

# Workers power

**INSIDE**

Number 170 September 1993

★ From civil rights to

**BLACK  
POWER**

see pages 8 & 9

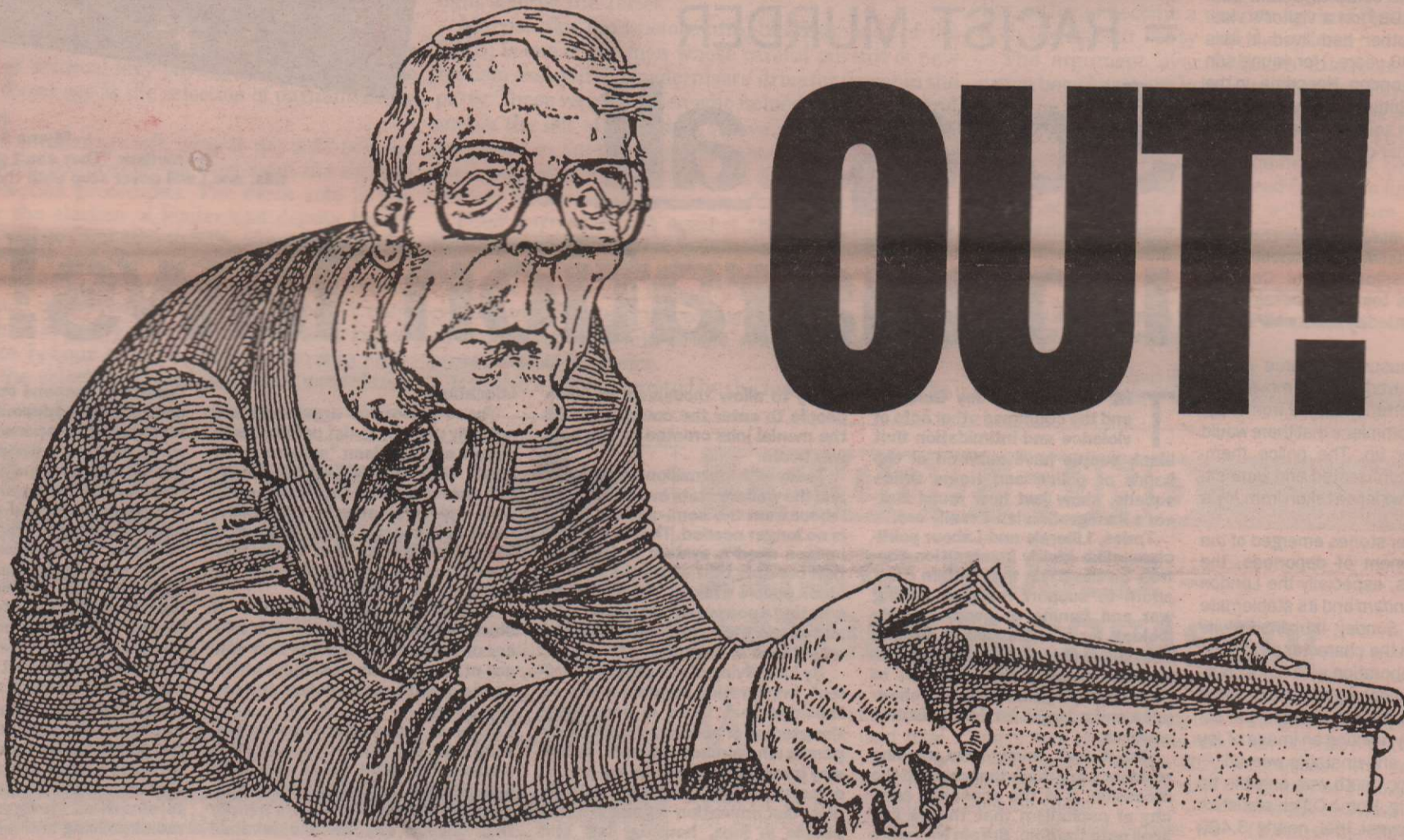


British section of the LRCI - League for a Revolutionary Communist International

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## AS MAJOR PLANS MASSIVE CUTS

# GET HIM OUT!



**THE TORIES are back from their summer holidays. And they taking up where they left off.**

- Wage councils have been abolished, leaving the lowest paid facing even lower wages.
  - British Rail is raising its fares by another 20% to get ready for privatisation.
  - Miners, who were promised their jobs had been saved, are now told that all but five pits will shut.
  - Hospitals have been told to stop all non-emergency operations, because the "market" has decided that too many people have been made better.
  - School students who have passed their exams now find out there are no college places for them.
- But worse is to come. An assault on the entire public

sector is being planned for the November budget, to pay for the £50 billion deficit. That is why the Tories keep coming on television and saying that we must all be prepared to "think the unthinkable".

And it is why they keep raising the possibility of cutting particular services and benefits, or introducing new taxes like VAT on newspapers or food.

They are testing public opinion to see which attacks they are most likely to get away with. Because one thing that really worries them is another wave of mass opposition like we saw against the pit closures or the Poll Tax.

The TUC, the Labour Party and the Tories all hold their annual conferences over the next few weeks. One thing will stand out at all three—weakness.

The TUC leaders are weak because they are cowards. They put their fat salaries and plush offices before the interests of the people they are supposed to represent.

They prefer selling pay, jobs and conditions down the river to leading a fight. Their new leader, John Monks is a bureaucrat's bureaucrat. He hasn't been near a picket line in years.

Labour is weak because it has no alternative to the Tories. It has moulded its policies to sound like Tory ones. And they think this will win them support!

The Tories are weak because they are still divided over Europe and the economy. Rows keep breaking out over rail privatisation, whether or not to increase taxes, how far to cut benefits.

Kenneth Baker's attack on

Major for involvement in Thatcher's downfall shows there are still plenty of Tories that would be pleased to see the back of him.

All of this has made Major the weakest prime minister since the war.

But rank and file workers are fighting back. The Timex workers waged a heroic struggle to stop the bosses destroying their wages and jobs.

The workers at University College Hospital have captured the imagination of London with their strike to save wards threatened with closure. Postal workers in Cardiff staged a two week strike against attacks on their conditions.

The mood for resistance can be seen across the country. And it is growing. It can and must be transformed into action. Every attack must be

met with a militant response: strikes, occupations, demonstrations, all forms of protest can build on this mood.

And with a weak government resistance can get results. It can force U-turns. By building solidarity action and linking up rank and file workers in every town, every city and every industry to plan the fightback, we can not only turn the tide against the Tories, we can drive them from office.

Major is one of the most unpopular prime ministers ever. If the union and Labour leaders wanted to make themselves *really* popular with working people they would put themselves at the head of a massive campaign to get this rotten government off our backs.

Last year we missed an ideal chance to kick Major

out when hundreds of thousands rose up in protest against the pit closure plans.

But our leaders ran away from a fight. Instead of calling strike action that could have brought the country to a standstill, they opted for useless gestures in the name of "public opinion". They tried to reassure the bosses that they were moderate. Not one single pit was saved.

That must not happen again. We need to use all the anger and all the struggles of the coming months to bring together an alternative to the weak leaders of Labour and the TUC. We need a rank and file movement to win back control of our unions, and a new fighting party to campaign not for tired old Tory policies but for the overthrow of the Tories and the rotten system they represent. ■

ON SUNDAY 1 August staff at North London's Whittington Hospital switched off the life support machine and pronounced Joy Gardner dead. Initial media reports claimed she died of kidney failure.

In fact Joy had almost certainly died four days earlier on 28 July, before she even reached hospital. She was the victim of Britain's immigration laws and their brutal enforcement by the police and Home Office squads.

We know that around 6:40 am at least five police, as well as immigration officers, broke into Joy's flat to take her to Heathrow airport for the first flight to Jamaica. They burst in with no advance warning as Joy and her five year old boy slept. The Home Secretary's office only notified her solicitor later that morning.

### Manacles

Neighbours who witnessed the raid on Joy's home reported as many as 15 police waiting in two vans parked outside. Meanwhile the officers inside tried to restrain Joy with a body harness and manacles. They used choke holds and a gag of thick tape to silence her. Evidence from a second post-mortem, conducted at her family's insistence, shows that these actions killed her by halting the flow of oxygen to the brain.

Joy Gardner was forty when she died. She had come to Britain from Jamaica in 1987 on a visitor's visa. Her own mother had lived in this country for 33 years. Her young son was born in London. Her crime, in the eyes of the British state, was to be a black woman seeking a better life for herself and her child.

### Anger

As anger simmered in London's black communities Metropolitan Police Commissioner Paul Condon, swiftly made token concessions to the campaign led by Labour MP Bernie Grant.

Condon suspended three of the officers involved, and removed the SO1(3) deportation squad from duty, amid empty promises that there would be no cover up. The police themselves had confiscated and were sitting on vital evidence taken from Joy's flat.

While other stories emerged of the brutal treatment of deportees, the Tory tabloids, especially the London *Evening Standard* and its stablemate the *Mail on Sunday*, launched a vile offensive on the character of Joy herself. In collaboration with her ex-husband, who allegedly received a large bribe, these papers justified the police action by painting an image of Joy as a violent and unstable woman.

Joy's tragic death was only the tip of the iceberg. Home Office statistics for 1992 reveal that nearly 3,400

people were ordered out of Britain as illegal immigrants last year. Of these, 1,726 were physically deported. All of these faced at least the threat of force while many were returned to bloodthirsty regimes, countries torn by civil wars or wracked with desperate poverty.

• Two days before Joy's murder a coroner found that Zairean refugee, Omasase Lumumba, had died because of "excessive force" used by prison guards at Pentonville jail, where he awaited deportation.

• Nigerian-born Dorothy Nwokedi, deported in July, issued a statement after Joy's death, describing her own ordeal at the hands of the police and immigration officers who broke her thumbs and bound her legs with tape before transporting and dumping her penniless at Lagos airport.

• In mid-August, after Joy's murder, four immigration officers staged an 8:00 am raid on the Walsall flat of Ruksana Faqir. According to family members the officers dragged her down stairs where she lay unconscious for 15 minutes before an ambulance arrived.

A campaign continues to demand a police inquiry into the circumstances

of Joy Gardner's death. Unfortunately the momentum which culminated in last month's march demanding justice has diminished.

As a result, figures such as Barbara Roche, Labour MP for Hornsey, where Joy lived, can get away with nothing more than pathetic calls for an official investigation convened by a high court judge.

But these judges are routinely responsible for ordering deportations of black people. They are privileged and racist to the core. The local community and labour movement should convene its own inquiry and examine all available evidence for any hint of injustice, foul play or cover up.

They should demand that all evidence be handed over to the inquiry by the police and that the officers involved should be named. The workers' and community inquiry should press for its own findings to be adopted and the murderers punished.

The most fitting tribute to Joy Gardner's memory would be a national campaign linking together numerous local battles against individual deportations and led by the labour movement, to *smash all immigration controls!* ■

RACIST LAWS  
+ RACIST POLICE  
= RACIST MURDER

# Scrap all immigration laws!

THE MURDER of Joy Gardner, and the countless other acts of violence and intimidation that black people have suffered at the hands of police and Home Office squads, show just how racist Britain's immigration laws really are.

Tories, Liberals and Labour politicians alike justify immigration controls on the basis that Britain can't afford to support refugees fleeing war and famine or people simply looking for a better life in Britain. They argue that allowing immigrants into the country will only lead to more unemployment, housing shortages and a larger tax bill for British workers.

But it isn't immigrants seeking residency in Britain that created the recession. It is the economic anarchy of capitalism that throws millions onto the dole. Britain was quite

happy to allow thousands of black people to enter the country and fill the menial jobs created by the post war boom.

Today with four million unemployed and the welfare state in crisis, cheap labour from the semi-colonial world is no longer needed. That is why the bosses need a system of immigration controls that shuts the door to black people while at the same time creating a scapegoat for the poverty and misery their system has inflicted on millions of workers.

By identifying black people as "alien", immigration controls reinforce the idea that there is something threatening or abnormal about black people who already live here. In this way immigration controls are part of a racist system, justifying systematic discrimination against black people in jobs, housing, law and



Myrna Simpson, Joy's mother: "They can't get away from this, and I will never stop until there is justice"

education.

These poisonous arguments are not only used by racist politicians to deport and imprison "suspected aliens". They are also used by small but violent fascist organisations to whip up racist attacks. Whenever there is a scare campaign against "illegal immigrants" and "bogus refugees" there is a spate of racist violence on the streets.

This means that thousands of black people face not just the misery of deportation but the real danger of death or serious injury at the hands of both racist police and fascist gangs.

Against racist attack, police harassment and forced deportation squads, we need mass organised self-defence. It was the fear of an uprising after Joy Gardner's murder that caused the Met's chief Paul

Condon to suspend three officers. If each attempted deportation met with an organised response by black and white workers, with well disciplined guards to defend the homes of those threatened with deportation, the police would be forced to think twice before sending in squads to secure arrest by violent means.

We need to fight all immigration controls. The borders should be opened now, not just to those fleeing torture and imprisonment, but to every worker who wants to live here. It is not enough for Labour MPs to moan about injustice when the laws are implemented. They should pledge to abolish all immigration laws, and the whole labour movement should organise a mass campaign rooted in the unions and black communities to smash all immigration controls, racist policing and racial attacks. ■

## Oct 16: build the Unity Demo!

workers power

**SMASH  
FASCISM!**

**March on the BNP HQ!**

Demonstration called by YRE, ANL, IWÁ & Searchlight

**SATURDAY 16 OCTOBER**

1pm Winns Common, Plumstead, London SE18

Join the NO PLATFORM FOR FASCISTS contingent

ON 16 OCTOBER thousands of opponents of racism and fascism will be marching on the British National Party (BNP) headquarters in Welling, South East London.

The BNP is the main fascist organisation in Britain today. It prides itself on being more racist than any other organisation. It wants the suppression of all independent democratic and working class organisations. It is the enemy of all workers: black and white, male and female, straight and gay.

But it's not just the BNP's ideas that are poison. The BNP is putting its policies into practice. On the streets, the BNP organises terror gangs, like C18, to physically attack black people and socialists.

As long as the BNP is allowed to

maintain its bunker in Welling, racist attacks and murders will continue.

That is why Workers Power welcomes the call by Youth against Racism in Europe, the Anti-Nazi League, the Indian Workers' Association and Searchlight for a Unity Demonstration on 16 October against the BNP headquarters.

Direct action is the way to shut down the BNP's HQ. That is why we must demand **no platform for fascists**: this means that they must be denied any platform, any means for spreading their views, by any means necessary.

Workers Power calls on all workers and youth, black and white, to join the march, to organise united mobilising committees, and to join the "No Platform for Fascists" contingent. With a

properly stewarded contingent capable of repulsing any attacks on the march from any quarter, and a firm commitment to no platform for fascists, we can start the business of avenging the murders of Stephen Lawrence, Ruhullah Aramesh, Rolan Adams and all victims of the BNP's race hate campaign. ■

**National Festival Against  
Immigration Controls**

12 noon to 5pm

Sunday 12 September  
Suring High School, Bolton  
Organised by the Rahman  
Family Defence Campaign

# Labour's dinosaur revival

**A**T A LABOUR Party conference a few years ago Ron Todd, former leader of the TGWU, defended the idea that Labour should remain a party firmly based on the trade unions. The "modernisers" in the party, now the dominant faction fronted by Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and the rarely seen leader, John somebody-or-other, stigmatised Todd as a "dinosaur".

The phenomenal success of Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park* should make the modernisers pause for thought. It seems that millions of people actually like dinosaurs!

At the forthcoming annual party conference Labour's links with the unions will be the key debate. The argument that unites the modernisers is that Labour will continue to lose elections so long as it remains identified as a trade union based party.

The solution they advance is straightforward—break the union link. But they face a dilemma. The unions finance the party. The mass membership drive has not done anything other than shrink the number of party members. This has made Labour more dependent on the unions, both to use as a mass base capable of campaigning in elections and as a primary source of cash to finance such campaigns.

So breaking the union link altogether is off the agenda. But the drive to weaken that link continues apace. The National Executive Committee has approved a package of measures that will take the union block vote at conference down to 50%, and will remove the right of political levy-paying union members to have any direct say in the selection of parliamentary candidates.

Now union members will have to pay a £3 poll tax on top of their political levy if they want the right to vote in selection procedures. The block vote in the college for the election of leader and deputy leader stays, but will go from 40% to 33%, alongside 33% for MPs and MEPs and 33% for constituency parties.

All of these measures, according to Blair and Brown, will increase democracy in the party. This is nonsense. Four million levy payers are having their rights to influence Labour policy, Labour leadership elections and the selection of parliamentary candidates

reduced.

Worse, this attack on the unions is accompanied by an attack on the limited democracy of the party conference itself. Constituencies and unions are to be deprived of the right to move amendments to resolutions, the NEC will be given the right to push through unamended resolutions (for the first time ever) and conference itself will be phased out in favour of the appointed National Policy Forum.

Modernisation means not only undermining Labour as a trade union based party, but also removing any remaining shred of working class democracy.

The dinosaurs have hit back. The union leaders have become increasingly vocal in their opposition to the "spin doctors" and public relations managers. They have expressed their dismay at the leadership's woeful performance in the face of Major's endless crises. Bill Morris, Ron Todd's successor in the TGWU, stormed:

"What the modernisers really want is: one MP loads of votes, one individual member one vote; four million trade unionists no votes . . . It is now clear that the alternative agenda is the salami-style removal of the unions from the Labour Party, slice by slice."

There is a strong element of truth in this analysis. But you would be dead wrong to believe that Bill Morris and his fellow bureaucrats are genuinely concerned with the issues of workers' democracy and a militant fight against the Tories.

Morris, like Todd before him, like Edmonds of the GMB, is one of the men whose careful pursuit of new realism assisted the modernisers' drive for power in the party. These were the men who helped witch-hunt and smash the left of the party. Above all, they and their predecessors are the men who kept the block vote out of the hands of their own rank and file workers through endless undemocratic measures for almost a century.

Their current revolt against the modernisers has nothing to do with a drive to democratise the block vote. It has everything to do with their own belated realisation that the faction of current leaders they helped create now threatens the political influence that they as union leaders wield in the party. It is a fight to preserve that influence.

It is also a fight prompted by the recognition that the

British people no longer blame the unions for everything from late trains through to lousy summers. The mass of people blame the Tories for Britain's mess. The union leaders know this. They know, from the campaign they led against pit closures, that they can play a role in mobilising opposition to the Tories and they resent the modernisers' implication that they are the problem rather than part of the solution.

The union leaders are fair-weather friends in the fight against the Labour leadership. Their resentment can and will be bought off. The NEC compromise on the leadership elections is proof of that. Moreover, while they bluster about Labour's inability to capitalise on Major's misfortunes, their strategy—epitomised by the campaign against the pit closures which relied on public relations exercises instead of action—is in line with the policy of the modernisers.

Most of the union leaders welcomed Blair's proposal to retain the anti-union laws. They have not said a word about Gordon Brown's recent redefinition of Labour's economic policy which has eliminated any promises to spend money on pensions, child benefits and the NHS but has promised to cut taxes for the rich.

That is why revolutionaries advance an independent strategy in the battle over the block vote. We fight for its retention and its thoroughgoing democratisation so it can become a weapon against the leaders of both the Labour Party and the unions.

The argument over Labour's future as a trade union based party only has any meaning if it begins to fight for the interests of the working class instead of pandering to the concerns of the bosses. Union leaders such as Morris and Edmonds won't begin that fight. But in pointing to the need for such a fight in the battle of the block vote we will convince growing numbers of workers that we need an alternative to Labour—a revolutionary socialist party. ■

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### MARXIST DISCUSSION MEETINGS

Workers Power branches run a regular series of meetings to discuss vital issues facing the working class movement today, both in Britain and overseas. So don't just read the ideas in the paper, come along and discuss our theories and our practice in a lively and informal atmosphere

#### MANCHESTER:

The Ghetto Fights -  
1943 Warsaw Uprising  
Thurs 2 Sep 7.30pm  
• Townhall Tavern, Tib St

#### SHEFFIELD:

The Bosnian Tragedy - the  
socialist response  
Wed 1 Sep 7.30pm  
• The Grapes,  
Trippet Lane

#### BIRMINGHAM:

The Bosnian Tragedy -  
the socialist response  
Tues 7 Sep 8pm

#### LONDON:

Stop the closures of  
UCH-Middlesex:  
How to win  
Wednesday 1 Sep 7pm  
• The Jeremy Bentham,  
University Street WC1

What kind of party  
should socialists be  
building?  
Tues 21 Sep 8pm

• See sellers for venue

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anti-fascist fighting fund

## £6,000 FUND

### £1,932 RAISED - TARGET INCREASED!

**W**hen we last went to press our fund total was £499, a mere £2,501 short of our £3,000 target for the end of September. With no Asil Nadir waiting in the wings to bail us out, we knew we had a lot of work to do over the summer.

Your response was better than we could have hoped for. Despite the extra expenses many of you incur during the summer we managed to raise £1,433.11. This takes our total to £1,932.11.

Many thanks to all the comrades who helped raise this money: our readers in Germany, London, Manchester, Birmingham and at the Nalgo conference who sent in donations and our supporters in Sheffield who raised money through a car boot sale.

Special thanks to all our supporters at our annual summer school who—through a quiz, a bar, a sweepstake on the Christchurch by-election, the sale of anti-fascist T-shirts and a collection—helped us surge towards our target.

We are increasing our target

to £6,000, to be raised by the end of April 1994. This is not simply because we are dizzy with the success of our summer fund drive.

Over the next months we aim to produce a major new pamphlet on the class struggle in Britain and a new edition of our theoretical journal.

A massive addition to our costs next year will be the Third

Congress of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International. The cost of this event will be well over £15,000. If Workers Power can raise £6,000 by the end of April this will be a massive contribution to financing this event.

So, we appeal to all comrades to carry on with their ingenious schemes for raising money. ■

### FIGHT FOR WORKERS POWER!

- I would like to know more about Workers Power & the LRCI  
 I want to join Workers Power

#### I would like to subscribe to:

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 Trotskyist International £8 for 3 issues  
 Trotskyist Bulletin £8 for 3 issues

Make cheques payable to Workers Power and send to:  
Workers Power, BCM 7750, London WC1N 3XX

Name: .....

Address: .....

Telephone: .....

Trade union: .....

# Support the UCH strike!

**T**HE CRUNCH is coming in the fight to save London's University College Hospital (UCH). Nurses and porters on indefinite strike at UCH since 17 August have been subjected to a sustained attempt at sabotage and victimisation.

Management have refused strikers access to the hospital building in Gower Street, denying them the right to maintain control of emergency cover. The UNISON branch secretary has been denied all facility time. Management have prevented union meetings on the premises. They have taken out an injunction against UNISON stewards and charged five nurses with the sackable offence of "gross misconduct" for organising within the hospital.

## Fighting

UCH strikers are fighting against a management attempt to close four wards at the Gower Street site, the first stage in a plan to close the entire building and merge UCH with the nearby Middlesex Hospital.

Charles Marshall, Chief Executive of the UCH-Middlesex Trust, claims that merger on one site, with attendant bed cuts and the loss of London's biggest casualty facility, is essential if the Trust is to compete in the NHS internal market. Camden and Islington Health Authority, facing Tory demands to cut £30 million from next year's budget, has threatened to withdraw all contracts from the UCH and Middlesex, effectively closing both hospitals.

At the Middlesex two renowned HIV wards face drastic staff cutbacks and an enforced downgrading of most nurses in a bid to save £64,000. Social work support is being withdrawn from all AIDS patients who do not live in Westminster, because of the new "community care" provisions. Many nurses at UCH-Middlesex face redeployment, competitive interviews and the break-up of caring teams that took years to build up.

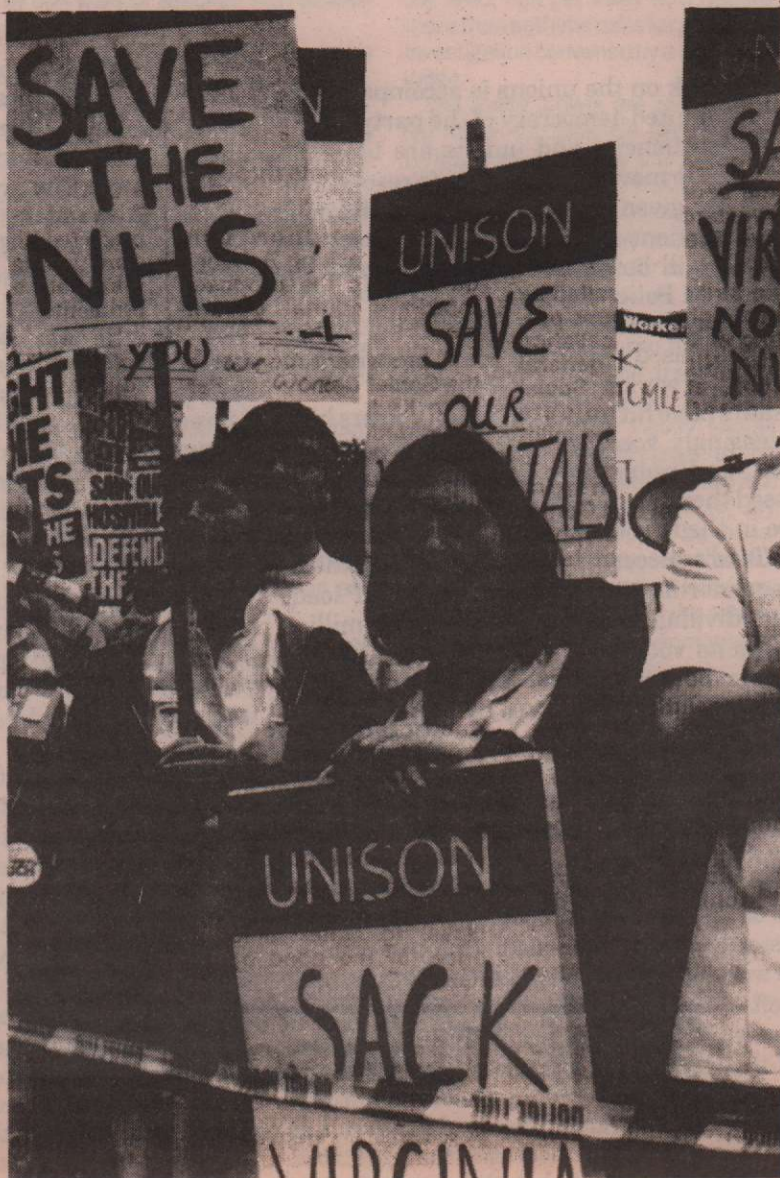
## Response

The response of UCH health workers has been superb. Through daily pickets and delegations to local workplaces the strikers have ensured that there is hardly a worker in central London who does not know about and support the strike.

Workers at the Middlesex struck for a day on 19 August and were planning another one-day strike on 3 September in solidarity with UCH. Sorting office workers in the UCH have sent regular delegations from several sites and brought collections to the picket line.

On 19 August two thousand nurses and their supporters marched from UCH to the Middlesex—and back again—defying and totally overrunning the police, bringing the London rush hour to a standstill.

Now the energy and initiative of the rank and file need to be focused into a plan of action that can win the strike:



BY PAUL MORRIS

- The first step is to make the UCH strike solid. Management have used agency nurses to break the strike and prevent strikers controlling emergency cover. Picket lines should be mounted to stop all agency nurses entering UCH. The catering, ancillary and clerical staff, who struck for one day at the start of the strike, should vote to come out on indefinite action now.

As management have stepped up the offensive some health workers have begun to accept the argument that "we can only win through other workers supporting us".

Important though solidarity action is this argument is in danger of conceding that health workers cannot take effective strike action. It has often been put forward by the bureaucrats—token strikes and demonstrations are necessary because "health workers can't fight for themselves". That's not true—with workers' control over emergency cover last year's strike to save ward 2.1 at UCH did win!

- Middlesex workers should build on the one-day actions for an indefinite strike alongside UCH now! Marshall has stolen a march on the unions by swiftly merging the managerial structures of the two hospitals. Meanwhile the two union branches remain sepa-

rate. There must be joint stewards' meetings and joint section meetings between UCH and Middlesex workers. The two union branches must merge as soon as possible.

- Threatened wards should be occupied immediately. Last December's strike and occupation to prevent closure of ward 2.1 at UCH won because nurses proved able to control emergency cover and won support from patients for the work-in.

- Management's plan is to close the first four wards through internal transfers. Workers inside UCH must be

won to refusal to move patients or equipment. Any attempt to move patients to the Middlesex should be boycotted by all staff and met with a strike, picket and occupation of the UCH and Middlesex wards concerned. Mass pickets committed to stopping the ambulances and removal vans will be needed the moment the managers try to move the threatened wards.

- Any effective mass pickets will have to defend themselves against police attack. UCH workers who protested against Health Minister Virginia Bottomley on 24 August outside Whittington Hospital found that a nurse's uniform was no protection against the boots and fists of the police. Like all workers taking effective action UCH-Middlesex nurses have to organise the effective stewarding and defence of the picket line.

- UNISON stewards at UCH have called for a day of solidarity strike action across London on 2 September, from other health workers and the trade union movement in general. UNISON, which made a big show of supporting the UCH strike, has done its best to prevent any spreading of the action. It circulated South London hospitals telling them not to support a local demo because it was "unofficial". UNISON officials have all but disappeared since strikers began to go out and argue for solidarity action—an attitude symbolised by the hurried removal of the UNISON banner from the head of the impromptu demo which stopped rush hour traffic on 19 August.

- Health workers must make sure the dispute remains under rank and file control. That means not just regular stewards' and strikers' meetings but reactivating the London Health-workers' Co-ordinating Committee, set up in October 1992, as a cross union London NHS stewards' organisation.

Socialist Workers Party (SWP) members have a great deal of influence in this dispute and at UCH, and no-one can doubt their militancy and determination. But it can now be seen that the SWP leadership made a serious mistake in allowing the Co-ordinating Committee to fall into disuse. The value of a cross-London committee of

the rank and file to build and extend the action now would be enormous.

- The UNISON leadership should be bombarded with motions calling for the action to be spread and for the full apparatus of the union to be placed at the disposal of the strikers. UNISON national HQ is only a few hundred yards from UCH, yet strikers have had to rely on the goodwill of local photocopy shops to produce leaflets and stickers!

- UCH and Middlesex workers should keep up the fight for workers' control of emergency cover. Management will always abuse health workers' willingness to provide cover. Stewards themselves need to be able to determine the real need for cover and organise its provision. At present five strike organisers are threatened with the sack for attempting to organise cover.

One hundred strikers had to barricade the UCH foyer to force management to allow one nurse back to her job to cover. Police then refused a management request to remove the nurse concerned!

Messages of support to:  
UNISON  
c/o UCH Main Door  
Gower Street  
London WC1

Faced with these dirty tricks UCH-Middlesex workers have to seize control of cover. That means occupation and defiance of the management bans and injunctions against union activists. If management call in the police, courts and bailiffs, or carry out their threat to sack or suspend stewards, workers should be prepared to withdraw emergency cover. A short sharp shock to the managers like this could turn the tide in the dispute. All out, no-cover strikes in both the USA and Australia have in the past been the only option—and they won.

There is an enormous feeling of power and pride on the UCH picket line. Young workers, many of them women, are on strike for the first time in their lives and fighting with the backing of the local community and trade union movement. Management are determined and ruthless. The strikers need to be equally determined to win! ■

## Market madness

BY CLARE HEATH

**T**HE STRIKERS at UCH are an inspiration to all workers who are horrified at the effects of the Tories beloved market on the NHS.

Already the management of UCH-Middlesex has decreed the suspension of all non-urgent operations—only five months into the financial year! This is because the hospital has "fulfilled the contract". Patients living in pain will have to wait until at least April 1994!

This is the madness of the Tory internal market. Over 150,000 patients are on the waiting list for hospital treatment in London. UCH and Middlesex are teaching hospitals with a reputation for high quality care. Yet already the demands of the internal market have led to bed cuts and ward closures. According to the contract, UCH and the Middlesex have already treated 500 patients too many this financial year. This is just the latest example of the absurdity of the Tories' claims that the market is the best way to efficient health care.

What does it mean in practice? The idea is that the health authorities and fund-holding GPs have budgets and sign contracts with hospitals to treat their patients. These

contracts are not just broad commitments such as Hospital X will provide all orthopaedic care for Health Authority Y's patients. No. The contracts specify that Hospital X will do, for example, 100 hip operations for that health authority in a year and it will cost £Z per operation.

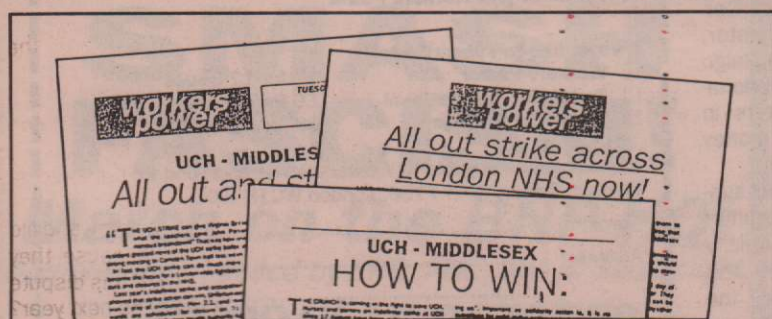
They calculate this price in a very crude way; if they think they do about 100 operations in a year (statistics are very poor) they work out the total cost for a year and divide by 100. That sets the price. But if the workers then work harder or more efficiently, or the prices worked out were wrong, and they do 100 operations in six months, then the contract is fulfilled and they won't let them do any more because there is "no more money"!

This leads to the absurd situation of doctors and nurses being told they are "over-performing" and should slow down. Hospitals have the doctors, the nurses, the equipment, the operating theatres and patients have the diseases and need treatment. But the Tories would prefer the staff to be laid off or even, in the case of some consultants, en-

couraged not to work so much, than to treat the patients!

Everyone can see the absurdity of this situation, and why the market is a wrong way to allocate resources for health care. But it is no less ridiculous for other things. Take housing, for example. There are thousands of building workers unemployed, building supplies piling up and small businesses going bust, and there are thousands of homeless families. Or take food production. There are millions starving in the world, yet the EC pays farmers not to cultivate their land. The market in general is an anarchic, wasteful system which destroys millions of lives.

It is easy to see this in the NHS, because the "market" is just being introduced and taking over from a system where care was planned, albeit inadequately. If the Tories get their way and introduced the total separation of financing from provision of health care—through private and insurance based funding—then the results of the market will not just be today's stupidity of operating only for the first five months of a financial year, but ever more inequality with only the rich and well-insured getting decent health care. ■



Throughout the strike Workers Power has produced a regular strike bulletin, with information and arguments on how to win.

## SOUTHWARK COUNCIL

**R**ACISM IN the workplace is endemic to class society. Black workers are the last to be hired and the first to be kicked on to the dole when jobs are on the line.

In the early 1980s, left Labour councils, like Southwark, adopted a whole range of equal opportunity policies and training programmes to deal with the issues of racist discrimination in the hiring and firing of workers as well as general work practices.

Socialists always recognised that these gestures were often little more than tokenism. They played a powerful role in diverting the struggle against racism away from mass action and towards ineffectual administrative projects.

The actions of Southwark Council towards its black workforce show how shallow its commitment to equal opportunities really is. In the housing department last year, 84% of disciplinary proceedings were against black workers—who only make up 36% of the workforce!

On 28 July, in a magnificent display of solidarity and anti-racism, over 400 housing workers took strike action against council racism. Within hours of the strike, Alan Jinkinson, General Secretary and Chris Humphries, Regional Secretary for UNISON, the strikers' union, rushed to repudiate the strike and withdrew union support for any member who faced victimisation.

The fact that UNISON bureaucrats like Jinkinson and Humphries could declare the strike unofficial, despite a majority "Yes" vote, indicates how undemocratic UNISON really is.

Even though the ex-Nupe Officers' Branch refused to support the strike, two victimised black workers were reinstated as a direct result of unofficial action.

# Strike against racism

BY A SOUTHWARK HOUSING WORKER

This strike shows that workers can and do take *political* action. The fight to stop victimisations and racist sackings is won, not by appealing to "impartial" bodies like the Commission for Racial Equality, but by taking strike action. Not only does it force management to retreat, but it strengthens solidarity and trust between black and white workers and undermines the divisions that weaken our ability to unite against management.

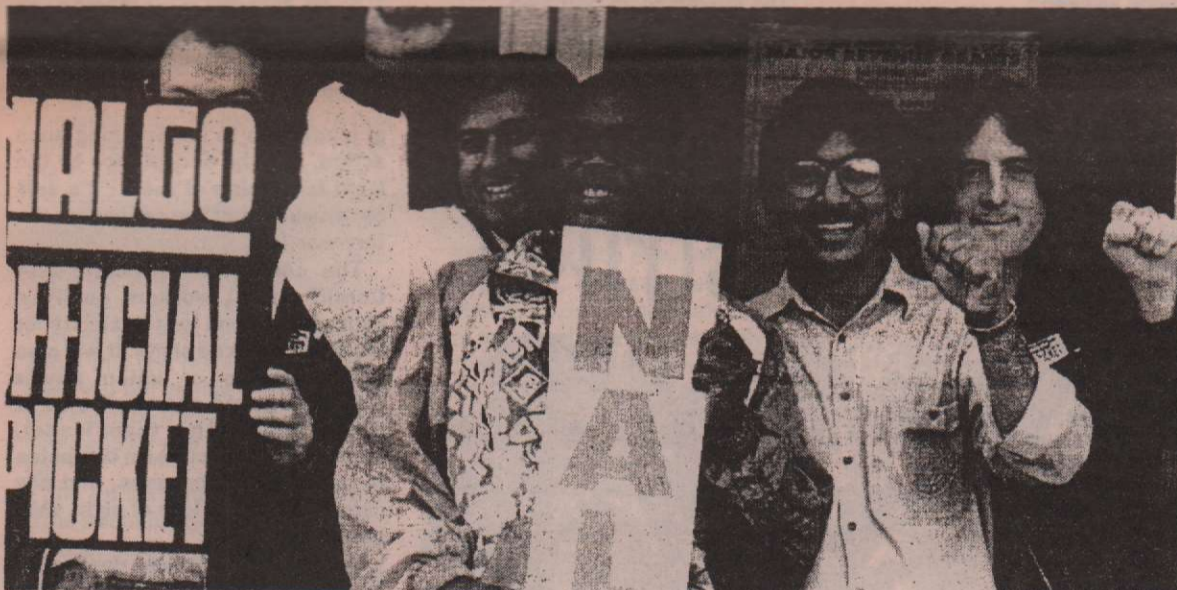
The action of the housing department must be built on. Racist sackings are only one part of Southwark Labour council's attacks on jobs and services. The council leaders have demanded job cuts of 2% to 10% across council departments. At least forty housing benefit jobs are

threatened in the finance department, with a council move to privatise 300 jobs in the section.

If we want to stop victimisations, racist sackings and compulsory redundancies, one day strikes will not be enough. We will need all out action to defeat all imposed procedures that facilitate redundancies and sackings. We need a trade union enquiry into council racism involving rank and file members and the black workers' group.

Not only should workers unite around the question of victimisation and racist sackings but they should link up with workers facing redundancies.

The savage cuts in jobs and services have created a breeding ground for racism in Southwark. That is why it is so important that we demand a deficit budget which meets the needs of all of those that live and work there. ■



Council workers are prepared to take political action

**R**evell and George is a small printing firm in Salford. The workers are out on strike, fighting to be reinstated after being sacked five months ago. The Revell and George dispute, like Timex, Hilliers and Arrowsmiths, is a classic example of the union-busting tactics employers are using across Britain today.

**Workers Power** spoke to **Geoff Souther**, a GPMU shop steward at Revell and George, to find out more about the dispute.

**WP:** Can you tell us how and when this dispute began?

**GS:** It began on March 29 when the chapel meeting agreed on an overtime ban, to pursue our pay claim of £6.50 per week and an extra day's holiday. When the meeting finished myself and Ron, a shop steward, were suspended. The rest of the workforce then refused to work until the suspensions were lifted.

**Was that all the workforce?**

Well one left, but the rest of us were then told that we'd all be sacked if we didn't start working. However we continued to sit in the canteen for the

## REVELL AND GEORGE

# The fight goes on!

rest of the day. The next day we asked if the suspensions had been lifted, and we were told "no", so we returned to the canteen. Again we were told if we hadn't started working by 10.00 am that we'd all be sacked. At 10.30 am we were all sacked, we commenced picketing there and then and we've been here ever since.

**What has the morale of the pickets been like?**

Solid. Three have gone back to work, but the rest have been solid throughout. One guy has worked here for 18 years and is 63 years old and was sacked straight away, but he says he'll stick by the union no matter what, and that's been the feeling for all of us really.

**What has the strategy of the union been to win the dispute?**

Manchester branch is in a bit of chaos at the moment, but if you've got a dispute in your branch, it's a chance to build it up and that's what we are doing at the moment.

We've held mass pickets on Monday mornings, with workers coming from many different areas like UNISON, NUT etc. In fact there were hardly any GPMU members on the mass pickets. We are also planning a demonstration which was to be on 4 September but has been postponed for legal reasons to 9 October. This shows that the union is looking to continue this dispute because many people see this as a very winnable dispute.

**How do you think this dispute can be won?**

The mass picketing was good, but it isn't going to win the dispute. The key to winning this dispute is his customers not going to him. If he loses one or two customers in the next few months he could well go down. For us now it's reinstatement or he goes down.

**Have you contacted other workers and what support have you received?**

Yes. We've been to Arrowsmiths and the other print works where shop stewards have been really pleased to see us. We've also spoken to other workers from UNISON, Timex, FBU—all over really—and it's been an excellent campaign.

## CIVIL SERVICE

# Reinstate the Bristol Two!

BY A NUCPS MEMBER

**O**N 20 August, Steve Goldfinch and Amanda Lane were sacked by the Department of Employment. Seven other CPSA members had their pay cut.

Their crime? Taking strike action in defence of sacked printworkers.

Every worker in the country must demand that they are reinstated and the pay cuts reversed. Trade unionism itself is under attack.

In July, CPSA members in Bedminster Job Centre, Bristol, were told to advertise Arrowsmith's printworkers' jobs. Arrowsmith's workforce had been locked out since 26 April following a ninety day strike by GPMU members.

The strike started over pay, but the bosses retaliated by demanding that workers sign personal contracts before a return to work. One hundred and twenty strikers are now sacked. No wonder Bedminster CPSA members were determined not to be used as scab recruiters. On 6 July they walked out.

Locally, CPSA's response has been magnificent. At a packed rally on 26 August over 300 civil servants and supporters endorsed plans to ballot across Bristol Department of Employment for a two day strike on 2 and 3 September in defence of Amanda and Steve. Social Security and Environment Department workers are considering joining the action.

The CPSA's right wing leadership were forced to back the action, even though they refused to make the original strike official. But the strike must be spread and escalated to indefinite action if Amanda and Steve are to get their jobs back.

This dispute is part of a Tory plan to break up and privatise the civil service. The Tories know they will have to smash the resistance of the unions.

Throughout July a wave of one

day national strikes against market testing (civil service-speak for privatisation) took place. These effectively shut down whole government departments. Most ballots resulted in 90% or better in favour of action. In mid-August the three main civil service unions agreed to a ballot for a national stoppage on 5 November.

That is why management waited until 20 August to sack the Bristol Two. Amanda and John McNally, one of the seven whose pay are being cut, are Militant Labour supporters and leading members of the CPSA Broad Left.

The Tories are clearly concerned that the present anger and militancy may lead to a revival of support for the left. They are pushing victimisations now to weaken the coming fight.

Civil servants must go beyond the present round of one and two day strikes. Unfortunately Militant are limiting their calls to one day selective lightning strikes. At a recent CPSA Social Security Executive meeting, Militant Labour supporters voted *against* a motion from the Socialist Workers Party and the Socialist Caucus for a ballot for an indefinite strike.

Such action remains the key. Demands on the union leaders must keep flooding into headquarters. But real success can only be assured by work on the ground, in the local offices.

Strikes against each and every individual threat of market testing and related attacks must be built. Local strike committees must not rely on their treacherous NECs to run disputes. Strikers themselves must go out and spread the action, like in Bristol. This way the call for a national indefinite stoppage across all departments will become irresistible. ■

**What success has your action had so far?**

We're turning a lot of lorries away. Even drivers on one day contracts have refused to cross. Judd's in Birmingham have refused to cross because they're an organised GPMU branch, but there's still a lot of ground to make up within the union and places we need to get into to organise more workers.

**What are your chances of escalating the action?**

To begin with, the huge amount of support we got was from outside the print union. We now need to consolidate a base within the print union. If we can get a meeting of all shop stewards in this area, that could escalate the action and put pressure on him from other employers.

The support within the rank and file has been rock solid, because they can see, day after day, if this dispute is lost then what happens next year? It will lead to workers losing money, jobs and being dictated to by management next time. I think at the end of the day they'll all be prepared to fight. ■

**T**HE LONG running strike at Burnsalls, in Birmingham, was called off by GMB officials on 30 June.

A majority of the strikers, still out at the time of the GMB's decision, decided to try to continue the strike. But there is now no effective picketing and the strike is limited to campaigning activities. The GMB has succeeded in ending the strike in all but name.

The maintenance of the strike for over a year by a group of oppressed and highly exploited workers was an enormous achievement. The courage of the strikers—with a determined group of Asian women at the core—in defying sweatshop conditions and the racist bullying of management was an inspiring example to other workers.

The strikers continued their picketing in a disciplined fashion and continued to harry the scab labour. They defied police intimidation, several arrests and thuggery from management stooges. A number of strikers found a new role as public speakers and campaigners and, in particular, leading women strikers found a new confidence.

All this is a reminder of what workers can achieve through determined struggle. It showed the potential for victory. What was needed was a militant strategy aimed at strangling Burnsalls' ability to continue production. At the centre of this strategy should have been the fight for spreading solidarity blacking action of all Burnsalls products and of all supplies going into Burnsalls.

The GMB officials in charge of the dispute did produce leaflets calling for such action and did try to follow it up with personal appeals to other workers. But much more was needed. A determined campaign, with the strikers addressing other workers,

## BURNALLS STRIKE

# Sold out!

organising factory gate meetings and, if necessary, picketing suppliers and recipients of Burnsalls' products should have been launched.

To build a solid foundation for such a campaign it was necessary to state openly that defiance of the anti-union laws was a vital ingredient and that any management reprisals against those blacking such goods would be met with strike action. Jaguar workers, who undertook blacking action and ensured an order was cancelled, could have been mobilised to help spread such action to other workers, demonstrating that their organised strength deterred the bosses from retaliating.

### Bolstered

Burnsalls' did receive a lot of support and publicity. The strike could have been bolstered if this had been used by the GMB, in concert with the strike support committee (which was only barely tolerated by the GMB) and other local trade unions, to launch a mass unionisation campaign amongst the many small factories in Birmingham and the Black Country.

Many of these factories are, like Burnsalls, sweatshops. Workers are fearful of fighting back because they feel isolated and unorganised. A unionisation drive could have helped break down such fears. It could have

led to other strikes in the area over pay, conditions and union recognition ending the isolation of the Burnsalls' strike and drawing thousands of other workers into the fray.

The strike should have been run and controlled by a democratically elected strike committee. Through such a committee action could have been co-ordinated and the "union" would not get reduced to being officials and leaders. Most importantly, a decision to call off the strike would have been discussed and decided by the strikers themselves at a democratic meeting convened by the strike committee.

When the GMB leadership made the decision to end the strike the strikers were simply informed the strike was over and that they would no longer get strike pay.

The GMB claims there was no opposition. Yet in the week after the strike was called off a number of strikers met and fourteen signed an appeal calling on GMB leader John Edmonds to continue the strike. They protested that local officials, Jo Quigley and Danny Parry, had threatened to drop the tribunal cases if the strikers criticised the GMB to the press or attended the demonstration planned by support groups for the following weekend.

This accusation caused protests from the GMB, from one of the strik-

ers, David Brown, who supported the decision to call off the strike, and from the trade union bureaucracy's self-appointed defenders, *Socialist Organiser*.

David Brown's statement argues that the union officials advised the strikers not to attend the march but gave them the option to. The officials also told the strikers not to be drawn into doing anything which could bring the union into disrepute because this could affect their membership of the union. According to Jim Denham in *Socialist Organiser*, the strikers were also told that if unofficial action continued, the GMB would be bound to repudiate it and this could also lead to the repudiation of the union membership of those involved.

### Threatened

This looks pretty straightforward—the Burnsalls' strikers were threatened with having their membership withdrawn and losing the union's support in the tribunal cases if they defied the officials. In other words the GMB bureaucrats behaved like . . . GMB bureaucrats. Their concern for the legal and financial position of the union predominated over their concern for the rights of the strikers. The strikers were betrayed.

But extraordinarily, *Socialist Organiser* sees in all this a repudia-

tion of accusations of threats and blackmail:

"The uncomfortable fact is, however, that in this instance the GMB conducted an honest, determined and surprisingly principled struggle."

As we have shown, this suggestion is not at all uncomfortable, because it is not a fact.

*Socialist Organiser* accuse various critics of the GMB of helping to "boost non-unionism and even anti-unionism amongst sections of Asian workers". This is the most scandalous part of *Socialist Organiser's* apology for the GMB leaders. If we followed this reasoning to its logical conclusion then the left would always have to cover up for the bureaucracy lest anti-working class forces are able to take advantage and criticise trade unions as a whole. We would be permanently gagged!

Denham's suggestion that the "hidden agenda" of all of this is a fight by black nationalists to discredit "white unions" and establish the case for black leadership of black struggles diverts attention from the real problem—the fight against the deep-seated racism that still permeates the British unions.

The Burnsalls' strikers deserve better from the left. They need to draw the real lessons from both their struggle and its betrayal. The fact that their continued determination has now led to some members of the GMB district committee to blame Edmonds for ordering the withdrawal of support for the strike shows that they have learnt a lot. They can and must use this to begin a rank and file campaign within the union against the leadership of the GMB.

An important focus for such a campaign will be the strikers' lobby of the TUC on Monday 6 September to demand that Edmonds re-calls the strike. ■

**L**AST MONTH postal workers in the two main sorting offices in Cardiff struck for two weeks. Within days their action created the possibility of a national strike.

Solidarity action developed spontaneously in local sorting offices. Newport, Swansea, Bridgend and Barry all immediately refused to handle any Cardiff mail. Offices in Bristol, Worcester and Oxford (all in the same Post Office region as Cardiff) voted for strike action, and many other offices had ballots planned.

The NEC of the Union of Communications Workers (UCW) blocked the spread of the action. They moved swiftly to undermine the strike by stopping ballots at Paddington and Liverpool for strike action.

Despite being committed by a conference decision to support the action, the national leaders refused to allocate strike pay and did nothing to support or publicise the strike. Worse, they negotiated a blatant sell-out, instructing strikers that if they didn't accept the deal offered the strike would be deemed unofficial and illegal and that all other offices would be instructed to handle Cardiff's mail.

Faced with this threat most of the strikers voted to end their action after two weeks. While it lasted the strike showed the enormous power of the working class and the potential for defeating the bosses. Within the first two days it blocked the movement of 500,000 pieces of mail and began to hurt Cardiff's other bosses—Companies House lost £250,000 through the dispute.

It was militant, with lively pickets, demonstrations and daily mass meetings. A strike committee was established (though it was largely made up of the old branch leadership and didn't draw in the new younger activists).

At stake was the issue of fixed

## CARDIFF POST

# Lessons of the strike



Cardiff postal workers show their strength

duty shifts. Fixed duty means the allocation of a shift for the rest of a workers' time with the Post Office, irrespective of the unsocial hours this means, particularly for

those workers with families.

The local UCW had already agreed to accept 240 fixed duty shifts. But when management tried to increase this to over 400, 1,000

UCW members voted by over two to one in favour of an indefinite strike.

Building solidarity action in other offices was the key to winning the dispute. The role of the UCW nation-

WORKERS POWER supporters were involved in supporting the strike from the outset. We produced two leaflets arguing "for a national postal strike, no to fixed duties and fight privatisation".

The leaflets were well received on the picket lines and at the mass meetings.

From the start Workers Power

argued for rank and file control of the strike. This meant: an elected strike committee; teams of strikers to go to other offices and workplaces; a daily strike bulletin; strike committee representation at all talks with management; and the daily mass meetings to vote on any offer with a show of hands.

The strike committee together

with the offices voting for strike action should have demanded the NEC call an all out national strike against fixed shifts.

In this way the strikers would have taken the control of the strike out of the hands of the bureaucracy both nationally and locally, and with it creating the real possibility of a victory. ■

al leadership in undermining such action, and the acceptance by the local leadership of the NEC's sell-out ensured that the chance for victory was lost.

The sell-out deal means 284 Cardiff postal workers on fixed shifts for life and less flexibility for those not on fixed shifts. It will also mean erosion of union power through the use of work teams of 10-20, each with a team leader, cuts in jobs as each team competes for productivity bonuses, and pay cuts through the loss of night shift premiums.

While this is the best deal so far won by any sorting office in the country—for example Bristol has 100% fixed shifts—the strike could have led to a struggle to destroy the hated fixed shift system altogether and set back the bosses' plans to prepare for privatisation.

Despite the defeat, the local union did give the bosses a shock and one gain of the strike was the emergence of a new layer of young activists who were at the forefront of the action. A substantial minority, nearly 25%, voted against the sell-out, many wanting to stay out to get rid of all the fixed shift duties.

The Post Office will be back for more. Disputes are brewing in other areas. Privatisation looms. Cardiff postal workers need to learn the lessons of their strike so as to be better prepared for when the next attack comes. Drawing the militants together is vital to discuss the lessons of the strike and campaign to build a new leadership in the branch.

Organising the rank and file in Cardiff is only the start. Building links with other militants in the union is crucial in the months and years ahead. And any rank and file movement that is built will need to prepare for the national strike action that will be needed to defeat privatisation plans. ■

**W**hy do people behave the way they do? This question has vexed human thought for thousands of years. And one of the most intriguing aspects of human behaviour is sex.

We are all the result of sexual activity between two individuals and most of us spend a considerable amount of time engaged in it (or at least thinking about it). The desire for sexual gratification is one of the most potent drives we experience, and for millennia its associated problems have been among the deepest causes of human misery.

Some people are attracted to the opposite sex, some to the same sex, some merely to themselves. Throughout human history, in all its varied social forms, sexual activity and sexual orientation have shown an ingenious variability.

### Interest

Despite this ages old interest in sex—both theoretical and practical—our ideas as to why we behave the way we do have not changed very much. From primitive religious beliefs (possession by evil spirits, "original sin" etc) through to modern psychoanalytic and neurogenetic explanations, two basic factors have consistently been identified: nature and nurture.

The latest chapter in this unfolding story was made public in the middle of July, when five US scientists announced that they had identified a part of a human chromosome—the cellular structures that carry our genetic information—which was linked with male homosexuality. Immediately the world's press was full of predictable headlines: "Gay gene identified" they claimed, suggesting that the factor causing homosexual behaviour had been discovered. The truth is different.

The study, led by Dean Hamer, had two parts. The first was relatively unadventurous; he identified 76 families of homosexual men, and traced the expression of homosexuality in a traditional pedigree study. The result was a set of family trees which showed that gay male relatives tended to be on the mothers' side of a gay man's family tree.

There was nothing particularly new about this first result, and in itself it does not tell us how sexual orientation might be transmitted. The cause could equally well be cultural or familial.

The excitement in the press and in the scientific, gay and lesbian communities was caused by the second part of the study. Using techniques developed over the last four years, Hamer and his colleagues took 40 pairs of homosexual brothers, their mothers, brothers and sisters and looked at their genetic make-up.

### Determine

Human beings have 23 pairs of chromosomes—small wiry structures present in every cell of our bodies—which carry the genes that determine much of our anatomy and physiology. One pair of chromosomes is different in men and women. Women have two X chromosomes; men have one X and one small Y chromosome. The presence of a single gene on the Y chromosome determines if we are a man or a woman.

Hamer's study concentrated on the X chromosome, which men receive from their mothers, and which would be a logical site for any maternally-transmitted genetic factor involved in sexual orientation. They found that 83% of the gay brothers shared a particular part of the X chromosome, much higher than would be expected by chance. This strongly suggested a relationship between the behaviour the men had in common—homosexuality—and

## IS THERE A GAY GENE?

# Sex, genes and dialectics

some genetic information contained in the chromosome.

This does not mean that there is a "gay gene" with codes for homosexuality. First, 17% of the brothers did not both have this part of the X chromosome. Secondly, the part of the X chromosome they identified contains hundreds of genes, none of which have been identified. If there is a genetic component to homosexuality, it seems most likely that it will be complex, involving the action of several different genes.

And even this does not mean that if you have the "gay gene" you will be homosexual. To understand what is really going on between us and our genes, we need to transcend the old "nature-nurture" debate.

### Evolution

Human beings are animals; our anatomy, brain structure and our social behaviour are all the product of evolution, of natural selection which operates first and foremost on our genes. To that extent "nature" is predominant.

Yet we are not merely animals. We are conscious beings, engaged for tens of thousands of years in a struggle to master nature in all its forms. We have created societies which have enabled us to partly overcome the limitations of our genetic make-up. "Nature" never meant humans to fly and yet every day millions of people take to the air in aeroplanes.

The relationship between nature and nurture, between genes and environment, is an intensely dialectical one for all animals, not only for human beings. The environment plays a key role in determining how and whether genes are expressed.

For example, there is a human disease known as phenylketonuria, PKU. Children suffering from it are



Nature or nurture?

healthy at birth but quickly develop serious brain defects. This disease is genetic; there is a defect in the gene coding for a particular enzyme which leads to the accumulation of certain toxins which literally poison the brain. And yet PKU, a 100% genetic disease, is far from inevitable. By avoiding certain foods which the defective enzyme is involved in digesting, the child will grow up without the disease.

If we apply this to the "gay gene", we can see that even if there is a single gene which codes for homosexuality (which is extremely unlikely) the expression of this gene would not be constant: in some people it would be expressed more or less

strongly, in others it would not be expressed and in still others the same result—homosexuality—would be the result of other factors.

"Nature" and "nurture" on their own are not sufficient to explain homosexuality, or anything else. For example, are differences between men and women genetically determined? Yes and no. There is a genetic difference between men and women—one small gene. But the many differences between the sexes are not all due to biology. Disentangling the interactions between "nature" and "nurture" in the context of a society which is based upon the systematic oppression of women is virtually impossible.

There is a widespread distrust on the left when scientists talk about genetic factors in human behaviour. And with reason. Bad science has been put forward to justify some of the most evil ideas in human history.

The Nazis justified the extermination of the Jews in the name of "racial purity". Racial oppression of blacks has been "explained" by pseudo-scientific claims of genetic differences in IQ. This malign rubbish must be rejected out of hand.

But as materialists, Marxists should not deny either the theoretical or practical importance of our genes. "Eugenics"—the idea of using selective breeding to produce better humans—has had a particularly bad name since the Nazis adopted it.

### Screening

And yet genetic screening, which tests fetuses for genetic abnormalities and gives women the choice of terminating their pregnancy, is a form of eugenics which only a religious nutcase could oppose.

The dangers, however, are obvious. Hamer's research could give the reactionaries a new weapon in their war against gay men and lesbians. Lord Jakobovitz, retired Chief Rabbi and full-time reactionary, quickly saw the possibilities when he acclaimed the discovery and called for genetic screening to eliminate homosexual fetuses.

This kind of response shows that the problem is not the science itself, but the use that is made of the results.

There is nothing wrong or dangerous about trying to discover the biological bases of human behaviour, or in untangling the complex relationships between genes and culture which produce a given human being.

### Dangers

The dangers come from the society we live in, a society based on oppression and exploitation which will try to turn any discovery or talent against those who have nothing, in favour of the powerful.

Only in a truly classless society, where research priorities are decided collectively, where everyone is informed of the scope and importance of new discoveries, will humanity finally be able to master the relationship between its animal past and its truly human future. ■

**A**t the same time as Hamer's results were announced, US gay scientist Simon LeVay published his book *The Sexual Brain*, an account of the biological bases of human sexual behaviour and orientation.

LeVay became widely known two years ago when he reported that in terms of a small structure in the brain, gay men were more similar to women than to heterosexual men. (See WP147, October 1991)

This result was not uncontroversial and has yet to be confirmed, but it heralded a new wave of studies of the material bases of sexual orientation. This research is partly encouraged by the growing number of "out" gay men and lesbians in the upper echelons of US society who are determined to disprove the lie of the religious right that their sexual orientation is in some way perverted or "a sin".

LeVay's book is a valuable weapon in that fight. It gives a brief and readable popular account of the history of both animal and medical studies on the role of hormones and brain structures in sex. Unfortunately the austere presentation—there is not one diagram or picture—will mean that some sections will be heavy going for the lay reader.

As he explains in the introduction, his intention is to break with the "fossilised, immovable dogma" of what he terms Freudianism—the role of childhood in determining sexual orientation—and to show "the strong influence of nature". Although he correctly states that no one—including himself—knows what makes a per-

## Gay brain?

Jack Tully reviews  
*The Sexual Brain* by Simon LeVay  
MIT Press 1993, 168pp, £14.95

son gay, bisexual or straight, it is clear that he thinks that genetic or pre-natal physiological factors play a major part.

There are several weaknesses in his argument:

- He gives unjustified weight to anecdotal studies such as the case of two twin boys who would run naked to entice the dustbin men to chase them and fondle their genitals. They both became gay men.

- The causal relationship between physiological or anatomical differences and sexual orientation is often not clear. That is, did the brain structure cause the behaviour, or the other way round?

- Most disappointingly, LeVay and many of his colleagues accept the "common sense" view that sexual orientation, and sex roles in general, are eternal phenomena. According to LeVay women are "more in touch with their feelings" and more "intuitive" than men, and this is due to physiological and genetic factors. The "fossilised, immovable dogma" that society may have something to do with this does not get a look in.

This flaw also lies at the heart of LeVay's understanding of sexual orientation, which he sees as clear-cut and historically stable. This is not the case: being homosexual today is not the same thing in San Francisco and in Tehran, and it is presumably different from being homosexual in, say, twelfth century France.

This is not due to different genes, or different hormones, but to different societies.

What is lacking in LeVay's book—and in most of the studies he cites—is an understanding of the dialectical, changing nature of human behaviour and of the roles of "nature" and "nurture" in producing it.

In humans, as in other animals, even relatively simple behaviour is virtually never the straightforward result of the activity of "a gene". This is even more so for complex and socially determined behaviour like sex. Without putting this approach at the centre of a scientific research programme, the results will inevitably be partial and one-sided. LeVay's book, despite the wealth of useful information it contains, fails this vital test. ■

ON FEBRUARY 1 1960, an impulsive and practically unplanned act of bravery by four black college students sparked the great civil rights' revolt in the USA. The students went into a Woolworths store in Greensboro, North Carolina and then sat down at a lunch counter which was reserved for whites.

They were not served. A waitress asked them to leave and they courteously, but firmly, refused. Despite the fact that their actions were a direct challenge to the system of segregation, they encountered no force, no repression, and no arrests. One of the students, Franklin McCain later recalled:

"Now it came to me all of a sudden. 'Maybe they can't do anything to us. Maybe we can keep it up.'"

They stayed put until the store closed, then went back to the college and began to organise. The next day they built a bigger protest, the day after a bigger one still. By 4 February hundreds of students had been drawn in to the protest.

### Sit-ins

The sit-ins spread throughout North Carolina. By mid-April every state in the South was affected by the movement which had drawn in 50,000 participants. The demonstrations and sit-ins were marked by dignity in the face of mounting repression, and by a pervasive attitude of restraint and refusal to be provoked.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC, pronounced 'Snick') was created as the first attempt to give an organisational structure to the spontaneous revolt of black youth against segregation. In the years after its founding meeting in Raleigh on 16 April 1960, it was to become one of the most radical organisations in America.

The extreme dedication and bravery of the young militants was linked to the notion, derived from Martin Luther King, that white America would be shamed into granting equal rights by demonstrations of the "capacity of black people to suffer". Under the influence of a large delegation of Nashville students committed to Gandhian principles of nonviolence and to Christian pacifist ideals, SNCC adopted a code of conduct that included:

"Don't strike back or curse if abused . . . Show yourself courteous and friendly at all times . . . Report all serious incidents to your leader in a polite manner. Remember love and nonviolence."

These principles embodied the innocence of the movement in its earliest stages. It was an innocence based on the acceptance that America really was "the land of the free". The leaders of the movement believed that white liberals in the USA, especially those within the Democratic Party, could be gently edged towards reform.

It was the Freedom Rides campaign that really brought SNCC to the centre of the revolt. In early 1961, SNCC, together with the Congress of Racial Equality, organised bus journeys across the South in which groups of black militants would attempt to use segregated eating facilities at bus terminals.

As the rides went on the activists suffered increasingly violent attacks from white racists, local authorities and police who were often linked with the Ku Klux Klan. In Anniston, Alabama, a bus was burnt out by racists and activists were beaten up by a vicious mob. By 21 May, disorder had reached such a pitch that martial law was declared in Montgomery.

Under enormous pressure, the Interstate Commerce Commission announced on 22 September that it would be prohibited to provide separate facilities for blacks and whites in bus and train terminals. Although many racist authorities ignored the regulation for as long as they could, the ruling had shown millions of blacks throughout America that defiance and

struggle could win real results.

At the same time the extent of repression meted out to the black protesters exposed the weaknesses of pacifism in the movement. The freedom riders were not "left alone" when they acted. They were hounded and beaten. The authorities, including the white liberals amongst the Democrats, were not persuaded to carry out reforms. Whenever they did act it was because they were frightened into doing so by militant action and the threat of disorder.

The movement was growing up, and the innocent ideals of pacifism began to be questioned. As the struggle assumed truly mass proportions more and more radical youth were drawn in, and they were less inclined to be courteous to racist gun thugs or deferential to Democrat politicians who sat on their hands while the racists ran riot.

Many activists started to realise that self-defence was vital in the face of police and Klan brutality. But still the leaders were relying on protection from the Kennedy/Johnson wing of the Democrats.

The Democratic Party could see the value of additional votes from Southern blacks. But their aim was to "support" the movement in such a way as to divert it away from struggle. Kennedy suggested that SNCC should turn its attention to a drive to register black voters.

Although black people were entitled to vote, many had not registered, and faced obstruction, intimidation and violence from white authorities when they tried to do so. Kennedy thought that a peaceful voter registration campaign would be an alternative to the confrontational desegregationist battles that had wracked the South. His plan backfired because of the violent resistance of the racist authorities.

In McComb the efforts to register

**"This is the twenty-seventh time I have been arrested. I ain't going to jail no more . . . What we gonna start saying now is 'black power'."**

black voters led to persistent arrests of SNCC staff members, including the imprisonment of project leader Bob Moses for 90 days. Moses was beaten up by the sheriff's cousin, who was acquitted by an all-white jury. Then Herbert Lee, who had been assisting the project, was shot dead in cold blood. Witnesses were threatened and beaten by the police, one being tracked down and killed literally years later.

The fact that the Democratic Party and the federal government failed to uphold the constitutional rights of the blacks or protect them in the face of thuggery hardened the attitude of many SNCC activists towards the Democrats.

In May 1962, when four activists were arrested on a demonstration on federal property, SNCC sent a telegram to Robert Kennedy saying that if the government couldn't protect their rights on such property then, "you must be considered a party to these violations of our constitutionally guaranteed civil rights." Charles Sherrod, an SNCC field activist, was even more blunt. He declared that "if we are murdered in our attempts, our blood will be on your hands."

Attempts to reform the Democratic Party also proved impossible. In August 1964 the SNCC-promoted Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party tried to defeat the all-white delegation to the Democratic National Convention, aiming to secure the delegation and weaken the hand of the racist "Dixiecrats" - representing white landowning interests - that ran the party in the South.

This achieved nothing in practical

terms. The Democrats were, and remain, open and unflinching representatives of the capitalist ruling class, and in the South the historic party of the slave owners, up to their necks in Jim Crow and segregation.

Illusions in the democrats were becoming self-defeating in the struggle for black rights. Even so, the leadership of the movement, even some of the most radical elements, were reluctant to abandon what they saw as their only hope of winning government support for their pacifist campaign.

The famous March on Washington was led by Martin Luther King in August 1963. Millions have heard and been moved by the vision of a society free from racism that he expressed in his historic speech that day. But there was another speech planned for that day which was never made.

SNCC's John Lewis drafted a declaration which rejected Kennedy's proposed civil rights bill as inadequate, as failing to protect people who were actively claiming and fighting for their rights in the South.

Lewis planned to tell the 250,000 people at the Washington rally:

"I want to know, which side is the federal government on?"

He intended to declare: ". . . the revolution is at hand and we must free ourselves of the chains of political and economic slavery."

Though Lewis remained committed to non-violence, he wrote:

"We will not wait for the President, the Justice Department, nor Congress, but will take matters into our own hands and create a source of power, outside of any national structure, that could and would assure us of victory."

He showed the speech to other civil rights leaders first. They told him to change it, because otherwise the Archbishop of Washington would not appear on the platform! Reluctantly Lewis agreed, and a committee was set up to modify his declaration. But on the day Lewis still launched into a bitter attack on the Democrats and the Republicans, and in doing so drew direct attention to a key weakness of the mass struggle against segregation and all forms of racism in the USA, a weakness that persists to this day:

"Where is our party? Where is the political party that will make it unnecessary to have marches on Washington?"

### Anger

Many SNCC workers, who had built the delegations to the march from the South, deeply resented the moderate slogans of the march, and the petty restrictions imposed by its organisers, such as the strict control of slogans on placards and banners. Gradually a new radicalism was beginning to permeate the younger, grass roots civil rights campaigners.

SNCC workers started to discuss and consider more favourably ideas of organised self-defence of black communities, as well as openly investigating pan-Africanist and socialistic ideas. A number of members of the SNCC staff were also members of Students for a Democratic Society, which was to become one of the main "New Left" organisations that flourished during the radicalisation of youth at the time

## STOKELY CARMICHAEL AND THE

# BLACK PANTHER PARTY



Power comes out of the barrel of a gun

of the Vietnam War.

By 1964 Stokely Carmichael was emerging as a leader of the radical wing of the movement. His emphasis shifted from pacifist pleading to demanding the nationalisation of the top corporations and the breaking up of large landed estates. He wanted to see "more than 100 people control over 60% of the industry". At the same time he began encouraging SNCC staff to "stop taking a defensive stand on communism." SNCC leaders began an African tour where they met, among others, Malcolm X and discussed collaboration with his newly formed Organisation of Afro-American Unity.

In early 1965 events took a sharper turn. Attempts to organise a mass march from Selma to Montgomery met with sustained police attack and barricades. On 10 March, Martin Luther King, at the head of a demonstration, angered local residents and SNCC staff by unilaterally deciding to call off the march, turn around and go back.

But SNCC, under the leadership of the militant activist Jim Forman, seized the opportunity to challenge the leadership of King and his Southern Christian Leadership Conference over the mobilisation. He argued firmly for building the demos and not flinching from confrontation with the police. As Forman put it, "If we can't sit at the table of democracy, we'll knock the fucking legs off."

Out of the work around the Selma marches the next year, Carmichael fronted a campaign to build an independent political organisation in the rural area between Selma and Montgomery, the Lowndes County Free-

*Thirty years after the March 1963, when Martin Luther King's dream", nearly a third of all live below the poverty line—in ten whites. Average earnings above half of the figure for whites twice as likely as white workers. Black people make up 12% of the prison population. The lessons of the struggle are relevant to the struggle against capitalism. See the article, Steve Clayton and Rosemary Dyer, 'The Rise of the Civil Rights Movement: the ideas of one of its most militant leaders, Stokely Carmichael'.*

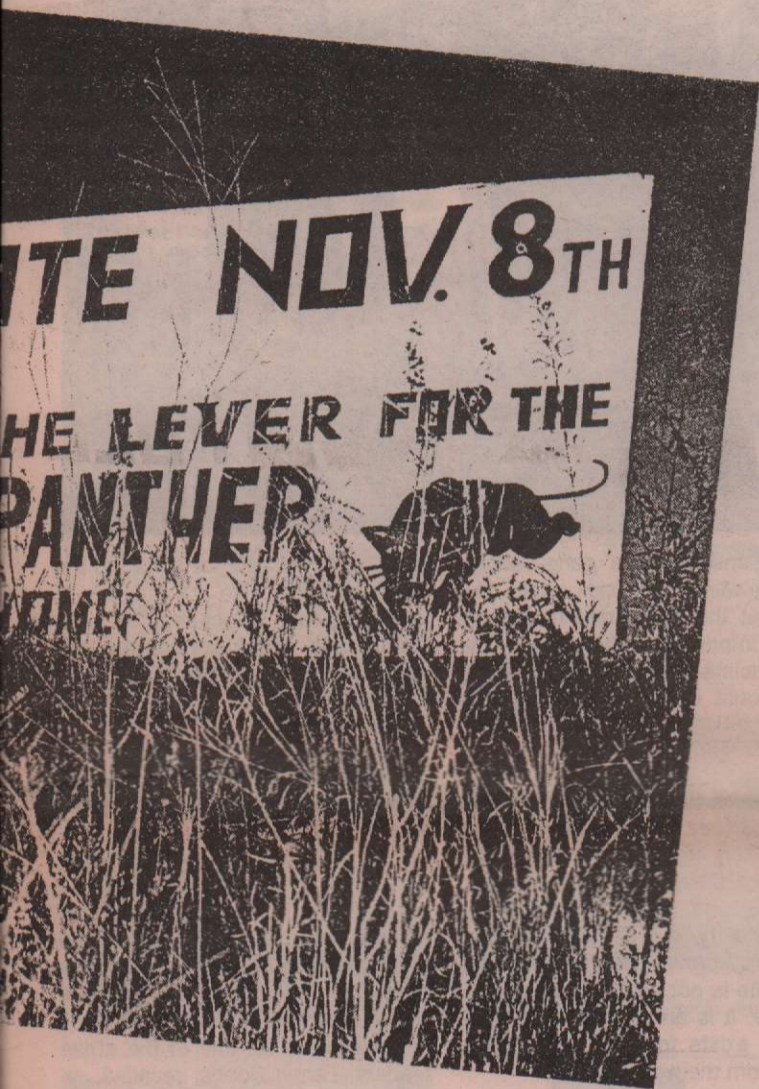
dom Organisation. It adopted the emblem of a snarling black panther, and soon called itself the Black Panther Party. According to one historian of the movement, Clayborne Carson, it was not at first intended to be an exclusively black organisation, but became so because no whites wanted to join it. It provided the model for the future organisation of the Black Panther Party for Self Defence of Bobby Seale and Huey P Newton. (See WP 162.)

Also in 1965, SNCC took the highly political step of speaking out against the war being pursued by the USA in Vietnam. A statement was already in



## THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

## POWER



on Washington of August  
King declared "I have a  
black people in the USA  
compared to around one  
things for blacks are just  
whites. Black workers are  
workers to be unemployed.  
of the US population, but  
pers in US jails.  
es of the 1960s are still  
inst racism today. In this  
Richard Brenner chart the  
ment in the 1960s, and  
most widely known and  
Carmichael.

the process of being prepared when  
SNCC were spurred to speak out by  
the death of Sammy Younge, a 21-  
year old veteran of the US Navy who  
was shot to death while trying to use a  
whites-only restroom at a filling station.  
The SNCC statement exposed  
US hypocrisy and explicitly linked rac-  
ism in the South to imperialism over-  
seas. A furious witch-hunt against  
SNCC ensued.

As an expression of the increased  
radicalism of the SNCC staff and vol-  
unteers, Stokely Carmichael chal-  
lenged John Lewis for the position of  
Chair of SNCC in 1966.

Born in the West Indies, Carmichael had family and personal connections with black members of the Communist Party of the USA. When he joined the Nonviolent Action Group and then the full time SNCC staff in 1964, he brought with him both secularism and an emphasis on economic and social issues.

By 1966 he was becoming heavily influenced by ideas of black consciousness, of pride in blackness, the positive promotion of black culture and the construction of black institutions. He insisted, in response to attacks from liberals against this approach, that his position was, "... not anti-white. When you build your own house, it doesn't mean you tear down the house across the street."

But it was not until the events surrounding the Mississippi march of 1966 that this orientation began to take shape, when the new slogan of Black Power was to sweep the USA.

In June 1966 James Meredith began a solo walk across Mississippi as a demonstration of the right of black people to live without threats and fear of violence. He was shot three times and hospitalised.

Martin Luther King, Congress of Racial Equality leader Floyd McKissick and Stokely Carmichael joined forces to lead a protest march that would also boost local voter registration efforts. King viewed the march in much the same way he viewed the whole campaign - a strictly peaceful protest. But SNCC was adopting a more militant stance than before.

Sick of years of beatings, shootings and arrests, Carmichael argued that

an organisation called the Deacons of Defence provide armed protection for the march. At mass rallies across Mississippi, Carmichael spoke against the nonviolence line being pursued by King, and condemned the federal government for failing to provide any real protection against racist terror. In Leflore County Carmichael told a meeting of hundreds after he had been detained in jail:

"This is the twenty-seventh time I have been arrested. I ain't going to jail no more... What we gonna start saying now is 'black power'."

What did Black Power mean? To many SNCC workers and poor blacks, from Mississippi to the ghettos of the big cities, it meant an end to compromise, to nonviolence, to reliance on white liberals. Rank and file SNCC workers had seen the consequences of reliance on the support of liberal whites in failed attempts to get the Northern Democrats and the administration in Washington to act in their support.

The liberals expected a political payoff for their support: the renunciation of the right to self-defence (something no liberal ever demanded of whites), the censoring of Lewis' speech to the Washington rally in 1963 and King's attempt to get SNCC to call off a demonstration on the Vietnam question in August 1966. As Carmichael explained:

"We will not accept someone who comes to us and says: 'If you do X, Y and Z, then I'll help you.'"

This refusal to tie the movement's hands in return for the illusory support of fair-weather bourgeois allies was a real political step forward.

But the idea of Black Power, as Carmichael came to theorise it in his book of that name, co-authored with Charles V. Hamilton, also contained serious ambiguities. When Carmichael wrote of the need for black consciousness and self-identification as a vital first step, that "only when black people fully develop this sense of community, of themselves, can they begin to deal effectively with the problems of racism in this country", he was not just speaking of the justified need to develop pride and confidence in black culture.

### Class

He invested Black Power with another—wrong and dangerous—meaning. He was advancing the principle of black unity, irrespective of any class divisions. Unity of all black people—workers, poor farmers and the urban poor, as well as middle class and even rich blacks—became for him a precondition for an effective fight against racism. This is what he meant by his famous statement that:

"Before a group can enter open society, it must first close ranks."

The first and most fundamental problem with this approach is that it downplays the central question of class. The unity of black people, as blacks, blurred the real conflicts between blacks of different classes. It blurred the differences between those who advocated reliance on the Democrats, and those who fought for militant action. It was a "unity" that contained the real possibility of holding

back the black struggle.

At the same time it cut off, in advance, the possibility of building fighting unity between black and white workers against the common enemy. In far too many cases the white working class and their unions had proved themselves to be racist. Insofar as Black Power meant not holding back the struggles of black people until white workers became anti-racist it was right and justified. But for Carmichael it was not simply this.

He went on to ignore the real material difference between white workers and their white bosses, and the potential for anti-racism to be built within the white working class because of this difference. As he told a meeting in Watts, Los Angeles, "the only reason [whites] suppress us is because we are black". For this reason white society was conceived simply as a monolith, with no fundamental contradictions between the interests of its respective classes.

While Carmichael insisted that all blacks must be united across class divisions, working class organisations, like the trade unions, were all but written off as "coalitions between the economically secure and the insecure". The racism of the official unions had to be acknowledged and fought. But Carmichael threw out the baby with the bath water, downgrading the rich experience of black workers, indeed black women such as Dora Jones of the Domestic Workers' Union, Floretta Andre of the New York Teachers' Union and Miranda Smith and Velma Hopkins of the Food, Tobacco, Agriculture and Allied Workers' Union, who played leading roles in the rise of industrial unionism and the CIO union federation. These experiences proved that it was both necessary and possible to challenge racism within the working class and build unity in struggle.

Whilst for a minority, such as Julius

### "Why is there a black banker in one town and a starving Negro in the same?"

Lester, Black Power meant an increasingly hardline separatist stance, involving rejection on principle of collaboration with whites (he gave one of his pamphlets the ironic title *Look Out, White! Black Power's Gon' Get Your Mama!*). Carmichael did not rule out coalitions with whites, but said they could arise only after black people had united.

At the same time as relegating the importance and downplaying the possibility of common class action between black and white workers, Carmichael's conception of the black community closing ranks failed to get to grips with the political and class differentiation within that community. As Jim Forman acutely observed when appealing to SNCC staff to recognise the ambiguities and inadequacies of the Black Power slogan:

"Are the problems we face only ones of color? ... What is upper, lower, middle class? Do they exist among blacks? Why is there a black banker in one town and a starving Negro in the same? ... Do the problems of a black welfare mother only arise from her blackness? If not, then what are the other causes?"

Whilst for SNCC workers and poor blacks the Black Power slogan was one of militancy, for other more moderate and conservative blacks it meant promoting black businesses, a black middle class and even bourgeoisie, rising not with their class but out of their class. In short it meant the furthering of the development of a black middle and upper class, with the attendant danger of a layer of privileged blacks being co-opted into support for the very establishment that Carmichael and others had repeatedly risked their lives to challenge.

Thus Black Power was to become the rallying call not only of the most

exploited and oppressed blacks, but also of the most conservative and bourgeois forces within the community.

That is why one Black Power conference was sponsored by black Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, who was trying to subordinate the movement to the Democrats and who, as Carmichael admitted, was "talking about stopping the throwing of Molotov cocktails and not stopping the causes that bring about the throwing of the cocktails".

A new layer of moderate community leaders was able to consolidate around the Black Power slogan, holding conferences sponsored by, among others, the white owned corporation Clairol.

This was in line with the attempts of US capitalism to co-opt a privileged layer of blacks as its answer to the urban uprisings and mass struggles of the 1960s. This is clear from the words of former Republican President, reactionary racist and proven crook, Richard Nixon:

### Power

"What most of the militants are asking is not separation but to be included in - not as supplicants, but as owners, as entrepreneurs - to have a share of the wealth and a piece of the action. And this is precisely what the federal central target of the new approach ought to be. It ought to be oriented toward more black ownership... black pride, black jobs, black opportunity and yes, Black Power..."

In the end, the Black Power slogan and the approach it represented proved not only ambiguous and capable of being adopted by conservative forces, but also disorienting for some of the most militant fighters in the civil rights movement. As SNCC declined under the twin blows of external repression and internal ideological incoherence, Carmichael himself turned to the pan-African nationalist "socialism" of Nkrumah and Sekou Toure, President of the bourgeois republic of Guinea.

Carmichael ended up accepting Toure's offer of moving to Guinea and acting as his personal secretary in 1968, taking the name of Kwame Ture and joining the leadership of Guinea's ruling party in 1972. The notion of uniting all black people before, and as a precondition for, fundamental social change allowed him to support a government which, despite its radical rhetoric, upholds the capitalist system.

Carmichael was wrong to believe that the only reason whites suppress black people is because they are black. The root cause of racism is the capitalist system of production for profit.

That system expanded and grew, by using slavery pure and simple in the development of the New World. It justified both that historic crime against African people and the subsequent political and economic enslavement of the colonial world by denying that Africans and the majority of the peoples of Asia are fully human. It continues to use racial division and prejudice to undermine the action and the unity of the working class, and to tie white workers to political support for the global system of imperialism.

While the heroic struggles of the civil rights movement in the 1960s won real democratic gains for black people, the root causes and brute reality of racism in the USA remain intact. Liberation remains a goal that young blacks are prepared to fight and die for. But as the black writer Harold Cruse pointed out at the time of the debates within the civil rights movement, the Black Power slogan avoids the central issue of "which class is going to wield that power."

If true emancipation is to be won, power must be wielded by the working class, black and white, the only class with the social cohesion and strength to uproot the capitalist system and every manifestation of bigotry, discrimination and racism.

**V**IOLENCE IS not pretty. Contrary to media scare stories about left wingers revelling in violence, we want to build a world free of beatings, stabbings and shootings. We want a world free from bloody wars, genocide and the barbarism threatened by thermonuclear warheads.

Yet both the everyday violence of the streets and the carnage of war are part and parcel of capitalism. Capitalism plunges whole communities into unemployment and poverty, creates unbearable social tensions and breeds misery and despair. Violence thrives in such conditions.

Capitalism's insatiable drive for profits, the "competitive spirit" that the Tories loudly praise, are a permanent source of global conflict—of war. Wars don't arise because of the mutual hostility of peoples and nations. They arise from conflicts generated by competing capitalist states, driven to carve up the world into spheres of trade and influence.

Capitalism survives at the expense of the great majority of people, the working class. To maintain this exploitation it needs a vast apparatus of violence—armed forces, security services and police forces—the state machine. The hallmark of capitalism is that it strives to ensure that all organised violence in society is under its direct control.

This is why it is futile, despite our distaste for violence, to renounce its use by the working class. Such a renunciation is a meek submission to the capitalists' right to a monopoly over the use of violence. It accepts that the class struggle should be waged peacefully on our side, but violently on theirs.

### Denounce

Labour politicians are always quick to denounce violence. Roy Hattersley called for maximum sentences to be given to the people who fought the police during the great poll tax riot of 1990. Neil Kinnock spent more time denouncing the picket line violence of the miners in the 1984-85 strike than he did supporting the defence of miners' jobs.

These people are lying hypocrites. They don't reject violence itself, only the justified violence of resistance.

The last Labour government unleashed the police Special Patrol Group (SPG) on the Grunwick strikers in North London in 1976-77. This was a strike in a small film processing plant by a group of mainly Asian women. When other workers supported their picket line and it looked like the scabs might be stopped from going to work, Labour sent in the SPG to batter these women and their supporters.

This speaks volumes about past and present Labour leaders' condemnation of violence. They defend and uphold the right of the capitalist state to use all the violence it deems necessary to batter workers into submission.

Our starting point is the exact opposite of Labour's. It is the organised violence of the class enemy that we denounce. We recognise that this organised violence cannot be beaten by a good humoured refusal to be provoked. It can only be defeated by the use of organised working class counter-violence. Many workers in Britain might well agree with us that the violence of the police ought to be condemned. But they stop short of advocating organised workers' defence. This attitude is a fatal legacy of years of influence of reformism, of legalism, of forelock-tugging subservience to the powers that be.

The bosses do not share such scruples. They learn from their experiences. In the 1970s workers' picket lines scored a number of successes. Militants developed the tactic of the flying picket, relying on force of numbers, pushing and shoving towards the chosen target. These shows of

WHY WE CALL FOR . . .

# Organised self-defence



force by workers terrified the bosses. They set about meeting the threat.

Thatcher poured money into the police force, recruiting more officers and training specialist squads. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the National Reporting Centre were created specifically for the purpose of centralising police operations against strikers. The SPG was replaced by the highly mobile Tactical Support Units, trained at specialist camps for dealing with "urban revolts". Riot shields, boiler suit uniforms and 20,000 plastic bullets were distributed.

The purpose of the militarisation of the police was to defeat working class resistance. The new methods were deployed against the inner city youth during the uprisings of 1981 and 1985, against printers in Warrington in 1983 and Wapping in 1986, against

## The importance of fighting for workers' defence squads in every sphere of the class struggle is not just that it is good sense. It is also that it raises the fighting spirit and class consciousness of the workers

miners in 1984-85, and against poll tax protesters in London in 1990.

Charles MacLachlan, the president of ACPO in 1981, made clear what the real target of the police was when he declared:

"Supporting the freedom of people who want to prevent other people going to work is not supporting freedom but supporting anarchy, violence, riot and damage and everything else."

The answer to this state of siege against the working class could no longer be flying pickets and force of numbers. The miners' strike showed all too clearly that these methods of struggle had become inadequate faced with snatch squads, riot shields, and cavalry. It was necessary to meet the advance in police militarisation

### BY KIRSTY MCGINTY

with the organisation of workers' defence squads. Once again the reformist legalism instilled into the working class by the Labour and union leaders thwarted the development of such organisations of struggle.

Of course there were examples of spontaneous resistance. Miners were no push over at Orgreave and the police did not have it all their own way during the poll tax rebellion. But there were few voices on the left that sought to transform these spontaneous acts of resistance into consciously organised defence units.

The Socialist Workers Party denounced the hit squads organised by miners in 1984 and called for mass pickets instead—blithely ignoring the fact that Orgreave already was a mass picket and that something more was needed. *Militant* peddled the disgraceful idea that the police were not really paid agents of the bosses, sealed off in an atmosphere of anti-working class prejudices, but merely "workers in uniform".

Workers Power consistently fought such nonsense and argued for the building of organised defence squads. This was a demand posed by the logic of the struggle itself. After all, you don't have picket lines for fun—you have them to stop scabs going into work or to stop supplies keeping a strikebound industry going.

If you don't use force to achieve these goals then you stand to lose your job, your livelihood and your dignity. Pacifism in the face of such violence is tantamount to giving up your right to defend yourself.

As police violence weakened the effectiveness of the traditional picket line, so it was necessary to step up the methods of defending picket lines and make them more effective through organised violence, under the control of the strikers.

Exactly the same principle applies in other spheres of struggle. Black communities have long faced attacks by the police, by racist gangs and fascist hit squads. To refuse to resist such attacks is to accept that you have to live your life under the permanent threat of being terrorised.

Once again spontaneous acts of self-defence have arisen to meet such threats. The recent case of the Drummond Street Four—young Asians who defended their commu-

nity against a racist gang—shows that the will to fight back exists. The fact that the state tried to get the Asians imprisoned, while allowing the white racists off scot free, shows that no amount of appeals to Britain's "democratic processes" can substitute for organised self-defence.

The fact that the state protects every march and meeting of the fascists and frees known leaders of their paramilitary organisations like Eddie Whicker of Combat 18, while beating, arresting and framing the anti-fascists who try to prevent them from operating, proves the same point. The state is not neutral in the class struggle. It is an apparatus of coercion. It exists to defend the ruling class from the working class.

### Squadism

Yet from the Socialist Workers Party we still hear the accusation of "squadism" every time we argue for a defence squad, whether to protect a picket, or to stop racist or fascist attacks. By "squadism" they imply that what we are arguing for is something separate from the general class struggle, something that will lead to a handful of adventurers provoking unnecessary clashes.

It is certainly true that any combat organisation would be "squadist" if it was not under the control of the workers in whose name it claims to act or if it substituted itself for the action of the masses. But there is no reason why a squad should have to act in such a way. Faced with similar charges by the increasingly reformist Communist Party in France in the 1930s, the revolutionary leader, Leon Trotsky, argued:

"It is nonsense to say that in itself the organisation of the militia leads to adventures, provokes the enemy, replaces the political struggle by the physical struggle, etc. In all these phrases there is nothing but political cowardice.

The militia as the strong organisation of the vanguard, is in fact the surest defence against adventures, against individual terrorism, against bloody spontaneous explosions."

The constant allegation of "squadism" in fact fits in neatly with the self-defeating legalism that is prevalent in the workers' movement today.

The key is to understand the rela-

tionship of the defence squad to the mass struggle. Like the publicity or social welfare sub-committee of a democratic strike committee, the defence squad would be an auxiliary organisation in the service of the mass struggle. That this can be achieved is well illustrated by the Teamsters strike of 1934 in Minneapolis in the USA. This strike was led by Trotskyists. It was conscious of the need to avoid separating the military struggle from the strike struggle. But it was also aware that sending unarmed and unorganised pickets to face the armed and organised scabs and police was stupid, a recipe for defeat and an act of political cowardice. As one of the strike leaders, Farrell Dobbs, recalled, organising picket defence strengthened the mass struggle, raised morale and showed what workers could do:

"Newsreels, which were then a feature of motion picture entertainment, showed combat scenes filmed during Tuesday's battle . . . Audiences in movie houses broke out in cheers at the sight of pickets clubbing cops for a change, since in most strikes it was entirely the other way round. It did the workers good to see workers standing their ground against the police and, in fact, giving them more punishment than they received."

### Consciousness

The importance of fighting for workers' defence squads in every sphere of the class struggle is not just that it is good sense. It is also that it raises the fighting spirit and class consciousness of the workers. It shows them who the enemy is, and that that enemy can be beaten. It alerts them to their own power and points the way to an alternative to police thugs as the guardians of order in society. It points to a revolutionary alternative run by the workers themselves.

That is why, in fighting for workers' defence squads now in the fight against the police, the racists or the fascists, we are laying the basis of a power that can take on and beat the capitalist class as a whole. Just as the development of the class struggle in the 1980s raised the stakes, so a struggle to defeat capitalism altogether will raise them even further. And in such a struggle the defence squad of today lays the basis for the workers' militia of tomorrow. ■

**CUBA**

# Break the blockade!

**C**UBA RANKS 25th in the world for infant and child mortality rates, better than all other "developing" countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Average life expectancy in Cuba is 76 years, and most deaths are from heart disease, strokes and cancer, rather than malnutrition and infectious diseases.

These figures signify enormous gains for Cuban workers since the revolution. The Cuban regime invested a lot in free health care with an emphasis on prevention and health education. Thirty years ago infant mortality was 65 per 1000 live births. In 1991 it was only 11, compared with 9-10 in the USA and Britain, 32 in Argentina, 109 in Bolivia, and 116 in Haiti.

These gains are now under severe strain. The withdrawal of subsidies from the USSR, combined with the tightening of the economic blockade by the USA, has seen a significant deterioration in the standard of living for Cuban workers.

Last October the USA passed the "Torricelli" Act which extended the 34 year old trade embargo to cover foreign subsidiaries of US companies. The Cuba Information Project estimates that this has cut off 70% of Cuba's trade, mainly in food and medicine.

The Ministry of Health in Havana reports an increase in the number of low birth weight babies, of anaemia in pregnant women and of infectious diseases. The American Public

Health Association sent a delegation to Cuba in June and reports that all types of medical equipment are now in short supply.

US hypocrisy on the matter is blatant. They cite human rights abuses as the reason for the embargo, but continue trade with all kinds of brutal regimes elsewhere. The USA says that its objective is to harm the regime, not the people, and that food and medicine can be sent by private organisations so long as they are not intended for anything other than humanitarian

BY HELEN WATSON

purposes. It is difficult to imagine what else the regime would want to do with supplies of food and medicine. But the USA continues to turn down licences.

Cuba is in a deep crisis. Before the revolution, 90% of Cuba's trade was with the USA. This shifted to a post-revolution dependency on trade with the USSR and Comecon. The underlying fragility of the island's economy was revealed when favourable trading agreements as

well as direct subsidies from the Soviet Union dried up. National income has shrunk by 50% in the last three years and per capita income is falling. Industry is working well below capacity and the lack of oil is also crippling transport and agriculture. By the end of 1992 it was estimated that "as much as 80% of the country's industry is now idle". More and more basic goods are being rationed. Provision of power, public transport and food are all declining.

The major gains of the Cuban

Revolution in social welfare and health should not be underestimated. But they are built on an unstable economic and political basis in which the Castro regime, like the regimes of the former USSR and Eastern Europe, has abolished capitalism but stands as an obstacle to socialism through its political dictatorship over the workers and peasants.

Political parties and oppositions are ruthlessly suppressed in Cuba. There are hundreds of political prisoners. There are no independent unions or community organisations, only Castroite fronts.

At the moment Cubans face a dramatic decline in their living standards and an absolute increase in poverty and ill health. Within Cuba there is an urgent need for a revolutionary opposition to Castro, fighting for a political revolution that will defend the nationalised property and planning but place it under the control of the workers and peasants themselves.

The US blockade aims to bring about the fall of the Castro regime and replace it with the rule of the *gusanos*, the pro-US Cuban bourgeoisie in exile in Miami.

Socialists and workers in the west must stand with the Cubans against the blockade, and show to the Cuban masses that they do not have to bow to this imperialist pressure. We need to organise mass protests and demonstrations against US embassies calling for an immediate end to the blockade. ■



Cubans face a dramatic decline in their living standards

**EUROPE**

**L**AST MONTH the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) of the European Community collapsed. Nearly a year after Britain and Italy suspended their membership the whole system went into meltdown. EC finance ministers agreed to "temporarily widen" the band within which currency values could fluctuate—from 2.5% to 15% either side of the official exchange rate.

Tory ministers in Britain hailed the effective collapse of the ERM, arguing "now the whole of Europe can have low interest rates and go for economic growth".

But few were celebrating in the European finance ministries. Just as Britain finally ratified the Maastricht Treaty, the collapse of ERM set back the whole plan for European economic integration.

**Rivalries**

The collapse was a product of the deep economic rivalries which are growing both within and outside the EC. It was clear confirmation of the incompatibility of the nationally based capitalist economy with the task of creating an integrated international economy and society.

The world market has begun to fragment into three big trading blocs around the USA, Japan and Europe. Of the three, Europe is the weakest—from a capitalist point of view. It has the following problems:

- It has no single currency and central bank—instead the currencies and

banks of four big imperialisms (Germany, France, Italy and the UK) compete for supremacy

- Although it has a single market, US and Japanese firms (like Hoover and Toyota) will reap the benefits of this unless the EC can foster the creation of trans-European corporations

- Compared to America and Japan the European working class is well organised and in possession of key social gains won or granted after the war. Of course there have been major battles and defeats, but the bosses still identify labour costs and social provision in Europe as a barrier to effective competition

- There is an imbalance between military and economic power. Germany has the economic power and the largest army, but it is constitutionally bound to refrain from imperialist intervention. Britain and France are called upon to maintain capitalist order in the Balkans but face huge state debts and are economically weaker. Consequently attempts to formulate unified EC foreign policy have consistently ended in shambles.

The Maastricht Treaty was meant to rectify all this. Its aims were a

BY PAUL MORRIS

single currency by 1997, a European central bank and a unified investment and technology programme to sponsor the development of Euro-capital. The move to majority voting on the Council of Ministers was designed as a step towards a unified foreign and diplomatic policy.

Crucially Maastricht committed its signatories to a joint policy of deflation to enable the twelve economies to "converge" around standards set by Germany. They would all cut government borrowing to below 3% of GDP and reduce inflation. Most importantly they would all do it together, even if it meant slow economic growth for a decade.

**Idealised**

What the pro-Maastricht bosses had grasped intuitively was an element of Lenin's phrase "politics is concentrated economics". Without economic convergence Jacques Delors' vision of an idealised capitalist Europe—on display at the lavish opening ceremony of the Barcelona

Olympics—was pie in the sky.

The collapse of the ERM represents the fall of all these plans at the first hurdle.

Germany, the economic lynchpin of the EC, faced a choice: massive inflation due to the measures it took to restore capitalism in East Germany or a government induced recession with high interest rates.

It chose the latter. The gears of the international capitalist economy then transmitted the effects of German interest rates across Europe. It was just not a question of speculators "gambling" against major currencies—the money skimmed off like this was only the froth on the beer. Currencies collapsed because major capitalist multinationals were not prepared to believe blustering finance ministers more than they believed the capitalist market. With high German interest rates every other currency had to be devalued. One by one they were.

Inter-imperialist rivalry inside the EC ensured this was not done in an orderly manner but in a mad scramble.

It may be that, in the short term,

# The collapse of the ERM

every major economy except Germany will now turn to short term reflationary measures having been freed from the pressure to match Germany's high interest rates. But in the long term the failure of the economies to "converge" will lead to slower growth.

And the reflation being planned across Europe will not be designed to benefit the working class. It will be designed, as in Britain, to hold back workers' benefits and wages while the bosses' share markets soar, making workers pay for the recovery just as they paid for the recession.

What does the collapse of the ERM tell us about Euro-imperialism in the mid 1990s?

It tells us that the national capitalist state is strangling the European economy. To unify that economy in a progressive and orderly way the national capitalist state will have to be overthrown and replaced by a Socialist United States of Europe.

**Attack**

It tells us that, in or out of Maastricht, in or out of the ERM, the bosses are obliged to attack the working class. The Gould wing of the Labour Party, which opposed ERM entry on the grounds that it was "anti-working class" is gloating over the defeat of Major and Smith's ERM policy. Major is forced to attack the workers just as hard or even harder outside the ERM. As with Maastricht the working class should side with neither the pro- nor the anti-wings of the bosses over ERM.

In the meanwhile the Euro-imperialists will be looking for a way to salvage their dream of a united Europe. ■

## ZIONISTS BUTCHER CIVILIANS

Anyone who thought that the election of Yitzhak Rabin as Prime Minister of Israel in the summer of last year meant that a peace-maker had arrived in office has been cruelly disillusioned.

Israel launched a massive attack on South Lebanon on 25 July. When it ended seven days later 130 people were dead and 500 wounded. Nearly all these victims were civilians. Some 10,000 houses were destroyed and 30,000 damaged. Half a million people fled north to escape the onslaught.

The Israeli army terrorised the population with horrific phosphorus bombs. One journalist reported:

"In one room I found . . . Mohammed Shabayta, a three year old Palestinian wounded in the arm by an Israeli gunboat shell . . . and a seven year old called Hussein Qassem who lay squirming with pain on the other side of the room. Parts of his genitals had been burned away by an Israeli phosphorus shell."

The Israelis made no secret of the fact that they were not specifically targeting Hizbullah combatants but were aiming to cause as much disruption as possible in the area to the north of their so-called security zone.

### Pressure

By doing this they aimed to punish the Shi'ite masses for protecting Hizbullah, the Islamic fundamentalist movement, and put pressure on the Lebanese and Syrian governments into curtailing the activities of the Islamicists.

The Israelis have not been able to stop Hizbullah and forces in the PLO opposed to the peace talks from launching attacks on the South Lebanon Army (SLA). As well as having their own forces in the security zone, Israelis use the SLA as a proxy army to control the strip of land in the south of Lebanon which the Israeli state claims it has the right to use as a buffer zone.

Despite the enormous level of bombardment from the Israeli Army with over 25,000 missiles and shells being fired, Hizbullah has not been silenced. It has continued to make attacks on the Israeli army and the SLA. On 20 August it bombed a patrol killing nine soldiers.

A truce has been negotiated by Syria and the US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher. Syria offered to control the attacks on Israel and promised to prevent Iranian missiles reaching the Hizbullah. Syria's President Assad hopes that this will curry favour with the Clinton administration. Currently Syria is considered a "terrorist state". Any change of heart in the White House would open the possibility of Syria getting the Golan Heights back if they agree to help eliminate organisations endangering the security of the north of Israel.

Hizbullah and other Islamic organ-

# Israel out of Lebanon!



Lebanese civilians forced to flee Israeli terrorists

isations like Hamas have been growing apace. This is due to the disillusionment with the peace process which has lasted over twenty months and produced only a potential sell-out.

The policy of the PLO leadership and its reliance on diplomatic pressure on Israel by the USA has had no effect on the daily lives of Palestinians suffering from Israeli state repression. In the occupied areas they continue to have no democratic rights and the army continues to gun down youth on the streets.

In an attempt to stabilise the region US imperialism has been pushing a "land for peace" deal. The USA even threatened to withhold loan guarantees to Israel if it did not ease up on the extension of new Jewish settlements on Arab land on the West Bank. It wants the Israeli state to allow the Palestinians some autonomy, either through a mini-state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip or through forming a federation with Jordan.

Such a deal would do nothing to

BY DAVE BEECH

resolve the continued oppression of the Palestinian people. Any Palestinian mini-state would be no more than a South African-style Bantustan. It would not be allowed to have control over its own defence policy and certainly would not be allowed to have any military organisation. Israel would continue to use the Palestinians as a source of cheap labour.

### Demobilise

Worst of all it would still leave around 750,000 Arabs as second class citizens within the state of Israel. Its aim would be to demobilise the struggle of the Palestinian masses for their rights, especially the question of their right to return to the lands that they were driven out of by the Zionists.

The Israeli state is based on discrimination against the Palestinians. This is not just one bad policy among

many others. It lies at the root of the entire project of building a specifically Jewish state in Palestine. A majority Jewish community in Israel only exists because Palestinians were forcibly expelled from their land. The majority is maintained through discrimination in citizenship and immigration rights.

Within the coalition government the left-of-centre Meretz party and the so-called doves in the Labour Party argued against the military action in Lebanon. But they remained within the blood-soaked government. This is the logic of supporting the "right of the state of Israel to exist within secure borders". It means having to accept, however tacitly, that the state can carry out these violent acts in its own defence. But any movement or struggle on behalf of the Palestinian masses strikes at the root of the Zionist state's legitimacy. It has to use its military strength to crush the resistance of the Palestinians fighting for the right to return to their land or any other groups resisting aggression and

occupation by Israel. The cowardice of Meretz is no accident. It is the inevitable consequence of an ideology that is a bald contradiction in terms: "socialist" Zionism.

Once again Israel has shown that if it cannot silence the Palestinians or Lebanese Shi'ites through diplomatic deals then it will not hesitate to exact revenge. This is proving to ever larger sections of the Palestinians that peace with the Israeli state means peace with oppression. That is why greater numbers are rejecting the current PLO leadership and following organisations like Hamas.

But the strategy of the PLO and other Arab groups resisting Israel has been to rely on one or other section of the Arab or Iranian bourgeoisie. The actions and aims of Assad of Syria shows the danger of this. To get back the Golan Heights he will make a deal with the USA and Israel.

Syria will then be prepared to destroy any groups that continue to resist and might therefore jeopardise any such agreement. Assad would not hesitate to use the 30,000 Syrian troops in Lebanon to do this. Already PLO officials have said that Syria has asked PLO opposition groups to leave Damascus.

### Reliant

In the same way fundamentalist groups are reliant on the support of Iran. The leader of Hizbullah, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, has been in Tehran to get support from government leaders. But any support given by the Iranian government will only continue as long as it coincides with the interests of the Iranian leadership. They do not put the struggle of all the people of the region against imperialism and Israel to the fore, as their attitude to the Gulf War showed.

It is looking as if more and more Arab states are prepared to do deals with Israel. This will lead to the Palestinians being left more isolated. The cowardice and equivocation of the PLO leadership will lead to more intransigent forces growing in influence.

In the absence of a strong voice for revolutionary socialism the way will be clear for the religious demagogues, complete with their ties to the Shi'ite and Sunni fundamentalist regimes in the region. But there is only one force in the area that can consistently support the struggles of the Palestinians—not the treacherous Arab bourgeoisie but the workers and peasants of the Middle East who have nothing to gain from any deals with Israel or imperialism.

Any such deal between Israel and the PLO leaders may well mean peace. But it will mean peace without land, peace without justice and peace without freedom. ■

● As we go to press, news is coming through of a deal agreed "in principle" between the Zionist state and Yasser Arafat's faction of the PLO. This shows all the signs of being a monumental betrayal of the Palestinian struggle.

**WHEN JAPAN'S** new Prime Minister, Morihiro Hosokawa, apologised for Japan's role in the Second World War, a taboo of almost fifty years was broken.

Morihiro rose in politics, like so many of his generation, as a member of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). In May last year he defected and founded a new party, Nihon Shinto. In the August election, in coalition with other parties, he helped end the 38-year reign of the LDP.

The coalition partners range from last minute defectors from the LDP to the traditional opposition party, the Social Democrats (formerly the Socialist Party). Even avowed "Marxists" are included. All these parties are united on one policy alone—breaking the grip of the LDP.

During the LDP's decades in power it oversaw the growth of the Japanese economy. Japan's financial sector became the world's

## Japan: end of an era

BY CHRIS BYRANT

strongest. Japan financed the USA's spending-revenue gap, becoming banker to the world's strongest economy.

But Japan's economic influence was not matched by its military clout. After the war the occupying forces of the United States wrote the constitution. Pacifism is enshrined in article nine:

"... the Japanese people must forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes."

The collapse of the USSR and the new world political situation has sharpened this contradiction.

The USA now wants other countries to share the burden of policing the world.

Clinton himself is in favour of Japan having a seat on the UN Security Council. But at the same time there are mounting antagonisms between the USA and Japan. For this reason the Japanese ruling class has to plan how to protect its own interests.

From the mid-1980s in particular, Japan has been playing an increasingly political role in south east Asia. The Japanese government breached the US-led embargo on Vietnam and for the first time since the war Japanese forces were deployed on foreign soil, in Cambodia last September. But if Japan is to carry out any greater military role it needs

significant changes in its political make up. The old insular politicians, bureaucracy and constitution are a barrier to this.

To prepare for more military intervention abroad the leaders of Japan have to exorcise the militarist ghosts of the 1930s and 1940s. This is what it is doing by formally apologising for the war, something that the leaders of the LDP had refused to do.

But the whole political system in Japan is rife with corruption and bureaucracy. Political reform that opens up government is high on the agenda, but whether the ruling class will opt for a renovated LDP or to keep backing the newly formed parties of the right is yet to be seen. And this uncertainty is a recipe for further governmental crises. ■

# Mass strikes paralyse Nigeria



Babangida waves goodbye to power

**NIGERIA'S PRESIDENT** for the past eight years, Ibrahim Babangida, was forced to hand over to a new regime at the end of August. He faced widespread opposition from all sections of Nigerian society.

Nigeria has twice been paralysed by general strike action over the past month and the army opened fire on pro-democracy demonstrators, killing at least twenty people. But Babangida's exit from office, welcome as it is, has not solved the crisis for the ruling class. He has constructed an interim government which includes a majority of civilians but leaves the army and Babangida's friends in all the key positions.

It cannot last. The interim government is the only way out that Babangida could contemplate after his long-promised transition to civilian rule once again floundered in June this year. Having set up two political parties, written their constitutions and programmes and approved their leaders, Babangida still could not stomach handing over power to Chief Moshood Abiola after his overwhelming victory in the 12 June elections.

These phoney elections, in which only a third of the population turned out, were supposed to signify the end of a three year transfer of power from the military to a formally democratic civilian government. But the whole process has been a farce. All political parties are banned except for the two set up by the military—Abiola's Social Democratic Party and Bashir Tofa's National Republican Convention.

The political ban was retained by the rule that parties had to register, and could only do so if they could raise 250 million Naira (£22 million) and proving that they could function in all of Nigeria's 21 states. Last year the presidential primaries were annulled because of fraud.

This year on the eve of the election the military started to get the jitters. One group calling itself the Committee of Elder Statesmen began to publicly voice their unease before the election. They placed adverts in the national press warning that:

"The ongoing political process does not appear to promote a climate conducive to national unity, political stability and the welfare of the Nigerian people."

## Suppressed

Other groups representing the old, the wise and the military appeared. Former military ruler Olusegun Obasanjo hosted meetings of the Association for Democracy and Good Governance in Nigeria, and the Association for a Better Nigeria tried to get the poll stopped and then succeeded in getting the results suppressed. This body is backed to the hilt by the powerful military elite in the National Defence and Security Council which has effectively run Nigeria since independence.

Babangida has been unable to manage a smooth transition to civilian rule because of fundamental social and economic problems. Nigeria has the largest population in Africa, is the fourth biggest oil producer in the world and has energy reserves to last for decades. But there is no truly integrated national bourgeoisie that can unite around a common programme for the whole country.

There are three main ethnic groups—the Yoruba, Ibo and Hausa who respectively dominate the west, east and north of Nigeria. Central government is weakened by regional, ethnically-based divisions which were fostered by the

British to facilitate their rule.

Since independence, politics in Nigeria has combined military-bonapartist rule with economic corruption and waste. Today political office is seen as providing a route to wealth. Politicians get rich from payoffs in negotiating contract awards, import and export licences, government loans and other financial transactions.

Many politicians and top army figures have accrued vast wealth as a result, much of which is held outside the country. A Nigerian banker estimated that Nigerians hold at least \$25 billion in foreign bank accounts, and the World Bank reckoned that \$50 billion of capital disappeared out of Nigeria in the 1980s.

This level of corruption and wealth among the politicians and military stands in stark contrast to the lives of the masses. Despite the vast natural wealth of the country, the people live in terrible poverty. Real income per person has fallen to one tenth of what it was eight years ago. Inflation has reached 100% a year, education and health services are crumbling and only 50% of adults are literate.

The deep political crisis faced by the Nigerian regime reflects international and internal pressures. On the one hand, the US and British imperialists are encouraging semi-colonies to ditch their military rulers and introduce more stable democratic regimes. They want neo-liberal policies that allow greater scope for investment and profit, combined with sufficient internal stability to satisfy investors that their assets are safe.

This is a utopian dream of the imperialists as the instability of the militarised democracies in Latin America has shown. But they continue to use economic and political power to promote this line. Nigeria, despite formal independence, has remained subordi-

BY LAURA WATKINS

nated to the imperialists.

The discovery of oil in the 1950s led to a total distortion of the economy towards oil export for foreign currency, at the expense of domestic manufacture and even food production. Nigeria gets 80% of its export earnings from oil and, once a net exporter, now has to import food.

The head of the new Interim Government, Ernest Shonekan, is a rich businessman who has been at the head of the transitional government, directly under Babangida, since January. He has promoted contracts that allow foreign firms to increase their investments in oil, particularly in exploration.

This has pleased the big oil companies which up to now have been restricted by Nigerian state ownership of oil which has reduced their capacity for profiteering out of the oil wealth and cheap labour.

## Opposed

Shonekan is opposed by a broad coalition of forces. Standing at the head of them is Abiola, demanding the right to form a government after his election victory in June. But from the outset Abiola has shown himself willing to go along with the phoney elections and the continued power of the military regime. He is, after all, an old friend of Babangida and a millionaire publishing magnate who has done well out of the misery of the Nigerian masses.

If he achieves his objective of becoming president, it will not herald a better life for the people of Nigeria. Nor will it end the political crisis.

Fortunately it has not only been the military that has intervened into the political life of the country. Time and time again the masses have shown that they want a

say in what happens in Nigeria.

Two years ago riots erupted throughout the country as students and youth protested against the crippling effects of austerity measures imposed by the IMF—the structural adjustment programmes. The government responded by arresting hundreds of people and closing eight universities. Lecturers have been on strike for a year because the state is not paying them. Railway workers are the latest to strike over non-payment of salaries—they are owed more than nine months wages.

The anger of the working class has been demonstrated in the massive protests organised against the military rulers. Three days of general strike action paralysed Lagos and south west Nigeria last month, and again at the end of August as the cities were brought to a standstill.

On 28 August the National Union of Petroleum and National Gas Workers began an indefinite strike in opposition to the Interim Government. These 50,000 workers have the power to completely cripple the economy through halting export earnings and, alongside striking transport workers, paralysing transport.

This shows the power of the organised working class in Nigeria—3.5 million workers are in the National Labour Congress which was behind the strike action and stayaways. These actions by the working class offer hope to the Nigerian masses and to the rest of Africa, by showing a capacity to challenge the political corruption and dictatorship of the ruling class.

But there is a huge danger in these struggles, that of the workers and peasants settling for supporting any new government of Abiola. Millionaire Abiola is trying to place himself at the head of the opposition to Babangida by claiming a mandate as a democratically

ly elected president. But he is a hand-picked ally of the military, committed to the disastrous economic subordination of the country to imperialism. He is no friend of the masses.

The workers want democracy. That is at the fore of all the strikers' demands. But the kind of democracy that the workers need is not that of a four yearly vote to decide which millionaire will work with the military and cream off money to their Swiss bank accounts.

The workers and poor peasants, the vast majority of Nigeria's population, need the widest possible freedom to form their own political party. They need the release of all political prisoners. In contrast to the fake elections of Babangida and Abiola, the workers' organisations should call for immediate elections to a constituent assembly where full democratic participation is guaranteed for all parties and all ethnic groups.

Full rights to self-determination must be supported for all nationalities, while arguing that the best way forward for all ethnic groups in Nigeria is through unity against imperialism rather than the creation of small non-viable states.

## Convened

A constituent assembly with full democracy will not be convened unless the workers' movement fights for it. Councils of workers and poor peasants need to co-ordinate mass action, oversee any elections and establish a militia to defend the rights and organisations of the masses from military repression.

Nigeria's social crisis is not caused simply by a lack of democracy. It is a result of imperialist exploitation of the whole region which leaves the masses in chronic poverty, lining the pockets of a layer of corrupt politicians and military while taking the lions' share of the wealth for itself. The masses of Nigeria have every interest in linking their fight with all workers and peasants of the continent, who suffer from similar problems as a result of imperialism.

To solve the economic crisis they should demand the cancelling of all debt and the taking over of all imperialist companies. This way the wealth that the imperialists currently squeeze out of the country could be used to improve the life of the Nigerian masses.

The workers have shown their willingness to fight back. The workers' movement must come to the head of the struggle for democratic rights. But if any gains for the Nigerian masses are to be more than illusory, if they are to secure more than just the promise of new elections or a pseudo-democratic capitalist regime, the working class must press on to the overthrow of capitalism, opening a new stage in the struggle to free the African masses from the chains of imperialism. ■

## WORKERS' AID TO BOSNIA

**F**ROM TIMEX to Tuzla—that was the ambitious project which organisers of the Workers Aid for Bosnia Convoy set themselves at the beginning of July.

With half the trade union bureaucracy on Mediterranean beaches and the other half seemingly under the impression that Serbia is Europe's last socialist state, it seemed a tall order.

Yet the ingenuity and generosity of ordinary working class people meant that the Workers' Aid Convoy has surpassed all targets.

As the Convoy leaves Britain it consists of five trucks, one fully equipped ambulance and a coach, all laden with food, medical aid and vital financial support. In its London warehouse the Convoy already has twice the amount of food aid it can transport.

### Donations

As the Convoy goes on its way through Europe it will collect aid from labour movements of many other countries. In addition to winning donations and backing from union branches and trades councils all over the country, the Convoy has scored notable successes:

- Timex strikers organised a rally at their picket line to send the Convoy on its way
- In Manchester the local labour

# Support the Convoy!

movement donated an ambulance, fuel and thousands of pounds worth of medical aid

- Sacked Tilbury dockers have volunteered to oversee the packing of the aid for transportation

• The convoy is travelling free of charge from Dover to Dieppe thanks to RMT seafarers

- In South Yorkshire NUM branches have pledged to give support to their fellow miners in Tuzla.

• Several T&G branches arranged for servicing and refuelling of the Convoy's vehicles as they passed through major towns.

- Young Bosnian refugees linked up with the convoy to raise tens

of thousands of pounds at U2 rock concerts in Leeds, Cardiff and London.

The Convoy will be touring major working class cities in Europe. But it is by no means guaranteed a safe passage to Tuzla—the multi-ethnic mining and heavy industrial city whose population has been swelled by tens of thousands of refugees.

### Sponsors

Nevertheless, all donors and sponsors can be assured that the organising committee has detailed plans to get aid into Tuzla.

Workers Power members and supporters all over the country have been working flat out to build

support for the Convoy at the same time as building vital support for the UCH and Cardiff Postal Strikes and the struggle against racism and fascism.

The Convoy still needs money (which can be wired to it en route), volunteers and other offers of help. As winter draws near further convoys will be needed. Next time the biggest left-wing groups and the trade union leadership, who have done nothing to aid this Convoy, must get off their backsides and do something.

The next Convoy should be funded and organised by the TUC and national trade union offices, not from the donated office space of small socialist groups. For protection and publicity it should be headed by labour movement leaders.

Building on the success of the Convoy all sponsors must make sure that the 30 October National Conference of WAFB becomes a working meeting to set up a principled, anti-imperialist solidarity campaign with all those fighting against the Bosnian carve up, based in the labour movement, and committed to action.■

**T**HE CONVOY has been organised by the Workers Aid for Bosnia Campaign (WAFB). Supporters of Workers Power, Workers Press, Socialist Outlook and the Campaign Against Fascism in Europe (CAFE) have formed the backbone of the organising committee.

Workers Power, whilst supporting the convoy, is not part of the WAFB Campaign. While its founding aims contain many anti-imperialist demands, it has still issued propaganda differentially hostile to the Serbs, and has even evinced political support for the pro-capitalist Izetbegovic Bosnian government.

It is beyond doubt that some of its participants—notably those in CAFE—see the Campaign as a substitute political party to make joint “revolutionary” propaganda rather than as a strictly limited united front for defined common action. That is why Workers Power insisted that the Convoy be built with no other conditions than the willingness to give solidarity and aid to all victims of the conflict in former Yugoslavia.

Many other organisations on the British left used the campaign's political confusion, and the questionable credentials of some of its organisers, as an excuse to do nothing. Thus a substantial Convoy will leave Britain in the name of international workers' solidarity without being mentioned in the pages of *Socialist Worker* or *Militant*.

They seem quite happy to leave the job of providing aid in the hands of liberal, religious and charitable organisations, rather than to use this initiative to demonstrate to working class victims of the war that their true allies are not the UN troops and agencies, but the workers of the world.

In some union branches the Convoy has even met with active opposition from the Socialist Workers Party—although many SWP members have voted to give support and are plainly sympathetic to the aims of the Convoy.■

## Defend Gerry Downing

**O**N 6 AUGUST Gerry Downing, a militant on the London buses, was victimised as a result of his union activities.

He was dismissed on a charge of “unreasonable behaviour: intending to disrupt normal business and industrial relations.”

This charge is so broad that anyone who argues for industrial action could be deemed to be breaking the rule.

London busworkers have been involved in a series of strikes against changes in their contracts. At the garage where Gerry worked, Willesden, they recently voted to reject new contracts. On both occasions the votes were overwhelming. This was despite the TGWU leaders arguing that there was no choice but to accept the second deal.

Following this management have gone on the attack. A dozen busworkers were sacked at the end of July and the beginning of August.

Gerry attended his disciplinary on 9 August. The witnesses for management included members of the union and it became clear that their original statements had been sent on to management from the garage TGWU representative. They

accused Downing of giving out material urging workers to reject deals from Metroline—the company that runs Willesden garage—and also of distributing a rank and file paper called *Busworkers' Punch*. The TGWU representatives themselves gave evidence at this disciplinary and said that they agreed that this material was intended to disrupt industrial relations.

Gerry Downing must be defended by every rank and file busworker. They must demand that the TGWU fights for his unconditional reinstatement. The recently convened busworkers' rank and file group must make the reinstatement of all those victimised in the recent disputes a top priority.

Also all those that have given evidence for the management who are in the TGWU must themselves face disciplinary action from the union. They have acted as tools for management.

If any worker dares to oppose the official line of the TGWU and organise against it they could presumably be accused of disrupting industrial relations and be grassed up by the officials.

The next step on that road is that any union activity will be deemed to be disrupting

industrial relations. Except of course for the activity of the TGWU London leadership which is best called “disrupting union activity”.■

## Summer school '93

**A**t the end of July, Workers Power held its annual Summer School, bringing together revolutionaries from across the world as well as from across the country. It was one of our best schools ever, providing a chance to study and discuss Marxism and the history of the working class movement in a lively atmosphere.

The school gave participants the chance to follow major courses on the Marxist analysis of the workings of capitalism, and on the history and meaning of the economic and political developments in Britain over the past decades. New members of Workers Power and sympathisers in attendance remarked on the seriousness and depth in which issues were discussed, the attention given to matters of theory and principle, and the opportunity that existed (sadly rare on the British left) to pursue a genuine discussion.

Further courses were held on a range of subjects, allowing us to examine in detail questions of vital importance to the working class movement.

A course was held on the history of the Bolshevik Party, to draw out the overall lessons of the principles of party organisation, looking at how the Bolsheviks succeeded in building a party that was politically intransigent and tactically flexible enough to lead the working class to power.

The role of women in revolutionary struggles was the theme of a further course, dealing with the realities of social oppression for women throughout the world, and the specific programmatic and organisational lessons to be drawn from past struggles.

In the context of the fratricidal war raging in the former Yugoslavia, we held a course on the history of the Balkans and the background to the present crisis.

Other courses included historic events in the British class struggle from the English revolution of 1640 through to the industrial struggles of the 1970s, the philosophy of Marxism and the history of the Fourth International.

There was plenty of opportunity for comrades to deliver talks on specific themes: this year there were meetings on the Lessons of the Warsaw Ghetto rising of 1943, on Marxism and Religion, on the class struggle in Sub-Saharan Africa, and on methods of organising black workers.

In a special meeting, young comrades from France, Austria, Ireland, Britain and Latin America met to discuss plans to deepen and co-ordinate the work of the LRCI in building among the youth. Finally it was not all work. A series of sporting and social events raised over £1,000 for the LRCI.■

## No violence in the labour movement!

**I**t is a long standing principle of working class democracy that political differences within the movement should be resolved through discussion and debate, not through strong-arm tactics, threats or violence.

At Marxism 93, a week of political discussion in London organised by the Socialist Workers Party, some members of the SWP marred what was in the main a democratically organised event by two physical

attacks on supporters of the newspaper *Socialist Organiser*.

In the first incident, a *Socialist Organiser* supporter was forced out of the bar in an arm lock and had his head knocked against a wall by ANL national organiser and SWP member, Rahul Patel.

Following this, when *Socialist Organiser* supporters were collecting signatures for a petition against this attack, another of their

supporters was pushed to the ground and kicked several times. There were witnesses to the attacks. The SWP have not denied that they happened.

Some SWP members have tried to excuse these attacks because of what they feel was provocative behaviour from *Socialist Organiser* supporters. A Jewish SWP member was infuriated by *Socialist Organiser*'s insistence that opposition to Zionism con-

stitutes anti-Semitism. He was quite right to treat this right wing argument with contempt.

But that would have been no excuse for physical violence. Within the labour movement, argument must be met with argument, not with force. The SWP leadership should immediately respond to these accusations and call the members responsible for these attacks to account.■

# Fighting crime

Dear comrades,

Your column in July's paper raises important issues on violent crime and how socialists should react to it.

You are quite right to point to capitalism as the cause of this violence. You are also right to say the type of violent anti-social crime in which innocent people are attacked by gangs (such as the one in Cardiff) should not be tolerated in working

class communities. I fully support your call for organised community-based defence organisations to patrol our communities.

Marxists have a term for anti-social individuals who rape, take part in racist attacks, commit burglary and muggings and prey on

our old folk—it is lumpen proletariat, these people we rank alongside BNP/C18 squads.

We can make choices comrades; either to "apologise" for criminals who are parasites within their own communities (and be seen as "wet liberal Guardian read-

ers") or defend our communities from anti-social elements (including the police) when necessary and be class-conscious communists. We cannot do both.

Yours fraternally,  
Mick Hitchin,  
East London

# Pact with Paddy?

Dear comrades,

I read these lines in *Tribune* just after the Christchurch by-election.

"The political reality of the nineties is that most differences on the centre-left are reconcilable and the overriding priority is to prevent the consolidation of a one-party state."

The person who wrote these lines obviously believes the centre-left is made up, not of factions of the Labour Party, but of Labour as a whole and the Liberal Democrats.

And this person was Sue Goss, deputy editor of the Labour Co-ordinating Commit-

tee (LCC) journal, *Renewal*. The LCC is meant to be well to the left of the modernisers on most questions.

In other words some of the left are openly arguing for a coalition with the Liberals as the only way that Labour can ever again get a sniff of power. What an indictment of Labour that with the Tories more unpopular than ever, they despair of being able to defeat them in their own right.

But it is not only an indictment of Labour's cowardice and lacklustre performance. It is also a dangerous temptation, especially for many workers in the south, to call

for a tactical vote. After all, in electoral terms it made sense to vote for the Liberals if you wanted to get the Tories out in Christchurch.

What is wrong with ever contemplating a pact with the Liberals is that, unlike Labour, no matter how radical some of their bearded weirdies sound, they are an open party of the bosses. They cannot be influenced by the working class in any way shape or form, in the way that Labour, through the block vote and trade union link, can be. They can only be taken on and defeated by workers, as they were many times during their years in government

earlier this century and during the last century.

A pact with this bosses' party would be a step backwards for working class independence. And it would give the Labour leaders the excuse of blaming their own servility to the bosses on the need to preserve a coalition with a party of the bosses.

I don't believe that Labour in power will advance us towards socialism one inch. But many workers do. Proving in practice that it's wrong, that it's an illusion, cannot be achieved by compromising class independence, however limited, and covering up Labour's anti-socialism with Paddy Ashdown's flak jacket.

Yours fraternally,  
Arthur Merton,  
Nottingham

Dear comrades,

Spurred by the decision to build a joint demo to "Shut down the BNP headquarters in Welling", Manchester has launched a Unity Committee with the aim of making the Unity demo the biggest show of anti-fascist strength possible.

The idea of the Committee is quite simple: to get all local anti-racist and anti-fascist organisations to pool their resources and experience into making sure that Manchester's labour movement, its black communities and its youth support the demonstration not only in words but in action.

"Nice idea," I hear you say, "but you'll never get the ANL, YRE, AFA, and ARA to sit in the same room together, never mind agree to that!"

But at the first meeting, convened by Workers Power supporters, all the above organisations bar ARA attended, as well as various local anti-racist groups.

Not only that, we agreed to a mass leafleting in three weeks, and a model resolution to be circulated to all union branches calling for support and affiliation to the demo.

Future ideas for activity

# Unity at last!

include a public meeting, giving talks at youth clubs and schools and organising a social to subsidise transport

to the demo.

At last the talk of the need for unity is being translated into something real. Let's

make The Unity demo do what should have been done four years ago: kick those fascist scum, the BNP, into the gutter where they belong.

Yours in fighting spirit,  
A Manchester  
Workers Power supporter



Unite to smash these scum!

# Building workers' aid

Dear comrades,

I have been involved in the building of the Workers' Aid Convoy in Sheffield. Most trade unionists have responded well to this initiative. There has been support from city council workers and bus drivers. The support of health union branches has been particularly useful as they have worked hard to get some brilliant medical supplies.

The South Yorkshire Forum of the NUM also gave its support and has pledged to take it back to the branches and to the regional NUM.

However, having said all that, there were also some sour points about the visit of the Convoy to Sheffield.

Sheffield Trades Council did nothing to build for this Convoy which is to get aid to our brothers and sisters

resisting ethnic cleansing and who desperately need our support. Worse than this though, the leaders of the Trades Council would not allow one of the Convoy members to give a short explanation to the Trades Council meeting about the Convoy. The chair went to the extreme length of calling for a card vote to prevent them speaking.

These people show they have no time for real life struggle, preferring to stick to the letter of Trades Council procedure rather than talk about how trade unionists can do anything about the Bosnian tragedy. Stalinism may well have collapsed throughout Eastern Europe and the USSR, but its leftovers still linger on in some areas of the labour movement.

Comradely greetings,  
David Esterson

# WHERE WE STAND

**WORKERS POWER** is a revolutionary communist organisation. We base our programme and policies on the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, on the documents of the first four congresses of the Third (Communist) International and on the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International.

Capitalism is an anarchic and crisis-ridden economic system based on production for profit. We are for the expropriation of the capitalist class and the abolition of capitalism. We are for its replacement by socialist production planned to satisfy human need.

Only the socialist revolution and the smashing of the capitalist state can achieve this goal. Only the working class, led by a revolutionary vanguard party and organised into workers' councils and workers' militia can lead such a revolution to victory and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. There is no peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism.

The Labour Party is not a socialist party. It is a bourgeois workers' party—bourgeois in its politics and its practice, but based on the working class via the trade unions and supported by the mass of workers at the polls. We are for the building of a revolutionary tendency in the Labour Party, in order to win workers within those organisations away from reformism and to the revolutionary party.

In the trade unions we fight for a rank and file movement to oust the reformist bureaucrats, to democratise the unions and win them to a revolutionary action programme based on a system of transitional demands which serve as a bridge between today's struggles and the socialist revolution. Central to this is the fight for workers' control of production.

We are for the building of fighting organisations of the working class—factory committees, industrial unions, councils of action, and workers' defence organisations.

The first victorious working class revolution, the October 1917 Revolution in Russia, established a workers' state. But Stalin and the bureaucracy destroyed workers' democracy and set about the reactionary and utopian project of building "socialism in one country". In the USSR, and the other degenerate workers' states that were established from above, capitalism was destroyed but the bureaucracy excluded the working class from power, blocking the road to democratic planning and socialism. The corrupt, parasitic bureaucratic caste has led these states to crisis and destruction. We are for the smashing of bureaucratic tyranny through proletarian political revolution and the establishment of workers' democracy. We oppose the restoration of capitalism and recognise that only workers' revolution can defend the post-capitalist property relations. In times of war we unconditionally defend workers' states against imperialism.

Internationally Stalinist Communist Parties have consistently betrayed the working class. Their strategy of alliances with the bourgeoisie (popular fronts) and their stages theory of revolution have inflicted terrible defeats on the working class world-wide. These parties are reformist and their influence in the workers' movement must be defeated.

We fight against the oppression that capitalist society inflicts on people because of their race, age, sex, or sexual orientation. We are for the liberation of women and for the building of a working class women's movement, not an "all class" autonomous movement. We are for the liberation of all of the oppressed. We fight racism and fascism. We oppose all immigration controls. We fight for labour movement support for black self-defence against racist and state attacks. We are for no platform for fascists and for driving them out of the unions.

We support the struggles of oppressed nationalities or countries against imperialism. We unconditionally support the Irish Republicans fighting to drive British troops out of Ireland. We politically oppose the nationalists (bourgeois and petit bourgeois) who lead the struggles of the oppressed nations. To their strategy we counterpose the strategy of permanent revolution, that is the leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle by the working class with a programme of socialist revolution and internationalism.

In conflicts between imperialist countries and semi-colonial countries, we are for the defeat of "our own" army and the victory of the country oppressed and exploited by imperialism. We are for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. We fight imperialist war not with pacifist pleas but with militant class struggle methods including the forcible disarmament of "our own" bosses.

Workers Power is the British Section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International. The last revolutionary International (the Fourth) collapsed in the years 1948-51.

The LRCI is pledged to fight the centrism of the degenerate fragments of the Fourth International and to refound a Leninist Trotskyist International and build a new world party of socialist revolution. We combine the struggle for a re-elaborated transitional programme with active involvement in the struggles of the working class—fighting for revolutionary leadership.

If you are a class conscious fighter against capitalism; if you are an internationalist—join us!

# Workers power

**INSIDE**

Number 170 September 1993

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- ★ No peace with Israel!
- ★ Nigerian workers show their power

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## BOSNIA

# UN sponsors ethnic carve-up

**T**HE UNITED Nations is policing the carve up of Bosnia. The majority of the Bosnian population—Muslims and the remaining multi-ethnic communities—will be herded against their will into a South African style "homeland" comprising barely 30% of the country's territory.

Sarajevo will be removed from the control of the Bosnian armed forces and placed under UN occupation. War-torn Mostar will be under an EC mandate.

Anyone who tries to flee these living hell-holes will be turned back at gun point by UN patrols. Those fighting the reactionary settlement will be disarmed by UN troops. Meanwhile the French and Ukrainian UN troops will continue their lucrative black market in food and ammunition, providing the only jobs for thousands of working class women who have been forced to turn to prostitution to earn money to feed their children.

The so-called safe areas—Srebrenica, Gorazde, Sarajevo—have become prisons for the Bosnian Muslims and all those fighting for a multi-ethnic Bosnia. The prison warders are the UN troops. Inside these safe areas there is no viable economy. Young men, disarmed by the UN, wander the streets without hope or work. Factories lie in ruins. The basic amenities of life, such as power and clean water, have been destroyed and the means to repair them lie in the hands of the victors.

The division of Bosnia is no solution to this. Not one of the three ethnically defined states is viable. The economy, already shattered by war, will



be stunted still further by the arbitrary borders that will be drawn along the ceasefire lines.

The UN-enforced "settlement" will prolong the agony of the Bosnian Muslims. It will not prevent starvation this winter, but guarantees ethnic-based citizenship and the rule of nationalist and even fascist warlords.

Despite being designed to "contain" the Balkan conflict, the settlement will only fan the flames. Macedonia, Kosovo, the Greek-Albanian border—these are multi-ethnic regions waiting to explode. The example of victorious nationalist genocide will encourage every aspiring nationalist demagogue and pogrom gang. If these regions do explode then the multi-millioned working classes of Greece,

Albania, Turkey and Bulgaria could be called on once again to kill each other in the name of "national self defence".

The nationalist murderers have won in Bosnia, and their victory has been guaranteed by the United Nations. Any rational human being can now see the truth of what *Workers Power* has been saying since the start of this bloody war:

- UN intervention was never going to prevent ethnic cleansing
- UN intervention means imperialist intervention
- UN intervention guarantees the defeat of the Bosnian Muslims
- UN intervention secures the carve up.

John Major has tried to win much needed public support by allowing a few wounded children into Britain. But this

rotten hypocrite wants to restrict this just to children, and precious few of them at that. Meanwhile over one million refugees live in squalid camps, with the doors of Britain and the EC slammed in their emaciated faces.

This is happening to people like you. Elena, a Bosnian refugee from Sarajevo, told a meeting at London's Conway Hall last month:

"The TV only show pictures of Bosnian women in scarves and peasant dresses. That way they want you to think of us as something remote, something different. But we dress like you, we live the same lives as you—all this could be happening to you."

Workers in this country have a spontaneous reaction to the Bosnian genocide—"somebody must do some-

thing". But as the horror and the killing continues, as peace talks lumber on, the anger leads to resignation, to the idea that "nothing can be done". But something can be done.

The British working class movement must provide solidarity with all those fighting the reactionary settlement. We must take sides with the just fight of the Bosnian Muslims against their oppressors—without giving any political support to the reactionary Bosnian government or any racist attacks committed by Muslim forces. We must demand:

- the immediate lifting of the arms embargo, which has left the Bosnian Muslims defenceless
- the lifting of all sanctions against the states of former

Yugoslavia

- the immediate withdrawal of British and UN troops from the area

- the opening of the borders, the hospitals and the schools of Britain to all those fleeing the war in ex-Yugoslavia.

We need to build mass support for the Workers' Aid for Bosnia Convoy and the demonstration in London on Sunday 5 September.

In doing this workers will not only strike real blows against nationalism and genocide. They will send a signal to the workers of ex-Yugoslavia that it is not Margaret Thatcher or Bill Clinton they must look to for justice, but to the international working class. ■

**SUPPORT THE CONVOY!**  
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