

# Workers power

## NO AIR STRIKES!

Major has called for air strikes against the Serbs. A NATO bombardment will not defend the victims of ethnic cleansing. It is Britain and the EC who have sponsored the carve-up of Bosnia. They should get out of the Balkans now and lift their arms embargo so the Bosnians can defend themselves.

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

Price 40p/10p strikers Solidarity price £1

## THIS "MORAL" GOVERNMENT



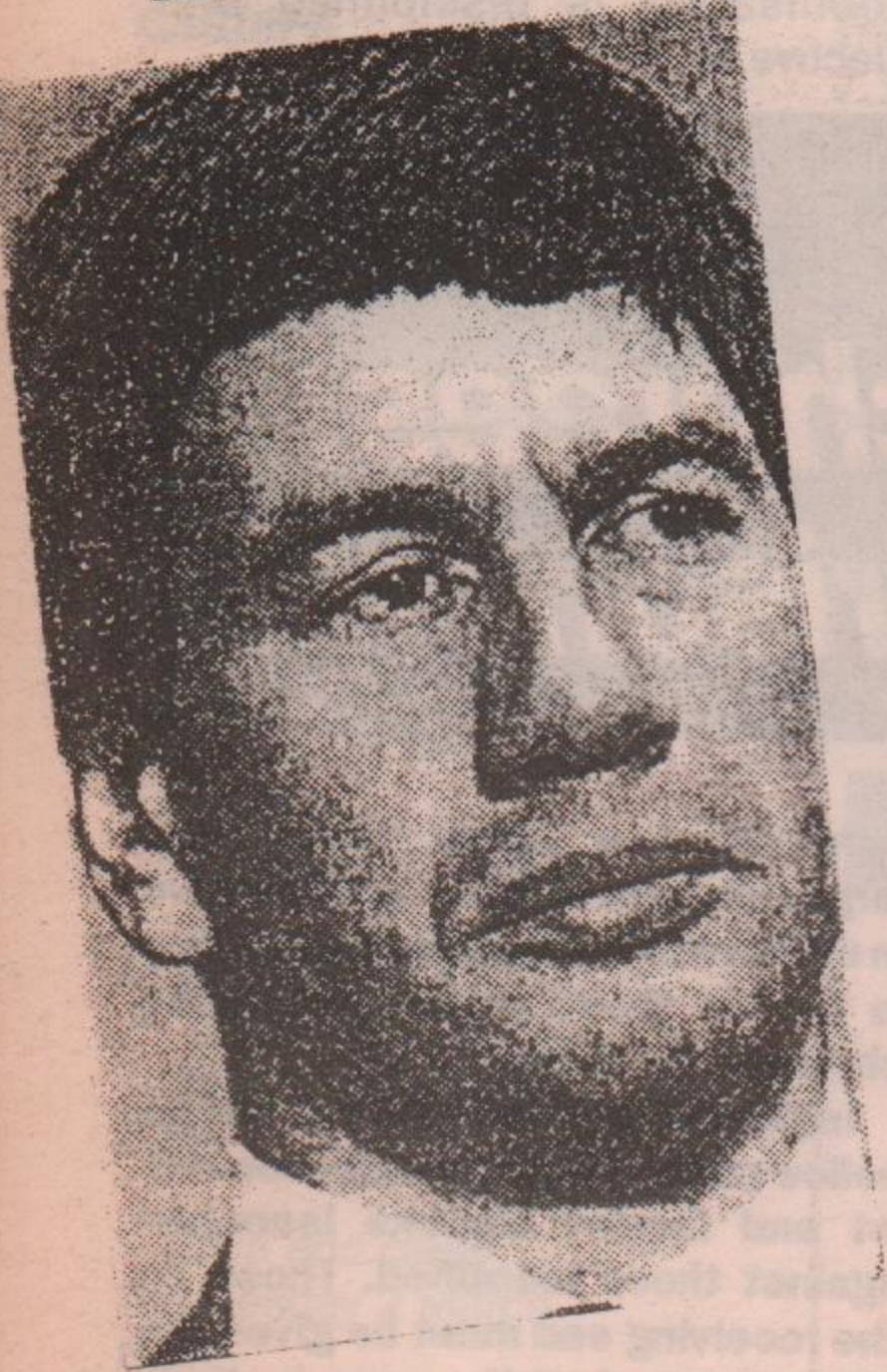
# Corrupt

- ★ *Third world aid linked to arms deals*
- ★ *Jobs for the boys in Quangos*



# Thieving

- ★ *Tax rises slice £10 a week off your pay*
- ★ *Pay freeze for workers—massive rises for bosses*



# Racist

- ★ *Portillo claims foreigners are lazy and corrupt*
- ★ *Foreign-born claimants face more harassment*

**Don't let the Tories off the hook!**

**TURN TO PAGE 3**

**L**AST SEPTEMBER a charitable trust asked schools in Hackney if they wanted to take part in a project around a ballet based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. The project would involve working with members of the Royal Ballet: they would visit the school, pupils would take part in a performance and there would be a trip to the Royal Opera House.

Kingsmead School didn't accept. Head teacher Jane Brown felt that the project was unsuitable. The pupils had already taken part in a dance project, the curriculum for the year had been planned, there were not enough teachers to spare and many parents could not afford even the £7 reduced price ticket on offer.

During a conversation with one of the organisers, Ingrid Haitink, Jane Brown made a comment about the heterosexual nature of the love story. Haitink wrote to Hackney Council. She did not complain about the lack of teaching staff in Hackney schools which means that pupils miss chances to take part in outside trips. Instead she expressed her shock that someone should question Shakespeare.

Hackney Council, correctly, ignored the letter. But in January 1994 it was leaked to the press, who immediately saw the potential for a good "loony left" scandal. Here was a chance to have a go at the left, "political correctness", equal opportunities and lesbians and gay men.

When the story hit the headlines the school was besieged, children were followed home and Jane Brown, forced into hiding, received death threats.

Hackney Council's education chiefs, instead of defending a head teacher who has transformed the school, taking it of the government's "at risk" list, and winning praise from parents, decided to carry out their own witch-hunt.

Pat Corrigan, Chair of Education, and John McCafferty, Leader of the Council, condemned Jane Brown before they had even heard her side of the story. Corrigan described the head's refusal as "an act of ideological idiocy and cultural philistinism". McCafferty said "because of the actions of one frankly irresponsible individual, children at this school have been denied an extremely worthwhile experience." Corrigan even gave Jane Brown's name and the name of the school to the press.

These condemnations had nothing to do with Shakespeare or education. Corrigan and other Labour leaders in Hackney are desperate to change the council's "loony left" image. They want to be seen by the Tories as reformed characters. Rather than fighting for schools to be properly resourced, they spend their time peddling the myth that all is well in Hackney schools. Jane Brown's experience show us what happens to anyone who upsets this strategy.

The Kingsmead Support Group newsletter, written by parents and teachers pointed out the real reason for Hackney's victimisation of Jane Brown:

"Because she is still committed to equal opportunity policies that the authority no longer wishes to defend or endorse in public."

There are many teachers who are working extremely hard in Hackney and there are many pupils who achieve a lot, but that success is despite the likes of McCafferty and Corrigan not because of them. But what makes their role in this episode even more outrageous is the fact that they are both members of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) the union to which Jane Brown also belongs.

Having thrown Jane Brown to the mercy of the press, the Council are clearly determined to get rid of her. An investigation began, in which she was at first denied union representation. Gus John, Hackney's Director of Education, ran to the press again to declare that he intended to suspend

*The furore over Jane Brown must have come as a god-send to the Tories. The Hackney headmistress allegedly denied her pupils the right to see Romeo and Juliet at the Royal Ballet on the grounds of its "heterosexual" content. She was then revealed to be a lesbian, whose partner is the former head of school governors. What a story! Sex, corruption and not a Tory minister in sight. And another chance for the Tory press to bash a "loony left" Labour council. As always the truth behind the headlines is different. Jane Brown's alleged remarks taken out of context and blown out of all proportion. Hackney's Labour Council has colluded with the press and the Tories to victimise Jane Brown. But Hackney teachers, students and parents are fighting back, as Sheila Phillips reports.*



## Defend Jane Brown!

her. Gradually the story changed from one about her views on Shakespeare to smears about her appointment and her sexuality.

But Gus John, the Tory ministers and the reactionary press pundits underestimated one thing: the support that Jane Brown had among teachers and parents. At a lively meeting at the school he was told in no uncertain terms that Jane Brown's sexuality had nothing to do with her ability to run the school.

The fact that she is a lesbian is not important, whereas the fact that she is "a bloody good teacher" is. The

governors, with massive support from the parents, refused to suspend Jane Brown.

Gus John and the Hackney Labour leaders have not given up. They are continuing the witch hunt, attempting to enforce the suspension of Jane Brown and investigating her for alleged misconduct. They base these allegations on her partner having been chair of governors at the school and the fact that she received advice when preparing for the interview. But all teachers receive help and advice when preparing for interviews and governors do not have a major say in the

appointment of headteachers. They may have some power over the appointment of most teachers but in the case of heads the education authority plays a much greater role.

We must defend Jane Brown. Hackney NUT members and parents should demand that all accusations made against her are dropped and the Director of Education and Council should publicly apologise.

At stake is the fate of one teacher, but the outcome of this case will have an effect on equal opportunities in Hackney, and the rights of all lesbian and gay teachers.

NUT members should also demand that the National Executive of the NUT expels McCafferty and Corrigan from the union because of their part in this witchhunt. ■

*A support campaign has been set up. Messages of support should be sent to Kingsmead Support Group, c/o Hackney NUT, 219 Mare Street, London E8. Motions from trade unions condemning the actions of Hackney Council should be sent to them at the Town Hall, Mare Street, Hackney.*

**J**ANUARY 16 saw a large and, for once, united mobilisation against a Nazi Blood and Honour concert. As always the Nazis planned to do their posturing in secret. But anti-fascists were one step ahead of them. The "redirection point" at Old Street tube station, to which Nazis from all over Britain and Europe had been sent, was occupied by 250 anti-fascists.

Meanwhile Workers Power, ANL, YRE and Anti-Fascist Action stewards' groups patrolled the public transport routes to Becontree, where the fascist gig was planned to take place in a local pub. When the fascists reached their Becontree rendezvous their problems were only beginning. In an unprecedented display of unity in action the ANL and YRE, with Workers Power playing a leading role, marched 400 demonstrators from Barking to Becontree, despite constant harassment from the police.

As we passed through Becontree's council estates—exactly the kind of "white, suburban" estates targeted by the BNP—large groups of local youth joined the demo. Young school students organised themselves into groups to scout out the BNP, many signing up there and then to join the YRE.

As the march approached the fascists' pub, Blood and Honour ran for it. As riot police poured out of their vans to block the march, co-ordinated stewarding successfully prevented any provocations and police attacks.

Determined to punish the anti-fascists for such a show of strength and unity, the police closed down the tube network, stranding hundreds, until we agreed to board a sealed train to Victoria Station, nearly ten miles away in west London.

This was a well planned trap which the police had already sprung on another large group of anti-fascists who had attacked the BNP en route. Instead of Victoria we were shipped to Earls Court. When the hundreds of anti-fascists were finally allowed to

## BECONTREE

# Nazi gig stopped!

leave the train, the police were clearly determined to provoke violence. One black youth was picked out, abused and attacked by police. The police then attacked outside the station. They repeatedly charged demonstrators who were attempting to get away down Earls Court Road. They attacked fleeing demonstrators and bystanders indiscriminately.

Undaunted many anti-fascists regrouped and headed for Waterloo station where the Nazis—drawn like lemmings to the site of their previous defeat—were attempting to regroup. Hundreds of anti-fascists again evaded police harassment to get within 200 yards of the Wellington Pub where the fascists were coralled by the police. In their frustration the fascists began to destroy the pub, whereupon the riot police waded in to disperse them.

The lessons of this successful day are that anti-fascist unity can't be left to declarations, and calls. It has to be built concretely, around the common aim of denying the fascists any platform for their views, by physical means where necessary.

For all its public disavowal of anti-fascist violence as "squadism" the Anti Nazi League was at last prepared to confront and take on the fascists, and to collaborate with other groups who have been carrying out this struggle over the last few years.

This collaboration has to be built on, both to make sure that every fascist event is found and stopped, and to prevent police provocations.

The Metropolitan Police are clearly out to destroy the mass anti-racist movement which has grown up in the

teeth of opposition from the labour and trade union leaders.

They fear a mass movement led by the left and committed to direct action. They fear most of all the support and participation of ordinary working class people, especially youth on the estates.

They are determined to teach anybody who participates in the anti-fascist movement a lesson: demonstrate and you have a good chance of your head being broken, your photo

being taken and filed and your activities monitored.

There is an answer to these police tactics. We need to build every mobilisation to make it as large as possible. We need to ensure unity in action.

And we need a co-ordinated stewarding organisation, with the authority to prevent provocations and to organise self-defence, so that every mobilisation is disciplined and effective. ■

## WELLING

# Drop the charges! Free the prisoners!

**T**he police have launched a witch-hunt against marchers who defended the 16 October Unity Demonstration in Welling. They have spent thousands of hours of police time, and hundreds of thousands of pounds, combing through videos and photographs in order to victimise anti-fascist demonstrators.

In addition to thirty-two charged immediately after 16 October the police have issued 80 photographs to the press, which has offered the usual rewards and displayed the mugshots under headlines like "Faces of hatred" (Mail) and "Name that Loon". Contrary to claims of black police

constable Les Turner, there were large numbers of black youth active in defence of the demonstration. One in five of those victimised in the photographs is black.

In the coming weeks there will be police raids, sackings and even racist and fascist attacks launched against those identified. Those on the receiving end must be given the full support of all the organisations involved in the Unity demo.

Every demonstrator charged should be defended. Anti-fascist organisations should unite now to form a legal defence committee for those rounded up. ■

## EDITORIAL

# Don't let the Tories off the hook!

MAJOR'S GOVERNMENT staggers from one disaster to another. As scandal follows scandal, as ministers contradict each other, as Tory politicians make U-turn after U-turn, it is difficult to keep pace with the Tory crisis.

They sold arms to Iraq, but "nobody knew about it". They have rigged votes through "social cleansing" in Westminster and Wandsworth. They have starved backward countries of aid in order to sweeten arms contracts for their better-off allies in the third world. Their unelected quingos have squandered millions in corrupt and mismanaged property deals.

They have preached about family values while leading secret sex lives well beyond the bounds of Tory morality. They demand respect for "Crown, Parliament and Church" from a public which increasingly holds all three in contempt.

Their tax increases will raise the average family's tax bills higher than under any Labour government. Their much vaunted "economic recovery" leaves three to four million unemployed. And in John Major's "classless society" the children of the unemployed survive on just over half the nutrition they would have received in the Victorian workhouse!

What has caused the Tory crisis? Is it because, having been in power so long, they have simply "lost the edge"? Or is it just John Major's weak personality that is to blame?

No, the causes of the crisis go far deeper.

First, and fundamentally, the Tories are divided over the question of Europe. Britain's role in the world economy has changed. In the aftermath of the old Cold War, the capitalist world is breaking up into rival competing blocks. The British capitalist class has to answer the question: for or against an integrated block in Europe? Britain has massive investments outside Europe. That is why in the past it has allied itself with the USA, which as the leading economic power in the globe aimed to prevent the emergence of an integrated Europe under German economic leadership.

But over the last 20 years Britain has become more dependent on Europe. Over half its trade is now with the countries of the European Union. Big manufacturing and financial companies need to collaborate more and more within Europe. The Rover deal is only one recent example of this process at work.

It is this conflict of interests within different sections of the capitalist class that is at the root of the rising factionalism within the Tory party. On the one hand there is the Thatcherite "92 Group" and their moles in the cabinet—moles who, as in the case of Portillo, are increasingly stepping forward as an

alternative leadership to Major. On the other hand are figures like Hurd and Clarke. They are less prepared to obstruct European integration, but they are hardly enthusiastic advocates of it.

The ruling class has relied on the Tories to break union power and attack the poor, but in the process they have saddled themselves with a party that cannot embrace a wholeheartedly pro-European strategy. As we predicted in our action programme *The fight for workers power*.

"If British capitalism is to avoid marginalisation and ever more rapid decline it will ultimately have to find a place in Europe . . . The problem of Europe can only be solved under capitalism if the British ruling class is able to defeat its pro-Washington anti-European wing decisively and find a political leadership which can place Britain firmly within the integration process. Until the ruling class finds a stable parliamentary majority for this strategy, the question of Europe will be a source of political instability and splits within the major British political parties."

Instability is what we are getting, with a vengeance. Major was forced to make ratification of the Maastricht Treaty an issue of "confidence"—an admission of political weakness that set the Tory right scheming for his removal.

To head-off a challenge from the right, Major swung the whole party rightwards at the party conference. He launched the "back to basics" slogan amid a welter of hang-em, jail-em and deport-em speeches. Ghoulish products of the public school system were let loose to air their reactionary views on every subject. In particular they launched a moral campaign, targeting "loose morals" and single parents as scapegoats for all society's ills.

Did nobody tell Major, when he unleashed this torrent of moralism, that his ministers had been fornicating their way through the Tory shires, leaving a trail of single mothers and, allegedly, disgruntled footballers in their wake? If they did he was in no position to take notice. He was at the mercy of the Tory right, and there he will stay, unless he risks a split that could easily propel him from office.

In the meantime the Tories have been busily trying to make the working class pay for the economic crisis, and in particular for the huge government debt. The right wing served notice that they would oppose any substantial increases on taxes aimed at the well-off. So they are taxing the working class to the hilt from April. They are condemning pensioners to even colder and more miserable winters through VAT on fuel, and have introduced an effective pay cut for 1.5 million workers. At the same time they want to restrict our right to fight back and stoke up racism to

divide us. More anti-union laws, attacks on the right to silence, arbitrary detentions, onslaughts against "corrupt" or "scrounging" foreigners: the list of attacks is as endless as the list of scandals.

And what do the Labour and trade union leaders do in this situation? They see the Tories, drifting up the proverbial creek . . . and they hand them back the paddle.

Blair, Brown, Harman, Straw—these experts in the art of saying nothing, of refusing to promise anything, of distancing themselves from all forms of working class struggle—are all Labour has to offer. The overwhelming majority of working class people feel patronised and betrayed by their petty word games with TV pundits.

Labour's entire strategy is to sit back, promise nothing, fight for nothing, and allow the Tories to self destruct. That did not work for Kinnock, and despite Labour's current 20% lead in the polls, it is not guaranteed to work for Smith and his bunch of tailors' dummies either.

We can't wait for the Tories to collapse. Sadly we can't rely on every Tory to follow the lead of Dr Michael Dutt who shot himself after his role in the Westminster homes-for-votes scandal was revealed. If Major gets the chop, they'll put some other Tory in his place.

The working class needs a leadership that will fight. Away from the world of the political classes, the lunches at posh brasseries and the parliamentary drinking clubs, ordinary people are simmering with rage at what's happening—to their jobs, their living standards, to education, health and local services.

Only the mass of the working class can pull the trigger on the Tory government. To do it we have to turn the anger into action, into a mass revolt over pay, jobs, services and against racism. That way we can stop every Tory attack in its tracks, and drive this corrupt, thieving, racist government from office. In the process we can do something else. We can organise the most determined, militant and politically conscious workers and youth into a new political force—a party that connects every struggle to the aim of revolution to overthrow the capitalist system, the source of economic crisis, racism, and poverty. ■

Published every month by Workers Power (Britain):  
BCM 7750, London WC1N 3XX

ISSN 0263-1121

Printed by Newsfax International Ltd:

Unit 16, Bow Industrial Park, Carpenter's Rd, London E15

## workers power

### MEETINGS

#### BIRMINGHAM

• *What is Permanent Revolution?*

Monday February 14  
7.30pm

• *Who is to rule in South Africa?*

Monday 28 February  
7.30pm

See sellers for venue

#### CARDIFF

• *State and revolution*

Thursday 10 February  
8.30pm

• *The politics of political correctness*

Wednesday 23 February  
8.30pm

• *Companies House Workplace Readers' Group*

*How to smash the pay freeze*  
Thursday 17 February  
12.30pm

See sellers for venues

#### LEICESTER

• *"Family values"*

Tuesday 15 February  
8pm

• *Race and class*

Wednesday 2 March  
8pm

See sellers for venue

#### LONDON

• *Russia's rising fascist threat*

Tuesday 8 February  
7.30pm

• *After the split, have Militant's politics changed?*

Tuesday 22 February  
7.30pm

London School of Economics  
Room 419, St. Clements Building

Houghton Street WC2

#### MANCHESTER

• *Russia: Nationalism, fascism and capitalist restoration*

Thursday 17 February  
7.30pm

Manchester Metropolitan University Students Union

• *Public meeting:*

*Youth oppression and the age of consent*

Wednesday 2 March  
7.30pm

Manchester Metropolitan University Students Union

#### SHEFFIELD

Workers Power Readers' meetings

• *The politics of political correctness*

Tuesday 15 February  
8.00pm

• *What's behind the Tories' crisis?*

Wednesday 2 March  
8.00pm

Women's Discussion Group

• *What is happening in Russia?*

(Eyewitness report and discussion)

Tuesday 8 March

See sellers for venues

### BOLSHIE WOMEN

**A weekend of discussion and debate for women**

*Sessions include:*

- Rise and fall of the welfare state - women and reformism
  - Suffragettes and socialists
  - How long can capitalism survive
    - The family in crisis
- Political correctness and the labour movement  
**and much more!**

DATE: 9/10 APRIL 1994

VENUE: SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY STUDENTS UNION

TICKETS AND DETAILS FROM WORKERS POWER

The takeover of Rover by BMW shows the vital importance of workers' internationalism.

The Tories sold Rover off to British Aerospace for a fraction of its real value and gave BAe bosses a smooth £63 million in "sweeteners". Within a few years BAe have sold it on for a profit of over half a billion.

But what have the Labour leaders had to say about it? Instead of blaming the capitalists and their system, Labour's Robin Cook says the answer is to keep the company British.

But it makes no difference to the workers whether the exploiters count their millions in London or Frankfurt. British and German workers both face

sackings, pay restraint and speed up. And at the same time that British negotiators arrived in Germany to meet BMW bosses, German work-



ers were walking out on strike in a massive show of strength.

Workers Power fights all nationalist attempts to set one group of workers against another. But our international-

ism goes beyond verbal declarations. We are part of an international organisation that is fighting to build a new party of the working class across the world. Our British and German comrades have been engaging in joint campaigns and struggles for years, from 1984 when we organised tours of striking British miners around German workplaces, to today when our activists are linking up in the fight against the rise of the Nazis (see page 5).

All of this costs money, for phone calls, plane and train fares, and—most expensive of all—international meetings and conferences. So put your internationalism into practice and donate to our international fund. Every penny counts!

### OUT THIS MONTH!

### PERMANENT REVOLUTION

#### ISSUE 10

- The British economy
- The unions in the '80s
- Militant—the unbroken thread?
- Walter Daum and state capitalism

£2.50

or £3.25 P&P from  
Workers Power, BCM 7750  
London WC1N 3XX

### 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:

- Workers Power £7 for 12 issues
- 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: .....

**SHEFFIELD**

# Strikes can beat the cuts

**A**FTER TWO years of pay cuts and job losses, Sheffield council workers were outraged when the Labour City Council announced that a further 1,100 redundancy notices were being prepared. The council claimed that £31 million "savings" had to be found to balance the books for 1994/5.

£18 million of the cuts are proposed by cutting back on vital services. The callousness of the cuts matches any meted out by a Tory council. Eight day centres for pensioners are to be closed, home helps

may be privatised, child protection work is targeted for cuts and 14 schools are facing closure.

The "municipal socialist" council once prided itself on its cradle-to-the-grave protection. Now, children and the elderly count for nothing except expenditure items in a ledger book.

The council started their offensive last December, when they leaked the idea of yet another "jobs-for-pay-cuts" package. When the proposed 2.75% pay cut met with widespread opposition from the workforce, councillors hurriedly disowned this plan and opted

for a divide and rule strategy instead. Different departments across the authority were singled out for cuts in jobs and services.

The reaction of the newly merged Unison branch has been swift and militant. A 2,500 strong all-members meeting - the first to pull ex-NUPE, COHSE and NALGO members together - voted overwhelmingly for a one-day strike on 10 March, when the council is due to debate its budget. Across the board walkouts were agreed should any worker receive a redundancy notice before the strike. The meeting also voted to begin building a fighting alliance with service users.

Faced with this determined response, the council have already backed down from their immediate threat to issue redundancy notices on 1 February. But it is clear that the militancy of the branch's rank and file is being threatened by an unholy alliance of certain right wing union officers and Labour councillors. Labour

councillors leafleted the mass meeting, scandalously claiming left wing union officials were lying. Some have even sunk so low as to orchestrate a McCarthyite witch hunt of left activists through the pages of the local press! These actions have been inspired by the hostility which regional and national Unison officials have shown to the branch since the members ousted the old right wing leadership who pushed through last year's pay cut.

Now it appears that the union's right wing are trying to devolve negotiations down to departmental level in order to isolate those most threatened before the planned strike. EX-NUPE and COHSE officers even claim that the mass meeting could not have made any binding decisions because the three branches have not yet formally merged.

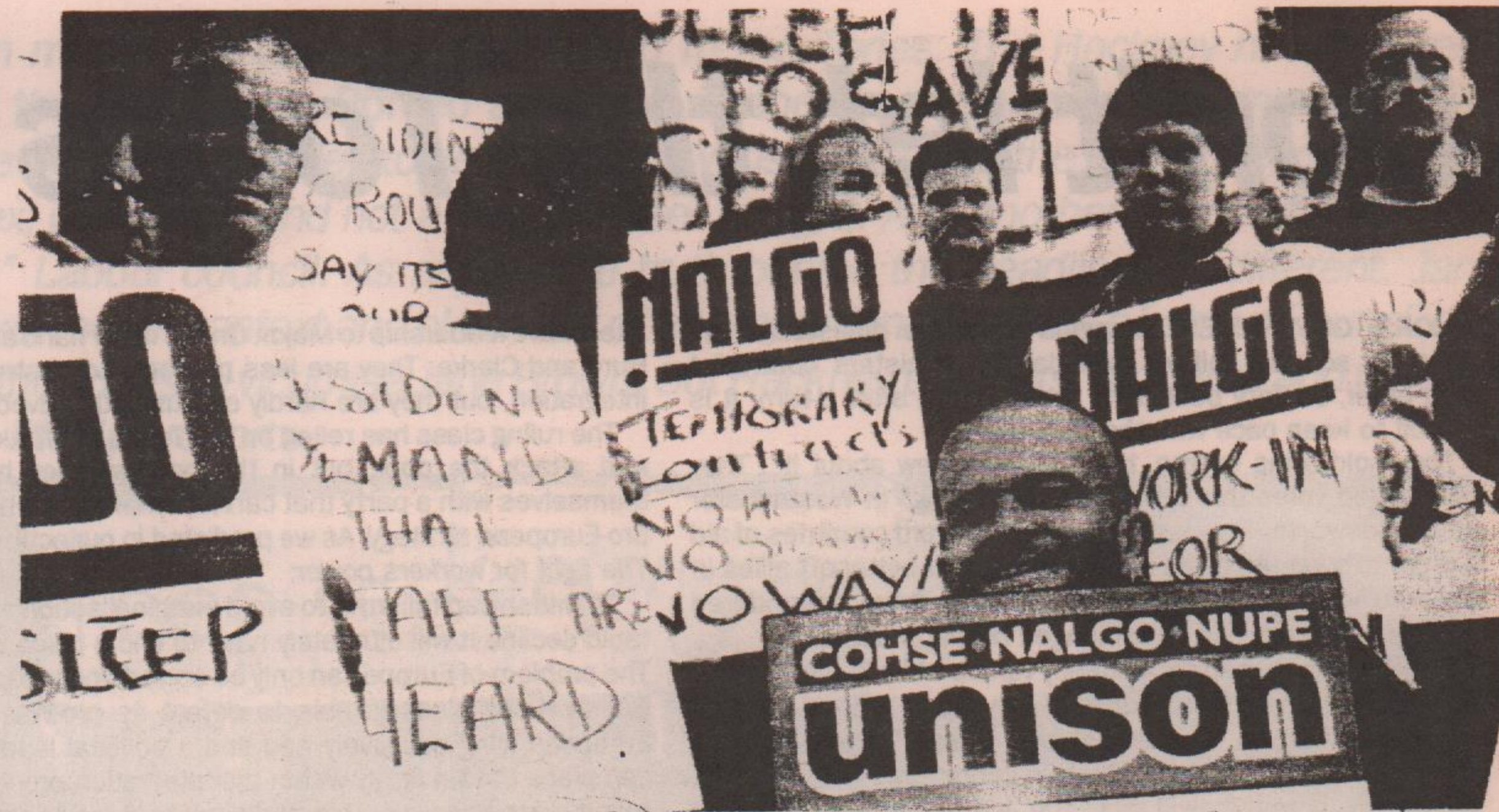
Despite the smears of councillors

and manoeuvring of the right wing, the potential for a victorious fightback, after years of unnecessary defeats, is still there.

Unison members in the three most threatened departments - Land and Planning, Employment and Economic Development and Design and Building Services - have already voted for all out indefinite strike action if any redundancies are issued. Other departments plan to follow suit.

Such action linked with militant occupations of threatened services - with the active support of users wherever possible - can blow the council's plans apart. But Unison members need to organise now and not wait for the P45s to start arriving. We must not allow the right wing union officials and the employers to divide or isolate us.

- Indefinite strike action to save all jobs and services!
- Occupy against the closures!
- No pay cuts and no job losses!



BY A UNISON MEMBER

**COLLEGES**

BY STUART KING

# Build for strike action in March!

**T**HE EMPLOYERS' campaign to force through new contracts in Further Education Colleges entered a new stage last month. The College Employers Forum (CEF) held a series of meetings for college managements, explaining how the new contracts should be forced through following the breakdown in national negotiations with the lecturers' union NATFHE.

The Department for Education (DFE) intends to write to all colleges making clear that unless they fulfill certain conditions in getting staff onto the new contracts, they will be subject to a 2% holdback in funds. Now the new contracts will effect not only new starters and promotions but all currently employed staff.

The CEF lays out a strategy to force existing staff onto these contracts. The new contracts involve extending the working week from 30 to 37 hours "on premises", abolishing all restrictions on hours taught per week and virtually halving holiday entitlement. The current 21 hours maximum in the classroom could theoretically be increased to 37!

Staff who agree to sign the new contracts will be offered a paltry £500. Staff who do not will be denied any pay increase for 1994 and probably beyond. New performance-related increments will be introduced, but only for those on the new contracts.

Other "benefits" designed to encourage lecturers to sign include private health insurance "at least for management staff" and "death-in-service benefit schemes". Presumably the latter is especially important given the work load that lecturers will now be expected to carry out!

Following the breakdown of talks with the CEF, a NATFHE Further Edu-

cation Sector Conference rejected the leadership's proposals to go into college-based negotiations. Having failed to strike a deal nationally with the CEF, and despite making a series of concessions, the executive wanted local deals, leaving the weaker areas, and colleges where new contracts were already introduced, in the lurch.

Unfortunately the Sector Conference narrowly rejected a call for all-out strike action but voted overwhelmingly for escalating action involving three, four and five day strikes. Scandalously a sub-committee of the Executive, the "Action Committee", overturned this decision. They substituted a one day strike on 1 March. Further plans for action are still vague.

College lecturers face a two-fold struggle at the moment: against their employers and against a union leadership that has no stomach for a fight and is constantly undermining a militant fightback. The coming national elections in the union give members the opportunity to turn out the do-nothing leadership and vote for candidates, grouped around the Socialist Lecturers Alliance, who are committed to building a democratic and fighting union.

The 1 March strike needs to be turned into a springboard to mobilise the members for further action. Strike and Action Committees should be formed at college and regional levels of the union in order to organise an effective fightback independently of the union leadership. These committees should organise a joint struggle with other unions and with the growing student protest movement against the cuts in grants in a common campaign to defeat the Tories attacks on further and higher education. ■

**I**F BOSSES and bureaucrats have one thing in common it is a hatred of strikes.

Strikes threaten their very existence. For the employers, profits cannot be made without workers producing the goods—whether that be making a car or running a passenger train. For the union chiefs, strikes also cost money but worse than that they involve rank and file members taking action against the bosses. It is this which threatens the bureaucrats' existence, as workers get a taste of what can be achieved if they controlled their own unions.

This explains the TUC's ambivalent attitude towards the Tory anti-union laws. The last piece of legislation enforced postal balloting for strikes, seven days written notice of any action and made it possible for anyone to sue strikers for inconvenience. What did the TUC do? Complain that the check-off system of deducting subs straight from wage packets was being abolished! They are more concerned about the subs that pay their salaries than they are about their members' rights to take action.

Unfortunately, stories of ballots for strike action by tube workers have an all too familiar ring. Time and again, since the partially successful wave of unofficial strikes in the spring and summer of 1989, the RMT and ASLEF top brass have threatened strikes only to use the "yes" votes as bargaining chips for late-night negotiating sessions with London Underground Limited's (LUL) bosses. Each time, these votes for action have been squandered in return for empty management promises. On 1 February officials of ASLEF, which represents the majority of the Tube network's drivers, called off the most recent proposed ballot for

# Union leaders block action

BY GR McCOLL

strike action. Members had been likely to vote for a series of 24 hour strikes in response to the bosses' latest broken promise.

Last year LUL management offered the carrot of a five day working week to entice drivers into acceptance of further job cuts in other sections of the workforce and changes in their own working practices. Now LUL's bosses are saying they cannot afford the £3 million to fund their end of the bargain. They are instead looking to axe more than 800 jobs on top of 5,000 eliminated in the past year.

At the time of going to press, it is not known what the precise nature of LUL's "concessions" in return for cancelling the ballot are—if any. But ASLEF members will need open discussions at mass meetings to decide on whether it merits calling off the ballot—and if not, how to force their leaders to issue the papers.

At the moment, the RMT, the other main union on the underground, is talking left. Bob Crowe, an RMT executive member with responsibility for the tube, has issued warnings to the press of the prospect of a sustained campaign of industrial action. There is widespread anger throughout the workforce in the face of another cut in real pay. Meanwhile, the RMT bureaucracy is especially worried by the possibility that LUL management might refuse union recognition on the extension of

the Jubilee Line when it is finally completed.

The sole occasion since 1989, when a ballot for action resulted in an actual strike, came in November of last year when most of the Central Line ground to a halt. RMT and many ASLEF members walked out over management's attempt to victimise long-standing union activists, Pat Sikorski and Ray Stelzner. This one day strike prompted LUL's bosses to retreat and reinstate both men with no strings attached.

This small but important victory showed that union organisation survives on LUL and that workers have not lost their appetite for a fight. Now militants in both unions must build in the depots for cross-union meetings with the aim of winning the earliest possible ballot date for the RMT and securing solidarity action from ASLEF. This will also help break down accumulated sectional distrust which the two union bureaucracies have played on in recent years. Finally activists need to win the rank and file membership to a strategy of joint indefinite strike action around the whole series of management attacks, which could still form the prelude to privatisation of the network. In the event of action strikers should elect a committee accountable to mass meetings and charged with bringing to book their unions' national bureaucrats who have given away so much behind closed doors. It's time to put away the "bargaining chips" and up the stakes. ■

**TUBE**

Students are fighting back. 3,000 students demonstrated against the Tory attack on grants in Birmingham. Over 2,000, supported by teachers' and lecturers' unions, marched in Leicester's biggest display of defiance for years. In Sheffield an important sign of the unity that must be built was shown when hundreds of students were joined on a city centre march by delegations from local trade unions, including council workers and teachers. There have been similar protests in other parts of the country.

**The unofficial demonstration against grant cuts and student poverty on 23 February is going to be huge and angry.**

The NUS leadership has done nothing to lead a militant fight against the cut in grants. Instead of organising an immediate national demonstration as well as a campaign of occupations nationwide, they suggested that student unions should organise a day of action by wearing red in protest! They claim that demonstrations and occupations achieve nothing and only undermine public opinion. But only two weeks ago in Paris a million students and workers demonstrated against government plans to give more money to private education. The government backed down when they saw the scale of resistance.

Despite the opposition of the NUS leadership, the 23 February demonstration has been winning support from students who want to fight back. A protest work-in at Leeds University has voted to back the demo. A national activists' meeting in London on 4 February which was called to take the campaign forward was attended by around 800 students from colleges across the country. The meeting took place in a tremendous atmosphere of militancy, and every student there was determined to build for a massive show of strength on the 23 February march.

It is an absolute scandal that the NUS leaders are not backing the march. The Tories are in a mess and hapless Education Minister John Patten is preparing to back down over his attacks on union funding, removing his proposals to outlaw much student union activity from the coming Education Bill. But it is not over yet, we still face a 30% grant cut over the next two years, the proposal to

## STUDENTS

# Build for action on 23 February!



Students on Birmingham Demonstration

bring in a graduate tax and the plans to make us pay tuition fees.

Students are desperate enough as it is—we can't afford to let the Tories get away with their attacks. That is why the response to the 23 February demo is so important. That is why every student activist should be working like mad to build the demo.

The national activists' meeting was an excellent start. Organised by Socialist Worker Student Society (SWSS) and chaired by Andrew Brammer, a SWSS supporter who has been suspended from the NUS National Executive for supporting an occupation at the University of East Anglia, it agreed to fight for occupations in the run-up to the demo and attempt to shut down the colleges on the day of

BY KIRSTIE MCGINTY

the march. A proposal from a Militant Labour supporter for a further action was also agreed. The FE sector will be shut for half-term on 23 February. The next action should be planned for 1 March, on the same day that the lecturers' union NATFHE is planning a one-day strike. A steering committee was established, made up of a member of Left Unity, a representative from Guildhall University and Brammer.

Much of the discussion focused on how to win support from workers. At the end of the meeting Brammer called for students to build action committees in their colleges and to link up with workers locally.

This is excellent. But will SWSS fight to make it a reality? In the past they have always concentrated exclusively on building occupations and demos as the way to win. Vital as this is, recent events have shown that unity with the college workers is the key. The successful strike by lecturers in Lambeth in 1992 shows that real unity between students and education workers is possible. After being threatened with redundancies by Lambeth council, lecturers responded by all out strike action. They set up a Joint Trade Union Strike Committee which not only united the unions but kept the strike under the control of the strikers rather than allowing the union leaders to sell it out. A strategy of joint action by students and educa-

tion workers made Lambeth council back down.

That is the sort of unity we need to beat the Tories—but in this fight we need *national* action. The 23 February demo should be the starting point of a fight for indefinite occupations across the country against the grant cut. SWSS need to be held to their word. Proposals should be put now to set up joint action committees with rank and file trade unionists to win their backing for our struggle, and to support them in theirs. Any SWSS groups that vote against this should be reminded of Andrew Brammer's words at the activists' meeting.

We now need to go further. The NUS leaders will not fight and have to be made accountable. This means demanding that no officer receives a level of pay or perks that cut them off from the situation facing ordinary students. If NUS leaders had to live like the rest of us on an average grant, they'd be a bit less keen to sell our struggles short.

We can't wait until the official NUS structures have been transformed and a new leadership installed. We need action now. The response to 23 February so far shows that rank and file initiatives can have a real effect. We need a permanent rank and file organisation to link up the activists across the colleges. SWSS can't play this role alone. A rank and file organisation could bring together activists from different colleges and groups to lead the movement against grant cuts, then the careerists in NUS couldn't sell us out even if they tried. ■

## GERMAN YRE CONFERENCE

# Fighting the racists in Europe

*The German section of Youth against Racism in Europe, Jugend gegen Rassismus in Europa (JRE), held its annual conference in Frankfurt on 22 and 23 January. Richard Brenner was there.*

Since German unification vicious racial attacks by Nazis have been spreading like wildfire and their organisations have grown quickly. The collapse of Stalinism in the East has left thousands of East Germans looking for answers as the reality of the free market has hit home—mass unemployment, the destruction of industry and services, no hope and no future for the youth. The Nazis have been capitalising on this with their message of hate and their murderous campaigns against foreigners. Last year 38 people were killed in Nazi and racist attacks.

The JRE is the only national campaign against the Nazis. At the conference the success of the JRE in building a vibrant and active movement was clear, with over 300 delegates and members present, representing branches from more than 40 towns and cities across Germany. One excellent sign was the large number of school students—the average age of the conference was really low. It was a refreshing change from the usual youth conferences where people in their mid-twenties always seem to dominate.

The main issue in dispute at the conference was how the JRE should relate to the mass organisations of the working class. Most delegates,

particularly those aligned to *Voran*, the German sister organisation of Militant Labour, supported the idea that in the coming general elections the JRE should raise the demand "don't vote for the right!" This is a call to vote against all the fascist parties, but also the racists of the CDU, CSU and the liberal FDP. There were a sizeable minority of Autonomists—a squatter-based youth movement that displays an extremely militant attitude when it comes to fighting the police, but which seems to regard the German working class as being too privileged to want to fight back. They wanted the JRE to call on young people not to vote for the SPD, the

Social-Democratic Party, which is linked to the trade union movement and has mass working class support. The Autonomists got a lot of support for their view, nearly a third of the votes. This was not really surprising because the SPD is like the British Labour Party—it combines its links to the working class with terrible right-wing policies. In particular the SPD has outraged anti-racists by supporting the CDU's racist restrictions on the right to asylum for refugees in Germany.

But, as a delegate from Bremen North branch and a supporter of *Arbeitermacht* (German section of the LRCI) pointed out, the best way to build strong links between the

JRE and the German workers movement will be for the JRE to fight alongside the millions of workers who have illusions that the SPD will bring them a better life. At the same time, the JRE should raise the call for the SPD to take real steps against racism and for the unions to act. This way the JRE's programme of action against racism and fascism could be put across to broad layers of the working class. Getting the SPD into power would be the best way to show to workers in practice that their trust in the SPD is misplaced.

But on some questions the JRE adopted a less militant stance than the British YRE conference in Lon-

don did last December. Workers Power's delegation at the London conference succeeded in getting proposals passed for physical confrontation to smash the Nazi gangs, and for organised defence squads to defend our movement and crush the fascists. But in Germany these proposals were voted down by a large majority, including not only the supporters of *Voran* but also the supposedly militant Autonomists. We will now need the maximum contact between the British and German groups to try to persuade the JRE that their current policy is very dangerous.

This is why the YRE needs a European conference: to make sure that we have a common policy for fighting the rise of the Nazis in Europe. A proposal for such a conference from Workers Power was voted down at the British conference. But there is a forthcoming opportunity to build strong links between YRE groups in Germany, Sweden, Holland, Belgium, France and right across Europe. The YRE is holding a European Youth Camp in Germany on 12 to 20 August. Watch this space for further details—we encourage all our young supporters to get there if they can!

The importance of building an international organisation of socialist youth has never been greater. ■

# The rights and wrongs of Political Correctness

**A** NEW novel by the author of *Jurassic Park* is launched in a blaze of publicity. Michael Crichton's *Disclosure* tackles sexual harassment—but the victim is a male who is later the subject of a false accusation of harassment himself. In the theatre a serious drama *Oleanna* plays to packed houses. It is about a college professor brought to ruin by an unjustified charge of sexual harassment. The instigator is a female student who offers to withdraw the charges if a series of "politically incorrect" books, including the professor's own, are withdrawn from the library.

Meanwhile the British tabloids are delighting in the misery they have inflicted on a headteacher. After allegedly turning down a theatre trip using arguments associated with "political correctness", she finds her job threatened and her sexuality under public scrutiny (see page 2).

## Offensive

Social workers and teachers have come under attack from Tory ministers for a wide variety of practices from equal opportunity programmes, through anti-racist curricula to opposing trans-racial adoption. All of these are given the convenient label "Political Correctness" and then ridiculed and attacked.

In this right wing offensive, reactionary writers and politicians have posed as the defenders of liberalism and free speech. They have sometimes been joined by those more often associated with progressive left wing causes. Supporters of "Political Correctness" (PC) have been accused of being authoritarian, of stifling "free thought" or of being the equivalent of new witch-hunting McCarthyites. This extraordinary upending of reality helps the right wing justify their own witch-hunts which are aimed at anyone who challenges the enormous inequalities of our society.

The reactionaries try to suggest that the odds are now stacked against white males, especially at work in terms of recruitment and promotion. All the advantages, they claim, now lie with women and people from ethnic minorities.

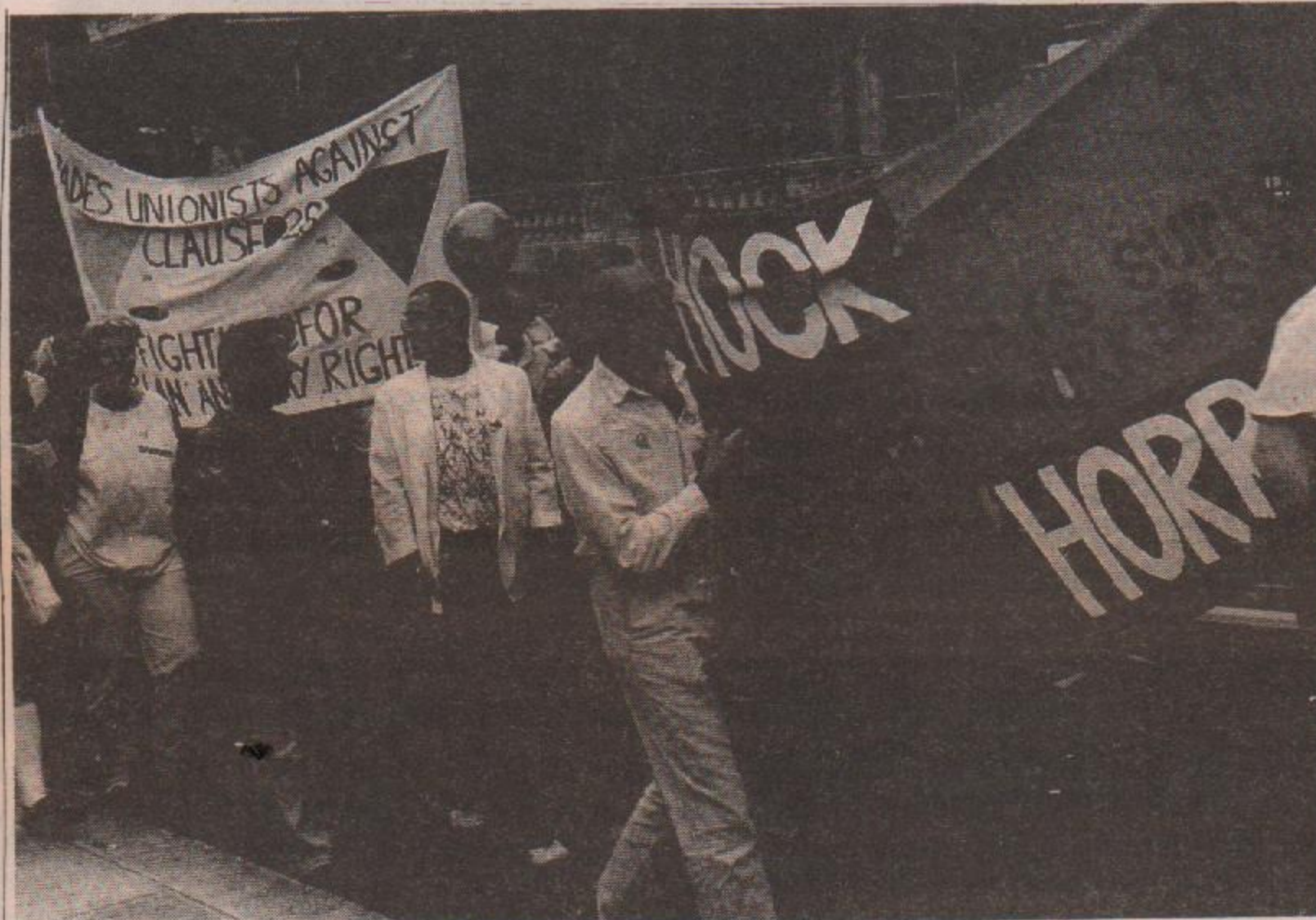
But the facts remain that women's average earnings are still 70% of men's, that unemployment rates among black youth are twice as high for whites, and that surveys have shown a huge under-reporting by women of sexual harassment they suffer at work, particularly from managers. Amongst the sea of grey suits in parliament the red and electric blue suits of ambitious women MPs stand out precisely because of their tiny numbers. Amongst the 1,736 members of the judiciary only 92 are women and just six are from ethnic minorities. In 1989 black people occupied just 207 of the 18,644 posts in the top seven grades in the civil service.

So the first response of socialists to the reactionary opponents of "Political Correctness" is straightforward. We know very well that the Tory ministers who demonise single mothers and lock up visitors from Jamaica over Christmas are opponents of equality and free speech and have to be fought tooth and nail.

## Reactionary

But fighting this reactionary backlash should not make us uncritical supporters of Political Correctness. Amongst the many differing practices and attitudes that are labelled PC there are some we should support and some we should reject. The method that underlies PC can be wrong-headed and dangerous.

The term "Political Correctness" was a term first coined in irony or self-deprecation by left wingers in the United States referring to those whose political activity became increasingly confined to dealing with appearance,



Class action—The key to fighting oppression

*The debate over "Political Correctness" has hit the British headlines recently. Stories of "loony leftism" have been gleefully reprinted by the tabloids and even Tory ministers have joined in the fray. But behind the headlines, serious issues of censorship, discrimination and how to fight oppression are at stake. Lesley Day examines the issues.*

language and attitude rather than tackling the underlying causes of inequality. Indeed, preoccupations with these issues reflected the decline and disintegration of the mass political movements—black, women and lesbian and gay—in the late 1970s. The right wing and the media then took up the term as part of the backlash under Reagan and Bush against progressive policies, particularly in the universities.

These policies were the legacy of the political radicalisation of the 1960s and early 1970s. Students and staff in universities fought for changes in the curriculum, in language and admissions policies. The universities had for long been the preserve of the middle class and privileged. There were bitter battles to get more black students admitted. As numbers increased and more working class, black and women students arrived in classes, they increasingly challenged what was being taught. Feminist academics set up the first Women's Studies courses. Black students and teachers challenged the traditional views of the history of civilisation and literature which ex-

cluded and ignored the contributions, and often the very existence, of cultures other than the European and Anglo-American.

Many mainstream academics have resisted this. They try to argue that the traditional liberal curriculum was value free and objective, whereas PC ideas mean promoting second rate writers and second rate civilisations. This is nonsense. Curricula are not neutral, and for the most part they reflect the predominant ideology of the time—that of the ruling class. When teachers and students make some progress in challenging this they are always opposed by those in command. For instance the Tories intervened to try and get the History component of the National Curriculum restricted to teaching the traditions and values of British imperialist history.

But mistakes have also been made in the name of PC. In reaction to traditional Eurocentric history and literature some PC supporters railed against "Dead White Males" dominating the curriculum. Famous literary works have been denounced as sexist, racist and offensive to stu-

dents. The answer is not however to censor such works, to remove them from course lists and libraries. Students have to be taught to recognise them as products of societies dominated by oppression and colonialism which have to be viewed and analysed critically. The working class and the oppressed have to appropriate these works for their own, sorting out what is valuable and worth learning from and what is not.

## Language

In Britain the focus of debate over PC has concentrated on language. Some of the most obviously daft aspects of PC have emerged in this area and the wrong method behind aspects of PC can be seen at work. Theorists such as Dale Spender in *Man Made Language* and other writings in the cultural field have developed idealist notions of the origins of inequality. Instead of a materialist explanation which recognises the roots of inequality and oppression in class society, language takes on an overwhelming importance. Supporters of this PC perspective seize on terms and labels and insist that anyone not using the "correct" term is a supporter of oppression. Accusations of racism and sexism get hurled about and in the midst of the furor, the question of policies and action for real change get forgotten.

It has often been in the white collar unions and workplaces that these issues are taken up obsessively. Words such as "disabled" are declared insulting to the "differently abled". A recent National Association of Probation Officers conference ruled a motion which had the term "tinkering" in it as offensive to Gypsies. Strike breakers could no longer be called "scabs" as this was offensive to people with skin diseases and so on.

## Abusive

As socialists, we know that changing language will not change the most important aspects of social reality. For instance, the changes needed to deliver decent chances for disabled people will come from fighting for a society which isn't run in the interests of profit, which provides proper facilities and so forth, not from deciding which term is the best to describe them.

But this does not mean to say that language is not important at all. Part of the fight against sexism in the trade union movement has been

changing the terms used. "Chairman" carries a certain expectation which we want to change. And even more important has been the fight against abusive or patronising language used to describe women and black people or other racially oppressed groups. Such language reinforces their oppressed position.

Trotsky took the question of language very seriously. He welcomed some of the new terms thrown up by the revolution and looked forward to a creative fusion of old and new forms. He fought for clarity above all: "Language is the instrument of thought". This phrase is very telling. The origins of exploitation and oppression may not lie in language but language contributes to shaping attitudes. That is why Trotsky and Lenin fought against rudeness when it reflected contempt by someone in a privileged position.

## Target

Trotsky fought against the tendency in the Red Army to revert to the old Tsarist habit whereby officers could use the familiar of "you" (like the French "tu") while those in the ranks were expected to use the formal version. "Of course the polite and familiar forms are only matters of convention, but definite human relationships are expressed in this convention".

Positive discrimination, known as affirmative action in the USA, is generating the most controversy at present. It has become a prime target of the anti-PC campaign.

Livelihoods and life chances are at stake. Whenever bosses and managers cut jobs or training programmes workers will be left competing for limited opportunities. Selection is never fair under capitalism. But in order to appear fair, capitalism provides—and continually recreates—prejudices to justify unequal treatment, appealing to one section against another. Usually, the bosses turn on those already suffering discrimination. This used to happen with policies of "women out first", for instance.

Modern managers are quite capable of using equal opportunities policies to foster divisions. "Well of course you deserved it" a manager whispers to a worker who fails to get a promotion or regrading, "but in the current climate of course the women/black candidates have to get the preference". This insidious divide and rule play has to be fought head on—most obviously through a united fight for better conditions and pay for all.

## Programme

But our programme should also encompass policies to combat inequalities, including where necessary "positive discrimination", and to right wrongs that are the product of oppression. Socialists try to unite all sections of the working class in fighting for the necessary resources to deliver these reforms. At the same time we point out that such measures will not eliminate oppression until its root—capitalist society—is overthrown. But the working class will not win its oppressed members for this battle if it does not take such issues seriously. "Wait for socialism" is no answer to give to the black student who sees an array of white staff running the college or the black railworker who sees all the cabins occupied by white drivers.

The politics of Political Correctness has become at best an inadequate and pale reflection of the thoroughgoing fight needed to uproot inequality. At its worst it is muddleheaded and misleads workers and young people in how to fight oppression. But its weaknesses should not prevent us fighting for an effective programme to combat oppression and exploitation and to see off the reactionary offensive that lies behind the attack on "Political Correctness" on both sides of the Atlantic. ■

## INDEPENDENT PANTHER UK

# Black separatism is not the answer

"FREE AT last, free at last!" proclaims the front page of *Panther* under the headline "A declaration of independence". The freedom and independence being celebrated are from Panther's connections with Militant Labour.

The split in Panther UK came, we are told, after "a year long protracted debate on the crucial issue of whether the group should develop as a genuinely independent Black and Asian organisation with the perspective of becoming a party at a later stage, or whether it should operate as a campaign group, with the objective of recruiting the best elements to the Militant".

## Central

The political results of Panther's new found "freedom" are contained in a reformulated programme. Reading this shows that the differences were not simply over Panther's independence, or its relationship to Militant. They were over central questions of the strategy for black liberation.

Under Militant's control, Panther drew up a programme that bore all the hallmarks of a *centrist* method. By this we mean an approach that represents a half-way house between reformism and revolutionary politics.

Until 1992, Militant used to present itself as the organic left wing of the Labour Party. Instead of challenging the ideas of reformism head on, they adapted their programme to these ideas.

A revolutionary programme must include the fight for reforms and for immediate improvements in the conditions of the working class. But it links every struggle to the need for the working class to organise the fight for political power. Above all, it makes it clear that the capitalist system cannot be transformed by peaceful, constitutional means. The armed power of the state, its apparatus of coercion and oppression, will have to be smashed by the working class and replaced by the rule of democratic and accountable workers' councils defended by a workers' militia.

Militant abandoned this approach. Instead they included no link in their programme between the fight for reforms and the need for revolution. On the contrary, they even went so far as to argue that socialism could be introduced peacefully by a Labour government.

When events knocked Militant out of its forty-year groove of adaptation to Labourism, it looked for other movements and false ideologies to adapt to. One of those ideologies was black separatism, which was on the increase as a layer of black youth rediscovered the ideas of leaders like Malcolm X.

So instead of adapting to Labour, they adapted their politics to black separatism. Just as Militant dubiously tried to claim the heritage of Labour's founder, Keir Hardie, so *Panther* claimed to continue the tradition of US Black Panther leaders, Bobby Seale and Huey P Newton. Just as Militant separated the day to day

struggle from the final goal, so *Panther*, argued for justified demands against racism, but failed to link these systematically and practically to the struggle for socialism. Crucially they failed to explain that *only* through uniting the working class to carry out a social revolution could black people achieve liberation.

Militant conceived the launch of *Panther* as a tactic. Ultimately its aim was to build a black movement politically allied to and led by Militant. There was nothing wrong with this goal. Revolutionary socialist parties should always strive to carry out special forms of work, with special organisations and papers, amongst the socially oppressed.

What was wrong, in addition to their programmatic adaptation to separatism, was Militant's dishonest way of carrying out this work. The leaders of the original Panther continually denied any formal links with Militant in public. Many black Militant members did not even sell *Panther*.

This dishonest fusion of centrist "Trotskyism" with black separatism could not last. Its inner contradictions have now exploded to create, in the shape of Independent Panther UK, a genuine black separatist organisation.

Included in Independent Panther's programme are demands for full employment, equal pay and equal access to education, an end to discrimination in the courts and trade unions and self defence "by any means necessary". These are all demands that revolutionary socialists support and fight for. But when it comes to dealing with the racist state, Independent Panther proves no more revolutionary than its Militant-controlled predecessor.

One of the hallmarks of Militant was its commitment to democratising the existing capitalist state. While Marxists advocate democratic demands that weaken the ability of the state to repress the working class, black people and youth, we do not hold out the dangerous illusion that this state can be reformed to meet the needs of the working class. So in the face of police violence we always argue for self-defence organisations, as the first practical step in the here and now towards the construction in the future of a workers' militia.

## Brutality

Independent Panther's answer to police brutality falls far short of that. It demands:

"a) a community controlled complaints authority to investigate cases of assault on our community, with the power to give compensation and bring criminal charges against police officers

b) policy and operational control of the police by democratically elected representatives from the local communities which they serve

c) the immediate disbandment of the Instant Response Unit and other specialised units used to terrorise our communities"

Every one of these demands would, if enacted, limit the powers of the



bosses' state. But for precisely that reason they will never be achieved without a fight to smash that state and replace it. The idea that the working class can ever control the bosses' police force like this is a utopia. No matter how many pictures you stick alongside your programme of Huey Newton with a gun, it is still a reformist utopia.

Another reformist and nationalist utopia is Independent Panther's programme on the cancellation of third world debt.

Revolutionary socialists always fight for the cancellation of third world debt. One of our strategic goals is an international programme of state investment to undo the damage imperialism has done to the third world. But in Independent Panther's programme this is posed in a way indistinguishable from the nationalism of anti-imperialist bourgeois nationalist movements:

"We want the cancellation of third world debt and the setting up of a fair means of trade and exchange between countries. We believe that the poverty of the so-called third world countries is because the wealth is being stolen and misused by the developed countries of the world. We want financial and technical compensation for the centuries of colonial exploitation and destruction of these countries".

The international system of imperialist exploitation is not simply a matter of one country robbing another. Nor can it be put right by restoring "fair exchange". Imperialism leads to the combined and uneven development of the colonial and semi-colonial countries. That is what causes poverty and debt. To overthrow this system we will need to overthrow the third world capitalists as well as the imperialist rulers. The whole world economy will have to be transformed in the sphere of ownership, not exchange. Then the fruits of the labour of the millions of workers and poor peasants will be in their own hands, not the multinational companies, the Western banks or their agents in capitalist third world governments.

Independent Panther's whole emphasis here—and this is the only section of its programme dealing with

international questions—is on squaring its programme with the reformist, nationalist utopias peddled by Malcolm X and Nkrumah. Even Pan Africanists like Walter Rodney, as the same issue of Independent Panther points out, were able to criticise bourgeois nationalism for ignoring class. But Independent Panther's treatment of the imperialist system ignores class altogether.

## Linked

Fundamentally, for Independent Panther, the struggle for socialism and black liberation are linked but separate. There is no explanation of why it is only socialism that can deliver freedom from oppression. Independent Panther deals with the link between oppression and exploitation with the same method as many "socialist feminists": there is class exploitation and socialism is the answer to that; and there is social oppression and Panther's programme is the answer to that.

Why else would Independent Panther set as its strategic goal the creation of an independent black political party?

Revolutionary socialists give full support to black self organisation within the workers' movement. We fight for the right to caucus, including inside the revolutionary party, and for black sections and conferences in the Labour Party and the trade unions. This is something neither Militant nor the original Panther would ever fight for. Independent Panther's programme says nothing about these demands either.

But revolutionary socialists do not fight for a separate black party. What different goals do black workers have that mean they need a different party, independent from white workers, to fight for socialism? If they have the same goals—a workers revolution, black liberation and socialism—they should be in the same party. That does not mean a working class party—even one committed to revolution—can't be infected by racism, or that struggles won't have to take place within it against instances of racism. Nor does it mean abandoning the tradition of revolutionary parties

undertaking special forms of work among the victims of oppression. What it does mean is that the black working class—a small minority of the working class in Britain—will not be able to make a revolution against the capitalists on their own. For that a party must be built of black and white revolutionary workers.

What Independent Panther has outlined in its programme is a separate road to socialism for black and white workers. That is a road to nowhere.

The whole Independent Panther programme fights shy of class. For Independent Panther the working class seems not to exist—instead "oppressed and exploited" people will lead the fight for world revolution.

*Panther* says: "We believe that black people and all other people will not be free until they determine their own destiny". What "other people"? The two words—working class—do not appear once in Panther's programme.

In offering these criticisms of Independent Panther UK, Workers Power does not hold up Militant Labour's approach as the one to follow. One criticism which Independent Panther levels at the left in Britain does ring true with regard both to Militant and the Socialist Workers Party:

"Instead of concentrating on the urgent task of raising the race consciousness of white workers left wing organisations spend all their time crudely trying to submerge the special problems of racism deep within the class struggle." The source of this error is Militant's and the SWP's belief that united trade union struggle will spontaneously overcome racism, sexism and anti-gay bigotry. Marxists call this error economism.

Workers Power has consistently criticised the economism of the SWP and Militant in all the struggles of the oppressed.

Our aim is to unite the working class in struggle without ever downplaying the fight against racism within the working class. But if all black revolutionaries are separated off in a different party, how does that help white revolutionaries "raise the race consciousness of white workers"? It doesn't, and it is a guarantee that the "race consciousness" of mainly white socialist organisations will get worse, not better.

## Split

When Independent Panther split from Militant, demanding "self determination", they threw in their opponents faces a quote from the black revolutionary CLR James, quoted out of time and out of context. Here is another quote from CLR James which Independent Panther will have to learn from, unless they want to repeat all the mistakes of Malcolm X and the US Panthers:

"The race question is subsidiary to the class question in politics, and to think of imperialism in terms of race would be disastrous, but to neglect the racial factor as irrelevant is an error only less grave than to make it fundamental." ■

## MILLWALL

## Labour split by racism

IN THE immediate aftermath of Beackon's victory the Liberals were split wide open. They had been pandering to local racism for years. Now the local Labour Party has also been riven over the question.

In September many anti-fascist campaigners suspected that Labour election agents had released bogus canvassing returns, hyping up the BNP vote, in order to frighten people into voting Labour. That cynical trick backfired.

At the same time the Isle of Dogs Labour Party had been pandering to local racism. The "Island Homes for

Island People" campaign led by the Liberals was clearly a racist campaign. It meant no housing for those on the Tower Hamlets homeless list, 40% of whom are Bangladeshi. During last September's election campaign Labour adapted to it.

In December 1993 both the chair and secretary of Millwall ward Labour Party resigned claiming "on the housing issue local people should be listened to". And what do "local people" say? James Hunt, the Labour council candidate who fought Beackon and lost spelled it out:

"There is a common belief... that the

problem is not insufficient housing but too many people moving into the borough."

Hunt's pandering to local racism earned him this accolade from the BNP in an unsigned letter to the *East London Advertiser*:

"To be fair the only Labour man I know who can claim to be even-handed on the race issue is James Hunt", wrote the BNP supporter.

Faced with a no confidence motion in the ward party, and implicated in the bogus canvassing returns scandal, Hunt quit the Labour Party in January. He is threatening to stand as an "Island Independent" in May, splitting the local Labour vote and giving Beackon the chance to win again.

This is just the tip of an iceberg of racism in the Labour movement. The fight against racism in the workers' movement must aim to remove and replace every single racist official, from MPs and councillors down to shop stewards and reps in the workplace. Black workers should have the guaranteed right to organise their own groups and caucuses inside the movement, with the aim of identifying and challenging racism in all its forms.

Above all, the Labour Party must stop supporting immigration controls and stop pandering to the racist lie that more immigration means more unemployment.

This is one of the richest countries in the world. There could be jobs and homes for everyone and many more besides if the resources were taken out of the hands of the profiteers and put under the control of working class people. ■



BNP's Derek Beackon and Richard Edmonds spread racist lies in Millwall

## Vote Labour but organise to fight!

THE MAY council elections present the chance to get the BNP voted out in Millwall. It can be done: they only just won the ward last year. Their 1,480 votes came from the most right wing and racist section of the local working class. Our fight has to be based on those who voted not just against the BNP, but for the mass party of the working class movement—the Labour Party.

In October Labour was only a handful of votes behind the BNP. The bigger the vote for Labour in Millwall this May, the more chance we have of kicking the Nazi Beackon out and stopping him spreading his racist poison in the limelight of the council chamber.

Labour's politics are moving ever further to the right. The party leadership have not lifted a finger to stop Beackon. But no alternative political party of the working class has been built. There is no alternative force in the working class movement in Millwall that is putting forward revolutionary policies or that could hope to win the election. So every socialist must side with the most class conscious workers of Millwall and campaign for the biggest possible Labour vote.

We must go through the experience with them of fighting to kick Beackon out.

Labour have left it to the Nazis to pose as defenders of the working class

in Millwall. With terrible local housing and an almost complete absence of facilities, the Nazis have won support for their lies that black people are to blame for white workers' problems. That is why, in fighting for a Labour vote, Workers Power will be demanding that Labour should act in the interests of working class people. We demand:

• **DECENT HOMES FOR ALL!**

The BNP's lies must be answered. Black people are not the cause but the victims of bad housing. The racist "Sons and Daughters" housing policy in the Isle of Dogs has meant that Asians have had less access to decent housing than whites, not more. The answer is to fight for decent homes for all.

There are nearly 50,000 homes in Tower Hamlets that are in need of repair and many of them are already unfit for human habitation. Nearly half the homes in the borough do not meet minimum standards. Meanwhile well over 1,500 flats are empty. Labour must house the homeless and carry out an emergency programme of repairs and council house building!

• **JOBS FOR ALL!**

More than one in seven of the adult population on the Isle of Dogs is on the dole. This is insanity—there is masses of work to be done building homes and decent facilities for working class peo-

ple. Labour should launch a programme of municipal works to meet the needs of the entire working class in the borough and put people back to work.

• **FOR A WORKERS' BUDGET!**

The working class in Tower Hamlets—and in every borough—know better than anyone else what their needs are and how they could be met. The Labour Group should open up their books and accounts to inspection. Mass meetings of residents should draw up their own plan and their own budget based on meeting people's needs rather than the needs of the profiteers and council careerists. This means that Labour will have to challenge the Tories' spending limits and lead a real fight against central government. The money for this programme should come from taxing the rich, and from refusing to pay interest to the banks or provide funds for the racist police.

• **FIGHT RACISM!**

The Labour Party should be going into these elections determined to challenge every racist lie and every instance of discrimination against black people. The "Sons and Daughters" policy discriminates against black residents. It must be scrapped. Labour must support the self-defence organisations formed by Bengali youth to fight back against racial attacks. ■

## NAZI ELE

## Smash t

The British National Party plans to stand as many candidates near where Beackon was elected and Beackon's victory has become a model for how the BNP campaign is allowed to take place, working class communities thugs. Socialists, trade unionists and black voters can expect what happened in Millwall. If the BNP get their way the urgent task is to stop them

THE LEADERS of the official Labour movement—the trade unions and the Labour Party—have between them millions of members. They have access to the TV and newspapers, a platform in parliament and on local councils, and the power to deliver action if they just give a lead. The power of the organised working class movement in Britain could scatter the few thousand fascist rabble to the winds.

Once the Nazi Beackon was elected in Millwall there should have been a massive campaign to expose him, to undermine his support in Millwall, and to take direct action to stop him taking advantage of his council position.

But the leaders of the Labour and trade union movement did not give a lead. The result is that, instead of isolating and weakening the fascists, it is the Labour Party which has been weak-

ened in the Isle of Dogs.

On the day after the BNP election victory, housing workers in the Isle of Dogs walked out on strike. The Nazi councillor now had the right to walk into housing offices and issue orders to individual housing workers. They were outraged. And they did the right thing by taking action.

Instead of backing the action, officials of the local government union Unison moved in to head off the action. The workers' threat to boycott all work with Beackon became a threat to boycott only work of a "racist character". This was a cop-out, because the whole aim of the BNP's activity is build up support for their racist party. Anything that helps Beackon—giving him a single paper clip—is helping the growth of a Nazi party. We have to stop him functioning as a councillor altogether.

The Labour Group on the council

## FIVE STEPS TO BE

**1 Build a Workers' United Front!**

The main working class, socialist, black and anti-racist organisations should unite in action to smash the BNP. There should be no excuses, no sectarianism, no refusal to join forces on any pretext. Any organisation whose leaders obstruct united action should be branded as wreckers. Their stupidity only helps the BNP.

In every town the leaders of anti-racist organisations, Labour parties and the trade unions should be forced to collaborate to set up a united campaign against the BNP committed to denying the fascists any platform for their views. It has been shown that this can work. Initiatives from Workers Power members in the run up to last October's demonstration led to the sectarianism of the Anti-Nazi League and other groups being partly overcome and local Unity Committees established.

This way we can plan and execute the most effective action against BNP election campaigns and activities, wherever they carry them out.

**2. Organise the youth!**

The youth are the future. That is why the fascists target them with their lies. Young people want radical solutions and fascism tries to offer them.

There is a mass, popular anti-racist culture amongst youth. What is needed

is a campaign to activate this tremendous anti-racist and anti-fascist feeling. That is why Workers Power actively supports and builds Youth Against Racism in Europe, and has been fighting to commit it to revolutionary policies.

The YRE is the only socialist, anti-racist youth campaign in Britain, and it is linked with groups fighting the Nazis abroad. It is committed to implementing the principle of No Platform for Fascists—and has proved that commitment through direct action on the streets against the BNP thugs. In every area, every college or school, there should be a Youth Against Racism group. The TUC demonstration on 19 March and the Anti-Nazi League Carnival on 23 April will provide important focal points for organising local youth groups. But the youth must not be left simply marching or raving against the Nazis. Youth groups should set up organised self-defence squads, with regular training, and demand resources to back this from the local labour movement.

**3. Stop the fascists campaigning!**

Anti-fascists need to pool their knowledge of the fascists' local goals and targets and systematically plan to stop them. One clear goal for the BNP is to maintain Millwall as a no-go area for anti-fascist campaigners. This is an area where the BNP has support. That is why



# ACTION BID

# The BNP!

as 24 candidates in May's council elections. —the first fascist councillor since the 1970s—propelled tionless and in crisis, with Labour totally unable to present vacuum with a national campaign in the May elections. promised funds for the BNP election drive. end it into neighbouring areas. They plan to stand three others in neighbouring East End constituencies. run its election campaign. If a national, fascist election can expect to face mass canvassing by large gangs of Nazi to be harassed and attacked on election day, which is just election counts will be turned into Nazi rallies. their tracks. Get organised now!

should have disrupted every meeting Beackon attended. We should have seen huge pickets designed to stop this Nazi even getting in to the council building. Instead, after one "symbolic" protest—on which Unison officials instructed demonstrators not to try and stop Beackon getting into his first council meeting—the Labour group has operated business as usual.

Even worse than this inactivity in Tower Hamlets, the Labour and trade union leaders have hardly lifted a finger to build a national campaign against the BNP. When over 50,000 anti-racists demonstrated against the Nazi headquarters in Welling last October, the TUC and Labour leaders stayed well away. They supported a tiny rival march which took place on the same day miles away from the main demonstration. They even had the nerve to condemn those who did march against the

## BNP headquarters.

The sickening fact is that the leaders of the workers' movement have no plans for a campaign to stop the BNP. That is why every worker, every socialist and every enemy of racism and fascism must be bombarding the official leaders with calls for action. But we should not stop there. Union branches, Labour parties, socialists and anti-racist activists everywhere need to be organising our own campaign—without official backing if necessary.

The one thing the TUC has done is to call for a national march against racism through East London on 19 March. We need as many people as possible to join the march and raise the call for action. Labour movement weakness makes the Nazis bolder. But with a fighting strategy our mass organisations can smash the BNP before it wins mass support.

# AT THE FASCISTS

the TUC should have called its march to go through Millwall. Since it won't, it is up to local anti-fascists to organise big, visible demonstrations through this and the fascists' other target areas. Local residents must be drawn into the campaign as far as possible. Otherwise there is a danger that they will see it as nothing more than the work of outsiders.

BNP canvassing teams should be stopped. Any attempt by local radio and newspapers to give the BNP a platform should be met with immediate protest demonstrations and boycotts by media workers. BNP election rallies must be prevented. Regular anti-fascist public meetings and leafleting campaigns must be held in the shopping precincts and estates. All of these activities must be well defended against the threat of violence from the BNP.

## No reliance on the bosses' state!

We cannot rely on the state to fight fascism for us. Calls on the police or the government to ban the fascists are a dangerous pipe-dream. The police systematically protect the fascists' "right" to organise. They have shown where their priorities lie. Whilst they cannot and the racist murderers of Stephen Lawrence, they can spend months analysing the videos of last October's anti-fascist demonstration and try to hunt down the youth who bravely defended

the march from police attack. The police and the fascists are just two different weapons for the ruling class. If the Tories or the police chiefs bring in bans they will use them against the anti-racists, to stop us organising and marching.

## 5. Build anti-fascist defence squads!

Mass mobilisations against the BNP are vital. The fascists will resist these physically. They have organised teams to mete out violence to their opponents, and a special terror unit of trained thugs called Combat 18 (18 is a fascist code for Adolf Hitler).

That is why we need our own well-organised defence squads. These should be built out of groups of youth and workers who know and trust each other, who can prepare and train for effective actions.

These defence squads should not be separate from the mass movement or beyond its control. They should be an integral part of it. We need a campaign to convince every anti-racist group and the entire working class movement of the need for our own co-ordinated network of defence organisations, to defend against BNP attacks, and to take the fight to them by smashing every Nazi meeting, rally, election canvass and paper sale.

# Why has the BNP not been smashed?

THE FIRST and most important reason is the leaders of the official labour movement. They will never sanction action outside the law. That means that when the Nazis attack us, when the police do nothing, they condemn those who fight back. What is more they are soft on racism themselves. For fear of losing support from racists within the working class movement they will collaborate and compromise with racism rather than fight it effectively.

The second obstacle is the pathetically misnamed Anti-Racist Alliance (ARA). ARA is run by a small clique of careerists who claim the sole right to lead the struggle. What this means in practice is the right to lead the struggle into the dead end of lobbying MPs, petitioning the police and getting "anti-racist" laws passed through the racist parliament. To maintain its position as the "respectable" face of anti-racism, ARA has not only refused to organise direct action against the BNP. It has condemned those, black and white, who do fight back.

The third obstacle is the wrong approach of most on the far left.

The official policies of the Anti-Nazi League (ANL) differ little from those of ARA. To maintain the support of La-

bour MPs and media figures the ANL avoids any commitment to the slogan of No Platform for Fascists. What is more, to avoid criticism of this fact from activists, the ANL refuses to organise democratically. It has refused to set up democratic branches, and, where it does meet, it stupidly excludes anti-fascists from other groups.

No matter how many people carry ANL lollipops on demonstrations, the ANL remains essentially a front organisation for the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). The potential for a mass anti-fascist movement has been shown by the 60,000 people who have joined the ANL. It is criminal that the SWP has refused to turn the ANL into a mass, campaigning organisation with functioning branches in every area of every town.

That does not mean the SWP and ANL members won't fight the Nazis. On the contrary they have shown that they will, using direct tactics of physical confrontation. But their leaders won't risk a break with Labour MPs like Peter Hain and Bernie Grant by committing the ANL to a physical onslaught against the BNP. On the march in October, this approach meant that the ANL even failed to organise proper stewarding to defend the marchers from police at-

tack.

Others commit an opposite error. Anti-Fascist Action, under the leadership of the Red Action group, concentrates purely on the physical fight against the fascists, as do many locally based, anarchist-influenced groups. While we have supported and participated in such physical confrontation with the fascists, and will continue to do so, this is not the whole answer.

AFA and its constituent groups at present rest content with leaving the "political" struggle against fascism to the opportunists and pacifists of ARA and the ANL. Workers Power, which played a major role in reviving AFA in the late 1980s, had to break politically with AFA when it refused to fight for a mass united front, and instead started to boycott actions called by other groups like the ANL.

The fight for a united front to smash the BNP through action must be continued. We call on the leaders of all the existing groups to form a united front. But if they won't do it from above, activists should not let them get in the way. We should go ahead and build united anti-fascist groups from below, in every city, every town, every college, and every workplace. ■

# Know your enemy!

FASCISM IS not just an organised form of racism. It is distinct from other right-wing and reactionary parties—all of whom use racism in one form or another—because it aims to construct a mass force to control the streets and smash its political opponents through direct violent action.

The fascists' main goal is to smash the workers' movement and every progressive movement allied to it. That is what Hitler, Franco and Mussolini did. They divided the workers through racism, nationalism and anti-Semitism, and then banned all trade unions and political parties. They threw activists and leaders into jail, executing socialists, and placing police spies in every housing block. They systematically undermined the living standards of the workers so that capitalism could survive. We must never forget that the Nazis' anti-Jewish lies led to the indescribable barbarism of the Holocaust in which six million Jews were killed in death camps.

Fascism is a weapon in the hands of the capitalists—the parasites who own and control all the wealth in this society and do not have to work for a living. They turn to the Nazi gangs when all their other ways of ruling us—their limited democracy, their police repression, their military dictatorships, and so on—have been tried and have failed to keep the working class down. To be a useful standby weapon for the capitalists, fascism has to assemble a mass movement capable of confronting and defeating the organised workers.

Who forms that movement? Historically it has been the least cohesive and solidaristic sections of society—the people who resent the power and privileges of the super-rich but hate and fear the working class even more. These are the people that can be readily fooled by fascism's "radical" rhetoric and turned against the working class. That means it has traditionally been based in layers of the middle classes who are impoverished by the capitalist crisis, allied to

the desperate layers who have been forced out of the rest of society, including the professional criminals who prey on working class communities. Bigoted and disgruntled police and members of the armed forces are always found in fascist organisations. Finally fascism aims to incorporate and organise the least organised, most despairing, sections of the working class itself.

To mould this ragged crew into a mass movement fascism needs organised squads of fighters who can and will break up the meetings of the work-

ers' movement and intimidate black and migrant communities, and other persecuted minorities like lesbians and gays, gypsies and Jews.

Understanding what fascism is points to the tactics needed to fight it. It is no good trying to reason with them or treating them like any other political party. They have to be smashed with the utmost force, as early as possible, by the direct action of the only class with a real interest in stopping them—the working class. ■

## MARCH AGAINST RACISM

TUC DEMONSTRATION

East London, 19 March 1994

Assemble 11 am Spitalfields Market, London E1

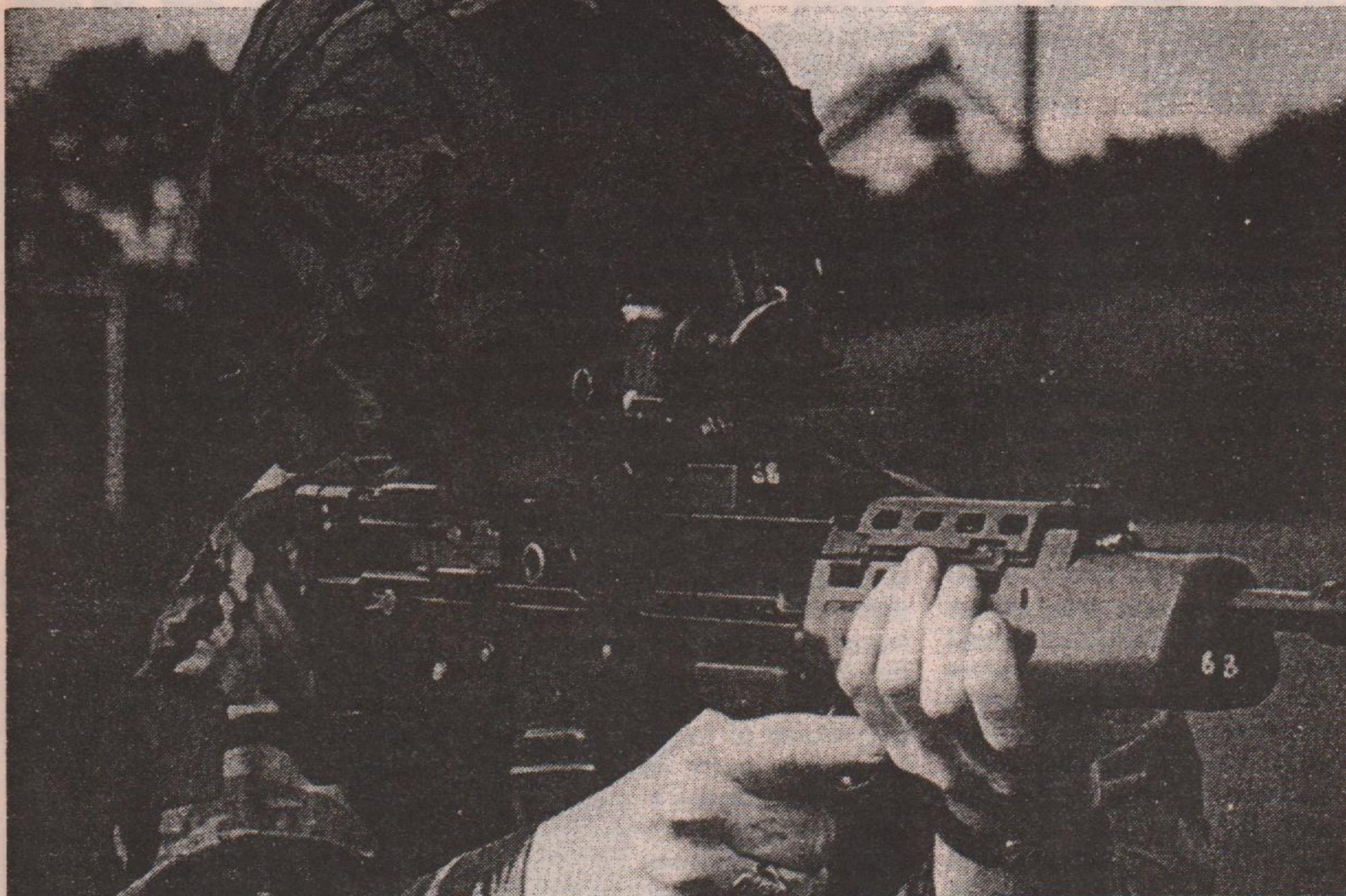
March to rally at London Fields

There are just a few weeks left to build the TUC Demo into a massive show of force against racism. The union bureaucracy seems determined to do the minimum amount of work to be seen to build the demonstration. Branches are being circulated. In several unions motions are being passed supporting the demo. 250,000 leaflets have been produced. But much more is needed. The unions should be mobilising every member to build for this demonstration.

What you can do:

- Pass a resolution in your union branch supporting the demonstration and committing branch funds to as many coaches or trains as possible. Organise mass leafleting at your workplace, dole office, estate or college.
- Form a workplace group to fight the fascists. Hold workplace meetings to build for the demonstration. Discuss what can be done to fight racism in the workplace.
- Organise delegations from your workplace to go out and mobilise for the demonstration in schools, colleges, estates etc. Use union funds to provide free transport to the demo for the old, the young and the unemployed.
- Demand the union leaders stop foot-dragging and start fighting racism. Ring the TUC on 071-634 4030 for official leaflets.

# Britain's dirty diplomacy



The true face of British diplomacy

When it comes to Ireland, British diplomacy has always served one purpose - preserving domination of the island. **Mark Harrison and Jeremy Dewar** argue that Major and Reynolds' Downing Street Declaration is the latest in a long line of initiatives to obstruct the right to self-determination for the Irish people as a whole.

step up their own repression against the IRA, to assist Britain's war effort and renounced any intention of overriding the Unionists' veto on the Orange state.

The executive and the referendum on Northern Ireland's status—which was boycotted by the nationalists and resulted in a vote to maintain the Union—were a complete fraud. Even so, the incorporation of the SDLP into the executive and the consultative role granted to Dublin were too much for the Loyalist masses. Under the leadership of Paisley they demonstrated that the Protestant veto existed over any reform of the Orange state, let alone its abolition.

The Ulster Workers Council launched a general strike in 1974. It was aided by the British army, who refused to break it and operate power stations. The Wilson government caved in, and the Sunningdale agreement was dead and buried by May of that year.

Despite this brazen affront to "constitutional politics" by the Loyalists, the British still regarded the IRA as their main problem. Twice the IRA announced truces in order to try and broaden the scope for peace talks with Britain. The British government, under Tory and Labour alike, replied by increasing repression and arming the Unionist forces of reaction.

In November 1974, the Prevention

of Terrorism Act was introduced, supposedly as a temporary measure. This Act continues to be used as a means of rounding up Republican sympathisers and anti-Unionists and holding them incommunicado for up to seven days. In March 1976 "Diplock" courts were introduced, Republican suspects were no longer to be tried by juries.

out for his funeral cortege. The mass strikes that followed, north and south, and the election of two other hunger strikers in the Republic persuaded London and Dublin to search for a new political settlement.

Thatcher and Charles Haughey, the Republic's premier, signed the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985. An elaborate set of procedures were laid down, which drew the Dublin government into negotiations. Britain wanted to enrol Dublin's support in practical cross-border security operations and increased repression aimed at crushing the IRA. The extradition treaty was one of the British gains.

It was also hoped that involving Dublin in talks would bolster the support of the SDLP amongst the anti-Unionist population. Certainly, Dublin's support for continuing and increased repression has taken its toll, but it has not destroyed the mass base of support that still exists for Sinn Féin and the IRA.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement failed to break the Unionist veto over any form of power-sharing. The talks finally broke down at the end of 1992, when the Unionists demanded an extension of their veto. They wanted to delete Articles Two and Three of the Republic's Constitution where the (undesired) aim of a united Ireland is enshrined!

Herein lies Britain's political problem. It recognises that it cannot beat the IRA and the Republican movement by repression alone. And even if it could, it cannot reconcile the anti-Unionist population to continued Loyalist rule. The two communities are more divided now, after 25 years of struggle, than ever. Despite this, the British will not face down Loyalist opposition to power-sharing.

The Downing Street declaration is just the latest attempt to erode the support for the armed resistance and manoeuvre the Unionists into some form of power-sharing with the SDLP. Sinn Féin have temporarily seized the initiative with their demands for clarification and Gerry Adams' tour of the USA. In response Patrick Mayhew wants to put forward "fresh ideas"; a devolved government and enhanced cross-border co-operation. These ideas are far from "fresh"—they are rotten to the core!

Workers in Britain must not be taken in when the government starts to blame the IRA for bucking the "peace process". The real obstacles to peace are the artificial border that ensures a Unionist majority within the six county statelet and the British occupation that defends it. Without an end to these there is no basis for a just and lasting peace. Britain's current proposals should be rejected with the contempt they deserve. No clarification is necessary. ■

**A** CHRISTMAS PEACE initiative was what John Major promised the people of Britain and Ireland. But when the wraps were taken off this present it was like one of those useless toys that have "batteries not included" in small print on the back of the box. The Downing Street declaration was a dud.

Major and Reynolds were not interested in securing a just peace. The British and Irish governments have waged a long war against the anti-Unionist population of the six counties and in particular against the most intransigent opponents of British rule, the IRA. They were mutually alarmed at the popularity of the Hume/Adams peace initiative and were fearful of being outflanked by their old enemy, Sinn Féin.

This fear, combined with a cynical and opportunist attempt to exploit the war-weariness of the people of the six counties, prompted them to issue their joint declaration. This particular diplomatic manoeuvre is framed with the express purpose of throwing Sinn Féin back onto the defensive. For if, as seems most likely, Sinn Féin reject the terms of the Downing Street declaration and the IRA continue their war against the British army, London and Dublin will point the finger of blame at the Republicans for obstructing peace.

Sinn Féin should reject the deal. This declaration has nothing to do with securing a just peace. It does not meet the legitimate demand of the nationalists for the right to self-determination for the whole of Ireland. It uses sugary phrases as a sop to nationalist public opinion, but it explicitly and unambiguously excludes the right to self-determination by guaranteeing the Protestant minority a veto over a united Ireland.

The Major/Reynolds document states:

"The British government agree that it is for the people of the island of Ireland alone, by agreement between the two parts respectively, to exercise their right to self-determination on the basis of consent, freely and concurrently given, north and south, to bring about a united Ireland."

No wonder people don't trust politicians! Here is a meaningless promise. A united Ireland is offered—but by consent given by the two parts of the country, *separately*. Major and Reynolds both know full well that consent by the north is out of the question because of the artificial char-

acter of that statelet, with its built in Protestant majority.

Britain has always ruled Ireland this way. It manufactures "facts" to suit its purpose. Two thirds of the Irish people voted for independence in 1918. Britain greeted this democratic vote with repression. Only a war of independence forced Britain to modify its stance. But, far from acknowledging the democratic will of the people of Ireland, the Government of Ireland Act (1920) subverted that will. The British prime minister, Lloyd George, commented:

"Two thirds of the population of Ireland demand the setting up of an independent republic in that island. Every effort I have made, publicly and otherwise, to secure a modification of that demand has failed. They have emphatically stated they will agree to nothing else."

So he partitioned the country. The original Irish province of Ulster contained nine counties. Within these there was a majority for independence from Britain. The loyalists were a minority. So Britain *made* them a majority by redrawing the borders.

Protestant veto.

The modern anti-Unionist revolt, which began in 1968 and continues to this day, brought a new round of British initiatives to secure "peace in the province". In August 1969, once again with Labour in power, the first initiative was to send in the troops. Faced with a mounting revolt from the nationalists and the inability of the faltering Orange state to do any more than contain this revolt, the government ordered in the British army.

It was in this period that modern British strategy towards Ireland was created. It combined three elements—repression, cosmetic reforms of the Orange state and political manoeuvres designed to isolate the IRA (principally the Provisionals, born out of a split in the Republican movement in 1970).

The repression was straightforward. Dubbing those who fought back as terrorists, Britain sanctioned the introduction of internment without trial. At the same time the troops openly collaborated with the loyalist terror gangs of the UDA and UVF. To this day these forces conduct sectar-

**New legislation not only made partition permanent, it enshrined in law the constitutional guarantee that Ireland could never be united without the consent of the majority of people in the Orange state. Unionist domination was sanctified by British law in the shape of the Protestant veto.**

ian assassinations of civilian Catholics. The reign of terror did not defeat the IRA or dent its support. Indeed it grew from nothing into a mass force in these years. So the British state activated the second element of its strategy—cosmetic reform. The Stormont parliament was abolished in 1972 and a new initiative, designed to create a power sharing executive, was launched.

In 1973 a settlement emerged based on the continuation of internment, the occupation of the six counties by British troops and the maintenance of the border. The "concessions" to the nationalist minority amounted to the creation of a Council of Ireland, in which Dublin could say its piece (but do nothing else), and the incorporation of the constitutional nationalists, the SDLP, into the executive as a permanent minority—four posts to six for the Unionist parties.

The south in return promised to

of Terrorism Act was introduced, supposedly as a temporary measure. This Act continues to be used as a means of rounding up Republican sympathisers and anti-Unionists and holding them incommunicado for up to seven days. In March 1976 "Diplock" courts were introduced, Republican suspects were no longer to be tried by juries.

In this period, the Labour Government also began its policy of "Ulsterisation". This entailed caving in to Unionist demands for more power to repress the Catholic population. From 1976 onwards, the RUC was developed into a huge paramilitary force with its infamous "Shoot to Kill" policy. The UDR was also bolstered so that now the Unionist armed forces number over 30,000.

Again, increased repression did not lead to the isolation of Sinn Féin and the IRA. On the contrary, in 1981 hunger striker Bobby Sands was elected MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone. Over 70,000 mourners turned

## ALGERIA

OVER THREE hundred people were killed in Algeria in a single week in January. In the two years since the military coup, Algeria's undeclared civil war between the army and the Islamic fundamentalist FIS (Islamic Salvation Front) has claimed up to 5,000 lives.

The FIS have blown up army barracks and carried out a series of systematic assassinations of gendarmes and army officers. They have become so proficient that, in many parts of Algiers, the police have to wear masks to prevent identification.

For its part, the army has imprisoned over five thousand FIS militants without trial. It has instituted a campaign of torture. It has napalmed parts of the countryside where FIS guerrilla units are active. Villages suspected of helping the guerrillas have been burnt to the ground. Several hundred FIS members have been killed or executed.

But there have also been other victims. The FIS have assassinated hundreds of people simply because of their trade union activity, their opposition to fundamentalism or for being foreigners.

The army, which has always been the real power in Algeria, has now taken over the Presidency, with the nomination of Colonel Zéroual as head of state. But the civil war continues, and the death toll grows daily. All the signs are there of a growing pre-revolutionary crisis.

Until 10 years ago, Algeria was relatively prosperous. Its highly nationalised and state-controlled economy, entirely dependent on oil and gas production, was able to provide the corrupt ruling party and the state bureaucracy with a comfortable living. It also provided enough food to keep the masses from open revolt.

### Oil

Following the collapse in oil prices in 1986—a 30% drop in one year—the Algerian government was obliged to take two steps that changed all this. First, to make up for declining oil revenues, they borrowed money from the IMF.

Secondly, they began to invest heavily in gas production. This cost more money, which meant that they had to borrow even more to pay back the money they already owed. The country entered the vicious spiral beloved of loan sharks the world over.

Oil prices slumped even further, reducing Algeria's income to such a point that today the country can no longer repay its debt.

The first decisive cracks in the one-party state appeared in October 1988 when a strike over union rights exploded into a general strike and mass rioting over food price rises.

Over 500 people—overwhelmingly youth—were killed in the repression which followed. The FLN—the ruling party which had led the Algerian masses in the independence struggle against French imperialism—was able to maintain its hold on power for the time being. But the writing was on the wall. And increasingly, it read "FIS".

A series of democratic reforms were instituted in the aftermath of the 1988 uprising, notably freedom of the press, freedom of political parties and the promise of parliamentary and presidential elections.

The FIS—a loose reactionary coalition between "moderate" Islamic leaders and a vicious clerical fascist wing—had one key advantage over the other new opposition political parties: it had never compromised with the regime.

All the other bourgeois parties were led by one-time FLN hacks who had fallen out with the leadership. In these circumstances, the FIS's simple message—anti-regime, anti-west, anti-



# The writing on the wall

BY EMILE GALLET

women—struck a chord amongst sections of the Algerian masses. The FIS programme is "back to basics" with a vengeance: back to the medieval religious law of the Islamic *sharia*.

By the 1990 municipal elections it was obvious that, in the growing political vacuum, the FIS were the only solid force. The FIS got 54% of the vote and took over more than 200 local councils. The one-time heroes of the revolution, the FLN, only got 28% of the vote.

In May 1991 the FIS tried to launch a general strike for an Islamic republic. The army moved in, crushing the movement, arresting the FIS leaders and installing a state of emergency.

### Elections

The FLN was obliged to go ahead with stalled elections, at the end of 1991. Despite an initial hesitation about participating, the FIS swept the board in the first round.

Victory in the second round seemed assured. The FLN President, Chadli, opened negotiations with the FIS, but there was no second round. Fearing high-level purges and opposing the anti-western outlook of the FIS, the army high command obliged Chadli to resign and installed a new state of emergency "to save democracy".

Thousands of FIS militants were rounded up and sent off to prison camps in the desert. The FIS, officially banned and increasingly dislocated because of successive waves of repression, began to lose control of the movement as gendarme after gendarme was killed.

By the end of 1993, Algerian military intelligence estimated that there were a total of 625 fundamentalist armed units operating in the country. The FIS spokesman in exile, Rabah Kébir, had to admit that the FIS were no longer in control of the situation.

The catalogue of violence is gruesome. Schools have been burned down, railways sabotaged, soldiers and gendarmes have been killed, left-wing militants, journalists and foreign workers have had their throats slit.

The army has discovered that it cannot beat the FIS. Repression has

clearly failed. So too have the attempts to create a new popular front behind the regime. The masses remember what the army did in 1988. The FLN are completely discredited, and the army too.

Cynicism and discontent mingle amongst the unemployed youth who make up both a key part of the FIS's base and the most explosive section of Algerian society.

The response of the left has revealed a deep crisis of leadership. The Communist Party, which discredited itself through its slavish support for the FLN, has disintegrated.

The two main so-called Trotskyist organisations have also completely failed the test. The Parti des Travailleurs (Workers Party), led by Louisa Hanoune, has consistently misled the Algerian workers by arguing for an alliance with the FIS and other bourgeois forces against the government!

On the other hand, the PST, section of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, has simply set its sights on "preparing the political conditions which will lead to democracy".

In these circumstances, the FIS' simple and reactionary message has gone unchallenged. The left has given them a free hand in winning over the mass of the unemployed youth.

### Debt

Despite the fact that they are—literally—at daggers drawn, the army and the FIS are obliged to come to a compromise. Everything the regime has been doing over the last few months shows this. Negotiations between the two forces have taken place, although the army's attempt to corral all the main political parties—including the FIS—into an agreement during the recent "National Conference" came to nothing, when all parties boycotted it.

The reason why an agreement is probable is obvious. With oil prices at their current low level, Algeria simply cannot repay its massive foreign debt. It does not have the money. Resched-

uling is therefore an inevitability, but a prerequisite for this is social peace. Rescheduling will be disastrous for the Algerian masses; it will require a devaluation of the dinar, perhaps of 50%, for a country dependent on imports for 99% of its food. They will mean even greater hunger and misery. Already youth unemployment is over 60%. Inflation is at 40% and industry is producing at only half capacity.

The IMF and the World Bank do not want to pour good money after bad. To guarantee their investments they need to keep a tight rein on the masses.

### Class

The FIS, despite being deeply divided on what the next move should be, therefore hold all the cards. Their support for any government action to re-schedule the debt will be necessary if there is to be any chance at all that the masses will accept it.

Despite their anti-western rhetoric, the FIS is not an anti-imperialist force. They want to ensure that imperialism's domination of Algeria continues.

All sides—army, FIS and IMF—are desperately worried that the Algerian masses will take matters into their own hands. The last few months have seen signs of a revival of the class struggle.

During the summer, workers at the state-owned EBA construction company went on strike over plans to sack 580 workers. The strike lasted an unprecedented 110 days and although the workers did not win, it represented a sign of resistance which has given heart to all sections of the working class.

In December there was a general strike in Rouiba—the industrial region which launched the October 1988 strike—over sackings and trade union rights. Strikes are also threatened by teachers and gas workers. Any major attacks on workers' living standards, such as the IMF will insist upon as part of any rescheduling programme, would inevitably provoke a fightback.

The one-time FLN trade union, the

UGTA, is aware of this growing desire to fight and has been trying to contain workers' anger. The leadership has launched a campaign against repaying the debt and has consistently refused any support for a rescheduling agreement.

But until last September, the UGTA was an avid supporter of the government's frenetic campaign to repay the debt come what may, despite the mini-austerity programme which was involved. The last prime minister, Bélaïd, had a traditional Algerian state-interventionist policy which was very much to the UGTA's reformist taste.

Today, just like the FIS and the army, the UGTA fear that the masses could escape their control.

And that is precisely what will have to happen if there is to be a progressive solution to the current crisis. Neither the FIS, nor the army, nor the IMF can do anything to resolve the desperate problems of the Algerian masses.

Unemployment, hunger and lack of accommodation all need radical, revolutionary answers. Neither neo-liberalism, out-dated state capitalism nor medieval religious rubbish will provide a solution.

The wealth is there which could free the masses from their poverty and cultural backwardness. It is in the hands of the imperialists and the state bureaucracy. It just needs to be taken.

The land is there which could produce food: it needs a workers' plan to organise production, to dynamise the agricultural sector.

### Break

But such an answer to Algeria's impending catastrophe would mean a complete break with the reformist and bourgeois nationalist policies which have dominated the workers' movement since independence in 1962.

Only a worker's party, built around a revolutionary programme, giving answers both to workers and to unemployed youth, will break the hold of reformism, nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism. It is on this that the future of Algeria's workers depends. ■

## ISRAEL-PLO ACCORD

# Bust the Peace Deal!

**T**HE ISRAELI state was established in 1949 after two years of pogroms and population transfers directed against the indigenous Palestinians. This horrific campaign of colonial violence—known in Hebrew as the “War of Independence” and in Arabic as the “catastrophe”—resulted in the 33% Jewish population establishing a state on 73% of the territory of Palestine.

750,000 Palestinian Arabs were driven from their homes by Zionist militias using outright terror, including, as at Dir Yassin, the wholesale slaughter of civilians. A policy of land seizure was consolidated through the imposition of discriminatory laws.

Since the establishment of the State of Israel, the Zionists have made the hypocritical claim that Israel is “the only democracy in the Middle East”. They guarantee a majority for themselves over the Palestinians by the deliberate use of exclusion and force. Under the racist “Law of Return”, the original inhabitants and their descendants are prevented from entering Israel, condemned to eke out a miserable existence in the refugee camps of Lebanon, the West Bank and the Gaza strip.

These territories have been under Israeli military occupation since 1967. Despite the claims of some on the Zionist right that these territories should be incorporated into Israel itself, successive Israeli governments have refused to take this step because it would have the effect of greatly increasing Israel’s Arab population. Hence the Labour government’s current proposals for a highly limited form of “Palestinian autonomy”.

## Opponents

Israel’s right wing opponents of the peace deal advance alternative “solutions” designed to preserve the artificially created Jewish majority within Israel’s borders. These range from stepping up the establishment of colonial settlements in the occupied West Bank through to the forcible deportation (“transfer”) of Palestinian Arabs who have the temerity to live in “Judea and Samaria” (the West Bank). Thus, Israel could remain a “democracy” for its citizens without the risk of the Jewish majority being undermined.

The leading faction within the Israeli ruling class, however, wants to bring to an end the 30 year struggle of the Palestinians for their national

rights. Backed by the USA through its “neutral” Norwegian brokers, the peace deal contains a recognition by the PLO of “Israel’s right to live within secure borders”. This not only legitimises the Zionist state itself, but by implication its “right” to take military action against those who struggle against its territorial “security”.

Israel’s Labour government appeared to have achieved a great vic-

tory for its preferred strategy of heading the Palestinian revolt through minimal concessions to the PLO leaders in return for the effective abandonment of their struggle. Unsentimental about the historic right of Israel to encompass the biblical lands of “Judea and Samaria”, they hope also to free Israel from the cost of repressing the *intifada*—the heroic revolt of Palestinian youth—and en-

able widespread foreign investment to pour into the new autonomous areas.

Israel will keep a firm grip on the economy, its agricultural and human resources. The Gaza Strip’s economy will remain oriented entirely to Israel’s needs. Zionist policy has been to allow the traditional agriculture of the Strip to wither, whilst encouraging the growth and export of cash crops. Production of fruit such as strawberries is based solely on export to Israel. The export of lucrative new crops such as flowers is controlled by Israeli traders, who benefit from the lower costs of cheap Arab labour.

## Investment

The success of the new arrangement will depend, for Israel, on attracting foreign investment into an economy that controls. The Israeli ruling class will ensure they, not the Palestinian workers, benefit. As the Cairo newspaper *al-Ahram* succinctly put it:

“Israel’s security would be better served if Gaza emerged as a Singapore rather than as a Somalia.”

Singapore’s semi-colonial status—the total absence of democratic rights for the masses, a high-tech export oriented economy, pitifully low wages and bogus political semi-independence—is the ideal model for Israel’s plans for “security” in the region. Ultimately this explains why key sectors of Israeli capital support Labour’s approach and the peace deal. The President of the Israeli Industrialists’ Association explained with cool pragmatism:

“It’s not important whether there is a Palestinian state, autonomy or a Palestinian-Jordanian federation. The economic borders between Israel and the territories must remain open.”

But Israeli society as a whole is far from happy with any concessions, even the cosmetic changes countenanced by the deal. The settlers on the West Bank are of course violently opposed to anything that might suggest self-rule or a future Palestinian state, no matter how economically and politically crippled it might be. Rabid anti-Arab racism and chauvinism have been encouraged for decades among the Israeli population. So while the right-wing Likud party lost ground in the heady days of the immediate aftermath of the agreement, recent local elections saw them make gains.

By November, opinion polls were

*The deal between Israel and the PLO signed in Washington last September was hailed as a major breakthrough, supposedly bringing a chance of peace to the tormented Middle East. But five months on the deal is rapidly losing support among Jews and Arabs alike. The reasons can be found in the true nature of the deal itself. On the Israeli side it is no more than an attempt to consolidate Israel’s oppression of the Palestinian people and obstruct their national rights. On the PLO side it is no less than a momentous betrayal of the Palestinian people, writes Richard Brenner.*

indicating that an election would wipe out Labour’s tiny majority—enabling a coalition between the conservative Likud and the extreme pro-transfer parties such as Tzomet. Indeed the Likud’s most rabid right-winger, Ariel Sharon, has toyed openly with the idea of building a new political force with Tzomet’s leader, his former military partner in engineering the savage massacre of Palestinian men, women and children in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in 1982.

The astonishingly quick turn around in Israeli-Jewish public opinion occurred mainly because militant Palestinian opposition to the Israeli occupation has continued in the West Bank and Gaza. With the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Jericho and Gaza being indefinitely postponed, Palestinian guerrillas have been resisting the violent attacks of Zionist settlers. After an Israeli gang murdered three young Palestinian workers returning to their homes on the West Bank, one right wing leader declared that he would “shoot to kill any Palestinian policeman” who tried to detain Israeli citizens. A poll showed one in six Israelis prepared to do likewise.

But it is not just within the Zionist camp that support for the deal is fading. There has been a similar response among Palestinians and opposition to PLO leader Yasser Arafat and the deal is growing.

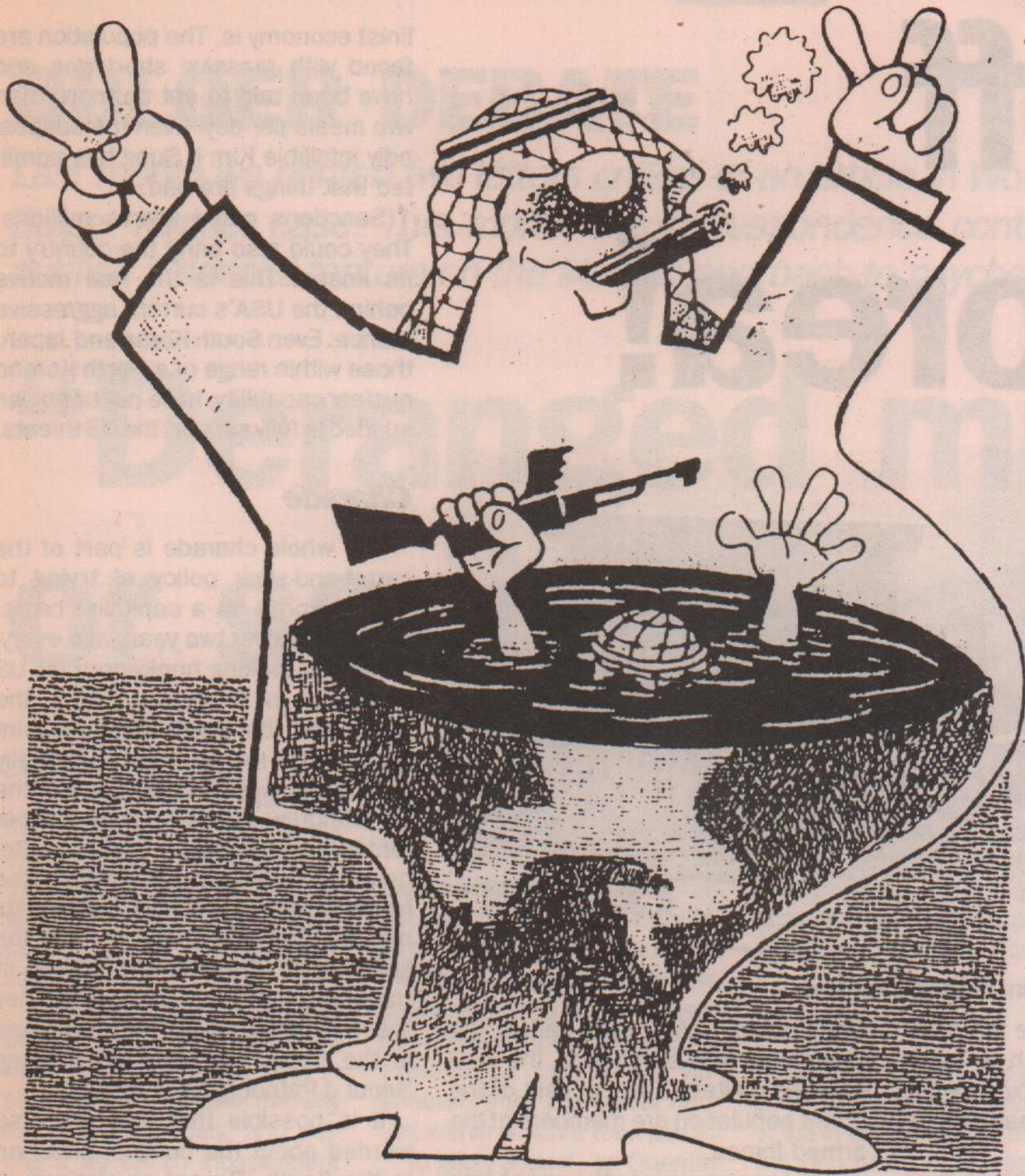
## Borders

The 800,000 Palestinians who remain within Israel’s borders are left without hope of reunification with their fellow Palestinians in the occupied territories and the camps. This does not just violate their general national aspirations, it consigns them to permanent second-class citizenship under Israel’s discriminatory laws. In addition to living in the poorest housing and doing the worst jobs, Israel’s 18% Arab population gets inferior treatment as far as provision of basic social services is concerned. Health care is the most glaring example. Arab municipalities get only a *third* of the funding of Jewish ones, leaving many without even adequate sewage facilities. This has the most barbarous of consequences.

For Arabs the rate of infant mortality is twice that of Jews. They have to pay for it as well. A special 2.5% tax on land affects Arabs whether or not they can afford to pay it—unlike the Jewish population.



**Israel will keep a firm grip on the economy, its agricultural and human resources. The Gaza Strip’s economy will remain oriented entirely to Israel’s needs. . . The success of the new arrangement will depend, for Israel, on attracting foreign investment into an economy that they control. The Israeli ruling class will ensure that they, not the Palestinian workers, benefit**



One Palestinian cartoonist's view of the sell-out

Despite abandoning the "Israeli Arabs", the peace deal leaves the Palestinians of the occupied territories with precious little to show for the PLO's compromise. The deal involves the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza, and from one part of the West Bank—Jericho. The precise area of the Jericho enclave is still a matter of dispute between Israel and the PLO.

These "autonomous" zones will not be politically independent nor will they have a sovereign Palestinian government. PLO officials will have powers only over taxation and the provision of certain services. In place of the euphemistically-named Israeli Defence Force (IDF), a PLO police force of 35,000 will "keep the peace". The meaning of this has been made quite clear—the suppression of those Palestinian organisations and youth who continue to resist the Zionist occupation. The Israeli military will remain on the West Bank ready to act if necessary.

#### Raid

Only two days after Arafat called on Palestinians to "reject violence and terrorism and return to ordinary life"—an unambiguous call to end the *intifada*—the Israeli military launched a massive raid against Palestinian guerrillas in the West Bank village of Qabatiya. Increasing numbers of Palestinians, particularly youth, are concluding that the deal has only strengthened the hand of the repressive occupying forces.

Persistent leaks of discussions within Arafat's Fatah faction—whose members will constitute the new police and administrative bodies—hardly allay fears. Armed Israeli actions since September have focused almost exclusively on groups that are hostile to the deal and are committed to armed resistance, arousing justifiable suspicions that the PLO leadership have reached a tacit understanding with the Israeli military. As Ehud Barak, chief of staff of the IDF, has put it:

"... the more terrorists are arrested before the IDF pull-out, the easier should be the task of the new Gaza police."

Arafat's high-handed and undemocratic methods in dealing with political opponents, even within his own Fatah faction, have not exactly inspired confidence in how responsive the new administrative authorities will be to the needs and desires of the masses. Allegations of personal cor-

ruption by the Arafat clique are also mounting. The Jordanian-based writer Lamis Andoni claims that "it is no longer a secret that Arafat's immediate circle is trying to keep the lion's share of 'commissions' from investors in future projects in the territories."

That this is already happening is a sign of the true intentions of the exiled Palestinian bourgeoisie and the pro-capitalist PLO bureaucracy. Whilst they enrich themselves and secure territorial authority as a useful adjunct to their business interests, the workers, small traders and urban poor can go hang.

The central tenet of the theory of permanent revolution, that today the national capitalist class in the colo-

**The PFLP and DFLP would only consider splitting the PLO if they could secure alternative funding and support. This is something that for them cannot come from the masses or the trade unions—for that would imply a workers' party and a working class strategy**

rial and semi-colonial nations is too weak and too tied to the world system of imperialist exploitation even to solve the basic questions of national unity and democratic rights, is affirmed with extraordinary force by the contemptible actions of the bourgeois PLO leaders. In an encouraging sign of the fighting spirit of the youth, the student council at Bir Zeit university voted in December to reject the deal. But which *political* forces are opposed to Arafat's treason?

First there are the "Marxist-Leninists" of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP). These PLO factions—whose politics are a classic admixture of Stalinism and nationalism—are building an alliance of forces opposed to the deal. But their opposi-

tion is designed to save face, rather than to genuinely obstruct the sell-out. They have already allowed Arafat to secure a majority for the agreement by walking out of the meeting of the PLO Executive that adopted the deal. If they had stayed and voted against, this would have denied Arafat a majority. It should also be remembered that the DFLP played a key role in promoting the idea of settling with Israel when, back in the early 1970s, they proposed a two-state solution leaving the Zionist entity intact.

Clearly the PFLP and DFLP would only consider splitting the PLO if they could secure alternative funding and support. This is something that for them cannot come from the masses or the trade unions—

for that would imply a workers' party and a working class strategy. Instead they are looking for support to the traditionally intransigent regime in Syria.

But President Assad, the blood-soaked butcher of the Syrian workers, has other ideas. His recent high-profile discussions with US President Clinton are designed to exert Syrian pressure on the negotiations. He aims to secure a free hand in Lebanon and—the main prize—the return of the occupied Golan Heights from Israel. The fact that the Labour government are prepared to even consider this shows how important Syrian support for the peace process could be in derailing the remaining Palestinian opposition.

#### Discontent

It would cut off their funds and deny them a key base for guerrilla training and operations. Drawing Syria into the peace process could restore flagging domestic support for the deal. And while the Jewish settlers on the Golan Heights have demonstrated against any Israeli withdrawal, only a small hard-core would be prepared to offer determined resistance. Israeli opinion polls show that over half of the settlers are considering moving back to within Israel's old borders, and 12% are already prepared to move if they are compensated.

The Islamic fundamentalists of Hamas are now in the strongest position to benefit from growing oppositional discontent in the refugee camps and the occupied territories. Whilst carefully maintaining verbal intransigence and rejectionist rhetoric, they too have repeatedly issued calls for militants not to damage the unity of the Palestinian people and the PLO. But their ideology is

nominally opposed to all compromise with the Zionists. Basing themselves in the declassed poor and desperate youth, their programme is a combination of anti-westernism, opposition to compromise and reactionary calls for the introduction of Islamic law.

The increased support for these clerical reactionaries at the expense of the secular forces of the PLO is a sign of the utter exhaustion of the PLO's bourgeois nationalist strategy. It also represents the continuing desperation and militancy of the masses and is a result of the failure of the "Marxist" left to advance a bold class strategy against the sell-out.

Whatever the outcome of the unfolding "peace process", the Palestinian masses will continue to be propelled into struggle against both the Zionist occupation and the new Palestinian agencies of Israeli rule in Jericho and Gaza. For this a new, revolutionary working class party must be built, to fight resolutely for the economic, social, democratic and national rights of the Palestinian workers and poor masses.

#### Contradictions

Only in this way can the Palestinian workers and youth be freed from the clutches of Fatah's misleadership and the alternative of reactionary Islamic fundamentalism. Only in this way can the mounting contradictions of the peace process be used to prepare for a new offensive against Zionism, imperialism and the profit system itself—an offensive worthy of the revolutionary spirit of the Palestinian youth. ■

*We have received the following appeal for solidarity via exiled Sudanese activists. Slight alterations have been made for linguistic reasons and reasons of space. We encourage all our readers and their organisations to act on this appeal without delay.*

## Stop repression in Sudan

THE ISLAMIC fundamentalist government in Khartoum continues to deny its persistent abuses of human rights which are consistent with their oppressive ideology.

However it has been established by various human rights organisations, regional as well as international, that the record of the Khartoum government as far as human rights are concerned, is one of the worst in the world. Reports from Amnesty International, Africa Watch, SHRO and the United Nations Committee for Human Rights present solid evidence of this government's brutal atrocities and violations of human rights.

Other than those unlawfully killed in concentration camps, many have been executed after being convicted in show trials and given pre-determined sentences.

Since it came to power, the fundamentalist government has used this device to get rid of political opponents in a way which can appear to be lawful. It goes without saying, of course, that such show trials do not observe any legal procedure. Defendants are tortured to make them confess to acts they never did and crimes they never committed. They are denied the right to see their lawyers. This agonising ordeal comes to an end only when they are, according to a predetermined sentence, executed or imprisoned for life. To such miserable creatures, execution may be a blessing. At least they are going to rest in unknown graves. Those who escape death will still be at the mercy of the security forces who may come to collect them from the prison to re-interrogate them under torture whenever they choose.

In applying this evil device, the Khartoum government have arrested 17 Sudanese citizens with allegations of plotting to overthrow the government by the use of force.

After six months of brutal physical and psychological torture and after a well organised propaganda campaign in which the government-controlled mass media accused opposition parties and neighbouring countries of being "behind the plot", these seventeen young men were put on trial facing charges punishable with death (*al Hayat*, 24.11.93, 21.12.93, 23.12.93, 26.12.93, 28.12.93, 15.1.94, 17.1.94).

Confessions were taken under torture from some defendants and they were offered parole to act as crown witnesses.

A defence council, which was formed by some Sudanese lawyers, is denied access to the defendants. An application to represent the defendants from a delegation of Arab lawyers was refused.

Reliable sources in Khartoum reported, according to information leaked from the INF Leading Council meeting, that five of the seventeen defendants should receive the death sentence. Ten will receive life imprisonment and two will be used as crown witnesses to convict the others (*al Hayat* 24.1.94).

According to this information and with knowledge of the government's record which includes similar precedents, we believe the lives of the young men are really at stake. We therefore call upon all organisations concerned with human rights to do all that they can to reveal the government's intentions and to counter its plan.

These defendants need your solidarity and support and so do all the Sudanese people and we are sure you are going to give it willingly.

#### Act Now!

Write to:  
President O E L-Bashir  
Republican Palace  
Khartoum  
Sudan

**N**ORTH KOREA may have a nuclear capability. It probably hasn't. Even the most hawkish Pentagon officials admit that it is only a possibility.

US Defence Secretary-designate, William Perry, announced: "I am unhappy that they may have one bomb, because it is part of a programme that could provide dozens of them".

The US imperialists are livid because one of the few surviving Stalinist states has the audacity to develop the kind of weapons that they themselves have been proliferating for years.

When Israel, Argentina, India and South Africa launched their nuclear programmes, the senate wasn't "unhappy". They did not threaten them with sanctions. They did not take ultimatums to the UN Security Council. They did not deploy nuclear weapons on the borders of these countries. But North Korea is different: it is a thorn in the side of the new world order. Thus, in the eyes of US imperialism, it is a threat.

Under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), North Korea has to allow inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency to inspect its nuclear plants. Since August last year North Korea has refused to permit inspections. The Pyongyang government now faces a deadline: let the inspectors in by February 21 or they will be declared in default of their NPT obligations. At the end of January US senators jumped the gun and passed a resolution demanding immediate sanctions against North Korea.

The real reasons for US sabre-rattling have nothing to do with a perceived nuclear threat. True, despite the size and economic weak-

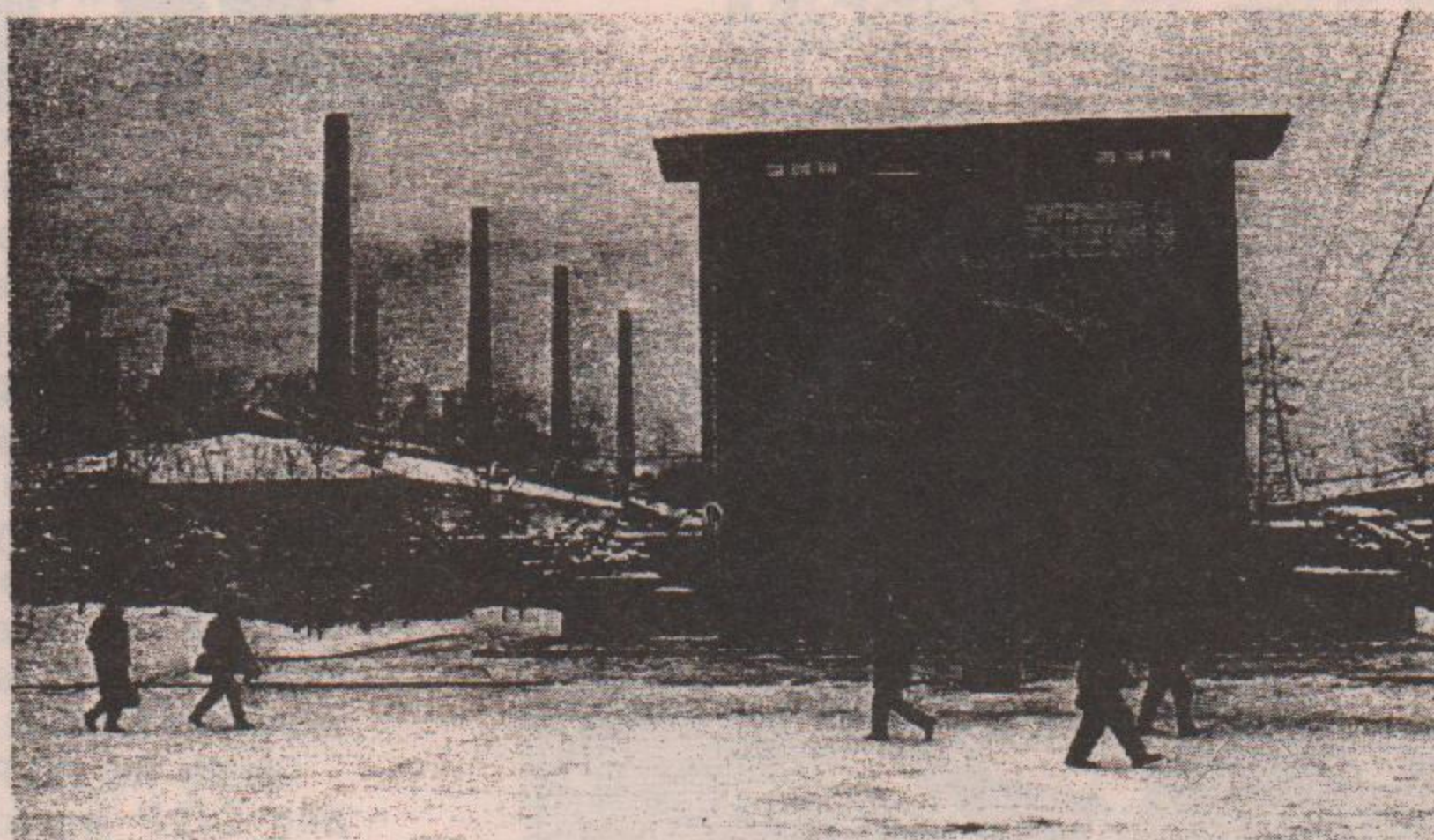
# Hands off North Korea!

BY CHRIS BRYANT

ness of the country, Korea has a substantial arms industry, and the fifth largest armed forces in the world.

But the permanent militarisation of the country is entirely geared towards defence. Since the end of the Korean war in 1953, North Korea has never shown any expansionist tendencies. Quite the opposite, it has been one of the most insular countries in the world—economically, politically and militarily. It is a country under siege, with 750,000 hostile troops, backed to the hilt by the USA just over the border in South Korea. In 1972 relations between China, North Korea's closest ally, and the USA began to thaw. Since then President Kim Il Sung has made repeated overtures to South Korea on both economic co-operation and reunification.

North Korea committed itself to reunification with the repressive US puppet government in the South as far back as 1972. The 1980 massacre of thousands of workers by the Seoul regime at Kwangu, and repeated savage attacks against workers, students and oppositionists throughout the 1980s did not stop the "socialist" government of the North from trying to



Outlook is bleak under Kim Il Sung's regime

"normalise" relations. Like the other Stalinist states, the North is being slowly strangled to death by imperialist encirclement and the dead hand of bureaucratic planning.

The constant military threat from imperialism is a massive drain on the economy. The denial of workers' control of the planning process and the backward nature of the economic base has inevitably led to a profound economic crisis. After forty years, the bureaucrats have not even succeeded in turning North Korea into a devel-

oped country. Well over half of the population works either on the land or in the military. Five per cent of the entire population are members of the armed forces.

The economy is less than one tenth of the size of its southern neighbour. Today, one admittedly hostile estimate suggests that North Korean industry is only running at about one third capacity due to disproportions across its different sectors. Even allowing for exaggeration this shows how chronically degenerate the Sta-

linist economy is. The population are faced with massive shortages and have been told to eat no more than two meals per day. Even the supposedly infallible Kim Il Sung has admitted that things are bad.

Sanctions could starve millions. They could also bring the country to its knees. This is the real motive behind the USA's current aggressive stance. Even South Korea and Japan, those within range of a North Korean nuclear capability, have not been persuaded to fully support the US threats.

## Charade

The whole charade is part of the carrot-and-stick policy of trying to reunify Korea on a capitalist basis. Only a little over two years ago everything was looking hunky-dory for US interests. In December 1991, the North and the South signed a joint treaty which moved towards formally ending the war of 1950-53 and the US withdrew its short-range nuclear forces from the South. Now the deteriorating economic situation in the North has given the US their opportunity, and they are trying to twist the knife. They dropped the offers of trade deals and aid packages, they are redeploying short-range weapons in the South and they are offering Seoul a Patriot missile system.

It is possible that they are also worried about the political situation in the South. Recent revelations of enormous pay-offs in return for arms contracts have exposed not only the corrupt nature of the military, but also the fact that Seoul has been buying dud, inefficient and ineffective military material for years.

The political clean-up has seen 39 generals sacked, and two former defence ministers and a former naval chief of staff found guilty of various types of corruption involving arms deals. A good nuclear scare provides the USA and Seoul with a handy opportunity to shake-up and strengthen the military—against both the perceived threat from without and against working class opposition within.

## State

North Korea is a degenerate workers' state. It is a workers' state because production is organised according to planning rather than the blind laws of the market. Marxists call it "degenerate" because it is ruled by a bureaucracy that denies the working class any political power. Because of its repressive role the bureaucracy is incapable of imparting dynamism to the planned economy.

A vital task of the socialist revolution has already been carried out in North Korea—the destruction of capitalism. This is a gain for the working class. The fact that its true potential is being strangled by Stalinist bureaucratic rule does not stop us from defending North Korea in any military conflict with imperialism. Nor does the horrendous destructive potential of nuclear weapons lead us to call for North Korean disarmament. As long as imperialism has weapons of mass destruction North Korea has the right to its own.

The US insistence on North Korea complying with the NPT and its demands that inspections are allowed are all part of an attempt to crush a workers' state. If the USA implements sanctions or attempts military intimidation workers everywhere should rally to the defence of North Korea. It is the task of the workers, not the South Korean and US generals, to overthrow Kim's dictatorship.

There is only one force that can end the Korean people's suffering from the combined torments of imperialist domination and Stalinist stagnation and that is the working class. Only a workers' revolution north and south can reunify Korea in a progressive way. ■

## RUSSIA

# Restoration in crisis

**T**WO OF Russia's high profile reformers quit the government last month, both warning of dire consequences for the Russian economy. The press and politicians in the West howled and wailed over the apparent death of the capitalist restoration process in Russia and the loss of two of its champions in Moscow.

Yegor Gaidar and Boris Fyodorov were both clearly committed to "fast track" restoration. They stood for removing subsidies, freeing prices and the rapid privatisation of agriculture and industry. Gaidar, leader of the Russia's Choice party, went into the December elections expecting to lead the government and push ahead with restoring capitalism. So what went wrong?

First, the Russian workers were not as keen on the effects of capitalism as Gaidar, Fyodorov and their Western advisors, like Jeffrey Sachs.

Whilst Russia's Choice formed the largest grouping in the new State Duma, they did not get enough seats to govern without allies from other pro-restorationist groupings. But the fast-track restorationists were so confident of victory that they had spent most of their time not addressing the electorate but attacking each other.

President Boris Yeltsin was clearly shocked by the results and took note of the success of the "slow-track" restorationists in the Communist Party and Agrarian Party. He retained his prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, whose first re-

BY KATE FOSTER

sponse to the election result was to comment, "Any shock methods must be precluded in the future".

Prior to the election Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin had announced new subsidies for industry, but many observers dismissed these simply as pre-election sweeteners. Since the election, however, they have been forced to continue with this policy. Subsidies of 7.8 trillion roubles are planned for the first quarter of this year. In January, one of the new deputy premiers, Zaveriuka, announced 14 trillion roubles in subsidies for agriculture this year alone.

## Credit

Gaidar and Fyodorov declared that they could not work with a government which refused to enforce "control" of the economy. One of Fyodorov's key demands on Yeltsin was the removal of Gerashchenko from his post of Governor of the central bank. Fyodorov complained that in the previous government, when he was finance minister, whenever he had refused additional credit for enterprises, they would then sim-

ply go to Gerashchenko for the money. Fyodorov finally resigned on 26 January warning that Russia was heading for hyper-inflation.

But the real reasons for the departure of Gaidar and Fyodorov may have more to do with politics than economics. The timing of their resignations and announcements that they would go into opposition is revealing. A week after Fyodorov resigned the Russian Academy of Sciences published a damning report on the restoration process so far. Thanks to the economic policies of Gaidar and Fyodorov, the report points out, a third of Russians are living below the poverty line and one tenth of the population is currently earning below starvation wages.

Over the last three years, life expectancy has actually decreased in Russia from 69.2 to 66 years of age. Infant mortality has gone up from 17.4% to over 19%. Much of the economic suffering has been caused by the freeing of prices and the reduction of subsidies particularly on foods. Pensioners in Russia now have to spend 83% of their pension just on buying enough food to survive. The restorationists may have succeeded in getting goods into the shops but few people can afford to buy them.

Gaidar and Fyodorov may be glad to be out of the way for a while. Gaidar has presidential ambitions. He intends to use his time in opposition to distance himself from the disasters of the Russian economy whilst remaining the figurehead of the restoration process. He

also needs to transform Russia's Choice into a real political party. When the election results were announced many of its members, as well as supposed allies, defected to other political groupings.

The departure of the fast track restorationists does not represent the end of the restoration process in Russia. As *Workers Power* has pointed out on many occasions, even the hard line Stalinist rump is committed to introducing some form of capitalism. The current situation does, however, reflect the real problems that the restoration process will encounter.

The volatility of the Russian electorate, caused by the economic harshness of restoration, may lead to Zhironovsky's fascism. But it could also lead to organised working class resistance.

Price liberalisation and limited privatisation has led to economic chaos in all sectors of the Russian economy. In the energy sector for example there are debts of 11,000 billion roubles owed by domestic and industrial customers to the new fuel producing enterprises.

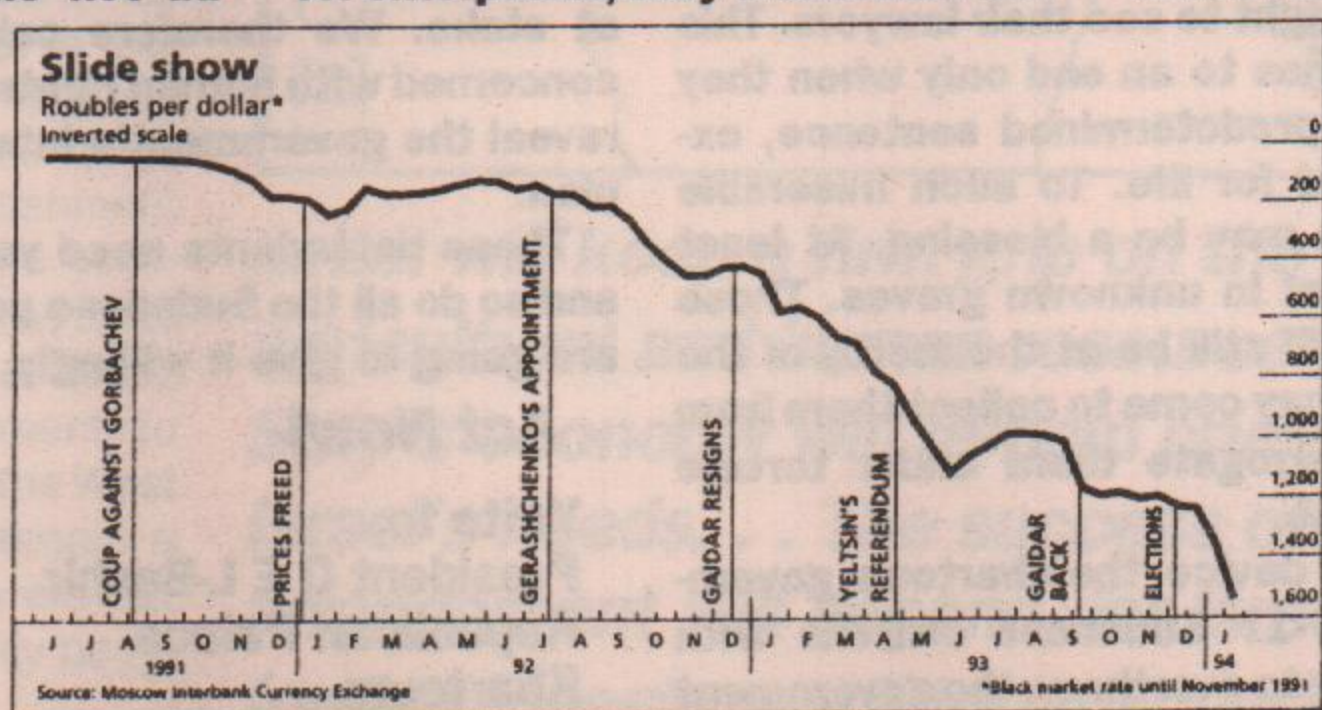
## Strike

Some government employees have not been paid for months. The Industrial Union of Coal Miners are threatening a strike unless miners are paid the 979 billion roubles which they are owed by the government.

Lack of investment, continuing subsidies arranged through the central bank and the political weakness of the fast-track restorationists mean that the restoration process is stalled in Russia.

Meanwhile Gaidar and Fyodorov will watch and see if Chernomyrdin has any more success than they did in cutting jobs and paying starvation wages. And if they judge that resistance is unlikely, they will be back.

Unless the Russian working class begins to fight capitalist restoration and its effects on their lives, they will be forced to pay even more heavily than they have already. ■



The rouble's rocky road to ruin

## BULGER DEBATE

Last month we printed two letters critical of an article in Workers Power 173 about the Bulger murder case. This month the correspondence continues. Next month we will publish a special feature on the Marxist approach to psychology and the mind.

# "Deranged minds" or social relations?

Dear Workers Power,

Workers Power 173 said that the Bulger murder "defies pat explanations", but stated that the answer to this "motiveless" crime lies "deep in the psyche of the killers themselves."

Quentin Rudland and Gerry Downing (see Letters WP 174) were correct to state that in separating the psyche from any material influences, and setting it up as an independent and unknowable factor, the original article was at odds with Marxism, historical materialism and indeed materialism itself.

It is not necessary to take a position on Freud to accept that the killers' psyche was disturbed by their relationship with an objective material reality. If this is not the case, no scientific theory or explanation is possible.

Just because the murder was an "aberration" does not mean that it was so unusual that it was not subject to the laws which determine all human society, and the consciousness of the individuals within it.

Being determines consciousness. To quote Marx:

"Men make their own history but they do not make it just as they please; they make it under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past".

### Heaven

The murderers of James are no exception. In one sense it may be true that the answer "lies deep in the psyche of the killers themselves" but only in one sense. Through examining the psyche of the killers it may be possible to uncover the material influences on these children, which made them kill. The children did not exist in a vacuum, their spirit did not descend from heaven. Their psyche is not an expression of the Weltgeist [world-spirit] It is formed within a specific set of social relationships. The children were not born murderers.

Their crime was not "motiveless". Their motive consisted of their needs, desires and emotions. It led them to carry out a disgusting prank, the kidnap of a helpless toddler, and then to progress by degrees seemingly out of their own control, to the murder of James. The stages of this process cannot be separated. This motive might not suit an Agatha Christie novel, but it is nonetheless real for all that.

An explanation as to why James died can be constructed through examining this progression and through considering

the specific set of material and social relationships which formed the boys' psyche.

As Marxists we know that these social relationships do not drop out of thin air. Capitalism creates them. This is not the same as saying that it was capitalism which killed James, but any attempt to provide an explanation cannot be abstracted from the social context within which it took place.

To glibly assert, as Quentin Rudland does in his letter, that one of the children was probably "secretly abused by an adult" gets us no nearer to the truth.

Sexual abuse takes place on a massive scale within capitalism, both inside and outside the family, but it does not

necessarily create child killers. Similarly we cannot blithely dismiss the decay of capitalism, or "bad parenting" or any other material factor which may have shaped the children's personalities as the article does.

### Events

We must simply state that, given the sketchy description of the events available through the bourgeois press and our lack of knowledge of the boys' circumstances, that we cannot know the precise set of reasons which led to the murder.

But this does not debar us from believing that an explanation can be found and that this explanation will be rooted in

the social relationships and material influences which formed the characters or psyche of these kids.

And, as communists, we can go further and say that a system which is able to destroy the spontaneous sociability, warmth and trust exhibited by every baby and young child and which can, by the age of ten, turn these instincts into their opposite as in the murder of James is a system which warrants destruction.

It is because of this that we must reject the author's truly "pat" explanation that the murder of James was simply the product of "deranged minds".

Bill Jenkins,  
Manchester

## No material explanation?

Dear Workers Power,

The article *Bulger Murder: Censorship is not the answer* (WP173) over-emphasized the unique, specific and "aberrant" nature, not just of the Bulger killing, but of Peter Sutcliffe, the Moors Murderers, Jack the Ripper and, by implication, most serial and child killers.

It's aim was laudable; to show why the Bulger murder should not be the signal for a round of arbitrary censorship aimed at videos like *Child's Play 3*. It was also correct to warn against the simplistic equation: social decay and family breakdown equals more child murderers.

But the article seemed to suggest that Marxists could offer no social, material explanation for "aberrant" behaviour.

### Limits

Clearly we can. Social oppression of women, and the supposedly "worthless" status of prostitutes and gay men under capitalism, must have played a role in their being targeted by recent serial killers. But what role?

Here we have to recognise the limits of Marxism's insight into the material causes of such crimes. Those limits are that Marxism is not primarily a science of individual behaviour.

Dialectical materialism can comprehend the whole of reality, not just society. Thus

there can be a dialectical materialist psychology. But that does not mean that every dialectical materialist has automatic insight into the causes of individual behaviour.

The material explanation for individual behaviour may be reducible to Marx's words: "being determines consciousness". But it is the whole of being—physical and genetic as well as social—which does so.

Thus it is not just family circumstances, sexual experience, poverty etc. which have to be taken into account. The science of understanding how this happens—how individual human consciousness is determined by existence—is psychology, not historical materialism.

If we understand the individual human "psyche" not as some disembodied spirit but as a materially determined physical fact, then it is not wrong to say that the answer to the question "why did they do it?" lies "deep within" that psyche.

As a former teacher of children classified by the capitalist system as "behaviourally disturbed", I can assure Quentin Rudland and Gerry Downing that the potential causes for violent, destructive behaviour are far more varied than sexual abuse and proximity to Toxteth.

Diet for example can cause marked changes in some children's behaviour. It would be ludicrous if I claimed that,

because "being determines consciousness", the murderers' behaviour had probably been caused by diet. But only as ludicrous as Quentin Rudland's presumption of sexual abuse. And indeed only as ludicrous as the Tory right's claim that it was caused by *Child's Play 3*. All three are attempts to identify material causes. But they are examples of mechanical, not dialectical, materialism.

Because Marxists understand that "being determines consciousness" in general does not mean that we have the exclusive right to judge how individual circumstances have determined individual behaviour and consciousness.

### Deep

The bosses' legal system is still deciding how long James Bulger's murderers are to be imprisoned. It is in the interest of society, even of James Bulger's distraught family, that whenever the murderers emerge they are, as far as possible, adjusted and "rehabilitated" to society.

Will the social workers, teachers and psychologists entrusted with this task rest content with examining the poverty of working class life, social oppression and sexual abuse within the family—general and specific?

No. They will delve "deep within the psyche" of the individuals. Hopefully they will not rely solely on Freud, any more than they will rely solely on behavioural psychology. If they approach the task scientifically it is conceivable that they could achieve results—even conceivable that they could answer the question "why did they do it?"—without being Marxists.

Colin Lloyd,  
London

## 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 175 February 1994

- ★ Students—time to fight!
- ★ "Political Correctness"
- ★ Middle East turmoil: Palestine & Algeria

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

Price 40p/10p strikers Solidarity price £1

# Smash

**PAY CUTS MEAN JOB CUTS!**

# the 3%

**T**HE TORIES have imposed a pay cut on 1.5 million public sector workers. And to put the boot in, they have also condemned 45,000 to the dole queue at the same time.

The Pay Review Bodies which dictate pay awards for health workers, teachers and the armed forces recommended a 3% pay "rise" for NHS workers, 2.9% for teachers and 2.75% for soldiers. But even the Institute of Fiscal Studies claims that workers on just less than average pay need 5% to maintain their spending power after April. And of course many public sector workers earn much lower than the average.

The majority of public sector workers are in grades where the maximum wage is only £12,000. Many fall below the poverty threshold set by the European Union. Cuts in services will hit the poor hardest.

Stephen Dorrell, a junior Treasury minister, has admitted that the tax increases announced in the November budget amount to a 7% cut in income. A 3% rise is a sick joke.

The Tories claim that 3% is the maximum because of public spending cuts. But the same review bodies still felt able to recommend that the heads of the armed forces,

the Lord Chief Justice and the Secretary of the Cabinet receive a massive £6,096 (5.4%) rise, giving them £118,179 a year.

The Tories hope that these awards will be enough to stave off a public sector pay revolt. And they are insisting that all the extra money for the 3% rise must come from cuts.

As Labour's Gordon Brown said:

"This is a pay review that the Government has awarded but not financed—granted but not funded... The reality is that many people will receive a theoretical pay rise and then lose their jobs."

If this divide and rule strategy is allowed to succeed it will mean 45,000 job cuts. The Tories say that "savings won't necessarily mean job cuts". This conveniently ignores the fact that over two thirds of public spending goes on pay. As even the *Financial Times* points out, the pay award will mean massive sackings. This is on top of £4.1 billion in cuts lined up for 1994-95:

- housing cut by 8%
- local government cut by 1.8%
- employment cut by 3%
- transport cut by 8.3%
- environment cut by 13%.

These cuts will not only destroy jobs but they will also attack the services that millions of low-paid workers and their families depend on.

Local authorities and NHS managers are already predict-

ing that the unfunded pay awards will lead to bigger classes, poorer education standards and fewer hospital beds and wards.

And there is worse to come next year. The Review Bodies want to move to more local pay bargaining. The bosses fear national pay bargaining because it stops them using cheap labour in one part of the country to undercut workers in another part. And it provides the focus for a national pay round and a potential national fightback.

*The Review Bodies are stuffed full with bosses' representatives. They are designed to undermine workers' rights to collective bargaining direct with the employer. Workers have no interest in keeping them. The unions should be forced to lead a campaign for a massive pay increase across the public sector and for the smashing of these dictatorial quangos*

Just what local pay deals mean can be seen by what is happening to teachers in Hackney. Their pay "rise" is going to be completely wiped out by the education authority's abolition of an £822 London Allowance!

Employers in the rest of the public sector will be eagerly awaiting the unions' reaction to the 3% award to see if they can get away with similar pay cuts.

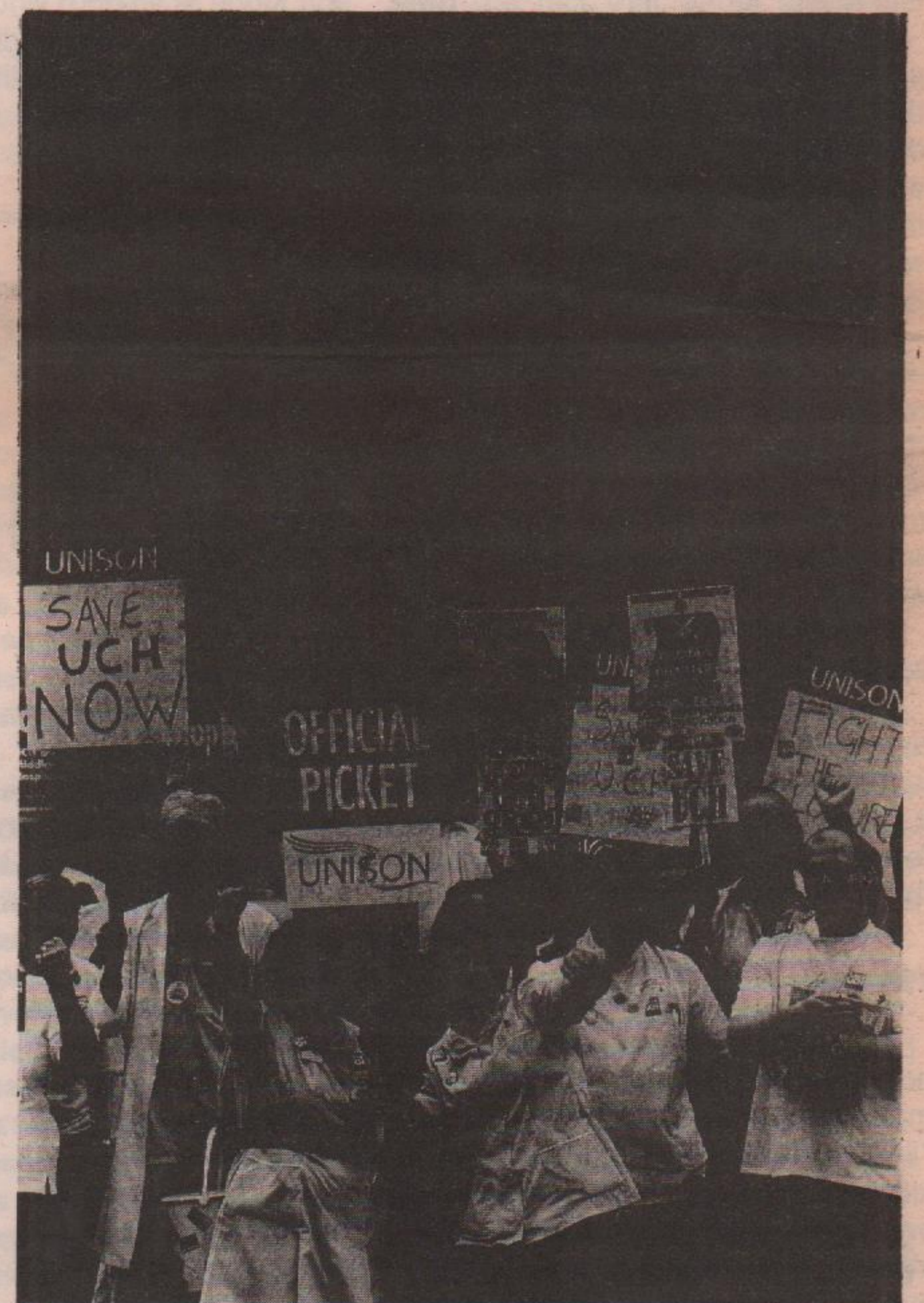
Likewise, private industry bosses will begin to use the 3% as a justification for freezing or cutting pay as well. If the 3% is not busted now, workers in all industries will have lost a chance to force the government and the employers onto the retreat.

The response of the union leaders, even those in the firing line, has been pathetic. Rodney Bickerstaffe, associate general secretary of Unison, meekly called on the government "not to interfere with the review bodies". After the 3% was ratified by the Tories, Unison's response was "One and a half cheers" for "not bowing to government pressure for a freeze".

The TUC's initial reaction to the announcements was to call off the idea of a one-day general strike planned for 11 April.

All out and indefinite strike action is the only way to beat this vicious attack. The Tory pay cut can be beaten. The Tories are worried sick that strikes will take off. That is why they chose not to stick to their original intention of awarding no rise at all.

**Every union involved in health and education should organise an immediate and indefinite strike for a £200 a**



Pay cuts will lead to job cuts unless workers take action

**month pay rise for all grades and a minimum wage of £1,200 a month.**

If just one union launched such a strike campaign, activists could go over the heads of the sell-out merchants and generalise a pay revolt from below. A strike wave spread-

ing across schools and hospitals would have enormous support from workers in those sectors as well as other workers looking for a way to beat the bosses' offensive. But militants have no time to lose: the best time to beat back the attack on pay is now. ■

**Pass this resolution in your branch or stewards' committee:**

*"This branch... calls on the union leadership to reject the Pay Review Body award. The union should call for the abolition of the PRB and assert its right to collective pay bargaining. We call on the Executive to submit a claim for a £200 a month pay rise and a minimum wage of £1,200 a month. To win this claim the Executive should organise an immediate ballot for all-out indefinite strike action across the sector and call on the leaderships and members of other unions to join in our campaign."*