

# SOCIALIST ORGANISER

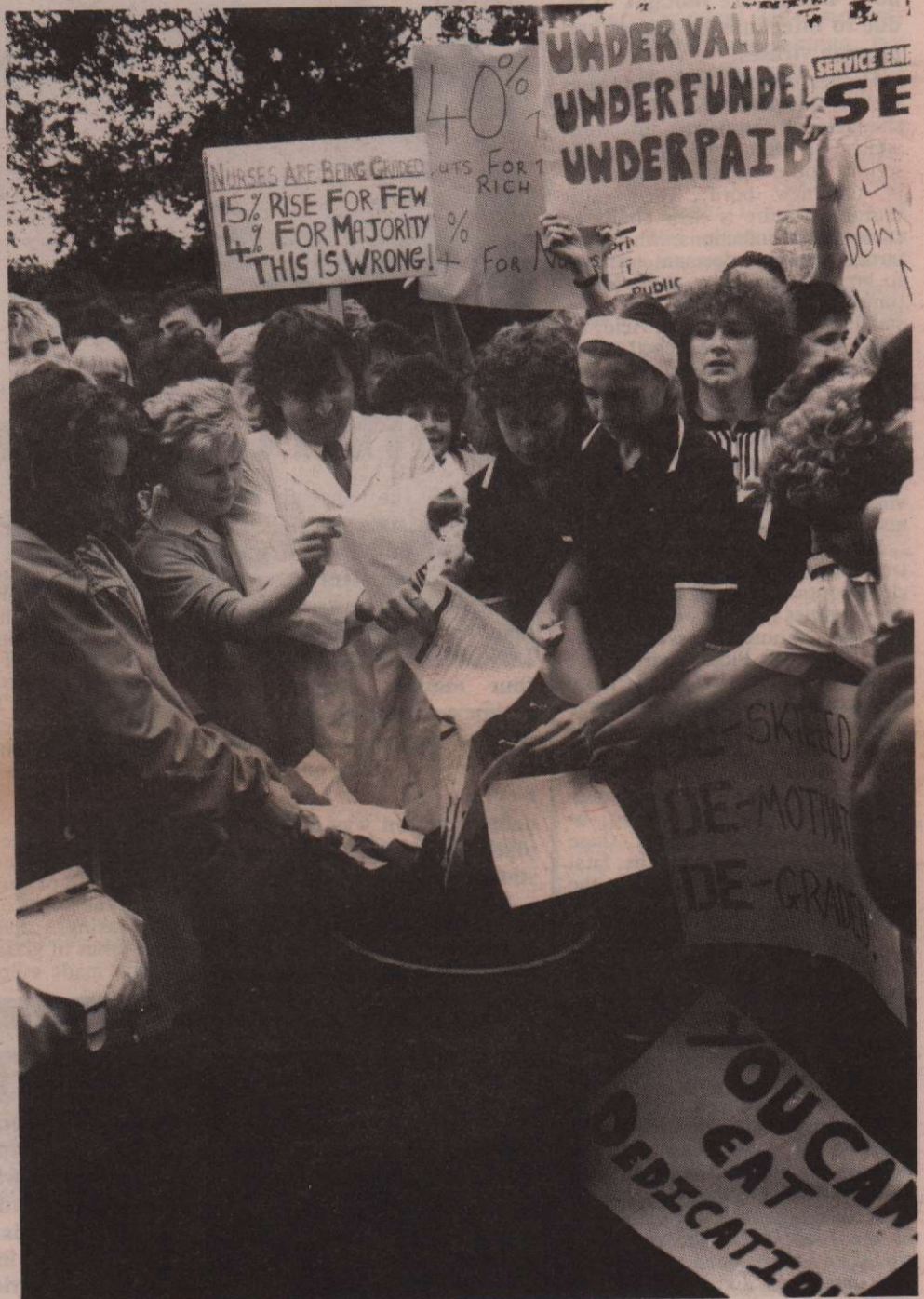
For Workers' Liberty East and West

Fight the Tories! Rebuild the left!



Back Benn and Heffer!

# NURSES TELL TORIES: STOP CHEATING!



Manchester nurses protest. Photo John Smith (Profile)

**Karen Reissman, North Manchester COHSE steward explains why**

**nurses are again taking strike action against the government.**

Last Thursday, 11 August, nurses in COHSE at North Manchester's psychiatric unit held an unofficial one hour strike over handling of their regrading and pay deal.

We took action against the new grading structure which the Tories pushed through in a package with

the 15 per cent pay rises last April. In the regrading process managers have acted for the government and cheated nurses. They have done this by systematically undervaluing the levels of responsibility and skills that nurses have so that they can justify lower pay rises than nurses have been led to expect.

The concessions made by the

Tories last April to stop the growing wave of militant action by hospital workers are now shown to have been largely a sham.

It is difficult to assess the prospects for further action, though hospitals up and down the country are now calling for strike action. Our brief walkout was a beginning. But ours is only a small branch and it was

## Les Hearn's SCIENCE COLUMN



### Save the seals!

The deaths of thousands of seals around Scandinavia and, now, Britain are thought to be due to infections by herpes and picorna viruses.

Herpes viruses cause diseases such as cold sores, chicken pox and shingles in humans, infections which are often mild but may be serious and even fatal, particularly in the new born. Their most unstable feature is their ability to cause latent infections, where the viruses are lying dormant, perhaps to break out again at some future time. Picorna viruses (pico = small; rna = Ribonucleic Acid, an unusual form of the genetic code related to DNA) also cause diseases in humans, such as polio and the mild infection known as the common cold (which can lead on to other more dangerous infections such as pneumonia). A picorna virus causes the cattle disease, foot and mouth.

Herpes viruses are easily transmitted through the normal close contact between members of communities (human or seal) and a majority of humans have been exposed to them. Picorna viruses are present in the gut and nasal passages and presumably are easily passed around between seals through the sea water.

But these viruses have probably always been present in seal populations. Another factor may be necessary to explain why these viruses are now causing the fatal lung diseases that are killing the seals.

The consensus from a conference of scientists convened by Greenpeace recently was that the seals' immune systems had been damaged by pollution, allowing the viruses to start multiplying.

The majority view favours pesticides washed off of North European farmlands into the rivers and thence into the sea. Once there, they would be absorbed by small animals and plants. These would be eaten by fish who would themselves be eaten by the seals. At each stage in the food chain, the pesticides would be concentrated as each seal eats many fish and each fish has eaten many smaller fish and so on.

A minority view blames acid rain for dissolving trace nutrients from the land and allowing algae in the sea to multiply massively. Just such an "angel bloom" occurred at the start of the seal epidemic. Many algae produce toxins which could also have been passed up the food chains to the seals, just like the pesticides.

In the long term, the solution is obviously to limit the use of pesticides and/or to use ones which can be broken down (biodegradable). In the short term, it may be impossible to save the European seal populations, already under pressure and unstable due to over-fishing of their food stocks. Normally, natural selection would allow those seals with some resistance to the diseases to survive and breed but in depleted populations there may be too few of these to make up a viable breeding group.

Vaccines are already being tested on captive seals but are unlikely to be of much use in protecting wild seals. The pace of the epidemic is such that in some places half the seal are already dead.

# Nurses tell Tories: stop cheating

## From front page

difficult to persuade — in fact impossible — branches of other unions that represent nurses on our hospital site to come out and join us.

There was a lot of pressure from both regional office and national office of COHSE to prevent us from going ahead with the strike. I think it's going to be difficult because of that pressure to get a lot of areas to come out on strike. However, I do think there will be

sporadic action up and down the country which can be used to put pressure on the union leaders to call some sort of co-ordinated national campaign.

A major issue is this: how can other healthworkers be brought in to the dispute specifically over nurses pay.

At the moment ancillaries are still deciding whether or not to accept their 5 per cent pay offer and I think the unions nationally ought to link the campaign for nurses pay and for ancillaries pay so that there

can be a general campaign against low pay in the health service.

A linked question is how can the current pay dispute be linked to other NHS battles against cuts, closures and privatisation? I think it's up to stewards on the ground to argue with other stewards who don't have nursing members that what we were doing in opposing the government's attempt to sabotage our pay claim should be linked to the general cuts which the government are bringing in and to forge some sort of campaign like the one

we saw earlier this year.

Right now the mood among nurses is that they are very, very angry about the way that the pay claim has been implemented.

The problem is that there aren't enough stewards arguing on the ground that that anger should be turned into action. Stewards who argue for it or who respond to the pressures of their members are often intimidated by regional and national officers into banking all their hopes on negotiations, rather than on taking effective action.



Demonstration in the Ukraine June '88

## Confrontation in the Ukraine

**Units of the Special Patrol Group, Russia's riot police and squads of militia went on the rampage in an effort to suppress the upsurge in protests that has taken place in the Ukraine. In Lviv Western Ukraine scene of four massive demonstrations within a month the authorities went to the extent of bulldozing parts of the square and erecting barricades where the demonstration was due to take place near the Ivan Farnko statue.**

According to a report from a leading member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Union 30-40 people gathered near the statue on Thursday the 4th of August and were immediately descended upon by militia vans from which those waiting in a nearby street were told to disperse. Within a few hours however the demonstration had grown to three thousand strong. The protesters began chanting "Free Ukraine! Free Ukraine!" The report by the Helsinki Union stated that "hardly had the people of Lviv tasted a hint of glasnost, the beginnings of a freer state, when a cold north wind blew"

The Special Patrol group and militia units went berserk, "the drilled unit from the company of the Special Patrol group began to attack the crowd dragging innocent people towards the militia vans. One young woman who resisted strongly, had her head beaten against the van until she finally succumbed and was then thrown half-unconscious into the vehicle. Other women were dragged by their hair, or thrust around bleeding, one youth was carried by the hair and legs and yet another who had a camera was dragged away from his screaming mother".

As Army and militia units attempted to force the crowds away a Colonel shouted to them "what do you need?" To the reply "A demonstration! A demonstration!" the Colonel shouted "There will be no demonstration!" and the crowd replied "Freedom, freedom, freedom!" The riot squads began attacking them again and attempted to encircle the crowd. "But when the demonstrators began to sing the International, they again were attacked by the special unit. People

### By Patrick Kane

were beaten, punched and kicked.

A group of SPG Officers beat an old man until he was unconscious then dragged him to the militia van to cries of "Fascists! Fascists!" from the crowd. The Helsinki Union stated "The attack by the special patrol group was ferocious. The sounds of the barking dogs, the cries of children and the screams of women should be the details of a film called 'democracy and restructuring Lviv-style'. The first drops of blood were shed on Lviv's streets on the 4th of August 1988, together with the hopes of the people."

Making a sham of Gorbachev's promises of glasnost the militia and army made every effort to ensure

no pictures such as those of the previous demonstrations were taken. Jaroslav Fudko one of the protesters was followed home by three KGB who attacked him and confiscated his camera.

25 people are still being held by the authorities including Iryna Kalynets who addressed the 50,000 strong demonstration several weeks ago also Ivan Makar who also played a central role in last month's protests was taken from his home by militia and hasn't been seen since. Gorbachev's efforts to suppress the growing discontent in Ukraine against the Russian bureaucracy have not deterred the Democratic Front which plans to continue with the protests.

In a statement sent of Gorbachev by leading opposition activists from

Lviv, Kiev and Odessa, they attack what they describe as an "anti-democratic pogrom" and "methods used by the most reactionary of regimes". In the Ukrainian capital Kiev there has been large protests by students according to fresh reports despite efforts by the authorities to prevent them. Gorbachev will be particularly worried that the wave of protests which could emerge as a second Armenia spreads to Ukraine's industrial Donbass region. So far the discontent there has not taken to the streets but has been expressed through statements and appeals, the demonstration however could give the workers the confidence to act and it was in this region that the Free Trade Union tradition was born.

## Don't ban Jesus!

**If Martin Scorsese's new film, 'The Last Temptation of Christ' is banned, it will be a disgrace. In Britain and in the United States, Christian lobbyists have been active in opposing the film. In America in particular, there has been a distinct anti-semitic theme to the campaign. Many of those backing the film are Jewish, and the line being peddled is that there is a conspiracy to discredit Christ.**

If Christian fundamentalists find the film upsetting, they can avoid seeing it. We have a right to watch films, and film makers have a right to make them.

Censorship on religious grounds is not new. Films about Jesus Christ have always been controversial, unless they are Hollywood-style epics. But one of the most important historical breakthroughs for democracy was the separation of Church and State. The Church should not be allowed to dictate the law or control the media. Freedom of religion should also mean artistic freedom from religion.

The left could do worse than ponder the issues raised by 'The Last Temptation'. Censorship in practice has been championed by the left over recent years; the right has been allowed to appear as the defenders of free speech. Banning

anything or anyone considered 'reactionary' has become a feature of much left-wing activity.

The notion grew out of the slogan 'no platform for fascists'. This originally meant that the labour movement should reject fascist claims to democratic rights, and should mobilise to drive them off the streets. Fascists should not be allowed to organise.

From there it went on to include 'no platform' for virtually anybody. Especially in the student movement, this reached bizarre levels.

Of course socialists don't see

democratic rights as elevated above class society. If the working class faces a bitter enemy, like fascists it needs to act decisively. To overthrow the capitalist class, we will need to act decisively.

But the working class also needs free speech. Especially at the moment with the right wing 'moral majority' on the rampage, the left needs to be very careful. Arbitrary banning can very easily rebound on the left and the labour movement.

When we oppose censorship on films like 'The Last Temptation' we must be sure we do so honestly and not as hypocrites.

## Revolt in Burma

**As many as 1,000 people may have died in conflicts last week in Burma, as president Sein Lwin was toppled after only 18 days in power.**

Jubilant crowds filled the streets of the capital, Rangoon, to demand democracy. For the last 26 years, Burma has been ruled by the Burma Socialist Programme Party. Former dictator Ne Win resigned last month after proposals for economic reform were rejected by the party. Some commentators believe he may be looking for a come-back.

Severe brutality by Burmese troops failed to deter demonstrations, particularly by the

youth. It seems that the government of South Korea has been worried by events in Burma, despite their distance away. Repression of Korean students, demanding unification with the North, has been heavy to prevent Burmese events being copied.

The Burmese actions are in turn possibly partly inspired by Korean student and worker struggles in the recent past.

The Burmese government is unlikely to relax its control over politics and economy much. But equally, the mass movement now on the move will not easily be defeated.

# Break their laws!

The laws are always useful to those who have and hurtful to those who have not.  
JJ Rousseau

The law, in its majestic equality, forbids rich and poor alike to sleep under bridges, beg in the streets, or steal bread,

Anatole France.

The Tories poll tax is permeated by the same spirit of majestic equality. The master and his butler, the mistress and her maid, the company manager and the shopfloor labourer will all be equal — at least in respect of the amount they will be required to pay. Everyone will pay equally, but some more equally than others. The poll tax is not some mad caprice on the part of the Tories, even if as late as 1983 the Tories could still declare that 'the rating system is basically sound but needs some improvement.' It is the latest act of aggression of a government which has decisively abandoned post-war consensus politics and is intent upon restructuring society in its own repugnant image.

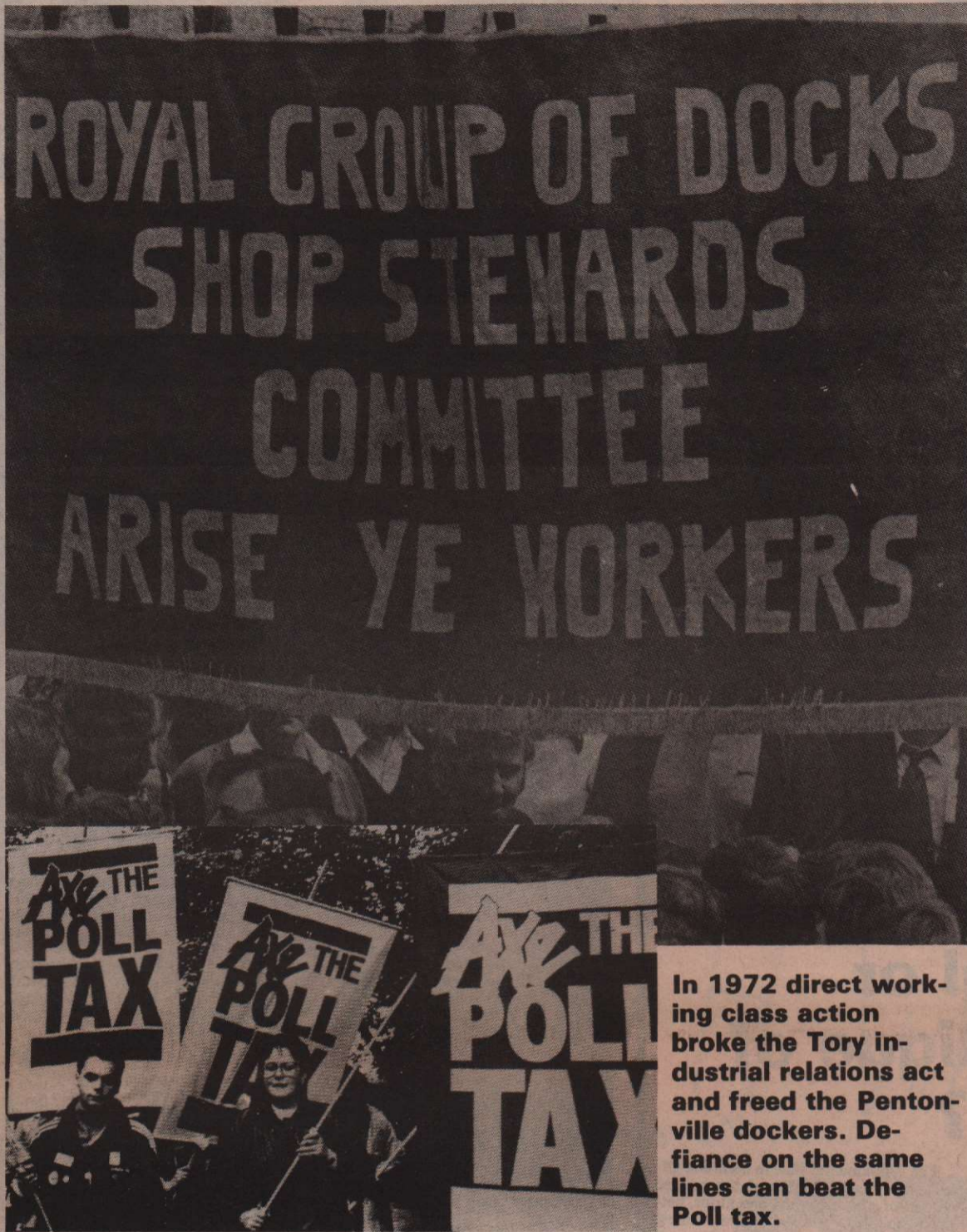
The attack is ideological, political and economic.

The Tories have an ideological commitment to a dog-eat-dog society where everyone looks to their own and rejects collectivist principles. 'Economic success' should be rewarded with more 'economic success' not 'penalised' by being partially redistributed to help the needy. The poll tax is based on exactly such a philosophy, levied on each individual in the hope that (s)he will elevate concern for a minimal poll tax above the need to provide for collective need.

The Tories, whatever their rhetoric about freedom of the individual, are politically committed to a strong, centralised state. Checks on free trade unionism, increasingly overt censorship and more powers for the forces of coercion are just so many aspects of that political drive. The poll tax too belongs to that ruthless centralising drive, increasing central government powers over local authorities and reducing local authority accountability to its electorate.

Economically, the Tories stand for a redistribution of wealth from the poor to the rich. Cuts in social security are merely the reverse side and complement of tax cuts for the rich. Cuts in rates of pay finance increases in profit margins. And a flat rate poll tax will mean bigger debts for the poor and more wealth for the rich.

How long before the principles of flat rating embodied in the poll tax becomes applied to income tax as well? The Tories are already well advanced along this road... Thatcher has rightly described the poll tax as her government's flagship. More than any other individual piece of legislation or act of societal restructuring, the poll tax epitomises the dog-eat-dog anti-



In 1972 direct working class action broke the Tory industrial relations act and freed the Pentonville dockers. Defiance on the same lines can beat the Poll tax.

social politics of greed upon which the Tories are based. As the Child Poverty Action Group puts it, the poll tax is:

'A system of local taxation which halves the tax burden of the richest, shifts resources from the recession-struck north to the affluent South

East, boosts already soaring house prices, costs at least twice as much to collect as the system it is designed to replace, necessitates an army of investigators to trace those liable to pay it, disenfranchises the poorest and introduced a system of rebates so complicated that few can understand it.'

The Tories were re-elected for a third term of office in the face of a half-hearted challenge from a Labour leadership lacking the stomach for a real merciless fight against them. The Tories are puffed up by the natural arrogance of the class they represent and taken in by their own lying propaganda. They believe themselves strong enough to unleash a fresh wave of radically reactionary attacks, spearheaded by the poll tax.

It is up to the labour movement to destroy their self-confidence and blunt their attack. The poll tax is not just another piece of reactionary legislation. It is a measure so sweeping in its implications that the fate of the government hangs upon it. To defeat the poll tax is to defeat the government itself and everything for which it stands.

In the poll tax Labour has a tremendous weapon against the government and a chance to lead a mass popular fight back against the Tories. The tragedy is that Labour leadership doesn't dare seize hold of it. They dawdle and protest and whinge when the job is to organise a labour movement to resist and fight.

If Labour were to launch a crusade against the tax and argue that tax payers and white collar unions alike should boycott it, the poll tax could be beaten.

It is still not too late. The labour movement must demand that its leadership lead a proper fight against the Tories and their poll tax — before it is too late.

## The tragedy of Brent

The demonstrations by disabled people and other victims of Brent Council's cuts are only the latest episode in the seemingly endless story of the collapse of the "left-wing" councils.

It has been a nightmare story of confusion, waste, and in-fighting between pressure groups. A story of empty posturings and stupid antics that played into the hands of a venomous, hostile Tory press; stupid antics which often subverted good causes — like the fight against racism — by giving the enemy ammunition with which to attack them.

Above all it has been a story of missed opportunities: the Labour left began to take power — in Lambeth — or move towards it, just after Thatcher formed her government. Local government could have been a powerful series of bases from which to resist the Thatcherite tide. One way of doing that was for the local Councils to have acted as real champions of their communities against Tory cuts, mobilising the com-

munities to resist and to fight back.

They didn't. They opted for would-be-clever strategies like high rate rises which passed on Tory cuts and turned local people against the councils. The only mobilisations have been mobilisations of hard-pressed local people against the councils.

The left is itself deeply marked by this experience and has yet to come to terms with it.

Brent Council must be resisted. The local unions are right to urge strike action.

One of the most ludicrous things in years is Ken Livingstone denouncing Brent Council. Livingstone is the main leader of the local government left who's example and arguments led the local government left to collapse. Now he tries to disassociate himself with violent words against Brent Council. That way he hopes to remain a MP.

But does the labour movement of Brent have such short memories as Ken Livingstone thinks it has?

## PRESS GANG

### Truly Independent

By Jim Denham

The Independent continues to go up in my estimation. Last Tuesday's edition was particularly outstanding. Not only did it carry a brilliantly written analysis of the phenomenon of 'underemployment' (penned by a correspondent who modestly prevents me from naming, but who is clearly one of the outstanding analytical minds of our age), but also it devoted just 12 words to the story that gripped the rest of Fleet Street: "Royal Baby: The Duchess of York has given birth to a daughter", was the sum total of the Indie's coverage, at the bottom of its page 2 News in Brief column.

The next day's Daily Mail even suggested that the Indies's Andreas Whittan Smith might be "the first Republican newspaper editor since John Wilkes brought out the 'North Britain' in 1762 and was thrown into the tower."

The near-hysterical Fergie Mania of last week's tabloids was predicatable, the 'serious' papers were not immune: the Daily Telegraph gave the story 20 column inches on its front page and The Times gave it a front page picture and 1000 words. Worst of all, the Guardian (perhaps reflecting the fashionable Marxism Today view that in this epoch of Thatcherism the good old monarchy isn't such a bad thing after all) devoted 2,000 words, 2 pictures and a whimsical editorial to the event. This on the day that news of ceasefires in the Gulf and Angola, Loyalist shootings in Ulster and a surprise rise in the interest rates broke.

Questioned by the Daily Mail, Whittan Smith protested "a charming young couple have had a baby. That is all the story there is. The rest is completely synthetic hysteria." Very tactful. But, then, he's a man who knows how to keep his head.

### Mania Exposed

A certain Russel Lewis has recently had a book entitled "Anti Racism, A Mania Exposed" published by Quartet. Lewis' basic thesis is that racism in Britain is largely an invention of do gooders and careerists bent on promoting the anti-racist "industry" in order to provide jobs for do gooders and careerists. The result has been a growing obsession and the book cites such well known manifestations as Hackney council wanting to outlaw "Bah, Bah, Black Sheep" from nursery schools and Haringey banning black bin bags, as conclusive proof. Both these stories first appeared in the Daily Mail. Both have since been exposed by independent researchers as total fabrications.

An example of Mr Lewis' concern for factual detail is his description of the 1964 Smethwick by-election won by a Tory Peter Griffiths "on the immigration issue", according to Lewis. What he does not mention is that Griffiths unofficial campaign slogan was "if you want a nigger for a neighbour vote Labour".

But then Russel Lewis could not be expected to know that: he's only a leader writer for the Daily Mail.

Socialist Organiser  
PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA  
01-639 7965  
Latest date for reports: first post Monday or by phone, Monday evening  
Editor: John O'Mahony  
Typesetting: Upstream Ltd (TU)  
01-358 1344

Published by Socialist Organiser, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA  
Printed by Press Link International (UK) Ltd (TU). Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office.  
Signed articles do not necessarily reflect the view of Socialist Organiser.

## Bill of rights goes too far

In the 'Socialism for the 1990s' pamphlet, the bill of rights on the state (page 6), in attempting to popularise socialist ideas has bent over too far — the end result being confusion.

The article rightly raises the idea of replacing the police and army. It then goes on to say it is to be replaced by a 'people's militia'. It is with this slogan that confusion reigns.

What does a 'people's militia' mean? Basically it seems that the army is to be replaced by an armed body of 'people'!

Which class will it be based on? Which class interests will it defend? Which class will control it? All these questions raise two answers — workers or bosses?

The idea which needs to be raised is not the confused one of a 'people's militia' but that of a 'workers' militia'.

Our fundamental task has to be the destruction of the present state and the creation of a new state based on workers control. It is not possible to gradually transform the character of the capitalist state. To suggest such gradual changes is to either underestimate the power of the capitalist state or imprison ourselves inside the limits of that state.

The destruction of the capitalist state is obviously not on the immediate agenda of the labour movement. The police, the courts, etc. are generally seen as more or less impartial. The only problem seen is one of curbing the excesses of certain parts of the police, army, etc.

We need to link up with the ac-

tivists to fight for democratic demands, eg. increasing the powers of police committees. At the same time we must sharply counterpose to the present model of policing society the idea of a radically different system based on workers militias.

The Bill of Rights proposed in the article raises another interesting demand — 'Police duty should be made a part-time job of every citizen, like jury service.'

Socialism raises the prospect of re-integrating the 'law and order' functions of the state back into local communities. Workers militias will execute these functions in a radically different way than today's police. The radical difference comes from the different class they will serve.

To present the enforcement of working class socialist law and order as simply everybody being a copper for a few hours is misleading and not very appealing.

The basic issue is not whether everybody can have a bash at being PC Plod. The basic issue is that law and order will be under the control of the local communities and based on a fundamentally different set of principles. Principles founded on the protection of individual rights within the structure of the collective ownership of the resources and wealth of society.

So, to sum up, the attempt to put forward our basic ideas in a more accessible way is right, but let's make sure we don't end up creating confusion on what our final goal is.

Tony Dale  
Manchester

## A political or moral critique of Stalinism?

Laurens Otter's letter on the class nature of the Soviet Union and Duncan Chapple's reply raise some interesting points.

Comrade Otter asserts that SO is inconsistent in regarding the Soviet Union as a degenerated worker's state, as opposed to a new form of class society with a new ruling class.

Comrade Chapple states (quite correctly) that the ruling caste of the Soviet Union has no power to transfer its control of the means of production to succeeding generations. This is a key point, thrown into sharp relief by the struggle for ascendancy between the Gorbachev faction and the rump of the Brezhnev clique. When Brezhnev & Co left centre stage, so to speak, the offices and power they had conferred on members of their entourage (including in Brezhnev's case several members of his family) were quickly removed. However, this doesn't in itself affect the argument that the bureaucracy can regenerate itself, unless one accepts that the Gorbachev clique represents a change in quality rather than quantity.

Similarly, the export of capital is not in itself germane to the discussion. Actually, the invasion of Afghanistan did involve the export of capital in certain forms. This doesn't per se tie us down to any specific societal model of the USSR. It is rather an illustration of its relation to and interaction with states organised on the basis of monopoly capitalism. No state exists in a vacuum. In Hungary, for example, the introduction of the new economic mechanism in 1966 was facilitated by both the preceding long boom in the west and its contingent phase of detente allowing greater production for export. This didn't and doesn't make Hungary into a capitalist country — unless one wishes to base an entire political analysis on trade figures. It merely expresses the relationship between two inherently antagonistic ruling elites who happen to be under pressure simultaneously to deliver the goods to workers in their respective spheres of influence.

The fundamental flaw in comrade Otter's analysis goes beyond the precise nature of the economic relations between capitalism and the Stalinist states. It is much, much older.

In short, Laurens hasn't made clear if we should regard Stalinism and the Stalinist states from a political or a moral viewpoint. It's easy to do a competent hack job of spotting similarities between monopoly capitalism, Stalinism and (say) fascism. James Burnham made a living out of this sort of thing in his later years. This is after all, what academics are paid for. The trouble with this approach is that it relies (at best) on empirical backup of fundamentally moralistic arguments.

(For example "Stalin killed more people than Hitler, we shall now count them.")

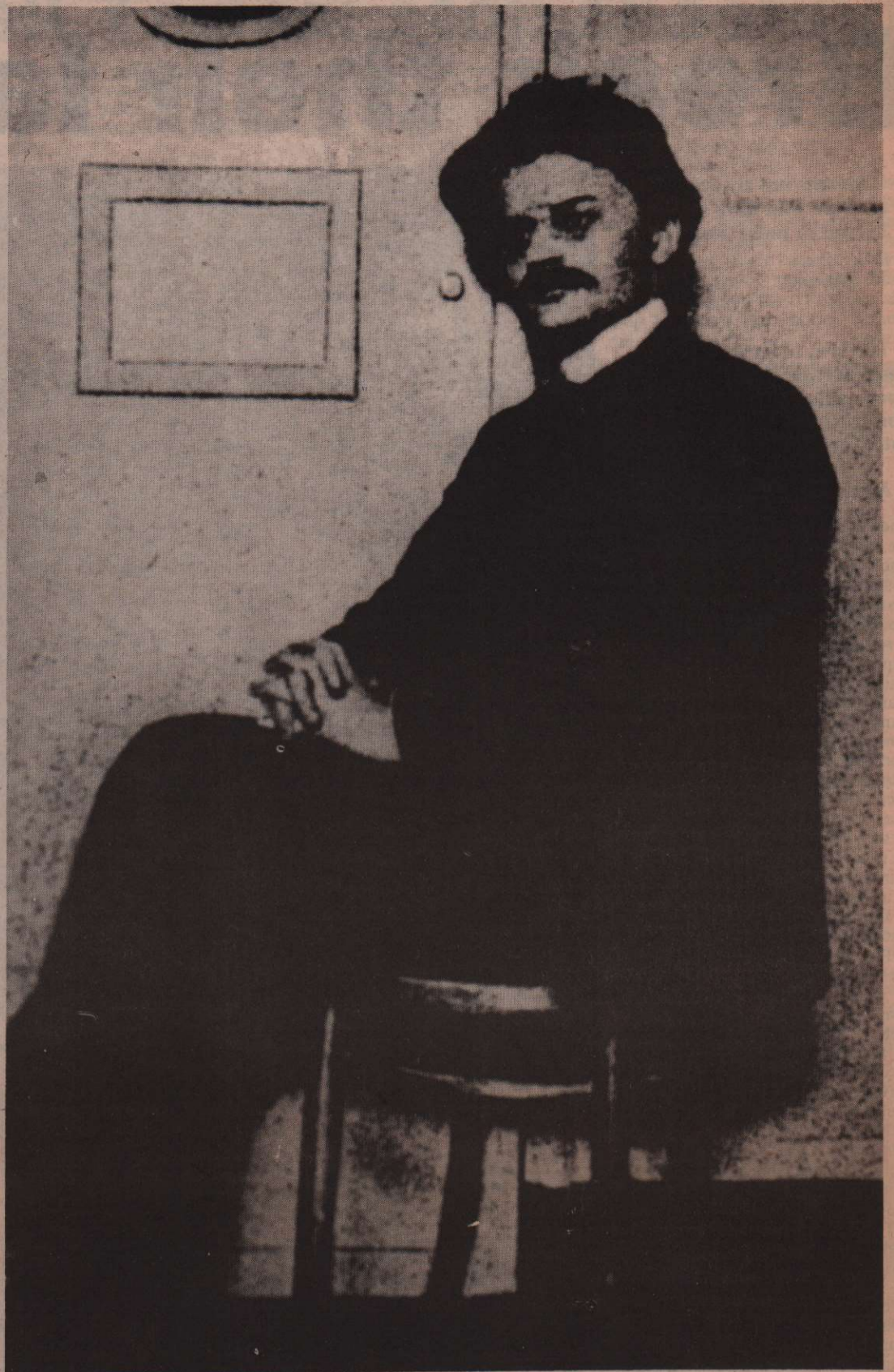
Comrade Otter would doubtless forgive me for calling him a moralist. He does, after all, represent a strand on the left older than Marxism. But this is where we part company. The slogan "Workers' Liberty, East and West" is a political slogan, not a comforting moral axiom. As a paper SO has always been consistently anti-Stalinist, but not from a moral angle.

I don't believe, as a rationalist that abandonment of the 'degenerated workers state' label would in itself be an abandonment of the 'one true faith', but Laurens must give concrete reasons for his alternative. More importantly he must spell out what this means in day-to-day political terms. For example, if Stalinism is as bad as (say) fascism and worse than capitalism, whose support does the left enlist in fighting it? Our own ruling class?

Over the past fifty years people such as James Burnham, Max Schachtman, Tony Cliff and Milovan Djilas (at least two of whom started out as socialists) have adopted analyses similar in style and content to comrade Otter's. Schachtman ended up supporting the US war in Vietnam. What price morals?

I look forward to comrade Otter's reply.

Neil Stonelake  
Cardiff



Trotsky in prison after the 1905 revolution.

Trots

# Leon

**Forty eight years ago, Leon Trotsky was murdered at his home in Mexico by an agent of Stalin's government in Moscow. He had been vilified by Stalin as a 'fascist' enemy of the Russian revolution. Today, Trotsky is still not properly understood by many on the left. Who was he, and what were his ideas? Jill Mountford and Mark Osborn look at Trotsky's life.**

Trotsky was one of the leaders of the Russian Revolution in 1917. Born Lev Davidovich Bronstein, he was won over to revolutionary Marxism at the end of the last century, and became a major writer and activist in the Russian socialist movement.

In 1905, in a revolution against the brutal regime of the Russian emperor, the Tsar, the industrial working class created for the first time 'soviets' — workers' councils. These were democratic bodies that represented the workers of a particular area, and could have formed a new government. Soviets were to reappear in 1917 when, with a Communist majority, they did form a workers' government.

Trotsky was made president of the soviet in St. Petersburg in 1905. On the basis of his experience in that — defeated — revolution, Trotsky developed a thorough criticism of the main ideas current among Marxists.

# WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK

Price 10p if sold separately

**INSIDE**  
**Labour Women's  
Conference  
Reviews  
and more on  
Housing**



# HANDS OFF OUR ESTATES!

The Tories hailed their Housing Bill as a radical solution to the housing crisis which would offer council tenants 'real freedom of choice'. In reality the Housing Bill, due to become law by the end of the year, will give council tenants even less say in how their estates are run than they have at present.

Which is hardly surprising — since when have the Tories cared about the lives of working class people?

What they're interested in is lining the pockets of their rich business cronies and if that is done at the expense of the worst off in society, tough!

The Housing Bill is designed to allow private developers to make massive profits and every proposal is heavily weighted in favour of the businessman and against the interests of the tenants. The existing landlords, local councils, will have no power to block any private landlord taking an estate off them and, in the case of the Housing Ac-

tion Trusts (HATs) proposal, the tenants won't get a say either. The government will decide what landlord they must have.

Even under the other component of the Housing Bill, the Pick a Landlord (PAL) scheme, the tenants ability to 'choose' who they want as their landlord is manipulated in favour of the private landlord. Tenants will have only two weeks to decide if they want a landlord other than the council. And to prevent the

takeover, 51 per cent of those eligible to vote must write back stating their wish to remain council tenants.

If a tenant doesn't return a ballot form — perhaps because they are on holiday or in hospital — it will count as a yes vote. Under the Tories' idea of democracy even empty buildings get a 'vote' — they are automatically yes votes.

And the vote only works one way: tenants cannot vote to return to council ownership if they don't like the new landlord. Nor can a

private landlord be voted out of office in the same way that the council can. They will not be accountable in any way to those living on the estates. They will answer only to shareholders or, in the case of HATs, directly to the government who may sack the board if they don't carry out the wishes of the Environment Minister.

**Continued over the page.**

# The Tory housin

Could you explain how the Housing Bill affects the tenants on your estate?

If your estate was taken over by a private landlord, and you weren't able to fight them off, firstly your rent would be at least three times higher, because they would charge the market value. The average rent on this estate is about £33 a week, but on the market a one bedroom flat is about £120, 2 bedroom £128 and £134 for a 3 bedroom flat.

Secondly, the private landlord can come along and only give you a shorthold tenancy, which is insecure. They can give you a tenancy which is for only two years after which they will review it. So you've got to be on your best behaviour. And there are several ways they can evict us. They can move you out of your flat to modernise it and, when they've finished it, say 'This is your flat, it's absolutely beautiful. Now it's going to cost you £120 a week. You can come back on Monday if you can pay'. They can also evict you if they find out you have a history of mental illness, or if you become mentally ill. They can evict you if you pay your rent late, because the DHSS haven't come through. And if the landlord decides he needs the flat for his family he can evict you. If someone has been on the exchange list for years because they've got a big family, the new landlord can just say 'You're overcrowded' and throw you out. Once you've been evicted you're nobody's responsibility. You're no longer a council tenant.

So that is presumably one of the

**Women's Fightback spoke to Jenny Boone and Josie Thompson of the East Dulwich Tenants Association who have been involved in the campaign against the Housing Bill.**

ways it specifically affects women?

Especially on this estate. There are an awful lot of single parent families and so many who are overcrowded and have been waiting for a transfer for years. And we have a lot of Vietnamese people on this estate.

The council has an equal opportunities policy, but there is no restriction on a private landlord. They can discriminate against black people, against disabled people. They can just do what they want, basically.

What about democracy?

Much as we moan and groan about the council, if we get really fed up with them we can vote them out. With a private landlord, you can't. They can even sell it again without telling us so you don't even know who your landlord is.

I thought there had to be a ballot?

When the first developer says 'I want to buy this estate' the council have given us their word that they will tell us what's happening. In which case we've got two weeks to get every tenant to write an individual letter saying 'I don't wish to have a private landlord. I wish to remain a

council tenant.' If 51 per cent of the people write and say no, then that developer will have to go away. Any votes not cast will be counted as a yes. Squatted flats, for example, count as yes votes.

That's why we are working hard on this estate to make sure everybody knows all about it. And knows why they've got to do something themselves. We've had a petition going round which we will use to make it obvious to people who are looking to buy this estate that we don't want to be bought, that might frighten them off a bit.

What else has your campaign been doing?

In April the TA organised a training day with speakers and workshops and everything was spelt out there. From that we set up a little group which gets together regularly to organise meetings, leaflets, etc. We've knocked on everybody's door on the estate, given everybody a leaflet and explained what it means. We had a public meeting in July and got a very good response, there must have been 100 people there.

We are now organising a leaflet and ballot forms and we will contact the 54 people who have said they want to help in the campaign. All our leaflets are done in Vietnamese and Bangladeshi as well as English. We want to get everyone motivated and make sure everyone knows the facts. That is really important because there is a lot of stuff in the Housing Bill that the government don't put in letters to tenants. For instance, there's no security if you buy your flat, if it's run by a HAT. They can buy it back off you at whatever price they like.

Do you plan to build links with other campaigns and with local council workers?

Yes, we have had speakers from other campaigns like Hulme in Manchester, where they told us how they organised. When they had private developers coming onto their estate, the tenants just harassed them. That's what we will do. We also want to build links with our council housing person and the trade unions. We think that's really important because the council workers are going to lose jobs and most of them live in council property. We should all stick together.

What we are striving for is to get a borough-wide or even a London-wide and then country-wide unit organised so that every estate under attack would help each other. So you're not alone. We will be lobbying Parliament in October. Apart from throwing HATs out, we



Victorian values

want to be rid of the whole Bill. The other bits are just as bad.

Locally, we invited our Tory MP Gerry Bowden, to one of our meetings to talk to the tenants. But he refused. He said he would come in three months time, after the Bill becomes law. He's scared to talk to us.

What do you think of what the national Labour Party has been doing?

They've done nothing. Nothing at all. We want them to say something, do something — to make a noise about it all.

Are you going to win?

Oh yes. If they want us out of those flats they'll have to drag us out because we're just not going to have it. What they want to do is to get all the yuppies in and all the working class out so it stays, or becomes, a Tory area. The only reason they got a Tory in this area is because they moved the boundary. Now they want to throw all the working class people out. And most of them work in the area too. You lose your home and you lose your job.

And the people who have been in bed and breakfast for

years have no chance of getting a flat. They will end up in cardboard boxes under the Embank-

## HANDS

Continued from page 1

The duty councils have to house the homeless will not apply to either HATs or private landlords. Nor will the least well off in society — single parent families, battered women, pensioners, the unemployed — be automatically considered for housing. The Race Relations Act will not apply either, and consequently black people will face greater discrimination. The renovated properties will be let on the basis of ability to pay the 'market rent', which can be anything up to five or six times the current council rent, especially in London. Properties that are sold off will also be out of the reach of the vast majority of existing council tenants — who's going to give you a mortgage if you're unemployed?

The Bill also gives greater power to private landlords to evict tenants. The properties will be let on 'assured tenancies' with less security and no right to hand the property down to children of existing tenants as happens now. Landlords will be able to evict tenants who are as little

## Emphasis on profit

The Housing Bill has serious implications for women because of its emphasis on ability to pay rather than need. It will mean more women facing homelessness and less security even if you do get a flat. As ever under Tory law, working class women will be forced to suffer to line the pockets of the rich.

**LOW PAID** Women are concentrated in low paid jobs and part time work. Women's average earnings are only 65 per cent of the male average. In London, only 1 in 8 women could afford to buy a house. In addition, more women than men rely on state benefits and maintenance payments.

The Bill will mean more women will be forced to rely on Housing Benefit, which is being reduced all the time. Evictions for arrears will be made easier for the landlord and less council housing will be available to help the low paid.

**CARERS** Women bear the brunt of caring responsibilities: 9 out of 10 single parent families are headed by women and 1 in 5 women over 40 care for a sick or disabled person. This will increase as the proportion of elderly people rises.

The Bill means that single parent families will spend longer in bed and breakfast accommodation as the housing stock shrinks, and carers will have fewer rights to take over the tenancy of a home of someone they have been caring for for years. Women will be forced to

move out of the area where their kids' schools are, away from their families and jobs.

**HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE** Women are particularly vulnerable to harassment, sexual and racial. And many women face violence in the home from male partners.

The Bill means that women will be forced to continue a violent relationship because their chances of being rehoused are vastly reduced. In addition, when subsidies to public housing are reduced, security doors and adequate lighting will be the first to go, leaving women open to attack. They will also face harassment from the private landlords who want them out so that they can re-let the property at a higher rent, or sell it off.

**DISCRIMINATION** Disabled, black and lesbian women face particular discrimination in housing.

The Bill will only add to this as the positive policies adopted by some councils (about moving racists away from their victims, housing lesbian couples) will be impossible to implement with reduced housing stock. There will be less money for councils to build homes specially adapted for disabled people.

**YOUNG WOMEN** Young women will be forced onto the streets because of difficulties at home. Short-life housing and co-ops on which many single women currently rely for their housing squeezed out of existence. Some will have no choice but to remain at home for longer, sacrificing privacy and independence.

# Angel: a message of hope

Penny Newell reviews 'Angel' by Merle Collins.

When the USA invaded Grenada in October 1983 it should have shocked the world — but it didn't. The excuses for the invasion were feeble and racist. Of course the reason there was no outrage, particularly from the British government, was because they supported the invasion.

Many people at the time were very confused about the internal struggles within Grenada's leading political group the New Jewel movement — which had led to 'the murder' of Maurice Bishop. In her book 'Angel' Merle Collins doesn't explain these issues. What she does do is far more educational. She traces the history of the past 30 years that were eventually to culminate in the invasion by the USA, and she uses fictional characters to do this.

The main characters are three women, Ma Ettie, her daughter Doodsie and her grand daughter Angel.

The book starts with the burning of the white landowners, the De Lisles, plantation houses by the plantation workers.

The book is so cleverly written that you learn about Grenadan culture, language and the developing political awareness of Doodsie and Angel as individual women against the background of the changing political climate of the island as a whole.

The chapter titles are written in patois and the whole style of the book integrates the humorous language of Grenada that says in a sentence what other languages take half an hour to say! For instance: "You make you children you don make dy mind" and "make sure you not livin on nobody eye lash so dat when dey wink you fall".

Despite an ending which includes the death of an older woman poet killed by the invading forces, the book is funny and full of hope right to the end.

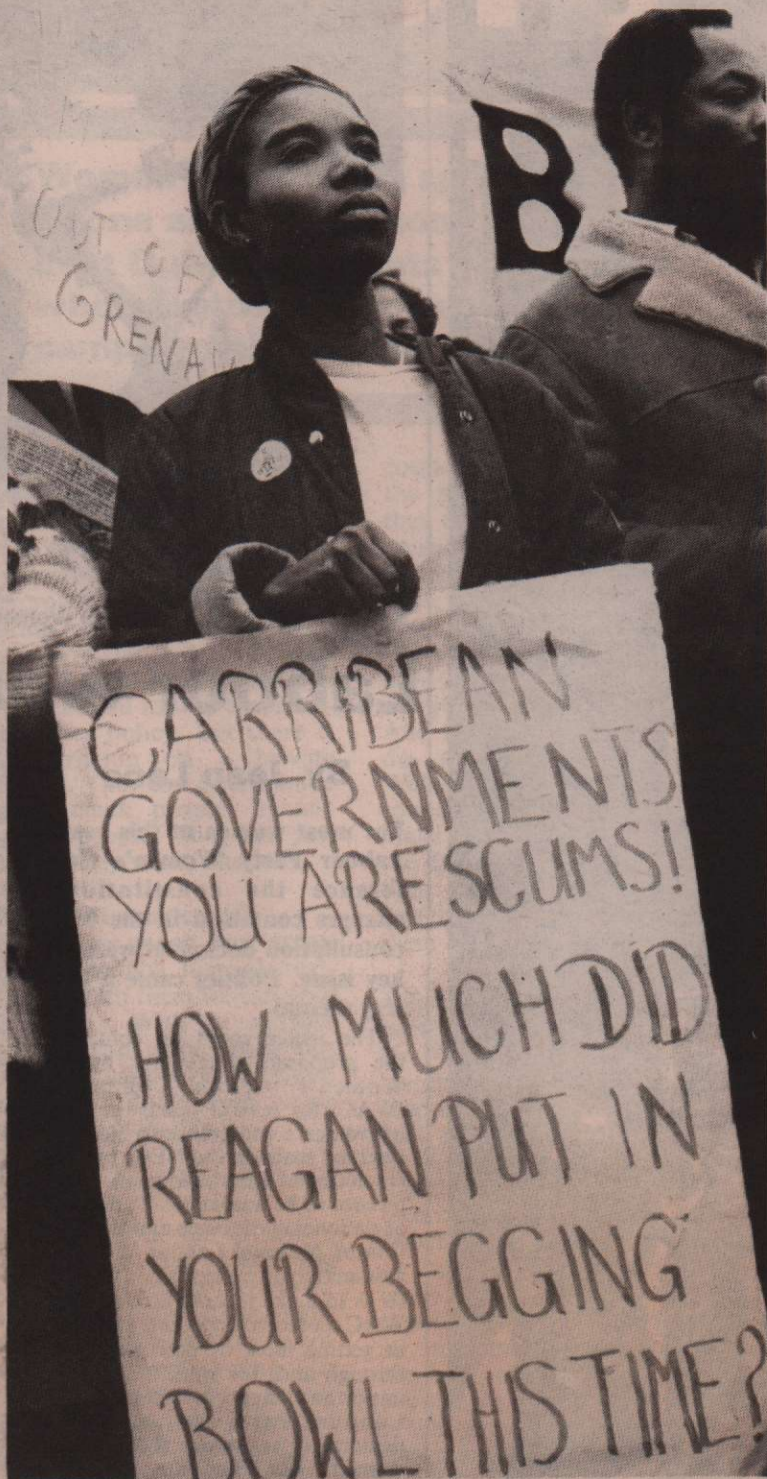
## Letter Misunderstanding 'Intercourse'

Ruth Cockcroft in her review of Andrea Dworkin's book 'Intercourse' concludes that it is possible that "feminism" will become a term that we, as socialists, must disassociate ourselves from." From Ruth's article it looks very much like she has done that already.

Ruth can find nothing positive to say about Dworkin's book at all. Dworkin's arguments are caricatured almost beyond recognition in Ruth's single-minded mission to present Dworkin as a twisted right-wing woman hater.

Surely there is much of worth in what Dworkin has to say, despite the perhaps over-dramatic way in which she expresses herself.

There is a vast cultural and ideological edifice built upon the economic roots of women's oppression. This misogynist culture cannot be written off with the phrase "Quite clearly sex in our society is distorted..." It amounts to more than that. Women across the world are terrorized by men. It is interesting that Ruth dismisses "rape, clitoridectomy, incest, prostitution, woman-hatred in male fantasies" as part of the "highly emotive hyperbolic language" that she considers to infect much of feminist thought. Doesn't she think that such crimes against women are worth getting



Demonstration in Britain November '83 against US invasion

Angel has got an education and comes home to find her mother very

politicised by the changing events yet still critical of Angel's new fancy Jamaican ways and hair style.

I felt slightly disappointed that although Merle Collins was a member of Grenada's national women's organisation and clearly heavily involved in the revolution she never explains the split in the New Jewel Party which culminated in Maurice Bishop's death. But this is a side issue to the book which is about ordinary people who move politically at the speed of light when collectively organised — none more so than women. And it is about how imperialism and colonialism can intervene and crush that spirit but not kill it. As Doodsie told her fowls "Allyou stay to gedder, when the chicken hawks was flying round. Don run when they try to frighten you. Stay together an dey can get none."

No wonder it has been chosen for the feminist book week promotion. I only hope it will prompt more people to take notice of the current events in Grenada.

The show trial of 18 members of the People's revolutionary government and the People's revolutionary army which condemned 14 to death and sentenced 3 others to 30-45 years imprisonment in December 1986 and the continuing interference of the USA must not be allowed to continue without protest.

At this year's NALGO Conference a motion was passed committing itself to a campaign for the restoration of human rights in Grenada and an end to the death penalty.

Other unions and the Labour Party must be persuaded to take up the issue too.

Yours in sisterhood  
Deirdre Mc Coy.

# A divine hair-do

Trudy Saunders reviews Hairspray

If you love '60s tack, have got a camp sense of humour and are a bit on the podgy side (like me) then 'Hairspray' is the film for you.

Set in the '60s in Southern USA, when "the world was a mess — their hair was perfect", 'Hairspray' is about the smashing up of a thin white middle class elite. Except it's not a serious film. After all, any film that stars the late, great, outrageously camp Divine is hardly likely to be.

Divine plays the (very fat) mother of the not so fat Tracy Turnblad, and come out with such wonderful lines as: "turn the TV down Tracy, I'm trying to iron". Tracy is a 'hair-hopper' (someone who bouffants their hair) and avidly watches 'The Corny Collins Show' which shows lots of thin, white, middle class hair-hoppers bopping around in wonderful '60s clothes to 'acceptable' black music. And as it's America there is a 'Miss Auto' competition. The 'Corny Collins Show'

also has a black night — but as it's the '60s in the racist USA the programme manager (also played by Divine) has ruled that the two should never mix.

'Hairspray' is about the fat girls revenge. Tracy Turnblad is a brilliant dancer. She gets onto the Corny Collins Show, gets engaged to the boyfriend of the whitest thinnest girl on it and takes the lead in the Miss Auto Contest. Meanwhile, her best friend Penny falls in love with — shock, horror — a black man. Penny's mother is not the most liberal of people and has Penny put in a straight jacket.

The town is split between those who want a black and white integrated Corny Collins Show and those who don't. Tracy is put in jail. Her boyfriend has both his legs broken. Divine has a new hairdo. The ensuing riot which takes place is a mixture of politics, protests and exploding hair-dos.

'Hairspray' is (obviously) anti-racist. But it also mercilessly pokes fun at those sickly American films in which everyone loves everyone else and the world turns out not to be such a bad place after all.

It's (sadly) Divine's last ever film — and it's not to be missed.

## Breast is best?

Last week's thrilling news about the new addition to the Royal family sparked off a mini campaign in support of breast feeding.

Wednesday's 6 o' clock news inevitably carried yet another story on Fergie and offspring. On this occasion noting, not without a certain moral judgement, that a) Fergie intends to leave the sprog behind in England when she goes off on a well earned holiday to Australia at the end of the month and b) she's decided not to breast feed the little cherub.

The BBC News was torn between tugging a forlock to the Royals and grovelling to the Tories who are apparently proposing to ban all advertising concerning bottle feeding infants.

As mothers world wide know, breast feeding is usually best for baby. Not only is breast milk, from a healthy mother, more rich in vital nutrients it also contains important antibodies that help build up the baby's immune system. And it's not just that breast milk is good in itself, but the act of breast feeding is recognised by many mothers and even some psychologists (thus giving a little weight to the claim) that often a special bond develops between nursing mothers and their babies.

So what does a ban on advertising bottle feeding mean to working class women?

It means more of the same old crap off the Tories. They care minimally about the health and safety of the working class be they very young or very old.

This they prove daily through cutting basic benefits by closing down hospitals, day care centres and nurseries, by relegating whole sections of the working class to the scrap heap — the list goes on and on.

The whole ethos behind the 'Breast is best' campaign is the return to Victorian values. "A women's place is in the home" looking after the young, the sick, the elderly and the infirm, providing these and many more services completely free of charge, pro-

By Jill Mountford

pping up a rotten system that has little if any regard for them or their family's well being.

Lots of working class women have no choice in the decision between bottle or breast. Their economic position dictates bottle. Many working class women don't qualify for statutory Maternity Pay and have no choice but to return to work 6 weeks after the birth. Keeping down a job, running a home, maybe looking after other children too, and expressing enough milk to feed the baby through the day is more than any human being can be expected to do. Some women do it, but can any woman be blamed if she doesn't.

Aside from the economic reasons, women don't breast feed for many others. Some babies simply don't take to it. It's not everyone's cup of tea. Some women find the task made difficult because of their nipples. And some women decide they just do not want to be restricted by a breast feeding timetable. Are any of these women inadequate, failing, selfish or bad mothers?

Of course not! The working class's physical and mental health problems are not caused by the consumption at an early age of Oestermilk No 1 and 2. More likely it is by having to survive on meagre benefits, low pay, poor education and health care, and bad and overcrowded housing.

Okay so breast is best — but not for every woman or baby. Breast milk doesn't clothe the baby, stop the gas from being disconnected or meet the HP payments on the washer.

Only with adequate maternity and paternity leave and statutory maternity pay for all women equal to that of the minimum wage will many working class women be able to opt for breast feeding. So until then the Tories (and any one who has a romantic vision of women and sucking babies) should get off women's backs — their load is more than big enough already!

# g scandal



ent. We don't want to move, s a real community here. A lot people on this estate can't af-

ford a loaf of bread, let alone a private landlord. And it's really united the estate — people are

all talking about the campaign even if they can't come to meetings.

## OFF OUR ESTATES

as two weeks in arrears — even if the arrears are caused by a delay in Housing Benefit being paid by the DHSS.

Tenants who lose their homes will no longer be able to look to the councils for rehousing. Under the Bill local authorities will be prevented from borrowing money to build new houses and, as the housing stock is depleted, more and more people will be forced into bed and breakfast accommodation, at best, or left on the streets.

Remaining council tenants will also be adversely affected. Councils will incur huge debts in the takeover bids: not only will they lose rent revenue, but in some cases they will have to pay the private landlord to take the estate over, if the government decrees that it is in particularly bad repair. Such costs will inevitably be passed onto existing tenants in the form of huge rent rises.

The end result will be that local people will be forced out of their homes in favour of yuppies, thereby increasing the Tory vote and, so the government hopes, getting rid of inner-city Labour councils. Work-

ing class people's right to a roof over their heads isn't a concern to the Tories.

But it is possible to stop this Tories. Although the government has the power to proceed without the agreement of tenants, William Waldegrave, the housing minister, has admitted that unless the government 'has won the hearts and minds of tenants' it would be difficult to go ahead with the plans. The tenants in Hulme, Manchester have already shown that the government can be made to back down in the face of organised opposition from the residents. It was Hulme that the government had in mind when they came up with the idea of HATs, but a massive campaign organised by the tenants federation forced them to withdraw the plan. The housing minister, William Waldegrave, was told that they would mobilise to oppose any attempt to make their estate a Housing Action Trust and got him to fund a feasibility study to look at real ways of improving the 5,500 homes for the existing tenants.

Similar campaigns have been mounted on other council estates

throughout the country. Tenants in East Dulwich, SE London, and Tower Hamlets in the East End have been organising against the Bill by, for example, leafletting all tenants on the estates about the implications of the Bill, holding mass meetings on the estates and lobbying government ministers.

The tenants associations are leading the way, but it can't be left to them on their own to defeat the Tories. The Labour Party must defend the working class against this attack on their right to a home. Yet, once again the Labour leadership is nowhere to be seen. While local Labour Parties are actively supporting the campaigns on their estates, Neil Kinnock is turning his back on us, crying crocodile tears in Parliament but doing nothing about mounting a massive campaign against the Bill. We cannot afford to lose this opportunity, not just to defend working class interests, but to mobilise and kick the Tories out. A mass campaign involving the entire labour movement has the power to do this and we must demand that Kinnock gets off the fence.



Caption competition! Write to Women's Fightback address below.

## Labour women meet

By Jean Lane

For most women at this year's Labour Party Women's Conference the constitutional changes contained in the NEC consultation document were the key issue. Politics came a long way second.

The issues voted on contained the proposals fought for by the Women's Action Committee (WAC) for several years: the right of women's conference to elect the reserved seats on the NEC, for five resolutions from women's conference to be automatically debated at national conference and the election of National Labour Women's Committee at women's conference, so as to make it more accountable. WAC scored considerable successes in getting most of their proposals through and, for sure, they are an important step in forcing the Labour Party to be more democratic and more accessible to women. But they are only the means to an end, not the end in itself as some women appeared to believe.

The way to draw working class women into the Party is not to make it easier for some women to get onto the NEC but to prove that the Labour Party will fight for women's interests. The message from this year's conference was that they won't. Traditionally, women's conference is more militant than national conference, but Kinnockism has infected the women's movement.

On all the major issues — the poll tax, the housing bill and local authority cuts — the response was the same as we have heard from Kinnock time and again: throw your hands up in horror, denounce the Tories, but do nothing to defend the working class. Conference refused to mount an illegal campaign of defiance against the Poll

Tax, despite being aware that this is the only way it will be defeated.

We were also presented with councillor after councillor getting up and demanding 'sisterly' support for them when they are 'forced' to make cuts, to safeguard their positions. Pity they didn't show more sisterly support for the women in their boroughs who will be forced to bear the brunt of the 'socialist cuts': no nursery provision, no repairs to housing, less help for carers.

Overall the main message of the conference was to elect a Labour government and everything will be alright. Until then, suffer in silence. And the Labour government must be one led by Neil Kinnock — the debate on the Benn-Heffer leadership campaign was not allowed to be discussed and the standing orders committee went out of their way to bureaucratically manoeuvre so that a decision to have the debate was overturned!

There was one success, though. A resolution put by Women's Fightback supporters on supporting the healthworkers by solidarity action was passed, despite the opposition of trade union delegations who told us to keep out of 'internal union business'!

Is it any wonder that women's sections are so moribund and working class women stay away in droves? They have no confidence that the Labour Party will fight to defend their interests. But the Labour Party is more than just the leadership, the careerists or the trade unions. We can take back our women's sections, turn them outwards, onto the estates, and draw more women into them. To do this we must get involved in the issues that affect the day to day lives of working class women, campaign against the poll tax, the housing bill, local authority cuts and prove that we will defend our class against Tory attacks. We must force Kinnock and his cronies to mobilise to support us in our fight.

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ky with his eldest daughter Zina.

# Trotsky

They argued that Russia was so economically underdeveloped that a revolution could do no more than sweep away the old system of rule by the nobility and the Tsar (emperor), and lay the basis for modern capitalist industry.

Many Marxists concluded that the capitalist class would lead the revolution. The role of the workers' party was to urge the capitalists forward while continuing to defend the workers' interests.

Lenin argued that the weak Russian capitalist class — tied to Tsarism, and afraid of the working class — would lead no revolution. The revolution could instead be led by the workers in alliance with the peasantry. It would still be a 'bourgeois' revolution, because the peasantry was a 'bourgeois' class, owning or aspiring to own private property, and the peasants massively outnumbered the workers.

But the workers' party would fight for it to be the most radical, thoroughgoing form of bourgeois revolution.

Trotsky went further, arguing that the peasants could play no *independent* role. They would follow the capitalists or follow the working class. And if the working class could win the leadership of the peasantry, then the anti-Tsarist 'democratic' revolution would merge with the socialist, working-class revolution.

Was Russia too underdeveloped for this? Yes, taken on its own. But in the modern world Russia could not be 'taken on its own'. Foreign capital had already created large-scale modern industry in Russia alongside the vast expanses of primitive peasant economy. And the Russian workers, taking power, could hope to link up with workers in more advanced countries.

This theory, which was borne out by the revolution of 1917, is called 'per-

manent revolution'.

Although for many years there was no love lost between Trotsky and Lenin, in 1917 Lenin moved towards Trotsky's ideas on the tasks of the revolution, and Trotsky joined Lenin's party, by then called the Communist Party.

It was Trotsky who organised the Communist insurrection in October 1917 (November by our calendar) that finally put the working class in power. It was Trotsky, too, who organised the Red Army to defend the revolution against Western capitalist military intervention in support of Russian counter-revolutionaries.

The Russian revolution did defend itself successfully. Other revolutionary movements exploded all across Europe but were defeated or betrayed — because parties like Lenin's had not been built in time.

The Communist government was

isolated in a terribly poor country, ravaged by world war and then civil war. People were starving; workers were deserting the cities in their thousands in search of food.

In these conditions, the Communist militants become more and more absorbed in the tasks of running the state and, bit by bit, more bureaucratic. Old Tsarist bureaucrats put their stamp on the workers' state. From 1923 onwards, Trotsky took up the fight against this degeneration of the party and the workers' state.

Trotsky was defeated. The emerging bureaucracy, whose most prominent representative was Joseph Stalin, was too strong. The 'Left Opposition', as Trotsky and his comrades were called, were isolated, and then expelled from the party. Trotsky was expelled from the USSR in 1929.

The degeneration of the Russian Communists also affected the Communist International which they had founded. The Social Democrats before 1914 had blunted and toned down Marxist theory delicately, bit by bit. The Stalinists gutted the ideas of Marx and Lenin at a hectic pace, putting written-to-order goobledgook in the empty husks in place of the original content. A terrible corruption befell the workers' movement and its basic ideals of freedom, democracy, equality and justice.

The Trotskyists were the sharpest critics of the absurd policies pursued by the Stalinists in the 1920s and '30s. On every question, the Trotskyists were proved right. For example, they were right about the ridiculous policy of the Stalinists in Germany, which said that the Social Democrats were worse than Hitler — and thus helped Hitler take power and destroy the labour movement.

They were right that the Popular Front — the opposite of the earlier policy and just as bad — would be a disaster.

They were right to criticise the Stalinist theory of 'socialism in one country', arguing like Marx and Lenin that socialism would have to be an *international* system, and that the Stalinist theory was nationalistic.

The Trotskyists were also right to say that by the mid 1930s the bureaucracy in the USSR, and the Communist Parties which it dominated, were beyond all hope of reform. The Trotskyists argued that new Marxist parties needed to be built, as part of a new ('Fourth') international Marxist party — and that a new revolution was needed in Russia to restore workers' democracy.

Not only Trotskyists were 'purged' in the Moscow Trials of 1936-7; anyone with any independent thought was to fall victim. But 'Trotskyism' was, in the bureaucrats' eyes, the most heinous crime — because it represented their most deadly enemy, working-class socialism.

The Stalinists called the Trotskyists 'fascist agents' (until Stalin signed a pact with Hitler in 1939), and all sorts of respectable liberals and social-democrats went along with them. Today, even the CPs admit that the 'confessions' that were got out of the 'defendants' in the Moscow Trials were the result of physical and psychological torture. Many did not confess, and died in concentration camps.

In 1940, Trotsky himself was murdered by a Stalinist agent while in exile in Mexico.

But the Stalinists could never suppress the basic ideas of working-class socialism championed by Trotsky. In 1953 in East Germany, in 1956 in Hungary, in 1968 in Czechoslovakia, and in 1980-1 in Poland, those ideas have returned to challenge the bureaucrats.

# Why the Tories yelped

When "The Monocled Mutineer" was first shown on television a year ago, there was a big outcry against it in the Tory press. Basing himself loosely on a true story, Alan Bleasdale showed the horror's of the First World War with stunning force.

It's critics attacked it for alleged 'inaccuracy' but what they really objected to was what it showed, the picture it presented of the great slaughter and of the ruling class responsible for

organising it.

It is the story of Percy Toplis a young worker from Nottingham. Toplis is birched as a boy and as a teenager sent to jail bitterly protesting his innocence. He makes his way into the army after the World War breaks out in 1914.

This was a war between competing blocks of Empires for control of colonies. The armies confronted each other dug in inside a network of trenches across a large part of northern Europe, in a bloody stalemate that lasted 4 murderous years.

The nearest modern equivalent is

By Mick Ackersley

the prolonged bloodbath between Iran and Iraq which may now be ending.

Poison gas — never used in the Second World War except on Hitler's captives — was used in the trenches. The generals would think nothing of throwing away a quarter or a half million lives to try and gain control of a few hundred acres of blood saturated mud.

And it was not just in pitched

battles that there was mass slaughter. All the armies killed many tens of thousands of their own men for breaches of discipline and 'cowardice'.

A long sequence in "The monocled mutineer" shows the terrible thing such killings were. Toplis is one of a group sitting up all night with an officer sentenced to be shot for losing his nerve after all the other officers in his regiment had been killed.

He is 20 years old — a reasoning, self-recriminating youth marked down to be killed by his comrades in cold blood because the army brass

need to keep their men in greater terror of them than of the enemy: there is some chance, maybe of surviving the enemy but none at all of surviving the wrath of 'your own' generals.

I missed it first time round. When I sat, very disturbed, through that sequence I understood why the Tory press made such an outcry against it. Lots of people today, even some Tories, condemn the first World War, but not like this. Try and catch the rest of it.

"The Monocled Mutineer" is on Thursdays on BBC1 at 9.30 pm.

## Where is Socialist Worker going?

When is a public meeting not open to the public? Answer: when it is held by the Socialist Workers' Party.

The SWP National Committee has just decided to ban supporters of Socialist Organiser from its public meetings. This follows last month's ejection of SO sellers from the SWP's 'Marxism '88 summer school. We have been declared 'beyond the pale' of political debate — too bad even to talk to. In this we are hardly the first, and nor will we be the last. But the signs are that the SWP's degeneration is accelerating.

What are the signs? There are two main aspects. First, an astonishing political shift away from the SWP's own bedrock tradition towards the worldview typical of 'average Trotskyism' (or what they would call 'orthodox Trotskyism', which they have always detested). Second, an apparent contempt both for democracy in general, and for rational terms of debate: instead of debate, they employ (and their leading figures do it most crudely) cheap demagoguery.

The SWP have not given an explanation of the ban on Socialist Organiser, but certainly the underlying theme is outrage at our alleged 'Zionism'.

What they mean is that we have a 'two states' position on the Israel/Palestine conflict, and that we do not share their relentless hostility to 'Zionism'. That is that we do not support the destruction of the state of Israel. We try to understand Zionism historically rather than simply denounce it. Socialist Organiser is not, of course, Zionist in any sense other than that we defend Israel's right to exist. We do not defend its policies, its oppression of the Palestinians, its alliance with the United States or any other of its obnoxious features. If we are Zionists, so too are most opponents of Zionism in Israel. (So too, incidentally, is the majority of the PLO!)

In fact, the SWP are today simply militant Arab nationalists. They explicitly reject the idea that Israeli Jewish workers can play any role in making the socialist revolution. The 'smashing' of Zionism will be carried through by the Arab workers of the region, whether Jewish workers agree with it or not. Oddly, the SWP describe the result of this process as a 'democratic' state. They compare the situation to South Africa, although the resemblance is utterly superficial.

The SWP's hostility towards 'Zionism' is also directed at individual Zionists. Since the vast majority of Jews are Zionists, this is in practice a hostility towards Jews, or at least all Jews who are not anti-Zionists. We think the results of this are deeply pernicious, and have criticised the SWP and others for it. But even this has been interpreted as an attack on the Palestinians.

Opposition to Israel has now become a fetish for the SWP. The

**The Socialist Workers' Party is a prominent participant in the Chesterfield movement. It seeks to engage in debate with the Labour left. Yet recently it has adopted worse and worse Stalinist-type methods in debate. More and more they rely on irrational and hysterical methods of argument. Clive Bradley looks at the direction the SWP is taking and asks where it will lead.**

question of Israel for them defines all other political questions, as if to be a 'Zionist' on this issue defines you as a 'Zionist' on all issues. It has been detached from rational criticism of the Israeli state and become the question of questions.

Fixing the label 'Zionist' on Socialist Organiser serves the purpose of declaring us outside 'respectable' socialist opinion. It is a way of declaring us not worth listening to, or debating with or allowing into meetings.

For example, Alex Callinicos, one of the SWP's top intellectuals, recently turned down a debate with Iranian Marxists on the Gulf War. As an excuse, he particularly insisted against sharing a platform with 'groups who support the terrorism of the Israeli state against the Palestinian people'. He meant Socialist Organiser.

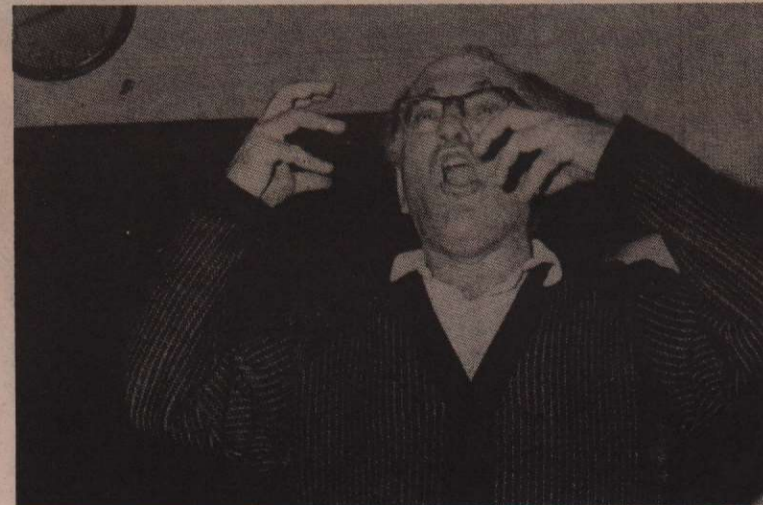
This is of course, pure libel. Either it is conscious libel — that is, Callinicos is deliberately lying. Or, if he really believes it, it is hysterical; it suggests an extraordinary inability to debate in rational terms. Whichever, it is typical of the SWP today.

Lies, disinformation, demagoguery and hysteria characterise current SWP methods of argument. They are in fact, the characteristic methods of Stalinism. Of course the SWP is still a long way from being a party like the Stalinist parties in the '30s. But the SWP members should think about what they are building.

Why do they refuse to debate? Why do they lie about other people's political position? What are they afraid of?

### Distinct

Throughout its existence (from the Socialist Review Group in the '50s, through to International Socialists in the '60s and '70s) the SWP has been a distinct tendency, differentiated politically from mainstream 'orthodox' Trotskyism on a wide range of issues. Indeed, until 1968 when they made a dramatic and sudden switch and



Is Cliff following Healy?

proclaimed themselves 'Leninist', 'building the revolutionary party', the Cliff group was explicitly anti-Leninist. The Leninist theory of the party they considered 'substitutionist'. But their origins were in Trotskyism, and they formed a part of the Trotskyist tradition broadly defined.

The Cliff tendency was one of the most sharply anti-Stalinist Marxist groups; 'state capitalism' was the label they pinned on the system in the USSR to show that they hated it. It was not only the USSR; China, Cuba etc were all also considered 'state capitalist' — and this was seen as the more-or-less inevitable product of 'Third World' revolutions in which the working class was unable to play a decisive role.

The actual event which led to the formation of Cliff's group as an independent entity was the war in Korea which began in 1950. Distinct from the rest of the Trotskyist movement, they were neutral viewing North Korea merely as a proxy for the imperialist USSR against the imperialist USA.

Whether they were right or wrong about Korea (and they ignored the independent dynamic of the Korean national movement), this attitude is in important respects radically different from the SWP's current line, for example on the Iran/Iraq war. Today the bare fact of the United

States' hostility to Iran dictates support for Iran in its 'anti-imperialist' war (against Iraq). All more subtle issues are phased out in the name of militant anti-imperialism. Those of us who have argued against support for Iran (or Iraq, or the USA) are denounced for "the politics of neutrality". If they were logical they would denounce us in the usual terms employed by the 'orthodox' Trotskyists they used to despise, as "Third campists"!

The SWP have been victims of precisely this accusation from their very inception and should know better. Now they practice vicious demagoguery on such serious subjects.

There are other big differences, and not only with their line on Korea. A characteristic feature of 'orthodox' Trotskyism is a view of events which collapses all details — indeed practically all concrete analysis into generalised assumptions. 'Analysis' is a matter of deducing what should be happening according to preconceived schemas, rather than actually analysing what is happening. The schemas are derived from a more-or-less crude division of the world into 'imperialism' and 'the revolution.'

On Iran, the SWP have collapsed into a variant of this 'campist' worldview (with the difference that the USSR is one of the 'imperialists'). Moreover, and

what is particularly striking, it is a variant in which there is not even a superficial attempt to relate their preconceptions to facts. There is little actual analysis of the Gulf War; what little there is has been contradicted by the actual course of developments (such as the idea that the US wanted to see Khomeini's regime replaced), without the SWP batting a self-critical eyelid.

All this might suggest that the SWP is retreating, bit by bit, from all the theoretical 'gains' of its tendency. It is difficult to imagine the ardent Iranian patriots of 1988 as neutralists on Korea. In fact there is more to it. Theory for the SWP and its predecessors has always played, as leading SWP writer Duncan Hallas once put it, an 'operational' role: it serves to justify rather than inform, SWP current practice. Hallas of course meant that it was adequate to grasp the essence of reality, even if not fully to understand it. But in fact major aspects of the SWP's theory, like the 'permanent arms economy' (which was meant to explain post-war capitalist boom and stability) have quietly been shunted to the back of the book shelf, if not actually dropped in the bin.

They don't define themselves on the left by distinct ideas. Rather, they try to promote themselves as the 'hardest' people on the left, the ones who never have to water down their politics for whatever reason. Being 'hard' on the Gulf War, or Israel/Palestine fits into this — like a kind of advertising gimmick. 'You want to fight imperialism?' says the SWP. 'We're the hardest anti-imperialists'. If in fact the left suffers from prejudices on these issues, the SWP simply presents itself as the most consistently prejudiced.

Where will it all end? It is now almost impossible to conduct a discussion with the SWP, even outside their meetings. But lies and hysteria cannot sustain a political tendency forever. The SWP should think about the experience of the Healy group (Workers' Revolutionary Party).

For the Healyites, self-proclamation as 'the revolutionary party' accompanied increasingly systematic lying about opponents: Cliff himself was often accused of particularly heinous crimes. For them too, 'Zionism' became a watchword in heresy-spotting. (They were to be the first group to call Socialist Organiser 'Zionist'). Politics, and especially 'polemic', became a way to sustain their organisation: denunciation, rather than rational argument, was used to keep the membership in line, and to 'rally the faithful'. But gradually the organisation declined and eventually it blew apart.

It may seem fantastic to compare the SWP with the Healy group (or with Stalinism). But they are heading in that direction very very quickly. Members of the SWP need to act fast to stop the rot.

# NUS needs a co-ordinated campaign

By Jill Mountford

Though NOLS have hardly any sabbatical officers this year they do have quite a few Area Convenors up and down the country.

At NUS Summer Convention last month the NOLS profile was small and lacked intent and the will to tackle the threats facing students. SSiN held two fringe meetings each with about 25 people attending. Here we had an open forum for new officers to discuss strategy and tactics for fighting voluntary membership and loans.

Regrettably, only one NOLSie

turned up to discuss with us. NOLS like us, advertised two fringe meetings but, not surprisingly, only managed to get one off the ground. The other never started due to a genuine lack of punters — they were all at the SSiN fringe meeting.

NOLS' profile at NUS Areas Political Convention a few weeks later was markedly increased — all their celebrities turned out, lots of pool playing and buying of drinks for independents went on, in fact the NOLSies had such a good time they forgot all about politics.

So much so that they had to organise a NOLS Area Convenors conference at Labour Party HQ in Walworth Road to make up for lost



time. It's clearly the case that the conference at HQ was a direct result of the distinctly apolitical convention a few weeks earlier. Because if it wasn't Rachel Pitkeathley, our NOLS NC member, would surely have been in on the discussion. After all she was at the last NOLS NC meeting and there was no mention of organising an Area Con-

venors conference then. Unless, of course, NOLS are not serious about building a strong campaigning fightback against the Tory attacks.

Simon Buckley, NOLS/NUS officer, invited all area convenors who are members of NOLS and left independent to discuss and debate voluntary membership, loans and the government inquiry. That is, all area convenors except two, both SSiN supporters.

Still it's reassuring to know that some things never change — the NOLSies are still the miserable carving bureaucrats they ever were.

The NOLS prioritised campaign for the next year is the Poll Tax. This is undoubtedly a good issue to

build a campaign around. At present the NOLSies are supporting non-compliance, though they did say that they did not want anyone to be imprisoned. Whether what's going on in the Scottish Labour Party Executive will have any effect on NOLS about non-compliance is hard to tell.

We should be building support for the campaign and getting a solid base in favour of non-compliance. Students should be setting up or joining existing local Poll Tax groups. This is an obvious and important way of getting students integrated in the Labour Party and the community. Poll Tax groups should be set up on campus. These must include members of all trade unions represented in your college and should be initiated through the campus joint trade union committee at the start of the term. Students should get involved in tenants associations on the estates, work with trades councils and other local groups.

A well coordinated national campaign is what is needed, a step forward to building Labour Clubs in the colleges. But simply declaring that the Poll Tax is that campaign will not be enough. The past record of the Democratic Left suggests that they're very unlikely to get a campaign off the ground. So we're preparing a broadsheet on the Poll Tax, posters, badges, etc. that can be used in colleges, on the estates, in the Labour Party YSs. The campaign must have links with the wider movement and not simply the traditional wing of that: local women's groups, tenants associations, etc. will play an important role.

## Southwark tenants campaign

By Roy Webb

On Tuesday 2nd August about 200 tenants from the North Peckham and Gloucester Grove Estates in Southwark met to launch their campaign against Nicholas Ridley and his Housing Action Trust (HAT) scheme for the estates. As reported in Socialist Organiser, the HATs are a major threat to tenants across the country, representing one prong of the Government's attack on Council tenants, their security of tenure and their rights to a decent home in good repair at a reasonable rent.

North Peckham Estates Tenants Association have joined forces with the tenants association on the Gloucester Grove to launch a joint campaign in Southwark. They were supported in getting the meeting going by the Southwark Group of

Tenants Organisations. Support also came from Southwark NALGO's Housing Section in the form of help with printing leaflets and distributing them on the estate.

Several other estates, including the East Dulwich Estate, Glebe Estate and Camden Estate tenants also attended the meeting and gave their support to the campaign.

At the meeting there were speakers from the Hulme estate in Manchester, where tenants have successfully fought off a proposed HAT. Hulme estate was one of the areas that the Government designed the idea of HATs around, and the campaign has been going there successfully for a number of years.

The key to success was getting tenants mobilised and active in the campaign across all the estates twelve different areas, and emphasising the need for tenants themselves to be involved centrally in fighting to defend their homes.

Research had also been a key to the campaign. Getting to know the

legislation backwards and being able to expose the empty arguments of the government. The government hopes to play on tenants dissatisfaction with an under resourced public sector to persuade them to give up their rights as Council tenants and welcome being handed over to a private landlord or property developer.

In the case of HATs this involves the intermediate step of forcibly handing over tenants to the HATs.

Although the Government says it will give some money to the HATs to start an improvement programme on the estates, the amount promised for North Peckham and Gloucester Grove is less than that already negotiated by the tenants themselves with Southwark Council.

They spoke of the tenants' determination to fight the HATs and of the support they have had from local trade unionists in building the campaign, talking about the need for trades unionists to 'fight alongside' tenants on this issue.

A lot of emphasis was also given to the effects of the new law on homelessness, which is bound to go up if the Bill is implemented, and of the effects especially on the black community.

In a clear vote on the HATs the meeting voted unanimously to reject the HATs and fight the Housing Bill in its entirety. Jane Foot from the Campaign Against Estate Sales, spoke about the links that has already been formed with tenants fighting in Tower Hamlets, and the plans for some joint lobbying of the House of Commons when the Bill returns there for debate in September.

There will also be attempts to draw together tenants from the HAT threatened areas from all over the country at a special meeting in Birmingham being called by the Manchester tenants to draw together a national campaign.

Gloucester Grove and North Peckham Tenants also are planning to get Nicholas Ridley down to a public meeting on the estate, if he'll dare to come!

## Manchester strike against casualisation

By Pete Keenlyside

Local deliveries were brought to a halt for 3 days in the Manchester area last week as over 5,000 UCW members went on strike over casualisation.

The matter was brought to a head when local management announced that they were intending to give temporary contracts to 35 casuals employed in the Newton St. sorting office over the summer period.

The excuse they used was that as the casuals had been employed for 12 weeks they were legally obliged to do this. But the agreement that was signed with the union section concerned allowed for casuals to be employed for a 10 week period and then laid off. Management had broken their own agreement and the reason wasn't too hard to find. They wanted to use the summer staffing agreement as a way to bring in a permanent force of casuals, renewing their contracts every 3 months. Some of us had warned when the agreement was signed that it would be the thin end of the wedge.

The union demanded that, as stated in the agreement, the casuals be laid off. When management refused, the section members walked out. What followed was a classic instance of 'black hole strategy'. This is a technique used by management to try to draw as many postal workers into a dispute as possible in the hope that pressure will be brought on the union to call it off.

In this case drivers from outside offices were ordered to cross picket lines to collect mail from the sorting office. When they refused they were suspended and their office walked out in support. In delivery offices such as my own, UCW members were being instructed to cross picket lines to do the work of strikers, even after an agreement had been reached between the union negotiating team and management. With very few exceptions no-one did.

In fact the support received by the strikers caused the management tactics

to backfire. The casuals will now be laid off and their duties performed by permanent staff. Also all the suspensions will be lifted and removed from records. The strikers prevented the management from trying to introduce casualisation by the back door, but they should never have been given the opportunity in the first place.

On another issue the membership have just voted by a 2 to 1 majority to give the Executive Council authority to use industrial action over the Post Office's decision to pay a supplement to new entrants in 'difficult to recruit'

areas. The supplement was part of the agreement over the shorter working week. It replaced the old bonus scheme and can range from between £7.50 to £20 a week.

The union originally wanted it paid to all new entrants but, as the Post Office wouldn't accept that, the final agreement was that no new entrants would get it. Recently, to no-one's surprise, management have found that they can't get anyone to work for them in the South East and London on the peanuts they pay us. So they've decided to break the national agreement and pay the sup-

plement to selected offices. Another payment will be dependant on good conduct and timekeeping. It seems they want to choose not only which offices but also which people get the payments.

We've got to take the Post Office on over this. Not only have they broken yet another national agreement, they're challenging the national pay structures. If they get away with this it could lead to local pay awards, with the Post Office deciding who's worth what and with the union broken up into little pieces. The Executive have got their mandate, the rank and file must make sure they use it.

## Justice for the mineworkers

On September 10 the Notts NUM and East Midlands Justice for Mineworkers Campaign are holding their annual gala and rally in Mansfield. Arthur Scargill and Dennis Skinner have been invited to speak.

For the past two years there has been an excellent turnout, and we would urge everybody to come — with their banners and their families. It is very important that both the NUM and the Justice Campaign show a strong face in the heartland of the UDM.

In Notts the fight against the UDM is still a long, slow, steady grind. But our lads are still in there, still fighting. It is not going to be an easy victory because every time the UDM gets problems the Coal Board and the government do what they can to bail them out. All we can do is to keep chipping away, and it is to the credit of our lads in Notts that they are continuing to do that despite all the odds against them.

There has always been good support for that fight from throughout the British coalfield. I have found that since



being at Manton, and I have had nothing but solidarity and friendship all down the line.

It was announced last week that the UDM were close to doing a deal with the Coal Board for 6-day working at the new Ashfordby pit. I wasn't surprised by the news. You have to remember that the UDM does not negotiate anything — they do what management tells them. But the UDM's problem is that they still have to sell it to their own membership. It won't be Lynk, Prendergast, Greatorex and co. who have to don knee-pads 6 days a week and their members might not be happy agreeing to it.

Even if they get it off the ground initially, it does not mean that the thing is fixed and final. Remember the Bevercotes agreement in the late 60s and early 70s, with the introduction of continental

shifts, broke down in practice.

And from South Wales has been the news that NUM members at Cynheidre colliery have accepted 6-day working after management threatened to close the pit unless production was significantly increased. If the news is true, I find it amazing that the men there have buckled under to blatant blackmail tactics from the Coal Board. It goes against a decision of our annual conference, the highest decision-making body in the NUM. If they are doing that it should have been firmly stamped upon by the Area leaders.

If the pit was that close to shutting I can't imagine why an extra day's production would have made a basic difference. The miners there are also likely to find that today's break-even figures become tomorrow's loss-making ones. I do not think the rank and file there should give way to the blackmail, breach conference decisions and set a deadly precedent for other miners. Letting the Coal Board get a toe-hold in the door with 6-day working is a very high price to pay — much higher than supposedly saving a single pit.

# SOCIALIST ORGANISER

## Don't stop the carnival!

By Gerry Bates

# Our challenge is political

says Eric Heffer MP

1. In this election for Leader and Deputy Leader, Tony Benn and I are standing on a joint platform. We are not concerned with personalities. It is a political alternative to that of the present leadership which we are putting forward for the future of the Labour Party, and for our country. Our objective is to work for the creation of a genuinely democratic, classless, socialist society, based on Clause IV of Labour's Constitution.

2. We want all nuclear weapons and bases removed from and around British soil. Arms expenditure in general must be cut and the money saved used to re-build the economy, the National Health Service, the Welfare State and help the low paid.

3. We want all anti-trade union legislation repealed, the rights of unions restored to those existing before Thatcher's election in 1979 and when that has been achieved new legislation introduced which will ensure that workers throughout their unions have greater rights than ever before. There should be no interference in the internal affairs of unions by the State, and therefore we do not accept that any part of the present Tory legislation is acceptable. Tony Benn has recently introduced a Bill which would carry out the above proposals.

4. If a trade union has deliberately broken the rules of the TUC and undermined the unity of the trade union movement by no-strike single union or other deals, breaking the Bridlington Agreement, it should also automatically be expelled from the Labour Party and should have no right to attend or vote at the Labour Party Conference. The Labour Party was basically formed by the trade unions in association with the ILP, Fabians and Social Democratic Federation. The basis of the Labour Party is the organised working class movement. It must remain so and the links between the unions and the Party must be strengthened.

5. All struggles of trade unionists against their employers for better wages and conditions, or in defence of jobs and employment conditions, or against privatisation as in the NHS, Local Government or Government services, must be fully supported by the Labour Party. The Party must identify itself totally with workers' struggles. Unfortunately, wholehearted support from the leadership has not been forthcoming in the past. Had that been the case, the outcome of the miners' strike, the printers' struggle and today the Seamen's P&O dispute might have been different. Tony Benn and I have given our unqualified support to the unions and workers in struggle and will continue to do so. Every trade union and trade unionist who has been fined, sacked or wrongly imprisoned as the result of the anti-trade union laws must be reimbursed, released or compensated by a



Labour Government when returned to office.

6. Unemployment has been used as a weapon to undermine the wages and conditions of workers in industry. It has badly affected the low paid, especially women workers who are too often used as cheap labour. There must be genuine equality of employment for women and we believe a new Labour Government must introduce legislation quickly which will strengthen and improve existing legislation. Inside the Labour Party, women must have the right to elect their own representatives onto the NEC. Labour must add new rights for the low paid, for women workers and must be against racial discrimination of any kind and should repeal all discriminatory legislation, such as that against gays and lesbians.

7. We are opposed to the so-called Training Schemes for the youth which amount to forms of slave labour. A Labour Government must introduce real Training Schemes, in agreement with the trade unions. Those being trained or re-trained must be given trade union rates of pay and working conditions.

8. Unemployment must be tackled. As a first step by developing public works schemes with a massive house building and renovation programme through local authorities and other public agencies. It must bring in legislation which will deal

with issues like the Lump and Self-Employment. Health and safety legislation must be strengthened and involve the oil-rigs etc. There must be an increase in the number of inspectors available. Health and safety at work, in all industries and offices, is vital and must be a priority. Labour must also carry out a massive public investment programme to rebuild manufacturing industries, ensure proper regional development and extend public ownership to the banks etc. It must take back into public ownership all those industries and services privatised, with the minimum of compensation, and in some cases, such as Giro Bank, no compensation at all.

Lastly, may I say, when working at my trade I was a senior shop steward in Cammell Lairds shipyard, NFBTO Steward on large construction sites and also on the line of docks in Liverpool, and have therefore been involved over the years in many industrial disputes and struggles. In 1960 as the Chairman of the Liverpool Trades Council and Labour Party, I was one of those designated by the Trades Council and Labour Party to mediate on behalf of the Seamen in their national strike at that time. It was at that time that I urged the seamen to remain in the NUS and fight to democratise it, which they did. I subsequently defended them in the House of Commons against the attacks on them by Harold

Wilson's Government.

I believe we need, in the leadership of the party, people with real, long-standing experience in the trade union and labour movement and with real experience in politics at all levels.

In conclusion, let me emphasise again, Tony Benn and I are standing on a clear socialist programme. We believe that such policies are the only real way to get this awful Tory Government out at the next election. That is our objective. Let us go forward unitedly to defeat this Government at the next election on the basis of bold, coherent, socialist policies, with the trade unions and the party totally united and fighting as one.

The wolves are howling for the Notting Hill Carnival to be banned. The recent rampage through the London underground by a group of kids who had just gate crashed a gig in Wormwood Scrubs, has added extra oil to the fire. Violence is too high, the critics say, and the Carnival is too risky.

Last year a 23-year old man was stabbed to death at the event.

But the idea that stopping the Carnival will reduce violence is ludicrous. In fact, it will raise temperatures. For the annual Carnival is an important date in the calendar of black people in Britain, especially black youth. To ban it is to clamp down on a major cultural event. Almost certainly, the result will be more violence.

Underlying the 'stop the carnival' is a racist theme. Black people are perceived as almost universally violent and threatening. 'Carnival safety fears over reggae rampage' declared the Daily Mail. It is covert racism, perhaps, but racism all the same.

### Riot

Calls for a ban are not new, of course. The claim that the Carnival is a violent event is longstanding. In 1976, the Notting Hill carnival saw a major riot between youth and the police, foreshadowing the riots of Summer 1981. In the press at the time, the violence was portrayed as 'the blacks' needlessly having a go at the police.

In fact the police provoked it. It was part of an escalating spiral of police repression of black people and black people's resistance.

Violence at events such as the Notting Hill Carnival cannot be understood separately from racism in our society. Those who want to ban it are the same people who excuse, justify or perpetrate racism, including the Tories and the police.

Stewarding organised by the local community is the way to stop violence at the Carnival. The police should be kept out of it. They are seen as an alien force by most people there, who only make things worse.

**The carnival must go ahead!**

## Constituency Labour Parties conference

17 September, 11am to 5pm, at the Manchester Mechanics' Institute  
Guest speaker: Eric Heffer

The initiative for this conference comes from a fringe meeting at the Chesterfield Socialist Conference called by Wallasey CLP. An organising meeting open to all CLPs will be held on Saturday 20 August, noon, at the TGWU offices, Birkenhead.  
Contact: Richard Applin, Wallasey CLP, 8 Agnes Grove, Liscard, Merseyside L44 3LP, or Lol Duffy, 051-638 1338.