

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Unite the left!

Inside this week



centre pages

Fight capitalism to fight racism!

page 3

Why doesn't Labour fight?

pages 4-5

Left challenge at CPSA conference

£230,000 for Bank boss, pay freeze for us

EXPOSED

TORY PAY RIP-OFF

A TINY HANDFUL of rich people — the top three per cent of households in Britain — have about £42 billion in personal income, in addition to the industrial, commercial, and financial investment they control.

That £42 billion is *two or three times* as much as it would cost to put all four million unemployed into public service jobs, expanding health, education, and other services beyond recognition.

Continued on page 2

Smash the 1.5% pay limit!

Swan Hunter closure will wreck Tyneside

By Garry Young

ONE HUNDRED and twenty years of specialist engineering on Tyneside look set to end. Last Thursday (13 May) receivers moved in on Swan Hunters, the last shipbuilding yard not only on the Tyne but in the whole of the North-East.

Swans had held out for the new Royal Navy helicopter aircraft carrier (LPH) as their only lifeline for survival. Last Tuesday (11 May) it was announced the order would be going to VSEL in Barrow, the yard which builds Trident submarines.

Workers at Swans have been and asked to return to work on

Monday (17 May) to complete orders already in progress. Once this work is finished — refitting three Royal Navy frigates — the order books are empty and Swan's gates will close for good. 2,200 directly employed workers will receive redundancy notices — redundancy payments look unlikely. Estimates of total job losses, including contractors and suppliers, are 6,000.

This, on top of the pit closure programme, will leave Tyneside without any major employer. Communities around Swans already have an unemployment rate of 1 in 3.

Controversy surrounds the eventual placement of the LPH

order. Swan's management claim the specifications given to VSEL were not the same as those given to Swans.

Could this be a vendetta against Swans by the MOD, who dispute the £20 million debt they owe Swans for previous work? Or, could this be the MOD implicitly helping the Tory government for party political reasons? Cumbria has two Tory seats, one MP and one MEP. Tyneside has one Tory seat with a majority of only 200 which they look set to lose at the next general election.

Industry Minister, Tim Sainsbury, said calls to save Swans "were looking back to the '70s" describing shipbuilding as a

'sunset' old-fashioned industry. Even from a capitalist point of view this is irrational gibberish. Obviously Tim has never stepped foot in a shipyard, or he would have seen that today shipbuilding is a 'high-tech' industry with highly skilled workers.

Later Tim Sainsbury announced a £4.5 million aid package for Tyneside to help alleviate the effects of Swan's closure. £2 million of the money was from the aid package supposedly alleviating the effects of the pit closure programme. The aid packages are not to stop closures, but instead to 'teach' unemployed miners and shipyard workers how to 'hunt' for

jobs. Tim Sainsbury didn't make clear where these jobs are. What is absolutely clear is that Tory lying, pragmatism and inertia is putting 6000 more

workers onto an ever increasing dole queue, with our families and communities again left to bear the sharp end of capitalism's failure.

"The workers always lose the capitalist game"
"The closure of Swan Hunter's is yet another unnecessary defeat for shipbuilding workers."
"For the last fifteen years or so we've seen the old story repeated of one yard played against another. We are seeing yet again it today with workers at VSEL pitched against workers at Swan Hunters."
"If we had stood and fought on the policy of occupation against enforced redundancies backed up by national action across the yards then we could have won."
But instead each group of workers have been left to fight alone. This lack of unity across the yards was encouraged by union officials who tried to keep disputes isolated. The workers have tried to pay the capitalist game and as always we lose"
Sacked Cammell Lairds steward



Supporters get supplies through, despite British Coal security to 4 women who have chained themselves to machinery at Trentham pit head in protest at pit closures. 13 May. Photo: John Harris

Endgame in Bosnia

By Steven Holt

THE BLOODSHED in Bosnia-Herzegovina continues with no hopeful signs in sight. In the western and northern parts, Muslim enclaves are under pressure from the Serbs and in the south-east the Croats are driving Muslims out of an area assigned to Croats under the Vance-Owen plan.

In Sarajevo the remaining forces of Izetbegovic's government — Muslims, Croats and Serbs — remain under fire from the besieging Serb chauvinists.

The presence of the small UN military contingents has probably saved hundreds of Muslims from death at the hands of Croats around Mostar and Serbs around Srebrenica. While we should not trust the UN, or the cynical and blundering policies of the big powers, this fact should sober up those on the left who have crudely denounced the UN presence as "imperialism".

Bosnia-Herzegovina is now being effectively partitioned into a Serb part and a Croat part, apart from Sarajevo and a few Muslim enclaves. It is quite likely that the Serb and Croat militia leaders

and their backers in Belgrade and Zagreb will get this accepted by the western powers, *de facto* if not in a formal treaty. The UN might end up safeguarding the Muslim enclaves as Europe's West Bank.

If the western powers do decide to intervene more energetically, the new Russian plan, to send in more ground troops to enforce a ceasefire gradually, has a greater chance of results than Clinton's idea of bombing the Serbs, which would only

intensify the violence and force withdrawal of the UN forces or their involvement in a major war.

It is not possible to be optimistic that an acceptable solution can be found in Bosnia-Herzegovina — or in similar conflicts between ethnic/religious groups in Afghanistan, Georgia and Nagorno-Karabakh, for example. Only by winning the working class to socialism and democracy can such barbarous wars be avoided.

Maastricht: Danish vote can increase Tory split

By Steven Holt

AS WE GO to press, voters in Denmark seem likely to endorse the Maastricht Treaty in their referendum on 18 May.

After the Danish result, pressure will be put on Major to get the Maastricht Treaty through Parliament, and this is where Labour must fight, to capitalise on the Tories' splits and to get the Social Chapter included. Maastricht presents big problems to the Tories because they are so split between nationalists and Euro-Tories and one possibility is that Major will continue to delay until the whole process breaks down.

The big problems faced by the capitalists throughout Europe are rising unemployment, low investment and monetary instability leading to diverging economies (so no common currency) and growing nationalist feeling, all of which work against integration.

Socialists can gain nothing from the likely failure of the Maastricht Treaty if the alternative is nationalism. The only way forward is to work to build solidarity of workers internationally.

Exposed: Tory pay rip off

From front page

As public service cuts get sharper and meaner, the top bosses are voting themselves bigger and bigger pay-outs. The new boss of the Bank of England will get over £200,000 a year (the Bank refuses to give the exact figure). Royal Bank of Scotland boss Peter Wood will get £10 million this year. Last year National Power boss John Baker took a 160% pay rise, building boss Bobby McAlpine took a 60% rise, airways boss

Lord King took 64%, and Barclays boss John Quinton took 22% (*Sunday Times*, 11 October 1992).

The gap between rich and poor is growing. Between 1979 and 1989, the average income of the best-off 20% of households rose by nearly 40% after allowing for inflation, while the average income of the worst-off 20% dropped 5% (*Financial Times*, 28 March 1991).

Cuts and pay freezes are only the flipside of hand-outs to the

rich. They are "necessary" only for capitalism. The wealth of society should be democratically controlled by the people who create it, not confiscated by a small minority.

Socialist Organiser will be missing an issue next week, 27 May, for the Whit bank holiday. Number 565 will be out on Thursday 3 June.

Islington: save our nurseries!

By Martin Thomas

RIGHT-WING councillors filibustered at an Islington council Labour Group meeting on Monday 17 May to avoid a vote on reversing their decision to close two nurseries.

The nurseries have been occupied 24 hours a day by workers, parents, and children since 5 May, to stop the closures.

Some Labour councillors outside the usual left-wing minority have said they now oppose the closures, and at a meeting with workers and parents on 11 May council leader Derek Sawyer promised to look into alternatives.

The strategy of the Labour right-wing is now, it seems, to stall and hope the occupations collapse or the public agitation dies away. They have been helped by NALGO's national leaders, who have repudiated the occupations. But the councillors have not reckoned with the anger and determination of the workers and parents.

The way to win now is to keep the occupations running and step up political pressure on the council through every means available — public agitation, Labour Party channels, solidarity action by other council workers.

The workers and parents at the occupied nurseries are fighting for the future of every small child in Islington, and especially of the hundreds on the nursery waiting lists. They deserve, and need, widespread support.

Trade union branches, Labour Parties, and student unions should send donations and messages of support (with copies to Derek Sawyer at the Town Hall, Upper St, London N1 2UD). NALGO branches should send letters of protest about the repudiation of the action to NALGO HQ. Individual activists can help by raising money and by helping with the overnight rota at the occupied nurseries.

Important dates coming up are: Monday 24 May, 7.00, lobby of council Education Committee, at

the Town Hall; Wednesday 2 June, Labour Party ward meetings throughout Islington.

Contact: Harvist Under-Fives Education Centre, 100 Hornsey Road, London N7 (071-609 0319), and Springdale UFEC, 15A Springdale Road, London N16 (071-254 7937).

National conference
Campaign to save Nursery Provision
10am to 4pm,
Saturday 22 May
Leisure Centre,
Seymour Hall,
Seymour Place,
London W1.

Workers' Liberty '93 Black Panther speaks in London

Michael Zinzun, former Black Panther and current leader of the Los Angeles Coalition Against Police Abuse, will speak at Workers' Liberty '93, Friday 2 to Sunday 4 July at Caxton House, 129 St John's Way, London N19. Michael will discuss *The legacy of the Black Panthers and Los Angeles* — one year on.



Michael Zinzun

Zinzun has worked alongside community activists to maintain the truce between the Crips and the Bloods in LA. Michael's sessions are part of a broader Black History Course which includes discussions about • Marcus Garvey • Malcolm X • Martin Luther King • Black workers' struggles in Britain • Where now for the Black communities? Workers' Liberty '93 is

three days of socialist debate hosted by the Alliance for Workers' Liberty and the weekly paper *Socialist Organiser*. To be sure of getting in — get a programme [programme gets you entry to the event]. • Before end June: unwaged £7/low-waged-

students £11/waged £16 • On the door: unwaged £8/low-waged-students £12/waged £19. Cheques/postal orders payable to "WL Publications". Send to: WL '93, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

More details: phone Mark on 071-639 7965.

Labour's right-wing drift and the tasks of socialists

Why won't Labour fight?

“We have become very timid about opposing orthodox views. We tag along.

“We attack every proposal to cut defence spending, for example. Sometimes we attack the Tories for cutting when it is clearly absolutely essential...

“We're reluctant to offend anyone”.

Is this some Labour left-winger lambasting the “me-too” leadership of John Smith, Gordon Brown, and Tony Blair? No, it is veteran Labour right-winger Denis Healey, in the *Guardian* of 15 May.

Healey is right. Even from a right-wing reformist, social-democratic point of view, the current Labour leadership is miserably feeble.

As well as arms spending, Healey mentioned the Labour leaders' panicked retreat, after the General Election, from their modestly redistributive tax proposals, which would mean higher taxes for people with incomes above about £25,000.

Some other examples have been grotesque. When wealthy investors in the Lloyds insurance market called for Government hand-outs to make good their expected losses (after many years of big profits!), the Labour front-bench rushed in to say that they would not oppose the hand-outs. They had to retreat in confusion when the Tories outflanked them on the left, refusing the hand-outs!

Another example: Labour's National Executive refused to call for a cease-fire in the Gulf War even a few hours before US president George Bush called the cease-fire.

And another: Tony Blair's creepy-crawly response to the Tories' demagogic campaign branding Britain's youth as “teenage villains” and proposing more prisons and borstals. Police chiefs and bishops criticised the Tories, pointing out that rising crime is rooted in poverty, unemployment, and frustration - but that was too left wing for Blair!

Healey explains it all as “one of the tragic legacies of Benery”. In a way he is right.

The left-wing upsurge in the Labour Party in 1979-81, symbolised by Tony Benn, did not make the Labour Party socialist. It did make it unstable and unreliable from the point of view of the ruling class.

Ever since a new soft-left/right coalition regained firm control of the Labour Party, in the mid-



The left has to offer socialist answers to workers like those at Burnsall in Birmingham (above). Photo: Mark Salmon

1980s, they have been trying to live it down.

Sober suits, lunches in the City, extravagant disavowals of all radical intentions - all these are aimed at convincing the ruling class that Labour is safe and respectable again.

Labour's new leaders are indeed “reluctant to offend anyone” in the Establishment. They are not reluctant at all to expel Labour Party members and offend working-class Labour supporters. So anxious are they about restoring their respectability that they will not even be as radical and outspoken as ordinary competitive parliamentary politics should lead any opposition party to be.

“Even from a right-wing reformist, social-democratic point of view, the current Labour leadership is miserably feeble.”

Labour's “new right”, people like Gordon Brown and David Blunkett who were leftist in the

early 1980s, are often worse than the “old right” typified by Healey. They are more panicky, more thoroughly dominated in their thinking by the Tory triumphs and working-class depression of the 1980s, more willing to cut any ties to the working class.

What is to be done? The situation creates two dangers for socialists.

The first is to let ourselves be pulled to the right by the rightward drift of the Labour leaders and the whole labour movement.

Some Labour left-wingers have shelved all talk of socialism, public ownership, or workers' control, as impossibly radical. Instead they clutch at causes which seem popular and in which they think they can see some sort of left-wing angle, like opposition to Maastricht and broad popular-front opposition to racism. Ken Livingstone MP exemplifies this trend.

It looks like a realistic response to adverse conditions, but it is irresponsible. Capitalism is in a terrible mess. Unemployment, poverty, and racism are increasing. Whatever the adverse climate in the labour movement, whatever the problems, socialists have to give answers to working-class people (especially young people) embittered and angered by the rot around them.

And there are no answers except radical, revolutionary ones. For socialists to limit ourselves to catchpenny campaigns is to make ourselves irrelevant.

“The working-class movement will revive: indeed, since last October, it has begun to revive, slowly and unevenly”.

The second danger is the sectarian one - allowing the rightward drift of the labour movement to push us into going off and trying to organise our “own” little movement in parallel.

The Socialist Workers' Party and “Militant Labour” exemplify this trend.

The alternative — organising socialists to fight for working-class politics, within the trade unions and the Labour Party — does not offer instant results. If the working class, and the working-class movement, are depressed by defeats and mass unemployment, then socialists

who base ourselves on the working-class movement cannot leap over that problem.

We know, however, that the working-class movement will revive: indeed, since last October, it has begun to revive, slowly and unevenly. We know that when working-class militancy revives, it will express itself chiefly through the established labour movement, and not through this or that small self-proclaimed “alternative”.

We know that every bit of work done now to build an effective organisation of dedicated, competent, well-educated and clear-headed activists, with solid roots in the labour movement and the workplaces, will be repaid a hundred times over in the struggles to come.

“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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Why the rail ballot was lost

THE ONE-DAY strikes by railworkers' union RMT over job losses and the use of contractors are over.

By a margin of just 183 votes, RMT members have voted to accept BR's "improved offer".

This is a serious defeat not just for railworkers but also for the beleaguered miners who saw us as their major immediate ally against the Tory government.

Railworkers now have to ask themselves why this happened.

Well, for a start, we have to point the finger of blame at Knapp and the "Magnificent Seven" on the Executive. These people wanted to accept the offer in the first place, they manoeuvred to force the issue to a ballot and then finally refused to campaign for the view of the clear majority on the executive.

The officials at Unity House did absolutely nothing to win a yes vote.

The only information put out to members which was of any use to activists in arguing for a 'yes' vote either come from papers like *SO* or from district councils and branches. The leaders refused to lead.

The timing of the ballot also has to be questioned. Balloting took place while over 130 of the best activists in the union were in Ayr for the trade grades conference.

This meant that some of the best fighters in the union with direct experience of the effects of contractors were taken out of the equation.

But the ballot result can't just be explained by blaming the sabotage of the full-timers, the reasons for this defeat go deeper.

At lot of people really believed that BR had given all the guarantees they could. "The BRB have given us guarantees right up until privatisation, how can they give us anything else?" went the argument.

This had a big effect. It shows the problem associated with just trying to fight the effects of privatisation without linking this to the fight to stop privatisation *itself*. We will have to re-examine the issue at the RMT AGM at the end of June.

At the end of the day, Knapp and the "Magnificent Seven" have behaved no differently from Derek Fullick of ASLEF. Both made a lot of noise about fighting BR and linking up to the miners and both settled for meaningless "guarantees".

We are now going to have to keep a very close eye on the Executive, there is a very real danger that they will move to accept the government's 1.5% pay offer.

Perhaps the most important lesson of all is the need for a serious campaigning rank and file movement on the railways. The need to create some permanent structure for the Campaign for a Democratic and Fighting Union should now be obvious to all of us.

INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper

Where now for Civil Service Unite to defeat

Trudy Saunders, DsHSS Section Editor, looks at what the left in the low-paid civil servants' union, CPSA, needs to do now.

THE LEFT were allowed their moments of frustrated glory at 1993 CPSA Conference. But for the remaining 51 weeks of the year the union will be run from Falcon Road by a right-wing NEC who have absolutely no intention of leading a fight against the central, overwhelming issue facing us — Market Testing.

The Tories no doubt breathed a sigh of relief, and well they might. A right-wing NEC was returned to power and a meaningless set of policies were carried, notably and most importantly over the issue of Market Testing.

However traitorous the right-wing NEC, we must restate that the Tories are the main enemy. To do otherwise is to lose sight of the wood for the trees.

Our starting point is the fight against the Tories' Market Testing plans. By uniting members around this issue we will inevitably build an opposition to the "Moderates" which will oust them from the NEC.

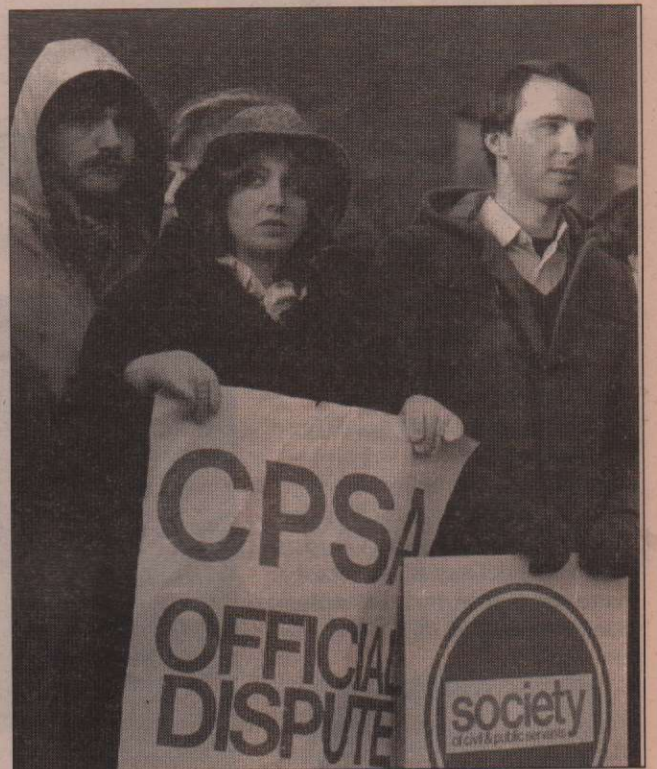
The 25,000 members who voted in the national elections

are unlikely to be shifted as a bloc from their respective allegiances. It is the 100,000 non-voters we must appeal to. If we are unable to appeal to the majority of CPSA members and unite them in a fight against Market Testing then we won't beat the Tories.

The non-voters are unlikely to be persuaded to vote on the basis of the meaningless policies of the "Unity" campaign or horror stories about Barry Reamsbottom and Marion Chambers. They can, however, be united on fighting policies to defend their own interests. That is the only basis on which the Moderates can be defeated in next year's election.

Our task is to build for national all-out strike action amongst the membership. The foundations for this were laid by Mark Serwotka's Presidential campaign. Unfortunately, the Market Testing motion carried at Conference (No 355) does not even demand that the National Disputes Committee sanction strike action by branches.

The NDC have turned down strike submissions from branches and Sections (DoE). We must continue ringing the alarm bells over Market Testing; highlight the effects; stress the political fight; argue against in-house bids; that TUPE is not a solution; and push branches and sections to put up strike submissions,



Unity on the picket line is the way forward

uniting where possible.

Where the NDC turn down submissions, we should argue for unofficial action where possible. This is the only way of pressurising the NEC to take action, even within the terms of Motion 355.

The Tories are under pressure. They have recently suffered devastating election defeats in Newbury and the County Council elections. The European Law on terms and conditions of contracted-out workers is causing them

problems. We must increase that pressure and not just sit back and rely on the EC laws.

If we can concentrate on mobilising the members to defeat Market Testing then we will build an opposition movement that can break the back of the Moderates and democratise our union.

But we can only do this by concentrating our fire on the Tories and not just their right-wing stooges.

Let us fight the organ grinder, not the monkey!

Margaret Kaye: unacceptable face of unity

By John Moloney
DoE/DTP

THE LARGEST fringe meeting of CPSA conference was the Left Unity rally. With 400 people. All agreed that the Tories and the Moderates had to be fought, but there was little said about *how* we fight them.

The most interesting speech from a political point of view was from Margaret Kaye, who used to be a member of the

right-wing Moderate group which controls the NEC. After a bust-up with the Moderates' leader, Marion Chambers, Kaye is now an "independent".

The first thing Kaye said was that the "Left" should be dropped from "Left Unity". She warned that many people would not vote for any election slate which contained the word "left".

At the end of her speech she said she had no regrets about anything she had done in the

past: "I sleep easy at nights". Since she had played a part in trying to get activists expelled from the Union, shutting down branches and witch-hunting activists, she obviously meant that she has no regrets about her role in these things.

So what was she doing at the meeting? The basic answer is that *Militant* wanted her there. They see Kaye as adding width to their United Front. Unfortunately, they have completely upended the purpose of a United

Front. Instead of marching separately and striking together, with Kaye its march together but don't strike at all.

Any campaign which involves Kaye as a key player can't be serious about getting strike action against Market Testing. She might have left the Moderates, but she still shares their basic world view. To accommodate her means dragging the policies of "Left Unity" to the right.

At a time when Civil Service workers are increasingly worried about Market Testing; when it is possible to mobilise them for a fight; when, to use an old *Militant* cliché, the membership is starting to move to the left, it is madness to move rightwards in order to do deals with a right-winger who has no electoral base whatsoever.

All activists should challenge *Militant* comrades and ask them what they are trying to do. *Militant* should dump Kaye and start talking to the genuine left activists of the Socialist Caucus. That is, start acting as class fighters, not electoral wheeler dealers.

DsHSS executive must lead Market Testing fightback

By a DSS worker, Brighton

THE BROAD LEFT won a massive victory over the right wing in the DsHSS SEC elections, winning every position but one decisively. The right wing were given the Deputy Chair position on a plate when Steve Cawkwell stood against BL member Mark Serwotka as "punishment" for Mark standing against "Unity" candidate Albert Astbury for President.

The ball is now in the BL's court. We no longer have a dictatorial, right-wing Chair to contend with. The BL must use its position to organise a massive fightback of DsHSS members against Market Testing.

The policy of the SEC and that passed by confer-

ence is clearly inadequate. A rolling programme of strike action in the Benefit Agency areas around a set of demands rather than for the complete withdrawal of Market Testing plans is tactically inept.

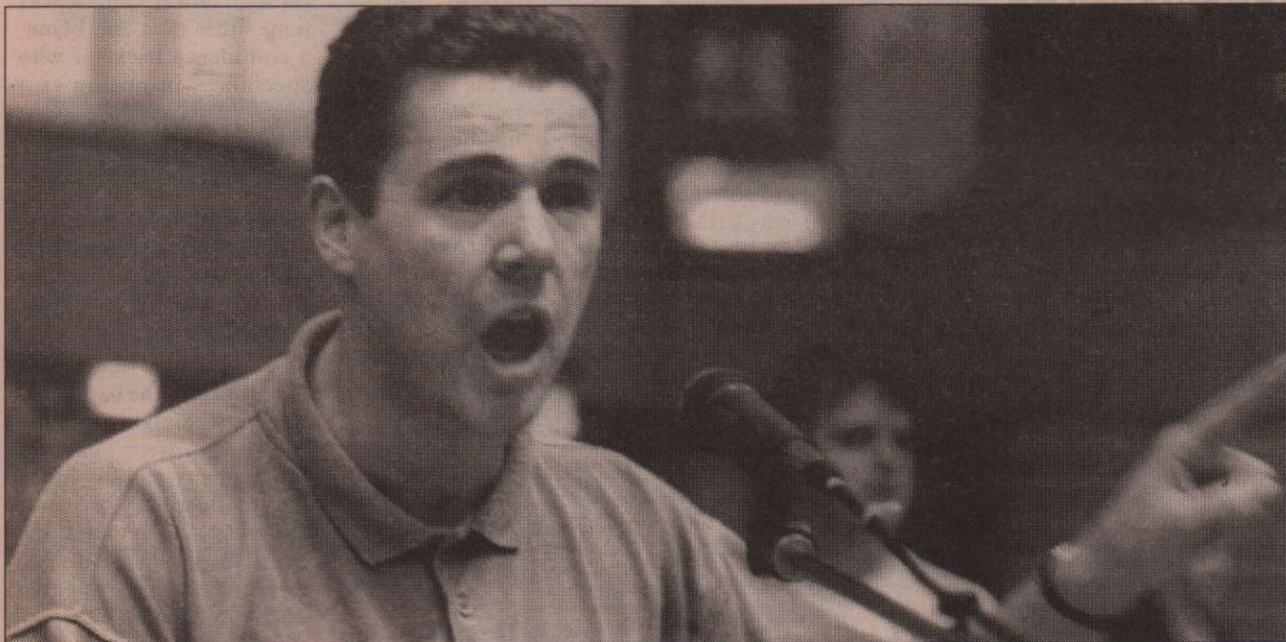
Market Testing teams are in offices across the whole of the DsHSS now.

The SEC must campaign amongst all those directly affected arguing for non-cooperation with the teams, and walkouts. It must unite all members in the DsHSS in all-out strike action to defeat Market Testing.

By doing this, DsHSS members will send a clear signal to the National Executive Committee that they should lead coordinated national all-out strike action. The BL SEC must not fritter away its time in office. It must lead the fightback.

workers?

Market Testing



Mark Serwotka: his campaign established the fighting left as a force in the union

"A platform for action"

By Mark Serwotka
DSS Rotherham

I STOOD FOR President in order to use the campaign as a platform to argue the need for an all-out strike to defeat Market Testing.

We have achieved this aim. Our campaign has set the agenda in this union. We have put out over 50,000 leaflets explaining the case for unity around a serious fight to defeat Market Testing. Every decent activist in the union now knows we need this action to win.

Even Astbury started to raise this demand, but not

until the ballot boxes closed.

Our campaign has also shown that the members are not afraid of left-wing policies. I have been slandered, denounced and witch-hunted. People who wanted to back me have sided with *Militant* and backed Astbury out of loyalty to the Broad Left.

Yet still, despite all this, I won 40% of Astbury's vote.

What we have done is establish the serious left as an irreplaceable part of the opposition in this union.

The unity discussions must involve us, otherwise the Moderates will contin-

ue to win.

This point comes out very clearly if you look at the arithmetic of Chris Baugh's election victory.

Chris was the only Unity candidate to win. He is one of the new Vice Presidents. 30% of Chris's 9,500 came from the people who supported me.

In fact, if you take on board the fact that the BL core vote of 8,000 includes nearly 3,000 votes from the serious left around Socialist Caucus then it becomes clear that the Broad Left majority's decision to abandon left-wing policies and drastically move to the right delivered a grand

Election results

President

Astbury (Unity)

7,031

Chambers

(Moderate) 12,399

Serwotka

(Socialist) 2,870

Moffat (Right-wing,

ex-soft left) 2,337

Hilton (Real

Moderate) 1,470

total of just over 1,000 votes.

This brings me to the next point. Broad Left '84 are irrevocably split. The bulk of their votes went to Moffat — a "soft left" candidate who is really a Moderate. They are a far less important factor in the unity equation than the far left grouped around the Socialist Caucus, yet *Militant* will talk to them about "Unity" but not to us.

The most important point to draw out here is that the "Unity" discussions on the left of the union have to be opened up and extended.

The stitched-up back-room deal behind the Astbury campaign failed. It was bound to.

That's why Socialist Caucus and others are calling for an open left unity conference which would lead to the creation of a united opposition movement committed to defeating Market Testing.

Astbury campaign ends in embarrassing flop

ALBERT ASTBURY is unelectable. That was shown very clearly by this year's election results. Astbury, who we were told could beat Chambers, got just 50% of the total vote won by the Broad Left and Broad Left '84 candidates for general secretary last year.

Standing as a so-called "Unity" opposition candidate he actually won 2,000 fewer votes than the Broad Left candidate managed for President last time. Hardly an improvement.

Even if all Mark Serwotka's votes went to Astbury — and many fighting union activists just won't vote for him — then Astbury still could not win.

The votes for Moffat and

Hilton — over 4,000 in all — are in the main right-wing votes. In a head to head encounter they would probably go to sitting right-wing President Marion Chambers. That means Astbury got less than 40% of the total right-wing vote. Hardly a good basis for one final push next year.

The reasons why Astbury did so badly are not too hard to find.

For a start, he is a manager standing for election in a predominantly low-paid clerical workers' union. He is an equivalent grade to a DSS area manager, so most ordinary members are hardly going to warm to him.

Secondly, he is embarrassingly opportunist.

Take the issue of Market Testing. Throughout the Presidential election campaign he kept very quiet about the policies needed to defeat it. Asked directly where he stood, he would not say anything. Then, guess what? Just one day after the election results are announced he suddenly makes a massive step to the left and calls for an all-out strike to defeat Market Testing.

How on earth he thinks anyone will treat him seriously with antics like that is unbelievable.

He should do the decent thing and say he is not going to seek high office again.

His campaign has been a total failure.

What sort of tests?

EDUCATION FOR BARBARISM

By Colin Waugh

THE GOVERNMENT IS IN RETREAT over testing in schools, in the face of opposition across all the teaching unions and from parents' organisations. To turn this into a decisive defeat for their education agenda and their public sector policy as a whole, teachers need, amongst other things, to develop an approach to the assessment of learning which working class parents and school students will support.

In doing so, we would be wrong simply to argue that there should be as little formal assessment as possible. This would be to return to supposedly radical ideas about education that flourished (but failed to gain popular support) in the 1960s and '70s. From that standpoint, all formal assessment is reactionary, so we shouldn't be involved with thinking about its nature, or pressing for one kind rather than another. There are several reasons why this approach is wrong.

Firstly, in terms of what's sometimes called the "hidden curriculum", different forms of assessment send different messages to pupils. For example, conventional exams which tend to 'teach' unquestioning obedience to authority, racist IQ tests which claim to have a scientific basis in psychology, or multiple-choice questions which rule out imaginative responses in order to allow marking by computers, are worse than, say, assessment through group discussion or coursework.

Secondly, when resources are scarce and the media bash any teaching they consider deviant, whoever controls assessment also controls both teaching methods and curriculum content. For example, a science teacher can't get children to reflect about, say, who owns chemical companies — that is, about something which it's crucial for working class children to consider — if it's not written into the list of things to be assessed. But some forms of assessment offer more chance of control by teachers than others.

Thirdly, although mass unemployment, particularly of young people, leads some to reject school, it leads others — and also many parents — to put a higher value on qualifications than they otherwise would, as a means towards a job. This is particularly true now, when a generation of defeats and betrayals seems to rule out advance by the working class as a whole. We can't challenge this attitude without recognising that it exists and is rational up to a point under the circumstances. But recognising this in theory is useless unless we fight in practice against those aspects of the qualifications system, including, therefore, those methods of assessment, which discriminate against working class people.

Fourthly, to stand back from struggles over different methods of assessment would be to play into the hands of interest groups supposedly on our side who could now rescue the government from defeat. The upsurge of resistance to SATs has bounced the union bureaucracies into an anti-government stance, and their main concern is obviously to regain control over the rank-and-file. To do so they must split off teachers who are campaigning against the SATs from parents. They will try to do this by dividing the SATs struggle into a dispute over teachers' workloads on the one hand (that is, a pure and simple union issue best handled — and sold out — by themselves), and an abstract debate over what is educationally desirable (that is, a matter for educational theorists) on the other.

If they succeed, the outcome could be that some formula devised by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (i.e. the state body instructed by Patten to recommend changes to SATs) will be imposed by the government, with union endorsement. Such a formula is likely to be bureaucratic and to embody a narrow "skills" ethos derived from provision for unemployed school leavers in non-advanced FE. Our position needs to be that the issue of *how much* work teachers do should not be treated separately from the issue of *what kind* of work they do — that is, of how they have to interact with working class students through the processes of teaching and assessment.

We should be demanding assessment methods and qualification structures which are in line with the aspirations of individual working class pupils and parents now, and with acceptable conditions for teachers, but which also start to increase rank-and-file teachers' control over the curriculum:

- we should advocate a single system of qualifications running through all sectors of publicly provided education — primary, secondary, further, higher and adult education;
- this system should be based on "credit accumulation". Anything that a person learns, at any stage in any sector, should in principle count towards a qualification. Each person should be able to accumulate credits at a pace which suits him/her;
- within this system, technical, academic and general knowledge, understanding and skill should all have equal status;
- in any given assessment there should be clear criteria for determining whether a person has 'passed' it or not, and, if so, with what grade. These criteria should be stated in advance. Anyone who satisfies the criteria should get the credit (as with driving tests). There should be no question of some unaccountable authority altering the criteria according to how many people they want to let through (as with GCSEs and A levels);
- anyone who 'fails' should be entitled to know why, and what they can do to pass next time;
- the bodies which set criteria at the moment, under the control of universities and employers — the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, the National Council for Vocational Qualifications, the regional exam boards, BTEC, City and Guilds, etc. — should be replaced by a single, democratically accountable, public sector body.

GRAFFITI

Winners and losers in the battle of the bugs



Murdoch — avoiding offence?

Not bad for part-time!

GRAFFITI

PERFORMANCE-RELATED pay, bosses' style. Paper manufacturers Arjo Wiggins Appleton have not weathered the recession well — profits down 30% this year. Time for serious talk of corporate belt tightening, or squeezing the workers as it is usually known.

Chairman Cob Stenham must have spent sleepless nights worrying about how to deal with the situation before deciding that the best course of action would be to award himself a 46% pay increase, to £307,000, as well as giving himself an option on 158,000 shares — in business this is known as "profit sharing".

Not at all bad for a part-time job: Stenham has another seven directorships. But not to worry, an Arjo spokesperson said Stenham "devotes more than half his time" to the company.

IT'S GOOD TO see that the *Mirror* has started taking its employees' pensions a little more seriously since Maxwell went skinny dipping. It has set up a special pension scheme for some of its employees and is paying, at the group's own expense, an amount equivalent to a quarter of their salaries into the fund.

The catch? There's no catch. Unless you count that there are only five people in the scheme, the Chief Executive, David Montgomery, and four other senior managers. The contributions for Montgomery's scheme alone come to over £1,000 a week.

THE POLL TAX might be gone but its effects live on. There is now even a council that has filed 12 cases for bankruptcy against poll tax debtors, and four have been made bankrupt and will have their property and belongings seized. The cost of each case is £600, about double the original debts.

What will these Tories do next, what a bunch of... hang on, this is Knowsley Council, Labour controlled.

"I THINK THAT YOU should not give offence to people's religious ideas. I hope that our people would never have published the Salman Rushdie book."

So said that world leader of sensitivity and minority rights, Rupert Murdoch, who is into book publishing in the States, through his ownership of HarperCollins, which makes it all the more unfortunate that he doesn't seem to be able to remember the title of *The*

Satanic Verses.

For those of you who don't quite believe the sensibilities of the owner of *The Sun*, maybe the evidence of Bill Buford, editor of *Granta*, Rushdie groupie, and all-round literatus will help you understand the source of Murdoch's morals:

"If I remember correctly, HarperCollins tried to buy *The Satanic Verses*, but it did not bid enough."

IT IS GOOD TO see that the spirit of philanthropy is not dead. Even building tycoon and leading Tory paymaster Lord McAlpine is willing to open his doors to the unemployed. As he said recently:

"There is nothing wrong with employing people in a household capacity; indeed with nearly three million unemployed in this country, it is a duty of those who can afford to employ people to do so."

BEING NICELY turned out is so important. Take the new redesigned *Socialist Outlook*. It was so important to get their look right that *Outlook* ceased publication for a major overhaul at the end of March, giving *Outlook* sellers the embarrassing prospect of spending six weeks until the beginning of May selling a paper with the front page headline "Everybody's fight! All out on April 2". So while the class warmed up for a fight against the Tories, *Outlook's* best brains were immersed in a struggle against outmoded design techniques and for a revolutionary new page layout.

And very nice it looks too. Three colour front page, new headings, some snappy graphics. This gives the increasingly politically disorientated and fragmented *Outlook* the age-old problem — all dressed up and nowhere to go.

WELCOME BACK to the reactionary of the week feature. This week's right-wing slimeball is none other than Home Secretary, Kenneth Clarke. Speaking about youth crime, Clarke attacked "liberals and socialists" who undermined the ethos of borstals and approved schools.

"I am not as concerned as some about the size of the prison population" said Clarke. Britain has the biggest proportion of its population in prison of any European country except Turkey.

"Judges must have it within their power to pass a sentence which right-thinking and reasonable members of the public will think fair and just retribution".

Clarke has obviously gone a long way in redefining what criminal justice means.

PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

SPARE A thought for poor old James Whitaker, royal correspondent of the *Daily Mirror*. He'd been looking forward to a comfortable retirement, tending his roses and working on his memoirs.

His book, *Diana v. Charles* was set to become a royal block-buster to rival Andrew Morton's *Diana: Her True Story*. The *Mirror* had already promised Whitaker a £65,000 down-payment for exclusive rights to the new book and worldwide serialisation rights could confidently be expected to make him a millionaire.

Last week the *Sun* effectively sabotaged all Mr Whitaker's hopes and dreams. They stole his book (or at least the crucial juicy bits) and plastered it all over their front page as a "World exclusive". At a stroke, Mr Whitaker's

prospects of joining his rival Andrew Morton in the millionaire stakes crumbled into dust; he even lost the down-payment from his own paper.

The *Mirror* responded to this debacle as best it could, pushing Whitaker into the limelight at a hastily-called press conference and bringing forward the serialisation of the book to the next day. But the damage had been done: the *Sun* had scooped the *Mirror*. At the *Mirror's* own press conference, Whitaker went further, claiming that the "security services" routinely bugged all the royals, "from the Queen down". This was the one aspect of the revelations that was of real interest, setting them apart from "Squidgygate", "Diana-gate" and all the rest of last summer's silly season royal stories.

Unfortunately for Mr Whitaker, the *Sun's* spoiler meant that his claims were immediately subjected to an unwelcome degree of scrutiny by the rest of the media. Kenneth Clarke's dismissive bluster, naturally, had the effect of lending credibility to the bugging claims. But as the week wore on, more and more holes appeared in Whitaker's story. It turned out that there was no tape, only a print-out that may or may not have come from GCHQ; Whitaker's account

of who gave him the transcript varied from "a man" to "a woman" to "a man and a woman"; finally he insisted that his informant was someone "very, very close to someone who is a senior person at GCHQ".

"Mr Whitaker may actually have served a useful purpose — putting the question of the accountability of the 'security services' on the agenda at last."

It now seems almost certain that Whitaker's only source was someone much closer to him than any mysterious "Deep Throat" at GCHQ: his colleague David Alford, a reporter on the *Mirror's* sister paper *The People*. On 17 January, the *People* had published the same "bugging" story that the *Mirror* and the *Sun* are now squabbling over. And *People* reporter David Alford's account of how he obtained the transcripts

suggests very strongly that their original source was none other than Joe Flynn, a confidence trickster who specialises in posing as a disgruntled secret service man in order to sell phoney stories to gullible journalists.

Poor old Whitaker: not only will he not become a millionaire, but he reckons that he's lost the friendship of Princess Di (who once used to call him "the big red tomato") into the bargain.

Spare a thought, too, for *Mirror* supremo David Montgomery and his editor David Banks, who once again have failed to beat the *Sun* at its own game, despite their best efforts to drag the *Mirror* down-market.

Strangely, though, there may be some good to finally come out of this farce: a lot of people have now woken up to the simple truth that the "security services" could have bugged the royal family with impunity. Just like they could bug you and me, and we'd be none the wiser. Nobody (least of all Kenneth Clarke, it seems) has any idea of what MI5, MI6 and all the rest of them actually get up to. The ridiculous Mr Whitaker may actually have served a useful purpose — by putting the question of the accountability of the "security services" firmly on the agenda at last.

Fight to end low pay

WOMEN'S EYE



By Jean Lane

"IF IT wasn't for women going to work then there would be no unemployment," the man — seeing unemployment as a term that relates only to his own sex — asserted confidently.

"And if all men stopped work, then every woman would have a job," snapped back the woman sitting next to him.

This conversation, over-

heard in a pub, and repeated every Saturday night in pubs up and down the country, is a long-running one and will continue to be. But although the argument may remain the same, the basis for it is changing.

Despite the man in the pub's desire for women to stay at home while their men folk bring home the bacon, soon most of Britain's workers will be women.

Since 1970 almost 90% of all new jobs created have gone to women. Whereas thirteen years ago working men outnumbered women workers by 45%, they are now running almost neck and neck: 10.7 million men against 10.1 million women.

Gillian Shepherd, the Tory Employment Minister, describes this as a blow for women's equality. It clearly illustrates "what can be achieved if women take full advantage of the opportunities that are available".

She's talking about women who get into business for

themselves. These "opportunities" for the majority of women who are becoming the mainstream British workforce involve part-time, low paid work; often 2-3 jobs per week to try and scratch together the money to pay the bills.

Almost half the women now working are in part-time work. They get about £3 a hour for working behind a shop till or £2.50 an hour for cleaning. Sainsbury's, who announced record profits of £733 million last week, pay their check-out staff (who are mostly women) £3.57. And that's before Wages Councils — which are supposed to prevent low wages dropping too low — have been abolished.

Gillian Shepherd, the great women's rights campaigner, is trying to do just that in a bill this October. They have, according to her, "outlived their usefulness". Guaranteeing a minimum wage for the lowest paid, she says,

"inhibits the creation of new jobs".

The new jobs she would create can be seen already in those areas not covered by the wages councils, e.g. workers in residential care homes who are paid between £1.50 and £2.50 an hour.

Women's employment may be running equal to men's in numbers, soon to become the majority, but women's wages are on average still only about 60% of those of male workers, and their entitlement to holidays, pensions, side-leave, etc. are severely restricted, especially for those on part-time contracts.

Trade unions must campaign to organise all women workers, whether full or part-time, however isolated, and must fight for full-time conditions for part-time workers.

They must build a campaign against the abolition of the Wages Councils and for a minimum wage.

Victimised by PTA and Diplock courts

Free the Beechmount Five!

Defend collective decision making in the Labour Party

CAMPAIGN FOR LABOUR PARTY DEMOCRACY

By Jim Mortimer, former Labour Party General Secretary

INJUSTICE

FIVE YOUNG MEN from the Beechmount area of Catholic West Belfast are currently on trial facing a one-judge, no-jury Diplock Court and the very real possibility of long prison sentences following the killing of Sergeant Stephen Gillespie of the DMSU (a special unit of the Royal Ulster Constabulary) during an IRA attack in 1991.

The Diplock Courts have a 95% conviction rate.

The Beechmount Five signed statements confessing to acting as lookouts during the IRA attack. In fact these "confessions" were forced out of them after several days of physical and mental abuse while being held at the Castlereagh interrogation centre.

None of the five men had been involved in organised republicanism and all were at work or at home — and have witnesses to prove it — when the attack took place.

They have already spent two years in jail, waiting for the case to come to court.

Margaret Hillick, Laurence Hillick's mother, talked to Richie Carrothers of Belfast AWL about the frame-up of her son and four others.

"On 1 May 1991 a rocket attack took place in the Beechmount area.

As a result, on 2 May, Sergeant Gillespie died in the Royal Victoria Hospital. Sergeant Gillespie died at 9.00 that evening and that night the RUC descended into Beechmount and started to



British "peace-keeping" in Northern Ireland means everyday brutality

arrest youth who were on the street.

Liam Coogan and Mark Prior were both picked up off the street. They were taken to Castlereagh and the RUC went round to their houses and took away all their clothing.

Two days later they took Kevin Mulholland and Jim McCabe. The boys were in Castlereagh for a long time without a solicitor. The Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) allows the state to hold prisoners for 48 hours before seeing a solicitor, but in Liam Coogan's case it was around 60 hours before he saw legal help.

They were very badly treated and they had signed statements admitting involvement in the attack.

When the mothers saw their sons they found them completely disoriented.

They had each had pressure

put on their testicles, karate chopping on the back of their heads while being shouted at: "We know you did it. Sign up".

They even blackmailed the boys. Mark Prior had been falsely told his mother had had a heart attack and was dying in hospital. They said the only way he would see her was by signing a statement.

The other boys were also lied to.

Then on 5 June, at 6.15 in the morning, the RUC came knocking on my door. They got us all up out of bed and took Laurence away under the PTA.

He had one interview which lasted 18 hours, non-stop. He was also charged with murder.

When I eventually saw Laurence I did not recognise him. I thought he had been drugged, his eyes were rolling around. He had a cut on his forehead and a swollen lip.

A few days later I met the other mothers for the first time and we began the campaign.

It turned out that the RUC had actually arrested 27 people in connection with this incident. The Beechmount Five were the youngest, and they were the only ones to sign statements. I think that any of the 27 would have satisfied the RUC.

They face one judge in a Diplock Court and it is quite possible they will go down for

20 years. This is despite the fact that, for instance, three of the boys were at work at the time of the incident. My own son had clocked in on his motor mechanic training centre and the instructor was in the room with him — and so were 17 or 18 other young lads from his course.

This case is a farce."

How you can help

- Contact the campaign: 3 Shaws Park, Belfast 11.
 - Write to the Beechmount Five. They are all being held in Crumlin Road Prison, Belfast 14.
- Liam Coogan (7178, A wing)
 Mark Prior (7177, A wing)
 Jim McCabe (7179, A wing)
 Kevin Mulholland (7138, A wing)
 Laurence Hillick (7342, A wing)



Laurence Hillick

More about Ireland from the Alliance for Workers' Liberty...

Ireland: lies the left tells itself

80p + 32p p&p from: WL Publications, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Cheques/postal orders payable to: "WL Publications"

THE LABOUR PARTY needs the participation of the unions at all levels. This includes the annual conference, the National Executive Committee, the general committees of constituencies, the selection of parliamentary candidates and the election of the leader of the Party.

It is much more than an issue of money, though the contributions of millions of trade unionists are essential for the finances of the Party. The working people who provide the money are entitled to representation and influence.

The importance of the full participation of the unions rests on their inextinguishable tie to the day-to-day interests of working people.

The proposal for "One Member One Vote" (OMOV) is not what it seems. It is usually taken to mean the elimination of the collective voting of trade unionists in some of the procedures of the Labour Party. Some of the proposals also seek to increase the influence of MPs in a manner of totally inconsistent with OMOV.

There is no way in which the policy of the Party can be determined democratically other than through a system of collective representation. The millions who contribute to the funds of the Party have a right to this representation.

There is nothing in principle wrong with the idea that trade union delegates at the annual conference should each carry a voting card, but the proposal is not as radical as it may seem. Indeed, it may be largely cosmetic in effect.

Delegates may decide that they should vote as a "block" for the conference decision of their own union.

Unions should also be able to participate in the selection of parliamentary candidates and in the election of the leader. It is possible to argue in favour of different systems of participation but the right of participation is fundamental.

One suggestion that has been put forward is that among trade union contributors to the political fund there should be a register of Labour supporters.

Presumably the register would then be divided into constituencies according to the residence of the supporter. The individual supporters would then vote in each constituency, except that supporters who were already entitled to vote as individual members of the Labour Party would not be permitted to vote as registered supporters.

All this sounds like a formula for a bureaucratic nightmare. It would impose on unions the task of sorting the political supporters into constituencies and of keeping the register up-to-date. The information would then have to be passed to the Labour Party for them to operate the voting procedure. The experience with the centralised membership scheme suggests that it would not work smoothly.

There is no case for weakening the link between the unions and the Labour Party. This is at the heart of the controversy.

From CLPD, 10 Park Drive, London NW11 7SH.

Fight capitalism to fight racism

Jeni Bailey discusses the rise of black nationalist ideas among black youth in Britain today, and how socialists should respond. This discussion is taken from an Alliance for Workers' Liberty dayschool on "Marxism and Black Nationalism" on Saturday 15 May.



WHY IS IT THAT SO many black youth today are turning to forms of black nationalism and to ideas from Malcolm X? It's a lot more than people wearing t-shirts. We as socialists should have political answers, and we should take them and argue them among black youth.

Some very positive things came out of Malcolm X's life, like the slogan "by any means necessary". It has been used by lots of different people, but to my mind it does not mean advocating violence. It means "self-defence is no offence".

He also promoted self-organisation of black people, which at the time was a relatively new idea — making black people stand up and be proud of themselves and their own history.

He encouraged black people to analyse their history for themselves, and not just to accept what they were told by the white establishment or by the Nation of Islam.

He was an internationalist. He did not just look at America; he thought about the world.

And towards the end of his life Malcolm X declared himself to be a revolutionary.

But I do not think he was anywhere near our sort of revolutionary. A lot of groups on the left are claiming that Malcolm X was a revolutionary

socialist, and supported their form of socialism. But we should be honest. Malcolm X was nowhere near our working-class, socialist politics, and even if he had lived and continued his political development, quite likely

"Black youth won't listen to people who tell them black nationalist attitudes are good, and mention black and white workers' unity under their breath."



Manchester: protest at the racist murders of Mohammed Sarwar and Siddik Dada. Photo: Paul Herrmann



Protest at the shooting dead of Ian Gordon by police in Telford, August 1991. Photo: John Har

he would still not be close to us.

What do we say to young people who have seen the film *Malcolm X* and read the *Autobiography*? Do we say to them that black nationalist ideas are tarnished and diversionary, and that the Nation of Islam is very anti-semitic and has ideas which are very degrading to women? Do we have the argument, or do we pander to black nationalism as many groups on the left do?

I think black youth want answers. They won't bother to listen to people who just tell them that black nationalist

attitudes are very good and quickly mention black and white workers' unity under their breath.

Black youth are asking "what can we do? What can we do to get equality? What can we do to stop the police harassing us?" "Be black and proud" is no answer.

We should argue for working-class politics. Black and white workers' unity, on a programme of wiping out racism and capitalism, is the answer to the problems of police harassment, unemployment, cuts and low wages which face black youth.

Malcolm X had no class analysis whatsoever. He did not see black people as part of the working class.

He could see we were downtrodden, but he did not see that black people are a specially exploited part of the working class.

For a lot of black youth "black nationalism" is really just black pride. Black pride expresses itself that way because of the failures of the labour movement, but also because of the failures of the left.

"For a lot of youth 'black nationalism' is really just black pride. It expresses itself that way because of the failures of the labour movement and of the left."

I don't believe many young black people even think about, let alone advocate, the theoretical idea of a black nation. We live in a multiracial country, and we

have grown up with Asians, or Jews, or others, as our neighbours, and a separate black nation does not seem conceivable.

Black people don't trust socialists, they don't trust Trotskyists, because of the way they have been treated by sectarian groups who will pick up an anti-racist campaign to gain members and then drop it when it is out of fashion.

There is also a layer of middle-class black activists now who bad-mouth Trotskyists. They have come through the student movement, and then they think they know it all. They are always telling me that I should leave these silly Trotskyists and join my

racism!



Black mothers campaign against police abuse

Patricia Sallery-Musah from Community Action for Positive Policing [CAPP] spoke at the "Youth for Justice" lobby of Parliament last Thursday, 13 May

MOTHERS HAVE set up a group to tackle the issues of the youth being harassed and picked up by the police on the streets. Some of the issues raised are:

- Parents not being notified of their children being held at police stations;
- The length of time the children are held (including minors);
- The racial abuse children are subjected to when they are questioned;
- Incidents of strip searches, particularly young females, with no guardian present;
- Children being taken out of Local Authority establishments e.g. children's homes, schools, etc.

The parents of this community actively challenge the police on their tactics of the policing of the area.

The group of mums are meeting regularly to support, advise and update on issues. They are looking towards funding bodies to enable them to offer youth a service catering to their needs, and which will keep them off the streets where they hang around through boredom.

The police are systematically criminalising the youth at a very early age. The youth are ending up with trumped up charges. The police attitude to the youth of our community is that they are all potential criminals, and if they see a black face standing on the corner of the street, the police will a crime find to fit the person.

Another area of my work in the community is the opening of a refuge catering for Black women's needs. Other refuges catering for white women rely on police support when aggressive males come looking for their partners. This is a dilemma for refuges catering for Black women. Often the male is Black and if police are called out on a disturbance, we fear the Black male will be beaten, just on the basis of his skin colour and not for the reason the police were called in the first place.

The women are manipulated by police when they are in a very vul-

nerable state. They are questioned very sneakily as to their Black partner's whereabouts, immigration status, and movements with other members of the Black community.

Another issue is Black women suffering domestic violence who live in the area of the no-go policy. They are not protected by the law, because the bobby on the street is told you do not go into that area. He is informed that there is a high level of racial tension and the police do not want to be accused of starting a riot while other tactics are being deployed.

Refuges need to have a workable liaison with the police and often this need is abused in many forms, trying to gain information on the activities of the Black community.

Many people in the community do not trust the police and would be very apprehensive to do so.

Another effect of the 'no-go area' is the problem of stolen cars. Often it is white youth from white areas who steal cars and then speed into the area where they feel totally safe that the police will not pursue them.

The police divided the community when two youths were killed by stolen cars this year. Residents angry at the situation of speeding cars in the community wanted it to stop. Police used this situation by releasing a press statement with the overtones that fractions of the community criticised their tactics of policing and were making it difficult for them to police the community properly and so the community were in some way

responsible for the problem.

Similarly, a group of local activists contacted the local MP about various complaints against the police. When the MP raised them with the Chief Constable, he received a reply which attempted to totally discredit them and virtually portrayed them as a terrorist group.

This is all part of the police 'divide and rule' tactics and of how the police try to destroy the credibility of anyone who criticises them. This makes any effective opposition to police attitudes and activities very difficult.

This is the reason why I became involved in CAPAP. A priority area of the group is that this community and others like it need policing, but a certain quality and respect is needed from the police to gain the trust of the community. Policing without consent does not work. Police needs to listen to the grass roots activists' voices who are constructively trying to better the quality of lives in our community and in other communities too.

However, at present we as Black people need to protect ourselves from this institution, 'the police', and hopefully today's initiatives are the beginning of some form of positive action. We desperately need to set up networks so that communities can stand together and protect themselves.

CAPP can be contacted via CAPAP, the Campaign Against Police Abuses of Power c/o Liverpool 8 Law Centre, 34-36 Princes Road, Liverpool, L8 1TN.



Patricia Sallery-Musah

Looking back on the C

Cheung Siu Ming reviews *Memoirs of a Chinese Revolutionary* by Wang Fan-hsi

THE DEFEATED CHINESE revolution of 1925-27 was one of the key issues in dispute within the Communist International after the death of Lenin. The fact that the founder of Chinese communism, Ch'en Tu-hsiu, sided with Trotsky against Stalin in this dispute was an important milestone for the Left Opposition.

Wang Fan-hsi is a key witness of this period. He joined the Chinese Communist Party aged 18 in 1925 and participated in two years of revolutionary struggle, before being sent to Moscow.

There he discovered and embraced Trotsky's positions on China, and played a leading role in establishing an underground Left Opposition organisation which won over half the exiled Chinese students in Moscow. On his return to China he was eventually expelled by the Chinese Communist Party as a Trotskyist.

He then became central in facilitating the unification of disparate Left Opposition groupings in 1931, and became one of the key leaders of the Chinese Trotskyist movement in the '30s and '40s.

During this period, the Trotskyists stuck to their work among the pulverised Chinese working class in the cities, and were squeezed between the Stalinists, the Kuomintang [the Chinese bourgeois-nationalist party] and Japanese forces [which invaded China]. Many of their members were killed or imprisoned and tortured, or suffered from poverty and starvation.

Wang himself was imprisoned for two spells by the Kuomintang. During the first spell, prison was an opportunity for political debate with imprisoned CCP

members, to further the cause of the Left Opposition.

The second time round, the Kuomintang had adopted the 'scientific' methods of sensory deprivation, isolation and torture of body and mind, designed to imprison communists indefinitely until they were politically broken. Wang only escaped what he termed his "Darkest Days" because of the Japanese invasion of Nanjing and the wholesale retreat of the KMT.

During the war years the Trotskyists struggled to sustain their organisation in the cities, but they were largely marginalised. After the Japanese defeat, they were able to rebuild and their numbers rose quickly to hundreds. By the time the KMT lost the civil war, they had established significant bases of support in the cities among the working class.

The conquest of state power by the Chinese Communist Party under Mao in 1949 surprised and disorientated not only the Chinese but the whole world Trotskyist movement. In December 1952, virtually all the Trotskyists in China were imprisoned by Mao's secret police. Wang escaped the net.

His comrade Cheng Ch'ao-lin was finally released, without ever facing trial or abandoning his political views, in 1979. They are both alive today; Wang is in exile in the UK and Cheng is in China. They have both written memoirs and Wang's has been translated into English and many other languages.

The original Chinese edition of Wang's memoirs was produced in the '50s, and an English translation

by Greg Benton of Leeds University was published over twenty years later in 1980 by Oxford University Press. Unfortunately it was an expensive hardback, pricing the book out of the reach of many readers and the last chapter, on Mao's victory and Chinese Trotskyism's

defeat, was left out.

Eleven years and many other language editions later, a paperback edition has been published. It contains the missing final chapter as well as a new preface by Wang and an updated introduction by his comrade Greg Benton.

Socialists should read this book, not just for a better understanding of a politically critical period of Chinese history, or an insight into the development of Stalinism in Russia as well as in China, but also for inspiration from the deeply moving life of a revolutionary.

There may even be more to be learnt from political defeats than from victories, provided someone survives the battle with their political spirit and clarity intact, and can draw out those lessons which will educate the next generation. This is precisely what Wang has done.

Wang provides vivid portraits of many key participants from this period. His political assessments of opponents as well as comrades are balanced and scrupulously fair, and through these portraits he displays his own politics and his gentle yet strong personality. His passages about Ch'en Tu-hsiu, founding general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, is particularly insightful.

CH'EN WAS born the same year as Trotsky, and played major roles in the May 4th movement of 1919, in founding the CCP, in standing up to Stalin after 1927, and in uniting four disparate groups to form a united Chinese Left Opposition in 1931. Ch'en is still not rehabilitated in his own country, and his eventual break with Trotskyism has meant that his political contribution has been devalued and denigrated by some Chinese Trotskyists like P'eng Shu-tse, who had opposed the fusion in 1931.

The last three chapters covers the period from the war against Japan in 1937 through to 1952, when virtually all Trotskyists in China were imprisoned, after the Maoist victory in 1949.

The entry of US imperialism in the Pacific War led to a dispute amongst Chinese Trotskyists over whether the Kuomintang, who had broken off its

alliance with the Communists, should still be critically supported in their war against Japan who had invaded China. However, Wang recalled that it was the manner in which the majority led by P'eng Shu-tse had suppressed internal debate over this issue that led to a split with the minority, led by Wang and Cheng Ch'ao-lin.

The last chapter records how all the Chinese Trotskyists, like the rest of the world Trotskyist movement, had wrongly concluded that the CCP was incapable of carrying out a revolution. Wang reflected on how he, Cheng and P'eng reacted to the unexpected events in 1949 and after.

Both majority and minority groups did not conceive it possible that the Maoist forces had the political will to fight the civil war to the finish. Stalin had pressured the CCP to compromise with Chiang Kai-shek. The Chinese Trotskyists had characterised the CCP as a party based on the peasantry and not on the working class, and therefore incapable of carrying out an anti-capitalist revolution.

Wang reflected that they had all underestimated the significance of the political struggle inside the CCP between Mao and Stalin's direct agents, particularly Wang Ming. Although Mao had sided against Trotsky, he also was determined to fend off external interference by Stalin — he was practising "Titoism before Tito".

After the 1949 P'eng's group continued to insist for two years until November 1951 that there was no revolution, that the Trotskyists' strategy was correct, and Mao's victory relied on "historically exceptional circumstances" and was a "bourgeois bonapartist dictatorship" which "will never change its bourgeois character".

In 1952 P'eng concluded that the Chinese Party had developed a "dual character" and had a new working class basis: anti-capitalist actions by this party had led to the formation of a deformed workers' state. This position was similar to that of the American SWP, with which P'eng became associated — see *The Chinese Communist Party in Power* edited by Les Evans, (Monad Press 1980.)

"Like Cheng Ch'ao-lin and me, P'eng was unable to wrench himself free from the old formula, but unlike us he continues to insist to this day that we Chinese Trotskyists were absolutely right to apply it to the theory and practice of the Chinese revolution at each stage in its development."

For his part, Wang suggested in 1950 that the Soviet Union had turned into a bureaucratic collectivist state, and the

"In December 1952, virtually all the Trotskyists in China were imprisoned by Mao's secret police. Wang escaped the net."



Ch'en Tu-hsiu: founder of the Chinese Communist Party, and first leader of Chinese Trotskyism



Deng Xiaoping: one of the Stalinist leaders who overthrew the old order in China but set up a bureaucratic tyranny

Chinese revolution



China's Stalinist movements responded to the democracy movement of 1989 with bloody repression

Stalinist party into a party of bureaucratic collectivists. "From this I concluded that the victory of the CCP was merely the victory of a collectivist bureaucratic party and in no way the victory of a Chinese proletarian party, i.e., of proletarian revolution."

Cheng came to a view that Maoist China was state capitalist.

Wang writes: "This analysis (bureaucratic collectivist) seemed to me to explain many features of the Stalinist Parties and to solve the riddle of the CCP victory. Gradually, however, I discovered that for all its advantages and its theoretical consistency, once applied to revolutionary practice e.g. which side to take in the civil war between the CCP and the Kuomintang, it proved to be wholly inappropriate and plainly wrong..."

"Eventually I arrived at the conclusion that among the numerous theoretical analyses of the Soviet Union and Stalinism advanced both inside and outside the Fourth International, Trotsky's was by far the strongest and in the best interests of socialist revolution. I had launched my soul into unknown seas only to land

again at the port where I had embarked. Some may mock me for this. Let them. All that matters to me is the search for truth, and for the key to the completion of the revolution" (p.257). He concluded — like P'eng, but on a different basis —

that Maoist China was a "deformed workers' state".

Wang recalled his arguments with some Chinese comrades who were won over to supporting the CCP. "Even if Stalinist parties can under certain circumstances fight capitalism and carry out a revolution, we should not neglect the equally fundamental question of how they do so, and what sort of regimes they form... bureaucratic rule will

never create a truly socialist society."

Although he noted that his arguments failed to sway them at the time, Wang has clearly been proved correct against them in his estimation of the Stalinist parties.

A MAJORITY of Trotskyists in the Fourth International had massive illusions first in Tito and then in Mao: they failed to draw Wang's conclusion: that the Chinese working class must carry out an anti-bureaucratic political revolution, until as

late as the 1960s (in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution).

Clearly, whole sections of the Fourth International had a very different conception to Wang of what constituted a "deformed workers' state". This can be seen in how they failed to spell out what were the tasks facing revolutionaries and the working class with respect of those regimes. The same theoretical weaknesses also affected their attitudes to the political regimes in Vietnam, to Cuba, to Nicaragua and to Russia's invasion of Afghanistan.

Wang's memoirs and his other writings considerably widen the political heritage of Chinese Trotskyism available to English readers. Previously the writings of P'eng Shu-tse were all that was available, and for me, reading the memoirs for the first time in Chinese and meeting and talking with Wang was like scales falling off my eyes.

In his exile years in the UK, many comrades have known or met him, and I think not one person has failed to be deeply moved and impressed by his humane and calm nature, his inner strength of character and by his political convictions and knowledge. Even in his advancing years he had helped to guide and motivate young comrades in Hong Kong through many crises and opportunities in the past three decades.

I know that Wang will be pleased that this edition of his memoirs will give a new generation of socialists the chance to study the Chinese revolution from a new perspective.

Radiation — not as safe as you thought!

SCIENCE COLUMN

By Les Hearn

SINCE THE DISCOVERY of radioactivity and ionising radiation a hundred years ago, we have become more and more aware of the harm they can cause to living things. The pioneers in this field, scientists such as Marie Curie, suffered radiation burns and cancers in large amounts. Later, patients suffered health damage from the X-rays that were intended to cure them but were given in too high doses. Workers with radiation, such as radiographers and the painters of luminous dials also suffered ill health and even death.

Gradually, the dose limits were brought down as the risks were appreciated more. Now the health question became "is there potential risk with any exposure or is there a limit below which the body can tolerate radiation". After all, man had evolved amid a background of natural, if low-level, radiation. Unfortunately, to evaluate small risks you need to study a large number of cases. If a worker in a nuclear power station contracts a cancer, it might be caused by his or her work. On the other hand, perhaps they would have got it anyway. We have to look for cases above those expected among very large numbers of people.

One very large group of people exposed to radiation are the survivors of the atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Other groups examined in surveys include pregnant women given X-rays in the 1950s and the workers and nearby residents of the Banford nuclear weapons plant in the USA. Much of the work has been carried out by the British epidemiologist, Dr Alice Stewart, now in her eighties.

Dr Stewart's four decades of research have thrown up such findings as that children of women given X-rays during pregnancy have a bigger chance of getting leukaemia and that the nuclear weapons workers, though exposed to less than the permitted level of radiation, were more likely to get cancer.

Now she has released further estimates of risk, based on painstaking statistical analysis of radiation exposure of workers at the Banford plant. The radiation records of workers between 1944 and 1973 have only recently been released by the USA Department of Energy. Over 7,000 of them died before 1987, some 1,700 of cancer. Now, Stewart and her co-worker George Kneale have estimated that some 8% of those cancer deaths were due to radiation exposure, even though these exposures were very low. Conventional wisdom would expect no excess cancers as a result of such exposures.

Part of the problem with previous analyses is that the largest group of radiation victims, the 41,000 A-bomb survivors who have been studied, received their radiation in a one-off dose; it is likely that these survivors were more healthy anyway than the average victim and this is why they survived. They might be expected to run lower risks of subsequent damage than a completely unselected population. Previous studies of nuclear power workers have similarly failed to take into account that these were selected for fitness and have had regular monitoring.

Dr Stewart's estimate of 8% extra deaths may seem small but it should be emphasised that this is a result of exposures previously thought harmless. It might seem important to the forty victims and their families, too.

Democracy and capitalism

Does parliamentary democracy do away with the class nature of the state, and make it the servant of the whole people?

No, argues Lenin in this extract from his "Lecture on the State", written after the 1917 Russian Revolution.

TO UNDERSTAND THE struggle that has been started against world capital, to understand the nature of the capitalist state, we must remember that when the capitalist state advanced against the feudal state it entered the fight under the slogan of liberty.

The abolition of feudalism meant liberty for the representatives of the capitalist state and served their purpose, inasmuch as serfdom was breaking down and the peasants had acquired the opportunity of owning as their full property the land which they had purchased for compensation or in part by quit-rent — this did not concern the state: it protected property irrespective of its origin, because the state was founded on private property. The peasants became private owners in all the modern, civilised states. Even when the landowner surrendered part of his land to the peasant, the state protected private property, rewarding the landowner by compensation, by letting him take money for the land. The state as it were declared that it would fully preserve private property, and the state accorded it every support and protection. The state recognised the property rights of every merchant, industrialist and manufacturer. And this society, based on private property, on the power of capital, on the complete subjection of the propertyless workers and labouring masses of the peasantry, proclaimed that its rule was based on liberty. Combating feudalism, it proclaimed freedom of property and was particularly proud of the fact that the state had ceased, supposedly, to be a class state.

Yet the state continued to be a machine which helped the capitalists to hold the poor peasants and the working class in subjection. But in outward appearance it was free. It proclaimed universal suffrage, and declared through its champions, preachers, scholars and philosophers, that it was not a class state. Even now, when the Soviet Socialist Republics have begun to fight the state, they accuse us of violating liberty, of building a state based on coercion, on the suppression of some by others, whereas they represent a popular, democratic state. And now, when the world socialist revolution has begun, and when the revolution has succeeded in some countries, when the fight against world capital has grown particularly acute, this question of the state has acquired the greatest importance and has become, one might say, the most burning one, the focus of all present-day political questions and political disputes.

Whichever party we take in Russia or in any of the more civilised countries, we find that nearly all political disputes, disagreements and opinions now centre around the conception of the state. Is the state in a capitalist country, in a democratic republic — especially one like Switzerland or the U.S.A. — in the freest democratic republics, an expression of the popular will, the sum total of the general decision of the people, the expression of the national will, and so forth; or is the state a machine that enables the capitalists of those

countries to maintain their power over the working class and the peasantry? That is the fundamental question around which all political disputes all over the world now centre.

What do they say about Bolshevism? The bourgeois press abuses the Bolsheviks. You will not find a single newspaper that does not repeat the hackneyed accusation that the Bolsheviks violate popular rule. If our Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in their simplicity of heart (perhaps it is not simplicity, or perhaps it is the simplicity which the proverb says is worse than robbery) think that they discovered and invented the accusation that the Bolsheviks have violated liberty and popular rule, they are ludicrously mistaken.

Today every one of the richest newspapers in the richest countries, which spend tens of millions on their distribution and disseminate bourgeois lies and imperialist policy in tens of millions of copies — every one of these newspapers repeats these basic arguments and accusations against Bolshevism, namely, that the U.S.A., Britain and Switzerland are advanced states based on popular rule, whereas the Bolshevik republic is a state of bandits in which liberty is unknown, and that the Bolsheviks have violated the idea of popular rule and have even gone so far as to disperse the Constituent Assembly. These terrible accusations against the Bolsheviks are repeated all over the world. These accusations lead us directly to the question — what is the state?

In order to understand these accusations, in order to study them and have a fully intelligent attitude towards them, and not to examine them on hearsay but with a firm opinion of our own, we must have a clear idea of what the state is. We have before us capitalist states of every kind and all the theories in defence of them which were created before the war. In order to answer the question properly we must critically examine

all these theories and views.

The forms of domination of the state may vary: capital manifests its power in one way where one form exists, and in another way where another form exists — but essentially the power is in the hands of capital, whether there are voting qualifications or some other rights or not, or whether the republic is a democratic one or not — in fact, the more democratic it is the cruder and more cynical is the rule of capitalism. One of the most democratic republics in the world is the United States of America, yet nowhere is the power of capital, the power of a handful of multimillionaires over the whole of society, so crude and so openly corrupt as in America. Once capital exists, it dominates the whole of society, and no democratic republic, no franchise can change its nature.

The democratic republic and universal suffrage were an immense progressive advance as compared with feudalism; they have enabled the proletariat to achieve its present unity and solidarity, to form those firm and disciplined ranks which are waging a systematic struggle against capital. There was nothing even approximately resembling this among the peasant serfs, not to speak of the slaves. The slaves, as we know, revolted, started civil wars, but they could never create a class-conscious majority and parties to lead the struggle, they could not clearly realise what their aims were, and even in the most revolutionary moments of history they were always pawns in the hands of the ruling classes.

The bourgeois republic, parliament, universal suffrage — all represent great progress from the standpoint of the world development of society. Mankind moved towards capitalism, and it was capitalism alone which, thanks



However democratic the parliament, where a capitalist minority controls the wealth of society it also controls the army

to urban culture, enabled the oppressed proletarian class to become conscious of itself and to create the world working-class movement, the millions of workers organised all over the world in parties — the socialist parties which are consciously leading the struggle of the masses. Without parliamentarism, without an electoral system, this development of the working class would have been impossible. That is why all these things have acquired such great importance in the eyes of the broad masses of people. That is why a radical change seems to be so difficult. It is not only the conscious hypocrites, scientists and priests that uphold and defend the bourgeois lie that the state is free and that it is its mission to defend the interests of all; so also do a large number of people who sincerely adhere to the old prejudices and who cannot understand the transition from the old, capitalist society to socialism. Not only people who are directly dependent on the bourgeoisie, not only those who live under the yoke of capital or who have been bribed by capital (there are a large number of all sorts of scientists, artists, priests, etc., in the service of capital), but even people who are simply under the sway of the prejudice of bourgeois liberty, have taken up arms against Bolshevism all over the world because when the Soviet Republic was founded it rejected these bourgeois lies and openly declared: you say your state is free, whereas in reality, as long as there is private property, your state, even if it is a democratic republic, is nothing but a

"The bourgeois republic, parliament, universal suffrage — all represent great progress from the standpoint of the world development of society."

machine used by the capitalists to suppress the workers, and the freer the state, the more clearly is this expressed.

Examples of this are Switzerland in Europe and the United States in America. Nowhere does capital rule so cynically and ruthlessly, and nowhere is it so clearly apparent, as in these countries, although they are democratic republics, no matter how prettily they are painted and notwithstanding all the talk about labour democracy and the equality of all citizens. The fact is that in Switzerland and the United States capital dominates, and every attempt of the workers to achieve the slightest real improvement in their condition is immediately met by civil war. There are fewer soldiers, a smaller standing army, in these countries — Switzerland has a militia and every Swiss has a gun at home, while in America there was no standing army until quite recently — and so when there is a strike the

bourgeoisie arms, hires soldiery and suppresses the strike; and nowhere is this suppression of the working-class movement accompanied by such ruthless severity as in Switzerland and the U.S.A., and nowhere does the influence of capital in parliament manifest itself as powerfully as in these countries. The power of capital is everything, the stock exchange is everything, while parliament and elections are marionettes, puppets...

But the eyes of the workers are being opened more and more, and the idea of Soviet government is spreading farther and farther afield, especially after the bloody carnage we have just experienced. The necessity for a relentless war on the capitalists is becoming clearer and clearer to the working class.

Whatever guise a republic may assume, however democratic it may be, if it is a bourgeois republic, if it retains private ownership of the land and factories, and if private capital keeps the whole of society in wage-slavery, that is, if the republic does not carry out what is proclaimed in the Programme of our Party and in

the Soviet Constitution, then this state is a machine for the suppression of some people by others. And we shall place this machine in the hands of the class that is to overthrow the power of capital. We shall reject all the old prejudices about the state meaning universal equality — for that is a fraud: as long as there is exploitation there cannot be equality. The landowner cannot be the equal of the work-

er, or the hungry man the equal of the full man. This machine called the state, before which people bowed in superstitious awe, believing the old tales that it means popular rule, tales which the proletariat declares to be a bourgeois lie — this machine the proletariat will smash. So far we have deprived the capitalists of this machine and have taken it over. We shall use this machine, or bludgeon, to destroy all exploitation. And when the possibility of exploitation no longer exists anywhere in the world, when there are no longer owners of land and owners of factories, and when there is no longer a situation in which some gorge while others starve, only when the possibility of this no longer exists shall we consign this machine to the scrap-heap. Then there will be no state and no exploitation. Such is the view of our Communist Party. I hope that we shall return to this subject in subsequent lectures, return to it again and again.



Richard Gere, as Confederate soldier turned 1990s New Man, with Jodie Foster in *Sommersby*

How it wasn't

Cinema

Belinda Weaver reviews *Sommersby*

SOMMERSBY, LIKE most Hollywood historical films, rewrites history. Its hero, Jack Sommersby, a Confederate soldier, returns from the Civil War a changed man.

No longer the hard-drinking gambler and wife-beater who went away to fight, he's now kind to blacks, he stands up to the Klan, he offers to share his wealth and his land to keep his small community alive.

He's also nicer to his wife, Laurel, who has struggled to keep the farm going through the six years of his absence. She has had the help of Orrin, another settler whom she promised to marry if Jack didn't come back. She sends him packing when Jack reappears.

Orrin is not pleased. But he is alone in that; everyone else is delighted to see Jack back where he belongs.

But does he belong? Is he really who he says he is, or an impostor?

Sommersby is based on the French film *The Return of Martin Guerre* which starred Gerard Depardieu as the peasant returning to the village and wife he abandoned. *Sommersby* is less complex, and weaker than the French film, but it's still watchable, if at times predictable, entertainment.

Unlike the French film which brought a whole community to life, *Sommersby* has only two real characters — Jack and Laurel. It's the relationship between them that drives the film. Orrin, whose disappointment ripens into malice, is just a stock Hollywood bad guy. He's not interesting; he's just there to start rumours about Jack, and to stir things up.

In the French film, the wrangles were about property, not love.

People came to suspect Martin Guerre because it suited them; the hard-nosed peasants weren't about to give up their land if they could help it.

In *Sommersby*, Jack already owns the land, and he wants to give it up if doing that will keep people from leaving. He's too good to be true, and his neighbours think he can do no wrong. They believe in him.

He is too good to be true; there can't have been people like him. If there were, wouldn't we have heard about them? If Hollywood wants to make historical films, they should accept that values were different then, that the past is not always pretty, and that audiences are probably smart enough to know it.

Trying to push everyone from Robin Hood to Christopher Columbus into the same white liberal mould is simply foolish. Not only does it drain the life out of scripts by making them all alike; it also takes away what makes audiences go to costume dramas in the first place — the chance to get a glimpse of the past, of how it was.

Making Jack a saint is also a mistake. It's overkill. Not only is Jack fair and kind to black people, super-understanding with his son, and keen to share his land with everyone, but he's a hero between the sheets as well.

In contrast, Orrin the villain is a sweaty, vengeful hypocrite, full of festering hatred, and he's got a wooden leg.

It's sledgehammer characterisation, guaranteed to crack us over the head till we get the point — Jack good, Orrin bad. How dumb does Hollywood think audiences are?

Jack's grand scheme for saving everyone — planting tobacco — is the only possible mark against

him, and it's not one the filmmakers condemn. It's just another sign of Jack's smartness, that he hits upon so profitable a scheme.

Everything he touches turns out well. His neighbours, who have long been vengeful racists, soon convert to the common cause. There's no reasons given; it's all down to Jack's miracle working skills.

Of course, it would be nice to think of black and white people working side by side for a shared purpose, without hatred, without fear. But in films like this, people never achieve harmony by themselves, or by working together to solve things. Solutions come from outside; they're imposed by some do-gooding individual.

It's as if all problems were simply problems of leadership. With the right leaders, problems would melt away.

Richard Gere (who plays Jack) must have hung out too long with his pal, the Dalai Lama. He's absorbed the saintliness, and a touch of the boringness as well. It's hard work concentrating on whether he's really bad-old-Jack-turned-all-new-man or someone else altogether; Gere isn't much of anything, ever.

Jodie Foster as Laurel is a different story, full of conviction. You really feel she loves this man who's come back to her, and that she doesn't much care who he is as long as he keeps making her so happy.

The film isn't interested in why or how Jack becomes such a reformed character. Nor does it care what happens to the farmers, black or white. It's really only interested in the love story between Jack and Laurel. Foster makes all that believable, and important. Her performance makes *Sommersby* better than it is.

Putting the screws on workers

Television

Garry Meyer reviews *Panorama* (Monday 17 May, BBC1)

ACCORDING TO the general manager of

Lord Rayleigh Dairies, milkmen who work for them "choose" to work up to 70 hours a week and sleep only 3-4 hours a day. "I'm sure," he said, "if more people had the choice to work under those conditions they would jump at it".

These are the sorts of arguments which you get from bosses, and they really make me sick.

Panorama last Monday made a brave attempt to expose bosses' callous disregard for workers.

They spoke to a William Hill Group Manager who said that giving workers the "choice" of signing new contracts, which would mean longer and less sociable hours, or being sacked, is not intimidating. "I cannot accept that this is bullying," he blurted out, shocked at the thought.

Perhaps the sickest thing revealed in the programme was that the bosses have their own help-line service which advises them on what they can legally get away with.

One example is sacking workers before they can be legally protected by unfair dismissal legislation.

In Britain, the minimum period before protection comes into force is two years. In the rest of Europe employees are protected under the law from day one.

Not many people feel sorry for estate agents, but the Nationwide Estate Agents have given us a reason to. They have just forced a pay "agreement" on their workers with a £2,000 pay cut. At the same time they have awarded the Managing Director a £20,000 pay increase. The MD has said to his local managers, "I guarantee staff will accept this because they will have nowhere else to go".

Panorama recognised that bosses exploit workers but made out that this only happens because of recession. Wrong. Bosses get away with it more easily because there is a recession. That's all.

Periscope

Mark Osborn previews *Hayes Over Britain*, 7.30, Tuesday 25 May, Radio 2

BRIAN HAYES discusses the appeal of religion in contemporary Britain.

It is true that explanations are needed: only 16% of the population attend religious services twice or more a month, yet three in four say they believe in God.

I believe that most people are not really interested and are just hedging their bets.

Half of Britain believes in life

after death but only a quarter in hell. Clearly life with your feet up in paradise is preferable to an option of an eternity in a sea of fire.

There must be very few people now who believe that God will take care of the mortgage or the threat of unemployment. Modern life disabuses such beliefs at every step.

All moves towards a more modern, rational world and away from religious obscurantism and mysticism must be healthy. The only salvation is the salvation we create for ourselves, by our own actions, in the here and now.

Why you should be a socialist

WE LIVE IN A capitalist world. Production is social; ownership of the social means of production is private. Ownership by a state which serves those who own most of the means of production is also essentially "private".

Those who own the means of production buy the labour power of those who own nothing but their labour-power and set them to work. At work they produce more than the equivalent of their wages. The difference (today in Britain it may be more than £20,000 a year per worker) is taken by the capitalist. This is exploitation of wage-labour by capital, and it is the basic cell of capitalist society, its very heart-beat.

Everything else flows from that. The relentless drive for profit and accumulation decrees the judgment of all things in existence by their relationship to productivity and profitability.

From that come such things as the savage exploitation of Brazilian goldminers, whose life expectancy is now less than 40 years, and the working to death — it is officially admitted by the government! — of its employees by advanced Japanese capitalism. From this comes the economic neglect and virtual abandonment to ruin and starvation of "unprofitable" places like Bangladesh and parts of Africa.

FROM THAT COMES the cultural blight and barbarism of our society force-fed on profitable pap. From it come products with "built-in obsolescence" in a society orientated to the grossly wasteful production and reproduction of shoddy goods, not to the development of leisure and culture.

From it come mass unemployment, the development of a vast and growing underclass, living in ghettos, and the recreation in some American cities of the worst Third World conditions.

From it comes the unfolding ecological disaster of a world crying out for planning and the rational use of resources, but which is, tragically, organised by the ruling classes around the principle of profitable anarchy and the barbarous worship of blind and humanly irrational market forces.

From it come wars and genocides: twice this century capitalist gangs possessing worldwide power have fallen on each other in quarrels over the division of the spoils, and wrecked the world economy, killing many tens of millions. From it come racism, imperialism and fascism.

The capitalist cult of icy egotism and the "cash nexus" as the decisive social tie produce societies like Britain's now, where vast numbers of young people are condemned to live in the streets, and societies like that of Brazil, where homeless children are hunted and killed on the streets like rodents.

From the exploitation of wage-labour comes this society of ours where the rich, who — through their servants and agents — hold state power, fight a relentless class struggle to maintain the people in a mental condition to accept their own exploitation and abuse, and prevent real democratic self-control developing within the forms of what they call democracy. They use tabloid propaganda or — as in the 1984-85 miners' strike — savage and illegal police violence — whatever they need to use. They have used fascist gangs when they needed to, and they will use them again, if necessary.

A GAINST THIS SYSTEM we seek to convince the working class — the wage slaves of the capitalist system — to fight for socialism. Socialism means the abolition of wage slavery, the taking of the social economy out of private ownership into common cooperative ownership. It means the full realisation of the old demands for liberty, equality and fraternity.

Under socialism the economy will be run and planned deliberately and democratically: market mechanisms will cease to be our master, and will be cut down and re-shaped to serve broadly sketched-out and planned, rational social goals.

We want public ownership of the major enterprises and a planned economy under workers' control.

The working class can and should win reforms within capitalism, but we can only win socialism by overthrowing capitalism and by breaking the state power — that is, the monopoly of violence and reserve violence — now held by the capitalist class. We want a democracy much fuller than the present Westminster system — a workers' democracy, with elected representatives recallable at any time, and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

Socialism can never be built in one country alone. The workers in every country have more in common with workers in other countries than with their own capitalist or Stalinist rulers. We support national liberation struggles and workers' struggles worldwide; we back the struggles of workers and oppressed nationalities in the ex-Stalinist states of Eastern Europe and in still-Stalinist China.

What are the alternatives now? We may face new wars as European and Japanese capitalism confronts the US. Fascism is rising. Poverty, inequality and misery are growing. We are deep in the worse capitalist slump for 60 years.

Face the bitter truth: either we build a new, decent, sane, democratic world or, finally, the capitalists will ruin us all — we will be dragged down by the fascist barbarians or new massive wars. Civilisation will be eclipsed by a new dark age. The choice is socialism or barbarism.

Socialists work in the trade unions and the Labour Party to win the existing labour movement to socialism. We work with presently unorganised workers and youth.

To do that work the Marxists organise themselves in a democratic association, the Alliance for Workers' Liberty.

To join the **Alliance for Workers' Liberty**, write to: PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

The first bureaucratic-collectivists

LETTER

YOUR introduction to the Shachtman piece [SO 562] makes him out to be the founder of the bureaucratic collectivist tradition, which he was not.

Ignoring Bakunin's predictions and theories that were built on them, the earliest exposition of a bureaucratic collectivist theory of the way that Bolshevik power was going was in a novel published in 1919, which was later the model for Orwell's 1984. The earliest two (post-revolution) statements as a basis for political theory were:

a. that of Hugo Urbahns, (he had moved between various communist factions, so though he would probably have considered himself a Trotskyist when he first evolved the theory, he can be given virtually any label that his opponents would wish to give him); and

b. the first exposition of Wittfogel's "Hydraulic Theory" which then used the term "bureaucratic collectivism", (though obviously not in the same sense as other such theories). [Wittfogel was then a Bukharinist. There was a split between the strict Bukharinists who wanted an alliance with the more radical petit bourgeois parties and the Brandlerites who were prepared to make concessions to left social democracy. Some Brandlerites argued that

popular frontism led to state capitalism, and Wittfogel replied that compromise with state reformism led to bureaucratic collectivism].

No doubt you view the Rosmer group's Trotskyist associations askance since the group originated as anarchist and after breaking with Trotsky returned; but it would be well to remind you that Trotsky did not consider the breach total, which was why Marguerite Rosmer nursed him through his final hours. The group evolved the theory, deputing Simone Weil to write the full exposition,

in the early Thirties. Trotsky wrote *The Revolution Betrayed* and an earlier shorter work to argue the contrary case, but in so doing shifted his position accepting for the first time that a political revolution was necessary in the Soviet Union.

Rizzi, initially intending to support Trotsky's case, and to plug what seemed to him to be a gap in the theory, wrote *La Bureaucratization du Monde* in 1936; and for all Rizzi's other oddities, this work has an obvious claim to be the first Trotskyist statement of the theory (if Weil's is disre-

garded). His theory was taken up by (the then Trotskyist) Partisan Review group and by the International Communist refugees from Germany (IKD). These broke with Trotsky a year before the split between the Workers' Party and the Socialist Workers' Party. The Workers' Party (under Shachtman's leadership) when it broke with Trotsky did not at first embrace the Bureaucratic Collectivist theory, it disagreed only over the support Trotsky gave to the invasion of Finland.

Laurens Otter, Salop

Support the right to choose!

PLATFORM

WE ARE A women's self-insemination group organised in the London area. We are lesbian, celibate or heterosexual women who are choosing to have a child without a sexual relationship with a man.

We believe that women should not only have the right to choose *not* to have a child, we also believe we should have the right to choose when, how and with whom we have children if we want them.

Donor insemination is semi-available for heterosexual married couples on the NHS. It is not available for lesbians and single heterosexual women. Some private clinics offer services to us (within the confines of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act) but the present cost in London is £150-£500 per month.

We are looking for men who will agree to become anonymous donors for a period of time for the women in our group. We hope that your male readers will recognise that becoming a donor is a political act which supports

women's choice and reproductive rights.

We do everything to make becoming a donor with us very easy — including paying an amount for expenses. However, at the end of the day, as women who are trying to become pregnant without a man (and without vast amounts of money!), we are dependent on men (particularly socialist men) offering to assist us.

For further details men should write to: Margaret Jackson, Women's Insemination Group, c/o Women's Health, 52 Featherstone Street, London EC1Y 8RT.

Alliance for Workers' Liberty public meetings

Thurs 20 May

"The socialist solution to crime"

York University AWL meeting. 7.30, Goodericke College, G120.

"How to fight the cuts"

Islington AWL meeting. 7.30, Springdale Nursery, 15a Springdale Road.

Speakers: Alice Sharp, an AWL teacher and an Islington NALGO member.

Weds 26 May

"Socialists and Europe"

Lancaster University AWL meeting. 2pm, Student Union.

Sat 29 May

"Ideas for Freedom"

Brighton AWL dayschool. 1pm, Unemployed Centre.

Women

Sat 22 May

Women and the public sector day school

Organised by Women for Socialism. 10.30-4.30, Wesley House,

4 Wild Court, Holborn, London.

Unions

Sat 22 May

TUC Conference "Organising for recovery"

Congress House, London. Details from: 071-278 4430.

Anti-racism

Sunday 23 May

"Racism and miscarriages of justice"

1.00, Bathway Cultural Centre, Woolwich, London SE18.

Miners

Saturday 22 May

March and rally to save Trentham pit

Assemble: 10.00, Hanley Park, Stoke.

Activists' Conference

1.00-5.00, Lea Hall Miners' Club, near Rugeley, Staffs.

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

UCW Conference — the main issue is jobs

Post workers: fight for the 35 hour week!

By a UCW conference delegate

Postal workers, like most others, have been hard hit by the attack on jobs over the last few years. New Technology, which should operate for the benefit of workers, has been used to cut a swathe through duties in the sorting offices. Now it's starting to affect delivery offices as well. Productivity schemes have been introduced that have sold jobs for a pittance. The discipline code has been and is being used as a device to get rid of staff. And above all this hangs the ever present threat of privatisation and the effect this will have on jobs.

Activists in the union have argued for years that the only answer to the threat of job losses is a shorter working week. By and large this has fallen on deaf ears. When it comes to deciding priorities this has always been pushed to the rear. In the past 25 years all that's been achieved is a cut of 1.5 hours from 43 to 41.5.

Now the feeling is that something has got to be done, and quickly. At this year's Annual Conference, starting in Jersey on 23 May, there are no fewer than 29 amendments on the shorter working week. These range from the impractical call for an immediate 35 hour week by October 1993 from Eastern No. 5 to the general wish for 35 hours from Stockport and District Amal.

The main debate, however, will be around the composite moved by London No.7 and Western Amal. This calls for an immediate claim for 35 hours but recognises that a phased introduction may need to be negotiated. It goes on to state that if an acceptable and speedy agreement isn't reached then a ballot for strike action will be conducted. The composite has a weakness in that it doesn't place a time limit on negotiations, but if passed it will still be a big leap forward.

The attempt to foist a new productivity agreement (the Stratford Agreement) on delivery staff has also attracted a large number of amendments, 24 in total. The previous scheme, IWM, was hated by delivery staff and they are in no hurry to go into another one. The main aims of the amendments are to prevent the selling off of jobs, hours and agreed working conditions and to prevent the Executive Council slipping it in by making any eventual acceptance subject to a decision of Annual Conference. Greater Manchester Amal calls for no local deals to be made and London SW Amal Postal calls for industrial action if there are any attempts to impose such a deal locally.

Continued on page 15



Charges against those arrested at the mass picket on 17 May should be dropped

Back the Timex pickets!

By Harry Tuttle

THE LAST WEEK and the coming days are a critical period in the Timex dispute at Dundee. As the ninety day mark passes, the Timex bosses and in the first place Peter Hall will look to break the solidarity of the sacked workforce by selectively re-employing some of the sacked workforce. The active, visible support of the entire labour movement is more essential now than ever.

Last Saturday 15th saw an STUC sponsored demonstration of some 5,000 people in Dundee, and the mobilisation of popular support in the area. Speeches at the rally were, in the main, excellent, with ample evidence of the Labour Party swinging behind the Timex workers. But Jimmy Airlie still managed to make a shameful speech. He attacked any whiff of illegality in a dispute that increasingly has to confront the anti-union laws to win, and his main solidarity with the workers was to wish them luck.

Monday was much better. Again some 5,000 trade unionists mobilised. Workers from Ford Daghenam and the occupied nurseries in Islington were there as well as banners from Labour Parties from as far afield as Cambridge. According to reports from the strike committee, we stopped many of the supervisors entering the plant. The two scab buses had to go in an hour early to cross the picket lines. Massive over-policing and a vicious and vindictive operation led to

35 people getting lifted. What was basically a good humoured and peaceful picket was disrupted by the police. Now the media is making a fuss about picket-line violence, and the police have fitted up two arrested pickets on a charge of attempted murder. As Willie Leslie put it on Monday night: "The biggest act of violence that we've seen in the course of the fifteen week dispute as far as I'm concerned is the sacking of the 343 workers by Timex management in Dundee." The police operation and the charges are designed to intimidate workers to prevent them joining the mass pickets. We must demand the dropping of all charges from the mass picket.

The picket was followed by a rally at which the local MP John McAllion and miners' leader Arthur Scargill spoke. Bill Jordan had warned Scargill to stay away, and called him the captain of the Titanic. McAllion pointed out that the Titanic had come upon its downfall unawares, but Scargill, uniquely, has warned the trade union movement of its dangers. Scargill himself replied to the timidity of Airlie and Jordan in the face of the anti-union laws, reminding them of recent history: "In the 1970s, the trade union leadership made it absolutely clear that if it meant action in breach of the law that it would do so", and "it's time trade union leaders recognised that this movement was built not by people who were compliant to the law — it was built by the Chartists, the Levellers and the suffragettes."

Scargill called for solidarity action to back the Timex workers as well as against pit closures and the privatisation of British Rail, the STUC should heed the call for a Day of Action, to coincide with the next Monday morning mass picket of the Timex factory. The Scottish labour movement in particular, must improve its mobilisation in support of the Timex workers. Scargill said he dreamed that Willis, Jordan and John Smith were all present on the picket line. If the Timex workers are to win, then something like this dream has to come true.

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SOCIALIST Inside this week
MAY-JULY Behind the hype
see page 10

Buses, rail, pits, public sector

STRIKE TOGETHER!

Unite to beat sackings, sell-offs, cuts