

workers power

revolution
against
global
capitalism

**We need a
workers'
government!**

Kirstie Paton, SA candidate
for Greenwich & Woolwich,
spells out the case for
socialism - page 11



Election 2001 Issue 254 ★ 10p

**Because
Blair is in
the pocket
of big
business...**

**Because
asylum
seekers are
welcome
here...**

**Because
pensioners
are living in
poverty...**

**Because
Labour
bombed
Iraq...**

**Because
private
railways are
a disaster...**

**Because we
defend the
right to
protest...**



**Socialist
Alliance**

Vote

Socialist

Alliance

...and Scottish Socialist Party

Action round-up

A PEACEFUL May Day protest called by Birmingham's S26 anti-capitalist group and supported by Globalise Resistance, was surrounded by huge numbers of cops who coralled the demonstration of about 40 people and snatched nine demonstrators, charging most of them with non-compliance with the police order to move to an underpass.

Police also tried to ban the traditional May Day march, saying that the Trades Union Council (BTUC) could be charged for road closure costs and sued by traders for loss of business.

The march was only allowed to go ahead on a prescribed pavement route. BTUC Secretary Mick Rice called for the labour movement to defend the right to protest. "We will stand by the those arrested on May 1st. The rights of all trade unionists and progressive organisations are under attack".

■ **Defend the Right to Protest:** meeting Saturday 19th May, 4pm, Queens Head Pub, Steelhouse Lane. Messages of support to S26brum@hotmail.com; s26 Collective, PO Box 9417, Birmingham B13 9WA.

TWO NATIONAL strikes have been called by the lecturers' union Natfhe this month. Both are on the issue of pay. The higher education (new universities) workers will come out on 21st May, while workers in the further education sector will take action on 22nd May.

Natfhe members are fed up at Labour's refusal to fund higher and further education properly - they are angry that they are being used to provide education on the cheap.

The FE strike is the first attempt at a national strike and a nationally aggregated ballot since colleges became corporations. The ballot was won for strike action with a 65 per cent yes vote on a 50 per cent turnout.

ON THURSDAY 17 May sacked Marks and Spencers workers from across Europe are set take to the streets in London.

Without giving notice to the staff or unions, M&S closed all its European stores in March, creating widespread anger in France and Belgium in particular. The decision was communicated to staff at 8am just before the opening of the shops and the London stock exchange.

The demonstration is being organised by the UNI Europa (the shop workers federation of the European Congress of Trade Unions).

A delegation of Left MEPs is also coming to London to join the demonstration including Arlette Laguiller of the socialist organisation Lutte Ouvrier, and Alain Krivine of the LCR.

The demonstration is due to assemble at Baker Street (near Hyde Park) at 1pm to march past M&S head office in Baker Street and ending at Congress House, Great Russell Street.

STEELWORKERS IN Sheffield start all-out strike action on Wednesday 16th May. AEEU members at William Cooks foundry are stepping up their action in a fight against pay cuts of up to £120 a week - this is after £80 a week cuts last year! Bosses at the plant are also trying to impose new contracts and 17 workers have now been sacked for refusing to sign the new contracts. Sheffield Socialist Alliance is actively supporting the strikers.

■ Send messages of support and donations to: Eddy Grimes, 116 Richmond Park Crescent, Sheffield S13 8H

■ Sign up today for Workers Power Global - your weekly online newsline: www.workerspower.com

Socialist election challenge rocks the establishment

SOCIALIST ALLIANCE national chair and Coventry North East parliamentary candidate, Dave Nellist launching the campaign, said:

"While the establishment parties hide in the television studios we'll be out canvassing, campaigning, holding public meetings and talking to people in the streets."

Reports coming in from around the country show just how true this is - the Socialist Alliance is out there fighting.

In Norwich the city college was threatened with redundancies. A one-day strike was backed by a 300-strong demo. The Socialist Alliance (SA) was there, with Dave Nellist addressing the rally.

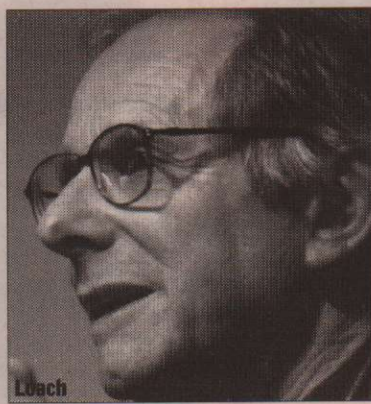
In Birmingham, fire-fighter and Erdington constituency candidate, Steve Godward, has made a splash with a huge mural - and by pelting an SA supporter in a Blair mask with wet sponges. The number of people happy to pelt Blair showed just how unpopular "the most popular" prime minister in British history really is. In neighbouring Perry Barr the SA candidate, Caroline Johnson, was a leading organiser of a recent road blockade in protest at the council's plans to privatise elderly people's homes.

In York the campaign has organised a demo against rail privatisation, with SA supporters demanding free return tickets to public ownership, and a march through the town against George Bush's madcap Star Wars plan.

South Hertfordshire SA have put anti-racism on the agenda by organising a picket of the racist "comedian" Bernard Manning. Meanwhile, in Scarborough and Northampton, the alliances are at the forefront of the campaigns against the closure of local factories.



Nellist



Loach

Join the Socialist Alliance!



Write to: Socialist Alliance, Wickham House, 10 Cleveland Way, London E1 4TR
Phone: 020 7536 9696
e mail: office@socialistalliance.net
Visit: www.socialistalliance.net
Help us raise £100,000

We have no big business backers. We rely on you. We desperately need money for leaflets, posters, tannoy systems, room bookings, office costs and just about anything else you can think of.
Rush donations, cheques payable to Socialist Alliance.

* If we're not standing? If you live in a place where the SA/SSP is not standing we recommend you cast your for Labour. But get involved in your nearest SA/SSP campaign.

The SA candidate for Regent's Park and North Kensington, China Mieville, was arrested and manhandled during a council chamber protest against the Tories' attempts to close a local nursery. In Camberwell and Peckham, and

Dulwich and West Norwood, Southwark SA candidates John Mulrenan and Brian Kelly have both played a leading role in organising demos against the National Front marching in the borough. In Nottingham when Blair turned up

for one of his sickening "photo-ops" he got a taste of the bigger picture when he was greeted by some 50 local SA supporters putting the case for socialism. This wasn't the sort of publicity he was looking for. David Blunkett's photo-op was also accompanied by loads of SA posters and placards as a backdrop!

Everywhere the SA is standing working class people are responding well to a campaign that speaks their language, fights for their needs and encourages their active involvement. They are not "apathetic", as the pundits and politicians claim. They are just sick of the tired old politics of spin and the betrayals of New Labour in office. They want action and they want change, and the Socialist Alliance is showing them the possibility for both.

And all of this was in the first three days of the campaign!

This campaign will grow. All over the country Labour Party members are defecting and joining the alliance. Everywhere new forces are coming over to the alliance. Now the phoney war is over and the real one has begun recruits are starting to pile in.

Over the next four weeks Workers Power appeals to every single one of its readers to throw themselves into this crucial battle to:

- Make the SA campaign an active, fighting socialist campaign.
- Maximise the vote for socialism on 7 June.
- Mobilise hundreds and thousands of workers to join the Socialist Alliance so that we can build the fightback from 8 June against the new pro-big business government, be it Labour or Tory.

■ Don't miss the election broadcast on 22 May - directed by Ken Loach and coming to a TV or radio near you!

Raynsford awarded Golden Helmet for helping construction fat cats

Greenwich socialists inspired by *Bread and Roses* film

When Labour housing minister Nick Raynsford launched his election campaign on 11 May he got more than he bargained for. Around 50 Greenwich Labour Party members saw Raynsford presented with a "Golden Helmet" for his services to the construction fat cats.

Socialist Alliance election candidate Kirstie Paton - who is challenging Raynsford in Greenwich & Woolwich - presented Raynsford with the gold-painted construction workers' hard hat.

"We were inspired by the scene in Ken Loach's film *Bread and Roses*, where union organisers present a 'golden turkey' to a union busting chief executive. Raynsford spends his time wining and dining with the construction industry bosses. He is one of the key backers of PFI. He is backing the PFI sell off of my school, John Roan, and he backed the merger of our two local hospitals into a PFI-run unit with fewer beds



Raynsford startled by golden helmet (left) and Socialist Alliance candidate Kirstie Paton with the fat cat award (right)

higher charges."

Paton slammed Raynsford over Labour's record on construction deaths. "There have been 239 workers killed on site under New Labour - and every year it gets worse. The construction bosses know they have nothing to fear from people like Nick Raynsford - like other New Labour ministers

he is basically in the pocket of big business."

Raynsford told a construction industry dinner last year he was disappointed at the death rate but he stressed: "It's not a question of having a go at anybody."

Paton retorted: "But Labour is always ready to 'have a go' at



workers who defend their rights and community activists who fight privatisation."

Eight Socialist Alliance activists took part in the peaceful protest at Raynsford's party meeting. One was pushed to the floor as Labour's Greenwich council mafia moved in to eject them.



Parties fuel racist hate

No to divide and rule. Asylum seekers are welcome here!

LABOUR AND THE Tories can't resist making race an election issue.

Tory MPs rushed to denounce the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) and its pre-election compact against playing the race card.

Hague accused Labour of making Britain "a foreign land", Anne Widdecombe dismissed the CRE pledge as "silly", while Michael Portillo, refused to sign.

Meanwhile, Tory MP, John Townend, voiced the sort of naked racist prejudice that still runs deep in the party's ranks. His public rantings about "coloured immigration", his defence of the "Anglo-Saxon race" and the spirit of Enoch Powell drove the Tories' senior black politician, Lord John Taylor, to demand Townend's expulsion.

Of course, Hague did no such thing, administering only a slap on the wrist. Taylor's remarks fuelled speculation that he was about to jump ship to New Labour, which had deployed former journalist turned politician Trevor Phillips to "advise" Taylor.

But it was Labour who stirred up the race debate. Robin Cook's "chicken tikka masala" speech was designed to expose Tory divisions. But it came at a time when a minority of white racists in communities like Oldham, Bradford and East London are being stirred up by far right rhetoric.

The result was not to sideline the Tory extreme right: instead race came to the centre of the election debate. The media went on a witch-hunt against the Asian communities in Bradford and Oldham - repeating lurid stories of "white no go areas" and "racist attacks by blacks" supplied by the police.

Even as New Labour sought to boast of its multicultural credentials, the party is fielding fewer African-Caribbean and Asian candidates at this general election than in the 1980s - making a mockery of Tony Blair's commitment in 1997 to create a parliament that reflected Britain's ethnic diversity.

Likewise, its Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 has been exposed as a hollow sham.

Inner city areas with large minority ethnic populations continue to suffer massively higher unemployment levels than the average. A recent analysis by the TUC showed that levels of jobless-

ness among black and Asian people actually grew over the course of the 1990s, despite the supposed economic boom. Unemployment rates remain at least twice as high for people from "visible minority" groups compared to the white population, says the TUC.

But the main victims of Labour's racism are asylum seekers.

In an article for Rupert Murdoch's *Times*, Tony Blair made it plain that New Labour is determined to match the Tories every step of the way when it comes to taking a hard line against refugees and economic migrants. Blair did not dare accuse the Tories of racism over the asylum issue, but pointed instead to their "opportunism".

The prime minister's article also reinforced Home Secretary Jack Straw's early February assault on Article 31 of the 1951 Geneva Convention, bolstering predictions that the British government will spearhead an attack on the Convention during the Belgian presidency of the European Union, which starts in July.

In the same week as Blair's piece appeared, Jack Straw's lapdog, immigration minister Barbara Roche, revealed New Labour's successor to the Tories' so-called white list. She issued an executive order that conferred on immigration officers "special powers" to discriminate. (See centre pages for further details).

A week earlier the Home Secretary had gleefully surveyed the latest technology for detecting would-be immigrants crammed into lorries, even as he pledged that the government would ensure that at least 30,000 people were deported this year.

In Cardiff there are between 30 and 40 asylum seekers imprisoned in the city's jail, simply for the "crime" of applying for refugee status. In mid-May a group of 11 detainees was taken in handcuffs to the city's Royal Infirmary for what were described as "routine medical tests."

Constant rhetoric about bogus asylum seekers pays off in violence on the streets.

Two Palestinian brothers, who had arrived in Glasgow under the government's dispersal scheme, found themselves in intensive care after a gang of thugs attacked them with baseball bats on 21 April.

Scotland Yard's Racial and Violent Crime Task Force admitted in April that the level of racist rhetoric from politicians and the level of racist violence on the streets are linked. In March 2001 the number of racial incidents soared by 300 per cent in the wake of Hague's "foreign land" speech.

■ Oldham report - page 11

Stop this poison

Racism is poison. It poisons working class communities and it prevents us fighting back against the profiteers. Divide and rule is the oldest game in the book.

At the Islington dinner tables of the Labour elite, it is easy to talk up "multicultural Britain" while stabbing asylum seekers in the back. But in working class communities, the constant drip feed of anti-asylum seeker rhetoric is corroding solidarity.

If your wages are low and your housing sub-standard it's all too easy to blame "asylum seekers" instead of the real culprits: the bosses and their friends in Labour councils.

The answer is not to bury the debate on racism - but to confront racism for what it is.

Racism is not about different sets of people being prejudiced against each other: it is about systematic oppression of black people by the system.

Only working class struggle and solidarity can drive racism out of our communities, and out of people's heads.

Most of all it means the organised working class supporting black people's right not just to self-organisation but to self-defence.

what we say

- Scrap the voucher, detention and dispersal schemes - full access to benefits and other citizenship rights
- Close down Campsfield, Oakington and all other detention centres
- Abolish all immigration controls.
- Support black communities right to self defence
- Drive the fascists of the NF and BNP off the streets

What we think...

Time for unions to wake up and fight!

The triumph of Tony Blair within the Labour Party was the product of 20 years of working class defeat. Thatcherism

delivered numerous body blows to Britain's trade unions - the most severe being the bitter defeat of the miners in 1985. But its most lasting victory has been to turn Labour into a neo-liberal party.

workers power

Labour still gets 40 per cent of its income from workers' contributions made through trade unions political funds. Unions leaders will shell out £8 million of their members' money to New Labour in this election.

Tony Blair also relied heavily on the union leaders to ensure that Labour's ditched policy commitments to renationalisation of privatised utilities - and to abolish democracy at the party conference itself.

But New Labour is on a collision course with the working class in its second term. As economic slowdown turns to recession we will see more job losses and plant closures - not just in the old industries, as at the Corus steel plants, but in the new high-tech plants like Motorola and Compaq.

And Labour is determined to pick a fight with the workforce of the newly commercialised Post Office. Postal workers have mounted a guerilla campaign of unofficial strikes and go-slows that should be an inspiration to any trade union member.

What little Labour is delivering to trade unionists in terms of employment rights it is taking away with the other hand as it allows manufacturing to be destroyed, and unionised service workforces to be hammered by privatisation.

Though the headline figures say unions are growing again, they are still declining as a proportion of those in work. And in the brave new world of McJobs and private services - the fastest growing part of the economy - union density is falling.

Unions still organise around 30 per cent of the workforce in Britain. They can have a massive impact. A one-day Tube strike cost London's bosses substantially more in lost revenue than the closure of Oxford Street by Mayday protests.

There remains an enormous social power in the organised working class - one that can and must be unleashed during New Labour's second term.

The Socialist Alliance and the Scottish Socialist Party have transformed electoral politics for the left. The anti-capitalist movement has revived protest on the streets. The missing link is in the workplaces and the union movement. The unions are still dominated by a leaden bureaucracy that can't or won't organise effective action.

The answer is to import the methods of the anti-capitalist movement into the unions.

Horizontal networks of activists exist to deliver solidarity and information with other unions across the globe - now we need a rank and file network that can deliver effective action: within the official union structures if possible, outside them if necessary.

The next two months will see huge union mobilisations at Gothenburg and Genoa against the capitalist ministers and corporations who rule the world. It's time for the British trade union movement to wake up, smell the coffee and shake off the chains of Blairism.

Workers Power, BCM Box 7750 London WC1N 3XX ● 07730 220962
www.workerspower.com ● Letters to: paper@workerspower.com

1 Labour is in the pocket of big business. We stand up for working people

Labour came to power in 1997 backed by the votes of millions of working people. But since then a small gang of millionaires have dictated many of its policies.

Labour exempted Formula One racing from the tobacco advertising ban - after its boss, Bernie Ecclestone, donated £1m to the party. Labour offered fast-track passports to the crooked Hinduja brothers - after they gave £1m to bail out the Millennium Dome.

Blair has kept most of the Tory anti-union laws intact. He boasted to the boss: "Under Labour Britain has the most restrictive union laws in Europe."

And Peter Mandelson, then Blair's right-hand man, said "Labour is deeply relaxed about people getting filthy rich".

In short, Labour rules for big business. Labour stands for the filthy rich.

The Socialist Alliance stands up for working class people - the people Labour has left behind. We'll govern in the interests of working people, not the rich.

2 Direct action works. We are a direct action party

Thousands of people will stay at home on polling day because they believe all politicians are the same; that "whoever you vote for, the government gets in".

That is not just apathy: people are waking up to the fact that politics is a carve up between establishment parties, all of them loyal to the capitalist system.

We think voting can only change things if it's part of a wider movement that sees direct action by working people as the main force for change.

Look at what happened to the multinational drug companies last month. They tried to ban the South African government making cheap medicines to combat AIDS. They had to back down because people all over the world threatened to picket their premises and boycott their products.

The message is: direct action works. Socialism will come from below, through ordinary people getting organised in their workplaces and in their communities.

The Socialist Alliance is a direct action party. Don't just vote for us - join our campaigns in local communities, against council house sales, school closures, hospital privatisation and environmental risks.

3 Labour is addicted to privatisation. We will take back control

Privatisation is at the heart of Labour's programme for the second term. It is set to hand over £20bn of public services - schools, hospitals, prisons, transport projects - to the private sector in the form of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI).

Labour says PFI is needed in order to fund massive improvements in public services. They say handing over our schools and hospitals to private multinationals gives "better value for money".

But experts have shown this is a barefaced lie. PFI projects guarantee the big construction companies an average 10 to 15 per cent return on investment. Before PFI the construction industry was earning average profits of just 3 per cent. All that extra money comes straight out of taxpayers' pockets and goes straight into the construction bosses' pockets.

So what's the answer? We will give a massive 25 per cent boost to the NHS, schools, transport and local council spending. We will renationalise all PFI projects - with no compensation. And we'll pay for it through taxing big business and the rich.

But we'll go further. The Socialist Alliance will put all public services under the control of the workers who provide them and the people who use them.

There will be no return to unelected quangos and bureaucrats: the whole public sector will be run under workers' control.

4 Labour backs globalisation. We're fighting against global capitalism

Globalisation is killing millions of people in the Third World. Each day 19,000 people die from poverty inflicted by the harsh economic policies dictated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

When anti-globalisation protesters surrounded IMF conferences in Seattle and Prague, many global businesspeople rushed to appease them with promises of concessions. But not Labour's Clare Short. Short hates anti-debt campaigners nearly as much as she despises the poor of the Third World. She wants to press full steam ahead with globalisation.

Only if the poorest countries privatise their health service and basic industries, and surrender control of their economies to the IMF - will they get New Labour's approval. As for sweatshops - Clare Short defends them. She says attempts to force firms like Nike and the Gap to comply with basic labour standards are wrong.

The Socialist Alliance will unilaterally cancel all Third World debt. It will offer massive aid without strings to Third World countries. It will implement the "Tobin Tax" - with one per cent deducted from every financial transaction in the City of London and the money used to fund a massive development programme for heavily indebted countries. And we'll pull Britain out of the IMF and World Bank.

5 Labour panders to racism. We fight racism - and smash fascism

Labour's immigration policies are racist to the core. They have borrowed Tory rhetoric about "bogus" asylum seekers and "economic migrants". They have jailed large numbers of asylum seekers who have committed no crime. And the demeaning "voucher system" condemns asylum seekers to a sub-human existence: in the money society they have no right to a money income.

Labour claims tight immigration controls are needed to "maintain racial harmony". That argument effectively says black people are to blame for racism. It's rubbish. Racism stems from Britain's legacy as an imperial power and a slave-trade economy. And it is perpetuated because the capitalist system demands that factories and investment can move countries to find the cheapest labour - but workers can't move countries to find better wages and conditions.

Labour refused to implement the full recommendations of the Macpherson report. While it tries to look anti-racist, insisting on cosmetic changes to policing, Labour's 1997 manifesto said nothing about police racism.

We say ethnic minority communities should have the right of self-defence against racist attack. And in Oldham and Bradford Asian youth have put that into practice. The police response has been to target ethnic minority communities - with other violence and racist abuse.

People before profit!

Ten reasons to vote Socialist Alliance



Asylum demo: Socialist Alliance will scrap immigration controls

We say self-defence is no offence. Workers Power has pushed within the Socialist Alliance for measures that will scrap the current police force and replace it with organised community self-defence groups. Socialist Alliance candidate, Kirstie Paton, says: "The police are institutionally racist - and institutionally pro-capitalist. They have killed people, they fail miserably to solve crime, and they cannot change: if the police force was a school it would have been shut down long ago."

6 Labour destroys local control. We fight for workers' control

Under New Labour, local government has been gutted: councils are forced by the best value initiative to hand over services to incompetent private firms. No matter who you vote for, you will get council outsourcing.

It's the same with council housing. They are forcing communities to accept the mass transfer of council properties to private housing firms with the ultimatum: no privatisation, no renovation and rebuilding work.

They want to remove the last vestiges of community control over the health service. And the industry "regulators" are a joke.

There is only one solution: nationalisation under workers' control.

We will renationalise the railways, end council estate sell-offs and service privatisation. And we'll put the whole system under the control of workers and service users.

7 Labour is a party of imperialism and war. We fight for international solidarity

Tony Blair's government has bombed Iraq and Yugoslavia, and spearheaded the recolonisation of Sierra Leone. It is virtually the only European government to back George W Bush's "son of star wars" initiative.

Labour backs Israel to the hilt as it murders unarmed Palestinian children - the worst the Israeli state can expect is a rap on the knuckles from Robin Cook.

Labour carried on selling arms to tyrants like Indonesia's Suharto - and the arms trade is still booming for British weapons manufacturers.

Labour welcomed China's leader Jiang Zemin – and got the police to harass Chinese human rights demonstrators.

And in Ireland, Labour continues to back the Loyalist veto on the peace process. It sacked Mo Mowlam because the Orange bigots thought she was too soft on the anti-unionist community. And 30 years on it is still desperately trying to cover up what happened on Bloody Sunday. When the European Court of Human Rights denounced Britain's cover-up of the Northern Ireland shoot-to-kill policy, Labour ministers rubbished the verdict.

So, whatever happened to the "ethical foreign policy" we were offered in 1997? Quite simply, it was a sham. Once in office, Labour has to govern for the ruling class. The British ruling class runs the oldest imperialist operation in the world. No matter how "ethical" you want to be, imperialism means you shoot to kill all resistance to the rule of global multinationals.

The Socialist Alliance has pledged to slash defence spending and calls for "Troops Out of Ireland". We think it should go further.

A workers' government would abolish today's armed forces and replace them with a working class militia. We would pull British forces out of the Balkans, the Middle East and the Malvinas. We would send arms without strings to progressive resistance movements across the globe.

But until we achieve a workers' government, we say: not a penny nor a single person for the defence of this system.

8 Labour criminalises youth. We say the youth are the future

Labour closed down its youth organisation years ago because it organised too much resistance. Now "Young Labour" looks more like a cocktail party for lawyers and dotcom entrepreneurs.

Labour lives in fear of young people. It effectively criminalises a million people every week through its refusal to legalise drugs. Labour has filled the Young Offenders Institutions (YOIs) to the brim with its harsh sentencing policies. YOIs like Feltham are so bad that even prison inspectors have condemned the violence and racism there – yet Labour plans to double the numbers of young people in jail.

Because Labour has abolished grants and imposed tuition fees, many working class young people cannot afford a university education. Those that do have to work, on average 20 hours a week on top of full-time study – usually for the minimum wage and under conditions of bullying, harassment and workplace hazards.

To cap it all, young people are denied the vote. You can die for your country at 16, get married and – at 17 – drive a car. But you can't vote until you're 18.

Socialists want an end to the systematic oppression and discrimination against young people. The Socialist Alliance will legalise cannabis. Workers Power fights for the legalisation of all drugs under a state monopoly.

We will give the vote from the age of 16. We'll put education under the control of teachers and students together. We'll restore student grants and fees to the level of a living income and abolish the means tests.

Labour botched the equalisation of the age of consent and still has failed to fulfil its 1997 pledge to abolish Section 28. We will scrap this homophobic law and make space in schools for the sex education children need.

And we'll put youth in control of their own lives. Workers Power supports the independent socialist youth movement Revolution – which hit the headlines at Prague in September 2000 and on Mayday. We've helped set up the campaign "No Sweat" – to link the fight against poverty wages at shops like Gap, Nike and McDonalds with the struggles of Third World factory workers.

The Socialist Alliance is the only party that offers equal rights and pay for young people, and an end to criminalisation.

9 Labour is the party of poverty. We'll abolish poverty

The gap between rich and poor has widened under New Labour. No wonder people from "social classes A and B" – the Audi TT drivers and Armani-suit brigade – are Tony Blair's biggest backers in opinion polls.

New Labour has offered them nothing but tax breaks. But for the poor it is very different. Labour's public spending cuts delivered the insult to pensioners of a 75p a week rise. It has pegged state benefits so that life for unemployed people and single parents is a misery.

And its New Deal strategy is creating a massive layer of "working poor". The minimum wage was not only set too low – but employers have been allowed to fiddle hours and contracts to make it meaningless for some workers.

The Socialist Alliance will introduce a minimum wage of £7.40 an hour that will apply to all regardless of age. It will restore the link between pensions and earnings and deliver a massive boost to pensions overnight. It will abolish the means test on benefits and create a universal benefit system for those who can't find work.

Poverty has sapped the self-respect of generations of working class people. For socialists, the answer is not just more "handouts" and state spending from above – but solidarity and struggle from below. Labour is just not interested in that. Labour fears class struggle; it fears solidarity – because the biggest challenge to the New Labour project is if millions of ordinary people decide they've had enough and it's time they had the power.

10 Labour is the rule of capital. We fight for workers' power

Labour's second term is guaranteed to see attacks on workers who have resisted privatisation and globalisation. The postal workers will be in the firing line, together with teachers and railway workers.

As the recession bites Labour will stand by powerless. But when workers resist the closures and cuts, Labour will allow the anti-union laws to be unleashed. It will be the same where working class communities try to defend their services.

So there's a straight choice on 7 June wherever the Socialist Alliance or Scottish Socialist Party is standing: a vote for the bosses or a vote for working class resistance. Even if you believe Labour can be pressured or reformed into representing some basic working class demands – and we don't – the best way to exert that pressure is to help us unseat the 20 Labour ministers we've targeted, and put some real socialist working class MPs into parliament.

So join our campaign. Vote Socialist Alliance/Scottish Socialist Party. If you're an activist of any kind – on housing, poverty, globalisation, anti-racism or women's rights – your place is in the Socialist Alliance.

And on 7 June let's deliver the biggest possible slap in the face for New Labour and their filthy rich friends.

Vote Socialist Alliance/Scottish Socialist Party.

www.workerspower.com

Capitalism's last line of defence

Who really runs Britain?

Colin Lloyd explains why a workers' government would have to take on and break up the unelected state

Suppose the Socialist Alliance and Scottish Socialist Party won the election. What would happen then?

Would big business just roll over and let us take away their wealth and power? Would the Queen put the royal assent to a bill abolishing the monarchy? Would MI5 quietly pack its bags and vacate its Millbank HQ?

Not likely! In reality, whenever capitalism has been threatened by working class parties trying to shift wealth and power in the direction of ordinary people, it has wheeled out the unelected bodies that form the secret state.

In Britain there are seven layers of sabotage and self-defence that the system could deploy to thwart a Socialist Alliance government.

LAYER 1: The City of London. In the 1960s, when Labour prime minister Harold Wilson tried to implement some meagre economic reforms, the City of London organised a "flight of capital" – moving millions of pounds abroad. Today the potential for economic sabotage is much greater: they can move billions of pounds with one mouse click.

■ A socialist government would have to seize control of the banks and financial institutions from day one to stop this happening.

LAYER 2: The civil service. On the day a socialist walks into the Treasury or the Ministry of Defence it will stop being "Yes, minister". Civil servants regularly misinform ministers to keep the system under control of an unofficial club of public-school educated elite mandarins. Just look at the way MAFF has protected the big farmers and stood in the way of effective action on Foot And Mouth disease. Faced with a Socialist Government, they would sabotage it at every turn.

■ That's why we would have to abolish the top layer of civil servants and turn the machinery of government inside out.

LAYER 3: The judges. In theory parliament makes laws and the courts enforce them. In practice much of Britain's laws are made by judges. And on top of that there are international laws and agreements that would stand in the way of socialist transformation. Our first attempts to renationalise the railways would probably be met with court challenges. The judges aren't elected – they are another part of the self-appointed elite.

■ We would have to sweep away the present legal system: abolish the post of Lord Chancellor; all judges would have to be elected; and their powers would be limited by a written constitution guaranteeing the right to jury trial and free access to justice.

LAYER 4: The police. The police are not just an impartial force there to impose the wishes of any government that happens to gain office. They are there to protect the property of the bosses. In the Grunwick dispute in 1976, a Labour government's pro-union legislation ran up against a vicious anti-union boss. We saw the spectacle of Labour MPs on the picket line, and a Labour government in power – but the police on the side of the strike-breaking bosses. The police are racist to the core. And the activities of Special Branch and the riot squads link seamlessly with the higher tiers of capitalism's self defence system.

■ We don't think the police can be reformed. A socialist government would not just disarm the police and abolish the riot squads and Special Branch. We would have to abolish the police force as it currently exists and replace it with a working class self defence force based in and accountable to the community.

LAYER 5: The secret service. The secret intelligence services MI5 and MI6 are unaccountable. They burgled and bugged their way through the offices of Harold Wilson's Labour government. And they conduct systematic surveillance on anyone associated with the left and trade union activism. Even Home Secretary Jack Straw has an MI5 file – which he has refused to ask to see! The experience of left wing government across the globe is that, whenever they face a serious attempt to challenge capitalism, the secret services become organising points for death squads and dirty tricks – funding far right groups and destabilising the government.

■ The answer is to abolish the secret services and throw open their entire set of secret files – collected since 1909 – to public view.

LAYER 6: The Monarchy and the House of Lords. To outsiders, the monarchy looks like a harmless trinket. In fact the Queen has a highly political function: she sees the minutes of Cabinet; she has the power to dissolve parliament and sack prime ministers. Around the monarchy is the Privy Council: ministers from current and previous governments who have been hand picked and can be trusted in a crisis. Backing it all up is the House of Lords – which has sabotaged and delayed progressive legislation under New Labour and would completely block the Socialist Alliance programme.

■ We should abolish the monarchy, the privy council and the house of Lords.

LAYER 7: The last line of defence for capitalism is the armed forces. The British Army swears allegiance to the Queen not parliament. In a crisis – like generals across the globe – the high command would attempt to crush a workers' government with a military coup. Labour MP Chris Mullen described what would happen in his book "A very British Coup". The generals would seize control, dissolve parliament and rule from regional bunkers that still exist from the days of the Cold War.

■ We would have to abolish the UK Armed Forces and replace them with a workers' militia. A workers' republic would maintain the smallest possible armed forces to defend itself from sabotage and invasion. It would reduce "professional" soldiering as much as possible and put the arms in the hands of the people.

Capitalism's seven layer defence means a workers' government could not act like a normal parliamentary government – even if it started that way. It would have to be based from the beginning not just on working class struggles but on new forms of organisation: workers' councils, workers' self-defence bodies, and workplace committees.

In summary – a Socialist Alliance government would have to break up the real power that governs Britain: the unelected state machine. It would have to replace the capitalist state with working class power – exercised through councils of delegates elected from the workplaces and communities and directly recallable by mass organisations.

Even if it started as an attempt to reform capitalism out of existence – it would need a workers' revolution to finish it.



The Blair Experiment

Four years of Labour

Labour was just about to publish its manifesto as we went to press, but the broad outlines were already clear: more of the same.

We already know that Labour is set against using taxation to redistribute wealth and that its idea of "decent public services" consists of flogging them off to the private sector.

Of course, the manifesto will not boast of this since large swathes of the population have become opposed to privatisation. It will fail to mention that any increases in public investment will time and again be tied to subsidising the profits of big business.

In short, the second term of New Labour will see modest increases in public spending, with strings attached – and even that will hinge on continued economic growth.

As the Institute for Fiscal Studies has pointed out a global downturn would see Brown's Treasury coffers emptied by 2004. Labour will have a choice to make – increase taxes or cut spending. A socialist government would tax the rich, but Gordon Brown and Tony Blair, the self-styled radical, will cut public spending.

Blair's second will will feature more authoritarian attacks on civil liberties. The second term is also likely to see New Labour launch its first head-on assault against the organised working class.

VICTIMISING THE POOR

Working families figure in New Labour's definition of the deserving poor – but woe betide the undeserving poor. By 2006 income support and jobseeker's allowance fraud is to be chopped by 50 per cent. The New Deal will be made permanent with the focus shifting to the long-term unemployed. If you don't want to work long hours for little pay the message is clear: big brother will be watching claimants like a hawk – we can expect much less carrot and much more stick.

BASHING THE UNIONS

But it's not just supposed fraud and "scrounging" that gets New Labour hot under the collar about the benefits system – it's also expensive and unwieldy to run. Its workers are organised, with a socialist recently elected as their union's general secretary (Mark Serwotka). Along with other troublesome trade unionists, particularly those uppity post workers, they may be in need of a lesson. An all but open secret is Labour's aim to privatise the benefits system.

Postal workers, organised in the Communications Workers' Union, are probably the most militant section of Britain's labour movement. While partial privatisation of the Post Office has been achieved, Blair knows that he can get no further until the CWU's resistance has been broken.

BOG STANDARD SCHOOLS

As secondary education comes under the spotlight, "Excellence in Cities", specialist and "beacon schools" programmes will be used to divide the no-hopers from the high flyers.

Middle-class kids will get selected into schools that will look increasingly like old grammar schools, while working class kids will get channelled into schools offering new "vocational" GCSEs and work-related qualifications to prepare them for low-skill jobs in a low-wage economy – secondary moderns in all but name.

GO TO JAIL

As for working class youth who are alienated, bored or simply pissed off at the lousy alternatives on offer, New Labour wants to create a faster track to jail. Young people will be subject to increased powers of curfew to get them off the streets, and tougher sentencing will be targeted at persistent young offenders.

Many will be criminalised for drug use as Labour refuses to listen to calls from even the police for legalising soft drugs, and club owners will face arrest if they allow drug taking on their premises following media hysteria after another young woman's death from taking ecstasy.

Prison numbers have already risen by 6,000 since Labour came in. Despite all the reports that clearly show that prison brutalises rather than reforms, the new 10-year crime plan aims for another 2,660 prison places. Nearly 10,000 more police on the beat are Labour's "best" answer to poverty and alienation in working class communities.

War zone

Remember ethical foreign policy? No more arms to Iraq scandals; no more backing military dictatorships; instead New Labour would stand up for the rights of the oppressed around the world and stop kow-towing to US imperialism.

Since New Labour has been in power it has:

- Supported and took part in the US's bombing of Iraq (alone of all European countries).
- Supported the continuation of sanctions on Iraq that are responsible for the deaths of 100,000s of people.
- Sold Hawk aircraft to the military dictatorship of Indonesia and armoured

troop carriers to the army when it was in control of Nigeria.

- Bombed Serbia and blown up civilian targets.
- Sent thousands of troops to Kosova.
- Continued selling mines – New Labour's one concession is that it does not sell plastic anti-personnel mines – but big metal ones are ok.
- Broke the United Nations arms embargo on Sierra Leone. At the same time as Robin Cook was denying this in the House of Commons, there were demonstrations in Freetown, thanking the British for weapons, logistical support and the use of the SAS.
- New Labour has also sent more

than a 1000 troops into Sierra Leone, and trained and armed a 4,000-strong government army.

■ New Labour has come out in support – again alone in Europe and the world – of President Bush's Star Wars project. Even the Tory-dominated House of Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs refused to support the scheme.

Robin Cook's ethical foreign policy is lying bloodied on the world's battlefields.



Demonstration against the bombing of Iraq

Corruption zone

No more sleaze, said Blair: we are going to be a clean government.

Within a few months of being in power, New Labour had to hand back a £1 million that had been donated to the party by Bernie Ecclestone, the Formula One boss, because Blair had offered not to ban tobacco advertisement at F1 races.

Then Blair's favourite minister Peter Mandelson was caught lying about taking a loan of more than £300,000 for a house in Notting Hill from millionaire businessman and Labour minister Geoffrey Robinson. He resigned along with Robinson.

He re-appointed Peter Mandelson. But again Mandelson was caught doing favours for his rich friends. This time the Hinduja brothers, who gave a £1 million to the Dome's spirit zone at the same time as the two of the brothers were applying for British passports. The brothers, charged with corruption in India over the Bofors gun scandal, contacted Mandelson to find out how their application was progressing. When pressed on this issue, Mandelson "forgot" and within a few days resigned for the second time.

But the brothers still had Keith Vaz, minister at the Foreign Office, to do their work for them. Sadly, after a parliamentary investigation into his links with the brothers, Keith Vaz fell mysteriously ill – and has been unable to answer any more questions since.

Meanwhile, ex-minister Geoffrey Robinson has been found guilty by a Commons' standards committee of covering up money he received from fraudster Robert Maxwell.



Mandelson: Filthy rich

"The Dome will write the first line of the next Labour manifesto" - Tony Blair



Poverty zone

"If the next Labour government has not raised the living standards of the poorest by the end of its time in office, it will have failed." So said Tony Blair before being elected in May 1997.

But for all New Labour's rhetoric about helping the poor into work, about combating social exclusion and repairing the fabric of communities, the government has failed.

A recent study by the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) finds that overall growth in household incomes is the same under New Labour as it was under 18 years of Tory rule – 2.3 per cent growth per year.

A closer look finds that this 2.3 per cent has been mainly going to rich and middle classes – while for the poor it has been the same old story. For all the much heralded tax credits, welfare payment changes and increase in the num-

bers on means-tested benefits, the IFS says that for people on low earnings and those families where no one is employed real incomes have actually stagnated under New Labour.

New Labour has overseen an increase in the wealth of the richest in society. Inequality between the top 20 per cent and the bottom 20 per cent has accelerated at a rate not seen since the days of Margaret Thatcher. The IFS says: "The changes in living standards over the first three years of the Blair government shows income growth that, as in the Thatcher years, is skewed towards the middle and upper levels of incomes."

- The poor are still as poor as they were under John Major
- The rich have got richer as fast as they did under Margaret Thatcher.



Brown: Inequalities are wider now than under any Tory government

rience

Thousands of workers will vote Socialist Alliance on 7 June. Here's why...



r's broken promises

Privatisation zone

New Labour has done what the Tories failed to do: find a way to privatise what's left of public services. Under the Private Finance Initiative the Tories managed just £4 billion of privatisation. Labour's privatisation fanatic Nick Raynsford has engineered the transfer of £14bn into the hands of construction fat cats and big computer companies. And in Labour's second term we will see another £20bn of state assets handed over.

And it's not just PFI. Under part-privatisation,

Labour has sold off the Air Traffic Control Service; it is set to sell off the Tube to the very companies who have turned the railway system into a safety disaster.

Large parts of Whitehall have been privatised – and most town halls are handing over their IT systems, their refuse collection and their housing stock to the privateers.

It means fewer hospital beds; more expensive services and – as with ITNet in Hackney or Andersen

Consulting with the Inland Revenue computers – shoddy performance that is never punished.

Britain's construction firms and IT rip-off merchants are laughing all the way to the bank. But services are getting worse – and safety is being compromised from the Tube to the air lanes to the gas supply system.

Labour has turned Britain's public services into a giant gravy train for anti-union private bosses.

■ Our campaign to oust Raynsford – see page 11.



Raynsford: construction fat cats' best friend



Crackdown zone

When Blair was elected in 1997, millions of people thought his government would make Britain a freer, more open society – they were wrong.

New Labour promised to bring in a new law that would let us see what really goes on behind the closed doors of Whitehall. But instead Straw's Freedom of Information Act meant:

■ Restrictions to deny access to information about the reasons behind government decisions.

■ Anything affecting 'security' was ruled out too, leaving the secret services MI5 and MI6 completely unaccountable.

■ 'Commercial' information was excluded – so business information couldn't be revealed either.

This was worse than the previous system. Straw's Freedom of Information Act didn't make it easier to get information. It made it harder.

Year after year the Tories slashed the Legal Aid budget. Blair and his legal chief Lord Irvine continued this policy. They withdrew legal aid altogether from claims for damages for injuries – leaving anyone without a union-backed legal scheme in the hands of sharks like Claims Direct.

Jack Straw has stripped the right to trial by jury for several categories of criminal offence. Instead unelected magistrates and judges will decide the fate of defendants. They are drawn disproportionately from the higher, richer, classes and they are far more likely than a jury to convict.

There is the RIP Act – the snoopers' charter. It gives employers right to snoop on workers' emails, phone calls and web site browsing whenever they want, as long as they can say it was for a "legitimate reason".

And under Labour, all protesters can be classified as terrorists!

New Labour has extended the category of terrorism to include anyone who carries out or even argues for direct action or "property destruction". This can include anti-capitalist protesters who try to surround an IMF meeting. It also covers Greens who destroy genetically modified crops. Or anyone who tries to put their principles into practice.



Straw: Double prison population

Anti-union zone

Labour has maintained the Tory anti-union laws. Tony Blair boasts that Britain has the most restrictive union laws in Europe.

The one piece of pro-union legislation, the Employment Relations Act 1999, was delayed and then watered down under the pressure of the employers. It has allowed unionised workplaces to regain recognition – but it has yet to be properly tested against anti-union bosses like Rupert Murdoch and Sodexo.

Under New Labour it is still virtually impossible to take effective strike action. There can be no strikes against privatisation; the small print of the 1999 Act was used to ban an RMT tube strike.

And when teachers took action against large class sizes, education secretary David Blunkett threatened to bring in scab labour to break the action.

Under New Labour employment tribunals have soared – as unions are forced to use unfair dismissal laws and case work to do what solidarity and collective action are prevented from doing: defend workplace rights.

And Labour's privatisation drive is pushing public sector workers – the one sector where unions have maintained their strength – into the arms of union-busting bosses.



Byers: Bashing the unions

Racism zone

Home Secretary Jack Straw entered the Home Office on a tide of goodwill from black communities. He set up the Macpherson inquiry into the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence – and promised to get rid of the worst aspects of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996.

But Straw has embarked on a course every bit as racist as his Tory predecessor Michael Howard.

While the 1996 Act banned asylum seekers from working, the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 has stopped asylum seekers obtaining benefits. Instead, Labour introduced the voucher scheme. So now, an asylum seeker aged 18-24 receives a weekly allowance of £10 cash and £18.95 in vouchers to spend on food and toiletries.

Straw has boosted the number of detention centres – asylum seekers who have committed no crime are incarcerated and treated as criminals. And Straw introduced the dispersal scheme, which dumps asylum seekers into areas away from other people of the same ethnic background who

may provide support. The Race Relations (Amendment)

Act 2000 requires local government, police and other governmental bodies to outlaw discrimination against ethnic minorities. But not the immigration service.

It is exempt from a duty to combat discrimination and a ministerial order from Barbara Roche on 23 April 2001 actually permits discrimination against Kurds, Roma, Albanians, Tamils, Pontic Greeks, Somalis and Afghans. People from these groups are supposedly more likely to be "bogus" asylum seekers. Straw has in effect copied the Tories' infamous "white list" of countries of the mid-1990s.

Now Straw wants to do away with Article 31 of the Geneva Convention, which says that a country is obliged to seriously consider the claims of an asylum seeker even if that person has used forged papers to escape from torture and arrest.



Refugees: Labour has joined the Tories in whipping up a racist backlash against them

O ON MAYDAY more than a million people worldwide took to the streets to protest against the inequality, misery and suffering caused by global capitalism. This was the biggest anti-capitalist day of action yet - a sure sign that the movement that started in the mid-1990s and leapt to world prominence in Seattle in November 1999 is still growing.

Tony Blair said that our protest was illegitimate. London mayor Ken Livingstone called on people to stay away. Labour Home Secretary Jack Straw gave Sir John Stevens, commissioner of the Metropolitan police, a bearhug - heartfelt thanks for the illegal detention of 5,000 people in London's Oxford Circus for seven and a half hours.

Let's take the spirit of Mayday into the election campaign - and transform the working class movement

Yet thousands of young people - workers, students and school kids - did turn up. Despite the blood-curdling threats of rubber bullets, tear gas and baton-wielding riot cops, thousands refused to be intimidated. Workers Power supporters and members of Revolution, the socialist youth movement were at the forefront, organising events, taking part and defending people's right to protest.

Socialist Alliance banners and SA parliamentary candidates, alongside various trade union placards were also seen among the crowds. Hackney council workers were on strike that day - they too turned out. Also on the streets were immigrant workers,

many from countries where Mayday is traditionally celebrated under the shadow of guns and tanks.

Mayday posed the question point-blank to Labour's traditional supporters and activists: which side are you on?

Mayday exposed everything that's wrong with the traditional labour and trade union movement: it can't mobilise young people; its leaders collude with the bosses and police rather than see genuine protest against the capitalist system.

We need to take the spirit of Mayday into the election campaign - and use it to transform the wider working class movement.



Spirit of May

What is anti-capitalism?

CAPITALISM IS the global economic system which demands that everything produced, and every service provided is done for profit.

This, we are told by the capitalists, is the only system that can raise living standards around the world and get rid of hunger, poverty and disease.

Yet, after a century of amazing technological advances, there are no signs of any of these results.

■ The world's 350 richest people own more than the annual income of the poorest 45 per cent of the planet.

■ 3 billion people - half the planet - live on less than \$2 a day, the World Bank's own definition of absolute poverty.

■ The USA, Germany and Japan - the world's most powerful economies - are all heading for recession, which will throw millions onto the dole.

Capitalism has not only failed to narrow the gap between rich and poor or to provide an acceptable standard of living for the majority of humanity. It is a highly unstable system.

When it can't operate production for a profit, the system seizes up - creating even more misery. And if they don't get their way by peaceful means they are quite prepared to use riot police against strikers, and stealth bombers against the civilian populations of "rogue regimes".

But people all over the world have had enough. That's why they've formed a global anti-capitalist movement.

After the fall of the Stalinist regimes in Russia and East Europe we were told

that capitalism is the only game in town. But millions of workers and youth just found that their livelihoods became more insecure, their working hours longer, their welfare services worse, their environment more polluted. In increasing numbers they started asking: is there another way?

Anti-capitalists have no time for people like Tony Blair - who's sacrificed every principle to gain power. And we've got no time for the union leaders like TUC chief John Monks - who preached patience and doing things by the book.

Anti-capitalists - in the unions as well as the "single issue campaigns" on environmental rights and corporate greed - saw that the bureaucrats' strategy gets us nowhere. They decided to take direct action. Demonstrations, occupations, blockades of the capitalist summits where they plan their plunder of the world - these are the new methods of struggle.

And instead of passing a resolution calling on the "labour movement" to do it all for us, the anti-capitalists adopted Nike's famous slogan: Just Do It!

Many activists in the anti-capitalist movement are suspicious of workers' organisations like parties and unions. All they have seen is bureaucratism and cowardice.

But if the movement is to succeed and move from resistance to real change

it will have to embrace working class methods of struggle.

Already workers in countries like South Korea, Nigeria, India and Argentina have taken direct action through strikes, occupations and street barricades against the IMF and the multinationals.

Instead of passing a resolution, anti-capitalists adopted Nike's famous slogan: Just Do It!

In Europe and North America it's starting to change. At the Quebec protest in April, trade unionists - especially car workers - helped tear down the fences protecting the heads of state meeting to impose free trade on all

the American countries. In Berlin on May Day engineers from the world's biggest union, IG-Metall, joined in defending the anti-racist festival against an unprovoked police attack.

Workers of all countries share the same enemy. This will become even clearer in the next year as economic slowdown grips the world economy.

On Mayday in London, protesters unfurled a banner saying: "Abolish capitalism and replace it with something nice".

But only the organised working class has the power to do that.

That's why Workers Power and Revolution are determined to take anti-capitalist politics and methods of struggle into the workers' movement - and bring workers' organisations into the front line of the anti-capitalist direct action movement.

OVER A million people took to the streets against capitalism and its global institutions, making it the biggest, most unified and most anti-capitalist May Day for a quarter of a century. Alongside the Quebec protests, this marks a new highpoint for our movement.

The police illegally intimidated, provoked and attacked the demonstration in London and arrested eight anti-capitalists in Birmingham who had committed no crime at all.

Any damage to property or people happened because the police provoked it - a 1,000-strong demo, led by the white-overalled "Wombles", toured Soho after escaping from the police in Oxford Street and no vandalism or violence occurred.

The police proved on May Day that they are the capitalists' hired thugs.

We call for the release of all May Day prisoners, the dropping of all charges. Unions and anti-capitalist protesters should call for a public inquiry, under democratic control and with the power to investigate the police plans and actions on Mayday.

The capitalist police force is out to criminalise our movement, to isolate us from the mass of people who are the victims of capitalism. We assert our rights to assemble where and when we choose, to say and print what we like, and to defend ourselves in the process from any unprovoked attack, whether that be from fascists, corporate thugs or the police, who are after all just civilians in uniform.

In Genoa and on May Day 2002 we must therefore organise self-defence: protective clothing and shielding, affinity groups to de-arrest protesters, spotters and a mobile phone system for relaying information - all with the aim of defending our right to protest.

We call on the rest of the anti-capitalist movement in Britain and the trade unions and Socialist Alliances to begin now to organise unified, well-defended anti-capitalist demonstrations on 1 May 2002.

Monopoly May Day was a good idea but, given the state's tactics, next year we should start the demonstration together so as to make the biggest possible impact and to defend ourselves from police attack.

what we think

- Release the May Day prisoners and drop all charges
- Organised defence of future demonstrations

Why we protested

Jeremy Dewar offers an eyewitness account of the Monopoly May Day protest - and the issues that make him angry

7.00am: We started the day by packing up some provisions and cycling into the City of London for the Critical Mass bike ride from Liverpool Street station to King's Cross. It was cold and miserable, threatening rain, but already the adrenalin was flowing as we wondered whether the cops were going to allow us to gather in the City.

The bike ride aimed to slow down the flow of traffic in protest at the deadly pollution generated by a system that puts individual private car transport above a decent public transport system.

Carbon dioxide, pumped out of every car exhaust, is one of the so-called "greenhouse" gases. It rises through the atmosphere and stops heat escaping from earth into space. The overall effect - apart from the lung and heart diseases and asthma attacks it inflicts on those of us who have to live in the cities - is global warming which threatens the future of our planet.

George W Bush has just torn up the Kyoto Treaty, which committed the

world's leaders not to increase greenhouse gas emissions. Bush denies that global warming even exists. Why? Because any slowdown in pollution will hurt the interests of US multinationals like Exxon, the world's largest oil company. Exxon paid millions of dollars into George Bush's election fund.

8.30am: As we approached the stock exchange - where a few thousand super-rich financiers can decide the fate of whole industries and countries - the cops started pulling protesters off their bikes, slamming them against the wall and frisking them.

Everyone stopped and demanded they were released, asking what they had been arrested for. Their "crime" apparently was to be wearing scarves and anti-pollution masks!

10.00am: By the time we reached King's Cross our ranks had swelled to around 1,000. A street party began.

At this point we decided to leave the bike ride as we had other things to do. Later, the police cordoned off a whole

section of the demo and kept them penned in at Euston for several hours.

Most of the young people in Revolution went off to show solidarity with the trade unionists and the Turkish and Kurdish workers...

12 noon: Others, including me, joined our local Socialist Alliance candidate at the Elephant & Castle traffic interchange. Here we were protesting against privatisation in all its forms. Not only the tube, but hospitals, school services, council housing. Under New Labour there's £20 billion of public services up for privatisation.

We occupied the road for 15 minutes with a noisy but peaceful protest. Almost all passers-by and shoppers took leaflets and supported our stance. Building site workers cheered us on and local postal workers stopped to talk about how privatisation was threatening their jobs, conditions and union rights. RMT members from the tube came and joined us. Soon another street party, with a sound system ingeniously run on peddle power, was in full swing.

When we wanted to move our protest off into central London, the police again moved in and threatened to detain us for hours.

2.00pm: "World Bank, IMF - how many kids have you starved to death?" - it was the Globalise Resistance picket of the World Bank and it had already occupied the road. A loud but peaceful crowd of a 2,000 protesters were shouting in condemnation of murderous third world debt: 19,000 children die each day from curable diseases and hunger.

Suddenly, we were on the move to Oxford Circus. Shoppers, tourists and retail workers gave us a smile and a cheer as we went along. By the time we reached Oxford Circus, the mood was really electric. We had reached our target by 3pm - an hour early - and the cops couldn't stop us. Niketown and the other shops had already closed and boarded up. Capitalism closed in its commercial heartland: the sweatshop bosses lost over £3m in trade.

4.00pm: It soon became clear that we had been trapped by the police. No one was allowed in or out. Only then did some of us have a serious go at escaping, but as soon as we did the police moved in their robocops with all the gear: truncheons, batons, shields that they bashed you with and gloves with sewn-in knuckle-dusters - I am not kidding or exaggerating. I had a black eye for days after, but some people got much worse treatment.

A bank of loudspeakers on Niketown bellowed: "There has been a breach of the peace. You are being detained to prevent criminal damage. Be patient. You will be let out in due course."

9.00pm "Due course" turned out to be five hours later! No food, no water, pouring rain with no shelter, no toilet, no cigarettes. No wonder people eventually took it out on capitalist property like the traffic lights. Far from preventing criminal damage, the police tactics caused it!

As we left, the police demanded our names and addresses and photographed everyone. One protester refused and was promptly abused, was punched between the legs and was thrown onto the street. **10.00pm** As we watched the news in the pub every picture of the protests was cheered, every shot of a cop bashing someone jeered.

We weren't dispirited. Just wet, angry and proud of a job well done!

www.destroyimf.org

World Anti-Nike Day



Global action turns the heat on sweatshops

12 May saw activists across the globe picketing Nike's retail outlets in a bid to stop the company using sweatshop labour. 30 people picketed in Prague, with five arrests. 30 people picketed in Vienna - with a good response from workers going by. In London, we revisited Oxford Circus for a lively 100-strong protest with street theatre. More reports on the web - but the highlight was in Melbourne, Australia

Melbourne: Around 400 demonstrators chanted and protested outside the central Nike store in Melbourne, Australia on 11 May. Demonstrators peacefully blockaded the store, and successfully shut it down for several hours.

It was the seventh week in a row the anti-Nike protests have shut the store down at one of the busiest shopping times.

Trade unions supported the demonstration, with the secretary of Victorian Trades Hall Council, Leigh Hubbard, speaking to the protest. Shoppers also stopped to hear about Nike's rotten employment practices.

The action in Melbourne kicked off a worldwide anti-Nike day on May 12. No Sweat, the international campaign against sweatshops, is demanding an end to slave labour conditions. Nike pays children just 20 cents an hour in its factories in China. In Indonesia, Nike workers are paid just 16 cents an hour, and workers often put in 72 hours a week. When workers in the Kukdong factory in Southern Mexico went on strike on 9 January, management used armed police to beat and intimidate the strikers.

Across the world we are taking action in solidarity with workers like these.

Melbourne's protest this week came on the back of an attempted council clampdown on the Nike demonstration a week before. By-laws officers (who usually hand out parking fines) handed out two \$500 fines to activists for the "crime" of handing out a leaflet.

The council resurrected an old by-law under which they can fine people \$500 for "permitting others" to hand out printed material without a permit. That's right, you don't even have to hand the leaflet out yourself! They can also seize your stall and everything on it.

The law, originally enacted during the 1960s around the anti-Vietnam war movement in Australia, was also successfully abolished as a result of this movement. In 1999 the law was resurrected, supposedly as a means to prevent race-hatred propaganda.

This week, with trade unions backing the protest, the Melbourne Council didn't dare serve the \$500 fines. However, two protesters were arrested and one badly injured when police attacked blockaders. But No Sweat is not backing down. We marched to the cop shop to support those arrested and are vowing to continue our weekly protests at Nike.

The No Sweat Campaign will not end until companies sign up to a code of practice which guarantees:

- No child labour. Make the company pay for their education and guarantee them a job afterwards.
- No forced overtime, and a living wage set up by workers themselves.
- Equal rights for women, and the right of workers to join and organise trade unions.
- Public disclosure of factory locations, so that human rights and labour organisations can contact workers and inspect the working conditions themselves.

www.nosweat.org.uk
www.uniteunion.org
www.usasnet.org

Day!



Friends like these...

George Monbiot (above) - who has previously stood on anti-capitalist platforms with Globalise Resistance - claimed in the Guardian on 1 May that the movement had hounded out or silenced non-violent activists and is now controlled by people who will violently attack those in our movement who criticise the trashing of property and beating up of police.

Naomi Klein (above, right), author of *No Logo* and another anti-capitalist journalist, denounced Monopoly May Day as a "McProtest" without any roots in the community. Sure, the police, the bankers and multinationals, the media and New Labour all did their best to isolate our protests. But we do have widespread support - the capitalists don't spend millions of pounds deploying 6,000 riot police and thousands of column inches scaring people off unless we're reaching out and winning the arguments with millions of people.

These critics have disgraced themselves. Whatever their criticisms, to join in with the media-led and police

enforced crackdown on the anti-capitalist movement is an act of betrayal.

Monbiot says he's on the "reformist" wing of the movement and that is being driven out by violent revolutionaries. That's a lie: the movement remains an alliance of those in favour of non-violent and unorganised protest, and those who want working class-based direct action.

When Klein urges us to put down roots she doesn't mean the working class - she means don't scare off the liberal intelligentsia with their white-wine book launches and access to the mainstream media.

We're re-learning an old, old lesson. You can't trust self-appointed middle class spokespeople. We shouldn't run them out of the movement - but we shouldn't limit the movement's scope to keep them from leaving it. And we should never put them on a pedestal and refuse to criticise them just for the sake of attracting more people to our meetings. All you get, as on Mayday, is a stab in the back.

Mark Hoskisson outlines the way forward for the Socialist Alliance after the election

Where next for the Socialist Alliance?

THIS ELECTION has put the Socialist Alliance on the map in England and Wales. Thousands of socialist activists from established left organisations, from the Labour Party and the trade unions, and from no organisation at all, have pulled together to fight New Labour.

Most Alliance supporters see the election as the beginning, not the end. The Socialist Alliance is different because it has linked the election with a range of grassroots campaigns and trade union struggles. It is a direct action organisation, not just an electoral alliance.

The question that many in this movement are asking is: exactly what are we building? What is our longer term goal?

In *Socialist Worker* (5 May), Lindsey German gave the SWP's answers.

German considers three options for the Socialist Alliance – short-term tactic; a vehicle for building a new mass workers party; and a permanent alliance. She dismisses the first two options and argues the case for the third one as the way forward. But her arguments are inconsistent and unconvincing.

The most welcome aspect of her article, however, is her rejection of the SWP's old-style "raiding" approach to united fronts and campaigns: go in one minute, get out when you've got enough recruits. In a clear departure from this method, she writes that if the SWP did this:

"We would effectively turn our backs on much of the work that we have done and reduce the movement back down to what the SWP can do. If we took this approach we would also find ourselves isolated from many of the people with whom we work most closely in the alliance."

Of course, German is talking primarily about those to the right of the SWP with whom cordial relations have been established. Nevertheless, she knows that the growing forces to the SWP's left – including Workers Power – cannot any longer be dismissed as "irrelevant sects". SWP members have seen us work creatively and constructively in building the alliances into a positive force. We have done that despite our disagreements with the limitations the SWP imposed on the Alliance's politics and programme.

German accepts that the significance of the Socialist Alliance is that it has provided "a joint socialist home" for activists breaking from Labour and acknowledges that a party "would attract significant forces to a new and more permanent home". But building such a home is not on at the moment, she believes. The best we can hope for, she says, is a halfway house, a permanent alliance based purely on the election pledges (not even on the full manifesto agreed by a conference of almost 400 people). This, she says, is "obviously something short of a full party, but is considerably more than the alliance has been".

She describes this halfway house as having a national leadership, delegate's



Socialist Alliance on the march with Vauxhall workers

meetings and AGMs, local branches, newsletters "and other forms of propaganda to raise the profile of the alliance". But if we add to her description of what the alliance should be to that offered by another leading SWPer, Chris Bambery, then it begins to look remarkably like a party, whether the SWP like it or not.

Bambery wrote in *Socialist Review* (April 2001) that each constituency should hold a weekly meeting with a guest speaker, followed by a discussion, then reports, and finally breaking into ward groups to plan the next stage of the campaign.

Question: what meets weekly, discusses politics, plans activities, has a national leadership and democratic members' meetings and is based on a political programme, however brief? Answer: it's a party!

Independent socialists within the Alliance, like John Mulrennan, the candidate for Camberwell and Peckham, have gone on record as saying that forming a party is the logical next step. After all, it was precisely out of the Scottish Socialist Alliance that the Scottish Socialist Party was formed. It was the logical evolution of the alliance in that country. Belatedly, the SWP recognised this and on 1 May joined the SSP en bloc, organised as the Socialist Worker Platform.

PARTY AND PROGRAMME

Given this, what are German's arguments against the logic that is driving the Socialist Alliance towards a party? She reasons:

■ Without a mass movement in the class itself such a party would be dominated by the SWP and this in turn would lead to "a party full of factional arguments with relatively few independent forces on the ground".

■ A party, unlike the alliance, should be based on "a full revolutionary programme" so that it does not fudge the issue if faced with a war or "a controversial strike or a real racist backlash".

The fact is that the Socialist Alliance is – numerically – already dominated by the SWP. True, it has not attempted to impose its will in a bureaucratic way, but it is unmistakably the decisive

force. Its votes at the Birmingham policy conference blocked our attempt to make the Socialist Alliance manifesto into a revolutionary election programme.

German's argument is profoundly pessimistic – given the optimism of the party's perspectives about the new forces moving toward socialism.

It assumes – in advance of the election campaign – that we won't attract mass working class forces. It assumes that the push to form a party will simply involve the existing left groups plus a few independents.

This is wrong – and self-fulfilling. The positive espousal of a new party could attract hundreds, even thousands, of independents. It could attract wide layers of militant youth and trade unionists. The SWP's relative dominance would take second place to new forces drawn in. And that's before the class struggle under New Labour's second term has begun; before the recession begins to bite.

German's argument breaks down once you consider that winning thousands of independent workers and youth is possible.

Thousands of new activists would prevent the new organisation becoming a sectarian bear pit. They need not be only ex-Labour stalwarts – there are thousands of anti-capitalist youth and rank and file workers in industries like the rail and post who could be recruited.

What's the guarantee that a new party would not split at the first sign of having to stand against the stream? There is none – but the following will help:

■ Campaign on the full manifesto – don't hide behind the cut-down "pledges" that effectively dodge some of the hardest arguments for socialism.

■ Recruit people to an open revolutionary programme that explains why we'll have to sweep away the state to carry out the policies in the manifesto.

■ Dive into situations like Mayday or the Oldham troubles with a revolutionary answer – organised self defence – instead of ducking the question.

■ Educate people through open political discussion, instead of shifting uneasily in your seat and moving next business whenever someone wants to raise political points in Alliance meetings.

There is evidence that some SWP members are beginning to see in practice the truth of what *Workers Power* said at the Birmingham conference: open revolutionary politics can win more people and address more problems than an organisation based on the "pledges".

The question of a new party is posed now, as the next step for the Socialist Alliance.

We need to prepare for the launch of a new party so we can draw such forces into our election campaign, make them permanent members and ensure that they fully participate in debates on the character and policy of Socialist Alliance.

A NECESSARY STAGE?

The SWP has created a schema – similar to the old Militant/Socialist Party schema – that workers will break from reformism but cannot be won to revolutionary communism straight away. Therefore, we need something short of the revolutionary programme: a politically undemanding "haven" before they can move on.

The question this schema avoids is: why is this stage necessary? The answer can only be a lack of conviction about the immediate relevance and practical possibility of winning people to a revolutionary programme. The SWP sees the revolutionary programme as a set of principles, not a manual for action. If you cannot convince workers of these principles you cannot win them to the revolutionary programme, goes the logic.

This is not proven, however. In most any strike workers begin with illusions in the impartiality of the police and the courts; they often trust the union bureaucracy, and even the Labour Party. When the strike's picket lines are broken up by riot cops, the union's funds sequestered by courts, the strike shafted by the bureaucrats and dumped by Labour politicians the illusions can be broken. But it is crucial to fight openly for a positive alternative. Only by pointing to the need for a revolutionary alternative to the capitalist state – argued for in an accessible way – can we do this. The best way to consolidate this transformation is to recruit such workers to a party – a revolutionary party.

The Socialist Alliance could have done this. It could have gone to the working class with a revolutionary pro-

gramme and said: we know you don't agree with all of this right now but we will convince you in the course of the campaign that we are right. It chose not to because the SWP are worried about frightening away reformist workers. But class-conscious workers are not easily frightened by discussion, debate and argument that is relevant to their real lives and daily struggles. They are prepared to listen and be convinced.

In fact, German's line of march represents a retreat from the Manifesto passed at Birmingham – a retreat we predicted in *Workers Power* 253. Anyone who has signed up to that extensive manifesto – which for example includes Troops Out of Ireland and Scrap All Immigration Control – is unlikely to run away at the first sign of war or a racist backlash. But those attracted on the basis of the "pledges" – who basically think the SA is an old-Labour style home for their electoral careers as councillors and union officials – will be very likely to do that.

That is why we believe the time is right now to win people to the revolutionary programme.

We will carry on trying to do this – in a fraternal, not sectarian or ultimatum fashion – and prove in practice that we are right.

If the Socialist Alliance were a party faced with a controversial strike we are convinced that – by having already argued for and proved the value of the revolutionary programme to the new forces we are winning – we would avoid splits and unnecessary factional struggles.

Perhaps most telling, in terms of the weaknesses of German's argument, is that in Scotland this is exactly what the SWP have decided to do. They say, that in the SSP, "we will argue about the 10 per cent we don't agree about, but at the same time we will work together."

Workers Power is in favour of the Socialist Alliance becoming a party after the election. We will argue it should be a revolutionary party. But if the majority don't accept our programme we will take our place in a new party as a loyal grouping, provided we are given the democratic right to propagate our views within that party so as to convince the majority. We will argue about the differences inside its ranks, but at the same time work together to take the Socialist Alliance into the direct struggles of the working class.

One thing holding the SWP back from doing the same is, ironically, a sectarian view of how to build the new revolutionary party.

Their ultimate goal is to carry through a variant of the old "join the SWP" line. They may be prepared to be involved in long-term united fronts, but they still see themselves, and themselves alone, as the revolutionary party and will recruit the ones and twos out of the united fronts.

If they carry on with this method they miss the best chance in a long time to advance the fight for a well-rooted and significant revolutionary party of the British working class.

Oldham puts Nazis on the run...again

Jason Travis, president Oldham NUT (in a personal capacity), reports on the fight against racism and fascism in Oldham

ON SATURDAY 5 May the National Front turned up in Oldham for the second time this year. The fascist outfit was looking to exploit the recent media and police-orchestrated lies about "anti-white" racism. In the event, the 30 or so fascists who turned up were successfully contained, though 500 Greater Manchester police shielded them against several hundred anti-fascist demonstrators, many of them local Asian youth.

The fascists decided to target the town after several national newspapers had reported that parts of Oldham were "no-go" areas for whites and that a pensioner, Walter Chamberlain, was a victim of a "racist" attack by Asian teenagers. Walter Chamberlain's family had stated categorically that they did not consider the incident to be racial but simply a thuggish attack as part of a robbery.

The police, however, branded the attack as racist. This, of course, is the very same police force that repeatedly fails to investigate racist attacks on local Asians and brutally criminalises them for standing up for themselves.

The 5 May showdown began with a 200-strong Anti-Nazi League rally outside the Civic Centre where the fascists had threatened to turn up in defiance of a Home Office ban. Several hundred Asian protesters had stayed in their communities to protect residents' homes from attack.

Socialist Alliance activists visited these defence squads and got a good reception. We argued that there should be a division of forces to enable mobile squads to take on the fascists wherever they turned up. This actually happened when 200 youth, ran from Coldhurst to Westwood because of reported trouble, scaring off a hard core group of racists. There was general agreement among the youth to send a strong contingent into town, but some community elders

Police stir football racism

The Saturday before the NF's attempt to march, a few fascists had infiltrated a contingent of Stoke City football supporters going to a match at Oldham Athletic's ground. The chanting of racist abuse and bottle-throwing drew local people on to their streets in the largely Asian Westwood area, who were then told to move by the police. When the residents stayed put, police drove their vans at them, set dogs on them and attacked people with truncheons. The cops shouted racist abuse at the secretary of Oldham United Against Racism and put an Asian youth in hospital.

exerted pressure to keep them from the centre. They effectively co-operated with the police, whose aim was to divide the anti-fascists. The youth had very different ideas, however.

One youth said: "We want to defend our communities. We don't want the police to do it for us because we know they're racist. We can do it ourselves!"

A Socialist Alliance supporter was threatened with arrest for suggesting that some Asian youth join the Anti-Nazi League protest and later two Asian youth were prevented by police from going into the town centre. "We wanted to go to the bank to get out some money but they stopped us. We asked why when we could see all these white people allowed into town. They said that it was because of the colour of their skin. That's racist. It's saying that we're not allowed in Oldham town centre because we're Asian!"

Throughout the day the police used stop and search powers and tactics of illegal detention, penning people in for hours at a time and generally pushing them around as well as making some arrests. In one case a police officer aimed a truncheon at a protester's head but missed, hitting another officer - so the protester was arrested!

A contingent of 50-70 Asian youth did eventually join the town anti-fascist demonstration, but were penned in with

around 50 Anti-Nazi League demonstrators. A breakaway group of anti-fascists managed to avoid the pen and went into town with the aim to smash-up the gathering of chanting, flag-waving fascists. The police just managed to protect the fascists in time!

Later when some fascists took to damaging shops and houses on one road they were promptly dealt with by Asian youth. Some youth were then arrested by police, but following spontaneous demonstrations, were later released, mainly without charge.

Overall, the demonstration was a success with the fascists effectively contained. It also showed the potential for mobile community defence squads, which were formed quickly and effectively to meet the immediate demands of the day. These need to be organised on a longer-term basis and controlled by democratic meetings.

If the National Front turn up again in Oldham (as they've threatened to on 19 May) we need to ensure a co-ordinated response, made up of spotters, demonstrators and mobile defence squads.

Many of the youth are ready for this and are sick of being sold out by councillors and misleaders within their own communities.

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Kirstie Paton: Q&A



It's about control...

We spoke to Socialist Alliance election candidate and Workers Power supporter *Kirstie Paton* as she hit the campaign trail for 7 June.

WP: What does socialism mean to you?

Kirstie Paton: As I've toured the constituency talking to people it's reminded me of the enormous creativity of working class people.

Working people know the solutions - the problem is they can't implement them because all the decisions that affect our lives are made by small groups of rich people. And it always comes down to: how can they make more money out of us?

So for me, socialism is about people having control over their lives. And the only way is to take economic control. The decisions on whether a school gets built or whether a factory gets closed are based on economics. We can only change things if we take control of the economy.

WP: How have you been taking that message into the campaign?

KP: Our campaign so far has been stalls in shopping centres, petitioning on the issues that matter to local people - like the privatisation of my school, and the PFI scheme at Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Privatisation is definitely the issue that people are angry about. At QEH a phone call for a patient costs 50p a minute. It costs £3.50 a day for a patient to watch TV. A cup of coffee costs £1.20 - all because the hospital is run by a private firm, Meridian Healthcare. The original owners of Meridian - the construction group Kvaerner - spelled it out when they adopted PFI as a business strategy: "Profit is the name of the game and cash is king".

I've also been visiting workplaces - basically turning up and asking to see the union rep. I've been to the local bus garage, fire station, ambulance depot and done meetings outside the Council and the hospital.

In the workplaces, you find people distrust Blair and his whole project - but many are not ready to make a clean break with Labour. One workplace rep argued strongly that we still need a Labour government. But then she took our leaflets and gave them out to her workmates.

Some workers still believe there is a fight to be had out within the official Labour movement. Actually that feeling is stronger within the organised working class than among poorer people on estates and on the streets.

Within the organised working class the Socialist Alliance is only going to break those illusions with Labour by showing we can deliver and lead strike action and real resistance against job losses and privatisation.

That's why the fight has to go on long after the election: in the key struggles of Labour's second term.

WP: You've called for the SA to link up with the anti-capitalist movement. How can this be done in practice?

KP: For a start when we're campaigning against privatisation we have to use activist methods - not just pass resolutions. Also you have to make the link between a privatisation and the wider context of globalisation that is pushing that agenda.

I went to the Prague demonstrations on S26 - and I was among those detained for five hours near Oxford Circus on Mayday.

Most of all we've got to win the fight within the Socialist Alliance for revolutionary politics. The anti-capitalist youth won't join if they think it's a rerun of Old Labour, or just an electoral alliance. They will join if we show we're serious about direct action and destroying the capitalist state. It's a question of: do you want to fill the SA with ex-Labour careerists or class fighters?

What has inspired you most about the Socialist Alliance?

People often say you can't get socialism because humanity is too selfish - we're all greedy and out for our own ends. Touring local workplaces, you see the opposite is the case.

Look at the local hospital: it can't function without porters, nurses, cleaners: but the way the hospital is run and managed they are denied any decision making. But ambulance workers still put in 14-hour shifts, on terrible pay, just to save people's lives.

Socialism is about taking that basic humanity and putting the working class in control.

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Organised self-defence needed

Following the Westwood events of 28 April a Socialist Alliance meeting on 1 May attracted over 50 people, over half of them local Asian or black residents.

They unanimously condemned the police attacks, branded the police force racist and called for organised community patrols and self-defence, and monitoring of the police. There was also a strong mood in the meeting for standing a Socialist Alliance candidate to set a clear

working class alternative against the fascist's politics of racial hatred.

The BNP's leader, Nick Griffin, had already declared his candidacy for the parliamentary seat in Oldham West.

Beyond the election, we need to ensure that Oldham United Against Racism, working with the Socialist Alliance and groups of Asian and white youth, can develop effective fighting organisations that can smash the fascists.

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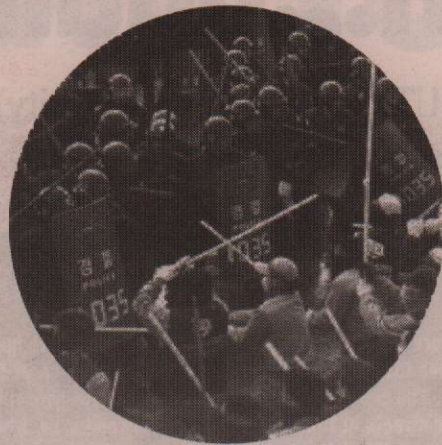
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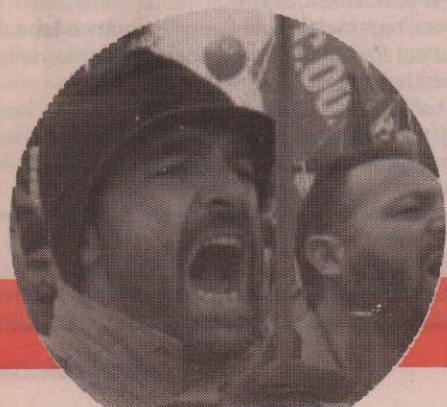
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