

Red Rag

Issue 4, October 1997

30p

WHAT'S LEFT IN EXETER

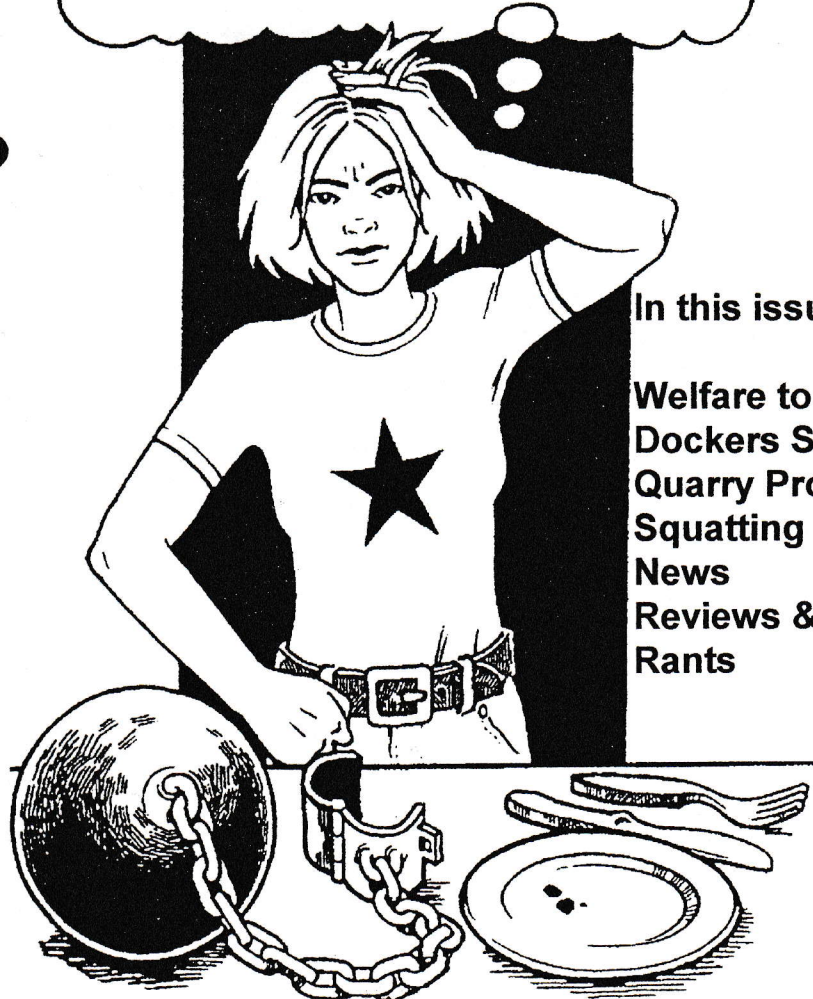
The Exeter Left Group was formed to link and organise the Left in Exeter. We aim to provide a forum to discuss issues relevant to those in the struggle to overthrow this rotten system. Signed articles represent the views of the author (unsigned: the editor).

TOUGH ON LABOUR, TOUGH ON THE CAUSES OF LABOUR

**NEW
DEAL?**

**BIG
DEAL!**

WAGE-SLAVERY OR STARVATION? —
THAT'S NOT A CHOICE, IT'S A THREAT!



In this issue:

**Welfare to Work
Dockers Strike
Quarry Protest
Squatting
News
Reviews &
Rants**



EDITORIAL

Welcome to the fourth issue of Exeter's paper for those who want to know about political events in the region and elsewhere. As there's no staff of journalists, please send in any news item we have missed.

We also aim to carry a certain amount of theoretical articles and discussion. That's a hard balancing act for something this thin and this erratic, so bear with us if it seems to lean too far one way or the other.

Our coverage is from a distinctly left-wing perspective, which means that we will even consider contributions from those members of the Labour Party who still believe they're socialists. However, if it's recycled copy from Mandelson, we'll shred it.

At present, the only action of any note has been the protest against the threat to divert the Teign and the Bovey to get at the clay. The most interesting feature of this campaign is the solidarity between the young eco-warriors and local residents.

So far they have confined themselves to petitions and marches but have won a public enquiry. At the time of writing the camp at Teign-grace is being dismantled. While they've won a reprieve, it could take off again if the enquiry goes against them. Shame, we were looking forward to seeing our old mate Swampy in an aqualung.

Also in this number, a reminder that Britain's most critical industrial dispute - the lockout of Liverpool dockers - has passed its second anniversary. They have like-

wise made an alliance with environmental activists - this time, *Reclaim the Streets*. Are we seeing a new and long overdue grouping of forces in the making?

Meanwhile the euphoria with Labour's May Day victory is passing off and people are slowly waking up to the fact that, despite fancy new labels, the Tories' agenda is still being forced onto us. Great areas of public policy were wrecked by Thatcher and Major: housing, education, health, jobs, incomes and unions. Plans to repair the damage are based on the same assumptions of "efficiency", "value for money" and the monetarist philosophy of the world bankers. Any socially liberal or "caring" gloss is as thin as a spin-doctor's conscience.

This is not the millennium - before long the same old shit will be hitting the same old fan. Troublemakers will be back in business ... until people start taking control of their lives. The big question is: when they see the Blair con-trick collapse, which way will they jump - leftwards, back to the Tories or even further to the right?

It's time to change the public view that blames the victims for the crimes. The unemployed didn't cause the lack of jobs (unless they took voluntary redundancy); single parents aren't the biggest drain on the Social Security budget; the homeless don't choose to be beggars; refugees and immigrants didn't create the poverty and violence they're fleeing - **we did**, if we agreed with or passively accepted the lies of the ruling class. There's going to be plenty to get organised for.

... if Blair is the answer, it must have been a stupid question!

A Quarry Too Far?

The latest environmental protest in the South West is against a plan to change the courses of the Rivers Teign and Bovey near Newton Abbott. AQUA, Anti-Quarry Action, have recently completed a 12 day march to London to present their objections in person to Environment Minister, John Prescott, and to call for a full environmental impact study.

Devon County Council passed the plan with an entirely inadequate assessment, sponsored by the quarry company, of its likely effect on the area. There are also dubious claims of job-creation and other benefits. Watts Blake Bearn & Co want to enlarge their Southacre Quarry by 120 acres, diverting the two rivers for a mile through a new channel to reach the clay deposits beneath them.

There's nothing new in such canalisation and WWB's chairman wrote to the local papers claiming a good record of reinstating their sites after extraction has finished. But, even if that were believable, this is a beautiful part of the county with important wildlife populations in and around the rivers, including salmon and otters. No amount of landscaping will replace that established system.

For once the campaign was started by and has a lot of support from local people. Because of this opposition Prescott has suspended the project. But DCC have still voted for its continuation.

What will happen if the enquiry approves the scheme is not clear, but protesters have already set up six camps and, despite a possession order granted against them, are preparing for the usual siege. There'll likely be further actions and demos if the appeal to the government fails.

For more information, leaflets, copies of the letter to the Secretary of State, etc:-

post: AQUA, c/o Coral Cottage, Ventiford, Teigngrace TQ12 6QL
phone:0370-878920 (mobile)

email:
Rachel@dark.star.zynet.co.uk
internet:
<http://www.geocities.com/RainForest/3081/>

A Squat Too Few

One of the earliest casualties of the Teigngrace campaign has been Richard Duggan, lifted for infringement of some legal restraining order. Richard came to our attention by opening Exeter's first organised squat in ten years.

Waste of Space aimed to target city centre premises left to rot by speculators, in order to make the point about people left to rot on the streets outside. This tactic was based on previously successful actions in Swansea and, allegedly, Taunton!



His timing was immaculate, with the 'Suppress & Distort' in the middle of a sympathy campaign about the homeless, on behalf of the St Petrocks project. Sadly, there was no follow through and no significant political support from local people. Despite this they held out for some weeks, getting excellent publicity. Then the owners got an Interim Possession Order and the squatters decamped before the bailiffs turned up.

Their second place, former offices of a Housing Association was more comfortable but short-lived. The absentee landlords this time used the High Court in London to get a possession order and the occupants felt they couldn't fight it from here.

Their career since then has been less organised. They've had a num-

ber of interesting locations, including next-door to Heavitree Road nick! However, the strain of maintaining the political character of the occupations, in the face of the needs of the homeless who move in, has been too much. Whatever happens, there'll still be more people sleeping rough for the foreseeable future. There was also a grim satisfaction to be had in seeing their banner in the window of what used to be the Youth Justice Office.

What you have missed

The Liverpool Dockers Mystery Tour in London on the 29th September, found the Labour Party's least favourite industrial dispute teamed up with *Reclaim the Streets* for a second time in the capital. Press coverage was overwhelming in its total blackout as usual. For more info contact: Reclaim the Streets, PO Box 9656, Finsbury Park, London N4 4JY; tel: 0171-281-4621

Are demos a waste of time?

The *Campaign Against the Arms Trade* had more luck than the dockers when a thousand were reported to have picketed the COPEX trade fair of military and 'public order' hardware at Farnborough on September 1st. It helped that 50 of them were arrested. The second day of action on 1st October got less coverage but 40-50 people blocked the entrance to the airfield again. CAAT have been told that Hampshire Constabulary refuse to police the show next year and the MOD are not making any other property available. Sounds like a victory.

Last year the German COPEX show was closed down completely, when the Bonn anti-fascist group shamed Mercedes-Benz and other major firms into pulling out. These didn't like publicity which showed them sharing a shop-window with manufacturers of torture equipment and other technologies of repression.

(continued on page 9)

WELFARE TO WORKFARE - two views



Before the election, the Labour Party - soon to be renamed the Business Party - touted this as their solution to everything: unemployment, the Social Security budget, youth crime and the general pit of despair the Tories had dumped us in. Its importance was indicated by the claim that this is what the windfall taxes on the privatisation rip-offs would pay for. "Streamlining" British industry had created mass unemployment. This is what we would be getting in return ... Never, in the history of hype, has so much been promised to so many with such little substance.

The only difference between the present proposals and the Tories' workfare scheme, *Project Work*, is that all the 'options' for the young unemployed will be lumped together and baited with the promise that some of the jobs might be real and last more than 6 or 12 months! Apart from that it's just more of the same pressure being put on the unemployed to take any crap on offer, or risk losing all your Job Seekers Allowance.

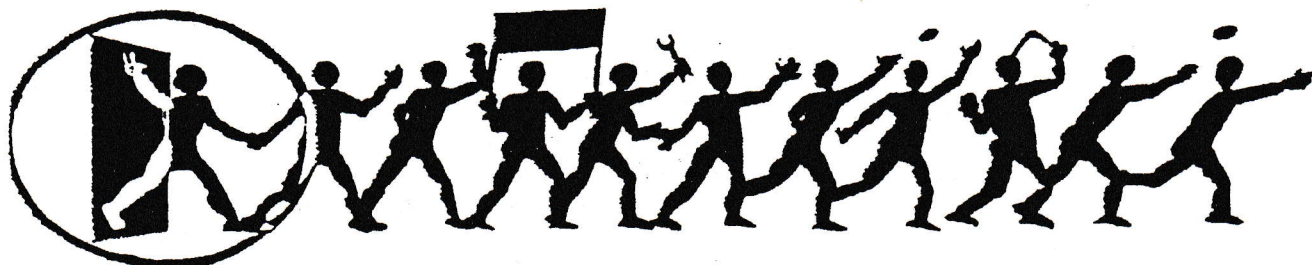
Before the Tories were slaughtered at the polls, a strong campaign was being built to oppose *Project Work*. Voluntary groups and local authorities in those areas where the scheme had been piloted or was about to start had already declared they would

have nothing to do with it. That opposition has not gone away just because of the name has changed. Their rejection of workfare had less to do with ideological antagonism than with recognition that the barely-concealed coercion of the unemployed to take these posts was a bad recruitment policy. It would deter genuine volunteers, as well as undermining the job-security of regular employees where such 'dole slaves' were used.

Curiously, the private sector don't seem any more enthusiastic. Blair and Co are having a hard time getting them to take this poisoned chalice. Modern employers prefer to keep their workers docile by persuading them that they're much better off than the rest of the herd, not by whipping them to work under the threat of starvation. That's too obviously brutal and gives the game away.

This is no reason to be complacent. There are still plenty of potential participants who will swallow the sales-pitch, or which are so desperate for cash that they'll go along with it. It's time to let your boss, union or community organisation know that *Welfare to Work* is not welcome here. Your job could depend on it.

RA



Welfare to Work - The New Deal

Welfare to Work, the shiny flagship of New Labour will be sailing to the rescue in 1998, bristling as it is with all the latest technical developments. It is not merely a measure to deal with unemployment but a multi-purposed, albeit token panacea for all our ills. Its aims include:-

- reducing unemployment
- making ready for employment those who haven't had a job for some while
- reducing welfare costs so money can be made available for other projects
- extending welfare provision in the 'voluntary' sector, and
- greening the environment

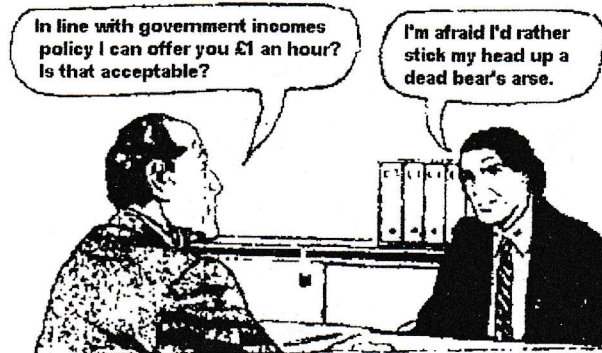
Behind all of this lies the main aim of New Labour, (like the Tories before them and Labour before that), to assist Capital in its drive for increased profitability. In essence this continues the project begun in the mid-seventies to win back concessions made in the post-war settlement, to increase profitability and to combat the general tendency of the rate of profit to decline. The key to this was greater exploitation of the workforce. The strategy was to create a large reserve army of unemployed workers in order to undermine pay, conditions and job security; to 'train' people to take what they were given.

Welfare to Work is intended for young people who have been out of work for more than six months and the long term unemployed who have been out of work for more than two years. This New Deal is presented as a positive programme to help people and even allow them a choice in the process. The choices will lie, apparently between accepting a subsidised job with a real employer, continuing in training or education, 'working' with a voluntary organisation or being part of the conservation task force. There is no choice to decline all of these attractive offers - unless you want your benefit cut!

This limited choice, (compulsion), really gives the game away. It's not just New Labour machismo to impress their friends in the city, it's meant to help deal with the problems of the refusal of work and the perceived inadequacies of the potential workforce caused, not unsurprisingly, by mass unemployment. It reflects a lack of commitment to full employment which would give wage-earners everywhere a base from which to argue for a greater share of the profits. The scheme will

almost certainly involve a revolving-door employment existence for a bigger section of the workforce to help maintain the hard won insecurity of other workers.

The scheme will initially cost about £3bn raised through windfall taxes. However it will ease the pressure on the social security budget which is considered far too large and over 3 years is supposed to save over £100m per year. On top of this it should become possible to reduce other welfare costs by injecting additional labour into the voluntary sector.



Unemployment is considered as a major cause of 'disaffection'. This term is being preferred to 'underclass' and

denotes a difference between the Tories and New Labour, not just in superficial terms, but on the basis of making a more subtle attempt to manage alienation in the face of the process of restructuring the workforce. The Tories, rather like the Americans have been more prepared to allow the state to be the hard edge of managing the effects of unemployment and poverty caused by low wages, part time employment etc. The 'underclass' were considered beyond help and had to be controlled with more prison space, more policing of estates etc. New Labour are more keen and confident of their ability to con the most exploited into believing that they share the same aims and values as their exploiters.

The final aspect: 'the conservation corps' reflects a superficial nod in the direction of a greener environment and a recognition that some thing new has to be created to deal with the more difficult customers.

I intend to deal with this in more detail in future issues of *RR*. This is intended to be a brief introduction.

The scheme is fraught with problems, both in New Labour's stated aims and the overall project of Capital. The White Papers related to Welfare to Work and related issues are due out in the Autumn. The pilot projects are due to start in the New Year. These developments will also need further comments and analysis.

TP

ARE YOU BEING HASSLED?

Information wanted on harrassment, suspensions, lousy advice by Job Centre or DSS staff. Contact:-
Exeter Claimants, c/o The Flying Post, PO Box 185, Exeter EX4 4EW

Liverpool dockers can win!

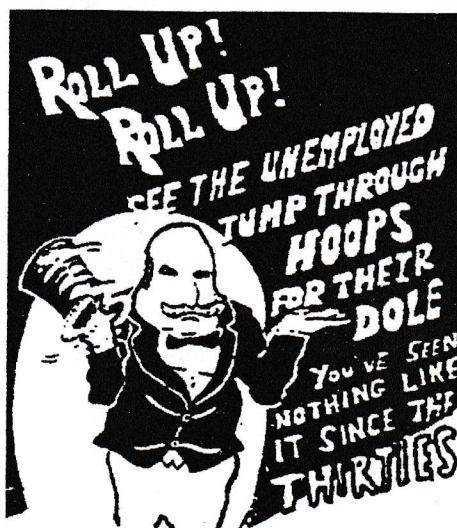
Liverpool is famous for the attitude of its inhabitants - one that has earned the undying hatred of the bosses and their political henchmen ... of whichever party. When dockers working for a firm called Tor-side went on strike in 1995, the regulars of the Dock Labour Scheme refused to cross the picket-line. This was normal practice for them, but it was a declaration of war as far as their employers were concerned.

Hadn't the government outlawed secondary picketing and sympathetic strikes? Hadn't they spent £millions of tax-payers money to smash the miners and bring the unions to heel? Who did these fools think they were?

The nearly 500 offenders were all sacked and scabs hired to replace them - end of story except that it wasn't. Last week BBC Radio (and very few other sources) announced that they had voted, by 2 to 1, in a secret ballot to reject the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company's (MDHC) "final offer" of £28,000 per man to call off their action. A couple of hundred would then be rehired - for a while at least - while the rest would stay sacked.

Why had national media decided to cover the dispute for practically the first time since it started? Because they had been primed to report the defeat of the dockers. This final offer had already been made and refused by the workers nearly a year ago. The only difference was that their union, the Transport & General, had been expected to deliver a sell-out. The union even went to the company for the addresses of the sacked workers to send out the ballot papers! These arrived without warning on the Saturday and the Monday with a deadline of the following Thursday.

Dockers have long memories. They and their families have fought for generations to **stop** being casual labour and only got permanent contracts in the 1960s with the National Dock Labour Scheme. Scarcely twenty years later, Thatcher thought she had ended it.



Whatever you've been told by the aging yuppies who believe they're running this country, this struggle is not lost. It isn't the death throes of the last dinosaur. Despite the news-blackout, the dockers are stronger than ever. Fellow dockworkers in Europe, North America, Australia, India and elsewhere are refusing to handle cargoes from companies which use Mersey Docks and are stepping up their own campaigns against non-union work. At least one ship is wandering the Pacific because it can't find anywhere to unload. These 'foreign' workers aren't only protecting their own interests, they remember that British dockers have supported them in the past. International solidarity can help!

This is hurting their bosses. So is the action of South African dockers in blocking oranges en route for the new £9 million fruit-handling

facility at Sheerness, because it's owned by MDHC. The 'final offer' is one more bluff and it has been called.

It's also hurting Bill Morris and the time-servers in the TGWU, who want to deliver industrial peace to Tony Blair and his business partners. The government too is a stake-holder in Mersey Docks - a 40% stake in fact. They want to keep this dispute quiet and end it as soon as possible, because it gives an example to other workers who're fed up with the treatment they get from arrogant managers and employers.

Their recent alliance with *Reclaim the Streets* came about when dockers saw the young roads-protesters getting a beating from riot-police in Liverpool and decided to join in. After this introduction, Liverpool dockers and RTS took a leading part in the London March for Social Justice in April. In September a smaller operation - the Dockers Mystery tour - was prevented from reaching the T&G headquarters, so they occupied the Department of Trade and Industry offices instead.

Most traditional lefties still probably have difficulty in relating to the new wave of anarcho-hippies who squat trees rather than houses and take over highways not factories. Vice versa with the RTS crew. But this co-operation must mean that some, at least, begin to make the connections between the destruction of the environment and the destruction of jobs and workers' rights, between anti-union legislation and anti-traveller laws. We're always being told that roads bring jobs, but some of us have noticed that they just as often take them away.

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Fighting Back in Ukraine - a book review

"Fighting Back in Ukraine - a worker who took on the bureaucrats and bosses"

Oleg Dubrovskii & Simon Pirani Index Books '97 £2.50.

This short book (67 pages) paints a very clear picture of the situation in Ukraine over the past twenty years and the response of one militant worker to the old system and the new.

By way of introduction, the first chapter graphically illustrates the depth of the social and economic crisis into which the Ukraine has plunged since the end of 'communism'. Population levels, life expectancy and birth rates have all fallen dramatically. Living standards have plunged 80% since 1991. Needless to say this has gone on alongside the growth of a new rich at one pole and a new poor at the other.

The meat of the book is Dubrovskii's story, his history of the Ukraine and his political struggles. One strength of this book is the way it shows the 'new realism' of the left, which on the one hand reflects a lack of dogma and sectarianism but on the other hand reflects the lack of a genuine workers party/organisation. Dubrovskii is candid about the level of consciousness of the workers and he makes no attempt to hide problems or to invoke a macho workerism where any obstacle can be overcome by throwing oneself into the cause with greater vigour. There are several references to the extremely low level of independent activity, belief and organisation of the working class. Not so different from what it's like here!

The book is weighted to an account of the practical. It emphasises the struggles of Dubrovskii at work in various factories, often acting virtually alone. His courage and fighting qualities are really admirable, especially his willingness to fight every regime of oppression which he comes across, starting in the Brezhnev days in the mid-70s right through to the capitalist masters of today. His concern is always for workers and their conditions often at great personal cost to himself and his family. There are occasions when big strikes break out or progress in working conditions is made, but the new situation has generally made things far more volatile and unfavourable. However, it is Dubrovskii's theoretical struggle and development which is even more interesting than the 'industrial' fight.



Dubrovskii is now a member of the Workers International, (a Trotskyist group which came out of the collapse of the International Committee of the Fourth International/WRP). He started as a Communist Party member in the seventies but was never prepared to accept the 'party line'. Amazingly, he was able to study many of the reports of the congresses of the CPSU in the twenties and came to the conclusion that

the Workers Opposition was correct. Later, as Solidarity in Poland took off he moved to an anarcho-syndicalist position and it was only in 1994 that he became a Trotskyist.

The book highlights, without meaning to, some of the weaknesses of the Trotskyist movement today. For a start, even though Dubrovskii has read and taken on board the arguments in Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*, he still uses the term *state capitalism* which Trotsky explicitly attacks in that book and which

the Workers International certainly opposes as the characterisation of the former USSR. But this confusion perhaps reflects the confusion within the Workers International and the Trotskyist movement in general about what the USSR was at the end and what happened in those revolutions of the late eighties and early nineties.

Up until the overturn of the USSR, Trotskyists had called for a Political Revolution to throw out the Stalinist bureaucracy and install a new workers democracy. But what happened was a political *and* social revolution where the gains of the Russian Revolution were lost and capitalist norms began to be restored. In other words there were good and bad sides to the overturns, as this book makes obvious.

Going back to the point about low levels of activity and consciousness, there is a real underestimation of what the collapse of the USSR meant in world historic terms, especially by the Trotskyist movement. It seems to me that the Workers International in particular is guilty of not properly investigating the collapse, or worse, sees it merely as a confirmation of a position it held prior to the collapse. The key thing is to say *what is* - no progress in understanding can be made until it is acknowledged that the collapse of the USSR was not simply a process of moving forward, of clearing a path to the world revolution but involved a serious setback for the communist movement as well as open-

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ing up new opportunities. This is less a criticism of Trotsky, much more a criticism of the way Trotsky has been interpreted.

What is the book for? Is it propaganda or journalism? If it is an attempt to win cadres to the Workers International it is unlikely to succeed, mainly because it appears to be the product of principled and dedicated struggle by just two people, Dubrovskii and Pirani. The Workers International does not have the theoretical strength or organisation to build on this. Moreover, the lessons of the collapse of the USSR have not yet been assimilated.

'The struggle to build a workers' party will be a long one' says Dubrovskii. This statement is an accurate assessment of the international situation and is not just applicable to the Ukraine.

The force at the centre of this book is Dubrovskii. His dedicated and open fight for socialism is inspirational. However, Dubrovskii's strength only highlights the weakness of the working class as a whole. The fact the book is about him and not about a great emerging movement indicates how far we still have to travel.

There are two other reviews of this book that I am aware of. Geoff Barr in Somerset Socialist and JJ Plant in Revolutionary History. I have tried to cover different ground here.

RK

SLP: Socialist Alternative or Stalinist Monstrosity

Our correspondent comments on the latest developments.

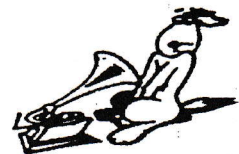
The SLP is only just over one year old. Many socialists from various backgrounds joined the SLP project with enthusiasm that a new party to the Left of Labour could be formed. Many of those who joined were fed up with the sectarianism of the old "revolutionary" groups and/or fed up with the rightward march up the Labour Party. The SLP seemed healthier than being witch hunted out of the Labour Party or joining some nutty sect.

However, all is not sweetness and light. From the outset Scargill set up the SLP with an undemocratic constitution designed to keep existing Left groups out. This constitution has never been voted on by the membership, but imposed from the outset. Now the Scargill leadership is trying to completely crush any rank-and-file attempts to democratise the Party (see the letter below). The battle is far from over. Many in the SLP believe that Scargill has no right to impose his leadership on the Party and that there can not be a mass socialist alternative to the Labour Party without democracy and an end to the old authoritarianism and sectarianism that has dogged much of the Left in the past. Scargill might well find that he loses at the next conference of the SLP, and will either have to back down or stand aside. Either way a big battle is on the horizon that could shape the Left for years to come.

DB

THE MASTER'S VOICE?

Scargill's letter to SLP members



"Constituency Socialist Labour Parties and individual members have been receiving correspondence from organisations such as "Revolutionary Platform", "Socialist Labour Information" and "Campaign for a Democratic SLP", together with open letters from individuals.

Many members and branches have been bombarded with correspondence from individuals - including John Pearson and Stan Keable - as well as correspondence sent from groupings claiming to be "campaign committees" acting on behalf of people whose membership application form has been unanimously declared null and void, and one person who has never been a member of the Party!

Conferences and meetings have been convened with the clear aim of co-ordinating campaigns to challenge the Party's Constitution. A central demand of these campaigns that Socialist Labour should become a "federal" party, thus allowing other political organisations and groupings to join - a concept which is in conflict with the central principle of our Party's Constitution.

Any member who attends a "faction", or meeting convened by any such grouping/organisation or any individual(s) will be acting in contravention of the Socialist Labour Party's Constitution. Members of the SLP who become involved in any of these activities with any of these groupings and individuals, or who attend meetings/conferences convened by them, are acting in violation of the Party's Constitution (Clause ii,(4) and (5), Clause iii, (2)(a), (2)(b), and (2) (c), and (3) (a), (3)(b).

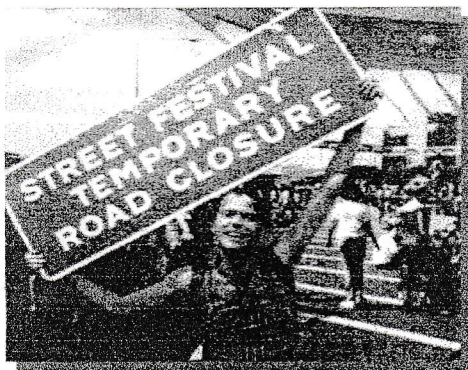
Such meetings will not be tolerated by the Party. Any member who attends such meetings or becomes involved with those co-ordinating these meetings/campaigns against the Socialist Labour Party must understand that they are acting in violation of the Party's Constitution and will be dealt with accordingly."

Arthur Scargill
General Secretary

Liverpool Dockers

(Continued from page 6)

Young workers in this part of the country are thankful if they get a job, let alone what the conditions are. Even the so-called Labour government now talks about 'flexibility' - the modern code word for casual work - or, to put it less politely, "bend over and get shafted". The Liverpool lock-out and the fight to save the environment shows that you don't have to take that nonsense for ever. There is another way - if enough people say no and keep saying no, we can start winning again.



SUPPORT THE DOCKERS!

500 Liverpool

DOCKERS

Sacked Since September 1995

Excellent T-Shirts available for £5
(cheques payable to *Exeter Left*)

SHORTS

There have been bleatings recently in Parliament about "politicised Civil Servants". There should be a prize for whoever comes up with a one word description of this kind of 'grimy pot' hypocrisy. An unpoliticised civil servant, of course, thinks like a Tory. Just as unpoliticised education means teaching their corrupt and fraudulent 'morality' and the warped official history of the British Empire.

They ought to know when to keep quiet - too many of their yes-men and time-servers are still in place. Ofsted supremo, Chris Woodward, continues to promote the previous government's elitist and destructive policies in schools, despite all teachers calling for his dismissal. The first man to unite them in the history of this country.

But it isn't enough to remove a few heads. The poison of the last twenty years trickled further down than that. Front-line clerks in the JobCentre, who remember the old days before JSA, are taking early retirement or any job they can

NEARLY NEWS AND TOTALLY STALES

(continued from page 3)

Such successes alone won't stop the arms trade, but they help to end the culture of silence and complicity in which it operates.

For more info, contact: CAAT, 11 Goodwin St, Finsbury Park, London N4 3HQ; tel: 0171-281-0297; fax: 0171-281-4369

Genetically engineered crops were the target of a demo at the NFU offices in London on 9th October. Media silence was deafening again. For info, contact: Genetic Engineering Network 01810-374-9516

Liberty (the old NCCL, not the clothes shop) and *Earthrights* held a conference, for the lawyers and protesters, on "Protest and public order: a litigation strategy" on Saturday 25 October, Conway Hall, London. If you want to find out what happened, call: 0171-357-8689.

One you haven't missed is the "Job Creation Summit", next January in London, of the G7 group of states who control the world economy. That'll be a load of laughs - the US Treasury is already worried about the growth of employment caused by the spread of new technology to various parts of the globe. This could lead to inflation as workers have more money to spend! Can't please the bastards anyhow, can we! Contact RTS at above address for more info on how to make your feelings known to this gathering of global power.

You Want More? Given the normal delay in bringing out this newsletter, it's not possible to publicise every action we hear of in good time. **If you want notice of demos, campaigns, meetings, etc, in time to get along, get in touch via the PO Box. Let us know what you areas of interest are and enclose a donation to cover photocopying costs and postage.**

If you know of any other local political activity, please send us details. We need the copy.

Exeter Left, c/o 'The Flying Post', PO Box 185, Exeter EX4 4EW

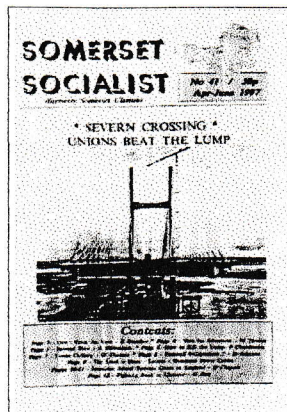
get. The survivors are signed-up to the new dispensation, like the victims of 'total quality control' in other industries.

The reality of this was demonstrated recently with a BBC consumers' rights(!) programme exposing how the Safety Inspectorate of the mining industry has ignored the cover-up of accidents in pits since privatisation. The once most militantly safety-conscious workers in the UK have been persuaded that their jobs depend on **not** reporting serious injuries. Small wonder a Labour government thinks it can shit on the unemployed with impunity.

Black Belt & Red Braces

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More useful publications:

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Squall (squatters news), PO Box 8959, London N12 5HW; tel: 0171-561-1204

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BOOK REVIEW

"Seven Myths About Work"

By Molly Scott Cato. Pub: Green Audit. Aberystwyth 1996. Price £5
Available from: Green Audit (Wales) Ltd., 38 Queen Street, Aberystwyth, Wales, SY23 1PU

This book of 84 pages explores the Myths surrounding the work ethic. It considers the methods used to persuade the labouring classes that work was an essential part of their pattern of existence.

The book explores the greatest-confidence trick of the 20th Century - the search for full employment. Between the covers of this slim volume are contained seven chapters. Each chapter considers a particular myth, explores its origins and then describes the true reason why each myth was accepted by the working people.

Myth number one is the myth of the jolly worker. Long working hours are the product of the indus-

trialised society. In the more simplistic hunter-gather societies the young men would only 'work' between 12 and 20 hours per week. The author explores the religious basis of the work ethic and concludes that it is the ideology of those in control that drives us on to harder work.

The second myth is that of job creation. The question is posed why invent work?! Phrases like 'the devil finds work for idle hands' is examined. If jobs need to be created it should be in areas which give a real benefit to people.

The myth of 'work is good for you' (myth 3) is shown to be a complete nonsense by quoting research that shows the damage caused to people by the stress of modern working practices.

Moving on to myth 4 'Women's Work', the author explores the bias in the world of work and the manner in which 'women's work' is belittled.

Following on from the feminists

view, is the myth that 'Work makes you rich' The book shows that it is the rich who get richer and the poor who get poorer and no amount of hard work at slave wages is going to change that.

By quoting from Philip Larkin's poem 'Toads' and 'Toads Revisited' the sixth myth 'A Working Life' is discussed.

The final myth is 'Working for Yourself' where the myth of 'The self-made man' and that of the freelance worker are shown to be the product of the need for capital to have access to a compliant work force.

The book reaches a number of conclusions in the final chapter which should lead to an enlightened debate on the future of work. It raises as many questions as it answers and should be read by anybody who is concerned about the way in which modern society is driving headlong to self destruction.

DD