



REARRANGING THE DECKCHAIRS

Editorial

JULY 24 was supposed to be Parkinson's day of glory. The Electricity Bill was scheduled to become an Act. Instead Parkinson made a fundamental and politically terminal retreat over nuclear power. This was the recognition that the City will not support the privatisation of Electricity with its nuclear risk content.

That retreat over the nuclear risk content embraces several factors. Public fear over nuclear safety, inestimable decommissioning costs, uneconomic generating costs of ageing nuclear stations, the perceived "nuclear tax" - 20% on electricity bills, dumping of nuclear waste. The decision to keep the ageing Magnox nuclear power stations in the public sector means the public will

pick-up the bill not the shareholders and investors of any future privatised electricity companies. So much for the loosing of "market forces" in electricity.

The retention of the Magnox power stations is only the beginning. The Advanced Gas Reactors (AGRs) and PWRs are not clear by any stretch of the imagination. Significantly, National Power, the proposed successor company arising from the CEBG controlling nuclear generation, has been divided for months between a Thermal Division and a Nuclear Division. The Nuclear Division has been viewed as a separate enterprise entirely. Expect further gyrations over nuclear power, state intervention and control in the next few weeks.

The Tories are beset with difficulties in their electricity privatisation proposals. Parkinson's piloting of this act of national sabotage and vandalism was supposedly going to be his stepping stone to further senior office in Thatcher's administration. Within hours of the retreat on nuclear power, Parkinson had been re-shuffled - sacked from Energy to Transport. The Electricity Bill is a failure, so is Parkinson.

THE 1978 British Leyland management style of Michael Edwardes anticipated the Thatcher arrival in office of 1979. Tens of thousands of jobs were cut to 'compete effectively with the Japanese' (now taking over BL by stealth). Edwardes, a South African, took over with scores of new managers and directors, among them an Ian MacGregor, a Graham Day and a Trevor Toolan.

MacGregor moved to the British Steel Corporation and later to the National Coal Board, now both shadows of their former selves. Day went to BSC also, and to British Shipbuilders which hardly exists, and oversees the Rover Group recently asset stripped by British Aerospace. But it's Trevor Toolan who's come unstuck. Toolan's hard faced style has been shown up by workers employed at British Rail. They succeeded where others failed. So what now lies in prospect is a major management reshuffle, but striking workers at BR have broken the mould. Nor are reshuffles confined to BR.

The large scale reshuffles of directors at Britain's biggest bank NatWest have shaken the City of London, following a scathing report of the bank's role in takeover shenanigans. For Chairman Lord Boardman, a former Tory industry minister, it must have reminded him of old times. So this is the private sector; trouble is the revelations were made public.

But the big reshuffle has been the coming and going from Thatcher's Cabinet, where British Leyland management style still prevails, though perhaps not for much longer. Dictatorship is going out of fashion among those who get dictated to. The Cabinet has its 12th industry minister in 10 years, which tells you all you need to know.

The last decade has seen the construction through the City and its government of a financial house of cards. Reshuffle them as they might, the casino economy is heading off the rails.

Education head-ache for Minister MacGregor

APPARENTLY, a Member of Parliament put it to the new Education Secretary, MacGregor, that... "After Edwina and the French the NUT will be a soft touch". The newly installed minister, unfreshly culled from 'Agriculture' to 'Education' will find the havoc created by his sick predecessor, the oleaginous Mr. Baker quite a headache. For starters he inherits quite a few court cases from parents of children sent home through teacher shortage. They are demanding the statutory right of education for their kids. Then he has fraudulent plans for City Technology Colleges to deal with, and then the National Curriculum, testing, local financial management and so on...and so on.

The National Union of Teachers, far from being a soft touch has been reorganising to defend both its conditions of service and state education. What is more, the NUT has forged alliances with parents and other teaching unions to defend the interests of schools and children. While MacGregor attempts to sort out Baker's mess, those who champion education find common interest.

Horror

The latest Thatcherite horror to be foisted on education has emerged in the London Borough of Westminster. There are plans afoot to fund a 'performance related target' scheme for headteachers. This means that governors can offer a 10% salary bonus (to come out of a school's

budget) to heads who 'perform' well. 'Good' heads could be those whose schools produce good exam results, balance their budgets or achieve job placements for pupils, all things that a head and staff with integrity would do anyway. It is an insult to the profession!

'Key tasks' would be identified by the Local Authority and could eventually be those that ensure privatisation.

Thatcherite delivery of education; like sacking certain teachers, saving lots of money and putting business studies on the curriculum. Westminster is considering extending this money grubbing scheme to the posts of deputy head and head of department.

Appalling

It is clear that a certain 'type' is to be attracted to it. There may not be enough of Baker's 'Renaissance Men' to go round however as there is still enough professionalism in the profession to deem the scheme appalling.

The national Association of Headteachers (NAHT) has urged its members not to apply for Westminster headships and for existing heads to refuse to have their existing conditions of service tampered with. Lets hope that the NAHT defends the integrity of its position.

Attempts to turn schools into branches of MacDonald's or Next will fall on the principle of professionalism. Have a nice day Mr MacGregor. The halcyon days of Edwina and the French may be remembered with sweet nostalgia!



No way out for BR Management.

Photo: The Worker.

The need to rebuild the dockers' unity

AS THE WORKER goes to press dockers around the country face great difficulties. Under threat of dismissal without severance pay Southampton dockers have voted to return to work from Monday 31 July.

The destruction of the National Docks Labour Scheme has been accompanied by vicious intimidation involving threats and the dismissal of stewards at Tilbury. In practice the majority of Scheme dockers have not had sufficient belief in the need to strike to stand up to the intimidation.

It will be a bitter blow to many, particularly to Liverpool dockers who have lobbied at Tilbury and Southampton.

Whatever the difficulty, victory for the employers only becomes absolute if we are reconciled to defeat. That will not happen and in practice the task of rebuilding starts from

now.

Division between Scheme and non-Scheme ports was never healthy. It has effectively blocked the possibility of a national docks strike. It placed the most organised dockers in a position where they relied on the law for protection - no protection at all when the law is in the hands of ruthless employers who choose the moment to attack.

At this stage the last thing we need is brother against brother in the docks among the former Scheme workers. Such a struggle would be pointless and demoralising and could leave scars that take years to heal.

It is a difficult truth given the bitterness of the moment but true nonetheless. It is time for all ports to reach the most dignified settlement possible and to return to rebuild.

Workers take the initiative

NALGO's local government members' industrial action on pay entered a new phase this week: key finance staff in twenty local authorities walked out on indefinite strike, supported by the union on full take home pay. The sections of members chosen to take this action are those who can directly hit the employers where it hurts, in the pocket, while minimising disruption to the general public. In particular, many branches have chosen their Poll tax sections to strike, which will seriously disrupt the introduction of this hated tax. Many branches will be balloting sections of their membership in the coming week: the goal is to have 5% of the 500,000 local government members out.

The membership generally will also be involved: a ballot will be conducted among the membership for four days strike in each four weeks, starting from September. Also in September, when councils start their official business after a summer break, members who service committees may be called out.

Haringey branch is balloting its committee clerks, Members Secretariat and Policy Co-ordination Unit, all of whom have day to day contact with councillors and are vital to the functioning of council machinery.

The employers' side rejected a proposal from their Chairman and Secretary to hold talks with ACAS acting in an advisory role, and the next negotiating meeting is on Monday 31 July: if the dead hand of the Thatcherites on the employers' side can be lifted, real progress might be achieved.

Strengthening the NALGO position, NUPE has also decided to hold a ballot of its thousands of members employed in administrative and clerical work to see whether they are prepared to join in the battle.

**In this
issue**

PAGE 2 THE FRENCH REVOLUTION - PART 2

PAGE 3 THE DECLINE OF CAPITALISM

French Revolution -Struggle Between Classes Part 2.

LOUIS XVI and his family were closely guarded by the Insurrectionary Commune of 10 August, 1792, following the treacherous but foiled attempt by the King to conspire with foreign powers to topple the Revolution and restore the monarchy to France.

France was surrounded by enemies. But the Commune was determined to defend the gains made and so this revolutionary body took the initiative against the legally-established authority of the Assembly, which met for the last time on 20 September, 1792.

This major conflict between popular masses and big bourgeois was struggle between rival authorities.

The 288 elected members of the Insurrectionary Commune, mostly lesser and middle bourgeoisie, now had to be accepted as representative by the Legislative Assembly, itself controlled by the Gironde, which advanced the interests of big bourgeoisie for whom the Revolution had gone far enough.

1792 was a year of crisis for France. Yet it was the fear of foreign invasion that had the effect of invigorating patriotic feelings amongst the people. They it was who constituted the nation such that 'Vive La France' was the cry that went up whenever reactionaries tried to kill off the Revolution.

In Paris in August, 1792, many hundreds of suspected counter-revolutionaries were rounded up. Verdun was under siege and Paris was called to arms, ready to march on the invaders. As a precaution, 1100 prisoners were killed, although some were just common criminals.

The Catholic Church, a sponsor of counter-revolution, was squeezed further with the decision to deport priests in days. In future, the State would register births, deaths and marriages. Despite the religious protests, the State legalised divorce.

Sans Culottes

New infantry battalions had been formed since July but made up of artisans and journeymen. They stopped the Prussians, the most professional army in Europe, at the Battle of Valmy on 20 September. Goethe was present and his immortal phrase was engraved on the monument: 'This day and this place open a new era in the history of the world'.

All of aristocratic Europe was against France. Thus unity among the various revolutionaries was considered vital. But that did not last.

Girondins and the Montagnards were opposed to each other in the National Convention. Their class interests were at odds. Seating arrangements placed the Gironde on the right, while Montagnards sat on the left.

Those on the left acknowledged the vital role played by the sans-culottes in saving the Revolution. It had been the working class republicans of Paris, who

wore proletarian trousers rather than aristocratic breeches, hence the name, who had moved against the King. Montagnards saw as essential the granting of concessions to maintain popular support. However, the Girondins did not.

In September 1792 the Girondins attacked the Montagnard leaders they most feared: Marat, Danton and Robespierre.

"I have always fought against those who have been motivated by a desire for self-advancement", said Robespierre, known as The Incorruptible.

"It is impossible to want a revolution without having revolutionary action." The Gironde hated and feared him.

Indeed Karl Marx would, decades later, regard The Terror as "a plebeian way of getting rid of the enemies of the bourgeois, absolutism and feudalism".

The battle between the Gironde and Montagnards grew venomous inside the Convention and without. Centre forces around the Marais (the Marsh or Plain) accepted the wartime concessions to the masses and followed the lead of the Montagnards when they moved against the King.

HISTORIC NOTES

On 20 November, 1792, the discovery in castle walls of arms and papers that proved Louis XVI had had secret arrangements with foreign enemies sealed his fate. His trial began on December 11 despite the Girondins' attempts to prevent it. The 1791 Constitution guaranteed the inviolability of the monarch and was founded on a property suffrage, but circumstances had now changed. The Gironde was beaten.

A few abstained, but otherwise the Convention was unanimous about the King's guilt. The death sentence was imposed by 387-334. A reprieve was rejected by 380-310. On 21 January, 1793, the King was executed. The 'divine right' of the monarchy was shown for what it was.

Europe was shocked. The old regimes called it regicide, but their old corruption did not prevent their outbursts of moral righteousness. Wrote one deputy for Pas-de-Calais, "We are fully committed now. The paths have been cut off behind us and we have no choice but to go forward whether we like it or not. Now as never before we can truly say that we shall live as free men or die."

Between March and September 1793, Britain signed treaties that organised belligerents against the revolutionary nation. The monarchies formed a general coalition against France. The King's execution had been only the pretext for Britain's involvement; in fact France and Britain were two nations fighting for political and economic mastery. Said Briassot to the Convention, "Now you have to fight, both on land and at sea, all the tyrants of Europe".



Toussaint Louverture led successful slave revolt in Haiti, inspired by 1789

The Gironde was the dominant force, yet the Montagnards eventually would come to the fore.

The Girondins printed paper money, a feature of their inflationary policy. Thus rather than sell their grain and save the paper money, the farmers preferred to hoard the grain. Economic crisis and food crisis was the result.

Workers agitated for

patriotic feeling to be expressed by the people.

For instance defeated Dumouriez plotted with Austrian generals in March 1793 to restore monarchy under a Louis XVII as well as bring back the 1791 Constitution. His plan to march on Paris was ruined by soldiers' refusal to go with him. A hail of volunteers' bullets followed him as he fled to the Austrian lines.

Peasant grievances fed into the revolt in the Vendee in the west of France. Resentment at military manpower decrees caused killings in a revolt led by nobles and clerics in a very traditionalist Catholic region. They called for the return of altar and throne. Many lives were lost between March and October 1793, although it rumbled on into the Napoleonic period.

It seemed that only the Montagnards were committed to public safety and the defence of the Revolution. Counter-revolutionaries had to be crushed; that was the popular sentiment.

Committees were set up to engage in Revolutionary Surveillance. The Convention took special powers to itself. Sans-culottes mobilised their forces.

On 28 March, 1793, laws against emigres banished them for life from French territory. Their property

on the rich; voting rights to sans-culottes alone; to the old, the sick and the relatives of those fighting in the armies, public aid; the arrest of suspects; exclusion of the Girondin leaders from the Convention; creation of a revolutionary army; and a purge of the various administrative bodies.

The insurrection on 2 June surrounded the Convention with 80,000 men of the National Guard. Surrender was inevitable.

The pressure from the sans-culottes was resisted by the Montagne, although the Montagnards knew that only their active presence had beaten the Gironde. Foreign armies had pushed the French back. But the assassination of Marat on 13 July caused yearning for vengeance, and new energy was found to go on.

Power was centralised. Mass conscription came in. Robespierre inspired and took inspiration from the popular support. But there were contradictions too.

Terror was organised. On 16 October, the Queen was guillotined. Girondins suffered the same fate. Of 395 defendants in the last quarter of 1793, nearly half were executed. Provincial towns involved in civil war was where most executions took place; in peaceful towns relatively few.

The Committee of Public Safety believed there was a foreign plot through deputies with business interests. Suspicions lingered on and poisoned relationships. Montagnards split over such tensions; factionalism intensified.

Those alarmed at the Terror grouped around Danton. A large delegation of women in December 1793 persuaded the Convention to examine whether prisons held innocent people. In April 1794 Danton went to the guillotine with a number of others.

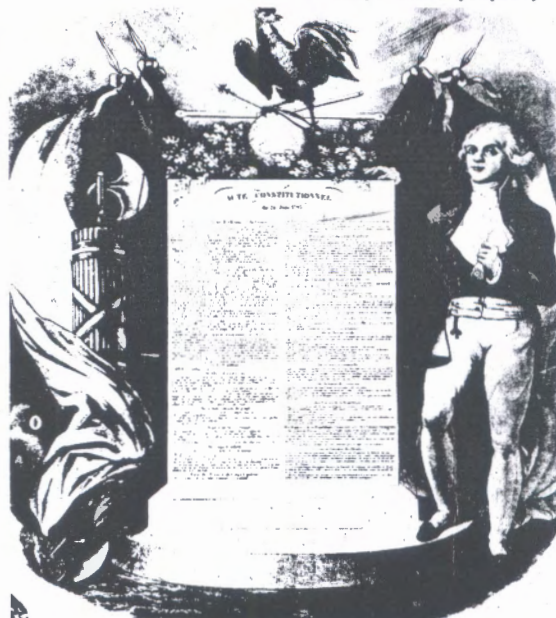
Food shortages worried the people. The popular movement and the Revolutionary Government were now to diverge; the end was near. The Jacobin dictatorship antagonised the sans-culottes.

The Terror detained an estimated 100,000 people. It is calculated that some 40,000 were executed. Who were they? The historian Georges Lefebvre remarked, 'those who run counter to their own class interests are treated with much less circumspection than the original adversaries'.

By spring 1794 military successes made Terror much

harder to justify, yet the economic situation seemed to require it. Fervour for revolution also cooled. On 28 July Robespierre and 21 colleagues were not saved from execution without trial. On 29 July 71 more were guillotined.

Albert Soboul argues of both Saint-Just and Robespierre that 'They were both too conscious of the interests of the bourgeoisie to give their total support to the sans culottes, and yet too attentive to the needs of the sans-culottes to find favour with the middle classes'. With the fall of Robespierre, 'The Revolution resumed its bourgeois course'.



price controls, which infuriated the Gironde so concerned for its own class interests.

Grain riots in the Beauce and surrounding departments saw thousands of men assessing grain supplies in markets. 'Long live the Nation. Corn prices will come down.' The Gironde reacted violently to such events.

Soldiers were organised in regiments of regulars and volunteers. Regulars had fewer rights, but the volunteers could elect officers and leave after one campaign. Mutual resentment forced their amalgamation for victory, but it was difficult to raise the 300,000 seen as necessary to win the war. Yet military defeats caused great upsurges of

Robespierre and 1793 Constitution: Tension between property and people

reverted to the Republic.

On 5-6 April, the famed Committee of Public Safety was set up. Nine men met in camera and supervised war on counter-revolution.

Said Jean-Paul Marat, "It is by means of violence that liberty must be established, and the moment has come for...the despotism of liberty in order to crush the despotism of kings". The Jacobins and popular societies stepped up the campaign against them. On 26 May, 1793, it was Robespierre who called on the people to revolt. The insurrection took place on 31 May.

They demanded the fixing of bread prices by a levy

We're not backing Baker Colleges say businessmen

AT THE 1986 Tory party conference Kenneth Baker, former Secretary of State for Education, enthusiastically introduced City Technology Colleges, a 'new concept' in inner-city schooling.

These secondary schools, promoted as Thatcher's educational beacons of excellence were to be funded, all or mostly, by the business community with running costs paid by the government.

Three years later, where are all these CTCs? Baker promised that 20 City Technology Colleges would open by September 1990. So far, just one school has opened with a further two due to open in September and another four next year. You don't need a City Technology College background to tell you that $1 + 2 + 4$ do not equal 20! But you do need to be something of an accounting genius to explain this very costly CTC failure to the overwhelming majority of people who care about education.

Thatcher chose to develop CTCs in order to drive a wedge into state education and bring in privatisation through the back door. Real educational and financial arguments were never considered, so the government badly under-estimated the real cost of the plan.

Opposition

New school buildings are very expensive, particularly in the inner cities, and potential sites are almost impossible to find. Every single plan to close an existing school to convert it into a CTC has been met with strong opposition from parents and teachers alike.

The 'business community' has seemed no keener on the plan, and is certainly not rushing to offer sponsorship. But who belongs to the business community anyway? Out of the small number of contributors so far, the majority, like the Hanson Trust, are well known for their devotion to the Tory party.

The result is that the government is now funding up to 80% of all capital costs together with all the running costs. Tax payers will have to fork out a staggering £126.3 million over the next three years.

Out of the ten local education authorities where CTCs are to be developed, eight are seriously underfunded. More precisely, these eight LEAs have to run all the local nursery, primary and secondary schools in their area on a tenth of the budget that the government is prepared to put up for just one City Technology College.

In London the facts are even more dramatic. The cost of turning Bacon Church of England Secondary School in Southwark into a CTC is to be approximately £13 million, the same as the government's total capitation allowance to the whole of the ILEA. Southwark's share of the ILEA's budget is just £1 million.

AUT makes victory complete

THE MOST contentious aspect of the recent pay award won by university lecturers following their successful campaign of examination boycotts was the element of local bargaining. This was due to the inclusion in the offer of a lump sum of £150, to be increased to up to £285 at the discretion of each university. Now every university has agreed to pay up the full £285.

Most universities agreed to pay up immediately, the last to hold out being Reading. This is no co-incidence, for Reading's Vice Chancellor

CAPITALISM is in terminal decline because of its own internal logic. For capitalism it's expand or bust. But the possibilities for expansion are limited, most particularly since 1917 when the new Soviet Union became a no-go area for imperialism.

Capitalism in this century has been characterised not by opening up new lands but by being forced back in on its heartlands, by revolution and the struggle for national liberation elsewhere. As a result the contradictions between the capitalists intensified, especially between the financiers and the manufacturers, the bank and the factory.

When Thatcher came on the scene it became apparent with her first act that finance capital had triumphed, that money lending had eclipsed making things to sell. She released constraint on the movement of capital and investment flooded out of Britain - a signal that the ruling class were done with industry in Britain. Which means they were done with Britain.

A Britain without industry is not the Britain we know. Consider the lives of people in pre-industrial Britain, tied to the land, to the manor; no communication, no travel, ignorance, superstition, disease, and a tiny population.

The rise of capitalism led to the growth of industry and the emergence of an industrial proletariat. This development transformed Britain more utterly in one century span than all the years of history and pre-history before it. We would be more at home and familiar in any developed country of the world today than the Britain of 200 years ago. Now, with Thatcher, we have an attempt to return us to the conditions of feudalism: divided, superstitious, isolated, with little class consciousness and no sense of a future or of progress; hapless victims of circumstance.

Thatcher has not brought capitalism into decline, but she does represent those who have grasped the significance of that fact. Others before her have turned on workers, but Thatcher has positively embraced that necessity for the expiring parasite to destroy its host. She



The revolution that changed the world. Lenin addresses the people.

has brought continuity and purposefulness to what had been haphazard and uncoordinated attacks. Her single-mindedness gave the lead to the forces of reaction around the world. She especially hates the strength, dignity and culture of workers, which comes from combination, a product of industry. Everything she has done has been an assault on organisation, on industry.

Today we witness the spectacle of the first industrial nation unable to produce its own coal, steel, machine tools, cars, ships, etc. The economy is in a mess because these are the industries that pay for everything else. The only reason that education and health have been less badly damaged so far is that precious national assets have been sold off to disguise the loss of revenue from basic industry. Britain under Thatcher has become a toxic waste dump, an arms bazaar and a free port for Europe. She leads not so much a national government as an invading force set on conquering a people. Perhaps we should pay more attention to our own need for national liberation.

And to come? If she gets her way, a new 21st century

dark age with high-tech feudalism. That's why they want you to do your shopping from home while watching your satellite TV. Widespread beggary in the capital is a unique pointer to a society going backwards.

For ten years we have taken this unending assault and yet here we are, bloody but defiant, battered not broken. Why have we survived? Is it because they missed the target? They aimed for the bricks and mortar, but industry is people. You cannot roll back class consciousness, you can only eliminate classes. And the people are still here. Confused, uncertain, in retreat, yes, but surviving. And an organised retreat in itself marks a progress from rout. Set against Thatcher's declared aim of snuffing out socialism, this decade celebrates her failure. We will not lie down and die. And we have much cause to be optimistic.

Look what has happened in education, which though not physically under direct threat is going through a softening up process with a two-tier system as a prelude to a more fundamental assault later. Among the weapons wielded against education were to be parents,

a national curriculum and the opportunity for schools to opt out of local authority control. Thanks to the vanguard role of the NUT, teachers have turned the tables. Parents are standing up loudly and clearly for educational quality alongside the teachers. The national curriculum has the hallmark of teachers' professionalism running right through it, and is being used to demand more qualified workers. The government's weapons have been turned against them.

A change of thought was required to bring this about. New methods of warfare, new weapons, new tactics. We had to understand the changes, which had taken place over the past ten years, analyse them and then respond. Of course there are always those who insist on fighting in old ways, or, more common, those who don't see why they should alter the way they have always worked.

And all around us we see signs emerging of a class which has been kicked for ten years stirring again. Why should tube workers go into struggle for the first time in 63 years; or dockers, doctors, power workers, journalists? Don't the miners know they are supposed to be dead? They haven't read the script.

Backwards into the Nineties

THE GOVERNMENT, in its White Paper "Employment in the 1990s", is moving ahead on its plans to privatise and destroy training in Britain. The new proposals include the end of the tripartite system involving trade unions in consultation and planning for training.

The Government's proposals for training have meant the abolition of the Training Commission and the Area Manpower Boards, to be replaced with Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs). It is envisaged that 100 TECs will be set up in

the next four years.

TECs will comprise local business representatives and a handful of other local people selected by them. The Government hopes that managing directors of local businesses will put in a bid to the Government-appointed task force, who will vet their appointment to a TEC. The TEC will define its own boundaries of the locality it will serve, and there is no reason for these boundaries to coincide with local education authorities.

Critical

The CBI, while welcoming the initiatives (could they have done anything else?) have been critical of the proposals. There will be no means for coordinating national training needs and indeed there is no means to secure representation of national industries on the TECs.

Fragment

This Government's entire attitude is to fragment training. Their proposals will not involve national planning for the nation's industrial needs. Planning is anathema to Thatcher. If the TECs provide any training at all it will be to fulfil the short-term requirements of the local businesses represented.

☆☆☆ Summer Quiz ☆☆☆

EXAMINATION PAPER
MODERN POLITICS: ADVANCED LEVEL

Please read all the questions carefully. You have a lifetime to answer any four of the questions set, although a good answer to any one of them will be sufficient to pass.

- 1) 'Man is a political animal (Aristotle). But if this is the case, why are so few involved in politics?'
- 2) Government is inevitably concerned with drawing up policies for all sorts of people and circumstances. Is honesty always, or ever, the best policy?
- 3) What is it, in your considered opinion, that causes so many people to be so cynical of the politically ambitious?
- 4) Niccolo Machiavelli offered advice in 'The Prince', 'The Discourses' and 'The Art of War' on how wise rulers should conduct themselves. Answer either of the following:
 - i) The conduct of modern politics suggests nobody reads Machiavelli anymore. Discuss.
 - ii) Machiavelli may have expected too much. Discuss.
- 5) Should politicians believe what they say?
- 6) 'We don't need no education' (Pink Floyd). For how many education ministers since 1970 has this been the guiding principle? Also please outline what has been the public reaction.
- 7) How does a ruled class become the ruling class in society? Does it have to change its ideas over time? Discuss.
- 8) 'I'm a great believer in humanity. It's people I can't stand.' Must politicians always want to have it both ways?
- 9) 'Julius Caesar was by no means the last politician to think of himself as a god.' Could you please outline, with modern examples, whether you regard this claim as justified.
- 10) Why is it that counter revolutionaries have so much to say about the French Revolution?

The disgrace of homelessness in West Yorks.

THE housing shortage in West Yorkshire and Humberside is steadily worsening as government policies take effect according to a report just published by charity organisations in the area. Due to youth unemployment and benefit cuts the problem is particularly acute amongst young people, who have been seeking help from agencies in increasing numbers to the point where 40% of hostel referrals are now under 18.

Wakefield charities have been turning away homeless young people who are drifting into the city from outlying areas looking for work. Leeds Citizens Advice Bureau report dealing with one young woman on a pre nursing course who had been sleeping for several nights on Leeds station.

CAB worker Gill Robinson believes that "these people are homeless because they are penniless". In Leeds as a whole hostel accommodation is at bursting point, with families doubling up, and 80 children in the council's two family units.

Deputy housing chairman Richard Lewis says "We are extremely concerned about the desperate plight of these families and others who may become homeless in the near future. Asked to give the cause of the crisis he cites mortgage default due to high interest rates, the sale of council houses and cuts in housing finance.

Councillor Cherril Cliff points out that "When Leeds City Council sought to borrow money for their Housing Investment Programme they were asking for £95 million for '89 to '90 but were only allowed to borrow £15 millions by this government.

Next door in Bradford the situation is just as bad, though the Tory led council seems unaware or indifferent to the plight of their homeless families. Councillor Margaret Eaton who sees council houses as a 'valuable capital investment' has announced discounts to tenants of up to 70%.

Of course the problems in Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield are just typical of those in cities all over the country, as the number of homeless families has doubled.

Things are so bad that even Mother Theresa of India, case hardened to destitution in Calcutta is shocked into contemplating relief work in Britain's cities. Fresh from a recent meeting with Mrs Thatcher which yielded many photo opportunities but no action she said "It was painful for me to see the homelessness. I found it deeply upsetting to see people living in what I call cardboard coffins, sleeping out at night". Few could disagree.

Very serious damage to electronics research

LAST summer the Advisory Committee on Science and Technology (ACOST), a body which advises the Government on research, concluded that 'optoelectronics' is vital to our future as an industrial nation.

Optoelectronic research aims to exploit the properties of light to make optical devices which are many times faster and smaller than their electronic equivalents. It holds the promise of being the basis for the next generation of industrial and consumer electronics.

Britain has six major research groups, some face closure due to a shortfall in funding.

The sums involved are trifling compared to the massive investment being made by Britain's industrial neighbours.

The Science and Engineering Research Council which distributes government funding, allocated just £700,000 to optoelectronics for the coming year. John Midwinter of University College London, a member of the committee, said recently, "It is grossly inadequate. We have Alpha 4 rated proposals worth £2.2 million with us already. At our meeting last week, we learnt with horror that this figure of £700,000 is fixed in stone...we will face very serious damage.

One group is certainly going!

It shouldn't be forgotten that what the government spent this year alone, maintaining the military garrison in the Falklands, would amply fund optoelectronics research well into the next century.



Sun sinks in Liverpool after sickening Hillsborough coverage

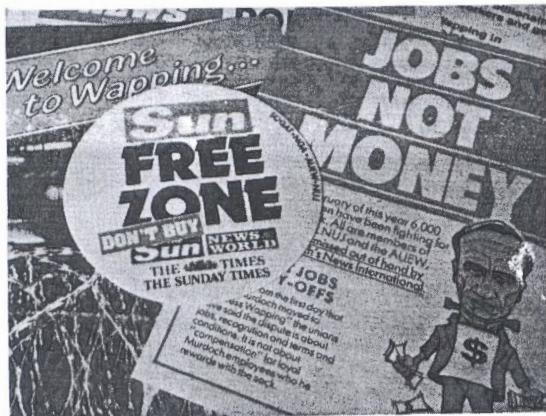
SALES of the Sun newspaper have been badly hit by a consumer boycott in Liverpool, according to the latest Audit Bureau of Circulation figures. The reason for the action on Merseyside was the attack on Liverpool fans in front page articles two days after the Hillsborough disaster.

Although this was some time ago, the boycott is continuing, backed by newsgagents and consumers alike. The

circulation figures for June show a 2.5% drop, 103,862 copies in the year on year figures.

The Sun's circulation manager has admitted there is a problem. He has also blamed the drop on the lack of colour printing facilities at News International compared with arch rival, the Daily Mirror.

Coupled with sales of the Scottish Daily Record, Mirror sales are currently



The public are urged to boycott the Sun. Photos: The Worker

MANIFOLD ENGINEERING SACKINGS

WORKERS at Manifold Industries, an engineering factory in Leyton, East London, are picketing the plant after the management sacked them earlier this month. Their crime? Refusing to cooperate with a firm of management consultants who were not there.

The engineers, members of the AEU, had put up with nearly a year of the management trying to introduce sweeping changes in working practices.

These included lengthening shifts to nine hours and compulsory overtime, Bank Holiday and weekend working.

The crunch, say the workers, came when the company tried to

bring in the management consultants. The shop steward and another worker said they would not cooperate with them, and the consultants disappeared. The company then told workers that they didn't have to cooperate unless they wanted to - so all the workers promptly said they wouldn't.

But the next day the company changed its mind and sacked the 70 engineers. Its managing director has been telling the local press that the company had to "remain competitive" or there would be "no jobs for anyone" in a couple of years.

On the picket line, the workers tell a different story.



Barbed wire is the symbol of Murdoch's new empire at Wapping.

running neck and neck with the Sun, reversing years of decline by Maxwell's papers. Sales of the Sunday Mirror have also grown by 8.3%, and now top 3 million a week.

Murdoch's so called quality papers have been hit by the general decline in sales too. The Sunday Times is 3.2% down at 1,317,865; and The Times 2.2% down.

Only Today has shown any growth as

it erodes the midmarket sales of its rivals.

As Murdoch continues to pour millions into promotions for his Sky satellite television channels in an attempt to persuade a disinterested public to but receiving equipment, any decline in newspaper sales which are subsidising Sky will be bad news. No wonder that cost cutting programmes are being implemented at Wapping.

Telecom chairman in search for new disguise

BRITISH Telecom Chairman, Iain Vallance, has revealed that the company is suffering from an identity crisis. Many customers are confused by the company's name which leads them to believe that it must have something to do with providing a phone service in Britain. In turn the bad press generated by failure of public phone boxes and a steep rise in all complaints after privatisation forced Vallance to reverse the staff cuts he had imposed and employ people to fix things.

The solution will be in line with the company's internal policy of Japanesification. Workers are being systematically bored to death with constant repetition of Japanese style slogans about loyalty to the company and "all working together". The assurance that managers from the top down are committed to Total Quality is somewhat marred by the failure to set internal budgets until well into the financial year and the imposition of widespread cuts once they were set. The problem is that where quality conflicts with boosting profits there really is no competition.

So what will the new name be? It cannot mention Britain because apparently this is confusing in the US market. Some have suggested Nippon Telecom, but others feel that this implies too much involvement in telecommunications and anyway the name is already taken.

It must be "Offshore something". The City would like "Offshore holding company which employs less and less" but this seems a little wordy. The staff competition has so far only come up with "Offshore Asset-strippers" (OAS) which is more snappy and will have to do if you cannot improve on it. Suggestions please to Iain Vallance, care of your local Telecom sales office.

BRITISH Telecom is still in dispute with the 30,000 strong Society of Telecom Executives over pay. The union says that its policy of withdrawing good will and refusing cover for members on leave is biting. BT had imposed a rise of 7.5%.

British Aerospace into property speculation

BRITISH Aerospace, the aircraft, car, and weapons manufacturer has added a new company to its portfolio. It has just paid £278 million to take over Arlington Securities.

Is this company involved in a related area of manufacture like Royal Ordnance or the Rover Group? No. Arlington Securities is a property developer, whose speciality is the redevelopment of derelict industrial sites by turning them into business parks. With profits last year of £23.4 million on a turnover of £70 million, it is clearly a lucrative business to own.

Now the reasons for the takeover becomes crystal clear. There has been a furore

recently concerning the closure of three former Royal Ordnance factories which were bought by BAe for the government at knock down prices.

BAe paid just £3.5 million for two of the sites in Enfield and Waltham Abbey, north London. Now they are to be redeveloped for £300 million. The value of the land alone is worth £100 million. The third site is at Patricroft in the Manchester area.

Similarly, by buying the Rover Group, BAe has gained control of more surplus land at Copley in Oxford and Bathgate in Scotland. It also has land for redevelopment on another valuable site at Weybridge in Surrey, an old

aircraft factory.

BAe naturally denies that it is asset stripping. But its chairman has hinted that several more sites are likely to become available as the company trims its manufacturing capacity as part of a "logical rationalisation".

All of this will be watched closely by opponents of these privatisation deals. They have warned all along that taxpayers are losing huge sums through the deliberate undervaluing of nationalised companies by the government, which is selling them off primarily for political reasons.

Labour response

Bryan Gould, Labour's trade spokesman estimates that BAe alone could make over £1 billion on its property deals. And as the recent sale of part of Rover to Honda shows, it does not necessarily have any long term commitment to these manufacturing companies anyway. The recent flurry of takeover activity by the likes of Hanson and Goldsmith shows that nowadays no company, even those in the world league, are safe from asset strippers, who profit from disruption and destruction rather than the creation of wealth through manufacture.

Nor has Britain a government that can be relied upon to protect companies from the unwelcome advances of these latterday robber barons. The sooner we do, the better.