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Lesley Mahmood  
Walton  
**Real Labour**  
Message to Women



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For socialist renewal!




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**CANCEL THE DEBT**

# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Unite the left!

Royal tax dodge scandal

# Sack the Queen!



# Up the Republic!

**W**e are living through an orgy of Royal-bashing such as has not been seen in Britain for more than 100 years.

The gilded young jobs of the House of Windsor and their often repulsive doings are chronicled and criticised daily by the right-wing tabloid press. The heir to the throne has long been depicted by these as a way-out weirdo, a bad father and husband, a bit of a loony leftie, and, probably, it is implied, a bad

Turn to page 2

# Labour purge planned in Sheffield

By Ruth Cockroft

At a meeting of Sheffield Central constituency held on Friday 28 June, delegates voted in favour of a proposal put forward by the executive to investigate the presence of *Socialist Organiser* in the constituency.

The right wing had prepared well for the meeting which was "packed" with delegates previously unknown and inactive. The vote to go ahead with an investigation was passed in the first five minutes of the meeting, and no-one whom this decision will affect was given notice of the resolution.

An inquiry team of four was appointed to work alongside the regional office in uncovering people who commit the terrible crime of selling the paper.

Indications are that the council leadership find the presence of *Socialist Organiser* a grave threat not only in Sheffield Central but across all the Sheffield constituencies.

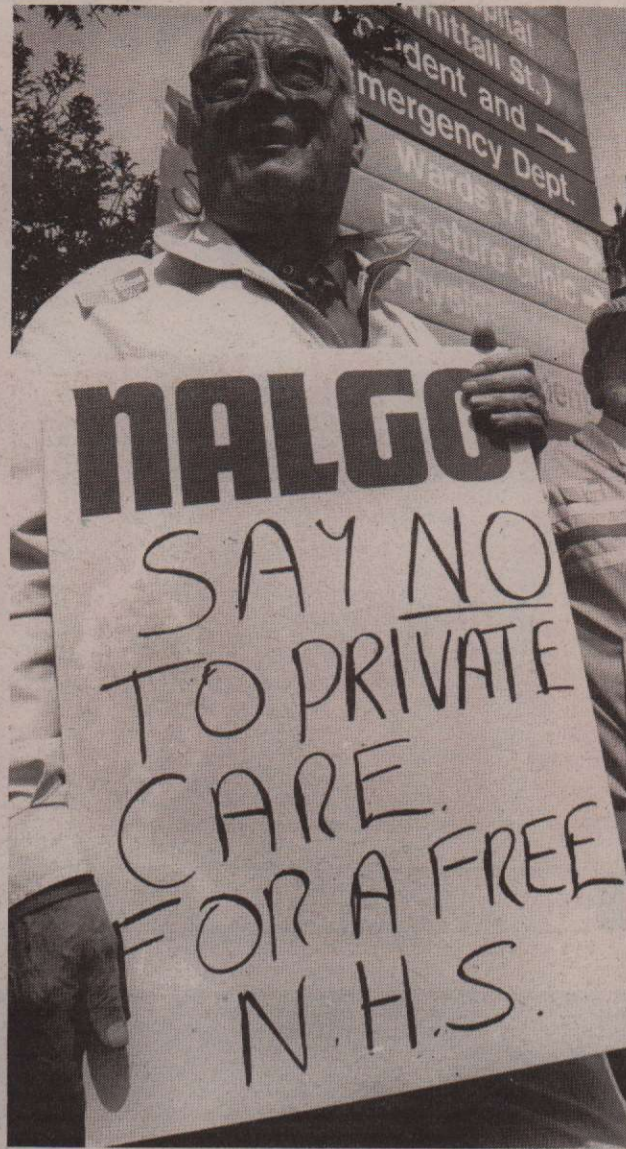
Clive Betts, leader of Sheffield Council, instigated an investigation recently into Nof Ttofias, a Sheffield Brightside Labour Party member, and *Socialist Organiser* seller.

Clearly the council leadership and prominent Sheffield MPs such as Blunkett and Richard Caborn have settled on a purge. Readers of the paper can rest assured that they won't have an easy task.

Already a Sheffield Anti-Witchhunt Campaign has been established and Sheffield Labour Party Socialists is building a campaign in defence of those threatened.

Three Manchester councillors are being investigated by the Labour Party following a visit to one of their constituents in a Liverpool jail for non-payment of the poll tax.

Because Lesley Mahmood turned up at Bridewell jail when the three Manchester councillors, Ray Boyle, John Clegg and Margaret Manning were visiting the Salford resident, they have been accused of supporting Mahmood's candidacy. Clegg and Boyle have been asked for "letters of allegiance" to Kilfoyle, despite the fact that they were known to have opposed Mahmood's candidacy.



Protesters mark the 43rd birthday of the NHS at Birmingham General Hospital. Photo: John Harris

## The lie machine



The tabloids' love-hate relationship with the IRA was renewed once again this week.

They love it when the IRA goes high profile because then they can dig into their file of grossly obscene hate headlines.

The *Daily Star* thought "Mad Dogs" most appropriate. The minor issue that neither man had even been tried was irrelevant to the *Star's* headline writer.

The *Sun* just got the details wrong. As it turns out the gun was sent to the jail by parcel post courtesy of the Post Office.

## Nationalise the banks!

The Bank of Commerce and Credit International has gone the way of America's "Savings and Loans" businesses (building societies), Michael Milken, Ivan Boesky, Asil Nadir, Ernest Saunders and the rest — the get-rich-quick people and enterprises of the '80s which have collapsed messily as credit has tightened.

The characteristic of the credit system, as Marx wrote, is "to develop the incentive of capitalist production, enrichment through exploitation of the labour of others, to the purest and most colossal form of gambling and swindling."

The 1980s were a golden

age for such business. Using links with a few oil-rich governments, the BCCI came close to breaking in to the narrow ring of big international banks.

Now the bank and many of its leading officials have been found guilty of "laundering" money from illegal drug dealing; General Noriega of Panama has been found to have had accounts at the bank's Edgware Road, London, branch; it was ordered last March to cease operations in the US because it had broken banking laws there; and now the Bank of England says that billions of pounds may have been siphoned off in fraud.

How much sleazier — if at all — than more established banks the BCCI was, we can't know. The BCCI did not have the Lords on the board which protect other banks; it

had to rely on using slightly marginal members of the Establishment, like James Callaghan in England and Jimmy Carter and Clark Clifford in the US.

The gamblers, the swindlers, and their big-name dupes gained most from the BCCI's rise, but will not lose most from its fall.

The big losers are the BCCI's workers — many of whom have lost not only their jobs, but also all their money, tied up in BCCI accounts — and some 50 thousand small businesses in Britain, mostly Asian-owned, which had banked all their cash with BCCI.

That is how capitalist credit system works — a few get rich on the roundabouts, the many get ruined and flung into poverty on the swings. The Labour Party should be calling for the taking into common ownership and under collective control of the whole banking, financial and credit system.

## Stop BNP!

For the first time in a long time the ugly face of fascism has reared its head in Peckham, South London.

The scum British National Party (BNP) are standing a candidate in the council by-election in Brunswick ward.

Their filthy election material concentrates on the usual racist muck and on attacking Lambeth councillor and local housing worker Rachel Webb for being a transsexual.

Already Labour Party canvassers have been verbally abused and a black family have had their flat broken into and smashed up.

The local labour movement and community groups have already sprung into action against the BNP.

Southwark NALGO (local government workers' union, the biggest in Southwark) have organised a number of initiatives including a mass anti-fascist rally to take place on 16 July at 6.30pm outside Harris Street Neighbourhood Office, Southampton Way, London SE5.

## Sack the Queen! Up the Republic!

From front page

future king, too.

His popular wife, the future queen, is now depicted in the tabloids as an adulteress, and more and more clearly.

"Charles and Di" are, it seems, competing with each other in a public relations war, competing for favourable publicity in the press: it is suggested that Charles is deliberately preparing the ground for a divorce.

It could not be long before the Queen herself, after 39 years on the throne, came under the critical fire. A great agitation against her for not paying her taxes has now begun.

How long can the monarchy survive? Should it survive?

Now that the subject has been broached, the Queen will eventually be forced to pay her taxes.

It is impossible to believe that the monarchy can continue as it is, without being dramatically pruned down, like the Dutch and Scandinavian monarchies.

That may be what some of the press critics are aiming for.

But why should it continue at all?

The very existence of the monarchy is an outrage to every idea of democratic equality. And it is more than that.

As Tony Benn MP has repeatedly pointed out over the last decade, the legal formulas according to which the Queen is alleged to be the source of legality and governmental authority is not just mumbo-jumbo.

The monarchy would be a monstrous source of power and strength for the right to rally around against any attempt to bring about radical change in Britain — even should there be a parliamentary majority for it.

We should get rid of the monarchy!

The labour movement should set itself the goal of winning a democratic republic. Republicanism must be one of the central ideas around which the left reconstitutes itself.

Our goal is the socialist

republic: the demand for the republic, even under capitalism, can help us convince people to fight for it.

And where does Neil Kinnock stand on the question? Where he stands on almost every question: to the right even of sections of the tabloid press!

It is demagogic Liberal MP Simon Hughes who has put down a Bill in parliament to compel the Queen to pay taxes! Kinnock's Labour Party would not have dared!

Just as Labour disgraced itself by rushing to support government compensation for the Lloyds speculators who got stung in the market, Labour — whose leaders back sending bailiffs against workers who cannot pay their poll tax — now holds back from demanding that the Queen pay taxes!

It would offend some people, you see!

If Kinnock has his way Labour will be the royalist opposition in Britain's first republican parliament!

Socialists, by contrast, will raise, now, the good old radical cry: Up the Republic!

## Support Kanta Patel

By Martin Thomas

The Campaign Group of left-wing Labour MPs has circulated its slate for the 1991 elections for the constituency section of Labour's national executive.

In addition to the established left candidates — Tony

Benn, Dennis Skinner, Diane Abbott, Alice Mahon and Ken Livingstone — it includes two new names, Jeremy Corbyn and Dave Nellist.

For the first time in many years, almost all the left groups in the Party have rejected the left MPs' slate.

Almost the whole left backs Black Sections nominee Kanta Patel in place of Nellist; a number of groups (though not Labour Party Socialists and not *Socialist Organiser*) are also seeking a fourth woman nominee in place of Corbyn.

Attempts were made to get a compromise, but the MPs refused.

In fact the MPs must have known they would never get left unity on their slate when they first chose it. For many groups on the left, like the Women's Action Committee and Black Sections, positive discrimination and representation for women and black people in the Party are central to their politics.

You can disagree with those groups about how central they make the issue — *Socialist Organiser* does disagree — but if you want left unity you have to accommodate their views. They were never going to support Nellist who, like *Militant*, rejects positive discrimination and opposes Black Sections.

*Militant's* decision to stand Lesley Mahmood against the official Labour candidate in Walton — and its announced intention to stand against Labour in future elections, such as next May's Liverpool City Council elections — puts the argument in a new light.

Nellist's supporters will argue that if we do not back

him for the National Executive then we will aid the unfolding witch-hunt on Merseyside.

In fact the opposite is true. Only by separating itself from *Militant* can the left campaign against the witch-hunt.

We should argue for the split in the Liverpool Labour Party to be mended: the right wing should stop expulsions, reinstate those already expelled, and restore the District Labour Party and the Women's Council; *Militant* and the "Broad Left" should drop all plans to stand candidates against Labour.

That programme of mending the split cannot possibly gain support in the Labour Party unless it includes the call on *Militant* to stop standing against Labour.

By its escapade in Walton — on top of many, many other things over the years — *Militant* has thoroughly, and deservedly, discredited itself with the great majority of Labour activists.

A campaign against Kinnock's purge cannot succeed if it is tied to the coat-tails of *Militant*.

*Militant*, in their own way, confirm that. They have not even tried to campaign against the purge. Nellist has carefully said not one word about the expulsions and suspensions and threats in Liverpool. What can he say in the circumstances.

To restore left unity, to save themselves from being boxed into an impossible position by *Militant's* antics, and to enable them to campaign against the purge, the left MPs should reconsider their slate, even at this late stage.

## The lessons of Walton

# Class politics, not gestures and stunts!

How much of a defeat did socialism suffer in the Walton by-election? In part, the answer depends on what you make of the *Militant* candidacy (and it was all, blatantly, *Militant*, despite the "Broad Left" name tag). If Mahmood represented socialism, then socialism did very badly.

2,613 votes is only five times the vote for the "Real Joke Candidate", Screaming Lord Sutch! And about one eighth of the Labour Party vote. It was a pretty miserable showing, and it is foolish to pretend otherwise.

Not so very long ago, the *Militant*-led Liverpool Labour Party was marching tens of thousands of people — who wanted to fight the Tories — through the streets of Liverpool. 2,613 is derisory in the circumstances.

For sure Walton was no victory for socialism. The official Labour candidate defined himself against the left, the press built it up as a contest between the Labour Party and the left.

Almost the entire left threw itself behind Mahmood, declaring her candidacy in Walton the centre of a socialist crusade against Kinnoism.

But *Militant* was not grateful: just as they pushed the independent element in the "Broad Left" aside, so they banned both the SWP and Workers' Power from canvassing for them! Least of all did those non-*Militant*'s who went to canvass for Mahmood have any reason not to know this was just a *Militant* stunt!

What we need now is not bluster and whistling in the dark: we need to throw light on this strange episode.

Peter Taaffe, secretary of the *Militant* organisation, shot himself in the foot on breakfast TV on Friday morning when he offered this explanation: "For every vote Lesley Mahmood got, there were five supporters who voted Labour because they want a Labour government".

*Militant* didn't know this before the Walton by-election?

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Thousands protest against the council's decision to privatise refuse collection.

Taaffe's figures are probably wishful thinking: many Walton socialists who voted Labour had a positive animosity to *Militant* because of its rotten record when it controlled Liverpool council. But for certain it is true that Mahmood had no chance because she did not — and could not — offer a credible alternative to the Tories.

Even if Mahmood did not have the council record of *Militant* and Hatton behind her like a long noisy string of clattering tin cans, that hard fact of political life would have made an anti-Labour socialist candidacy in Walton nothing more than a propaganda stunt. Politically clued-up socialist workers would have rejected it.

Maahmood did not, and could not, appear before the voters of Walton as a clean, fresh socialist alternative to the dirty Labour municipal wheeling and dealing.

She was the candidate of the deservedly discredited Hatton machine: a machine discredited by its Tammany Hall jobs-for-the-boys corruption; by the stone age council racism it preserved and defended; by its short-sighted deals with the Tories in 1984, when it could, instead, have taken the working class of Liverpool into a confrontation with the Tories side by side with the striking miners; and so on, and so on.

Nor did *Militant* run a socialist campaign.

In the first place, they ran a stupidly lying campaign which must have repelled and alienated many socialist voters. They pretended that Mahmood won the selection in Walton and that Kilfoyle was imposed by Kinnock, that she was the "Real Labour candidate".

After the returns were in on the night of 4 July, *Militant*'s chair of

the Broad Left, Tony Mulhearn, appeared on TV to make the idiotic claim that Peter Kilfoyle was out of line with the leadership of the Labour Party and to argue that, for that reason, Kinnock and Co. had made a mistake in supporting him!

To confuse things even more they claimed that a vote for Lesley Mahmood — against the official Labour candidate — would not only help get a Labour government but a Labour government with socialist politics.

In all these aspects of the campaign *Militant* behaved as desperate and incoherent people who didn't mind what claims they made, nor care about either truth or consistency. People notice these things. And the voters of Walton are thinking people, not fools.

And *Militant* offered no socialist politics. *Militant*'s programme in the by-election was just a set of minimal reforms.

As Mahmood's election material said:

- "Lesley is standing for
- Equal pay and a national minimum wage of £175 per week
- Return all trust hospitals to the NHS, full funding for all health needs
- A nursery place for every child
- No prosecution of poll tax non-payers, no bailiffs, for a full amnesty."

Fine, as far as it goes. But the "socialist" element in the election was a matter of an agreed description: Lesley Mahmood was, it was agreed by Lesley Mahmood, the Labour Party, the press, and by the fantasist sectarian left, the representative of the left.

More than this, the people who ran this "campaign for socialism" in Walton came

across in the mass media as people with tape recordings in their heads, instead of minds, spouting set routines, mainly in a private language made up of jargon and private points of reference.

Much of what they said was senseless, especially from a socialist point of view; most of it was gobbledygook from any point of view.

The looming general election; the desperate urge inside the labour movement to focus on getting the Tories out; *Militant*'s record — that of out-bureaucrats and displaced corrupt municipal politicians — and the combination of sectarianism and minimalist agitation with which *Militant* ran the Walton campaign all made the Walton by-election a very unfavourable set of conditions to test "socialism".

All proportions guarded, *Militant* standing on its own in a Liverpool constituency was a lot like East German Stalinists standing in Berlin.

In the circumstances, perhaps 2,613 votes was an achievement!

*Militant* fought Walton for its own narrow factional reasons and no others. From that point of view it may have made short term sense.

For the rest of the left to rally to *Militant* made no sense at all.

The SWP is not concerned with national politics, but didn't they know about *Militant*'s record in Liverpool? Or is it that they think the voters of Walton don't know?

Do they really think that the record of *Militant*'s "deformed workers' state" in Liverpool, makes Lesley Mahmood, the candidate of its now derailed municipal machine, a proper representative of socialism?

The truth is that their prime and only concern was to be able to

posture militantly and, maybe, recruit a few people from *Militant*. And so they strung themselves with *Militant* (and Workers' Power, and the WRP, etc) into a preposterous sectarian daisy chain.

If *Militant*'s "left" candidacy in the by-election has any effect on the effort of council workers to defend their jobs, then it can only be a harmful effect. That was entirely predictable.

Socialism was not tested in the Walton by-election. *Militant* was. *Militant* are the "Trotskyists" who thought in the mid-'80s that they could build their own "socialism in one city" and created a small caricature of a degenerated workers' state instead. Socialism did not fail: *Militant* did!

Walton will help the left if, as a result of this experience, the central lesson for now is learned from it: the left is the left when it engages in serious class politics; it is a sectarian irrelevance when it cuts across class politics and diverts itself to stunts and gestures.

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

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## Rank and fileism vs good blokeism

**W**ith Bill Morris newly-elected as General Secretary and the Biennial Delegate Conference taking place this week, now seems as good a time as any to take a look at the TGWU and the role of the left within it.

The official T&G Broad Left has been the majority on the union's NEC since the mid-1980s, and the union has been led by Broad Left-backed general secretaries (Jones, Evans, Todd and now Morris) for 30 years. T&G national policies still generally reflect the old Communist Party/Tribunite "mainstream" left positions: unilateralism, opposition to incomes policy and state interference in union affairs.

But what the Broad Left has never done is campaign amongst the membership for these policies. Its meetings remain "by invitation only" affairs involving a few left officials and chosen activists. The Broad Left only ever mobilises at election time and even then the basis of its campaigning tends to be that so-and-so is a "good bloke", rather than any clear political platform.

The result of this sort of approach has been that while the Broad Left has maintained its majority on the NEC and succeeded in electing Bill Morris, the union's well-organised hard right has kept control of the majority of the regions, with the (unelected) regional secretaries exercising baronial power and sabotaging national initiatives like the "Link-Up" campaign, aimed at part-time workers, women and youth.

Electing "left" leaders is all very well, but as the experience of the '70s (when "terrible twin" Jack Jones became the main architect and champion of Wilson's Social Contract) showed, you can't depend upon "good blokes" in high places — especially under a Labour government.

The T&G left now has an ideal opportunity to change its ways, to break out of the cliquey "word of mouth" tradition and become more than an election machine. The priorities should be:

- Halt the decline in union membership by making "Link-Up" a reality.
- Industrial action against attacks on jobs and conditions.
- Campaigning for a Labour government on *our* terms (yes to a national minimum wage, no to the "National Economic Assessment").
- Democratise the union's own structures, starting with a campaign to get regional secretaries elected.

The immediate threat of a right-wing takeover of the T&G is past. The challenge for the Broad Left is whether it can turn to the rank and file, campaigning for basic trade unionism (recruitment, defence of conditions, etc) as well as organising for left policies and candidates within the unions.

Bill Morris has promised a "members' charter" to promote lay member participation in union affairs. What this charter will mean in reality remains to be seen, but in principle it's a fine idea and one that the T&G left should seize on and develop. Here are some initial proposals:

- Freedom of association and rights to organise across the union's structures, for individual members, eg. the right to campaign for a candidate for election regardless of whether or not the branch supports him/her.
- Full-timers should have their own branches and full rights in them, but no vote in trade group matters and no right of involvement in industrial policy discussions.
- BDC constituencies are too large: there is no realistic chance of delegates reporting back to the members they "represent". There should be one delegate per branch (minimum) and maybe Trade Group conferences or Regional Delegate Conferences in non-BDC years.

None of these proposals are exactly earth-shattering. But they would help promote rank and file participation and transform the internal life of the T&G. The left needs to promote this kind of change — and get away from closed meetings, cliques...and "good blokeism".

### INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper



### AGAINST THE TIDE

By Sean Matgamna

**E**ven as capitalism destroys the beneficial green jungles of the earth, it creates a great spreading blue jungle all its own in its cities across the globe.

Dog eat dog, man eat man; plunder and exploitation according to the laws of the market and the rites and rights of property; and plunder and robbery outside the much-licensing and indulgent laws of legal exploitation. The blue jungle.

London is, despite everything, comparatively civilised, I suppose.

Or is it?

Two weeks ago, at one o'clock on a Monday morning, I found an elderly man on the pavement in a South London street just after he had been robbed and, it soon became clear, murdered.

Guiseppe Mellito was an Italian, a waiter, and 62 years old. The last I saw of him he was walking, with help, weakly, to an ambulance. He seemed badly shaken and shocked, seriously hurt, but "allright". In fact, and with hindsight it should have been obvious, he was badly brain damaged and bleeding internally, as well as on the outside of his face and head.

He soon fell into a coma and, after an operation, spent three days unconscious on a life support machine, and then died.

If he had not died he would have been greatly diminished by the massive and irreversible brain damage. In effect, he died, his life was over, when he was hit on the head, and his head smashed onto the pavement.

It was about 1am. I was making bedtime drinks at one end of the long corridor of a kitchen; Liz, who shares the flat, was at the other end, near the window. She speculates that the noise which attracted her attention was his head hitting the pavement.

Peering out of the window across the dark — wide — road, she saw two young men behind the wall of cars parked along the footpath across the road. One of them looked up at her and they hurried off down the hill, towards New Cross.

It was difficult to see in the dark and the pavement was hidden behind the almost continual line of cars, but she thought she saw something moving on the pavement. She called me



Guiseppe Mellito

to the window. We saw through a gap between two cars a hand waving feebly from the pavement, like a man drowning, going down. I grabbed my coat and ran across the road to him.

At first I thought he might just be drunk. Head inclined down the hill, one knee raised crookedly, hand raised up and waving, his eyes were wide open, very big, unblinking. Unseeing, I think. A dark, tarry halo framed his head on the pavement: blood in that light; it was a thick red slick in the light next morning.

I went back half way across the road and shouted up to Liz at the window to ring for an ambulance. She did and came down. I put my coat under his head.

After a while he began to move more energetically, returning to awareness. Then he began to try to raise himself, very feebly, but with a great will for it. He kept at it, and would not be still, so I helped him to his feet, and supported him the few feet to a garden wall, where he sat, palms of hands on knees. He was very "inward", self-contained, withdrawn.

He looked younger than the age I later learned was his. His head was matted with much blood, and blood streamed in rivulets down his face from his scalp. I think his face was cut, too.

I asked him if he had been attacked or fallen accidentally. He seemed unable to comprehend. He asked: "what happened?", a man seemingly waking up. He would repeat the question at intervals.

He was collecting himself, but very bewildered. Noticing his accent, I asked if he were Italian and he responded instantly with a nod and a "yes". That he could understand.

Liz found his travel pass near the blood, and he recognised it and put it in his pocket. The will to pull himself together was very strong. Now he started to try to stand. "I want to go home"; the voice was weak, undirected. He would say this, or "help me to go home" at intervals, and try to get up.

I restrained him gently, but he seemed unable to take in the information that an ambulance was coming. Or unable to reconcile himself to just waiting. He was very weak, easy to restrain.

He was shivering, so I put my blood-smearing coat around him and we held him round the shoulders to reassure him.

The police arrived after 15 minutes, the ambulance, which had to come a long way, five minutes later.

The ambulancemen immediately started to talk to him, jocularly, to get an idea of his condition, shining lights into his eyes. The police did not seem to think it was serious, and he did seem to be recovering, walking with help to the ambulance.

But I was not so sure. He seemed to be somehow "gone", deeply wounded. I've been knocked unconscious and I know the after shock feeling, when your head feels as if it is inside a bell, and words, spoken or heard, are blows; but this seemed more. Later I identified what it reminded me of: a person I nursed who was completely delirious at the end, except for odd flashes of intelligence, "gone" too...

He became unconscious, I don't know how long afterwards, and that was the end for him. The police came knocking at the door at 8 the next morning, now taking it very seriously. They have mounted a murder hunt, appealing for help. Their chances of catching them can't, I guess, be very big. I hope I'm wrong.

What is there left to say? It seems to have been an "opportunistic" mugging. Two young men, spurred by greed or deprivation, or both, living in a world where greed and self-centredness are extolled as the great virtues, and ostentatiously rewarded, casually

stamped out an old man on the street where he happened to meet them, for the money they hoped he had in his pockets.

The police think the killers may not even know he is dead.

Robberies and murders will most likely continue to be a part of human life even under socialism, and for the imaginable future.

People are responsible for what they do. Whatever about capitalism and Thatcherism, it was three human beings, all of them capable of empathy and suffering, and *thinking*, who met on that South London street. When the blows that destroyed one of them landed they were dealt not by capitalism, but by individual people morally responsible for their deeds.

I hope they catch the dirty little savages. I feel with people who would do serious violence to those who attack children and old people, but I am not either by temperament or conviction for cold revenge by "society". I am surprised by how much I want the police to catch them.

But when that is said, something else has to be said: social responsibility for the vast increase in robberies and crimes of violence over recent years does lie with capitalism! It is a direct product of Thatcherite politics over the last 12 years.

Thatcher and her friends deliberately set out to create a markedly more brutal red-in-tooth-and-claw form of British capitalist society.

Their hopes of reinvigorating and rejuvenating the capitalist system have been disappointed. Their only success lies in the destruction of much that reformists had won from old capitalism, and the degradation of millions of people, trapped in homelessness, unemployment, ghettos and slums.

Reformist socialists who thought they had cleared the jungle out of capitalism find that it has crept back in and engulfed much of the space they cleared. The serious socialists, by contrast, have always known that you cannot compromise with the capitalist jungle: either you destroy it completely, or else it comes back and devours you!

In this social climate of big, conspicuous consumption and small public morality, why *shouldn't* vigorous young people, shut out from what the world around them tells them are the good things of life, and often deprived of basic needs, strong-arm their way to a little bit of instant prosperity? In or out of work, nobody cares much for them: their "place" is that of the victims of exploitation, of outcasts and semi-outcasts: why should they care who suffers so that they can prosper a little?

Why should they try to be human beings in a debauchedly inhumane society? A society that defines human beings as predators and is organised by and for the big successful legal predators.

The savages at the top of society have bred a vast increase of savagery below.





Tito (right) with his chief of staff Jovanovic: Tito's legacy continues in Serbia

# Baby Blues



## WOMEN'S EYE

By Liz Millward

Two of my women friends at age 30-something have just had their first children (and very beautiful they are too).

In their own way each seems (to my eyes anyway) to be coping brilliantly with their new task. But before the babies were born, both women worked full time, in demanding jobs which provided the main income for the household.

I don't know whether either of my friends will return to work full-time, but for myself I cannot imagine not working. I know that caring for a baby is certainly work, and to judge from my friends it is rewarding work.

Even so, it is not well-paid, there are no promotions, little status and no trade union. Thanks to the division of society into small units (who will buy more goods than large units) there is, in many cases, miserable isolation.

The contrast between a people-filled and money-rewarded working life and being on your own with a baby is alarming.

AS Byatt, interviewed on Radio 4, related how being forced to give up her job to be a full-time wife and mother made an emotional cripple of her mother. The absence of intellectual stimulation left her mother bitter at missed opportunities — which bitterness was taken out on her children.

AS Byatt's mother had no choice: married women were not allowed to teach. Women of my mother's generation were allowed to work after marriage, but social pressures made many give up, and "settle down to raise a family".

Nowadays we have maternity leave — a space of time to have the baby, spend a few precious months with it, then...what? Maternity leave is badly paid (if at all) and often the money is conditional on returning to work for the same employer.

Sometimes women can go back to work part-time, or job-sharing in the same job. Frequently they find themselves taking a less attractive job in order to work part-time; sometimes doing work for which they are wildly over-qualified or over-experienced.

If these women go back to full-time work, and try to put as much effort and commitment into this area of their life as they did before, they have to pay for full-time childcare.

But women's skills and abilities do not atrophy with childbirth. If anything, most women's abilities are under-used long before the baby is born. It is the disaster and crime of capitalism that most people live and die without realising their full potential. In the case of most women the crime is compounded by the choice of children.

The resources of the world would easily allow women to have children and (if they chose) paid, interesting work. But there will have to be some rearranging first.

# Why Yugoslavs are at war

By Branka Magas

Yugoslavia is a country at war. Negotiations had been taking place over the last six months to remodel Yugoslavia without any agreement being reached. Slovenia and Croatia decided to go it alone as independent states.

On 25 June they declared themselves fully sovereign. Then the federal government stepped in, sending troops into Slovenia.

The Slovenes fought back with some successes because the Slovene population is 100% behind the government on this issue.

The Western European governments had thought that Slovenia and Croatia would quickly fall into

line. Now they became alarmed and decided to send their foreign ministers to Yugoslavia to try to get a ceasefire.

But the army has taken power. The civilian federal government is no longer in control of the military. Within the army itself, there has been a type of coup. The army is now in the hands of hardliners.

The Yugoslav Army is a multinational army in the sense that conscripts come from all over the country and its ranks reflect the population of call-up age. But the officer corps is predominantly Serb and Montenegrin.

To find the roots of the current crisis, we must look back three years to when the current Serbian leaders came to power, headed by Slobodan Milosevic.

Up to that point, all major decisions in Yugoslavia had been based on consensus between the six republics. Serbia became aggressive

and tried to change the balance of power.

It managed to swallow up the autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. It imposed its own people on Montenegro.

The other republics started talking about independence. Croatia and Slovenia moved quite quickly.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina the moves have been much slower. Macedonia has been following the footsteps of Croatia and Slovenia.

So four republics are going one way — towards the break-up of Yugoslavia, or a looser confederation — and two republics, Serbia and Montenegro, with Serbia's subjugated provinces, are trying to get a more centralised, Serbian-dominated system.

Initially the Serbian leaders used the Communist Party to impose their will on the rest of Yugoslavia. But one year ago the Yugoslav Communist Party collapsed. The

Serbian leadership have relied more and more on the army.

In March this year, there was a huge demonstration in Belgrade. Hundreds of thousands of young people came onto the streets to protest against the Serbian government. But even the opposition in Serbia is deeply nationalist.

Serbia has become more and more aggressive.

Within days of the Belgrade demonstration the federal presidency had collapsed, and the federal bodies were paralysed.

A political vacuum was created and the army stepped in.

Now Serbia is trying to use the military and its weight to impose its will on the other republics. The others are not going to accept it, and they will fight.

The army has got some problems. It has a multinational base. Its ranks may disintegrate. In Slovenia, lots of troops have surrendered or deserted — not just Slovenes, Croats and Albanians, but Serbs as well. There is no will to fight.

The soldiers in barracks were told all sorts of lies including that Yugoslavia had been invaded by Austria.

In the end I doubt that the army will be able to impose itself. Yet lots of damage can be done — loss of life, destruction of the infrastructure, and poisoning of international relations.

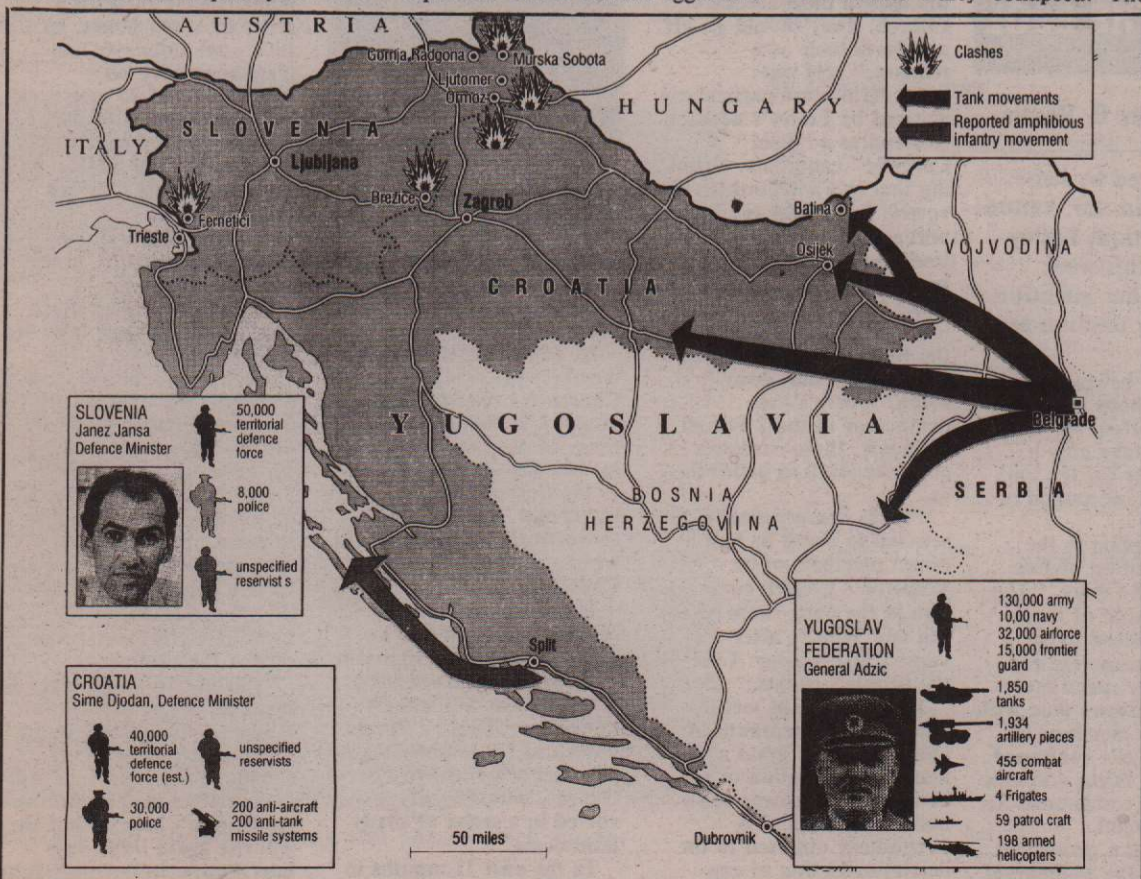
Yugoslavia is finished. The best that can be hoped for is some sort of very loose association.

There are very good reasons why the Yugoslavs should stay together in some form.

There are economic reasons. The economies of the different republics have been integrated. To disrupt that, particularly at a time of economic collapse will be very bad. Secondly, the republics are multinational and the populations are mixed.

The best outcome would be a confederation based on sovereign states. The alternative is Yugoslavia falling apart, and repeated conflict in the many places where it is difficult to see how the borders should be decided.

Branka Magas was speaking at the "Workers' Liberty '91" Summer School.



## GRAFFITI

# Those lazy, crazy, hazy days

### PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

This is the season when thunder stalks the skies and stickily tread the weary flies. Or something like that.

In other words, the Silly Season is upon us when, traditionally, "serious" news ceases and headlines like "Phew, What a Scorcher!" dominate the tabloid press.

Officially, the Silly Season doesn't start until Parliament's summer recess, when domestic political activity grinds to a halt (who cares what's going on in funny furrin parts like Yugoslavia?).

But in reality, the Silly Season (like the football season) is an ever-expanding entity — especially now that we know there is no possibility of an autumn election.

According to the *Independent on Sunday* the government's Chief Whip, Richard Ryder, has attempted to cancel the Silly Season by instructing ministers to limit overseas holidays to a fortnight and to "ensure adequate ministerial cover in their departments while they are away". The Parliamentary Labour Party has responded by scheduling an unceasing series of "announcements" and "policy launches" throughout August.

But government and opposition alike are up against almost impossible odds in

their vain efforts to keep politics on the front pages: already we've had the heaven-sent combination of soap opera, sex and murder in the form of the Bodies in the Car trial, featuring EastEnders star Sandy Ratcliff.

Now, even this made-for-tabloids story has been eclipsed by the best soap opera story of them all: The Windsors. The state of the Charles/Diana marriage has been grist to the mill of tabloid gossip columnists for years, as well as providing the storyline for *Private Eye's* long-running Mills & Boon spoof, "Heir of Sorrows".

The Windsor soap opera became "real" news last Tuesday, when the *Daily Mail* led with "Charles and Diana: Cause for Concern" — a "serious" piece for the *Mail's* smarmy gossip-columnist Nigel Dempster, suggesting that the royal marriage is really on the rocks this time, following Diana's refusal of Charles' offer to hold a big knees-up for her thirtieth birthday. The story was, apparently, fed to Dempster by "friends of Prince Charles" anxious to counter what they see as pro-Diana bias in the popular press.

Do you know anyone who gives a monkey's about Charles and Diana? I don't, but then I probably move in the wrong sort of company. Anyway, at least we know now what the real raison d'être of the royal tax-evaders is: to give the tabloids something to cover over those long, apolitical summer months.

I don't suppose many readers of *SO* also take the *Spectator* — apart from the Jeff Bernard Fan Club (founder member: J Denham).

There is, however, another compelling reason to read



Poor Di, Charles doesn't love her anymore. Who cares?

that semi-official journal of Thatcherite reaction: the Wallace Arnold column. I cannot do justice to the Arnold "angle" (dread word!) on current affairs, except to note that he was elevated the "man-in-the-pub" school of column writing to a fine art, as well as investing the exclamation mark with a whole new dimension of banal significance (!).

I can now reveal that the "Wallace Arnold" column is, in fact, what we humourists call a "spoof" and not really a bufferish, saloon-bar tirade of genuine reaction, stupidity and crass attempts at "humour" à la Keith Waterhouse, John Junor and (most recently) Bernard Ingham.

The column is, in fact, the

work of one Craig Brown, who bears no likeness to the pipe-sucking cove whose bluff portrait accompanies the *Spectator* column.

Now, "Wallace Arnold" has been "head-hunted" by the *Independent on Sunday*, where he writes "The Agreeable World of Wallace Arnold" in much the same vein as the *Spectator* column.

Meanwhile, over at the *Spectator*, "Wallace Arnold" denounces the imposter using his name at the *IoS*. I can reveal that the real Wallace Arnold (Craig Brown) is now at the *IoS*, while the *Spectator's* "Wallace Arnold" is, in fact, none other than Charles Moore, one-time Thatcherite advisor and speech writer. How the mighty are fallen (!).



Some workers are paid, literally, 'criminally' low wages

## When crime does pay

### GRAFFITI

Wage Councils cover 2.5 million British workers in industries such as catering, clothing, hairdressing, and retailing. The minimum rates of pay range between £2.33 and £2.96 an hour.

Last year 5,205 businesses were found to be undercutting those rates. Of those, only 7 were prosecuted!

You might think that's a pitiful number of prosecutions but it is an improvement on previous years.

Since 1979, when the Tories were elected, more than 100,000 firms have been found to be paying their workers below the legal minimum rate. So far there have been 67 prosecutions. Under the Tories crime does pay.

It's not surprising, given the numbers of unemployed, that the number of people living in poverty has risen dramatically under the Tories.

When Thatcher took office in 1979, less than 10% had incomes that were less than half the average once housing costs were removed. The figure is now more than double that at over 20%. 20% equals more than 10 million men, women and children.

And it is now much worse to be unemployed than in 1979. Then a married claimant received 35% of average earnings. In 1990 it was 27%.

A survey for the National Children's Home provides one example of what living on that income means.

One child in 10 under five years of age goes without food at least once a month.

For American children the chances of escaping poverty, or death, are statistically even worse.

One in five children in America (and the rates for non whites are even higher) lives below the poverty line.

The Congressional Committee on Children has found that gunshot wounds kill more teenage boys than all natural causes combined; that there is a measles epidemic in the big cities because a third of pre-school children are not immunised against common contagious

diseases; that almost 40% of kids in the big cities drop out of high school.

Since 1973 the median income of families headed by workers under 25 has fallen by a quarter, and that families with children pay relatively more tax than at any time since 1948.

One of the committee's recommendations — that health insurance should be extended to all children and pregnant mothers at public expense — has led to right wingers denouncing it as socialised medicine.

Another recommendation that has raised the right's ire is for an allowance of \$1,000 per year per child under 18 years for parents. That would bring the US into line with all other industrialised nations.

All Bush's and Reagan's rhetoric about the family is aimed at giving money and assistance to the rich and law, punishment and poverty to the majority.



US workers are fighting for decent health care

Legal and General have just released the results of their survey into the cost of running a household.

They took a "non working" mother with three children and estimated that it would cost £21,728 a year to replace her.

The estimate included paying for a part-time nanny, cook, launderer, cleaner, dishwasher, and waitress, and was based on an average 87 hour working week.

When the survey asked those women what they thought it would cost to replace them, unfortunately more than half underestimated their value at £7,800.

## A Pope on a worker's wage?

### OVER THE EDGE

By Stanley C. Raptis

Undeterred by her defeat in the Walton by-election, Lesley Mahmood this week announced her intention to stand for election as Pope.

Lesley will be standing as the Real Catholic (RC) candidate. If elected, she has promised to take only a worker's wage for the job and to stand for annual re-election.

"I am standing in the Catholic tradition of Eric Heffer", said Lesley. "The Catholic Church of today has been hijacked by a bunch of bureaucrats and bishops. They spend more time with actresses than with rank and file members of their flock," she continued.

Moderates in the Catholic Church have condemned her decision to stand. "Mahmood is a prominent supporter of the Mullahtant

sect. There is no place for Mullahs in the Catholic Church. They should go off and form their own religion," said one.

Moderates are particularly angered by Lesley's decision to stand as a "Real Catholic" candidate, claiming that this will confuse the voters. But Lesley is unrepentant: "Popes have traditionally been bureaucratically imposed by some old geezer with a long white beard. He passes the word down to a bunch of cardinals shut away in a room. Where's the democracy in that? For all we know, those cardinals could be stuffing ballot boxes.

"I was democratically selected to stand by half a dozen members of St Winifred's Church congregation in the back room of the Pig and Whistle after vespers last Sunday. I am the people's choice."

The Mullahtant sect is particularly obscurantist and bases itself upon a literal interpretation of the Scriptures. It frowns upon homosexuality and is strenuously opposed to the decriminalisation of can-



Lesley Mahmood, the 'Real Catholic' candidate for Pope

nabis and prostitution.

Its adherents have been members of the Catholic Church for over four decades, in the belief that in times of deep spiritual malaise the masses will turn to the Catholic Church for leadership. It dismisses its competitors as "sects on the fringes of the Catholic Church".

In recent years the mullahs have suffered a series of setbacks, beginning with the excommunication of prominent Mullahtant supporter "Degsy" Borgia notorious for establishing a personal army of Swiss Guards, and allegedly involved in a series of shady land deals.

In the past 12 months in

particular the heretical mullahs have suffered a series of heavy blows. In Liverpool alone, six congregations have been suspended and 25 priests excommunicated after they refused to hand over the running of local services to bureaucratically imposed priests.

Our ecclesiastical correspondent writes: "In the last couple of years the mullahs have gained much publicity from their 'Pay No Tithes' campaign. In the Church itself, though, support for their dogmas has declined. In 1984 they sold out the Diggers by doing a compromise deal with the political wing of the Church of England. Their promise to stand up for workers' rites the following year ended in a debacle. Since then the 'new realism' of the Counter-Reformation has eroded their influence.

"Mahmood's candidacy is really an act of desperation. It is a case of 'here I stand, I can do no other'. Personally, I think that she will get crucified in the election. And I don't believe that she will rise again three days later."



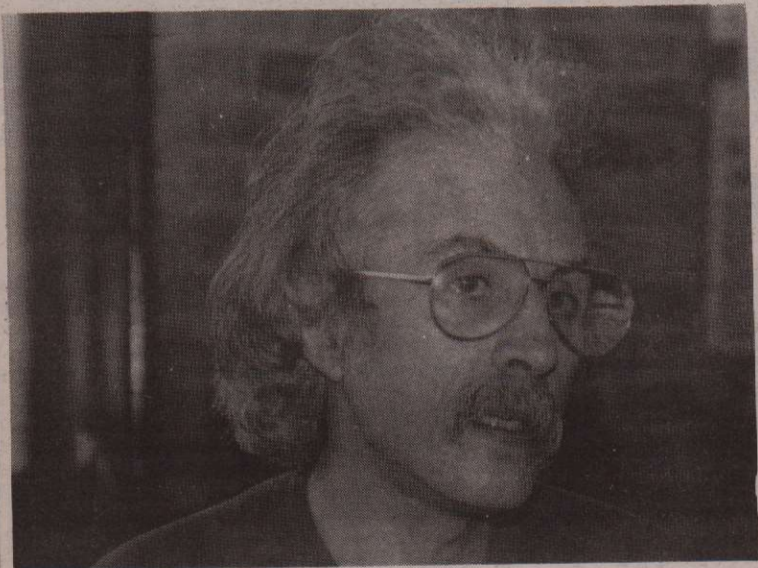
Graham Van Wyck, from the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa, posed the question: Does the new politics of negotiation in South Africa mean the mighty million-strong trade union movement is going to be tamed? Will this militant giant remain militant?



Branka Magas unravelled the origins of the descent into civil war in Yugoslavia. Each nationality must have a right to self-determination, but socialists have an interest in seeing some confederal links kept between the different republics.



Domisane Mbanjwa, from the National Union of Mineworkers of South Africa, told of how the independent trade union movement had been built up over years of struggle and of the strong traditions of shopfloor democracy and socialism within the movement.



Steve Cohen, author of *That's funny, you don't look anti-Semitic*, spoke on how anti-Jewish prejudices and assumptions have often slipped in to left wing discourse.



Richard Kuper argued that the left should back Proportional Representation

## "Alliance for Workers' Liberty" summer school

# A weekend full of ideas

By Martin Thomas

Everyone — as far as I could see — who attended the "Workers' Liberty '91" summer school in London on 28-30 June went away feeling they had learned something.

Perhaps more important, they went away wanting to learn more, by reading and taking part in struggles, campaigns and discussions, and to take what they had already learned into the labour movement.

350 people came; 14 new people decided to join the Alliance for Workers' Liberty. The biggest sessions included:

- a sparky debate on banning pornography with Avedon Carol, Liz Kelly and Steph Ward;
  - socialists and the Tories;
  - a meeting on the Walton by-election, in which speakers who had come to "intervene" from the SWP and other groups got a chance to put their argument and had it answered;
  - forums on the "New World Order";
  - the collapse of Stalinism;
  - South Africa today.
- The speakers on South Africa in-

cluded prominent left wing black trade unionists from South Africa, as well as Bob Fine, author of *Beyond Apartheid*. Adam Keller, editor of *The Other Israel* magazine in Tel Aviv; Anatoly Voronov from the Socialist Party in Moscow; and Adam Nowak from the Left Alternative in Czechoslovakia, were also among the guest speakers.

Branka Magas addressed a session on Yugoslavia, where civil war had just broken out.

Two sessions on Sunday — Peter Tatchell's "Lesbian and Gay Agenda" and Clive Bradley on "Gay Fiction" — attracted much interest from people who had been on the Lesbian and Gay Pride march the day before.

Sessions on the history of the left attracted large attendances from people interested in discovering the origins of the current divisions and confusion.

John O'Mahony spoke on "Trotzky versus Shachtman?" and on the history of the *Militant* tendency, Jim Denham on the "International Socialists" (forerunners of the SWP) in their heyday of the early '70s.

Items which were less directly "political"-with-a-capital-P also drew attention — Jim Denham on

the press barons, Terry Eagleton on Oscar Wilde, Robin Blackburn on the Black Jacobins, Ruth Cockcroft on the "politics of identity", Patrick Murphy on human nature, and others.

An "introductory course" of five sessions went through the basic ideas of anti-Stalinist socialism for beginners, and an intensive four-session course by Simon Mohun presented Marxist economics.

People who had previously attended similar events organised by the Socialist Workers' Party or *Militant* commented on the contrast: instead of rote repetition of a stereotype "line", and panicky rote denunciation of any criticism, there was genuine debate and willingness to explore ideas.

Unfortunately only one other group — *Labour Briefing* — would even go so far as to send a speaker to debate left unity (and the *Briefing* speaker, so it turned out, came mainly to try to justify his group's split from *Socialist Organiser* in 1980!). That's the state of things on the left at the present.

But this school showed that the Alliance for Workers' Liberty has both the openness for debate, and the seriousness in hammering out issues, that left unity will need.

# Walton: the

## On the doorstep in Walton

By Dale Street

What were the voters saying on the doorstep in the Walton by-election? From a left-wing point of view, nothing very encouraging.

Presaging the low turnout on polling day itself, a lot of voters had clearly had more than enough of the by-election well before 4 July. "Not another bloody leaflet," and "I've had that other mob [ie. *Militant*] round half a dozen times already," were the most frequent comments from voters.

The attempts of Mahmood to masquerade as the real Labour candidate provoked sweeping condemnations of *Militant* and left wing politics in general on the doorstep: "Why can't they just be honest and call themselves Marxists?" queried one voter. "Derek Hatton made a laughing stock of this city, and now that woman wants to do the same again," commented another.

Alan Bleasdale's *GBH* had what was presumably its desired effect upon sections of the electorate. Many Labour voters firmly believed that if they stuck up a poster for Kilfoyle, then they would have hordes of crazy Trots dancing on their roofs and hurling bricks through their windows.

Racism also reared its ugly head on the doorstep: "I'm not voting for that Paki bastard," explained one voter, whose ignorance was surpassed only by his racism.

Bins were less of an issue in the by-election than they had been in the May local elections. Few voters showed much sympathy for council workers in general, or binmen in particular.

Members of the electorate who were council workers themselves expressed a variety of responses on the doorstep. Some, though clearly

only a small minority, voted for Mahmood.

Others stuck with Labour. "I'm voting Kilfoyle — but reluctantly", as one of them put it. Some were more enthusiastic: "I'm voting Kilfoyle, and please let Harry Rimmer know that some of us council workers think he is doing a wonderful job", requested another.

Even council workers facing imminent unemployment did not necessarily turn to their self-appointed saviour, Lesley Mahmood. "How can you expect me to vote Labour? I've just been made redundant by those bastards. I'll not bother voting at all. Or, if I do, I'll vote Liberal", said one.

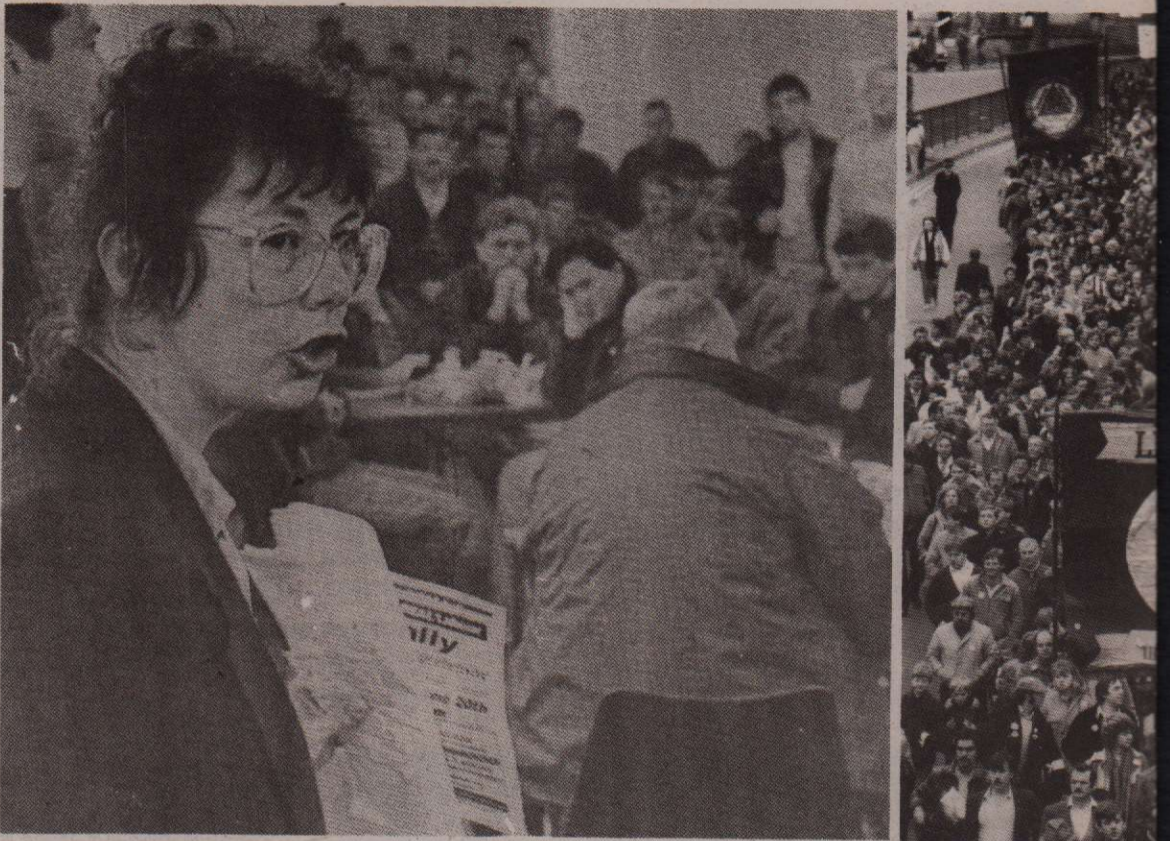
Those intending to vote Mahmood generally explained their intentions in terms of an angry dissatisfaction with Kinnock's record as Labour Party leader.

Others were voting Mahmood because they foolishly believed that *Militant* seriously fought the Tories in 1984/5, or because they thought that Lesley Mahmood had had a rough time.

Kilfoyle's personal record was frequently criticised by Mahmood voters on the doorstep. But the suggestion that if only a small proportion of those intending to vote for Mahmood had actually been members of the Labour Party, then Kilfoyle would never have been the candidate, met only a bemused response.

At the end of the day, many voters felt as if they were pawns in a far bigger game. They knew that *Militant* had bussed in hundreds of people (you don't normally get many Scottish or Cockney accents in Walton) and that Kilfoyle had other things on his mind apart from retaining a safe Labour seat.

As one of them put it: "What have we done to deserve all this? We've always voted Labour in this house, and this is the thanks we get for it."



Mahmood's (left) defeat by Kilfoyle (right) flows from *Militant's* failure of nerve during Liverpool Council's confrontation with the Tories in 1984/5.

## The Labour right: preparing the ground

By Sam Campbell

How would you feel if you were out canvassing for Labour in an election and found yourself being photographed by the Tories at every opportunity?

How would you react if you discovered that the Tories were keeping a list of every household with a Labour poster in the window?

This is what was going on in the

Walton by-election campaign. Except that it was not Tories who were spying on Labour Party supporters, but Labour Party right-wingers who were spying on Mahmood supporters.

While Labour right-wingers denounced *Militant* as Stalinists, they also showed that they themselves had borrowed a few ideas from the Eastern European police states so admired by *Militant*.

On top of the secret filing and the tracking down of Mahmood posters, there were also the "Militant Tendency Incident Report"

sheets, distributed to the real (in the non-Mahmood sense of the word) Labour right-wing hacks.

These sheets were broken up into seven columns: name (if known); CLP/Labour Party positions (if known); date, time, place, nature of incident, witnesses. At the stroke of a pen this was your chance to get someone thrown out of the Labour Party.

Ordinary party members who worked in the Labour by-election campaign wanted to get votes for Labour to ensure that Labour won. For the right-wingers it was more a

## A self-serving sectarian irrelevance

By Anne Field

In the Walton by-election *Militant* ran the campaign in support of their candidate, Lesley Mahmood, like the lying sectarians they are.

Their campaign was centred on the Big Lie that Mahmood was the real Labour candidate, democratically selected by local Labour Party members. *Militant* never actually got around to admitting that their candidate was not even a member of the Labour Party.

This was coupled with emotional exploitation of the memory of Eric Heffer. Mahmood's election material constantly suggested that anyone who had voted for Heffer should vote for Mahmood, "the only worthy successor to Eric Heffer".

In terms of its political content, Mahmood's campaign was threadbare. She was against the poll tax, against redundancies, against rent increases, for an MP on a worker's wage, and for an undefined socialism.

For someone who claimed to be "the only worthy successor to Eric Heffer" Mahmood was strangely silent on many of the major issues on which Eric Heffer had taken such a strong stand — anti-union legislation, unilateralism and, above all, the Gulf war.

Perhaps Lesley did not want to frighten away the voters (even if she was not too successful in attracting them anyway). There were certain groups of people, though, that *Militant* did not merely want to frighten away but positively banned from involvement in their campaign.

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the small left-wing grouping *Workers' Power* (WP) which both made emotional pledges of "full support" for the Mahmood candidacy, were banned from participation in the election campaign by *Militant*.

In the opening week of the campaign *Militant* generously allowed the SWP and WP to tramp the streets dishing out Mahmood's election material and publicity for her first rally.

Once the canvassing started,

however, both were given their marching orders by *Militant* (backed up by the Liverpool-wide "Broad Left" Executive Committee).

WP did at least attempt to kick up a stink about this act of rabid sectarianism on the part of *Militant*, though it did not lead them to question the wisdom of their support for the Mahmood sectarian sideshow.

The SWP, on the other hand, kept their lips sealed. So desperate were they to try to ingratiate themselves with *Militant* and their hangers-on that they crawled on their bellies and allowed *Militant* to trample all over them.

The Walton by-election showed up the SWP for what they are: an organisation with no politics, no guts, and no integrity.

Even the erstwhile allies of *Militant* in the Broad Left in Liverpool were given the cold shoulder. As the *Guardian* reported on the eve of the by-election: "Broad Left leaders outside *Militant* said they were not happy with the conduct of the campaign. Agreements over leaflets, statements, and the

Militant Tendency Incident Report - Liverpool Walton By-election							
PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS							
NAME	ADDRESS (if known)	CONSTITUENCY (Or Branch) PARTY POSITION (if Any)	INCIDENT (Canvassing, Postering, Militant, other)	DATE	TIME	LOCATION	WITNESSES

**Peter Kilfoyle means Labour**

Vote for a new Liverpool  
Vote Labour - Vote Kilfoyle

Liverpool Walton By-election  
Thursday 4 July

Published by Eileen Murfin, 254 County Road, Liverpool, L4 5PE and printed by DDP Offset Ltd., Fineprint House, Birchill Road, Kirkby.

**LESLEY MAHMOOD Means Militant**

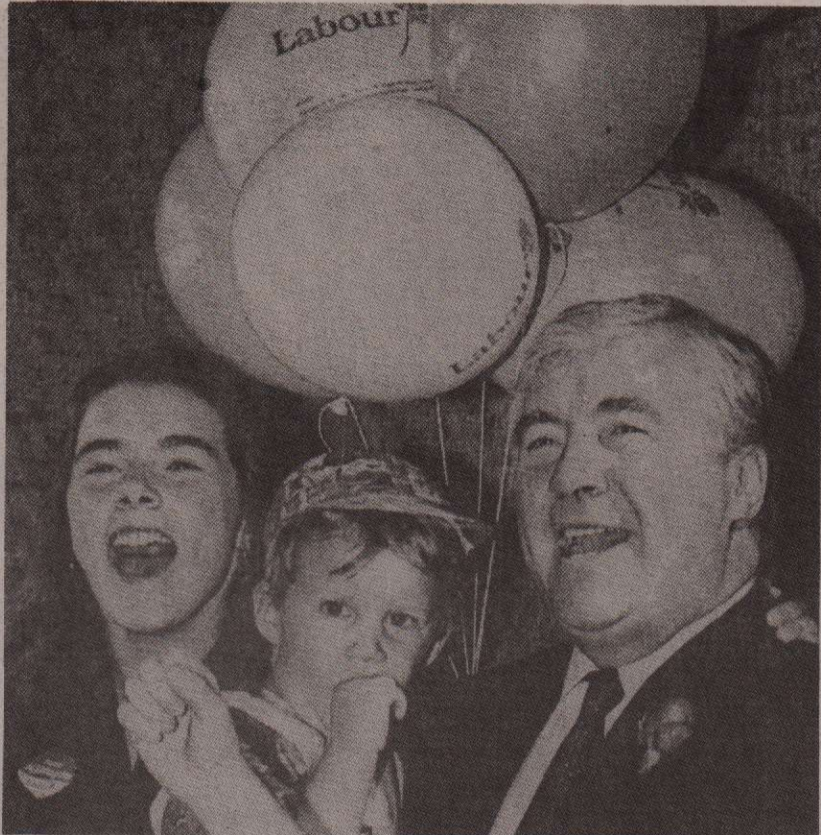
"I am fighting Neil Kinnock, not the Tories."  
(Daily Express, 11.6.85)

The words of LESLEY MAHMOOD, the Militant Tendency candidate in the Liverpool Walton by-election.

The official Labour campaign concentrated on witchhunting Mahmood rather than attacking the Tories



# truth



1984 (centre). They made a shoddy deal with the Tories and allowed the miners to fight alone.

## ground for more expulsions

case of "get Militant" than "get votes".  
If more time and energy had been spent on traditional election activities, and less time and energy spent on imitating the Man from U.N.C.L.E., then perhaps the Labour vote would not have collapsed to the extent that it did.  
Kilfoyle's election material was very colourful, very glossy, and very bland. Given Kilfoyle's own brand of politics, this was not necessarily a bad thing. When he did deign to be specific, it was generally for the purpose of praising

Harry Rimmer's record of capitulation to the Tories or doing a hatchet-job on Militant.  
No attempt was made to win over Mahmood supporters to voting Labour, and the idea that such people should be encouraged to join the Labour Party so that they could argue their politics within the Labour Party certainly never even crossed the minds of the Labour right-wingers.  
Like something out of Monthly Python's *Life of Brian*, the real enemy for the Labour right-wingers


were not the Tories or the Liberals but rather the ordinary working-class people who wanted to see a fight against the poll tax and the Tory-style policies being implemented by Labour councillors in Liverpool.  
Between them, Rimmer, Kilfoyle and Mahmood alienated such people from voting Labour. A few of them voted for Mahmood. A lot more of them, as had been the case in the May local elections, simply stayed at home.  
In a sense there were two sideshows in progress in the by-election campaign. One was Mahmood's candidacy. The other was the way in which the Labour right-wingers treated the by-election campaign itself as a sideshow — especially when opinion polls showed Labour heading for a certain victory — and were more concerned with laying the groundwork for mass expulsions.

use of by-election speakers had been broken. The swamping of the city at the weekend with Militant supporters from outside Liverpool was also under fire.  
With defeat staring them in the face, Militant resorted to their tried and trusted technique of lying. They falsely claimed that they had never really wanted to stand a candidate but merely felt a sense of obligation to go along with the non-Militant elements in the Broad Left who wanted to do so.  
But when has Militant ever felt a sense of obligation to anything other than their own sectarian factional manoeuvres?  
The result of the by-election merely confirms what was obvious from the outset: Mahmood's candidacy was nothing but a self-

serving sectarian irrelevance on the part of Militant.  
Militant and the left-wing organisations which hung onto their coat tails deserve nothing but contempt and condemnation for getting involved in such a sideshow.  
Now the by-election is out of the way, the "serious" work, from their point of view, can get underway: rooting out "the Trots".  
All the signs are that the normal expulsion procedures will be short-circuited, as happened when suspended Labour councillors formed the "Liverpool Labour Councillors" groups. Party members who were seen canvassing for Mahmood will simply be declared to have repudiated their party membership.  
The right wing will also interpret the by-election result as a vote of confidence in the policies being pursued by Rimmer on the City Council. They will do so by focusing on the paltry score of Mahmood, and ignoring the collapse of the Labour vote.

Walton REAL Labour

For a Workers' MP on a Worker's Wage



VOTE

5 LESLEY MAHMOOD X  
Walton REAL Labour

Polls open 7am - 10pm

For Socialism and a Socialist Labour Government

Stand up for Liverpool... Stand up to the Tories

Vote REAL Labour

Lesley Mahmood opposed Kilfoyle

THE TORIES are treating Liverpool people like dirt. They have allowed the city of 450,000 people to be run by a Tory government. They have allowed the city to be run by a Tory government. They have allowed the city to be run by a Tory government. They have allowed the city to be run by a Tory government.

A crazy blend of parochialism and fantasies about a Kinnock-led party providing a socialist Labour government

## Last exit from Walton

By Dale Street

March 6  
In the debate on the Liverpool City Council budget for the financial year 1991/2, Lesley Mahmood votes for a budget including a poll tax of £496 (£22 higher than that proposed by the Labour right-wing) and 50% non-filling of job vacancies

May 27  
After an illness of 18 months, Walton Labour MP Eric Heffer dies of cancer

June 3  
The funeral of Eric Heffer is held. Those attending include Peter Kilfoyle, Lesley Mahmood and Derek Hatton

June 5  
Meeting in a local pub, the Walton Broad Left agrees to stand a candidate in the forthcoming by-election. Nominations are to close at midday on June 9.

June 6  
Doris Heffer, widow of the late MP, states that she has been distressed to see her name used to suggest what Eric Heffer might or might not have wanted: "I am in mourning and do not want to be involved, or used by anyone who is standing"

June 6  
The editorial in *Militant* declares: "In Liverpool, the Broad Left and the expelled and suspended party members are the real Labour Party. They have no choice but to stand (in Walton)".

June 7  
An article on Heffer's funeral, written by Lesley Mahmood, cites an interview given by Doris Heffer to the *Observer* as evidence that Kilfoyle should be challenged in the by-election

June 7  
*Militant* spokesperson on Merseyside, Richard Venton, warns that Kilfoyle could lose Walton for Labour, and that "untold damage" could be caused in Liverpool by allowing him to stand

June 9  
Lesley Mahmood is selected to stand in the Walton by-election. There are just over 70 people at the selection meeting. Less than 50 vote for Mahmood. Mahmood declares: "We will be fighting Kinnock's yes-man and the Tories, and we will win." She says that Eric Heffer would have supported her

June 10  
"I don't think our Broad Left and Real Labour campaign will be a dirty one. We'll be sticking to the high ground, and the bread-and-butter issues", says Lesley Mahmood

June 13  
The writ for the Walton by-election is moved in Parliament. It is to be held on July 4.

June 13  
At a press conference, Mahmood describes Kilfoyle as "the bogus Labour candidate" and the "Kinnock bogus candidate", and declares herself to be the only candidate in the tradition of Eric Heffer. Her election agent criticises the decision to call the by-election so soon after Heffer's death.

June 14  
In an article in *Militant*, Mahmood claims: "Over 600 people have been expelled or suspended from the Labour Party in Liverpool... I believe we will win (in Walton)."

June 14  
Another article in *Militant* declares: "Now a genuine workers' party is in the making (in Liverpool)... The official party is withering on the vine."

June 14  
Mahmood's first election leaflet is printed. She describes herself as "the people's choice who will continue the tradition of Eric Heffer" and as "the real Labour candidate, democratically selected by Walton Labour Party members".

June 18  
A public opinion poll shows 40% intending to vote Labour, 16% Liberal Democrat, and 9% for Lesley Mahmood. 16% cite unemployment as a major issue in determining their voting intentions, but only 2% cite council redundancies. 13% cite "quoshing Militant"

June 19  
The Mahmood campaign claims that their initial canvass returns of 10,000 voters show Mahmood to be leading Kilfoyle by almost 2 to 1

June 20  
An editorial in *Militant* (entitled "Unite for Socialism") declares: "A victory for Lesley Mahmood in the Walton by-election will make history. Far from splitting the Labour vote or damaging its electoral prospects, she will push it towards the socialist politics which can guarantee a majority Labour government."

June 22  
A Mahmood election leaflet (entitled "Unity for Socialism") declares: "Walton Real Labour has the support of the majority of Labour Party members in Liverpool... Lesley Mahmood will continue to campaign in the tradition of Eric Heffer and the 47 surcharged councillors"

June 23  
The Mahmood campaign claims that canvass returns from 16,000 households show Mahmood to be leading Kilfoyle by almost 2 to 1

June 24  
The Mahmood campaign issues a warning to the media that they are in breach of the "Representation of the People Act" if they refer to Mahmood as the "Militant" candidate rather than "Real Labour". Mahmood declares that she will be readmitted to the Labour Party, as were Aneurin Bevan and Michael Foot. (They had the Labour whip withdrawn in Parliament, but were never expelled. Nor did they ever stand against Labour in an election)

June 26  
In her "Election Message to Women", Mahmood declares: "Socialist unity in Liverpool can help achieve a Labour government. In Parliament Lesley will vote with the Labour Party." Her message to women makes no mention of abortion rights or anti-lesbian discrimination

June 28  
Lesley Mahmood tells the media: "The Liberals just aren't in the contest. This is a two-horse race, and we'll see a few people singing a different tune by Monday about the result."

June 29  
Labour issues election leaflet headed "Lesley Mahmood means 'Militant'". Mahmood is defined as "the Militant Tendency candidate in the Liverpool Walton by-election." 'Militant' is described as "a cover name for a Trotskyite organisation called the Revolutionary Socialist League."

June 30  
"Walton Real Labour News" is distributed by the Mahmood campaign. According to this broadsheet: "Lesley Mahmood has been in the Labour Party for 24 years. She has the support of the vast majority of Liverpool Labour Party members. Lesley is the democratically chosen Real Labour candidate, following in the socialist traditions of Eric Heffer... Lesley Mahmood is the only real Labour candidate, the only worthy successor to Eric Heffer... A vote for Lesley is a vote for unity against the Tories, a vote for a socialist Labour government."

July 1  
The broadsheet also quotes extracts from Doris Heffer's interview with the *Observer* (see June 5-6). Mahmood tells the media: "We have been out speaking to people on their doorsteps, and we believe we are neck and neck with Peter Kilfoyle."

July 2  
A public opinion poll puts support for Labour at 41%, for the Liberals at 18%, and for Mahmood at 6%, with 24% either undecided or not prepared to state their intentions. Appearing on the "Open Eye" television programme, Mahmood declares: "Real Labour will win this election, whatever the polls may say. I am supported by the rank and file of the party. I represent Liverpool Labour policy in this city."

July 2  
Derek Hatton says that, if he had a vote in Walton, he would probably vote Tory rather than support either of the "two" Labour candidates

July 2  
According to Mahmood's campaign team, 28% of the electorate are voting for Mahmood, 30% for Labour, and 22% are undecided. An opinion poll reveals that 28% of those intending to vote for Mahmood support the expulsion of left-wingers from the Labour Party, and 20% think that the "Broad Left" councillors on the City Council are doing a bad job

July 3  
An eve-of-poll leaflet from Mahmood declares: "He (Kilfoyle) has the gall to say that Real Labour is travelling under false colours... The so-called 'Labour' Party is flying under false colours... Lesley Mahmood is the real Labour representative."

July 3  
The leaflet reproduces an article from the *Liverpool Echo*, reporting on Eric Heffer's opposition to Kilfoyle being his successor. The article is 17 months old.

July 4  
A second eve-of-poll leaflet declares: "In Parliament Lesley Mahmood would press for the implementation of real Labour policies by Labour. Lesley would be part of the conscience of the Labour Party."

July 4  
21,317 vote Labour. 2,613 (6½% of those voting) vote for Lesley "I'm-two-to-one-in-the-lead" Mahmood. Mahmood denounces Kilfoyle's victory as "not a victory, but a disgrace". Perhaps she thinks she achieved the "real" victory?

# Trotskyists organise

## Declaration of the revolutionary proletarian cells

This document is the manifesto of a small group in Leningrad. We have no further information about the group, and some of their ideas — such as that “the economic foundations of a workers’ state” still exist in the USSR — we disagree with. Yet, as a group with the basic idea of a workers’ commonwealth as the alternative both to Stalinism and to capitalism, it is very important. The document is reprinted from the US socialist magazine, *Bulletin in Defence of Marxism*.

**The working class needs a revolutionary party!**

The economy, the state, the policies of the bureaucracy and its international relations are thoroughly imbued with a social crisis that demonstrates the society’s prerevolutionary state. The main obstacle on the road to transforming this prerevolutionary situation into a revolutionary one is that the working class does not have a proletarian leadership.

Because it is outside the political arena, the proletariat is being manipulated by political forces alien to it. The experience of the strike struggle has shown that without its own political organisation, the proletariat cannot defend its economic demands. The organs of self-management and the strike committees are inundated by “bureaucratic bastards” and the working class aristocracy. This will continue to be true until the proletariat creates its own political par-

ty — a party of the revolutionary vanguard. Its aim: the conquest of power by the proletariat and the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy.

This is especially important now a part of the Stalinist bureaucracy is striving to transform itself from a section of the privileged caste into a neobourgeois class. Its perspective of capitalist restoration and deals with international imperialism threaten to liquidate the economic foundations of the workers’ state and transform the USSR into a semi-colony. This will cause tremendous hardship for the working class which, even without that, is suffering from the bureaucracy’s hands around its throat. What the “reformers” are preparing the way for is a monstrous mutant with the worst features of capitalism and all the “charms” of Stalinism.

Unless the workers unite politically, it will be impossible to effectively resist this process.

The revolutionary proletarian cells have begun a movement for the creation of a revolutionary workers party. But this movement will suffocate without mass proletarian support.

**Workers, unite in struggle!**

- Against the continued existence of the bureaucratic system!
- Against the restoration of capitalism!
- For workers’ power instead of a dictatorship of either the bourgeoisie or the bureaucracy!
- For world proletarian revolution!



Workers’ resistance — strike in Minsk

We must remember the words of Trotsky when he said that the crisis of proletarian leadership can become the crisis of humanity’s survival.

**Political crisis and the split in the ruling caste**

V.I. Lenin noted more than once: “The fundamental issue of the revolution is the issue of state power”. The same is true in reverse: the

fundamental issue of the counterrevolution is also the issue of state power.

The crisis, which has engulfed every sphere of public life, inevitably finds expression in the ruling counterrevolutionary bureaucratic clique. We are witnessing just such a crisis of those on top. The corrupt oligarchy has split into two basic camps which are fighting between themselves but are politically necessary to one another.

First, there is the camp of those who want to restore capitalism. The so-called reformers, who had earlier been loyal lackeys of the Stalinist system — Yeltsin, Afanayev, Popov, and Co. — are now singing the praises of Western capitalism and discussing ways to accelerate the imitation of capitalism’s experience and a constructive dialogue with imperialism.

The road these people offer is one that undermines the economic foundations of the workers’ state in the USSR: denationalisation of the basic means of production, privatisation of industry, restoration of private property and market relations. These measures are advantageous above all to that part of the bureaucracy which, taking advantage of its privileged position, and by means of shady manipulations, has grabbed for itself enormous wealth. It is prepared to sacrifice part of its political might for the sake of legalising its thievery. This explains its impertinent chatter about the advantages of the legalisation of private property and of market relations. This part of the bureaucracy is basically

in the service sectors and the light, textile, and food industries; but it is also in the juridical structure of officialdom where it plays the mercenary role of intellectual servant. It was the middle section of this layer that during the first years of “perestroika” constituted the noisy pack of democratic hounds who have now “grown up” to become the watchdogs over the capitalism which is being restored.

**“The restoration of capitalism is a fundamental social break, fraught with unforeseeable consequences... The fairy tales about the ‘Swedish paradise’ will mean only pauperisation for the Soviet working masses and a dictatorship of the fascist Pinochet type.”**

The bureaucrat-reformers today openly fraternise with the speculators and mafiosi, legitimising their criminal activity.

The restoration of capitalism is a fundamental social break, fraught with unforeseeable consequences. This process can be completed only by relying on extraordinary authoritarian measures and dictatorial rule. The fairy tales about



Boris Yeltsin in New York — fairy tale capitalism?

# in the USSR



Gorbachev with advisers

## Workers' struggle

**For an alliance of workers and of all who toil! Against the alliance of the oppressor bureaucrats!**

Comrade workers! The powers that be are preparing another political spectacle — the March 17 referendum — which “will decide” the fate of the union. No worker can stand by indifferently while the country is destroyed. It can only lead to a worsening of the situation of all workers independently of their nationality, language or place of residence.

The main ones responsible for the breakup of the USSR are the ruling Kremlin parasites. These shameless low-lives with their chauvinism and their oppressive policies have caused nationalities to prefer to secede from rather than to remain a part of the USSR. Many people are fighting for their independence even when it is clear to them that their national leaders — Landsbergis, Gamsakhurdia and the others — are no more democratic than those who bear the responsibility for the bloodletting in Tbilisi, Baku, Vilnius, Riga etc. The nationalist leaders want independence so they can exploit their workers without having to pay any tribute to the Kremlin. In the RSFSR itself, social forces are at work that want to dismantle the union so as to accelerate the transition to a market system. Their spokespeople — Yeltsin, Popov, Sobchak and Co. — want capitalism restored.

**Workers and toilers of the country — no matter what their nationality — must not unite with these cliques**

A second variant — to support Gorbachev — is also unacceptable. Gorbachev was the one who initiated this course towards capitalist restoration and bears enormous responsibility for the deepened crisis which the workers above all are paying.

To vote “Yes” on the referendum means to support the bureaucratic gang that for decades has plundered the toilers and intends to continue doing so. Workers must not give their approval to Gorbachev or Yeltsin or Landsbergis or Gamsakhurdia or any of these filthy politicians. Despite their differences, they are united in an antiproletarian policy: to force the workers to remain silent and work in order to safeguard and strengthen these politicians' privileges.

• Workers must not solidarise themselves with their oppressors and exploiters

• Workers must wash their hands of the political intrigues of those on top

• Boycott the referendum — that is our policy!

**What it means to be a Trotskyist in the USSR**

It means to persistently oppose the bureaucracy's privileges, the black “Volgas”, the dachas, the special stores, the luxurious hotels and the millions in bank accounts abroad. At a time when the bureaucrats have established the strictest controls over everything, including the distribution of produce, who will control the bureaucrats themselves?

To be a Trotskyist means to fight for the establishment of maximum freedom, for the removal of the passport system, for the freedom to travel and change your place of residence, either inside the country or outside it. It means fighting to abolish the political police and for the rights of nations to self-determination.

To be a Trotskyist means to oppose any attempt to dump onto the shoulders of the people — the toilers — the burden of the economic crisis brought on by the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy itself must pay for it. The resources for industrial renewal must be obtained at the expense of the special food supplies and transport of the bureaucratic apparatus, at the expense of the nationalised property controlled by the CPSU, the trade unions and the Young Communist League.

It is necessary to dismiss the entire state bureaucratic apparatus, its institutions and its ministries. The workers will carry out their decisions through democratic councils, workers' committees and trade unions freely chosen and deserving of confidence.

It is necessary to organise popular control over the large centres for the distribution of food

products and other consumer goods in order to destroy the nomenklatura with its mafia nouveau riche. The property as well as the foreign bank accounts of the nomenklatura must be confiscated. With these resources, that have been stolen from the people, economic renewal can begin.

In order to avoid decisions contrary to the interests of the workers, the workers must have veto power. The workers must make the decisions about the income of the enterprises, changes in the working conditions or wages. When it comes to economic renewal, the voice of those who labour must be decisive; and for it to be heard and respected, workers must everywhere set up their own committees.

To be a Trotskyist in the USSR means to oppose the plans to shift to a market economy because it is all being done behind the backs of the people, the plans have not been publicised, and it is not those who created the crisis who will be paying for it.

To be a Trotskyist means to oppose those who have provoked the crisis, the so-called “renewed” nomenklatura, the new privileged class that aspires to transform itself into a capitalist class, taking state property for itself.

To be a Trotskyist means to unite everyone who is fighting more or less consciously for these ideas. It means to unite with the aim of creating a revolutionary party that can be an independent organisation of toilers and in whom the people would entrust the power stolen from them by the CPSU.

It means to unite all those who are fighting within the Soviet Union with those who are fighting abroad. We cannot expect anything from those who awarded the Nobel Peace Prize to Gorbachev or those who organised the imperialist war in the Persian Gulf, or who in their own countries are organising an economic war against the workers.

In order to strengthen this unity, a new Fourth International needs to be created. Our address: 198334, Leningrad, a/ya 121.

Join the Revolutionary Proletarian Cells!

the “Swedish paradise” will mean only pauperisation for the Soviet working masses and a dictatorship of the fascist Pinochet type.

The reformers understand this. They already occupy many key posts in the state power structure. Having scored points with populist demagoguery, today they proclaim the need for military-police measures. There is no other way to describe such statements as, for example, those of the chairman of the Leningrad Soviet, Sobchak, who, after having initiated a free economic zone in Leningrad, demands special police measures be implemented throughout the country. Whose interest does this serve? He is only licking the boots of the capitalist restorationists. We, workers and communist revolutionaries, will wage an uncompromising struggle against them!

The second camp is the belated followers of the Stalinist regime, that is the section of the bureaucracy which will lose its privileged position if capitalism is restored. These criminals, whose hands are dripping with the blood of the proletariat, say they are fighting for socialism. But in fact, they want to continue parasitically feeding off the gains of the October revolution: the nationalised and planned economy. This part of the bureaucracy plays a decisive role in the army, the military, heavy industry and coal mining. The collapse of Stalinism and of the Stalinist parties has fully exposed how rotten the bureaucratic caricature of socialism is. Stalin's successors, the pillars of his system, can also save their positions only by

means of the cruellest dictatorship.

President Gorbachev, in light of this split in the ruling caste, is no longer able to manoeuvre between the two opposing camps. He is forced to come down squarely on the side of one of these two fascist cliques.

**“...the only alternative to either a bureaucratic or bourgeois dictatorship is a proletarian revolution [which will] establish workers' control — rule by democratic workers' councils.”**

We, proletarian revolutionaries, believe that the only alternative to either a bureaucratic or bourgeois dictatorship is a proletarian revolution which will sweep the bureaucratic parasites and the bourgeois nouveau riche from all spheres of public life and establish workers' control — rule by democratic workers' councils. The RPC is struggling for the creation of a party of the proletarian vanguard. We call on all revolutionary forces to join in a united workers' front against the impending danger that a dictatorship will be imposed — either pro-Stalinist or pro-bourgeois — and to radicalise our methods of struggle to establish a system of democratic workers' rule.

(Accepted by a general meeting of RPC, November 29, 1990.)



“The bureaucratic gang has plundered the toilers”

# When Paul Foot tried to think: The incredible arrogance of bogus radicals

## AS THEY WERE SAYING

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) eagerly supported Militant's little adventure in the Walton by-election. They issued an "open letter to the left", insisting that Militant's candidacy in Walton is now the main touchstone for left-wing politics: if you back Militant, then you are left; if you back the Labour Party, then you are a traitor and a scab!

Much of the early part of this year's SWP summer school ("Marxism '91") was given over to denunciations of SO for backing the Labour Party. SO is no longer socialist, but "rightwingers, no better than Tories", many speakers said. As SWP junior guru Alex Callinicos put it in a meeting on "imperialism", after an SO speaker made a point: "How can you talk about imperialism when you backed Labour in Walton?"

Now on one level this is just silly; and the SWP is mainly after recruits from Militant. The SWP long ago ceased to deal in serious politics where the British labour movement is concerned. But it does express the justified emotional disgust with Kinnockism which many people feel now.

Instead of teaching such people that the only way to defeat Kinnockism is to win the fight for socialism within the trade unions and the Labour Party, the SWP demagogically exploits their lack of knowledge of the history of the labour movement.

The SWP twins with the Kinnockites as a double act: the SWP works to persuade socialists to give up on the only existing working class political mass movement, while the Kinnockites work to force them out.

There was a time when the SWP (then called International Socialists) aspired to be serious Marxists inside the real labour movement. We print here an editorial which appeared in Socialist Worker (then called Labour Worker) in January 1966. It is a reasoned argument against the decision of Richard Gott (now editor of the Agenda page in the Guardian) to stand in the upcoming Hull by-election as a protest against the then Labour government's complicity with US action in the Vietnam war.

Going a bit over the top, it describes Gott as a "scab" for risking letting in the Tory!

The editor of the paper then was a certain Paul Foot.

"But things have changed!" No, essentially, they have not changed. If the left had been better in the '70s and '80s then things might have changed. We might be in a different situation. But we aren't. Serious people have to face that if we are ever going to change it.

Labour remains the only credible labour movement based working class party. As Walton has just demonstrated, there is no force to Labour's left which can seriously challenge it.

And, even with the millstone of Militant's record when it controlled the council around Mahmood's neck, conditions in Liverpool were more favourable to the left, probably, than conditions anywhere else in the country.

It is still necessary for socialists to work patiently in the existing labour organisations. It is just as stupid now for leftists to mistake their own state of mind for that of the broad working class; just as self-defeating to give way to impatience.

There is no way forward for the working class now except through a



Paul Foot

Labour victory over the Tories in the next general election. That is the lesson of Walton.

Those who learn it can play a useful role in organising socialists to fight for a Labour government. Those who refuse to learn from it will deserve all the words Paul Foot directed against Richard Gott.

Richard Gott has identified himself with history. "I am convinced", he told a press conference recently, "that it is right to threaten the government in order to show the world and to history that there are people in the country who are prepared to put principle before loyalty to the Labour Party."

Mr Gott's dreams these days are confined no doubt almost exclusively to the history books. Perhaps he looks forward to the day when the books will speak of that glorious by-election at Hull North in 1966, when Richard Gott, Michael Craft and Pat Arrowsmith took on the whole labour movement in Britain and reduced it to ashes.

Deprived of future historical significance by the recent refusal of the Richmond and Barnes constituency party to select him as prospective Labour candidate, Mr Gott was determined to write himself into history as an independent "Radical Alliance" candidate at Hull North.

One month he is seeking selection as a Labour candidate; the next he is threatening the Labour government. Such political meanderings are, of course, irrelevant to history. And it is with history that Mr Gott and his friends are chiefly concerned.

At the centre of Mr Gott's political philosophy is parliamentary cretinism run riot. For Mr Gott and his friends, all political argument, all decision and the rest take part either in parliament or in elections to parliament. The way, they feel, to take part in public argument and discussion is to take part in elections. The only other group in the left to hold similar parliamentary illusions is the Socialist Party of Great Britain, who, at the time of writing have not yet nominated

their candidate for Hull and history.

What Gott and his friends want is an arena, an arena where they can voice their views on Vietnam, immigration and the like, many of which correspond with Labour Worker's position over the last four years. They seriously believe that the pathetic round of canvassing, tiny public meetings and electioneering leaflets is a substitute for real argument, a short cut to a society which will behave properly on the issues they care about.

They refuse, in their arrogance, to understand that what matters is not their own consciousness, not the political understanding of a small, middle class elite, but the consciousness of the mass of working class people. Only when the workers' consciousness is geared to socialism will Mr Gott's ideals have any chance of fulfillment.

What is he doing to enhance that consciousness? Does he take an active part in his trade union? He is never seen, apparently, at branch meetings. Does he play a relevant role in his local Labour party? Is he a delegate to any trades councils or similar organisations? Of course not. What he does is to gang together with a lot of like-minded middle class radicals, and indulge in a form of radical masturbation, far away from the dreary arguments, but nevertheless the only real and relevant arguments, which are going on inside the labour movement.

No doubt the Radical Alliance would argue that all is lost in the Labour Party and trade unions. They are quite wrong. On the issues which matter most — and which, interestingly, to the Radical Alliance matter least — on the issue of wages and incomes, there are signs of profound and coherent resentment against government policies throughout the movement.

At the last Labour Party conference, only one year after the election of a Labour government, the rank and file nearly threw out the entire government policy, including its attitude to Vietnam; the constituency parties voted three to one against the Immigration White Paper.

The "loyalty" to the Labour Party is dying much quicker than in the 1945-51 government; in fact, in spite of the Labour government, there is more discussion and argument about serious issues in the labour movement now than ever before in the last five years.

If Mr Gott knows anything about the labour movement he would know that nothing irritates more than a scab. A worker may be the purest socialist on earth, but if he refuses to join a trade union he is playing the bosses' game, and his "pure socialism" will, inevitably and rightly be associated with the bosses. Similarly in the Labour Party anyone who deliberately sets out to replace a Labour MP with a Tory one, he is seen as a scab and his politics are thought of as scab politics.

## THE INCREDIBLE ARROGANCE OF RICHARD GOTT AND HIS BOGUS RADICALS

RICHARD GOTT has identified himself with history. "I am convinced", he told a press conference recently, "that it is right to threaten the government in order to show the world and to history that there are people in the country who are prepared to put principle before loyalty to the Labour Party."

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and Barnes constituency party to select him as prospective Labour candidate, Mr Gott was determined to write himself into history as an independent "Radical Alliance" candidate at Hull North. One month he is seeking selection as a Labour candidate; the next he is threatening the Labour government. Such political meanderings are, of course, irrelevant to history. And it is with history that Mr Gott and his friends are chiefly concerned.

### Labour Worker

Editor:  
Paul Foot  
6/128 Haverslock Hill  
London NW3

Business manager:  
Fred Lindop  
8 Malvern Road  
London E8

Production editor:  
Roger Protz

### Our aims

Labour Worker



The 'Cancel the Debt' campaign will not necessarily link up with workers' struggles in the Third World. (Picture: striking Mexican teachers, 1989)

# Cancel the debt! — and what then?

By Martin Thomas

On 15-17 July, the leaders of the world's 7 richest countries are meeting in London, and the Saturday before, 13th, demonstrators will demand: "Cancel the Third World Debt!" The protest assemblies at the Imperial War Museum in London.

Since Mexico defaulted on its debt payments in 1982, more and more Third World economies have been crippled by rising interest charges on money they borrowed in the 1970s, when oil-boom cash made credit easy.

Often the debt payments take up nearly all the hard currency the country can get from exports, leaving none for essential imports.

To get new loans and escape complete economic paralysis, the governments have to get approval from the International Monetary Fund, a body dominated by the US. The IMF demands — and gets — an end to government subsidies on food and transport prices, cuts in government welfare spending, and the selling-off of state industries.

No wonder that the call has come to cancel the debt. In 1985 the Labour Party conference passed a motion moved by Socialist Organiser supporter Patrick Murphy demanding more aid to the Third World and the cancellation of debts owed by the poorest countries.

If the movement built up round the weekend's protest is to continue effectively, however, it will have to tackle some illusions.

Some people see "Cancel the Debt!" as an anti-capitalist or revolutionary slogan in contrast to the traditional liberal call for "More aid to the Third World!"

It is nothing of the sort. The problem with aid to the Third World is that it goes into the hands of self-serving and often corrupt elites; it is often linked to contracts for companies from the aid-giving state; most of the money is spent on weaponry, prestige projects, or high-tech enterprises of little relevance to most people in the aid-receiving countries.

The problem with "Cancel the Debt!" is much the same. The borrowing was done by those same

elites, and the money has been spent in the same sort of way, where it has not been siphoned back out again to enable Mexican or Argentine capitalists to acquire property in the US and other rich countries.

Aid, despite everything, can enlarge the room for workers' and peasants' movements in the Third World to win improvements; so can "Cancel the Debt!" But cancelling the debt is simply a clumsy sort of aid, not some revolutionary alternative. It would bring more benefit to states like Israel, South Africa, Mexico and Argentina than to Bangladesh or Ethiopia or Mozambique.

The call to cancel the debt has a radical ring because it taps into a long tradition of populist struggles — struggles aiming to unite workers and peasants with smaller or less successful capitalists (the debtors) against the banks (the creditors). Over a hundred years ago Marx and Engels criticised this misidentification of exploitation with money-capital rather than capital in general.

What would "Cancel the Debt!" mean in practice? Simply wiping Third World loans off the books of the big American and European banks, so that many of them went bust and the world financial system collapsed?

No capitalist government would do that. If the movement to cancel the debt succeeded, it would mean the Western governments covering the losses of the banks involved. That would just be an indirect form of Western government aid to the debtor countries, with the side-effect of the big banks having the dodgy loans on their books replaced by safer government credits.

And then what? Would the debt reappear? Third World states would still want to borrow. So do we demand that the world capitalist system should be run in a non-capitalist way, without interest being charged on loans? (Some Third World countries already get some loans on easy rates, through the World Bank and other; but that is, yet again, just another form of traditional liberal aid.)

The cause of poverty and exploitation is capitalism, not lending at interest as a particular form of capitalism. Our struggle should be aimed at linking up with the new workers' movements in the Third World to overthrow capitalism.

# American soaps and society

## Television

By Belinda Weaver

**T**hirtysomething bit the dust last week, so it will be next year before we see the final series. It's been axed in the States, and deservedly so, in my opinion. I used to like it, but it got religion, and that finally finished it for me.

It's always been a very inward looking show. The characters deal with the world of decaying, often violent, Philadelphia by ignoring it. They focus on friends and family and make that their whole world, often to the point of obsession — were relationships in other US shows ever so scrutinised, so discussed?

But in this series, several characters began to feel family and success weren't enough. They wanted something more, and in two cases, Michael's and Elliot's, they turned to religion.

Oddly enough, neither choice was presented as a positive one. Michael turned back to his Jewishness when his son was born. He arranged to have the baby circumcised. This choice, opposed by nearly everyone, was a capitulation. Michael followed tradition because he felt rootless. He wanted to belong to something, no matter what.

Elliot's return to Catholicism was also a cop out, a way of coping with Nancy's cancer by shoving the burden onto a god. I felt squirmy-sick watching him mouthing Christian platitudes; he's always been the rebellious one.

It is tough getting older, feeling your body ageing and your options shrinking. But religion has no answers. It's a dead end for people who've copped out of doing something about the world, who look to some outside force to solve their problems.

Grace in *LA Law* tried some problem solving last week. She defended a young captain being court-martialled for disobeying orders during the US's invasion of Panama. The captain had refused to blow up a civilian target. Grace thought that was enough of a defence. In her world, not killing people generally gets you acquitted.

But the army's topsy-turvy. The stern-jawed officers on the bench agreed it was terrible that Panamanian civilians were killed, tut-tutted about them being shoved in garbage bags and hidden in mass graves. They even found it bad that 50,000 people were made homeless by the army's bombing of civilian neighbourhoods. But the worst offence, they all agreed, was the captain's refusing to obey an order.

There was no irony here. They really meant it. It was as if they'd never heard of Nazis and Nuremberg, and what just obeying orders can lead to. The captain got ten years hard labour.

Sound harsh? The prosecutor came to apologise and delivered the punch line that cleared things up. With 300,000 US troops massed in the Persian Gulf, the Army couldn't afford not to put the captain away for a long, long time. The Army rules, OK.

I like *LA Law*. It's the voice of liberal America. Makes a change from George Bush and the holy joes on *thirtysomething*.



A film where the workers are central, not marginal

# An "us versus them" film

## Cinema

Tony Brown

**K**en Loach's *Riff Raff* is enjoying a return season following its success at this year's Cannes Film Festival. If you missed it first time round, make sure you don't miss it this time.

It's not often that working class characters occupy all the lead roles. Usually workers are either peripheral to the main story, figures of fun or ridicule, or simply non-existent.

But *Riff Raff* is not a stern, serious, 'political' film. On the contrary, it's a very funny movie, set on a building site in 1990s London.

The film opens with Stevie, just down from Glasgow, waking up on the street and setting off for a job as a builder's labourer.

At the site office the rules are laid down by the bitter and cynical old manager. Employment means hard work, lousy conditions, no insurance and instant dismissal when he feels like it.

The men we meet have been drawn to London over the years from Glasgow, Liverpool, and Bristol by unemployment. Their's is a tenuous existence, always know-

ing that work might stop at any moment and that an accident is just around the corner. Even when Stevie meets Susie and they start to share his squat, they assure each other it's only short-term.

They are a rough lot, ready for a joke, a pint, and a game of cards, and willing to lend a hand for one of their mates. And it is a very masculine culture we enter. There is camaraderie but, as we soon see, no solidarity.

Stevie is quickly set up with a squat which lets Larry tell us that Labour in Liverpool built more houses in the mid-80s than all other local authorities. He gives a speech about homelessness and the waste

that lets sites and bricks lie idle while people live on the street. This is met by gentle rubbishing at his speechifying, but the point is taken.

The conditions they endure are terrible. Rats in the eating area, foul toilets that reduce them to urinating on the floor, and safety 'standards' that can only lead to injury.

Loach doesn't set up his characters as angels. Far from it. They are three-dimensional people. Apart from being well-meaning happy-go-lucky lads they also break their word to other workers on the site and engage in a bit of petty theft on the side. The white workers stick together, and so do the black.

The first time that we see any sign of them all thinking about standing up for their rights follows a near accident and the discovery of the rats' nest under the eating room floor.

Larry tells them they need to get UCATT down and they should all join up. He goes to the boss and gives him a list of their demands and assures them it will all be fixed up by Thursday. And so it is — Larry gets the sack.

This scene though is hard to believe. Loach is making the point that after twelve years of Thatcher, even basic trade union organisation has broken down in many areas and industries. The need to join a union and win back conditions has to be explained anew.

But the response of Larry is to accept the sack and walk off the site saying he's seen this before in Liverpool. His mates just stand by and watch him leave. They do nothing.

It's not until another bloke is sacked for using the boss's mobile phone, and a black worker actually falls through the unsealed scaffolding that some response is made. But it isn't collective action, it is an individual act of violence. It's hard not to give a cheer, but you realise that it's a futile and destructive act.

*Riff Raff* is very much an "us versus them" film, workers against the boss, Labour councils against the Tories. There is no real differentiation of Labour or left-wing politics, but the opportunity to see a film where you can identify with "us" is so rare that *Riff Raff* should not be missed.

## GBH turns upside down

### Television

By Mick Ackersley

**I**am glad *SO* resisted the impulse to denounce Alan Bleasdale's *GBH* after episode one. This included the scene where a crowd of "left wing" thugs danced on the roof of a school for emotionally-disturbed children, terrifying them.

It was characteristic of *GBH*'s vivid, poster-colour comic-book style that the frightened children had their faces painted up, Walt Disney fashion, as cute animals. The scene was deeply disturbing. As many people wrote, it would be worth a lot of votes for the Tories in an election. (And it cannot have helped Lesley Mahmood!)

But *GBH* is now revealed as being like those old Guardian TV ads where you saw a man running, seemingly to attack an old man; and then the broader picture put it in context: he was pushing him out from under falling masonry.

After 5 episodes things in *GBH* look radically different. The organisers of the 'left wing thugs' are state agents. The thugs dancing on the roof were organised by the state and paid for "by public money" to discredit the left, and, in particular, the Labour

Party.

Michael Murray, the Derek Hatton character is manipulated by them. He thinks he is being manipulated by the *Militant*-like political organisation which is run as a cover for their activities by the state agents. (The waffling Ted Grant character, "Mervin", doesn't know either).

From this viewpoint, the scene in which the state-organised and financed thugs dance on the roof of a disturbed children's school is a metaphor for their relationship with the very disturbed Michael Murray, on whose head they have been dancing all through.

I'd formed the strong opinion that lower middle-class snobbery and disdain for workers such as bin-men is an underlying key-note in *GBH*. I still think so. It overlaps with another strange aspect of a programme dealing with left-wing politics: the working class does not exist in this "Northern City" as any sort of force. Michael Murray seems to strut above a void. He is a petty, local dictator without a base.

At first it seemed that the brutal thug squad run by the agents were meant to represent the working class. Now that you see them for what they are, there is no working class movement!

Reality is a Russian Doll: outside is Murray, "inside" Murray is the *Militant* group, "inside" that the state. And who knows what revelations are yet to come?

It is a curiously Gerry Healy-WRP view of reality: all the world is a spy

novel and all the men and women in it merely dupes and "agents".

Bleasdale's Kinnockite politics, mixed with a WRP view of how things work leads to the strange conclusion that the left only exists (or is manufactured) to... discredit the Labour Party!

But, except for the thugs and a couple of cliché "salt-of-the-earth", "good-old-fashioned" Labour, slow-witted workers, there is not much of a Labour Party either!

In fact, *GBH* is full of clichés and "homages", played with, turned around, or simply used without ceremony. You notice that the — very funny — episode where Murray can't stop his hand giving Hitler salutes is straight out of Kubrick's *Dr Strangelove*; in the next episode someone refers to it as Murray's *Dr Strangelove* act... Episode 5 ended with a naked man sitting upright — straight out of Monty Python...

The cast, of course, is wonderful, the main source of the strong primary colours. They — with Bleasdale's writing — make it all very vivid: Michael Palin looks like Dan Dare, hero; Dearbhla Molloy, his wife, has a wonderfully warm and sympathetic face; Robert Lindsay can make you hate or like him on call; and Lyndsey Duncan is walking cartoon sexuality, as well as being a fine actress.

Michael Murray is catching on, and may yet prove the hero. It is not clear to me how it will all be pulled together in the remaining two episodes. But then I am not Alan Bleasdale. Keep watching!

# Sectarians call the tune

## WRITEBACK

The two left groups of the National Union of Teachers, the Socialist Campaign for a Democratic and Fighting Union (STA and CDFU) held their AGMs on the same day 150 miles apart.

Motions on the need for left unity and the importance of campaigning for Labour at the General Election were moved at both events.

The CDFU continues to regard non-union matters with suspicion and, by and large, argued that it had neither the resources nor the inclination to invest heavily in the election campaign. It continued to express unease at closer links with the STA, and rejected calls for joint membership as a way of building the left inside the union.

At the STA AGM the SWP dictated the order of the day. A motion calling for the STA to organise a campaign around the slogan "Teachers for a Labour Victory" was replaced by one which described elections as secondary to the class struggle. It went on to call for a 'Broad Left' vote in the Walton by-election and a vote for any candidate to the left of Labour at the General Election, provided they have a recognised base in the constituency.

The SWP were assisted by others who couldn't bring themselves to call for a pro-Labour campaign. After voting with the SWP before lunch, national executive member Bernard Regan seconded an emergency motion committing the STA to "campaign for a Labour victory". But as ever, Bernard underestimated the desire of the SWP to wreck any attempts at united front activity. Again they were successful with a delete-all amendment which argued support for candidates to the left of Labour.

The SWP called the tune throughout the day.

After voting against working with the Kinnockites for a

Labour victory, the AGM passed a motion seeking alliances with their political soul mates inside the union over issues like the political fund ballot. So it's to be a united front over the political fund ballot, a minor detail in the class struggle, but no united front during the election, when the prospects of the whole working class are at stake.

The STA even rejected an amendment which pointed out that on all questions of action the CDFU will be our allies against the right-wing.

These topsy-turvy politics were crowned by the spectacle of Militant voting with the SWP on the issue of the General Election. Spurred on only by the factional line, they argued half-heartedly that a vote for Mahmood was really a vote for Labour, and that the witch-hunt had forced them down this road. How campaigning against Labour in Walton will help them come back up the road God only knows.

Despite all this, things are not that gloomy. Most of the serious STA and CDFU members will campaign for Labour. Inside the union, the STA and the CDFU will still have to work together against the right-wing. A local



Socialist Worker: running away from a fight with Kinnock

associations conference called for 12 October will help this process and provide another opportunity to stress the importance of intervention in the election campaign.

The task of building the left across the country remains a central one inside the union. The left must work more closely together, and Socialist Organiser Teachers will continue to push them in

that direction. The first occasion when a united left meets, with the likes of the SWP an insignificant minority, will be the first occasion when the left's annual events will produce a genuine reverberation throughout the union and the wider labour movement.

Liam Conway  
Central Notts NUT

## Labour is not a class party

Paul McGarry (Letters, SO 490) has made a useful contribution to explaining how SO sees the Labour Party to readers.

More people buy the paper at elections. So we need to make our descriptions of the Labour Party, as a capitalist party with a workers' base, quite clear.

But I think Paul was unclear when he wrote that it is Labour's "organic trade union links that makes it a workers' party".

Labour is different from other parliamentary parties. Workers created it through their unions. But their desire for a class party hit up against the pro-capitalist

politics of the union leaders. So Labour was founded to argue a sort of mixture: for a working class government over a state and an economy still run by capitalists.

The Labour Party defends capitalism. Because a party is described by its programme it is a capitalist party; not a workers' party, not a bit of both.

For us Labour is different from other parties because most thinking workers support Labour as a way of getting a working class government. If that was still the case, our attitude towards the Labour Party would be the same even if it lost its organic links to the trade unions.

Revolutionary Marxists argue that the Labour government will act for the

bosses, not for working people. But only when workers experience that and come to support an alternative working class strategy can we end the hold of Labour's capitalist politicians.

Militant and Socialist Worker think their propaganda alone will break many workers from Labour over to "Marxism". In fact, their ultra-left stunts will isolate them from advanced workers and delay the building of a mass socialist party.

We have to fight alongside advanced workers for a Labour government and to try to turn Labour into a class party. But we must not suggest that Labour already is a class party.

Duncan Chapple  
Manchester

## Your position on Walton is a disgrace

I can agree with you fully that the politics of Militant, from the standpoint of revolutionary socialism, leave something to be desired.

For example, Richard Venton, spokesperson for Merseyside Militant, wrote a letter to the Independent during the course of which he

managed to condemn both Liverpool NALGO and the Liverpool Black Caucus. Comrade Venton may well have legitimate criticism of both organisations, but the columns of the bourgeois press hardly seems the best place to air them.

The politics of Militant, however, are not really the key issue in the Walton by-

election, as you admit yourself when noting that the decision of the Liverpool Broad Left to oppose Kilfoyle was not originated by Militant. The key issue is whether or not the left is prepared to say enough is enough to Kinnock. To stand up and say that there is a limit to the witchhunting and the pursuance of Tory policies over jobs and services.

Standing up to this kind of thing has a long pedigree for revolutionary socialists. For example, John Palmer stood in the Hull East by-election in 1966 against Wilson's policies and achieved a most respectable result under the circumstances.

The position of Socialist

Organiser on Walton is a disgrace. It seems to me that by supporting Kilfoyle you are really saying that there are no limits to your support for Kinnock. Even at a tactical level there is surely no need to call for Lesley Mahmood to be "humiliated". The hidden agenda seems to be a sexism all too reminiscent of Militant itself.

There is more to life than Parliamentary Elections and Labour winning the next Election. is not everything. More important for revolutionary socialists surely is the advancement of the class struggle. How will voting for Kilfoyle achieve this?

Charlie Murray, London

## Unclear on democracy

In a recent issue of Socialist Organiser (468) Patrick Murphy wrote an article on Tony Benn's Commonwealth of Britain Bill.

In this Patrick wrote of the emergence in a future socialist society of "new structures, new democratic bodies at every level".

What Patrick did not tell his readers is whether in his future socialist society there will be a place for a national legislature composed of representatives elected on the basis of universal suffrage and organised on a multi-party basis.

It would be helpful if Patrick could make his views clear on that simple point.

Ian McCalman, Glasgow

## Social and Green issues are inseparable



where dependencies amongst people and nature are increasingly explicit. Ecological systems, the development and use of technology, the relationship between production and consumption: these must be the concerns of everyone.

To achieve social and economic changes against the ruling class we need a political movement with the support of the majority of the population — a political movement of the majority, in fact. A movement where human solidarity and democracy and the abolition of hierarchy are fundamental principles, where ecological and genuine workers' democracy form an integral whole.

The Tories are getting concerned about congestion. Searching around for policies to raise their appeal in the run up to a general election, they have decided to reflect the wide concern about pollution, traffic jams, road danger and so on. They propose to encourage more freight and passengers onto rail.

This has wide support. Clearly, freight, particularly bulk freight like ore, coal, concrete, grain, and oil is safer being transported by rail than by increasing the allowable axle weight on heavy lorries.

And for commuters, rail is a faster means of transport than the current 7mph average speed through London roads, for example. A passenger on a train also takes up a lot less room than a passenger alone in a car taking up a lot of road space.

So is this good news? Should all workers, particularly rail workers, be celebrating this announcement by Transport Secretary Malcolm Rifkind? Sadly, no.

True to their nature, there is to be no extra spending on more efficient locomotives and rolling stock, replacement of dilapidated equipment, or new lines or sidings.

On the contrary, Rifkind's plan is to open up the railways to greater competition, whereby anyone can have access to the rail system operating their own rolling stock. They would pay only rent for the track. This is to "liberate" companies from BR's monopoly.

And, of course, it would liberate such companies also from paying union wage rates (low as they are) and union negotiated holidays and conditions of service.

This follows the Tories' whole plan for the railways carried out over the last decade, of dividing up the rail system to identify that which is profitable and to ditch, where they can, that which is left.

The Public Service Obligation grant has been cut by 25% for the last two three-year periods. Intercity is now wholly without subsidy and borrows money on the stock exchange.

This plan should be exposed for what it is, and opposed. The Tories, as ever, have deftly chosen an issue which can look good but which is merely a continuation of their usual policies.

## SCIENCE COLUMN

Consciousness about environmental questions — or rather about the environmental disaster (which is not ahead of us but present, here and now) — has grown over the past few years.

And it is clear that the deplorable state of green affairs is connected with "our" economic system.

Discovery of that fact is not enough: it still has to be taken on board and absorbed in our wider perspectives. We must explicitly acknowledge that social and green issues are inseparable. Capitalism means the exploitation of human beings and of the natural world.

The exploitation of nature leads to longlasting or even irreparable damage that capitalism ignores in favour of its own profit interest. Fundamentals of life are put at risk by nuclear power stations — Sellafield, Chernobyl, Three Mile Island — and by the storage of toxic waste and the rabid exploitation of raw materials.

The ruthless exploitation of people is becoming progressively worse, too. Physical and psychological burdens at the workplace are increasing thanks to the development of technology against the workforce.

On the occasions that workers' jobs survive the introduction of new technology it is introduced regardless of workers' positions or potential, and leads only to increased alienation. Production is concentrated not on people's needs but on those of the capitalist bosses.

So both the ecological balance and the prosperity of the people are sacrificed for economic growth and increased rates of trade and competition. Consequently the absolute contamination and devastation of the very basis of life, as well as the social and psychological reduction to misery threatens us all. Here exactly the labour and green movements must unite to combat such attacks.

We must fight to create a system dedicated not only to the needs and abilities of people now but which is dedicated also to following generations. We must produce an economic system that sustains as well as exploits natural resources; a society

**Protest against G7 Summit**  
Celebrate Third World struggle against Debt.

**Cancel the Debt**

**Saturday  
13 July**

Assemble: 12 Noon,  
Geraldine Mary  
Harmsworth Park,  
Imperial War  
Museum  
(Elephant tube)  
March to:  
Trafalgar Square  
for Rally at 2.30pm

# Where now for Liverpool council workers?

By Dale Street

Whilst the Walton by-election has been the centre of attention in Liverpool in recent weeks, the campaign by City Council workers to defend jobs has suffered a series of setbacks.

Plans by GMB workers in Liverpool crematoria and graveyards to introduce a ban on overtime were stamped upon by the GMB national leadership.

Occupations by GMB members of the security force control room in Newsham Park and of a boiler room in the council offices in Canning Street were called off after the City Council obtained an injunction from the courts.

NALGO members, including key workers in the council's capital finance section, voted in favour of selective all-out strike action, but were not called out on strike by the local union leadership.

Refuse collection workers abandoned their ban on overtime in the aftermath of the council's decision to privatise the bins service, and returned to normal working.

Appeals by nine GMB branches amongst the council workforce for ballots to be held



on all-out strike action were rejected by the GMB national executive, on the grounds that the position of other unions was "confused" and only joint action would be justified.

The *Morning Star* (Communist Party of Great Britain) leadership of NALGO in Liverpool has also turned on its own shop stewards and played a leading role in attempting to have four activist shop stewards removed from the Senior Stewards Committee in the Social Services section of NALGO.

Such climbdowns have, of course, encouraged the City

Council, especially the right-wing Labour Group led by Harry Rimmer, to step up their attacks.

The City Council meeting of 19 June voted to privatise the bins service, giving the contract to the non-union, low-pay firm Onyx UK. Although a joint vote by Liberals and expelled Labour councillors resulted in 94 compulsory redundancies being withdrawn, the other 180 compulsory redundancies remained in force.

A subsequent City Council meeting, on 26 June, instructed council officers to attempt to cut the street sweeping workforce by 25% through voluntary redun-

dancies and early retirement.

The meeting also ordered sewerage workers to work an additional four hours a week with no extra pay, or face the sack, in order to cut costs in a bid for a contract from North West Water.

In early June the City Council announced that another 1,100 jobs might be axed, if in-house bids for running services were unsuccessful. The Council also claimed that it was so poor that it could not even afford to sack the workers, as it could not afford the redundancy payments.

At the same time, the Council declared that there was no prospect of redeploying the 160 workers facing compulsory redundancy, and broke off talks with the unions, using the old favourite of "picket line intimidation" as the pretext.

National union officials rushed in to pledge that picket lines would be properly policed — by union officers — if the Council agreed to resume talks on redeployment.

Talks resumed last Monday (8 July), with the union officials promising to call off the strike action if the redundancy notices were extended for a further two months in order to allow more time for redeployment.

On the one hand, therefore, there has been a de-escalation of the action against job losses. On the other hand, Rimmer and his colleagues have stepped up their attacks. And the unions' demand is no longer "no job losses", but redeployment of those whose jobs are axed.

So much for the fanciful notion that Mahmood's candidacy in Walton was going to help the council workers.

The only way the situation can be turned around at this late stage is by:

- all-out unofficial strike action organised at rank and file level;

- Labour councillors opposed to redundancies to break the Labour whip on the issue;

- campaigning to prevent disciplinary action against Labour councillors who break the whip, and for the reinstatement of expelled Labour councillors;

- joint Labour-trade union support committees in support of council workers on strike, arguing the case against any job losses and drawing up proposals for improved council services for working class people in Liverpool.

## Late news:

On Monday 8 July GMB walked out on strike as talks between the Council and the unions broke down after the Council refused to delay compulsory redundancies in order to allow for redeployment.

GMB members were out on strike again the following day, and there was heavy picketing of 70 Council premises, with an estimated 5,000 workers involved in the strike action.

As we go to press NALGO members were meeting to discuss their next move in the dispute.

## Manchester hostels strike ends

By Raj Puri, Strike Treasurer

The Peterloo Housing Association strike ended on Wednesday 19 June, when we returned to work after nine and a half weeks on strike.

The dispute was primarily about stopping the proposed imposition of casual workers. While we did not achieve this, the strike was successful in beating off a significant number of management attacks, and succeeded in refuting their two central contentions, that a financial crisis and a cut in council funding made a deterioration in standards inevitable.

The settlement included the following:

- Agency staff as used by the City Council are to be introduced to cover shifts, but only after TOIL at an enhanced rate has been offered to Project Workers.

- Proposed cuts in our establishment from 32 to 29 Project Workers have been defeated.
- We continue to have every other weekend off, and no back

to back working.

- Our working week has been reduced from 38 to 35 hours.

As part of the strike we had a campaign in defence of homelessness provision in Manchester. As a consequence Manchester City Council met with us and contrary to our management claims, guaranteed PHA's funding for this year with no cuts.

This dispute, and any achievements, wouldn't have been possible without widespread support received across trade unions and workplaces in Manchester.

It proved beyond all doubt that many trade unionists do not accept the logic of the market and will support the fight for public services to be based on need. We aim to continue campaigning for the above, for instance, Walkden Resettlement Unit, which provides accommodation for 1300 homeless men a year, is due to be closed down next year, throwing even more homeless people at the mercy of the profiteering private landlords.

Once again, thank you for your support and encouragement.

## PO Counters Reject this offer!

"Nobody where I work is fooled by the Post Office's lump sum cash payments of £400.

"Most people are saying 'what was the strike action for?'. They know there has been no movement on basic pay. They feel let down by the executive."

That's how one Edinburgh postal officer summed up the mood in his office as UCW counters members balloted this week on management's latest offer.

The deal, which gives nothing extra on basic pay has been recommended by the union executive keen to salvage some credibility and some role for themselves as negotiators.

The deal came out of a series of secret talks over the last couple of weeks in which, it is reported, that management insist that the executive recommend the deal to its members, otherwise the offer would be withdrawn!

Counters staff should reject the deal and discuss ways of escalating the action to win a substantial pay rise which will defend living standards.

If this deal goes through then it could well give the green light to counters closures, increased use of part-time, temporary and contract workers, loss of jobs through re-grading and centralisation of clerical functions, and the introduction of new, lower pay scales.

The alternative to submission is another national strike.

## CPSA splitters

By Mick Loates, CPSA LCD

CPSA (the administrative grades Civil Service Union) is to ballot its members from 9 September as to whether to merge with NUCPS (the executive and support grades union within the Civil Service).

Two sections within CPSA, the Lord Chancellor's Department (LCD) and the Department of Employment (DE), already contain certain executive and support grades. Both of these Sections are controlled by the BL'84 faction, a grouping previously part of the Broad Left but, since splitting in 1984, now a Kinnockite movement on the Right, some of whom joined forces with the Moderates in the Section and National elections this year.

There are fears in both LCD and DE that if, against the BL'84 faction's interests, the merger falls, BL'84 will attempt to take these Sections out of CPSA, either as separate multi-grade unions or in some kind of affiliation with NUCPS.

The Broad Left in CPSA opposes the merger. Any attempt to take these Sections out of CPSA if the merger falls, is against the interests of all members. The sheer hypocrisy of BL'84, who are wholeheartedly in favour of the merger at any cost and who constantly argue the advantages of a large, merged union, suddenly wanting to retreat into small, ineffectual, tea-room associations if the merger falls is breath-taking.

All CPSA members should be encouraged to vote NO in the ballot, and should be made aware of possible attempts, upon a NO result, to split the Union taking thousands of members into an uncertain future. Members in those Sections would be facing a hostile employer, intent on job cuts and forcing through Agency status, without the backing of over 100,000 CPSA colleagues. All members should also be aware that attempts to split the Union will happen before the end of the year. With balloting finishing on 25 October, it doesn't leave much time.

## Town Halls round-up

### Manchester cuts

Manchester City Council is drawing up its latest cuts package which will mean anything from £11 million up to £16.5 million being chopped from services.

This latest series of cuts are hitting services which over recent years have been cut to the bone.

Education is due to lose from £3.5 million to £5.4 million from its budget. Social Services cuts proposals range from £3.8 million up to £5.2 million. Recreation cuts package will be in the region of £1.95 million to £2.7 million. Both Libraries and Environmental Health are facing cuts of £500,000.

The specific cuts are due to be discussed this month at committees and full council meetings.

Whether the financial cuts are as high as £16.5 million or as "low" as £11 million these cuts will represent the further unacceptable decline of council services in Manchester.

Labour Against Cuts and Poll Tax campaign has called a "No more cuts" demonstration for Saturday 13 July at 11.30am, assemble All Saints, Oxford Road.

### Manchester anti-union victimisation

Manchester City Council's campaign against Housing Department trade unions took a new turn with disciplinary proceedings against NALGO Housing Assistant Convenor Tony Dale. The "crime" was to photocopy and circulate a circular to Housing shop stewards.

The circular sent out on 19 April, called for support for two strikes — at Peterloo Housing Association and at Social Services' Ross Place and Dickenson Road.

Both strikes were the legitimate business of NALGO Housing members. One copy of the circular to each shop steward is surely not excessive use of the Council's facilities.

Housing management's interpretation of legitimate trade union use of facilities is straight out of a Tory school of anti-trade unionism.

There was widespread opposition to the disciplinary across the department and the NALGO branch demanded the dropping of the disciplinary.

Housing management realised they would have difficulty making the charges stick. On

the Friday before the disciplinary hearing set for Monday 1 July, management beat a hasty retreat, calling off the hearing and dropping the charges.

Housing management should learn from this episode and call a halt to the anti-union campaign in the Housing Department.

### Greenwich

An inquiry commissioned by Greenwich Council into last year's housing strike has accused management of "prejudice" and "flawed" procedures.

The dispute, sparked by the introduction of the poll tax, lasted for 9 months after the Council tried to victimise 9 strikers. In the end the disciplinaries were dropped.

### Hackney

Hackney housing workers walked out on strike on 26 June after management ordered body searches of staff leaving the premises.

The background to these events is the inquiry into corruption in the borough's Housing Department.

Police have been called in and threats of summary dismissals have been made. NALGO has openly condemned the corruption uncovered last month, but has opposed the intimidatory methods of the Council.

## Telecom engineers: fight for 15%

By Maria Exall, Telecom engineer, Westminster NCU

At an all-branches meeting of NCU members in London, Telecom workers reaffirmed their commitment to fight for their claim for a 15% pay increase for this year.

The present derisory offer from BT of 6.1% was dismissed as "pathetic". This offer to

NCU-represented grades — engineering and clerical workers — contrasts with the 43% award to Ian Vallance, the Chair of the BT Board.

NEC members speaking at the meeting made clear the probable results of the next pay meeting with BT — a slightly better offer, ie. an offer that falls short of any improvement to the standard of living of members.

There is anger and frustration amongst workers who know that megaprofits are being made and managers are getting their reward. However, we are being treated with contempt, and no

benefit from the money we make comes to us either in the form of better pay or improvements in the Telecom service that would benefit working people.

Management make a big fuss about "co-operation" — then require the Union to co-operate with BT for the best interests of the business. This argument is wearing a little thin when we are treated in this insulting way. It is clear not in our interests to co-operate. The NEC should lead a campaign for our claim.

It is time for the Union to call the shots — not BT management.

# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

## ICI is a wolf, too

By John Moloney

In the attempt by Hanson to buy ICI, it is understandable that the workers and unions back the chemical company.

Hanson has shown itself ruthless in breaking up companies, cutting costs, throwing people out of work. But how much better is ICI?

It is a mass exploiter, and I don't mean that in a moral sense. The way I see it as a Marxist, workers work part of the day to produce the equivalent of their wage and the rest of the day they work free for the employer. ICI like every big capitalist enterprise, is a thief on a huge scale, a stealer of the worker's time.

In 1981, ICI, along with other chemical companies was fined by the European Commission for running a cartel. In the late '70s, these chemical companies found that they were producing too much of one particular basic industrial chemical.

As good free marketeers, they clubbed together and artificially kept the prices up. The excess profits they made paid for cutting capacity and chopping thousands of jobs.

Throughout the '80s, ICI, in conjunction with other munitions and explosives manufacturers, operated another cartel which supplied explosives and fuses to both sides in the Iran/Iraq War. Sanctions-busting was a mere trifle for a company which, as ICI likes to say, is world-class.

ICI also supplied Argentina with explosive powder during the Falklands War.

Last December, ICI was fined £12 million by the European Commission for running a soda ash cartel.

During the last decade, ICI has been busy buying seed companies across the world. ICI hopes to change wheat, corn and maize seeds genetically so that they are resistant to insects, fungus and drought. They even hope that the plants will not need artificial fertiliser.

This development could transform agriculture in the Third World. Yields would increase even on poor soils with little water. Of course, ICI is not doing it to help the starving masses, but to gain a world seed monopoly — so that it can change world monopoly prices!

The fight between Hanson and ICI is not a fight between a bad capitalist and a good one. Both are bad. All capitalists are bad.

ICI is held up as a paragon of capitalist virtue. If it is, then it only goes to show how bad everybody else must be.

The unions are right to fight Hanson, to protect jobs, but their fight shouldn't be against one wolf. It should be against all wolves, ICI included.

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A tank commander of the Yugoslav federal army holds his head in shock after Slovene ambush

By Tony Brown

Yugoslavia today resembles Humpty-Dumpty. All the army's tanks and all the army's men won't put the country back together again.

Tito's 'socialist' federation established after the Second World War now looks like breaking into two or three pieces. It is most likely that Slovenia will become Europe's newest state and that the battle for Croatia will be fierce and ferocious. Already villages in eastern Croatia, where there are large concentrations of Serbs, are waging battles across fields and streets.

The collective political leadership established by Tito to succeed him, has been pushed aside by the Stalinist (and essentially Serbian) leadership of the Army. In reality the system of a revolving Presidency and balanced representation from each of the republics and autonomous regions reflected the weight of the competing nationalisms of the Balkans.

From its inception Yugoslavia was a manufactured state with an uneasy alliance of, at times, hostile national groupings. It was thrown together at the end of the First World War, after the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian empire.

Yugoslavia came into being in 1918 but it was not called Yugoslavia until 1929. In 1941, the Nazis invaded Yugoslavia and were eventually defeated by Tito's partisans in 1945.

Later that year, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia formed the new 'federation of socialist republics'.

But the federation was always a precarious one held together by Tito's reputation and cult status (he was made President for life in 1974). Four constitutions were made between 1945 and 1974 in order to keep the country together.

Croatia and Slovenia, the former parts of the Austro-Hungarian empire, and the most westernised parts of the country, made repeated claims that they were subsidising the poorer southern republics.

When they declared their independence on 25 June this year, this was still foremost in their given reasons for leaving the state.

In fact the motor-force for

# Yugoslavia: poisoned by nationalism

disruption was the upsurge of Serbian nationalism with its increasingly violent rhetoric in the mouth of Slobodan Milosevic. Milosevic aims to create a greater Serbia which would annex parts of eastern Croatia and Kosovo in the south. Kosovo was the scene of fighting two years ago.

The early successes of Slovenia's militias and the desertion of troops from the federal army has demonstrated that the army is not reliable for putting down the secessionists. Now the fighting appears to be concentrating on Croatia where Serbs living there fear the consequences if Croatia secedes.

The problem of how different peoples can coexist together, which is destroying Yugoslavia now is, of course, not only a Yugoslav problem. There are similar problems all over the globe. Yugoslavia, however, can be held up as a test-tube example of what the 'national question' is.

The Croats, part of the defeated Austro-Hungarian empire, came under the sway of a state dominated by Serbs who were amongst the victors in World War One. They were

oppressed.

In World War Two, the Germans set up a Croatian state. Within this there was a Serbian minority over a million strong. The Croat fascist-nationalists oppressed them, forced them to convert to Catholicism from the Greek Orthodox Church, killing half of the entire Serbian population.

They were oppressed peoples, and they quickly became themselves oppressors. National egotism demands that national territorial claims and national identity be asserted alike against both strong oppressors and weaker minorities within the claimed territories.

The presently much-abused Russian Bolsheviks addressed this problem — endemic to the Russian territories as to Eastern Europe — almost 80 years ago, and their conclusions provide the best programme yet for resolving general difficult national questions.

In 1913, the Bolshevik Central Committee declared that national peace was only possible "under a consistently and thoroughly democratic republican system of government... the constitution of

which contains a fundamental law that prohibits any privileges whatsoever to any one nation and any encroachment whatsoever upon the rights of a national minority.

This particularly calls for wide regional autonomy and fully democratic local government, with the boundaries of the self-governing and autonomous regions determined by the local inhabitants themselves on the basis of their economic and social conditions, national make-up of the population etc." Where there is national and communal conflict, this is the only basis for peaceful co-existence — it is the only programme around which the workers of all the ethnic groups can unite across the old national antagonisms and despite them.

That this hasn't happened in Yugoslavia only serves to demonstrate that a time-bomb lies ticking away wherever one national grouping oppresses another.

There can be no positive outcome, no genuine move to socialism while worker fights worker on the basis of placing one national grouping's rights above another's.