

Drive out the Tories!

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Unite the left!

Support the miners
**TUC: call a
day of action!**

Lobby the TUC! Wednesday
25 November, Mansion House,
Doncaster, 9am onwards

TORY CUTS

ARE

CRAZY!

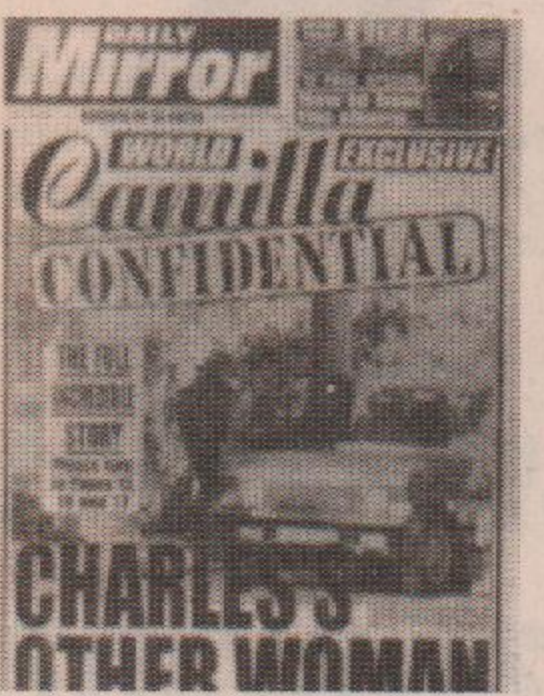
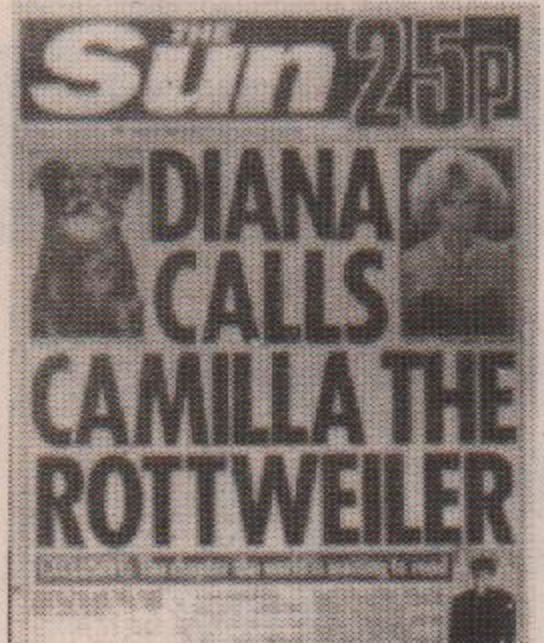
As we go to press, the Tory government is about to announce plans for drastic cuts in services, welfare benefits, and public sector workers' real wages.

Yet the government is more and more discredited. After a series of fiascos and U-turns, it is now revealed to have been helping build up Saddam Hussein's military machine while lyingly pretending that it was enforcing an embargo.

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The lie machine



Tories exposed as liars and death-merchants

The Mail and the Express led on a genuine scandal.

Former Tory minister, Alan Clark, has revealed in court that the Government secretly approved exports to Iraq for military production in defiance of an official ban. Four ministers — Heseltine, Kenneth Clarke, Rifkind and Garel-Jones — signed documents trying to keep the secret, but Alan Clark's revelation, and a judge's court order as the trial of Matrix Churchill businessmen for illegal exports collapsed, blew the whistle.

The Tory Government stands indicted for helping to build up Saddam Hussein's military machine and lying about it.

The other Tory tabloids — and the Labour-supporting Mirror, too — sidelined the real scandal. Instead, they went in for more royal tittle-tattle, and the Sun launched another chauvinist campaign, urging readers to boycott France and French goods.

Will there be a trade war?

The US has imposed punitive tariffs on various EC goods, to take effect from 6 December. This is the latest step in years of rivalry between the US and the EC over agricultural exports.

The US and the EC are by far the world's biggest agricultural producers and exporters. In a world where hundreds of millions of people do not get enough to eat, that should be a boon, not a problem. Under capitalism, however, it is a big problem.

The people who do not

get enough to eat also do not have enough money to buy the food produced by the highly productive farms of America and Europe. At the same time, the production of those farms is artificially boosted by state subsidies. So capitalism produces both chronic starvation and chronic overproduction of food, side by side.

Governments subsidise agriculture partly for political reasons — in countries like France, particularly, farmers are a big and restless constituency for right-wing parties. There are also

economic reasons.

Many manufacturing industries can adjust production relatively quickly and easily to the ups and downs of market demand. Agriculture is more like coal-mining. It involves long production cycles, and many long-term decisions.

Pure free-market economics would ruin many small producers every time there is a downturn — and that, indeed, is what happens in many areas in the Third World.

The US's and the EC's agricultural subsidies keep

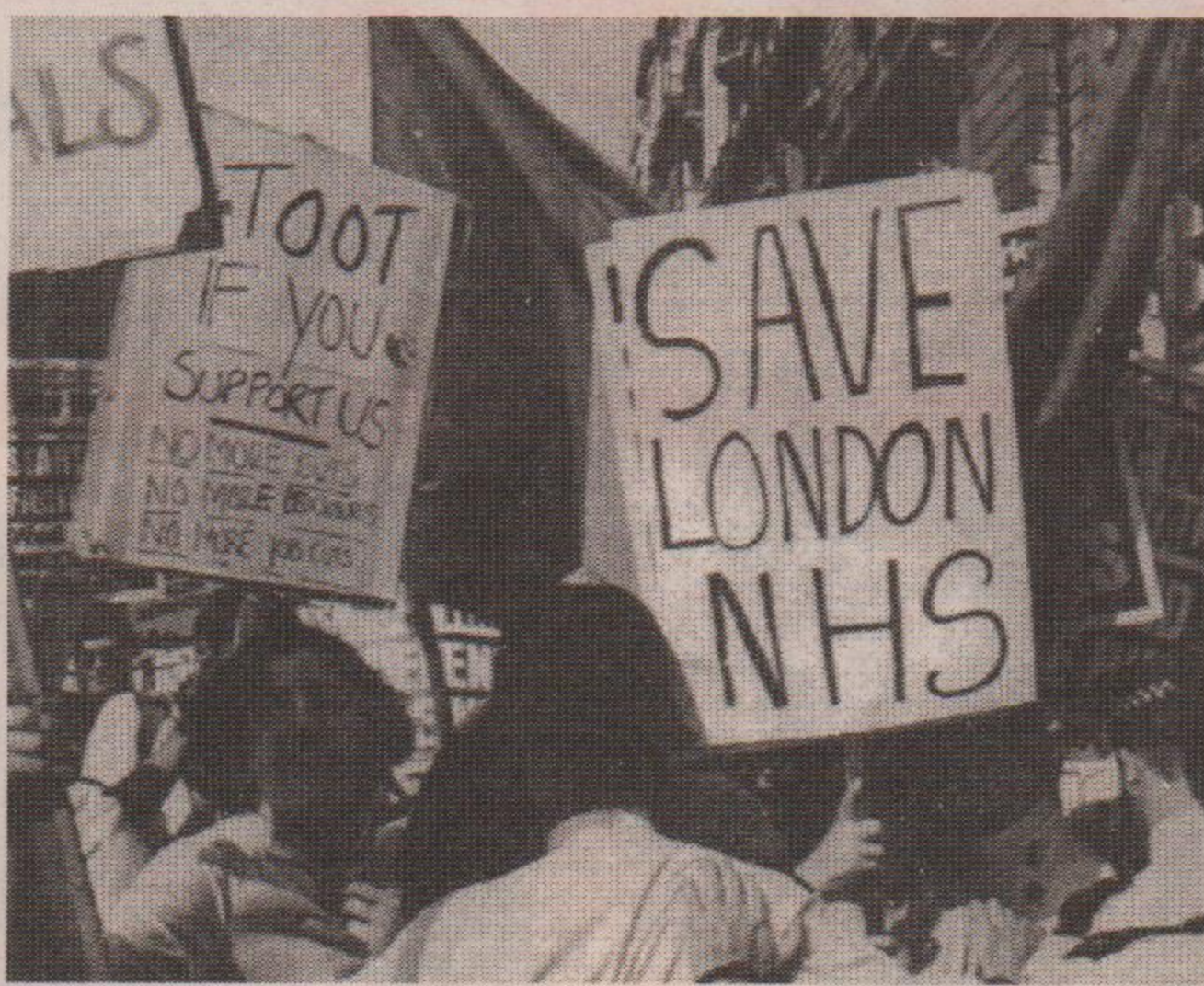
small farmers in business, but also guarantee huge profits for big farmers, and regular overproduction. Then the US and the EC fight each other for markets for the overproduction, and each quarrels about the other's subsidies.

The latest confrontation — over EC subsidies for rapeseed — is connected with the six-year-long "Uruguay round" of world trade talks. It could destroy the whole delicate balance of years of negotiations to reduce tariffs and import controls around the world, and send the world

spiralling down into a frenzy of beggar-your-neighbour.

Both the US and the EC have a strong interest in avoiding that catastrophe, which should be much more compelling than anything to do with the rapeseed controversy. Each of them, however, also has an interest in using the threat of catastrophe as a lever to force concessions out of the other. Such is the competitive, cut-throat logic of capitalism that they just could carry their game of "chicken" to the point of mutual destruction.

Health workers against the Tories



A protest vigil is planned for Tuesday 17 November to be held in Trafalgar Square.

The protest is aimed against the Tomlinson report which, if implemented, will result in the closure of 7 hospitals, the loss of 20,000 jobs, and 200,000 patients a year losing out on treatment.

Join the protest! Help build the campaign!

Tory "plan for growth" is sham

The Tories' new "strategy" is to cut interest rates and to maintain (rather than cut) public-sector capital spending.

It is unlikely to bring growth. The USA now has very low interest rates — around 3% — and its industry remains stagnant. However low interest rates may be, capitalists will not invest and expand unless they see new and profitable markets.

Market demand in Britain looks like remaining depressed. More people are losing their jobs, and the Tories plan to cut real wages and hold down welfare benefits.

Export markets hold out

little hope. The EC and the US are depressed, and unlikely to revive soon.

The one certain result of reduced interest rates is a reduced value of the pound relative to the deutschmark, the franc, and other currencies. A reduced value for the pound means that imports become more expensive, and prices go up.

Theoretically, the reduced value of the pound should reduce Britain's balance of payments deficit, by reducing imports and increasing exports. In the short term, however, it has the opposite effect: imports are not reduced instantly, but they are more expensive, so the balance of payments deficit increases.

That short term may be quite long. The prospects for British exports are poor. Many imported items are now not produced in Britain, so will still be imported even if they are more expensive.

The immediate results of the new Tory "strategy" will be a slide in the value of the pound, price rises, and a worse balance of payments deficit. Quite possibly these results will be bad enough to force yet another Tory "U-turn".

Whether they are or not, the prospects for the working class are plain: an increased cost of living, cuts in real wages, cuts in public services, and more unemployment.

5,000 students march and back the miners

Students from across Britain marched against Tory education policies in Manchester last week (4 November).

The demonstration, organised by Manchester Area NUS (MANUS), was joined by miners from Parkside, the local pit which the Tories want to close, members of the teaching unions, NATFHE and AUT, and the local government union, NALGO.

The demonstration was called under the slogans 'End Student Debt! Defend NUS!' and 'Coal not Dole!'.

Paul Williams, MANUS convenor, told Socialist Organiser, "we decided to organise the demo as a focus for activists in colleges who wanted to fight the Tories' plans to abolish NUS. We also demand a living grant for all students

in Further and Higher Education. We had to take the lead because NUS in London have done nothing to mount a campaign."

The five thousand students heard Billy Pye, (Parkside NUM), a member of the NUM Executive, attack the Tories' destruction of the mining industry. His words were echoed by Alice Sharp, the NUS Women's Officer, who called on students to go back to their colleges and build support for the miners.

"We should link our struggles together," said Alice, "students must organise our fight too, organising demos, pickets and occupations."

Left Unity, which had done the central organising for the demo, held a successful meeting after the rally with 85 people attending.

Disgrace in NUS

The right-wingers who run the National Union of Students (NUS) are witch-hunting the left — again! Kevin Sexton, a Left Unity supporter on the NUS National Executive, has been censured for an alleged remark he made to a member of the ruling Labour Students faction.

The tactic of using a kangaroo court to pass judgement and sentence on a left-winger is one regularly employed by the political vermin who run NUS.

The charges against

Kevin are untrue. The issue has been raised to smear Left Unity in the run-up to the NUS regional conferences which take place over the next few weeks.

Student unionists should protest against this latest disgrace, in which the SWP tacitly supported the right, something they have taken up as a hobby in recent years.

Activists should send letters of complaint to NUS from their student union executives, Labour Clubs, and lesbian, gay and bisexual societies, and send letters of support to Kevin.



Billions are siphoned off in dividends, interest, and incomes for the rich — more than enough to pay for restoring jobs and services. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni

Health, education, full employment:

The rich can pay!

Are cuts and a wage freeze necessary? Can we afford better public services? Cuts are “necessary”, and decent wages and services “too expensive”, only because the capitalist system puts profit first. It ranks the privilege, luxury and gain of the super-rich above the basic needs of the majority.

Figures published in the National Accounts shed light on this. They show total output in 1991 at £452 billion*.

The figure is very rough-and-ready, for a dozen reasons, but it will do for a start. The National Accounts show £330 billion going to “income from employment” (mainly wages), £58 billion to the self-employed, and £64 billion to profits.

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Members of the Advisory Committee are drawn from a broad cross section of the left who are opposed to the Labour Party's witch-hunt against *Socialist Organiser*. Views expressed in articles are the responsibility of the authors and not of the Advisory Editorial Board.

The figures need to be adjusted in at least four ways: for taxes paid to the state; for interest payments made by the state; for social security and welfare payments made by the state; and for the fact that a chunk of what is shown in the National Accounts as “wages and salaries” is not workers' wages but the salaries, directors' fees, and so on, of the upper class.

If we reckon that chunk as 15 per cent of the total, then we get a new breakdown.

Workers' net wages come to £157 billion, and the net income of self-employed people in small businesses to £27 billion. Social security and welfare payments, mostly to the working class and middle class, total £76 billion.

The rich control £42 billion in profits after tax, dividends, and so on, and £42 billion in personal income. (Official figures show that the top ten per cent have about 25% of all personal income, so £42 billion, or about 10% of the total, is probably controlled by the top three per cent or so).

The state spends £29 billion on health, £23 billion on education, and £12 billion on other services such as local authority social services.

It spends £24 billion on military purposes, £12 billion on the police, courts, prisons, and so on, £7 billion on administration, and £11 billion on debt interest.

To put it another way: the average worker produces output worth about £16,000. They get about £8,000 net wages, from which they can buy goods

worth £6,000, paying £2,000 to the state in VAT and other sales taxes. £3,500 goes to the rich, and £7,000 to the state. Of that £7,000, about £3,000 comes back in social security and welfare payments, £2,500 goes to health, education, and so on,

“Could a government which wanted full employment — in contrast to one which uses unemployment to discipline the working class — find that £14 billion? Easily!”

and £1,500 goes to maintaining the machinery of capitalist rule.

There are four million unemployed. To employ them would cost about £24 billion (their wages, less the taxes and National Insurance they would pay to the state). The state would save at least £10 billion in social security, so the net cost would be £14 billion.

Could a government which wanted full employment — in contrast to one which uses unemployment to discipline the working class — find that £14 billion? Easily!

The rich have £42 billion of income which could be taxed. British companies pay out a much bigger proportion of their profits in dividends than in other countries. A total of £22 billion is paid out in dividends, mostly to the rich: why not grab

some of that money? Or why not cut the £24 billion military budget?

The way National Accounts are calculated, public service workers always appear less productive than private-sector workers. They are assumed to produce output equal to their gross wages, while private-sector workers produce the equivalent of their bosses' profits too.

Even on that basis, however, and even assuming all the four million unemployed become state employees in hospitals, schools, colleges, libraries, nurseries, public works projects and so on, they would produce extra output of about £44 billion. That is the equivalent of a 50% increase in both health and education budgets, with £17 billion to spare.

In fact, in a capitalist economy, four million unemployed would find jobs through many fewer — one million, maybe — being taken on in public services and projects. The jobs would “multiply” because the increased public activity would generate increased activity in firms supplying the public sector and firms producing goods consumed by the new public sector workers. The initial net state spending needed would be nearer £4 billion than £14 billion, and the new output nearer £60 billion than £44 billion. (Or more: full employment means higher productivity: less unused capacity and smaller overhead expenses in proportion to production).

The sums are hypothetical, because in reality a government

planning such a huge boost to jobs and services would face a catastrophic collapse of capitalist “confidence” and a flight of capital overseas. Either it would capitulate, or it would move to a different, socialist economy, with a different basis of accounting.

What the figures prove beyond doubt, though, is that no absolute lack of resources is behind the cuts, but the demands of profit.

* All the figures here omit, for simplicity, several items included in the National Accounts. People who own their home are assumed in the National Accounts to have an income equivalent to rent for the home (and an equal expenditure): these “imputed” incomes and expenditures are omitted. The income and expenditure of pension funds and life insurance companies are also omitted.

A much more detailed and thorough examination of the National Accounts is included in a recent book edited by Paul Dunne, *Quantitative Marxism*, Polity Press.

“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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Fancy footwork and the UDM

The Government's postponement of the pit closure plan has taken the issue off the boil as far as the newspapers, "public opinion" and all those heroic back-bench Tory "dissidents" are concerned. But, of course, the issue hasn't gone away and the present Mexican stand-off between the Government and the miners may well be broken even before the 90-day "moratorium" expires.

INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper

Rank-and-file NUM members are presently laying their plans, discussing strategy and organising for the inevitable confrontation. Arthur Scargill has been told in no uncertain terms that reckless posturing is out: he must abide by the wishes and judgement of the rank-and-file. So far, that's exactly what he has done.

One of the many difficult questions presently under discussion amongst the NUM rank-and-file is what to do about the UDM. The big problem here is that the legacy of bitterness against the scab "union" and its contemptible leaders — Lynk, Prendergast and Greatorex — is so great that calm discussion of the issue is almost impossible. The UDM did not attend the 21 October London demo for fear of punch-ups between NUM loyalists and UDM members. But some of the best NUM militants have realised that in the present situation, some form of unity with the UDM rank-and-file is essential.

The UDM is now a totally discredited outfit and Lynk himself is a broken man, reduced to bleating pathetically about his "betrayal" at the hands of his Tory "friends". UDM members in Nottinghamshire are now admitting that Scargill was right in '84 and a few of them are even talking about re-joining the NUM. Lynk's likely successor, Neil Greatorex, (himself a super-scab and bosses' nark), has hinted at joining the NUM *en masse*.

The official NUM position seems to be to call on UDM-ers to renounce their sins and re-join the NUM as individuals. On the other hand, some NUM area leaders appear to be calling on Scargill for a "reconciliation" with Lynk and the existing UDM leadership. Neither approach meets the needs of the situation. The simple reason why appealing to individual UDM-ers to join the NUM is likely to have only limited results is that NUM members are the first target for British Coal management when redundancies come up.

What is needed is a positive campaign for joint action between the NUM and rank-and-file UDM members: united demonstrations, and rallies and joint preparation for the strikes and occupations that will soon be necessary.

The miners' wives are already acting as a bridge between the NUM and UDM. For instance, there was a demo involving both organisations, organised by the Cotgrave miners' wives, last Saturday. This was in stark contrast to a UDM-only rally called the next day. There are encouraging signs that the best NUM militants (and their wives) are now prepared to at least approach UDM members for joint action. And there are equally encouraging signs that a lot of UDM-ers have seen through Lynk and Co. and are now prepared to fight alongside the NUM.

Of course, it won't be easy and it will involve a lot of swallowed pride on both sides. In the words of one Notts NUM member, "We've got to box clever, we need some fancy footwork here." Fancy footwork will give the miners a chance of a united fight that can defeat the Government.



Roy Lynk (right) is a broken man, bleating about how Tories like Heseltine "betrayed" him



With the labour movement reviving — as the tremendous demonstrations against pit closures have shown — we now have big opportunities for our activity. Photo: John Harris

AWL plans for the year ahead

By Martin Thomas

At the end of this month the Alliance for Workers' Liberty will meet for its second conference.

Unlike the conferences of the Labour Party and the TUC, and even, sadly, of some groups of the revolutionary left, the AWL conference will be a place for open and sober debate about what socialists should be doing over the next year.

Ideas, and honest assessment of the world around us, will be central — not "image" or vote-catching or rah-rah-revolutionary declamation.

Probably our central debate will be on activity in the trade unions. Over the last seven or eight years, since the defeat of the great miners' strike in 1984-5, times have often been hard for socialists in the trade unions.

The AWL, and the Socialist Organiser Alliance before it, have insisted, against the prevailing tide, on the need for socialists to plug away in the trade unions. The trade unions, however right-wing their orientation at a given time, are basic bedrock organisations of the working class, and no body and no force other than the organised working class can make socialism.

To give up on the trade unions is to give up on the organised working class, and to give up on the organised working class is to give up on socialism. To

go half way towards giving up — to use the trade unions only as a platform for abstract agitation — is little better.

In many areas, AWL trade unionists have built a solid reputation. We produce regular workplace bulletins in several places. We have become an

"We base ourselves on a tradition, nearly 150 years long, of Marxist theory. To try to make a socialist revolution without studying that tradition is like building a skyscraper without studying physics or engineering."

important presence on the left at many trade union conferences. We have helped broader initiatives like "Trade Union News" and "NALGO Action".

With the labour movement reviving — as the tremendous demonstrations against pit closures have shown — we now have big opportunities for our activity as socialists in the trade unions to be extended and developed.

We will discuss policies for battles such as against contracting-out. We will

try to find ways to ensure that socialist trade unionists do not get submerged in the daily round of committees and meetings and resolutions — that they reach out to newer, younger activists.

The AWL conference will also discuss the continuing activity of *Socialist Organiser* supporters in the Labour Party. Since the Labour Party's ban on *Socialist Organiser* in 1990, followed by the expulsion of two Sheffield Labour Party members this year and threats to several more, this activity has been "illegal" — but we will not give up on that account!

Most of the AWL's recruits have come from youth and student activity — especially, recently, from students in the Further Education colleges which are now Britain's largest concentrations of working-class youth. This has made the AWL much more youthful than most of the rest of the left, which promises well for the future.

It also brings challenges. Local AWL groups have to organise themselves so that they can attract and integrate young people, and educate them politically: it is not the same as organising older trade unionists! We will be discussing this at the conference.

The problem of educating ourselves in Marxist theory and Marxist politics will also be central.

To resent and oppose the way society is run now is one thing. To be able to

envisage a workable alternative to capitalism and Stalinism, to see a way of fighting for it, and to understand events around us sufficiently to know the political terrain we operate on, is another.

The AWL does not start from scratch on these issues. We base ourselves on a tradition, nearly 150 years long, of Marxist theory, — on writers such as Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, Gramsci and Cannon. To try to make a socialist revolution without studying that tradition is like building a skyscraper without studying physics or engineering.

The conference will be debating key political issues which have divided and confused the left — like Yugoslavia and Europe — and working out plans for week-by-week education in local AWL groups and at national events.

We hope that many readers will join us in our debates — and, more importantly, in taking responsibility for the decisions we make, and for carrying out those decisions and making our ideas a real force in the labour movement.

"The only true prophets", as James Connolly declared, "are those who carve out the future they announce."

• AWL Conference: 28-29 November, in London. Open to members and friends of the AWL. Details: Secretary, AWL, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Strike for the miners on 17 November!

Billy Pye, Parkside NUM and NUM National Executive, spoke to Socialist Organiser

There is a mood of anger among miners, and a definite mood of resistance to what the Government is trying to do to us. There is also a feeling of betrayal, because at Parkside, we have achieved every target they ever set us, breaking records, in fact.

We seem to be in a better position than some pits as regards the number of men that have taken redundancy up to now. We've lost 47 out of 700 men — that's all across the board; management,

Reaching out to the UDM ranks

The Notts Campaign Against Pit Closures and the Notts area of the NUM have put out 'an open letter to members of the UDM and their families', calling for united action by UDM and NUM members.

"In forming the breakaway, the UDM leaders broke links with other miners, the TUC and the labour movement generally. Whilst 100,000 jobs were being lost in the mining industry, Lynk and Pendergast put their faith instead in the Tory Government and British Coal. They have rendered themselves unfit to lead any campaign now against them. The UDM members and branches must turn instead to the NUM and, yes, to Scargill, who have consistently and accurately warned of the Tories' intentions. Immediate campaigning unity should be established at pit level of all miners and their families against the closures.

"The earliest possible re-unification of a united NUM can undo much of the damage of the breakaway in 1985. It would terrify the Government, and would be a cause of celebration amongst the miners' true friends. Every UDM miner, every UDM miner's family, and every UDM meeting should consider how it can be rapidly and practically brought about."

Pete Radcliff of the Campaign explained why they took this initiative:

"It is vital to try to find ways of reaching out to the rank-and-file of the UDM. For the first time in years, the UDM is wide-open. Many ordinary members were saying that Scargill was right about pit closures."

The Campaign can be contacted at: 191 Burford Road, Forest Fields, Nottingham.

NACODS and NUM. Other pits have lost quite a few more.

The last day of the 90 day notice period is 30 January. Unless the Government does a real U-turn, the pit will close on that day. As far as the coal faces are concerned, we are putting our hopes on the legal action, the full judicial enquiry that will start on 19 November. Otherwise, the faces will start to close up. One face at Parkside is closing up already. We are losing something like two inches every 24 hours.

The North West TUC and the NUM have called a day of action on 17 November. There seems to be some confusion between us and the TUC as to what it actually means, them having left if off the public correspondence they've put out. My interpretation is that we'd expect people to take strike action wherever possible. I've been calling for that from public platforms.

The pit closures and the NUM might seem to be at the centre of things at the moment, but quite clearly for all those people supporting the miners now, the pit closures programme was a final straw, a trigger for millions of people who are dissatisfied with this Government and the way the country is being run in general.

The Labour Party is being very quiet. They've backed us insofar as the Parliamentary debate is concerned, but, had they supported us in real terms in 1984-5, then



Billy Pye speaking at the Manchester Area NUS demonstration on 4 November

things would have been very much different and we would have had a Labour Government by now.

I don't think there's anything wrong with calling on the TUC General Council to call a general strike as long as you realise that it isn't about to happen, unless Willis and the General Council have some sort of brainstorm — and, even if they did call a general strike, and even if they got one, it wouldn't last a day. The Government would make some sort of minor concession over pit closures and they'd throw it all down the toilet.

That's why we called for the day of action in the North West. Whilst we agree with the concept of a general strike, we think it

would be much better to build for that at the grass roots and drag the leadership along afterwards. The next step now is a national TUC day of action.

On the 17th, you can either come out in direct support of the miners,

Occupy the pits!

"We need to do something to stop the pits closing. Right now, we are losing momentum. The effect of the big boost in confidence that the two large London marches had on the lads is beginning to wear off. I think it's time to look seriously at the idea of occupation — it could provide a clear focus for the campaign and make it easier to win solidarity."

That's how one NUM activist at one of the ten closure-list pits explained why he favours occupying the pits.

The argument for occupation is backed up by the fact that if nothing is done soon then those pits on the immediate hit-list will rapidly decay to the point where re-opening them will be very difficult. Last week, the Guardian printed a special report on the state of these pits pointing to major problems at nine of the ten.

Many miners are unsure about

or be quite justified in fighting your own corner now.

Occupying the pits was discussed by the NUM National Executive at the start, when they intended to close the pits immediately and to start to fill the shafts in. The point of occupying the pits would be to stop them filling the shafts in.

Now there would be little point in simply occupying the pit, you would need a big enough section of the workforce to actually run the pit, which is more difficult. I don't know if it would become appropriate, I really can't say — a lot obviously depends on what happens in the court.

Our priority at the moment is building for the day of action on the 17th, which has got to come off all across the North West, for people in other trade unions and my own to see the strength of feeling against this Government.

occupations. Some activists point to the victimisation of those involved in the Betteshanger occupation during the great strike as an argument against occupying.

However, occupations have won in the past.

In 1935, 'stay-downs', as they were called then, beat the South Wales mine bosses and ensured that the scab Spencer union was marginalised in the coalfield.

The example of the South Wales 'stay-down' helped to generate solidarity action amongst miners and other groups like the railworkers. They could have the same effect today.

No-one should underestimate the real physical and technical difficulties involved in occupying the pits, but the potential boost that such action could give to the miners' campaign surely outweighs the difficulties.

Occupy the pits!



After the demonstration on 25 October, we need weekday protests. Photo: John Harris

Turn December 9 into a day of action!

The TUC is organising a national convention for recovery on December 9.

They plan a major event in London with guest speakers from the CBI, churches and the Liberal Democrats.

Hardly the way to galvanise support for the miners or the link up of the fight for jobs! Trade union activists need to

push for December 9 to be turned into a proper day of action with strikes. We want action from the unions, not speeches about the need for a wage freeze from the CBI.

We should make this point clear to the General Council when they meet later this month in Doncaster!

After Capone, Canterbury

GRAFFITI

It was tax evasion that finally caught up with Al Capone. It looks like the Church could suffer the same fate. Tax inspectors have been hitting churches for not declaring and deducting tax from payments made to part-time caretakers, organists and others doing odd jobs for the Almighty. Three churches have been prosecuted for tax dodging, and one fined £1,000. Sadly, the Godfather of the biggest mob in Britain, who goes by the name of Canterbury, has so far escaped prosecution. Must have friends in high places.

Funny the things people were saying only a year ago: "...a unique part of our national scene" (Paddy Ashdown); "...a great character who will be missed. No-one should doubt his interests in peace and his loyalty to his friends..." (John Major); "I valued his friendship... a man of genuine commitment to the advancement of the British people" (Neil Kinnock). All were paying tribute to Robert Maxwell, who "fell" from his yacht before he could fall from grace, possibly history's only example of the boat leaving the sinking rat.

And what did *Socialist Organiser* write? "Socialists should not mourn the passing of this union-buster and long time friend of Eastern European tyrants" (SO, 8.11.92).

You don't have to be a Maxwell to dip into the pension fund, as the employees of Qa Business Services, a privatised and now bankrupt section of West Midlands Regional Health Authority, have found. They have been told that the company underfunded their pension scheme to such a degree that they will be lucky to receive one-third of their pension entitlement.

None of this applies to former deputy Chief Executive Peter Brown, who took early retirement just before the collapse, took a £90,000 lump sum and will continue to receive a £30,000 a year pension. It is not known whether Mr. Brown plans any yachting holidays.

Many on the left mistakenly see the victory of Clinton over Bush as a victory for the working class. Labour MP, former Shadow Foreign Secretary and well-known ET-lookalike Gerald Kaufman, writing in the *Sunday Times*, laments the defeat of George Bush. Not for the sake of Bush, of course, but because "...if Bush had won (James) Baker would almost certainly have been elected".

Baker, according to Kaufman, is a towering world statesman who single-handedly ended the cold-war and beat Saddam, and is an angel of peace who persuaded the US bourgeoisie that it didn't have to spend billions on updating its nuclear capacity.

Now, alas, the world has been deprived of this great leader, all because he is implicated in the defeat as

Bush's campaign manager — in a campaign just brimming with progressive and radical ideas, as you may remember. The Labour Party leadership see Kaufman as such a valuable asset that they wisely hid him for the most of the British General Election campaign.

The good news: Cuba is to hold direct elections to its National Assembly early in 1993, the first for 30 years. The bad news: you can't stand without Communist Party backing. Cuba is a well known "workers' state". (Additional reporting, E Mandel).

Capitalism is a sane and predictable system, which is why US financiers have found a new tool for predicting the bond markets — the "gentleman's magazine" *Penthouse*. A 16-page interview with Gennifer Flowers, who alleges a twelve year affair with Clinton, was sent off to the psychoanalyst. Back comes the shrink's verdict — Clinton likes to be pushed around. The financiers think this is good news for the stock market, which makes you think they are planning on playing rough with the new President.

From the people who helped to throw away a ballot majority for strike action on the London Underground and negotiated wage cuts in Sheffield Council, comes the "news" that *Socialist Organiser* is blocking support for the miners! In the latest *Socialist Outlook* we read "our proposal that MANUS backs the call for a one-day strike on 17 November was blocked by the *Socialist Organiser* leaders of MANUS [Manchester Area National Union of Students]."

Indeed, says *Outlook*, that MANUS is backing the pitmen at all is down to the brave endeavours of Duncan Chapple, an *Outlook* supporter in the Area. "*Outlook* supporters have won MANUS to a programme of action in support of the miners."

We plead "guilty!" We refute the scandalous accusations that MANUS produced a poster calling for students to strike on 17 November, that MANUS organised coaches to the miners' demonstration on 21 October, that *Socialist Organiser* supporters proposed a motion to support the miners at the most recent MANUS meeting, and that MANUS invited Billy Pye from Parkside NUM to their 4 November demo, which marched behind a banner saying "Coal not dole". And we just love Boris Yeltsin.

For the record, the MANUS Council meeting at which the miners were discussed was held prior to North West TUC's calling a day of action. Duncan Chapple made no proposal for strike action.

And *Socialist Organiser* supporters are building a national student network for the miners. In contrast, *Outlook* failed to lift a finger to build the MANUS demo or indeed do anything useful.

We recommend *Outlook* employ a proof-reader or fact-checker in their editorial office.

Back to the royal soap opera

PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

The tabloids have returned to form. After a brief fling with serious politics over the pit closures, the *Sun* and *Mirror* are back to the Windsor soap opera. We can expect a re-run of this summer's circulation battle as the two top-selling tabloids once again fight it out with rival "exclusives" about the doings of Chas and Di (no new Fergie revelations yet, but these can be confidently expected).

So far, the *Mirror* seems to be winning on points, with its "World exclusive" featuring Charles and the Other Woman, one Camilla Parker-Bowles, by veteran royal-watcher, Harry Arnold. The *Sun* hit back with a "new Di tape", but this turned out to be no more than a new final chapter tacked onto Andrew

Morton's dreary *Diana* book, repeating the oft-heard claims of a "Palace plot" to bring down the lovely Princess.

Some quite sensible and reasonably intelligent people of my acquaintance actually rang the *Sun*'s hotline to hear for themselves the amazing "Dianagate" tape this summer. I have to report that Mr Morton's latest revelations have not produced a similar level of excitement. There are encouraging signs that the populace are finally tiring of all this nonsense. Perhaps one day soon, the whole royal charade can be swept into the dustbin of history where it belongs: then, popular newspapers could concentrate on real news, poor old Chazza could lead a normal private life and Mr Morton could have another crack at his original calling as an industrial correspondent.

Whatever their respective motivations, at least the *Sun* and the *Mirror* gave the miners solid, front-page support. The *Mirror* even produced a "Coal not dole" front page for use as a placard during the big London demo.

This was in stark contrast

to that semi-official voice of middle-class radicalism, the *Guardian*. Editor Peter Preston has rebuffed pleas from his own staff and from Tony Benn that the paper champion the miners' cause. The editorial line has been the standard *Guardian* approach of criticising the "brutality" of the Government's proposals and then going on to explain that environmental and other considerations mean the mining industry should be run down in a more "humane" manner.

How much longer are we going to tolerate the *Guardian*'s sanctimonious posturing as some sort of radical alternative to the Tory press? I propose an immediate boycott of this loathsome, self-righteous rag. Anyone seen reading it should be challenged and only allowed unmolested if they can prove that they are a hopeless case e.g., an FE lecturer.

As part of my campaign against the *Guardian*, I have taken to buying the *Daily Telegraph* quite regularly. I thoroughly recommend it to all who value hearing the enemy's voice at its most coherent and straightforward, sans *Guardian*-type

waffle. It was in the *Telegraph* last week that I read former Trade and Defence Minister Alan Clark's statement to the court in the Matrix Churchill "arms to Iraq" case. Questioned by the defence as to why the company had not been advised to inform the Customs of the potential military use of their sales to Iraq, Mr Clark stated that "it was our old friend economical... with the actualité."

This struck me as a quite extraordinary admission of Government-inspired corruption, involving Mrs Thatcher and quite a few serving ministers of the present Cabinet. But it has been kept off most of the front pages by the press's obsession with Maastricht and the royals.

Only the *Telegraph* and *Independent* have given the story the front-page prominence it deserves; Tuesday's *Telegraph* lead with "Ministers accused of conspiracy to break sanctions against Iraq" while the same day's *Independent* editorial concluded, "Thus a Government widely seen as incompetent now stands of corruption." Perhaps even the *Guardian* will be roused to anger eventually.

We have the technology and we don't give a damn

WOMEN'S EYE

By Rebecca Van Homan

When I was 13, my photo appeared in the local paper for winning a netball competition. For a year after that, I received obscene phone calls relating to it.

Many women reading this article will also share this experience — in fact, over half of all women have, at some time, received an obscene phone call — making it a more common form of harassment than being flashed at, followed or groped.

The invasion of your home in this way —

callers often claim they know (and often do know, if using a phone book) your address — is very frightening. It's not like being shouted at in the street where you can contextualise it. Being picked out for individual torment can result in fear of being watched, followed or sexually attacked — and for two-thirds of women, this fear stays with them long-term.

"According to British Telecom, three-quarters of malicious callers are related to their prey."

However, fear of the unknown attacker is misguided. According to

British Telecom, three-quarters of malicious callers are related to their prey.

"My phone calls ended when we changed our telephone number — at a cost of £30."

BT have the equipment to trace callers within seconds. In 1990, a pilot-scheme was set up in Canterbury. They were inundated with women wanting their calls traced. For the vast majority of women receiving obscene phone calls, nothing is done. Only 200 calls were traced last year.

Incidentally, the wife of the BT chairman received

an obscene phone call which was traced within minutes of him ringing back.

My phone calls ended when we changed our telephone number — at a cost of £30, of course. I expect that is the option most women take who get no help from BT.

I can't say why men make obscene phone calls. Perhaps the powerlessness they feel in their everyday lives has to be reclaimed somewhere.

What I do know is BT don't give a toss. There's more profit to be made out of getting a woman to change her phone number than in screening her phone calls.

"We have the technology" — and we don't give a damn.

Meet the new boss

Barry Finger in New York explains how Clinton won, and what he promises

The American political process is a great mulching machine — chopping, splintering and recombining electoral chunks into incoherent political amalgams. In this way, great social classes and movements for social change are reduced to the level of so many lobbies and pressure groups indistinguishable in operation from the National Rifle Association or the Bituminous Coal consortium.

Within this machinery, the Democratic Party occupies a special function. It is the ideological and organisational substitute for the socialist movement among the working class, their officialdom, the Black liberation movement and the radical intellectuals who would otherwise form the potential core of a labor party. Bottling these elements up in a vessel which serves as a political instrument in the defence of capitalism at the same time assures that the political centre continually gravitates to the right — just as the feeblest sign of class independence draws it to the left.

Just how deeply these movements have been subordinated to the Democrats is highlighted by the very choice of the Democratic standardbearer. Bill Clinton is the governor of a state renowned for its "right to work" (anti-union) legislation. Arkansas is also one of only two states without any comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation.

Yet Clinton's victory was all but inevitable given the abject failure of the successive Republican administrations in re-establishing the conditions for successful capital accumulation.

Over one million industrial jobs disappeared in the last decade alone. The incomes of Americans without college degrees have fallen by over 16% since 1970. The number living in poverty is the highest since the 1964 War on Poverty was initiated. In the last year alone, purchasing power for the typical American household fell by over \$1,100. The number of young people employed in sub-poverty level jobs doubled in the past decade.

Corporate giants continue to downsize. Forty per cent of all layoffs last year were white-collar workers, double the level of previous recessions. People are staying out of work longer, with little prospect for return to similar-paying jobs.

And in America, where health insurance is provided (if at all) privately by the employer as part of a wage package, the growth in joblessness and poverty has com-

pounded the health care problem to crisis proportions.

Bush's performance has been the poorest in most categories of any post-war administrations: the worst for GDP growth, for job creation, disposable income gains, industrial production and hourly wages. Industrial production and hourly wages actually fell.

The Reagan-Bush policies paid off in two regards only. The first is the massive jump in wealth concentrated at the top, the first significant rise since the 1920s and a complete reversal of the relative levelling of wages and wealth carried out during World War II. The second success was the utter rout of American working class institutions, now all but stripped in practice of the right to strike by permanent replacement workers in the private sectors and by legal prohibition in the public sphere.

Yet even this massive concentration of wealth has proven to be unable to restore vigorous capital accumulation and job formation. Profit rates still stagnate at half the levels in the halcyon days of the 1950s and '60s.

By the August convention, the Republicans were in an advanced state of political bankruptcy. Displaying all the sparkling wit and

"Clinton was able to tap into financial support, from conservative Orange County to Wall Street brokerages."

civil fellowship of a Munich beer hall putsch, the Republicans flailed out blindly, scapegoating everything imaginable including — ultimately — the American people themselves.

Why is America failing? Because of single mothers, working mothers, women in combat, femi-nazis, trial lawyers, gays and lesbians, cross-dressers, the "dark forces" of urban unrest, environmentalists, Hollywood, the "liberal" media, Woody Allen, Murphy Brown, atheists, non-Christians, Democratic panderers, non-Republicans and, the great Satan herself, Hillary Clinton.

Forced into this pique, perhaps, by the *New York Times*, which has just exposed the Bush administration's cynical ploy to jumpstart the convention by an air-strike on Iraq, the Republicans self-destructed. They were reduced in the final weeks of the



Clinton's economic model is Arkansas — a low-wage, anti-union state.

campaign into characterising Clinton as the Manchurian Candidate for having travelled to Russia in his student days.

The re-entrance of billionaire Ross Perot merely compounded Bush's problems. After having dropped out of the process without a clear message other than the practical man's contempt for the Washington babblerocracy, he re-entered the fray with a personal axe to grind and became, in effect, Clinton's point man on character assassination.

The real significance of Perot, however, lies elsewhere: the first hard evidence of the breakdown of commitment to the two-party system. Polls taken last spring confirm that 60% of the population would now favour the establishment of a third party.

Clinton, a creature of the Democratic Leadership Council — the furthest right-wing mainstay of the Party — refashioned the Democrats into the Republican Party of Richard Nixon. This was not difficult to do as Republican moderates were bailing out of their party, now hi-jacked by God's lobby. Clinton outflanked the Republican Party from the right on foreign policy and circumvented what had been the wedge issue for the Republicans — race, by pre-emptively seizing on the remarks of an obscure rap singer at a Rainbow Coalition forum. This provided the opportunity to deal with racism in symmetrical terms and thus sanitise it, as if racism were an equal threat to both white and black communities.

With this, the independents, the suburbs and moderate Republicans were ready to bolt in large numbers. From former Nixon

speech-writer and Republican warhorse, William Safire, to such international stalwarts of Republicanism as the London *Economist*, party loyalties were being switched at the top. This was the reassurance that Republican financial mainstays needed. Clinton was then able to tap into the well of Republican financial support from conservative Orange County to Wall Street investment brokerages. CEOs of Apple, Hewlett-Packard and Xerox were signing aboard.

And why not? Clinton was marvelously suited to complete the Reagan-Bush endgame.

In Arkansas's "economic success", Clinton created in microcosm his plan for rebuilding the United States. He used the low-wage, anti-union environment of Arkansas as a weapon to pirate investment from the industrial north. The analogy is the North American Free Trade Agreement which — after some reworking — will employ Mexican and Central American workers as battering rams to ratchet down American wages. As Clinton put it in a *Rolling Stone* interview, "Now that many wages are set on a global scale... we are going to have to reconcile ourselves not to being a hard-work, low-wage country, but to having a higher percentage of people at lower wage levels."

Clinton must get American capital accumulating. Jacking-up the rate of exploitation by continuous downward pressure on wages is the centre piece. A close second, is the decrease in capital turnover time that can be purchased through a massive public works project to refurbish the infrastructure. This will require an expendi-

ture of \$50 billion at the minimum.

For millions of Americans, the Democratic program is a lesser evil. The Bush program actively engaged in the export of jobs and dismissed infrastructural improvements — and the attendant job generating effect of such efforts — as wasteful government expenditures. And, for millions of others, the bitter pill of economic restructuring will be accompanied by non-economic concessions across a wide front. For gays and lesbians, this election was about survival; for women, the right to abortion. It means that the erosion of civil liberties by Reagan-Bush appointees will begin to be reversed, that secular education will be preserved and that health care for millions will now be delivered, however inadequately.

Recognition of this is not a concession to the permeationist view of the Democratic Socialists of America or of the Communist Party, who advise radicals to vote Democrat and hope the Democrats can be pushed to be a little more "progressive".

It is merely recognition that, without a left electoral alternative, the oppressed and exploited will invariably lobby the enlightened wing of the ruling class for concessions. They will do this or they will futilely vote no-confidence in the system by staying home on election day.

Either way, the mulching machine of electoral politics will grind on and the oppressed will continue to act as agents in their own oppression — Democratically, of course.

YOUTH FIGHTBACK

who we are

We're sick of poverty, of unemployment, of police harassment. We're sick of pointless jobs and YT cheap labour schemes. The Tories have used unemployment to drive down our wages. They've cut or abolished benefits and grants. Yet most young people see politics as irrelevant.

The reason for this indifference is the failure of the leadership of the labour movement. The trade union leaders have cowered at the Tories' attacks and failed to organise workers in new industries or the unemployed. The Labour leadership has given in and trailed along behind the Tories. Instead of fighting the Tories, Kinnock attacked the left and broke up the Labour Party Young Socialists.

Young people do kick back, the anger does explode in riots. But riots achieve nothing and can not change the basic problems we face. The only force that can rid society of poverty, alienation, unemployment and cut away the roots of racism and sexism is the labour movement.

The place for a youth fightback is in and through the labour movement. We will fight the right wing leadership of Labour and of the unions. If they bar us from official structures we will build our own.

We can take on the Tories, drawing the anger of young people into class politics. We can show young people they can change the world and that we can fight back.

Contact Youth Fightback at: PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Letter: why we need a youth fightback

The left in Britain needs to organise a strong, united youth campaign committed to struggle around four basic demands: jobs, rights, education and freedom from violence and abuse.

Jobs: there is a desperate need for the labour movement to campaign for jobs, especially for young people. But jobs are not enough if they amount to little more than slave labour. We need to campaign for a national minimum wage, equal pay for young workers, trade union rights at 13 years old (the minimum age for legal employment — at present, you have to be at least 16 to be allowed to join a trade union) and an end to discrimination against young people at work. Young people in training should receive at least the minimum wage or a decent, living grant from the government.

Rights: We should be demanding:

- the right to vote and stand in elections from 16.
- the right to claim social security from 16.
- an equal age of consent for gays, lesbians and heterosexuals at 16 years old.
- the right to buy legal drugs at 16 years old.
- the right to drive any kind of motor vehicle from 16 years old.
- the right to be fully independent from our parents from 16 years old.
- the right for young women to have completely free access to contraception and abortion facil-

ities.

Education: the Tories' attacks on the education system must be fought. However, defending the existing system is not enough. We should campaign for a decent, living grant for every student from 16 years old. Students should have real choice in their education. This means we should oppose the national curriculum and special testing (using strikes and boycotts) and that we should fight for school students to have individual choice and collective control over what they learn.

Freedom from abuses: finally, we need a youth fightback against the physical and sexual abuse of children and young people. Abuse is not just about some adults behaving badly. It is about the power which adults have over children. It is a political issue which requires a political response. We should support the right to live apart from their parents and choose other guardians, for children who are being abused. We should, in general be in favour of a fightback by children and young people against their abusers (be they parents, step-parents, relatives, teachers, "careworkers" in charge of children in care, or anyone else).

A campaign around these demands would not only improve the lives of children and young people but would also bring much needed vitality into the left and the labour movement as a whole.

David Ball, Leicester

Youth unemployment and A whip f

By Julie, (Sheffield)

Unemployment is for the capitalist what the whip is for a slave driver, and since their election victory in 1979 the Tories have used the whip of unemployment ruthlessly. Thatcher, determined to batter down the labour movement and using the climate of the world recession in the early 1980's, set out deliberately to decimate many industries, particularly nationalised industries where the unions were strongest. The Tories also set out to keep wages down, trying to make workers compliant. Unemployment rose sharply and youth were especially hard hit. By January 1984 the unemployment of under 25s reached 1,209,400.

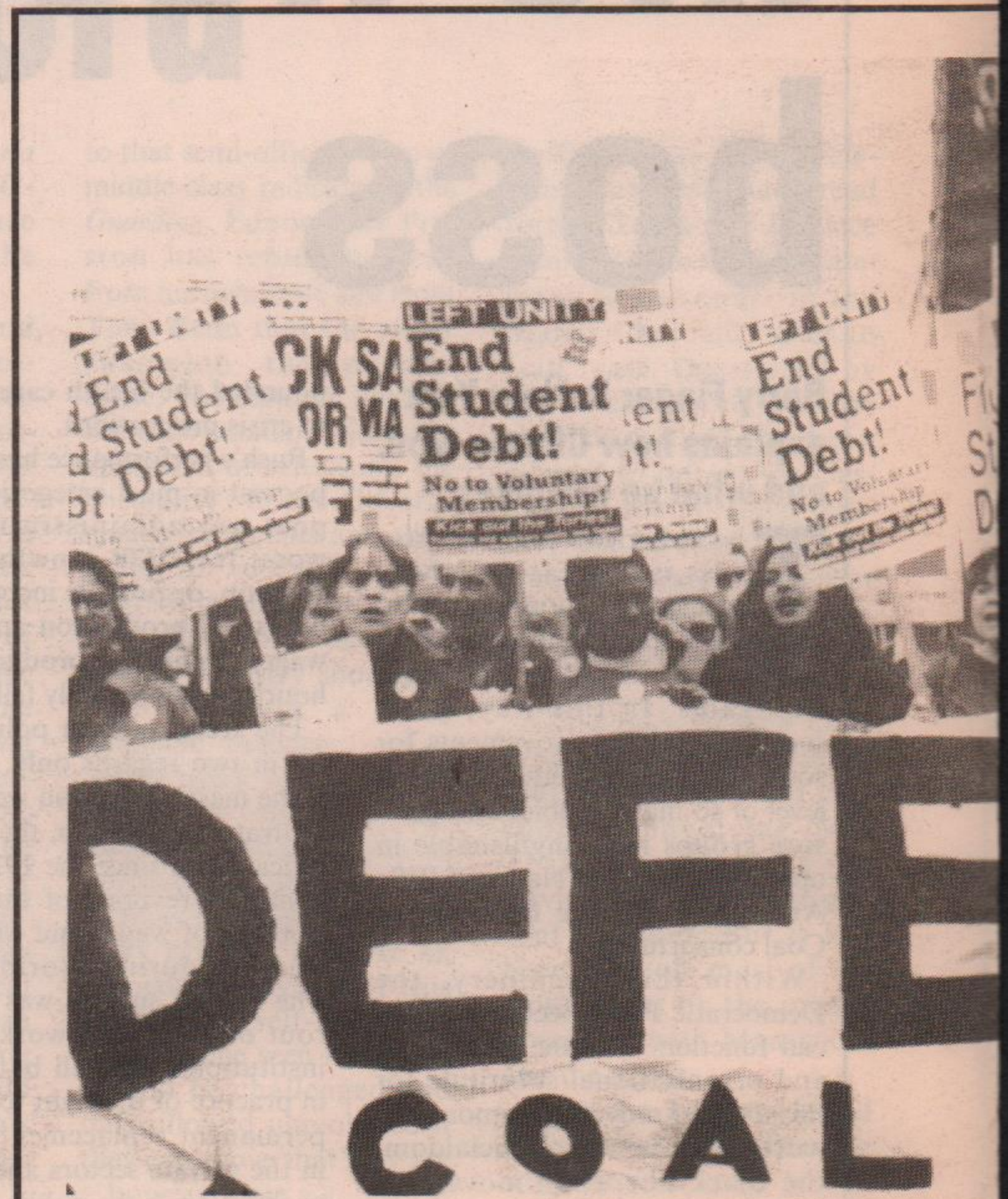
The Tories have not changed. Norman Lamont has said that mass unemployment is a price worth paying for low inflation.

The Tories' policy is very deliberate and callous. The fear of unemployment and the threat that there are plenty of people ready to do your job is used by bosses to whip workers into line, cut wages and increase workloads.

The Tories understand that unemployment is part of the market, but two things interfere with the working of the market. The bosses do not always have it all their own way.

Firstly, trade unions, by organising and uniting workers, counteract competition between workers. Successful union organisation undermines the bosses' divide and rule tactics.

Secondly, the labour movement in Britain has won benefits for the unemployed. This undermines the labour market by guaranteeing a minimum income below which workers will not work. Benefits also cost the government money, money



5000 students demonstrated against Tory education policy in Manchester last year. Left Unity, the left-wing in the national union. Paul told Youth Fightback, "if

they might otherwise want to spend on tax cuts for the rich.

And so the Tories have attacked the twin evils of unions and benefits, bit by bit, since they were first elected. Join your union and fightback!

Youth labour, the facts

Fact 1. By 1988 all benefits had been withdrawn from most 16 and 17 year olds. The only income available

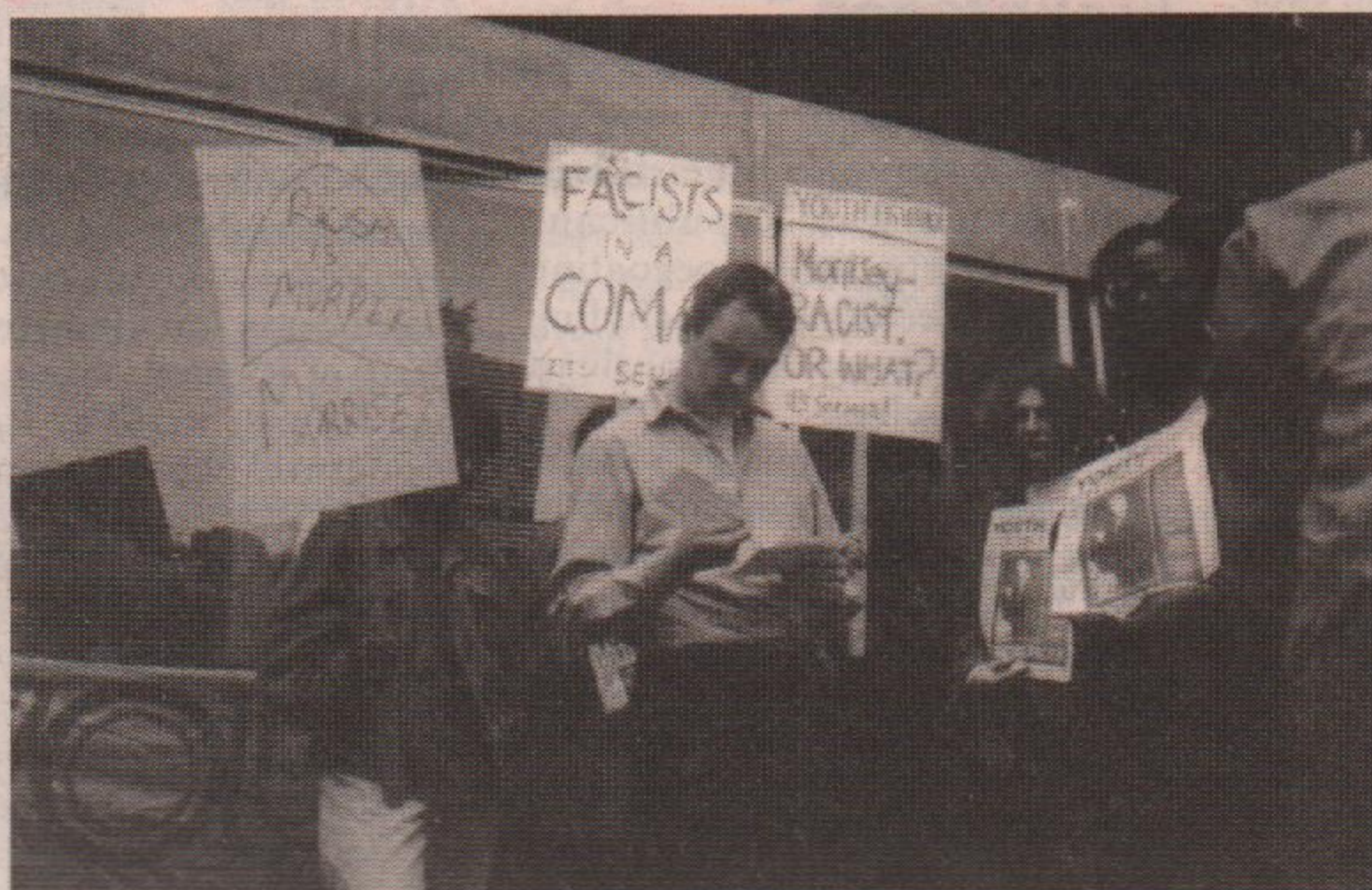
was from the Youth Training Schemes. Thus the schemes effectively became compulsory.

Fact 2. Last year the YTS was replaced by the even worse Youth Training. In January this year 80,000 16 and 17 year olds had no income because there were no YT places left.

Fact 3. Over the years the "training" on these schemes has become worse and worse. The real nature of Youth Training is made obvious by the fact that in March 1991 only 38% of trainees left the YT with any sort of qualification.

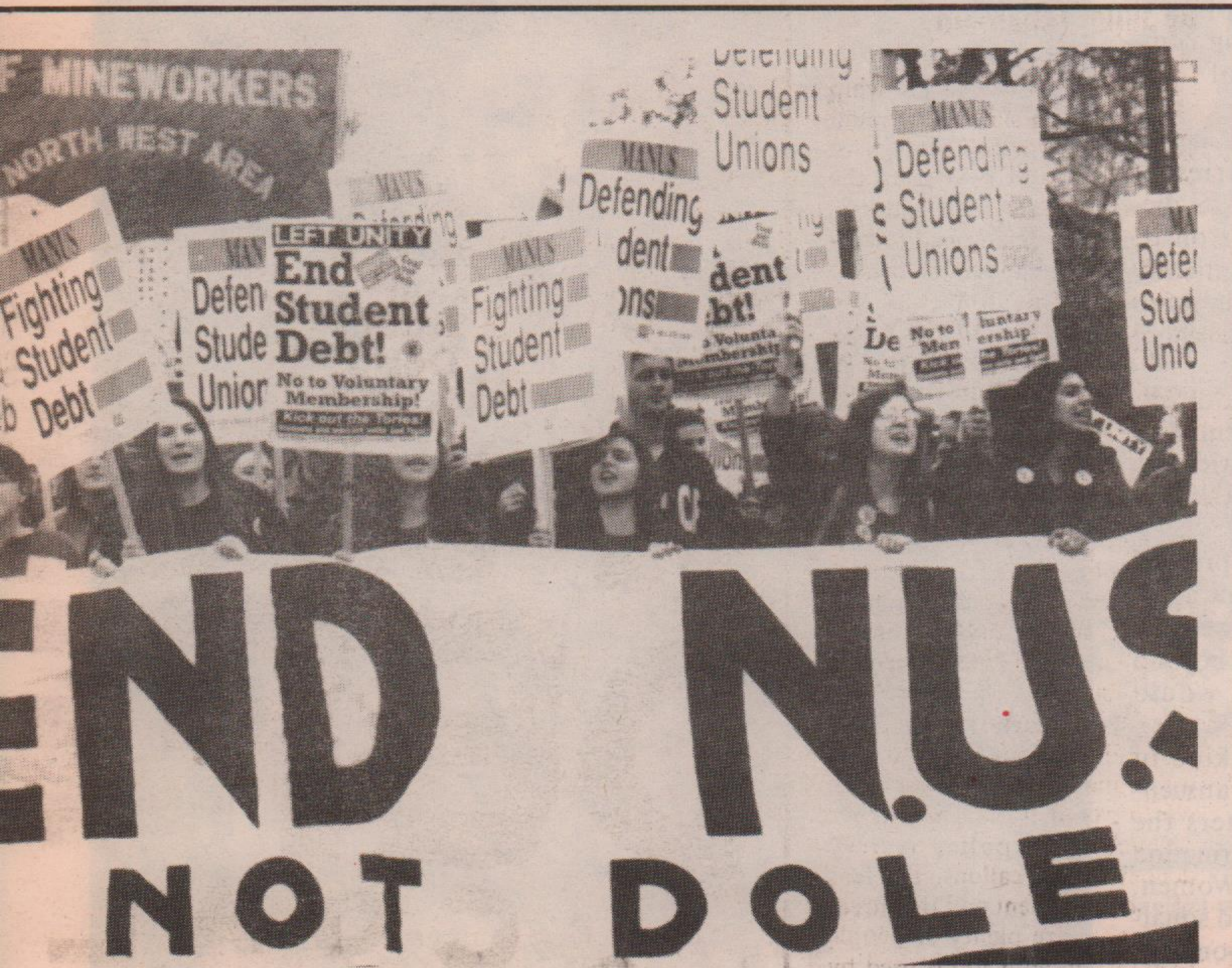
Fact 4. The "pay" of £29.50 or £35.00 a week on YT has not increased since 1986. When the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) was introduced in 1978 it was labelled "cheap labour", but if the £19.50 a week that was paid on YOP had kept pace with inflation it would be equivalent to £93.44 today.

Fact 5. YT has worked for the bosses. it gives them cheap labour and together with unemployment has driven down wages. A recent survey found teenagers working for as little as 90p an hour.



Youth Fightback picket of EMI to protest against Morrissey's flirtation with racism. This was the only action to elicit a response from Morrissey. The campaign is growing stronger by the day. Petitions are being circulated around the country and petitioning outside record shops is planned.

the cheap labour schemes or the bosses



week. The march was organised by the left-led Manchester Area NUS. Area Convenor, Paul Williams, is a supporter of students want to fight the Tories, join Left Unity and get organised". Left Unity: 58 Florence Road, London SE14.

Fact 6. YT has kept 100,000-plus off the unemployment figures but it has failed to meet the Tories declared aim of training people for work. Firstly because it was never proper training. Secondly because there are very few jobs.

Fact 7. Youth unemployment has not gone below half a million throughout the 80's or 90's despite YTS and YT. It is now increasing by 36% annually and the official figure was 864,000 in January 92.

Wage war

By Tunde (Vauxhall, London)

Last week the Tories declared they were going to abolish wage councils.

In 1986 the Wage Act took workers under 21 out of wage councils protection.

By 1991 the wages of under 18 year olds had dropped from 42% of the average wages of over 21 year olds in 1979 to 37%. For those between 18 and 21 wages dropped from 61% to 53% in the same period.

Though they were understaffed and legally weak, wage councils through their policing of pay levels did offer some protection especially for those workers in non-unionised work places. Young workers, women and black workers are more likely to be in jobs that most need legal protection. The Tories are trying to drive our wages down even lower. We should organise ourselves in the labour movement and fight back now.

Cruel to be a casual

By a young DSS worker

DSS offices are now solving their budget and staffing problems by exploiting unemployed people through using casual contracts.

Under such contracts workers have no rights. Working as a casual this year I have been made unemployed 3 times, sometimes at just two days notice, before being offered more work again after a few weeks. This is because every time there is a break in your service you begin again with no right to sick pay for the first 22 days and no right to any leave for the first 22 days.

As a casual you are not recognised as a member of staff when it comes to internal promotion, transfers or staff training. I have been used to train countless other permanent staff — often to do my own job. At the end of the training I'm out of work again! Casuals are always "Administrative Assistants" — the lowest grade. Very often they are young people desperate for a permanent job. This makes them easy to manipulate and exploit — especially when the chance of a job is dangled in front of them. The reality is after a few months they dump you back on the dole queue and use someone else.

The thing most casual staff have in common is that they are not union members. I believe that if all casual staff became active members of their CPSA branch, their anger could make the union take on the problem.

Now at last I have a permanent job in the DSS. I can become the CPSA convenor at my workplace and start to organise the anger that is felt there into some action. I supported the Broad Left in the CPSA, DSS Section. The right wing leadership cheated and tried to stop us winning — but we won anyway. We now have a fighting leadership in the DSS Section, things are looking up.

The unions should organise!

More and more young people are in low paid jobs with little or no legal protection. Young workers desperately need to organise but will often face the sack for even trying. At a time when trade union membership is falling unions should be fighting to unionise young workers.

Unions need to lead a fight against the use of all kinds of cheap labour including YT schemes.

The unions must stop cowering at the Tories' attacks and instead go on the offensive themselves.

We need a sliding scale of wages that ties the wage increases of all workers to the

cost of living, at least to the rate of inflation.

We need a charter of positive rights for workers including the legal right to be in a union, go on strike, stop work if it is dangerous and to take solidarity action in support of other workers' struggles.

In fighting for these demands unions should mobilise the strongest workers to support the weaker ones. Taking up this fight can draw a new layer of young workers into the labour movement. If the union leaders refuse to act, the rank and file should take a lead in the battle to organise young workers.

Unionising my workplace

Debbie, a nursing auxiliary, tells how she is ripped off by her bosses, and how she and her fellow workers have tried to fight back

Ever since I was 14, I've been working in private nursing homes and I am pissed off with the conditions we work under. The majority of staff are always women, which generally isn't a good sign that there will be even half decent conditions. These places are about making profit out of ill health and the worse conditions are for the staff and residents the more profit the boss rakes in. He can do what he likes and there's no one to stop him: trade unions are practically unheard of in this type of work.

Last May, rumours were flying around about the home where I work being closed or sold. So I decided to unionise my workplace.

It all had to be kept quiet, away from the boss and those who would grass, but within a short space of time thirteen out of twenty members of staff were convinced of the need for a union and we joined the GMB. The arguments for a union were easy to win as staff only needed to look around and see the conditions they were working under.

We work in a job where back and neck injuries are frequent yet we have no insurance to cover us. We have no job contracts, no rights to sick pay or maternity rights and my boss sacks anyone he takes a personal dislike to, no matter how good their work is. The pay is appallingly low (which is hardly surprising considering he's paying women) but even different members of staff are paid different rates for doing the same work. The job also involves shift work and I often work 18 hour shifts with no thanks.

Problems later occurred, not with the staff members, but with union officials. In the fight for union

recognition the GMB did nothing. After 8 people had joined, they wrote a letter to my boss informing him of this. That was the last he heard from the GMB. For weeks they refused to meet us, but eventually did, in a local pub, after one hell of a lot of persuasion. That meeting was a farce. Very few people had ever been in a trade union and wanted to know basic facts like what union recognition would mean.

For weeks before this, everyone had been really optimistic about work and the changes soon to be made, but left this meeting under a cloud of pessimism after putting blind faith in union bureaucrats. We had talked of going on strike for union recognition but the union official refused to support us and instead strengthened the fears some people already had, such as it being inhumane as the patients would suffer and the threat of being sacked on the spot with very little ground to stand on.

Still the fight goes on — against the bureaucrats and centrally, against our terrible boss!

Labour Youth Tom (Newcastle)

The Labour Party is holding its youth conference on 5-6-7 February, 1993 in Bournemouth. All young Labour Party members should get themselves delegated.

The conference has very little power to do anything other than elect a youth rep on the National Executive of the Labour Party.

You can be delegated from your LPYS branch or student Labour Club or be a non-voting delegate from your Constituency Labour Party if there is no Young Socialist branch. Each body can send 2 people, one of which must be a woman, but you must be under 23. If you're a member of an affiliated trade union you can be delegated too. Delegate forms should be submitted to Labour Party HQ by December 11.

For more information about the conference ring Mark on 071 639 7965

Why are there no great

by Alan Johnson

I am so sick of feminists saying that they refuse to accept male standards of achievement. These wishy-washy fools won't even admit that Michelangelo was a genius because he was a man.

"Absurd! Insane! It's a recipe for mediocrity". Now everything is great. So they say that some quilt made by some woman in Kansas is as important an object as the Sistine Chapel. Give me a break".

So says Camille Paglia, an American academic currently enjoying a best selling 700-page book, packed lecture tours, fawning profiles in the quality press and glossy magazines and a entourage of Hollywood admirers.

Cut through the pretentious gloss, and her message is as simple as it is reactionary. There is, she says, "No

"Paglia's message is as simple as it is reactionary: no escape from the biologic chains which bind us"

escape from the biologic chains which bind us".

Men got the genius and women got the womb. "There is no female Mozart because there is no female Jack the Ripper. Revolutionary Art needs violence, a willingness to break the rules like Picasso did, to kill the father... most women have too much empathy to want to be involved in anything like that. They want things to be comfortable, they want to be compassionate". And why is this so? Nature.

"In the beginning was nature" opens Paglia's book. This is not the sweet and comforting nature of today's radical feminists. That, says Paglia, is just a surface which hides the wet, murky and demonic powers underneath.

Nature is brutal and enslaving. Its "fascism is greater than that of any society" and it has "a master agenda we can only dimly know".

Nature dictates the separate destinies of men and women. "We are hierarchical animals. Sweep one hierarchy away and another will take its place". Reason is a pitiful little thing in comparison, "a hostage of its flesh-envelope".

All cultural achievement is an attempt to escape the vagaries of nature, to detach oneself from its dictates and impose some order on it. Men are, apparently, "anatomically destined" for this... because they can write their names in wee on the school wall!

In Pagliaese "concentration", "directness" and "projection" are essential to make art and all these qualities are essentially male as "remarkably demonstrated by urination".

"Freud thinks primitive men preened himself on his ability to put out a fire with a stream of urine. A strange thing to be proud of, but certainly beyond the scope of women, who would scorch her hams in the process.

"Male urination really is a kind of accomplishment, an arc of transcendence. A woman merely waters the ground she stands on. Male urination is a form of commentary... Women, like female dogs are earthbound squatters. There is no projection beyond the boundaries of the self"

Women can't ever see their genitalia, and so "accept limited knowledge as their natural condition". Men can see their genitalia, and that is the source of their reason. In fact, men invented mathematics to "escape the soggy emotionalism of women". But because women are nature they do not struggle against it.

Art is men's because art and culture is the male response of women and nature. The "eye" of western art is the male eye following the "arc of transcendence" obsessively into conceptualisation and reason and "hunting and scanning" for women. The male artist turns women into sex-objects in order to fix the power of nature.

Why does all this rubbish get a hearing?

Paglia is a talented self-publicist. She poses outside a Porn Store, leather-clad and whip in hand. She speaks in sound-bits. She makes sensational attacks on Anita Hill.

And, more importantly, she is a woman whom the right can point to and cite as 700 pages of educated authority when they tell us that women have got too uppity of late. She chimes with the backlash against feminism, giving it a pseudo-academic underpinning.

Of course, people instinctively sympathise when Paglia says Michelangelo is better than a patchwork quilt from Kansas. She conjures up visions of committees of the "Politically Correct" reordering curricula and museums, turfing out the DWMS (dead white males) to install the said quilt and no doubt the accompanying dollies and knitted sweater.

I think Paglia is right about Michelangelo and "greatness" against both some old Marxism and some new



"The woman artist — for example the Impressionist Berthe Morisot — exhibits a driven quality".

feminism.

But feminists in the 1970s, like Germaine Greer and Linda Nochlin offered a very different explanation for why there are so few women artists.

Paglia says: "Women don't have the kind of obsessiveness that produces great art. You have to have this maniacal egomania, you mutilate your social life, all your personal relationships for what you are doing". She assumes she is observing natural eternal truths rooted in biology.

Yet consider women's relationship to the world of art — the everyday material and psychological framework within which training, painting, exhibiting and selling go on. Greer called it "the obstacle race".

The psychological obstacles were summed up by Virginia Woolf when she wrote, about the aspiring woman author, that "The world does not say to her, as it said to him, write if you choose; it makes no difference to me. The world said with a guffaw, 'Write? What is the good of you writing!'"

The same applies to painting. The painter Renoir said in 1881, "The woman who is an artist is merely ridiculous, but I feel it is acceptable for a woman to be a singer or a dancer".

The material obstacles were many. Women were excluded from the academies, excluded from apprenticeships, forbidden to draw the nude (which "High Art" from Renaissance until the late 19th century was based on). Aspiring women artists were

pushed into painting flowers or still lifes, of cutting up coloured paper or decorative arts.

The art world, from the Royal Academy to the Clubs to the patrons, was a male world.

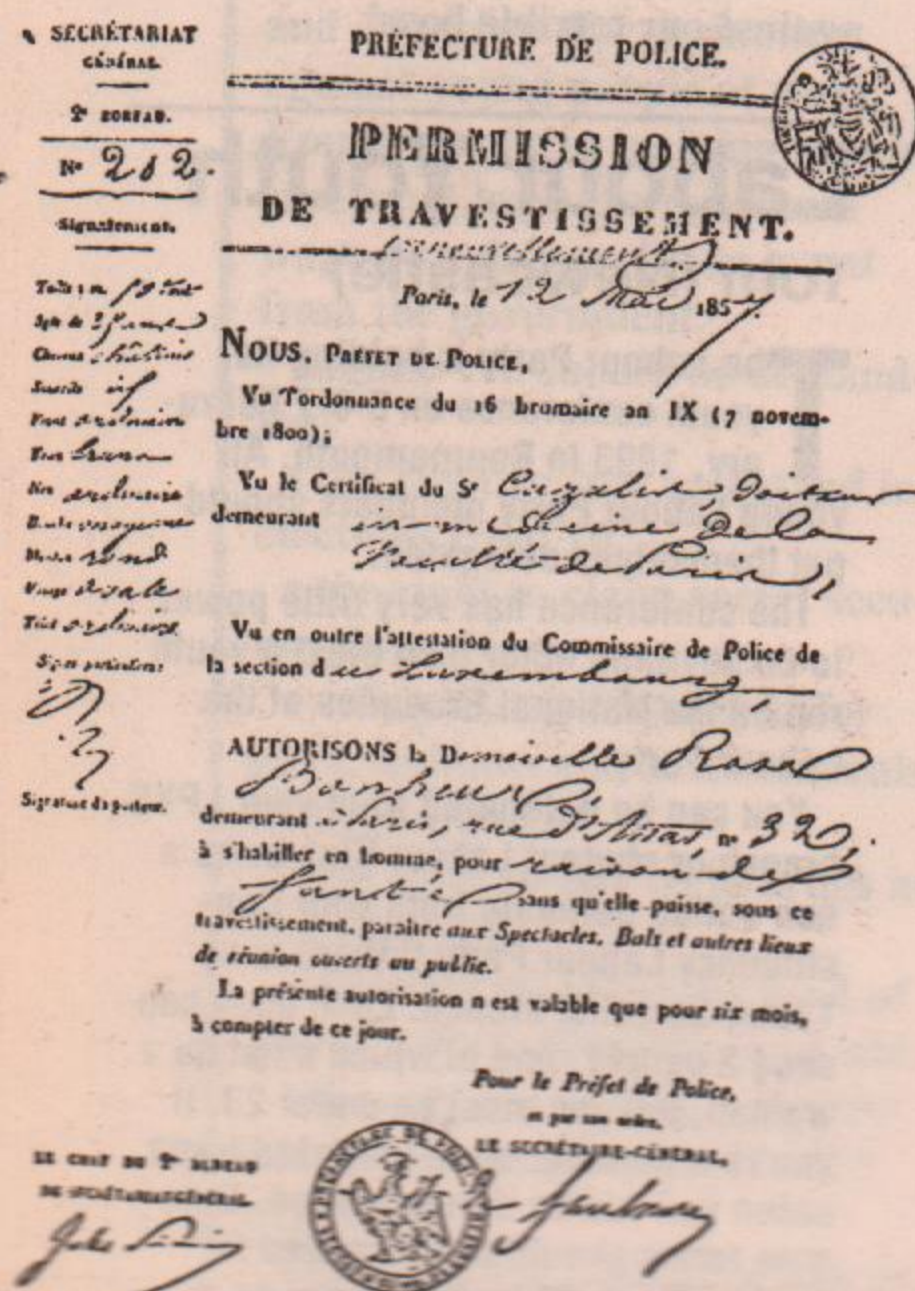
One incident can illustrate this. In 1983 Hubert Herkomer opened an Art School for both sexes. His diary recounts this incident.

"A lady came with her husband who seemed in the depths of misery at the idea of his wife studying in the life". The statement that married women were ineligible for my school had scarcely passed my lips when his entire

"The art world was not listening. Women artists through the forties and into the fifties in New York were the victims of a sort of cultural apartheid, and the ruling assumptions about the inherent weakness, derivativeness and silly femininity of women painters were almost unbelievably phallogentric".

expression changed, and he beamed with delight.

"The wife's last appeal was: 'But I am so fond of drawing; what am I to do if



The 19th century French painter Rosa Bonheur had to get a police permit to dress as a man.

women artists?



Kathe Kollwitz: a woodcut commemorating the revolutionary Karl Liebknecht, murdered by right-wing troops under Social Democrat sponsorship in 1919.

I cannot study?' That was easily answered: 'Devote your life to the

"But it is not the womb but the social, economic and psychological restrictions built into the fabric of male dominated society which have made more male Michelangelos than female ones."

happiness of your husband and children.'

"The husband lingered a little after his angry wife had passed out of my drawing room and pressed my hand with great warmth, saying: 'You have once and for all settled a dreadful family difference. I shall always be grateful to you'."

Women have been without economic independence, socially and artistically, constrained by dominant notions of 'femininity', and overwhelmed by the tasks of servicing the needs of father, husband, brother, children.

Lee Krasner, partner of the great American painter Jackson Pollock, was an enormously gifted painter. Yet, as Robert Hughes recalls: "The art world was not listening. Women artists through the forties and into the fifties in New York were the victims of a sort of cultural apartheid, and the ruling assumptions about the inherent weakness, derivativeness and silly femininity of women painters were almost unbelievably phallogentric".

And then there was Pollock himself to care for. Hughes again: "Krasner had to carry two loads of self-doubt: his and hers. Most of the time Pollock

had only his. No wonder that Krasner's full powers as an artist did not start to show until the late fifties" (i.e. after Pollock was dead).

Given such conditions it is hardly surprising women develop a single minded dedication to art in fewer numbers, with less confidence, and for shorter periods than men.

In their study of women artists Borzello and Ledwidge point out that it took a highly unusual combination of circumstances to produce a woman artist: an artist for a father, a rich family, supportive parents, a fashionable style, a sympathetic era, famous clients, a place in the art world, and a

willingness and ability to cut oneself off from society like Gwen John, or like Rosa Bonheur, to masquerade as a man.

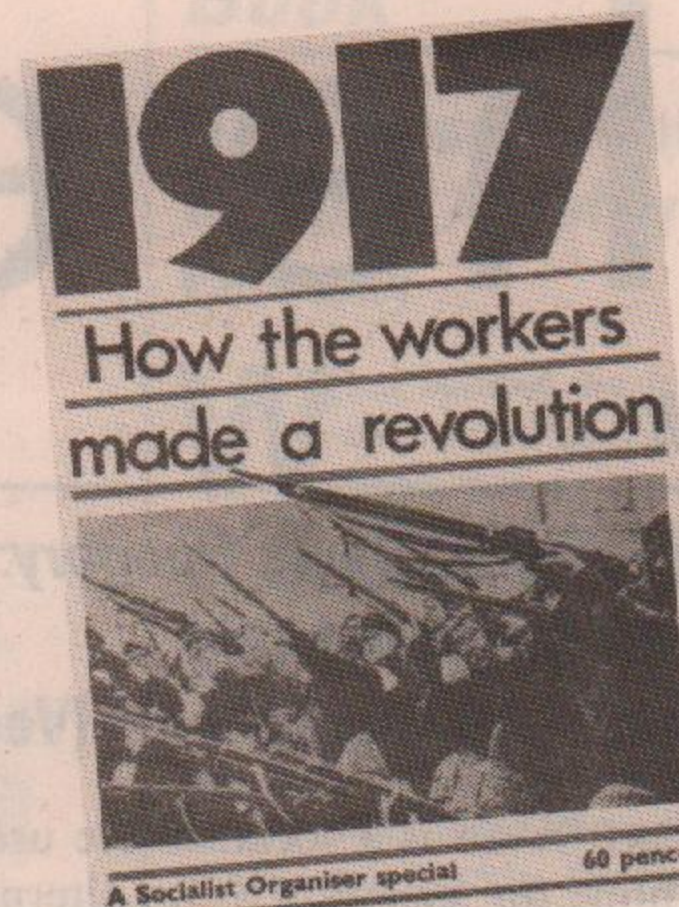
When these factors combined the woman artist - for example the Impressionist Berthe Morisot - exhibits the driven quality Paglia talks of.

Nochlin argues there is no need for "making excuses or puffing mediocrity". But it is not the womb but the social, economic and psychological restrictions built into the fabric of male dominated society which have made more male Michelangelos than female ones.



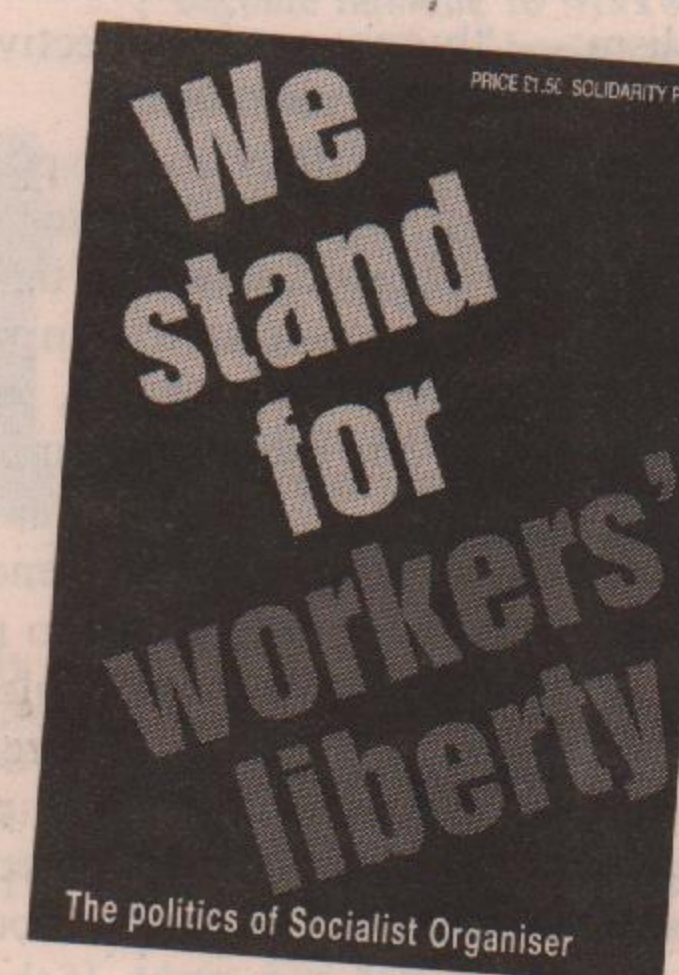
Lee Krasner: "The Guardian". "Krasner's full powers as an artist did not start to show until after her more famous partner Jackson Pollock was dead".

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Eastern Europe and the end of hope

Book

Colin Foster reviews *Hungary: the rise and fall of feasible socialism*, by Nigel Swain (Verso)

Nigel Swain is a socialist. He used to hope for socialism as an alternative to capitalism. Now he argues that the only possible socialism is a project of reforming and softening capitalism.

Yet those of us who fight for socialism as an alternative to capitalism should read this book. It is an honest, sober effort.

Swain regards the old regime in Hungary as "socialist", although in crude and bureaucratic form. We in the Alliance for Workers' Liberty would say that it was a system of class exploitation no better than capitalism — "bureaucratic collectivism" or (in my view) "state capitalism".

But that comment does not dispose of Swain's argument, which is that the failure of the centrally-planned economy in Hungary, and of the various attempts to reform it from the 1960s onwards, signals the unviability of *any* economy dominated by public ownership.

The centrally-planned economy encouraged waste by driving enterprises to reach targets of gross output, to the neglect of appropriateness and quality. Hungary's factories produced an excess of big plates and dishes, and few small ones, because that was the easiest way to meet a crockery output target defined by weight. If the target had been a number of items, then doubtless they would have produced an excess of small pieces.

Performance was assessed at fixed dates — month-ends, year-ends, and so on — and how could it have been otherwise? But that harmed quality further, as factories rushed to reach targets at the end of each period.

The system discouraged technical improvements; a factory boss who proposed a technological innovation to the central authorities could only expect a more demanding plan target next time round.

It encouraged investment in perverse forms: far more investment projects were started than the economy could afford, because every boss wanted to expand his empire, and then, inevitably, they were subject to cycles of delay and cancellation. They were finished very late, often so late that their technology was already out of date.

Meanwhile, old industrial capacity was never scrapped, for that would reduce someone's empire. And the whole lumbering system was dominated by big monopoly enterprises in heavy industry, because they were powerful in the bargaining that decided the plan.

After 1968 Hungary scrapped central-planning, stopped telling factories how much to produce, let most prices move freely, and resolved to regulate the economy instead by taxes and credits.

The change cured none of the ills of the centrally-planned economy. The same lobbying and bargaining between enterprise bosses and central officials which had shaped the previous plans continued to shape the economy, only in the form of lobbying and bargaining over taxes, credits and subsidies.

A factory which made big profits in the marketplace was sure to have them taxed



Homeless in Budapest

away by anxious central officials; one which made big losses could always lobby for subsidies to cover them as a lesser evil than the disruption if the enterprise collapsed. "Final" profits were *not correlated at all* with "marketplace" profits.

The new economic system drew resources away from health care and other social provision, and legalised a growing "second economy" of private enterprise and second jobs. All the essential evils of the old centralised system remained, and new ones were added.

"Swain is right that a workers' economy could not be created just by revising the Stalinist planning structure to replace unelected bureaucrats by workers' committees."

After new blows were struck to the floundering system by the foreign debt crisis of the 1980s, almost all Hungary's intellectuals, even those who had been sincere Marxist and democratic critics of Stalinism, concluded that public ownership must be abandoned.

Neither national nor workplace democracy can usefully decide such economic details as how many plates, or ball bearings or whatever, of various sizes should be produced. Such decisions must be made either by central administrators or by the market.

Hungary (so Swain argues) shows that deciding administratively leads to waste and stagnation. Making the administrators democratically accountable would not improve the quality of such decisions. The market must be allowed to decide, and that means it must be allowed to boost some enterprises and ruin others.

Each enterprise must be able to have a separate fate, and that means it must be

private. "In order to impose 'hard budget constraints', a society requires the legal mechanism of private property".

I think Swain is right in criticising both the Stalinist command economy and the illusion that a workers' economy could be created just by revising the Stalinist planning structure to replace unelected bureaucrats by workers' committees.

Before Stalin's turn to forced-march industrialisation in 1928-9, no Marxist proposed such detailed centralised planning. Sometimes, as Swain points out, Marx and Engels were so cursory or sweeping as to imply that a new workers' government would immediately be able to plan economically for all the needs of society; but their general principle was that "the working class have no ready-made utopias to introduce... They have no ideals to realise, but to set free the elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant".

A workers' government could take over the mighty mechanisms of planning and cooperation created by capitalism itself — the banks and the credit system, taxation, state spending, giant corporations — and use them to social ends, while continuing to allow markets to regulate details and provide information. Only at a much later stage, with more preconditions than can be discussed here, would the wholesale erosion of markets be possible.

Swain may even be right to say that the problems of over-investment, an excessive drain on resources by bigger enterprises, inadequate scrapping of old capacity, and so on, would exist as *tendencies* under such a workers' government. But why are those problems *decisive*? Why are they worse than the terrible brutalities, inhumanities and irrationalities of private enterprise? Why are they worse than the exploitation of workers by private capitalists?

Under the influence, I suppose, of Hungarian radicals, Swain ends up comparing the squalid reality of the old regime in Hungary with an *idealised model* of the free market. He minimises or dismisses — without direct evidence, as he acknowledges — the extent to which democracy could curb the problems in public owner-

ship, while blithely claiming that "personal private economic power is amenable to social democratic, reformist control, as the Swedish case illustrates".

A democratically-regulated economy with public ownership would not just be an improved version of Hungary's old regime, but its *opposite*. That old regime was not just a bit stiff and bureaucratic, but a regime of a *privileged class* exploiting the workers. All its reforms, all its initiatives, were secondary to and limited by the imperative of exploitation. The bureaucracy's defence of its privileges systematically, ruthlessly and consistently ruled out accountability, a free press, any rational approach to the international division of labour, or a labour movement with some sense of unity (rather than the mass of atomised, resentful individuals to which Stalinism reduced the populations of Eastern Europe).

Nothing that happened in Eastern Europe could be a fair test for democratic socialism. And, on the other side, there is no evidence that private ownership has the great benefits that Swain claims.

The economic irrationalities of the old regimes in Eastern Europe should not be minimised, but there is no proof at all that the new pro-market regimes will do any better — only the ardent expectations of intellectuals, looking across to the comforts of the middle class in Western Europe and hoping that privatisation will bring those joys to them.

"What is wrong with Swain's approach is that he sees the issue of capitalism versus socialism as a clash of philosophies in the committee rooms of economic power."

What is essentially wrong with Swain's whole approach, I think, is that he sees the issue of capitalism vs. socialism as a clash of philosophies in the committee rooms of economic power, linked with different moral priorities; sadly, the social planners, with their grand plans for the good of the working class, have turned out to be naive, and there is nothing for it but to yield to the market-men and try to restrain them as best we can with "community action groups... community planning initiatives... extension of the involvement of workers in workplace decision-making..."

From the point of view of the *class struggle* between workers and capitalists, the whole issue looks different.

Public ownership without working-class rule is certainly possible, as Eastern Europe shows. Working-class rule without public ownership is not. Public ownership of the major enterprises is not an option for the working class, but the only possible way it can rule. The "virtue" of public ownership is not that it is an ideal abstract model of economic regulation, but that it is a necessary form of the liberation of the working class, which in turn is necessary for the socialist emancipation of humanity from the domination of economic necessities.



Daniel Day Lewis plays Hawkeye straight and convincing

Wrecked by hindsight

Cinema

**Belinda Weaver reviews
The Last of the Mohicans**

This film is not James Fenimore Cooper's novel translated to the screen. It's director Michael Mann's view of it through a fog of anti-colonial attitudes and "politically correct" white guilt.

The film is set in 1757, when the battle of the English and French armies for control of the American colonies had already raged for three years. Cora and Alice, the two daughters of an English soldier, Colonel Munro, are seeking to join him at the fort where the British are besieged by General Montcalm's army. The girls are being led to the fort by Magua, a Huron Indian.

Magua leads them into an ambush by a Huron war party — the Hurons sided with the French in the war — and only the intervention of Hawkeye and his two Mohican friends, Chingachgook

"In his treatment of the British, Mann seems to be fighting the battles of 1776 rather than 1757. In the novel, Hawkeye scouted for the British."

and his son, Uncas, saves them from death. Hawkeye falls for Cora, but there are many perils ahead, not least a showdown with the evil Magua.

Mann uses the film to settle old scores. He adds a lame sub-plot about British betrayal of a colonial militia, to establish the British as two-faced and self-serving. In the novel, there were no lonely settlers to be massacred; the whole area was wilderness.

The film is also subtly anti-French. Montcalm, who had been open and generous to the surrendering British, is shown skulking with Magua, as if giving a tacit go-ahead to the Hurons' later massacre of the departing troops.

In his treatment of the British, Mann seems to be fighting the battles of 1776 rather than 1757. In the novel, Hawkeye scouted for the British. He was on their side, against the French, but recognised Montcalm's gracious behaviour to Munro.

That didn't suit Mann. Hawkeye has been changed beyond recognition. It's not just his invented romance with Cora; you expect that from Hollywood. It's that Mann seems ashamed of having a hero who is white.

The Hawkeye of the novel, who prided himself on his white skin, has gone completely native. Instead of demonstrating his self-reliance and wisdom learned from life in the wilderness, (which included respect for the Indian traditions, even where he disagreed with them), Hawkeye becomes a mouthpiece for one-sided, contemporary, guilt-ridden attitudes, namely, us white guys came along and trashed an Eden.

Hawkeye's speech to the ancient Huron, Sachem, is a gem of hindsight, even if it does contain important truths.

Cooper's Hawkeye felt no such guilt. He recognised evil in some white men, just as he recognised it in Indians like Magua. But he didn't blame *himself* for white misdeeds.

Mann seems incapable of pre-

senting a Hawkeye so luxuriously at ease with himself. Hawkeye has to be thrust into every squabble going, and appear on the right side, in *our* terms, rather than on his own. Hindsight is the great wrecker of costume drama.

Still, for all that, *The Last of the Mohicans* is one of the best adventure films Hollywood has made in a while.

Magua is a great villain, who vows to cut out Munro's heart and eat it. (We're spared the feast.) He and his half-naked, war-painted Indians, with their shaven heads adorned by scalping tufts and feathers, are meant to be fearsome, while Chingachgook and Uncas are reassuring in deer-skin garb and long hair. In the book, both had Mohawk haircuts and war-paint, but they've been tidied up for us. They even apolo-

"Cooper's Hawkeye recognised evil in some white men, just as he recognised it in Indians like Magua. But he didn't blame himself for white misdeeds."

gise to a stag they shoot for food.

It's been a long time since someone played a hero straightfaced, but Daniel Day-Lewis as Hawkeye rises to the occasion superbly. Luckily, Cora is allowed to be strong and resourceful, rather than a weakling crying and screaming on the sidelines. She's more than a match for Hawkeye.

It's good swashbuckling entertainment. Hawkeye and his friends always have tomahawks and rifles at the ready, and they cut down their foes with deadly aim and dashing cool.

**Right on
and
readable
Book**

Liz Millward reviews
Guardian Angel by Sara Paretsky

What spoiled my impression of Sara Paretsky's new book was going on to re-read an old and much-loved Ross MacDonald straight afterwards. Paretsky suffers by comparison, which is a shame, because the VI Warshawski novels are worth reading. This one, rumoured to be the last, is rather more leisureed than the others, and, frankly, the plot did not grip me. Despite that, I enjoyed it a lot.

Initially Warshawski hires on to find an old friend and workmate of her neighbour, and, needless to say, uncovers big business up to the old trick of ripping off the working man. But I was never really convinced that big business was doing anything bad enough to warrant the amount of murder and covering up that Warshawski came up against. Maybe I missed the point, or maybe we've all become immune to Maxwell-style fraud, but I kept hoping to find out what they were *really* trying to hide.

Better than the main plot is the second strand of the story which involves Warshawski helping to beat off the yuppies who are trying to take over her run-down neighbourhood. This strand is stretched to fit with the main story, and the joins show, but the hatred of yuppies is real enough and makes up for a lot.

The love interest is good too and, for once, Warshawski's lover turns out not to be the bad guy.

Guardian Angel is pleasantly right-on in places, but oddly jarring in others. Warshawski falls for a black man — complete with educational asides — but doesn't practise safe sex. She does no housework (good for her) but appears to have an endless supply of silk shirts and the money to have them dry-cleaned. She takes up the cause of her eccentric, elderly neighbour (owner of five out-of-control dogs) against the incoming yuppies (good), but the book is patronising to other working class neighbours who can't 'see through' the surface charm of the yuppies. Ross MacDonald may not be right-on, but no-one gets patronised either.

VI Warshawski has always been a bit self-consciously precious for my liking, emphasising the inessential of women's liberation, like not being called by pet names or doing housework, while the big issues get less attention. I'd be more impressed by a VI Warshawski who let people call her Vicky, but who didn't need a man (or his secretary) to book things up on a computer for her. Warshawski is emancipated in a thoroughly American, middle-class way — she might not need 'looking after' but she is careful to emphasise that she has successful friends, and eats in expensive restaurants as well as cheap diners. She has a cheap, unfashionable office, but out of 'choice' as much as necessity.

All the carping should not put you off *Guardian Angel*, which is well worth a walk to the nearest bookshop or library. For all that I moan about her, Warshawski is a credible detective, and the scenes of Chicago low-life are all too grubbily believable. All Sara Paretsky's novels are well-written and well-constructed, and if this one is a bit more laboured than the others, it's still streets ahead of most contemporary best-sellers.

If this is the last of the Warshawski novels, I will be disappointed. OK, so Ross MacDonald's *Lew Archer* would never have gone back to Mrs. Potter's the second time, suspending disbelief almost to breaking point, but VI Warshawski has plenty of life in her yet. Your fans want more, VI!

Skinhead chic?

Steven Long reviews *The Complete Richard Allen Volume 1*

Like being propelled, headfirst, through a windscreen, splintering your teeth on concrete, or a kick in the groin, this collection of stories by Richard Allen is a deeply unpleasant experience.

First released in the early seventies, these stories reflect a country in decline, a Britain no longer 'great', where racial hatred, criminal thuggery and street violence are the norm. Whose agents of decline — trades unionists, welfare scroungers, lefties, non-whites — meet their nemesis in Joe Hawkins, a skinhead avenger, whose verbal

and physical violence the author continually fails to condemn, as various people are left for dead or hospitalised.

The point being the need for strong government, a tougher police force, harsher sentences and a Britain prepared to defend 'traditional values'. The Tories' platform for the last fifteen years, in fact.

Richard Allen is being re-discovered by a generation of new readers, the majority of whom being the sort of people he must hate most — slackers, armchair socialists, pop psychologists, gay skinheads, a generation of whites whose belief in multi-culturalism, the welfare state and a kinder society remain undimmed. Must make you sick, Mr. Allen. Joe Hawkins — RIP.

JBS Haldane

A socialist scientist

SCIENCE COLUMN

By Les Hearn

One hundred years ago, on Guy Fawkes night, was born one of the most interesting British scientists — John Bardon Sanderson Haldane. Not only did he perform research vital to at least four different though related areas of science, but he also carried out research into poison gas defence in the First World War and research into survival of trapped submarines during the Second.

A communist, he believed in telling people what science was doing so that they could make informed judgments. For years, he wrote a popular science column in the *Daily Worker*. Later, he was to leave the Communist Party, at least partly because of Stalinist attacks on science.

Late in life, he left Britain to work for science in newly independent India and became an Indian citizen. His career is all the more remarkable because he had no formal science qualifications.

His childhood was exceptional. His father was himself a scientist who involved John in his experimental work. As a child, therefore, John found himself asked to make experimental dives or to accompany his father down mines to investigate the circumstances of explosions.

Going from Eton to Oxford to study maths, John attended zoology lectures "for relaxation". Already interested in genetics from his attending a lecture (as a boy of nine!) on the rediscovered work of Mendel, he, with his sister, the novelist Naomi Mitchison (who died recently, aged 92), carried out studies on inheritance amongst several hundred guinea pigs. He was also helping his father with the maths in his work on the properties of haemoglobin.

When the First World War started, JBS enlisted as an officer in the Black Watch. He became Bombing Officer, greatly enjoying his work. At the same time, he developed a distaste for killing which extended in later life to animals.

Later, he worked with his father developing more adequate defences to the chlorine gas that was starting to be used in war. This involved his breathing quite a bit of chlorine, typifying JBS's approach to experimental science. Rather than use animals or humans who perhaps did not understand the risks involved, he preferred to use himself and his colleagues. However, he was never opposed to the use of animals in research, where necessary.

After the war, he taught physiology at Oxford, carrying out research on himself that required his drinking hydrochloric acid, among other unpleasant chemicals.

Moving to Cambridge, he was a pioneer in the field of biochemistry, as well as doing important

work in the mathematics of inheritance. One of his discoveries is now helping with the mapping of the human genome. He also produced theories of the spontaneous development of life from the "primordial soup" of the early Earth's oceans.

During the 'thirties, the experience of the rise of fascism in Europe drove JBS towards the Communist Party. His experiences in Spain led him to campaign for effective air-raid precautions in Britain, something resisted by the Government of the day.

Despite his association with the Communist Party and his writing for the *Daily Worker*, (banned during the period of the Nazi-Soviet Pact), JBS was regularly consulted by the wartime Government over scientific issues including dangerous work for the Navy.

His work on escaping from submarines was heroic enough. It involved staying in an airtight tank until CO₂ levels were very high and then trying to use the escape apparatus available in a submarine. Later experiments on submarine escape required sitting in ice-cold water, breathing lots of CO₂, under pressure. JBS was undoubtedly risking his health and, on one occasion, his life when he suffered convulsions and unconsciousness, through oxygen poisoning. On another occasion, he badly injured his back.

After the war, Haldane continued working at University College, London, where he had been throughout the 'thirties. His loyalty to the Communist Party was tested by the Lysenko affair in the USSR. Lysenko's unscientific views on genetics had been allowed to prevail for political reasons but, worse, holders of the orthodox Mendelian views, such as JBS knew to be correct, were persecuted. Vavilov, director of the USSR's agricultural research since the '20s, was to die in a prison camp.

JBS was silent or circumspect on the Lysenko affair for a long time, hiding behind the uncertainties surrounding reports of what was happening in the USSR and not wishing to give comfort to the enemies of "communism". Eventually, he spoke out, though the delay in doing so does not reflect well on him.

By 1950, it seems he was no longer a CP member, though he continued to consider himself a Marxist. Later in the '50s, he was to emigrate to India to help build up their scientific research capabilities. He stated that he no longer wished to live in a country that invaded other countries (this was just after Suez).

A few years later he had to return to Britain for treatment for cancer of the rectum. With typical good humour and pugnacity he wrote a poem that started, "I wish I had the voice of Homer, to sing of rectal carcinoma..."

He died in 1964, leaving his body to be dissected by Indian medical students.

ORGANISING

A point of view from anti-fascists

LETTERS

As fascism grows across Europe the need for unity within the anti-racist and anti-fascist movement is crucial. The Campaign Against Fascism in Europe (CAFE) has tried to help build that unity through ad hoc campaigns, with a number of highly successful initiatives against Le Pen, David Irving and the NF.

CAFE is now being attacked by the Red Action leadership of London AFA

and by *Searchlight* editor, Gerry Gable.

In the same way as *Socialist Organiser* has been smeared by unsubstantiated allegations of vote-rigging in Sheffield, Gable smears us with scurrilous accusations, calling us conmen, adventurers, Johnny-Come-Latelys, and alleges that we are "improperly soliciting funds". As the initiators of the Ad Hoc Committee to Stop Irving, it was our specific duty to help raise these funds for those arrested at the anti-Irving demonstration, and was done with their full knowledge and agreement.

For the record, CAFE was created in 1988 as the Campaign Against Fascism in France (CAFF) by a number of anti-fascist activists, all of them deeply involved with anti-fascist activities.

If we are to stop the fascists, we need maximum unity, together with open and constructive discussion of our differences. CAFE offers a public debate on these differences as the most constructive way forward.

Jim Taylor,
Campaign Against
Fascism in Europe

AWL meetings

Thursday 12 November

"Ireland: what solution?" AWL debates the LCI at the Students' Union, University of Central England, Birmingham. 1.00.

"How to beat the Tories". Sheffield AWL meeting. 1.00. Sheffield University Students' Union.

"How to beat the Tories". Sheffield AWL meeting. 7.30, SCCAU, West Street.

Wednesday 18 November

"What is Marxism?" Luton AWL meeting. 12.00, Students' Union, Luton College. Speaker: Mark Sandell.

"Socialism and religion — are they compatible?" London AWL Forum. 7.30, Calthorpe Arms, 252 Gray's Inn Road. Speakers include Rev. Ken Leech.

"The case for socialist feminism". Goldsmith's College AWL meeting. 2.00, Students' Union.

Thursday 19 November

"How to beat the Tories". Leeds AWL meeting. 7.30, Adelphi Hotel. Speaker: John O'Mahony.

Labour Party Socialists Annual General Meeting

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Sheffield Hallam University
Students' Union

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Fighting racism

Tuesday 24 November

Anti-deportation picket for Prakash and Prem Chavrimootoo. 10.00, High Court, Strand, London. Details: 021-551 4518.

Saturday 21 November

National demonstration against the Asylum Bill. Assemble: 12.00, Hyde Park, London.

Also coming up...

Saturday 14 November

March and rally for Lyons Maid dispute. Assemble: 11.30, Broad Lane, Kirkby.

Tuesday 17 November

Torch-lit demonstration against health cuts. Assemble: 6.00, Trafalgar Square, London.

Saturday 28 November

Burnsall Strikers Support March. Assemble: 10.30, Fenton Street, Smethwick. Called by GMBU.

Back the miners

Friday 13 November

NUM demonstration, Trentham, Stoke.

Saturday 14 November

NUM demonstration, Littleton, Cannock.

Demonstrate in Merthyr Tydfil. 1.00. Speakers at rally include Arthur Scargill. Called by Wales TUC.

Wednesday 18 November

Birmingham TUC day of action. Rally: 12.30-2.00, Chamberlain Square. Evening rally: 7.30, Birmingham Town Hall.

Wednesday 25 November

Camden Solidarity meeting. 7.00, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street. Speakers include Dennis Skinner. Called by Camden Trades Council.

Marxist school

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty is organising an intensive, five-day political school from Friday 18 - Tuesday 22 December, in London.

The two themes of the school will be political economy and our programme. The reading material will be available for a small charge from 21 November.

For information about this school, please phone Mark on: 071-639 7965.

INDUSTRIAL

Tubeworkers set to strike against job losses

By a Central Line guard

RM T's ballot for strike action against the imposition of the Company Plan is now in full swing. The result is due for the 17th of this month. All the signs are that there will be a big vote for action. The ASLEF postal referendum on the Plan is due to close on the 11th. Again, this seems likely to give a no to the Plan. ASLEF will still, however, have to hold another ballot for strike action.

In the meantime, management are stepping up their campaign of intimidation and threats over the new contracts. This has provoked tremendous anger and will doubtless give a boost to the ballots. On being issued with the contracts, staff are being told that if they don't sign within five days, then they aren't guaranteed a job — this is being said for example to drivers with 35 years seniority! Management have got

legal advice on the whole issue of the contracts and how to force us into accepting them.

First, they have to interview us and issue contracts. Then we're given five days to consider them, after which we can arrange another interview. We then have three days to arrange a further interview. However, at that interview, if you don't sign, you are given twelve weeks' notice of dismissal. The difficulty is going to be sustaining the mood of anger and holding everyone together as the timetable progresses and dismissal notices start to be issued. Management will be going all out, playing on people's fears that they will be left isolated by others signing up.

We need to fight against this as vigorously as possible. With management trying to play the tactic of isolation and division, united action by the unions is paramount. It is pointless to leave this to the union bureaucra-

cies. The place to build this unity is the workplace. Joint RMT/ASLEF branch leaflets, joint branch meetings and local depot meetings to get across the message "Don't sign! Stand together!" are the kinds of initiatives that we need to see. Having said this, if numbers of workers do sign the new contracts, that is not necessarily the end of it. It is certainly possible that tubeworkers who are resentfully strong-armed into signing, may react very differently to how tube bosses think they will if a big majority for strike action is announced.

This brings us back to the ballot results. ASLEF are now under a great deal of pressure from their membership. Hopefully, they can be forced into organising a strike ballot quickly. If so, it would certainly be worthwhile for RMT to hold off their (presumed) strike so we can act together.

At the same time as building unity against the Plan in the workplaces, activists in RMT and ASLEF have particular tasks to do within the unions. ASLEF activists should be demanding workplace ballots for strike action be organised immediately — while both RMT and ASLEF activists should be arguing that any action be co-ordinated. If, for whatever reason, one union is on strike by itself, then the preparatory united work above should make it easier to argue that picket lines should be respected.

There is also the question of those staff that some people think will come into work no matter what, i.e., six month contract staff and those taking voluntary severance. Six months will be in breach of contract if they strike, but so will we all! If the Company successfully introduces the Plan on 7 December, they are straight out the door anyway. It is certainly possible, and we have had some success, to

argue with six month staff that they have got nothing to lose by striking, and, if we throw out the Plan, potentially a lot to gain.

With those taking voluntary redundancy, we can say: as long as you sign the contracts within twelve weeks, you'll get severance. The strike will be over one way or the other long before then. So stand side by side with your fellow-workers. If we lose, then so be it — sign the contracts.

Some of the RMT patriots would also include ASLEF members under those certain to come into work. RMT District Council Secretary, *Socialist Outlook* supporter Pat Sikorski, has stated that ASLEF "is no longer a union" because of its actions over the Company Plan. By the same logic, RMT is no longer a union because of its disgraceful behaviour over the victimised Manchester guards. Of course, this is nonsense: ASLEF is still a union and its members are still trade unionists. A vastly increased membership war is a fatal response (particularly on the OPO lines where ASLEF has a big majority of the drivers) to a situation that demands unity. We need a policy for tubeworkers as a whole: in TSSA, ASLEF on OPO lines across all grades and unions. Simply saying "Join RMT" is not it.

More generally, the mood on the job is a lot better than a few weeks ago. The miners' demonstrations have made a difference and people can see the Tories lurching from one crisis to another. A week is a long time in politics, but we seem to be moving towards a serious fight against London Underground Limited and their Tory puppetmasters. Over the next few weeks we need to keep on putting the message across — we must unite, only together can we win.

Lyons Maid workers stand firm

Workers at the Lyons Maid factory in Kirkby, now into the fourth week of their fight for jobs, are appealing for the maximum turnout for a march through Kirkby which they have organised for this Saturday (14 November).

As Steve Alcock, convenor at the factory, put it:

"We are calling for maximum support for our demonstration this Saturday. While the main issue for us is our fight to have all 67 workers at Lyons Maid re-instated, the march has been called in the broader context of campaigning against all job losses.

"That is why we have invited a miner from Parkside and also someone from the recent People's March for Jobs. We don't see our fight in isolation from everything else that is going on."

Despite being forced out of occupation by order of the High Court a fortnight ago, the Lyons Maid workers remain confident about saving

their jobs.

Picketing at the Kirkby plant has been maintained on a round-the-clock basis since the ending of the occupation, though three lorries — driven by USDAW members based at Clarke's factory in Stourbridge — managed to ship out some of the £700,000 worth of stock-piled ice-llies last Friday.

Trade union and Labour Party members should be working flat-out this week to ensure the biggest possible turnout for this Saturday's demonstration.

Even local MP, George Howarth, is supporting and speaking at the demonstration — this is the same George Howarth MP who refused to support the recent North-West People's March for Jobs, on the grounds that demonstrations were out-of-date in this age of mass media!

Assemble for march at 11.30, Saturday 14 November, Broad Lane Sports Field, Southdene, Kirkby.

ASLEF should give a positive lead, say rank-and-file

Dear ASLEF,

Train operators at Neasden depot are dissatisfied with the present situation.

We have received too little information from our union and too late! We are still awaiting a follow up to the nomination forms.

There are 300 operators at Neasden but we have not seen anyone from ASLEF to explain the union's position or listen to our questions.

Furthermore we would like to see some mass meetings organised where we can discuss our dilemma and unify ourselves.

Finally we believe that ASLEF have been far too passive in respect to the Company Plan. We are not interested in a new contract etc., at any price!

We are looking to our union to be positive and lead the way in defending management's impositions.

This petition, circulated by rank-and-file ASLEF members, was signed by hundreds of members.

London councils: where now after November 4?

By a Tower Hamlets NALGO worker

The NALGO day of action on November 4 was a missed opportunity. The Met District called the day of action in response to the disputes in many London boroughs over compulsory redundancies, and

cuts. It stepped back from making the day a focus for escalation of that action.

The District insisted they were not calling on branches to strike. The fear of anti-union legislation being used by the employers as in the Newham dispute has paralysed the NALGO leadership. Even in terms of basic organisation, however, like publicity, the

effort was less than half-hearted. Many demonstrators were locked out of their own union rally which was held in a hall holding 350 people and was ticket-only. That said, 2,000-odd people attended, and some people were on strike proving that the left branches have been able to get the District to call some form of action.

Bury NALGO strike over victimisation

By Tony Dale, NALGO Convenor, Housing Department, Manchester Council

1,500 white-collar Bury Council workers took part in a NALGO branch-wide, one-day strike on Wednesday 4 November in support of victimised Branch Secretary Rob McLaughlin and against threatened cuts and redundancies.

95% of Bury NALGO members joined the strike in an impressive show of strength against the Council. The message is clear — stop the cuts and reinstate Rob McLaughlin, who was sacked for running an anti-cuts campaign.

Rob was suspended in early summer after the branch refused to withdraw a series of satirical

posters, and sacked following a stitched-up disciplinary hearing. Now, over 100 key workers in the Council's income sections have been balloted on indefinite strike action. The ballot should produce a clear majority for strike action.

The Council has made sacking threats against key workers taking strike action. However, at the same time, following the successful 4 November strike, the Council appears to be softening its stance.

Bury Council can be forced into a U-turn. The indefinite strike by key workers, combined with further one-day, branch-wide strikes, will bring victory.

If the national NALGO anti-cuts strategy means anything, branches like Bury should be given full backing to defend activists and confront the cuts.

The dispute in Islington over compulsory redundancies is still raging. Newham have voted 57% in favour to resume all-out indefinite action in pursuance of a proper return to work agreement and guarantees of no victimisations and no compulsory redundancies. The success of these disputes is vital for NALGO. The autumn statement, including plans for a public sector pay freeze and massive expenditure cuts, is a declaration of war against the public sector unions.

NALGO must begin to make its anti-cuts strategy a reality with a national demonstration and day of action against the cuts soon. We need an emergency national conference on the cuts and the anti-union laws.

The Met District plans a London-wide stewards' conference in January. This should be used to start resistance to the employers and the Government's plans to attack NALGO members. Districts up and down the country should follow suit and real links and action should be planned with other public sector unions, especially NUPE and COHSE.

Dennis Skinner has spoken recently about this winter making the 'Winter of Discontent' "look like a tea party." Public sector trade unionists need to start organising.

UCW: reject 3.5%!

Postalworkers have been offered an insulting 'improved' pay offer of 3.5%.

This is still below inflation at a time when the Post Office have made huge profits and postalworkers could lead the fight against wage cuts.

UCW activists need to fight for rejection in the branch ballot.

Ford workers ballot for action

Ford management want to cut 1,400 jobs and slash pay to 60% of current levels by January.

The unions have agreed to ballot for action, but leading negotiator, Jack Adams, is downplaying the possibility of serious action. It looks like the officials want to use a ballot vote for action mainly to strengthen their hands in negotiations.

CPSA needs open, democratic left unity

By a CPSA worker

At CPSA Broad Left (BL) conference last weekend, Militant supporters in the leadership showed that they have learnt nothing from the defeats suffered by the left in the Union over the past years. The failure of the BL to lead fights against Tory attacks has culminated in the strengthening of the right-wing stranglehold on the Union. The sectarian attitude of Militant towards those on the left who hold different ideas is reflected in the fact that, instead of growing, the BL appears to be shrinking. Only 167 people attended.

As the leadership of the BL, Militant's undemocratic behaviour is a disgrace. Their motions head every section, slates are packed with Militant supporters and the National BL Chair could teach the much-criticised CPSA President Marion Chambers a few tricks.

In the debate on Contracting-Out — the most serious issue affecting civil servants — Militant supporters rejected a comprehensive fighting strategy and voted instead for their own motion, full of empty rhetoric and meaningless phrases. In debate, Militant supporters made it clear that they would not support the rank-and-file conference against Contracting-Out organised by CPSA and IRSF BL members, and sponsored by NUCPS Open Left. Instead, the Militant want to keep tight control on a CPSA BL "event". NUCPS Open Left have been invited — however, it was clear that they would not be equal partners.

The debate on left unity was amongst the most important and heated at the conference. In view of the right-wing domi-

nance in the annual National Executive Committee (NEC) elections, motions came forward to attempt to unite with other broadly left factions to defeat the right through an electoral pact. Supporters of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty argued for an open, democratic conference where a slate — based on a minimum programme of support for all workers in struggle and opposition to witch-hunts — would be agreed on the basis of proportional representation, thus ensuring that no one group would dominate the slate.

Unfortunately, the motion was defeated. The saddest thing about the debate was that many self-styled BL 'loyalists' took the rostrum with the sole purpose of telling lies. They tried to present AWL-ers, who have been long-standing advocates of non-sectarian left unity, as 'splitters' while conveniently forgetting that until seven months ago, all they had to say about left unity was 'join the Broad Left'.

This shouldn't be surprising. Militant's guiding principle in the BL seems to be "when in trouble, lie". This behaviour appears to be contagious. The only antidote is for serious activists to go and build the BL's 'left unity' event in the new year with the aim of transforming it into a genuinely broad, open and democratic conference of the left.

As things stand, the only concrete proposal about left unity with any certainty of being implemented is the idea of voting for former leading 'moderate' and witch-hunter, Margaret Kay, for President!

National Miners' Support Network

A much needed national miners' support network has been launched. It is backed by the Socialist Campaign Group of MPs, Women Against Pit Closures and the NUM. The network is producing a special solidarity bulletin, 'Coal not Dole!' Order your copies now!

The network can be contacted by writing to the Secretary, Jeremy Corbyn MP, 129a Seven Sisters Road, London N7 7QG. Fax: 071-281 5720.

YOUTH FIGHTBACK

The bulletin for well red youth
Inside: unemployment, the
bosses' whip • unionising a
workplace • and lots more
Produced as part of Socialist Organiser
by AWL youth (turn to centre pages)

Grand Xmas Draw!

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty is holding an Xmas raffle.
First prize: video recorder
Second prize: colour television
Third prize: Xmas hamper.
The draw will take place on Tuesday 22 December.

Raffle tickets are 50 pence each and ticket books and further details are available from Grand Xmas Draw, AWL, PO Box 823, London SE14 4NA.

Help your socialist paper!

Socialist Organiser is raising extra funds to help the paper expand.

Our fund target is £5,000 by the end of January 1993. Our running total stands at £2,021.80.

Why not help us?

You can send a cheque or postal order (payable to "Socialist Organiser") to: PO Box 823, London SE15 5NA.

Black and white unite and fight



STOP THE ASYLUM BILL!

Thousands of youth and students will be joining refugee organisations, anti-racist campaigns and trade unions to demonstrate against the Tories' racist Asylum Bill, in London on Saturday 21 November. The Asylum Bill aims to stop refugees, especially black refugees, entering Britain. The Tory Bill will make it more difficult for the victims of the Yugoslav war or trade unionists escaping the Turkish Government, or Tamil refugees to live in safety in Britain.

The Tories hope that British workers will blame immigrants for unemployment. In particular, the Tories want to turn black against white.

This is cynical and disgusting!

Youth Fightback says that white workers and youth must unite with black to fight racism and defeat the Tories. We say: refugees are welcome here!

Youth Fightback centre pages

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Demonstrate! Assemble at 12.00, Saturday 21 November, Hyde Park, London.