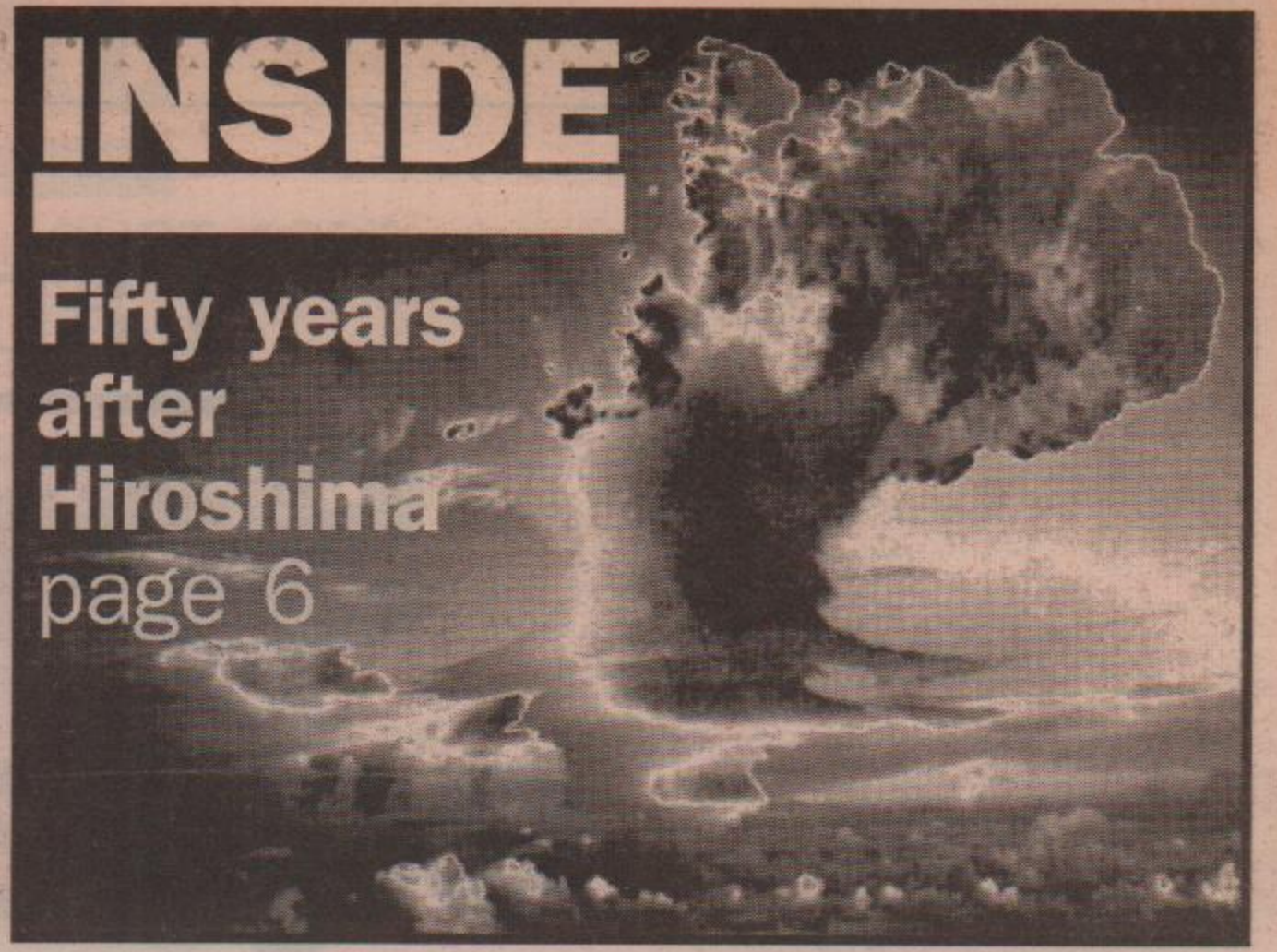


# workers power

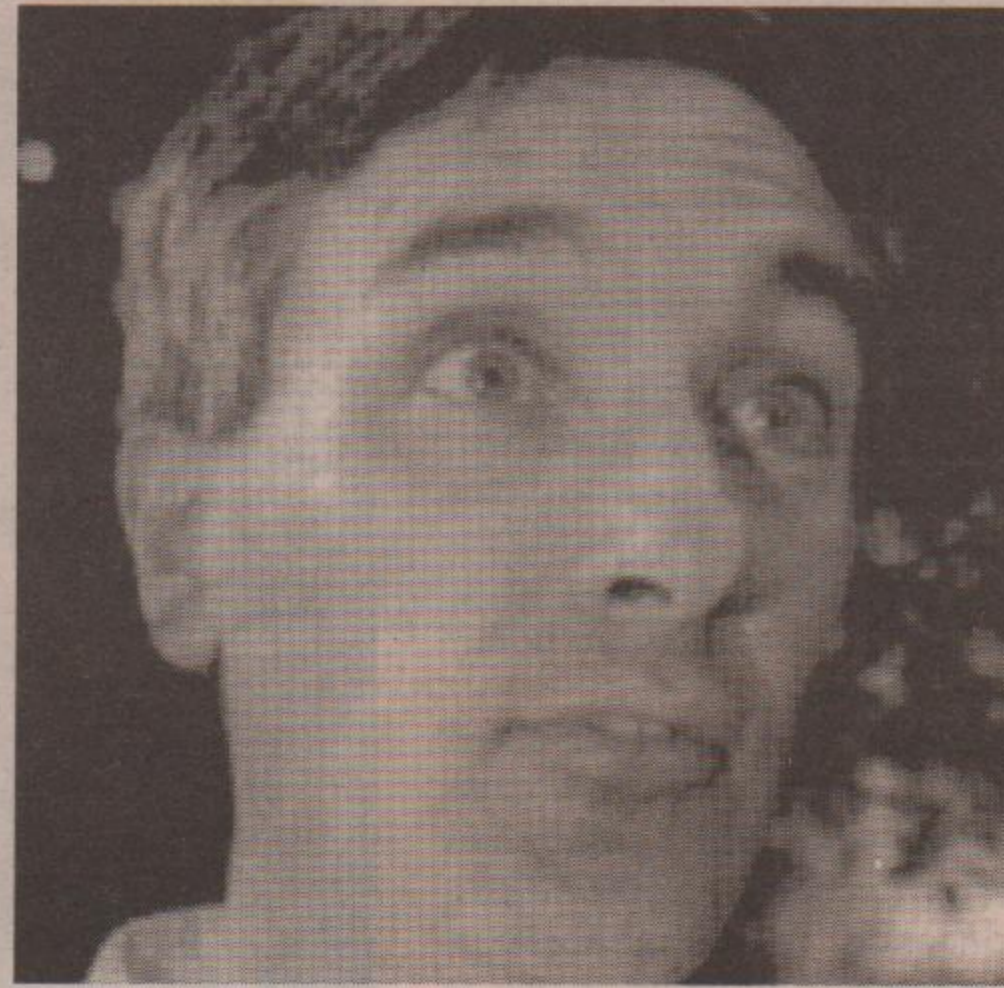
**INSIDE**

Fifty years after Hiroshima page 6



For Internationalism, Socialism and Workers' Revolution

No 191 July 1995 ★ Price 50p



# Kick them all out!



## Now is the time to fight!

Why the Tories are in crisis—page 3

## Strike action can finish off the Tories!

# Labour's education U-turn

## Some are more equal than others

**T**HERE IS an unmistakable message in 'New' Labour's education manifesto: comprehensive education is dead.

At least Tony Blair will avoid the charge of hypocrisy. Schools which have opted out of the state system will retain their independence under a Labour government. So Blair can still send his son to the opted out, selective, London Oratory.

Grant-maintained schools such as the Oratory will, under Labour, be known as "foundation" schools. Labour will change their name, but not their status. Together with private, fee-paying schools they will remain the "foundations" of a two-tier, class ridden education system.

Labour's new document unceremoniously junks previous party policy. Less than two years ago, under John Smith, the party was committed to overturning all the Tory reforms in education.

But Blair and Blunkett have latched on to the Tories' policies. Ironically, they even had to borrow Tory jargon.

Their document is called *Diversity and Excellence*, remarkably similar to the ill-fated white paper from ex-Education Secretary, John Patten, called *Choice and Diversity*. You would think if they're going to indulge in plagiarism then they would choose someone successful, rather than an unmitigated failure!

Blair and Blunkett know they cannot get away with adopting the Tory policies unchanged and within the document there is some commitment to tinkering with the opted out schools.

These schools will supposedly lose their "funding advantage" over state schools—extra money received from the state to replace Local Education Authority (LEA) services.

They will also have two LEA governors on the governing body and be subject to LEA admissions policies. Their funding, currently received via the quango Funding Agency for Schools, will "in time" be handed back to the local authorities. Probably about the time that young Euan Blair passes his A-Levels!

The local authority will not be allowed to dictate, but have a "hands-off" approach, acting as a kind of referee ensuring that standards are maintained. This is to prevent local voters from having any say whatsoever in the running or admissions policy of foundation schools.

Blair hopes that his support for opted out schools will appeal to middle-class voters who already have their children at grant-maintained schools or other forms of private education. To reassure this portion of the electorate Blair, as usual, is prepared to sell the vast majority of the working class down the river.

Blair seems to have missed the fact that remarkably few schools have opted out, mainly because parents actually voted against.

### Concerns

The concerns of middle-class voters are not, however, the only thing on Tony Blair's mind.

Education spending represents a massive proportion of the expenditure of the state. Any promise to increase it will meet the unremitting hostility of the bosses. The bosses' project, here as elsewhere, is to privatise the most profitable areas and cut the rest to the bone. Labour's traditional commitment to comprehensive education flies in the face of this.

But this was always the contradiction of Labour's policy. The educational needs



of workers and their children will never be compatible with the kind of education system which best serves the needs of the capitalists: a small number of elite schools to create the new capitalist class; a grammar school sector to provide the specialists and lower managers; and a majority of "dustbin" schools providing basic skills (and obedience) for the rest.

Comprehensive schooling and the other reforms painstakingly won in the post-war period were always liable to be turned back. Nor was Labour guaranteed to defend them, unless forced to by the pressure of the working class.

This is because Labour works for capitalism. Blair hopes to get elected by reassuring the bosses that he can do a better

job of managing capitalism than the Tories have done.

Look at their commitment to the "maintenance of standards". Will Labour provide more and better-paid teachers? No. Where is the excellence going to come from in education? More money for books or the repair of the rotting fabric of school buildings? Some hope!

### Smokescreen

Like the Tories, Labour are disguising their motives behind the smokescreen of "parent power".

Parents are to get an extra place on governing bodies and representatives on LEA committees. But "parent power" was the Tories' way of undermining local authority control, and thus strengthening the hand of central government.

With schools controlling their own budgets—another Tory measure that Labour now supports—parent-governors end up doing the government's dirty work: making cuts and sacking teachers.

Parent power without resources is no power at all.

The fight for working class control of the education system, not spurious "parent power", is crucial.

This means bringing all schools into the state system. It means making the LEA bureaucrats accountable to the communities they serve. It means giving real power over schools to the people who work in them, who study in them and whose community they serve.

Above all it means ensuring that our needs, not the needs of the capitalists, are met. Then we will have schools fit for our kids to go to—regardless of whether or not Tony Blair's offspring happen to go there too. ■

## Turkey

### Union leader jailed

**O**N 16 May this year a Turkish trade unionist, Atilay Ayçin, was arrested and sentenced to 20 months imprisonment for a speech made at a human rights meeting in 1991. Atilay Ayçin is the president of Hava-Is, Turkey's civil aviation union. His arrest came on the 21st day of a strike by aviation workers at the recently privatised HAVAS (Aviation Enterprises Joint Stock Company).

With 700,000 workers currently bargaining over wages and conditions, with more privatisations and massive redundancies pending, the state is determined to stamp out resistance. Atilay Ayçin's arrest was a warning to all those preparing to fight back. In 1994 alone 320 trade unionists "disappeared" in Turkey. Despite this, trade unionism is growing, with many employers being forced to grant sick

pay and better health and safety to their workers. The courage of activists such as Ayçin, often working in illegal or semi-legal conditions, deserves the greatest possible solidarity from trade unionists in Britain and elsewhere.

For further information, including a model resolution calling for Ayçin's release, contact the Colin Roach Centre on 0181-533-7111 (Fax 0181 533 7116). ■



Barricades in Istanbul. Now Turkish state cracks down on unions.

## Free Satpal Ram!

**O**N 16 November 1986, Satpal Ram went for a meal at the Sky Blue restaurant on Lozells Rd, Birmingham. There he became the victim of an horrific racist attack by six white men. Stabbed in the face and arms by a broken glass, Satpal took out a knife, warning his attackers to stay back. They did not. In fear of his life, Satpal stabbed one of the men, who later died.

Satpal acted in self-defence. But he was tried and convicted for murder.

Satpal's trial was a farce. Most of the

prosecution evidence came from his attackers. No interpreter was provided to translate defence evidence from Bengali speakers. Witness statements from the restaurant staff were mysteriously disowned. Satpal had one brief meeting with his barrister, in which he was advised to drop his plea of self-defence. The jury, in a multi-ethnic city, was all white.

Now, after eight years' imprisonment, the Home Office has finally allowed Satpal an appeal. There is no guarantee that the appeal will be successful. Cases just as

strong have lost in the past. It is vital that a big demonstration is built for the first day of the appeal. Union branches, student unions and community organisations need to be mobilised. The state and its legal guardians must get the clear message: self-defence is no offence.

The date of the appeal is due to be set shortly. For more information, or to donate to the campaign, contact the Free Satpal Campaign, c/o 101, Villa Rd, Handsworth, Birmingham. Tel 0121 551 4518. ■

## Raghubir Singh: political prisoner

**I**N JANUARY 1995 an unidentified man gunned down a Sikh newspaper editor on the streets of Southall, London. The following month, police in the West Midlands arrested, and then released without charge, seven men suspected of involvement in the shooting. Among those arrested and released was Raghubir Singh—himself a newspaper editor and a member of the Birmingham branch of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ).

Raghubir Singh, however, was swiftly re-arrested by police and immigration officers. They threatened him with immediate deportation on the grounds that he constituted a "threat to national security". The authorities placed him in Birmingham's Winson Green jail, where he has remained for more than four months.

No charges have been lodged against him.

### Accused

Raghubir Singh has lived in Britain since 1980. He has no criminal record and has never been accused of any breach of Britain's immigration laws.

His wife and his two British born children are British citizens, though Raghubir has elected to retain his Indian passport. Even the Tory Home Secretary, Michael Howard, has conceded that the state has no evidence to warrant a prosecution of Raghubir.

Raghubir's real "crime" is his persistent criticism of the Indian government in the pages of *Awaze Quam*, the Sikh Punjabi newspaper he edits.

Though he has been denied the most basic rights of due process, Raghubir is not fighting in isolation.

Raghubir's family, his friends in the Sikh community and his union have launched a high profile defence campaign to stop the enforcement of any

deportation order and win his release.

Though an attempt to gain a judicial review of the deportation procedures failed in the High Court on 12 April, the campaign has since forced Michael Howard to allow an "asylum application" before proceeding with any deportation order.

To date the campaign has staged a 1,000-strong demonstration in Birmingham on 29 April and gained the support of 102 MPs for an Early Day Motion, authored by Labour's David Winnick, calling for Raghubir's release.

On Saturday 24 June, campaigners picketed Winson Green prison as part of a broader day of action involving hundreds of demonstrators outside Haslar and Rochester prisons, and Britain's "concentration camps" for refugees and asylum seekers at Campsfield and Harmondsworth. The aim was to combine the protest with a birthday party for Raghubir's 11-year-old daughter outside the prison gates.

The truth behind the arrest, threatened deportation and subsequent detention without charge of Raghubir Singh is yet to be told.

But Raghubir's treatment needs to be seen in the context of such scandals as the harassment of Kurdish PKK supporters and the current imprisonment of Palestinians on the flimsiest of pretexts for the 1994 bombing of the Israeli embassy.

It is one aspect of a vicious immigration policy which scapegoats immigrants and fosters a climate where every worker or student from the "Third World" is a potential "terrorist".

For further information and messages of support contact the Raghubir Singh Defence Campaign, c/o Birmingham NUJ, 725 Pershore Road, Birmingham B29 7NY, tel: 0121 415 5866, fax: 0121 415 5877. ■

## in this issue



### Minimum Wage

Labour has refused to set a figure for the promised National Minimum Wage. The union leaders want £4.15 an hour. But it's not enough - page 4



### Save Mumia Abu-Jamal

Mumia Abu-Jamal, African-American anti-racist fighter and writer, has been sentenced to die on 17 August. All over the world the campaign is growing to save his life - page 6



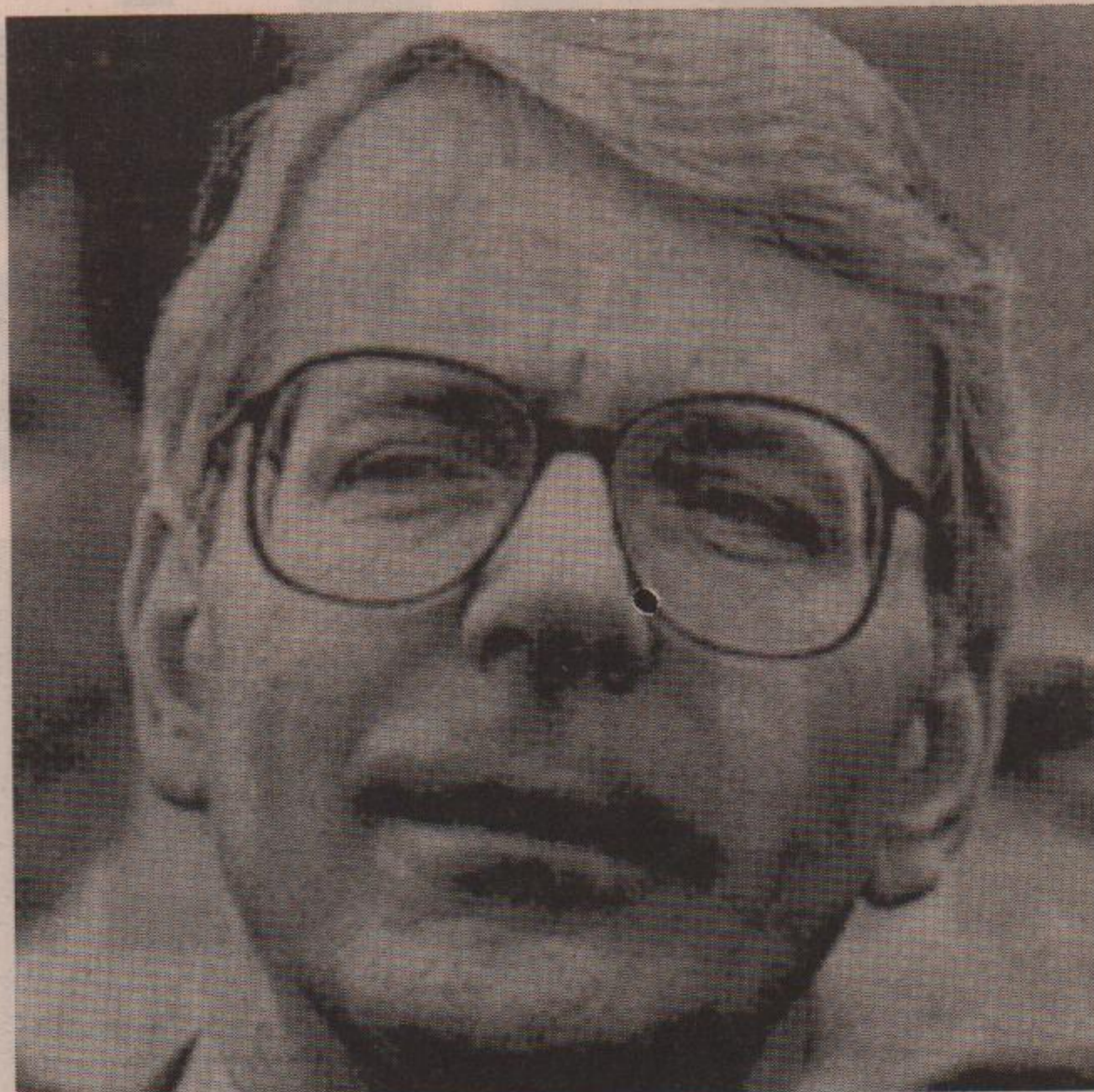
### China's great leap backwards

Deng Xiaoping in on his deathbed. He will leave behind a Stalinist bureaucracy riven with factions. They are busy fighting over the spoils of the return to capitalism. But the workers are starting to fight back. - page 10

### In the next issue

Workers Power 192 due out in September, includes:

- Engels and the dialectics of nature
- A to Z of Marxism: D is for Democracy
- Left regroupment - the debate continues. ■



## Tory crisis

# Divided they fall?

**H**IGH DRAMA is not something you normally associate with John Major. He's more the kitchen sink type. But his resignation as leader of the Tory party was completely out of character. He grabbed centre stage in a bid to save his leadership from possible defeat in November—and his party from total self-destruction.

Major's gamble earned him praise for being "courageous": from cabinet colleagues, from Tory newspapers who had given up hope on him and even from his undead tormentor, Thatcher.

But there is nothing remotely brave about Major. His action was a piece of parliamentary intrigue designed to cheat the country out of a general election. An election which would undoubtedly fling him and his party out of office.

Major's tactic was a sly means of preventing his main rivals for leadership—Portillo on the Eurosceptic wing and Heseltine or Clarke on the pro-European wing—from taking advantage of a November leadership challenge.

By calling a leadership election himself Major temporarily outflanked these alternative Tory leaders, gambling on gaining enough support in a first ballot (on 4 July) to lay the leadership issue to rest until the next general election. Behind his gamble was the calculation that enough MPs would be frightened of making a definite choice between the clearer cut alternatives—of Eurosceptics or Europhiles—and would opt to carry on backing him as the self-declared "one man coalition" leader.

Major hoped his surprise leadership election might save the party from complete electoral wipe-out in a general election. And it appealed to the Tories' big business backers. As Howard Davies, the CBI director general, put it:

"The business interest is in a government with clear and sensible policies. If this manoeuvre helps reinforce the government's authority then it is a positive move."

Whether Major wins or loses his action has revealed the full extent of his government's terrible weakness. A new mandate from the parliamentary party may save a few seats here or there. But it won't save

the party from defeat. Nor will it resolve the faction fight that lies at the heart of the present crisis.

That fight is between well organised and powerful sections of the party who have opposing views about the future of Britain and its relationship with the European Community (EC).

Heseltine and Clarke, the so-called Europhiles, believe that Britain's economic weakness can only be offset by further integration into Europe and alignment with the powerful Franco-German bloc at the heart of the EC. They are not federalists, as their opponents paint them. But they are clear on the need for Britain to place itself firmly and unambiguously within Europe.

The so-called Eurosceptics around Portillo, Lilley and Howard are the true heirs of Thatcher. They are in favour of a limited degree of economic co-operation

because it means endemic weakness. Major is prone to so many pitfalls because he is trying to keep on his feet, while keeping his feet in both camps. He is weak because his party is divided. While this continues to be the case the party knows that its heavy defeats in last year's European elections and this year's local government elections will inevitably be repeated in a general election.

British capitalism cannot tolerate the division because it has to know where its future lies. It has to know whether or not it will remain a subordinate partner to the USA or a component of its developing rival, the EC. Uncertainty means lost profits.

Hurd's announcement that he will resign as Foreign Secretary is a clear example of how Major's gamble will not overcome the Tory dilemma. After Hurd, there are no straddlers left. Whoever is prime minister will be forced to choose Hurd's

Party, has rightly said that this leadership crisis excludes the country from delivering its verdict on the government and its leadership. He should go further.

The Labour Party must not sit back and let a few hundred Tory MPs decide who rules Britain. They must demand the resignation of the Tory government now and an immediate general election.

They should back that up with calls for mass protest action, demonstrations and meetings to force an election now.

Blair has been busy denouncing teachers for threatening strike action, warning nurses that they shouldn't take industrial action and pleading with rail workers for restraint. He has been helped in this by a cowardly trade union bureaucracy forced to grovel so much during the Thatcher years that it is now incapable of looking up and seeing its enemy in total disarray.

The working class can make a difference in this crisis if it acts now. It can upset the balancing act and double dealing by introducing the "wild card" of mass struggle into the calculations.

Rail workers and health workers should go for all out strikes. They should set up joint committees to organise and prosecute those strikes and they should seek to spread them throughout the public sector.

Cuts in pay and services are coming. We all know that. Strike action now can repel such attacks. Major launched a pre-emptive strike on his enemies in the Tory Party. Public sector workers should also launch a pre-emptive strike on their enemy—the whole Tory Party.

The effect of such action, while the Tories are in disarray, would be electric. Every worker facing a pay cut, every worker being forced to work long hours, every worker facing privatisation would feel stronger and more confident to act against those attacks.

We could turn the crisis *within* the government into a crisis *for* the government. We could kick the Tories out.

The Tories are considering how to change their leadership so that they can better attack workers. We need to change the whole lot them and force them out of office.

Get rid of Major! Get rid of the Tories! ■

**We could turn the crisis *within* the government into a crisis *for* the government. We could kick the Tories out.**

in Europe, but believe that British imperialism's world-wide economic interests are best served by obstructing the development of the EC into a powerful regional bloc capable of rivalling the USA. They believe that the maintenance of British capitalism's global economic interests are reliant on the protection of US imperialism and the economic assistance of Japan.

The rows over Maastricht and the single currency are major battles within the framework of this war over the direction of the British economy.

This is not a conflict that will be resolved by Major winning enough votes to continue as leader. Both he and his foreign secretary, Hurd, represented an awkward straddling of these two factions. But they cannot continue this balancing act forever. Neither the party, nor British capitalism can tolerate this. The issue will have to be resolved by one or the other factions winning and reorienting the Tory party accordingly.

The party cannot tolerate the division

replacement from one side or the other. And the conflict will simply be re-ignited, but at a higher level.

If Major loses the leadership election, the same set of problems will re-emerge, but in a different form. A Clarke or Heseltine victory would be unpalatable to the Thatcher faction. A Portillo ascendancy would push pro-Europeans into opposition.

Whatever the outcome the working class will face a new round of attacks.

Portillo and the right have set out an agenda of further massive cuts in public expenditure. Heseltine, despite his "interventionist" reputation, knows that cuts will be necessary if they are to be able to fund an election tax-cut bribe. Major himself is already under pressure to pursue such cuts from his supporters within the back-bench 1922 Committee. Whoever leads them, the Tories will launch a serious attack on all public sector workers and millions of unemployed people.

Tony Blair, the leader of the Labour

### FIGHT FOR WORKERS POWER!

- I want to know more about Workers Power
- I want to join Workers Power

#### I would like to subscribe to:

- Workers Power (£8 for 12 issues)
- Trotskyist International (£8 for 3 issues)

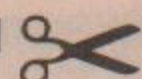
Make cheques payable to Workers Power and send to:  
Workers Power, BCM 7750, London WC1N 3XX

Name: .....

Address: .....

Telephone: ..... Trade union: .....

Workers Power (Britain)  
BCM Box 7750 London  
WC1N 3XX  
e-mail:  
paulmorris@easynet.co.uk  
ISSN 0263-1121  
Printed by Newsfax  
International Ltd, Unit 16  
Bow Industrial Park,  
London, E15



**W**HAT DOES £4 buy? As everybody knows, the answer is—not a lot. Yet in Britain over four million workers are paid less than £4 an hour. And we're not talking take home pay: four million people earn less than £4 an hour before tax and including overtime and shift payments.

£4.15 an hour is the figure many trade unions and the TUC are demanding Labour sets as a minimum wage. It is equal to half the "median male wage". (That means 50% of all male workers earn less than £8.30 an hour).

To the rich bosses who earn thousands of pounds a week it must seem like peanuts—they probably spend £4 an hour on their mobile phones.

But they have greeted demands for a national minimum wage with howls of indignation. The idea of the state guaranteeing that millions of working people can earn enough to buy their kids clothes, run a second hand car or stand the occasional round of drinks fills them with astonishment.

"It will increase unemployment, ruin the economy and boost inflation" they claim.

Dutifully, Tony Blair's New Labour, which once promised to include the minimum wage in its election commitments, is working overtime to abandon the idea.

It is a "vote loser", claims Blair, adding that there can be no commitment to an actual figure for a minimum wage even if it is included in the Labour manifesto.

But while Tony Blair clearly thinks £4 is too much, the European Union thinks it is too little. The EU "decency threshold"—a figure set by the infamous Eurocrats, not raging revolutionaries—is £5.88 an hour. Today, some 37% of British workers earn less than this.

Despite this the leaders of some of the biggest low paid workers' unions have declared their willingness to fight for the minimum wage of around £4 an hour. They know that a wage set as low as £3 an hour, for example, will only help 1.6 million workers.

They should be held to the highest possible figure and forced to fight for it before, during and after the next election.

But this means taking on the arguments of the bosses and the Labour leaders.

The national minimum wage is a vital necessity because low pay means poverty and degradation for over four million people.

It forces hard-working men and women to pile up overtime, to take on second jobs, to cut corners on safety and to ruin their health through poverty diets and stress.

We hear a lot about "one nation Tory-

**Over 2 million part-time women workers earn less than £4 an hour**



ism" and the "classless society" from John Major. But low pay is the biggest cause of social inequality in this country. Not only does it divide the rich from the poor, but it guarantees that the lives of low paid workers are vastly poorer than those of better paid workers.

No car means no supermarket shopping for cheapest offers. No latest football strips and trainers for the kids leaves them as second class citizens at school. Holidays abroad? Forget it if you earn less than £4 an hour. Ditto for overdrafts, credit cards, the lot.

The social case for the minimum wage is incontrovertible.

But what about the economic case? Here you have to decide who you're trying to persuade. In many recent articles advocating the minimum wage—from *Unison Focus* to *Socialist Worker*—trade unionists have tried to put the case that the minimum wage can even improve the performance of the capitalist economy.

Figures are cited showing low pay and rising unemployment go together, whilst in countries like Germany, France and Italy job creation and the minimum wage go

hand in hand. Citing a 1991 study which showed even unemployed people being better off with a minimum wage, *Socialist Worker* recently claimed: "A minimum wage would let these families escape the benefit trap by making it worthwhile taking up a low paid job."

But we don't want low paid jobs: that's the purpose of a minimum wage! And it is no use trying to sell the minimum wage to Britain's bosses.

They have no intention of allowing a government which pursues strategies for economic growth at their expense. Fortu-

nately for them, neither has Tony Blair.

And it is no use quoting the "ripple effect" of the minimum wage, which raises the pay of those who earn just above the minimum as well, unless you have an answer for the capitalists' warnings of increased inflation.

The real case for the minimum wage is an anti-capitalist argument: workers need a wage that allows them to work, year on year, without suffering exhaustion, ill health or premature ageing.

They need to bring up and educate their children. They need to provide for their own retirement. These basic costs of reproducing the workers ability to work should be covered by the wage under capitalism.

There should be a minimum wage which reflects these basic needs. Ideally that means taking average male earnings—still amongst the lowest in Europe at £8 an hour—and making that the minimum wage for men and women.

We can and must demand that it be paid for out of the profits of the bosses.

Faced with the inevitable pressure of inflation, as bosses tried to recoup profits by raising prices, and as shops took advantage of increased demand, the government would have to introduce price controls.

As a further safeguard the minimum wage would have to be linked to inflation, with committees of ordinary workers—not top civil servants—monitoring the prices.

Faced with the threat of mass redundancies against the low paid—as the penny-pinching private cleaning contractors for example suddenly found themselves barred from super-exploiting part-time women workers—we would need nationalisation of any company going bust or threatening redundancies because of the minimum wage.

In short, a national minimum wage set at the level to meet our needs would challenge the bosses right to cream off billions of pounds in profits from the work we do.

It would have to go hand in hand with a co-ordinated programme to shift control and ownership from the bosses to the workers.

That means that in the fight for the minimum wage today we have to do two things:

- push for the closest possible figure to £8 an hour and force the unions into a united and active fight for it.
- don't give an inch to toytown economic arguments that say it would be good for capitalism.

It will be good for millions of workers—and that is what matters. ■

## Unison Conference

# Divided left, wasted opportunity

**U**NISON CONFERENCE was a very large, and lack-lustre, affair. It was dominated by two central issues, the probable election of a Labour government and the probable sell out of the nurses' pay claim.

Throughout the week there were continuous references to the hopes and expectations of the leadership, and most rank and file delegates, in Tony Blair. Conference agreed to demand a £4.15 per hour minimum wage and to call on Labour to rationalise the privatised industries.

In spite of the large number of left delegates at conference, no resolutions were passed to force the leadership to lead industrial action. Even around the question of nurses pay, where conference was clearly in support of industrial action and the successful prosecution of the claim, the only concrete commitment was to a national demonstration on 29 July.

On internal union finance the leadership suffered an important defeat. Using their weight in a card vote, the larger branches were able to extract an increase in funding of an extra 2% of local subs collected for the use of branches. Strangely, the mover of the NEC report on branch funding, which attempted to bolster the central bureaucracy against the local organisations was a supporter of Militant Labour—John Flynn.

To actively support and fight for the

leadership's policy against their own members and the rest of the left on the conference floor is a disgrace and Militant should dissociate themselves from the scandalous behaviour of "comrade" Flynn.

Unison conference presented a golden opportunity to advance the organisation of the rank and file within Unison. But any objective observer would have to conclude that this opportunity was comprehensively squandered.

At the Fightback conference in Birmingham (see previous issues of *Workers Power*), the CFDU undertook a short-lived unity offensive, demanding that Fightback begin discussion with a view to forming one united rank and file organisation in Unison.

The CFDU is dominated by several different left groups, principally Militant Labour and Socialist Outlook. Aside from their accommodation to Labourism, the leadership these groups, and consequently the CFDU, also share a sectarian hostility to the SWP and Fightback.

As soon as the growth of the CFDU became apparent—it held two very large meetings at conference—and they realised that they were no longer as dependent on the SWP to form a credible organisation, they abandoned any prospect of unity.

So at the first CFDU meeting, attended by around 200 delegates and bigger than any left meeting at last year's conference,

the CFDU chair had no problem allowing Fightback members in the room to vote in principal whether it was correct to stand a left candidate against Bickerstaffe. But as soon as the debate moved onto who it should be, Fightback supporters were carved out of the debate in the crudest possible fashion and denied the opportunity to vote.

This led to a predictable response from the SWP and Fightback. Rather than fight the sectarian carve-up undertaken by the CFDU, they retreated further into sectarianism.

They simultaneously combined the worst of opportunism with the sectarian's fear of an honest and open debate. At the CFDU meeting the SWP's Brian Butterworth announced that Fightback were prepared to drop their candidate for General Secretary, Yunus Bakhsh, if a so called "independent candidate" could be found to unite the left.

No one was prepared to accept this proposal. As a result at their meeting the following day, the SWP made an announcement that Yunus would stand for General Secretary as an SWP "party" candidate—not even bothering to stand in the name of Fightback itself. In one fell swoop they managed to bolster the sectarians in the CFDU and alienate themselves from any rank and file militants who would have supported them in a fair electoral contest.

The CFDU leadership moved swiftly to consolidate their position. Calling a meeting which not all affiliated branches were informed of, and where there was an incomplete list of delegates permitted to vote, the CFDU endorsed Roger Bannister as their candidate for General Secretary.

Workers Power was the only group to fight consistently for the unity of the left, and for the necessity of a fair and open decision about the selection of a candidate to fight Bickerstaffe.

Newcastle Unison who had formally been advocates of unity, collapsed in the face of the sectarian division which split the left.

Rather than campaigning against the split they accepted it as an accomplished fact and opposed any left candidate standing against Bickerstaffe.

Under the pressure of the rank and file, the leadership of the two rival organisations could have been pressured into uniting and selecting a single candidate.

However, this has not happened, and as a result we have no choice but to make a decision as to which candidate we would support against Bickerstaffe. It has to be Roger Bannister.

This is not because he is our favoured candidate—far from it. He has a history of refusing to confront the bureaucracy and lead the rank and file against the union's own officialdom wherever necessary.

He did not speak at conference at all, although after much criticism from *Workers Power* comrades he did make a half hearted attempt to intervene on the anti-trade union law debate.

He explained during the CFDU hustings that as an NEC member he was bound by NEC decisions.

Yunus is in many ways a more acceptable candidate politically.

He was a leader of the attempts to force conference to back the nurses in deeds as well as words. But he is not standing as the candidate of any rank and file organisation. He is standing as the party candidate of the SWP, who are opposed to building any rank and file organisation.

In this case we have to vote, critically, for the left winger who has the best chance of winning, and who can focus the desire of thousands of members for a real rank and file movement.

It is vital that the rank and file have an opportunity to break from the rotten politics of our leadership, and that the election campaign is used to build a real rank and file organisation within Unison.

But we demand of Bannister that he does a lot more than passively indicating his opposition to the leadership. He must use this opportunity to start building the rank and file organisation which can take on the bureaucrats who run Unison and smash their hold over it. ■

# Sheffield Support Library Strikers



**WP:** What led up to the strike? The threat of withdrawal of national agreements. The employers have been trying to take away our enhanced pay for Saturday working for a long time—years! But it's never got to this before. They sent a letter seeking "staff flexibility", i.e. the removal of enhanced pay. We've taken pay cuts in the past and each time it's been "we won't ask you again". Then they said they would withdraw the letter and that they had no intention of attacking the national agreements, but when the shop stewards asked for clarification they wouldn't assure us that they wouldn't take away enhanced pay. Losing enhanced pay would mean up to a 7.5% pay cut—depending on how many Saturdays you work.

**WP:** So you balloted for an all-out indefinite strike?

Yes. It was very democratic. The bosses had a fortnight's notice. We've tried one-day strikes in the past and they've had no effect. This was the only way. We've been too flexible in the past. Nobody takes any notice of one-day strikes.

**WP:** How is the strike organised?

There are two full members' meetings each week and practically everybody comes—the numbers haven't dropped off.

A strike committee meets daily, made up of shop stewards and several non-elected observers but they don't vote—they're just members, there to make sure there's no hidden agenda going on—the management accuse the shop stewards of having a hidden agenda.

Then there are daily pickets at the Central Library, staff and public entrances and other libraries where some people are going in.

350 library workers began an indefinite strike in Sheffield on 5 June in protest against the Council's attempts to change their contracts and cut pay. On Saturday, 24 June over 500 marched through Sheffield to a rally and speeches. UNISON leader, Rodney Bickerstaffe and TUC chief, John Monks were both there.

Workers Power interviewed two women strikers on the picket line outside the Central Library in the week before the demonstration, just as negotiations broke down.

**WP:** How solid is the strike?

Hillsborough Library is opening with non-union labour—there is a regular picket there. Some users leave their books and won't cross the picket line. The world Metal Index is also open—it's a department in the Central Library. They make us very angry. They see themselves as different because it's a subscription thing—companies pay for the service—so they set themselves apart. But really the strike is very solid. Workers aren't going back. One or two libraries are managing to open using exempt workers—pregnant women and people in their last year of work before retirement.

Some have been moved about and aren't happy about it—in fact, I think they've been threatened.

**WP:** Have you had much support from other trade unions?

It's been brilliant. Sheffield Trades Council are behind us and cheques have been flooding in from all over the country. We collected £2,700 in bucket collections at Unison Conference in Brighton, then conference voted to give £10,000 to the strike fund. That helped morale tremendously. Unison is also sending a letter of condemnation to Mike Bower, the leader of the council.

**WP:** What do you think about the Labour council attacking your pay and conditions?

We gave the council a document before the strike suggesting other ways to make savings—they've even denied that they'd had it! We know they are under pressure from the Tories but they've handled it very badly. It's deplorable that they're attacking low-paid workers—because it's only low-paid workers that get enhanced pay.

**WP:** What are the implications of your strike for Sheffield and for the rest of the country?

In Sheffield, Leisure are balloting over the same issue now. But we're the first, nobody's done what we've done. People think the council tried us because they thought that we were a soft option—a mostly women workforce and we've been very accommodating and flexible in the past. I think management are very surprised; they didn't think we'd follow through.

Because national agreements are at stake we're getting lots of support from other parts of the country. The delegate from libraries in Birmingham at conference said, "Whatever Sheffield does, Birmingham follows," and followed it up with a £400 donation!■



After months of delay, the stage appears set for a showdown between railworkers and BR bosses. Steve, a London-based RMT activist and lay officer of the union, speaks about the current ballot and the prospects for a crucial fight against poverty pay and the privatisation of British Rail.

Rail

## All-out from day one

**“** IN THIS dispute we need to get the working class as a whole behind us—because we're not going in unprepared this time. In the first instance, that's going to mean talking to other railworkers, making clear the issues at stake, raising people's confidence and getting them involved in picketing to start off with.

As usual we're faced with the problem of union disunity. Basically, ASLEF, the train drivers' union, is an elitist union. They've got some good activists, but it's basically dominated by its full-time officials. The RMT, for all its faults, is the closest thing we've got to an industrial union for all railworkers.

To be honest it's quite hard to get in touch with ASLEF members because of the nature of drivers' jobs. Maybe we're at fault too for not trying hard enough, but I don't see much chance of co-ordination at this stage.

The RMT demonstration on 10 June was disappointing, with a very low turn-out. The left officials wanted to build it, but they only went about it through papers like the *Morning Star* and leaflets which were an absolute shambles. Three different leaflets advertising three different places for the demo were produced!

And the right wing of the RMT didn't want to build it. A week before the demo there were no posters around Euston, which is five minutes walk from Unity House, the RMT's national headquarters where the demo was due to start!

The 6% official claim isn't going to make all that much difference for many of our members who are on as little as £134 a week. 6% is a very timid claim—especially given BR's record operating profit.

Despite all this we're still reasonably confident of a "yes" vote.

I'm usually very cynical about the bureaucracy, but it's not one of those disputes where the bureaucracy would even be serving itself by trying to

downplay the prospect of action.

I believe there's going to be a big vote in favour of action and that the bureaucracy will be pushing for the action. Why? Because if this strike is not successful—and by that I mean if it doesn't stop privatisation—then the RMT is practically finished as a union. For the bureaucrats there's an element of self-preservation in this as well.

What we need is an all-out strike from day one. Initially, last year's one-day strikes by the signalworkers were successful, but Railtrack adapted their tactics to combat them pretty effectively.

So we've got to go all-out. And it shouldn't just be railworkers. We should be calling for solidarity action.

The London Midlands District Council of the union has agreed a proposal for a meeting to rally support for a strike. The aim is to reactivate some of the support groups that were set up at the time of the signalworkers' dispute.

We've got the UNISON healthworkers in dispute. You could still see the teachers in dispute. The TUC's obviously not going to call it, but I think if rank-and-file railworkers did call for it, we could get a wave of industrial action that would bring down the Government.

Closer to home there is a prospect of action on the London Underground, where ASLEF is balloting for strike action. But it will only happen if there is an ASLEF strike on the tube, because the RMT membership on London Underground is too weak to carry a strike on its own.

Ideally, we should fight for united action across the rail, London Underground and buses like in 1989, the last time we had some real success.

Despite the fact that you had a strong Thatcher-led, Tory government with more than a 100-seat majority, united strike action had a real effect.■

### College Lecturers

## No more local deals!

**N**ATFHE BRANCHES have clearly endorsed the rejection of the fake deal struck by the College Employers Forum (CEF) with the scab outfit, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers.

Branches are also voting to take part in further strike action against the new contracts designed to hit the start of the new term in September.

While the national leaders have done little to co-ordinate this action, key regions, including Wales, West Midlands and North-West are preparing the maximum action possible.

The rank and file campaign, Fight the Contracts, agreed at its last meeting to push for the co-ordinated strikes agreed at the last conference—four days starting on 5 September.

Such action is vital to stop the employers' renewed offensive. Knocked back by resistance to a national sell-out, the college employers are looking for local deals.

While rank and file action has forced many employers to abandon their insistence on totally "flexible" contracts, the

lack of effective national strikes has meant the employers are also able to increase pressures on members to abandon the Silver Book (i.e. national) contract.

The deal just signed at Sheffield College, while including contractual limits on annual teaching hours, has no such limits on weekly teaching hours.

The left, organised in the local Fight the Contracts Campaign and including Workers Power supporters, fought a hard battle against the deal.

But we were unable to persuade the majority to stick out longer in the face of a recommendation from the local leadership of NATFHE.

Meanwhile, the national leadership have been sabotaging conference policy on the pay fight.

Instructed to organise a proper national ballot over pay for national strike action, NATFHE Further Education Industrial Relations Committee has whittled this down to a vote for unspecified national action, delayed until well into the new term and conducted through branch by

branch ballot.

This form of balloting may avoid a challenge in the courts but, once again, risks breaking up the national union's ability to lead co-ordinated action.

Militants must continue the fight for a national pay ballot, including calling an emergency FE sector conference, but at the same time work to deliver the strike action over contracts.

For the employers, contracts and pay are inextricably linked—no new contracts, no pay increase—the employers are looking for deals which include a pathetic 2.7% to settle next year's claim.

Where branches accept these local settlements it runs the danger of taking them out of the national pay campaign for a flat rate increase of £2,000 a year.

We cannot delay the fight over contracts. The employers' offensive is on now. As we have argued since the start of this dispute only indefinite national strike action can force the bosses to retreat on the contracts issue and win a pay increase not tied to contractual change.■

### Meeting

## Build for active strike action on the railways

Organised by the RMT London Midlands District Council

Wednesday 12 July 7pm  
St. Aloysius Hall, Eversholt Street, Euston, NW1

Write to: BCM Box 7750, London WC1N 3XX

Messages of support: UNISON No2, 172 Arundel Gate, Sheffield, S1 1Q. Phone 0114 275 6507. Fax 0114 276 6412

# Mumia Abu-Jamal must not die!

**A** DEATH WARRANT has been signed for Mumia Abu-Jamal. If it gets its way the US state of Pennsylvania will execute this political prisoner on 17 August for a crime he did not commit.

His real crime in the eyes of his assassins is that he is a prominent, black political activist. He is a former Black Panther and radical journalist, speaking out for the oppressed in a way that the US authorities cannot tolerate. He is known as "the voice of the voiceless".

Jamal has been on death row since 1982. He was sentenced to death for the murder of a Philadelphia police officer. Since then he has campaigned against the racist legal system and the brutality of conditions on death row.

The campaign to stop the execution and free Jamal is now in its most urgent phase. Lobbies and demonstrations are being organised in the USA and elsewhere. In London over a hundred people demonstrated outside the US embassy. In Birmingham a meeting attracted fifty people to launch a local campaign. His case has been taken up by Tony Benn and Bernie Grant, and won the support of trade union leaders Bill Morris, John Monks and numerous union branches across the country. ■



## Pass this resolution!

Model resolution for trade union branches

"We are opposed to the death penalty and to the scheduled execution of black journalist and political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, who is on death row in Pennsylvania. A death warrant has been signed for Jamal with an execution date set for 17 August. This union resolves to:

1. Send an urgent letter/fax to Governor Tom Ridge, Main Capitol Building, Rook 225, Harrisburg PA 17120, USA (fax 00 1 717 783 1396), demanding the Mumia Abu-Jamal must not die;
2. Send a speaker to future protest demonstrations or rallies about Jamal;
3. Make a donation to help with the costly legal defence work under way by Jamal's attorneys who are mounting a new legal challenge to appeal for a new trial;
4. Publicise Jamal's case in union publications."

Send copies of resolutions passed, and donations (cheques payable to Partisan Defence Committee, with "Jamal legal defence" written on the back) to:

Partisan Defence Committee, BCM Box 4986, London WC1N 3XX.

Phone: 0171 485 1396

## Review

# "Voice of the voiceless"

by Helen Watson

**L**OCKED IN a cell for 22 hours a day. Two hours exercise each day, enclosed in the "dog pen"—a cage surrounded by double-edged razor wire. Deprived of a typewriter (a "security risk"); repeatedly frisked and "body cavity searched". The constant knowledge that at the end of it all is death, not freedom. These are the conditions Mumia Abu-Jamal faces every day.

But he has not collapsed into despair or passivity, instead he continues his struggle for black liberation.

Jamal is fighting for justice. He is also using his talents as a journalist and activist to publish articles on the racism of the judicial and penal system, the history of black struggles in the USA and about conditions on death row.

Last year his "Live from Death Row" reports for National Public Radio caused such controversy that they were cancelled.

This book is a collection of Jamal's articles. It is a revealing, inspiring and moving collection.

Racial oppression permeates the justice system: defendants charged with killing whites are 4.3 times more likely to be sentenced to die than defendants charged with killing blacks.

Cases involving black defendants and white victims are the most likely to result in a death sentence.

Jamal reveals how attempts to challenge

this systematic racism have been blocked by the state.

In one case a judge said these claims, and proof, of racism, cannot be upheld as they "(throw) into question the principles that underlie our entire criminal justice system."

Jamal has been politically active since his youth, and his accounts of different incidents from his past form part of a history of recent black struggles in the USA.

He was a member of the Black Panther Party, later a member of the Philadelphia MOVE organisation.

He recalls how, in 1975 the police had killed a baby during a raid on MOVE. In response:

"MOVE men and women were seen . . .

armed and uniformed. Shotguns, semi-automatic weapons, dark khaki uniforms . . . armed black folks! Niggas with guns! The city went wild."

In response to this organised black self defence, the police besieged the neighbourhood for 15 months with snipers trained on the local community.

Eventually, in August 1978, the mayor Frank Rizzo ordered the police to end the siege. Shots were exchanged and one policeman killed. Ten MOVE members were charged with murder.

In 1981, when Jamal was becoming an ever more prominent activist, as president of the Philadelphia chapter of the Association of Black Journalists, police beat him and shot him, and then charged him with murder. He has been on death row ever since.

Jamal describes the first time his daughter

visited him:

"She burst into the tiny visiting room, her brown eyes aglitter with happiness; stopped, stunned, staring at the glassy barrier between us; and burst into tears at this arrogant attempt at state separation. In milliseconds, sadness and shock shifted into fury as her petite fingers curled into tight fists, which banged and pummelled the Plexiglas barrier, which shuddered and shimmied but didn't shatter."

Death row prisoners are only allowed "non-contact" visits, part of a process of de-humanisation that Jamal graphically describes.

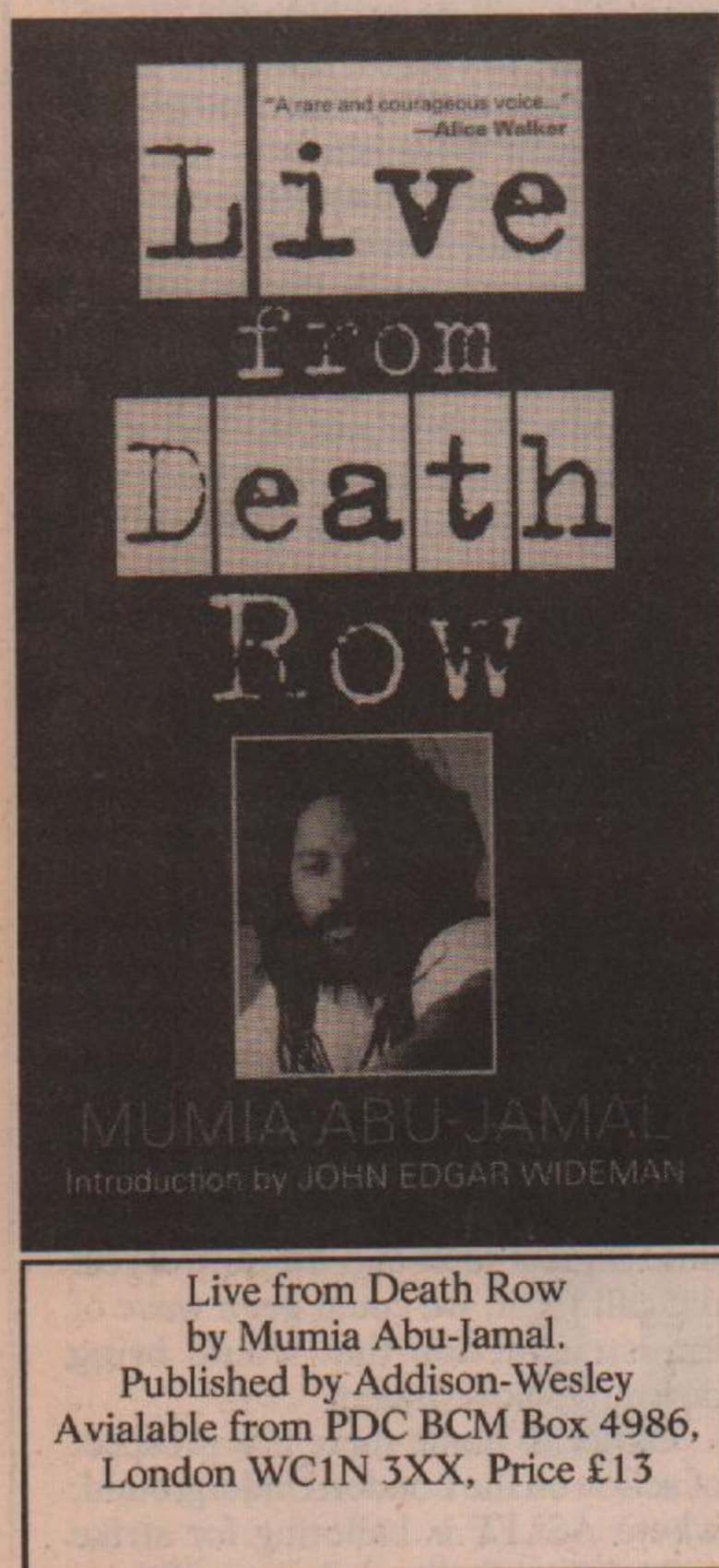
This makes visits a painful experience, leading to a weakening of family ties.

"By state action, (prisoners) become 'dead' to those who know and love them, and therefore dead to themselves. . . .

To such men and women, the actual execution is a *fait accompli*, a formality already accomplished in spirit, where the state concludes its premeditated drama by putting the 'dead' to death a second time."

Jamal's book shows that through political struggle he has resisted this physical and psychological state torture on death row.

It is an inspiration, to struggle not only for justice for Mumia Abu-Jamal, but against state racism, the death penalty and the racist class system that produces such inhumanity. ■



## Nuclear Weapons

# Fifty years after Hiroshima

**O**N 6 August 1945 the world's first nuclear attack wiped out the Japanese city of Hiroshima. Three days later the city of Nagasaki suffered the same fate. Hundreds of thousands were killed. Hundreds of thousands more suffered lingering death and disability from nuclear fallout. And hundreds of millions of people in the fifty years since then have lived in the shadow of global nuclear destruction.

Throughout the Cold War five nuclear powers—Britain, France, the USA, the USSR and China—confronted each other armed with more than enough nuclear weaponry to destroy humanity.

Has the end of the Cold War, "non-proliferation" and "arms limitation" treaties, reduced the threat of nuclear annihilation?

No. The world is far from safe from nuclear war. The recent French decision to resume nuclear testing, the US threat to do likewise, and the acknowledged proliferation of nuclear arms technology amongst aspiring Third World regional powers are all products of the failure of

imperialism to construct a "new world order".

Technologically, it is far easier for countries to become nuclear powers than before. This is not just because of the proliferation of nuclear energy, making the acquisition of weapons grade plutonium easier. It is also because the computer technology needed to prepare and simulate nuclear explosions is also more readily available.

As well as the five original nuclear powers it is now acknowledged that Israel, India and Pakistan have workable weapons. South Africa, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan are all officially in the process of "giving up". According to the *Economist* a process of "virtual proliferation" is going on:

"States such as Canada, Belgium and Japan are technically able to proliferate with ease. They could, if they wished to, just pull out of the Non Proliferation Treaty and use their plutonium, computing power and aerospace industries to go nuclear. It would take less than a year if they wanted



to do it. By the year 2030 technically advanced countries might be permanently perched days from a bomb, even though they had never tried to proliferate."

Faced with this prospect it is easy to see advancing technology itself as the problem.

Despite the awesome destructiveness locked up in the world's nuclear arsenals, it is not the technology which should frighten us, but rather those who control it. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, far from a piece of humanistic self-denial, is the political weapon which those who possess nuclear weapons use, both to regu-

late the power balance between themselves, and to keep others from developing the military power that would allow a challenge to their supremacy.

France, which developed its bomb later than the others, has always come off worst from the conditions laid down by various test bans and treaties and has consistently bent the rules. China, which came last to the nuclear club, has always ignored them.

But these countries have not been the target of airstrikes and military sabotage, in the same way as Iraq, Iran and other aspiring Third World nuclear powers.

The experience since the end of the Cold War confirms that the 'nuclear powers', both the imperialists and the ex-Stalinists, have no intention of disarming.

Non-proliferation is used to keep subordinate powers and semi-colonies from acquiring the same level of technology. Decommissioning is used to re-arm with better weapons.

As long as nuclear prowess remains the passport to the elite club of imperialist superpowers they will continue to develop,

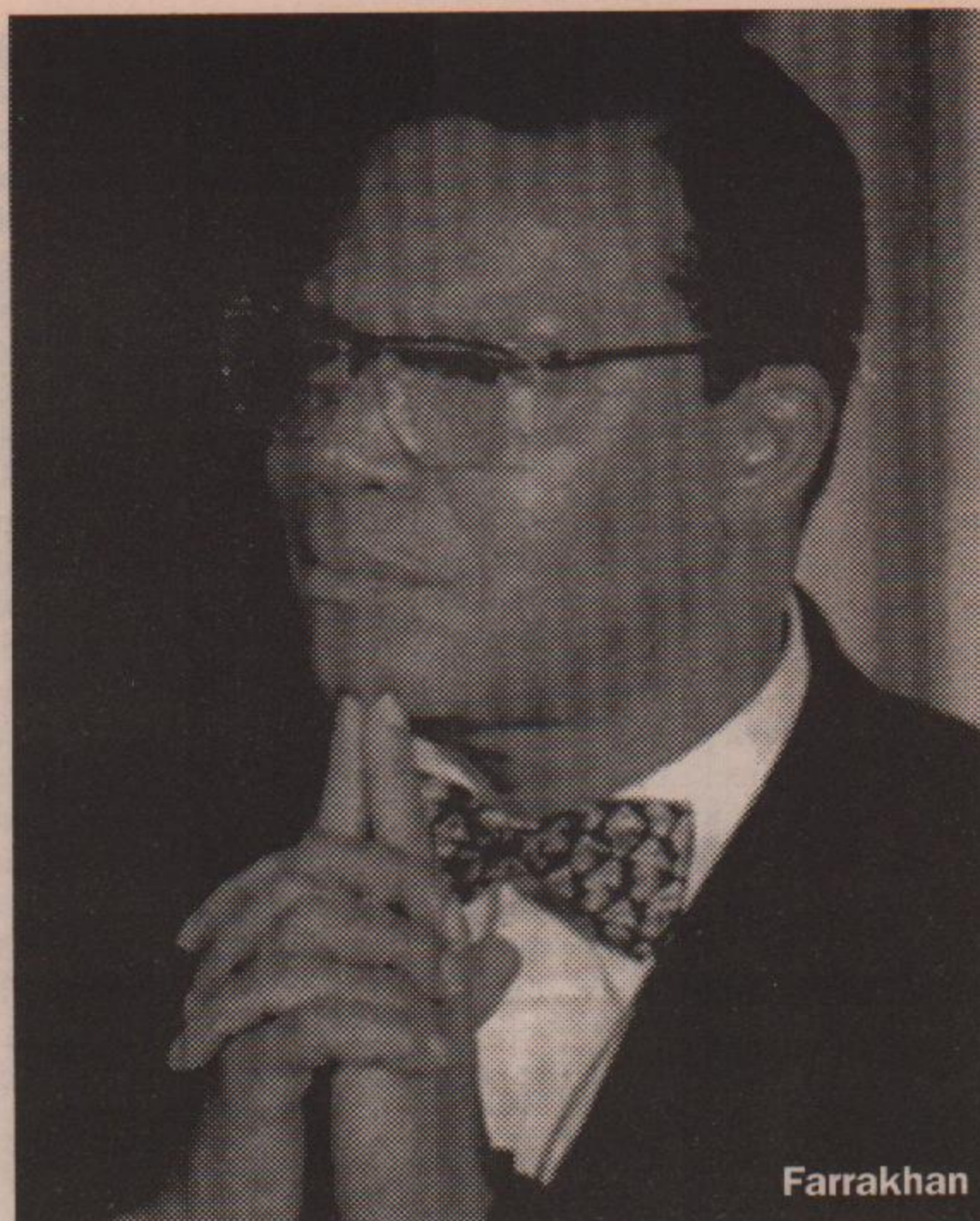
test and threaten with nuclear weaponry.

Yet campaigns for nuclear disarmament, which were mass movements in the 1970s and 1980s, have declined with the end of the Cold War.

The problem with disarmament campaigns is that first and foremost that they are utopian—while imperialism exists it will develop, retain and use whatever arms it can to maintain its position. That is not due to the "evil" nature of individual politicians or military leaders, but to the nature of the system they defend.

The second problem with disarmament campaigns is that they focus on nuclear weapons, allowing other weapons to be left intact. But other weapons can be used for mass destruction—napalm in Vietnam, "conventional" missiles in the war against Iraq, chemical weapons used against the Kurds.

While mass protest can limit the damage to the global environment caused by nuclear testing, only the destruction of the imperialist system can remove the threat of nuclear, and other, warfare for good. ■



# What every anti-racist should know about the Nation of Islam

by Colin Lloyd

The fact remains that capitalism is racist by its very nature. It condemns the mass of black people to poverty, violence and criminalisation. Black businesses in the USA account for only 1% of income. When black owned companies like Motown or Johnson Products grow big and successful the white dominated multi-nationals simply buy them out.

Despite this the NOI maintains the utopia of black capitalism and offers the white capitalists a deal: it will police the black ghettos and run the black jails in return. Farrakhan writes:

"I say to you it is in America's best interest to permit us to do this. For right now blacks are becoming increasingly disenchanted and we are a social tinderbox. And if black people rise up in an evil manner we could foment revolution in this country and so weaken America that she could not entertain war with her enemies on the outside".

As an alternative, Farrakhan has set up the NOI Security Agency. If the Security Agency were allowed to police black ghettos, he claims:

"we could affect a change in the lifestyle of our people that would allow us to do more with less wages".

Farrakhan has also volunteered to solve America's prison problem by establishing black only prisons on African soil! In *A Torchlight for America* Farrakhan suggests that the US capitalists:

"help us make a new beginning on the continent of Africa, first with the inmate population".

A NOI-run penal colony, Farrakhan claims, "could gain for America a strong foothold on that strategically important continent".

While the NOI's message of black pride and self-improvement strikes a chord with many black youth, in the NOI's politics it goes alongside acceptance of white racism's lie that black youth are to blame for crime. The Nation proposes to clean up the ghetto not by attacking the root causes of crime—poverty, unemployment and capitalist crisis—but by Security forces and strict social control.

## boycotts the anti-racist struggle...

The NOI's uniformed members appeared several times on successive demonstrations called by the Justice for Brian Douglas Campaign in London. But that is all they do: they appear, line up, give speeches and go home.

Asians. Yet, as last month's uprising in Bradford showed once again, Asian workers and youth are amongst those actively fighting back against racism.

Farrakhan's message is poison to the anti-racist struggle.

## reactionary...

Racism is rooted in the capitalist profit system. Instead of pulling up racism by its roots, the NOI peddles the belief that black people can and should separate to form their own state. Their *Muslim Programme* demands:

"complete separation in a state or territory of our own".

This is because the NOI believes it is impossible to fight racism amongst white people. It accepts white supremacist society as it is, and simply advises black people to get out.

In the "black nation" Farrakhan wants to build there would be total social conservatism. There would be no "race mixing": "We believe that intermarriage or race mixing should be prohibited" says *The Muslim Programme*.

There would be no divorce: "Divorce goes against the basic unit of civilisation, for divorce breaks up the family. Where there is no strong family there is no strong community or nation" writes Farrakhan.

"According to Mosaic law that which breaks up the family—adultery, fornication and other sins destructive to the family—are seriously punished, even by death". Needless to say that includes homosexuality, abortion and all drug use.

## pro-capitalist...

Even Farrakhan admits a separate black nation could not come about. Thus the real, operative programme of the NOI is to promote black capitalism within the USA:

"If you say we must return to Africa, what nation in Africa is willing to receive 40 million of us in the state we're in. Let us be reasonable... America is not willing to give us eight or ten states, or even one state. Let's be reasonable" (*Back Where We Belong*).

For the NOI being "reasonable" means promoting the idea of a few black capitalists getting rich, while the rest will remain poor and oppressed.

The NOI's whole setup in the USA shows, in miniature, what Farrakhan has to offer. There is a subsidised canteen for poor blacks, and there is a sumptuous restaurant for those who can afford it. True, it is no worse than what "liberal" white capitalism can provide—but it is no better, and more importantly, it is no answer to racism.

AT THE end of last month's Brian Douglas Campaign march, demonstrators heard a half hour tirade from Nation of Islam (NOI) spokesman Leo X. Leo's speech contained all the major themes of NOI leader Farrakhan's politics. As well as black pride and the need for a separate black nation these included attacks on all white people as "the enemy", on Jews as the "main enemy" and on active methods of protest and demonstration as "futile".

During the last few months the NOI has made a concerted effort to establish a base in South London, aided by the high profile of Leo X—better known as the TV and standup comedian Leo X Chester.

Seeming both radical and uncompromising, the NOI's rhetoric may be appealing to some—but every anti-racist should be clear: *the NOI is a right wing, racist, do-nothing, pro-capitalist sect.*

While socialists have no truck with the white racist governments who have tried to ban NOI leaders from entering Britain or speaking in public, we have to expose the truth about the NOI and fight its influence.

## The Nation of Islam is racist...

The NOI poses as the most radical and uncompromising defender of black people—so how can it be racist? Racism is an ideology which discriminates against certain sections of the population on the grounds of their supposed "race". Instead of fighting racism, Farrakhan simply inverts white supremacist racism. Not only are all white people seen as the enemy, and subordinate to black people as a race, but specific groups of non-black people are singled out for racist abuse—notably Jews and Koreans.

NOI leader Khalid Muhammad, speaking at Kean College USA, insisted that Jews brought the Holocaust on themselves:

"You see everybody always talks about Hitler exterminating six million Jews. Don't nobody ever ask, 'What did they do to Hitler?' They went in there in Germany, the way they do everywhere, and they supplanted, they usurped, and a German in his own country would almost have to go to a Jew to get money".

Koreans and Jews—the objects of racist prejudice in both America and Britain—are depicted as "blood-suckers of the black Nation" for their role in money lending and small business.

In Britain Jews no longer play a significant role in small retailing, and there are few Korean corner shops. In Britain Farrakhan's message will have to target

They did not build the 10 June Justice demo (see page 8/9) nor did they participate in it. When black youth confronted police on 14 May, demanding a march on Brixton, the NOI simply stood aside from the fray. They then asked the police to let them through so that they could leave in peace.

This is not an aberration or cowardice. It is the product of a strategy. As Leo X said from the demo platform: "these marches and protests and pickets get you nowhere".

Of course, without a strategy for liberation, protest marches *do* remain localised and ineffective. But the problem is not protest itself.

The NOI's opposition to the anti-racist struggle goes right back to the civil rights movement in the USA itself. This is despite the fact that the civil rights movement won some limited reforms. In a 1990 interview Farrakhan said:

"When the Civil Rights movement broke down the desegregation laws we began to lose black businesses and spend our money with white businesses. So throughout the South the economic advancement that we gained under Jim Crow [the US apartheid system—WP] is literally dead".

So despite the NOI's commitment to "full and complete freedom" it regrets the breakdown of apartheid in the Southern USA because a few black businesses went bust!

## collaborates with white fascists...

But while the NOI refuses to forge fighting unity with other anti-racists, black and white it shows no scruples about collaborating with white supremacists.

This is a tradition that runs right through the NOI, back to the 1960s. NOI members sat side by side with Swastika wearing Nazis at a NOI rally in Chicago in 1962. Nazi leader G L Rockwell addressed the rally claiming:

"Elijah Muhhamed is to the so-called Negro what Adolph Hitler was to the German people. Heil Hitler!"

Rockwell later wrote: "Elijah Mohammed and I have worked out an agreement of mutual assistance in which they will help us on some things and we will help them on others".

In 1985 Farrakhan staged a repeat performance, inviting California KKK leader Tom Metzger to a NOI rally and accepting a \$100 donation from him.

Why does the NOI pander to the people who organise white racist terror?

Because it agrees with their fundamental premise—the impossibility of black and

white workers living and fighting together against a common capitalist enemy. NOI agrees with the demand to "end race mixing" and it agrees with the idea of removing black people from white society.

## ... is implicated in the murder of Malcolm X

Malcolm X broke with Elijah Muhammad's NOI when its politics and practice got in the way of organising mass resistance to racism in the USA. Although he did not make a complete break with black separatism, he rejected the term black nationalism and fought against the NOI's passivity in the face of white racists. Malcolm wrote:

"It could be heard increasingly in the Negro communities: 'Those Muslims talk tough but they never *do* anything unless somebody bothers Muslims'."

Because Malcolm's was a powerful voice, the US state decided to silence it. It is well known that those who gunned down Malcolm were NOI members. It is highly likely that the NOI was infiltrated by the FBI and that the FBI pulled the strings. Throughout the NOI there were death threats against Malcolm, including this one by Farrakhan himself:

"The die is set and Malcolm shall not escape... such a man as Malcolm is worthy of death".

They gunned Malcolm down because he was effecting a break with the futile politics of black nationalism.

The same leaders who called for Malcolm's death now pose as the most radical and committed upholders of his tradition.

The NOI attracts black youth dedicated to the struggle against racism because it demands dedication and self sacrifice. Unlike many groups it presents a clear set of aims. Nor does it bluster about action it cannot deliver.

It hurls insults and abuse into the face of the white establishment and at the same time promotes black pride and dignity. It rejects the names given to slaves by white slaveowners in favour of the names of the "black people of the Earth". But its whole approach is a dead end.

Even the justified demands that its programme contains cannot be won by the methods the NOI chooses: "Full and complete freedom... Equal justice... Equality of opportunity" are goals worth fighting for.

But only a workers revolution, which pulls up the roots of the racist system, destroying the profit system and the rule of the imperialist powers over third world countries, can bring black liberation. ■

## No justice for Joy

The acquittal of Joy Gardner's killers has provoked a wave of anger across the country. No-one could have expressed this with more bitterness and indignation than Joy's mother, Myrna Simpson, who said outside the Old Bailey: "I would like somebody to put leg chains on them, force them to the floor and all of them lie on them... and put on the quick cuffs and the tape, 15 feet of tape on them, and see if they would survive."

Six hundred people packed Haringey Civic Centre on the evening of 21 June to express their anger at the failure of the British courts to provide black people with the most elementary right of all—the right to justice for those killed at the hands of the police.

Joy's visa ran out in 1990. She appealed against deportation, explaining how all her family including her son Graeme were in Britain: Graeme was born here.

She wrote to local MP Bernie Grant explaining her fears and depression in the face of constant harassment. She also wrote to TGWU leader Bill Morris pleading with him to intervene:

"I am writing to you with tears in my eyes and I am a nervous wreck. Me and my four year old son is in danger of being deported at any moment and would like you to intervene as this is very urgent and critical."

When the time for deportation came, the police trussed her up like an animal, clamping her legs in irons like the slave traders of old, punching her to the ground and suffocating her with 15 feet of tape tied round and round her mouth.

With sickening hypocrisy, one police officer claimed that Joy was "the most violent woman I have ever seen" and "the most violent person I have ever dealt with of any sex."

The jury accepted this incredibly unlikely statement as good coin because it chimes in with one of the main racist myths in our society—that black people are violent criminals. As one journalist wrote in *The Voice*: "there is a profound belief within the police force that any encounter with a Black person will be a violent one".

But the police set the tone for violence. They cut through the security chain on Joy's

front door, then cut off the telephone when she tried to make good her "threat" to phone her solicitor.

As she screamed for help and banged a salt and pepper set on the table, one officer shouted "deck her!" and she was beaten to the floor. Straps and the gag were applied, though one of the police told the court that "her airways were clear at all times."

If this is true, how did she suffocate? If she was determined to be violent, why did she try to ring her lawyer?

If she was so violent, how was she so quickly restrained? If gags were safe, how come Home Secretary Michael Howard banned sticky tape gags four months after Joy's death? As Myrna Simpson put it:

"She was an ordinary person just like anybody else. But suddenly when the police broke into her flat she became superhuman. Well, if she was so superhuman how come she is dead?"

Most claims of police brutality never get to court. When Joy's case did, it was under the control of a judge who was determined to ensure that the police got an easy ride.

He told the jury that some people were trying to give the case "a political or even racial dimension, which it certainly does not possess."

This was itself a profoundly political statement. For how many white New Zealand, Australian or South African immigrants are subjected to ruthless deportation orders and brutally killed by police?

The judge directed the jury to consider only whether "the use of the gag is not reasonably necessary in the circumstances?" But somebody was responsible for Joy Gardner's death—the officers who killed her and the top police and immigration officials who gave the order.

The message from this trial is the same as the acquittal of the police caught on video beating Rodney King in Los Angeles: the police are free to maim and kill.

There is no amount of evidence that will convince a racist British court to convict the police for crimes against black people—even murder.

We will need a mass struggle against the state and the racist system to secure even the most elementary of our rights. ■



Joy Gardner; one of seven black people killed by police in two years.

Brian Douglas, Joy Gardner... these are not isolated instances of police killing black people.

In its paper *Deadly Silence*, The Institute of Race Relations records 50 cases of black people dying at the hands of the police over the last 25 years. It is sickening but true that police officers have been charged with offences in only two of these cases.

The most that has ever happened to police as a result was the 2-3 year jail terms—for assault, not even manslaughter—for two officers after the drowning of David Oluwale in Leeds in 1969.

Since Joy's death, two years ago, seven black people have died at the hands of the police.

- Kwanele Siziba died in April 1994. Police burst into her flat; she thought they were immigration officers and fell 150ft to her death.

- Mark Harris died in a police cell in July 1994. Witnesses and the post-mortem confirmed that he had been beaten and

choked—police claimed that he hanged himself.

- Joseph Nalae died in October 1994—he fell to his death after immigration officials and police burst into his flat.
- Tyrone Wilson died trying to escape police in Ipswich in December last year.
- Shiji Lapite died in a police van in December last year.
- Brian Douglas died after repeated baton blows administered by police in May this year.

Some still dare to argue that these are isolated occurrences. What is more, claim the "liberal" anti-racists, the police are "trying to deal with the problem" of racism.

Metropolitan Police commissioner Paul Condon has issued statements, and even advertisements, declaring his aim to root prejudice out of the force and stressing that the Met is now an "equal opportunities employer". In particular he is keen to recruit black officers to the force.

Yet these black officers themselves en-

counter racism at every level within the police.

Mohamed Khalil is one example. He joined the police in 1990 thinking that he could help to fight crime. He ended up, in his own words, "fighting a racist organisation."

He is suing Paul Condon for racial harassment after putting up with years of abuse. Racist slurs were written on his pay slips; he was addressed by racist nicknames over the police radio and whenever officers were gathered in groups. Commendations of his actions were removed from his file.

When he complained he was subjected to a barrage of bogus claims against him by other officers who checked up on his every move.

There is a reason for this and for the racial harassment meted out routinely to other officers, such as Shafkot Ahmed who is mounting a similar legal case.

The police want black officers—at present only 700 out of 28,000 in Lon-

## As Joy's killers go free Smash police racism



## Brian Douglas

### "Evidence demonstrates the wilful murder of my brother"

**WP:** Have you been able to reconstruct the events leading up to your brother's death?

**DD:** Yes. We have been able to reconstruct some of the events; all the precise details are not absolutely in place.

What I am aware of—and the police are equally aware of what I am about to say as a result of tracing a number of independent witnesses—is that Brian Douglas and Stafford Solomon were approached outside of their motor vehicle by two police officers who we now know to be PC Harrison and PC Tuffey in the early hours of 3 May.

Without any provocation at all Brian was struck by one or both officers several times on the back of his head and he immediately fell to the floor.

Despite the police allegation of a lock-knife and CS gas, witnesses that the police have traced I am confident will state that the police at no time were under any threat from any action by Brian or Stafford Solomon.

**WP:** Brian was taken to the police station. Can you explain what appears to have happened next?

**DD:** I am aware that there are independent witnesses who will testify that Brian was in some considerable distress when he was put in the police car, crying for his head, obviously as a result of the injury that he sustained. He nonetheless was taken to Kennington police station where he was

kept for a total period of some 15 hours.

Now the police have forwarded information that he was visited four times by the police surgeon during the period of that 15 hours and that they didn't detect anything wrong. No medical treatment at all was rendered to Brian.

Coincidentally, however, Brian was not charged with any offences. One of the reasons given for him not to be charged with any offences is that they thought that he was drunk. But in the same vein it is a written rule that if you have anybody in police custody that is identified as being drunk they should be visited every hour, which meant that he should have been seen

**B**rian's killers have still not been suspended. The prospects of a police cover up are clear—the pathologist appointed to Brian's case is the same man who was involved in the Joy Gardner case!

The Justice for Brian Douglas Campaign is steadily building support.

Campaign speakers have been heard at a wide range of meetings, including a well attended meeting at this year's UNISON conference.

The demo on 14 June in South London attracted 1200 people. Determined and disciplined stewarding—stewards had been provided with hard hats for protection—ensured that the police held back and there were no arrests.

*Brian Douglas died on 8 May from head injuries received during his arrest by police in Clapham, South London. Two angry demonstrations demanding justice have produced no response. Both police officers involved in the arrest, PCs Tuffey and Harrison, remain on duty. Workers Power spoke to Brian's brother, Donald Douglas, who is leading the Justice for Brian Douglas Campaign.*

at least 15 times. But in reality they themselves have confirmed that they only saw him four times.

The local UNISON branch convened a worker/community tribunal, at which Donald Douglas gave evidence and answered questions. The tribunal unanimously found PCs Harrison and Tuffey guilty of murder and called for them to be suspended and prosecuted.

Scandalously Heather Rabatts, Lambeth Council's Chief Executive, attempted to prevent the tribunal from taking place on council property.

But activists refused to be obstructed in this way and the meeting went ahead as planned. Trade unionists involved with the Tribunal now face a witch-hunt from the council—they deserve unqualified support against any witch-hunt.

**WP:** Do you expect that charges are going to be pressed against the officers or any disciplinary action taken against the police doctor?

**DD:** I would hope so but I must say that I am pessimistic. My pessimism comes from just looking at what has happened to other people. Joy Gardner's case was the first case that actually ended in court. Despite the police officers getting off, it nonetheless was a landmark in the sense that police officers were called to publicly account for their actions, despite the disgusting results in that case.

However we've also seen over the last 10 years 150,000 complaints made against

the police, and less than 8% have resulted in disciplinary action or any other charges being brought against the police officers.

I actually think that the Brian Douglas case is quite significant when one considers what we know to be the considerable amount of evidence that demonstrates the police brutality and the wilful murder of my brother. But we will have to wait and see. We will do everything legally possible to ensure that the police officers are brought to justice.

**WP:** What are the prospects for the campaign?

**DD:** Like any campaign seeking justice we are limited in what we can do. The campaign probably represents 30% of the action while the legal case represents the other 70%. We have, to date, led a very dignified, well-organised campaign and I have to say that the results from that approach have been negligible or practically nil.

We have to step up the pressure. We intend to step up the pressure. We do intend to ensure that the authorities see and recognise the full weight of our anger. We intend to continually publicise the brutality and the race mentality of the police force.

#### DEMO

**Suspend the Officers!  
Justice for Brian Douglas!**  
Kennington Police Station 2 July, 2pm

massive backing. ■



don—not to change the racism of the force but to help them cover it up.

Black officers are expected to put up with racism because they will be meting out harassment to black people on an almost daily basis.

Any copper who doesn't like it simply won't fit in. That is the message being given to misguided individuals like Khalil and Ahmed who think the police can be reformed.

The diet of racism is constantly reinforced within the police because the authorities need to instil contempt, fear and hatred for black people among those they have charged with the job of oppressing black people.

Why else could a recent major police gathering invite the well known racist comedian Bernard Manning to spew out racist taunts and insults to wild laughter and applause?

The police force is not just infected with a few bad apples. The force is rotten with racism: rotten to the core.■

## No peace on the streets



ism!

Over two nights in Bradford last month, resistance to police racism exploded onto the streets and the TV screens. Asian youth—mostly teenagers—battled heroically against police armed with full riot gear.

This was not a "race riot" as the media insinuated. The assistant Chief Constable of West Yorkshire tried to blame the alienation of the youth for the trouble. But the mask slipped when he said that the problem "includes the Asian culture in which they have been raised".

Other "explanations" focused on prostitution in the Manningham area and local Muslim opposition to it following the profile given to the problem in Bradford by the recent TV series *Band of Gold*.

But the youths themselves are in no doubt as to the real causes of the uprising:

"It's not about prostitution or unemployment or all that nonsense of the Chief Constable's", one youth told the Guardian. "It's about the way two police officers treated one of our women."

What really happened? A group of police harassed some youths who were playing football in the street, running over one lad's foot with a police car.

Then they tried to arrest his brother, dragging him into their car by the hair. When a 30-strong group of local people demonstrated for their release at the police station, they were all arrested.

Parvez Iqbal told the *Yorkshire Post* that when his sister came out of her house to see what was going on, with her baby in her arms, the police hit her and tore her dress, even slapping the baby across the head.

No wonder the youth fought back. Asian youth in the Manningham area are treated as third class citizens. Half are out of work. One in five homes are—according to official figures—seriously overcrowded.

To detract attention away from the real reasons for this—the failure of the profit system to provide jobs and homes for all—the Tories, and the police blame "Asian culture".

The Bradford events show the tremendous anger and courage of black youth who are not willing to take police racism any more.

That anger shows the strength and self-sacrifice that can and must be channelled into an organised challenge to the racist state itself.■

## What we fight for

**AFTER JOY Gardner's killers walked free, Bernie Grant MP said:**

"In this case we behaved ourselves, played the game and used the system. It has let us down. I am afraid that in future people may well find other ways of expressing their anger."

Bernie Grant's polite strategy has failed. It is time for a different approach and a new leadership in the struggle against racism, a leadership based on working class black people themselves.

**For popular justice, not racist kangaroo courts.**

All talk of public inquiries will remain ineffective while the inquiries themselves are in the hands of Tory judges, barristers and racist officials.

We need to fight for inquiries that are independent of the state, involving representatives of local communities and the labour movement. Their decisions should be afforded full legal force and be implemented.

As to the official courts, all judges and magistrates should be elected. Juries should be 50% black in cases with black defendants.

**Organise self-defence!**

Black communities cannot rely on the police to defend them from racial attacks—the police are in the front ranks of the attackers. Disciplined patrols under the control of local workers—black and white—should get full backing from the unions and should be ready to take firm action enforcing their legal right to self-defence—whether the racists are in uniform or not.

**Disarm the police!**  
Abolish the new police powers in the Criminal Justice Act and Criminal Evidence Act!

Abolish all special immigration and tactical support units, strip the police of their batons, shields, guns and other weapons which they use indiscriminately against black people.

**Abolish immigration controls!**  
These are all aimed at keeping black people out of Britain while access is almost untrammelled for white "Commonwealth" immigrants. Close down

Campsfield, Harmondsworth and all other immigration detention centres.

To achieve these aims we will need to break with legalistic and "respectable" methods. As Bernie Grant has been forced to admit, "playing the game" has failed completely.

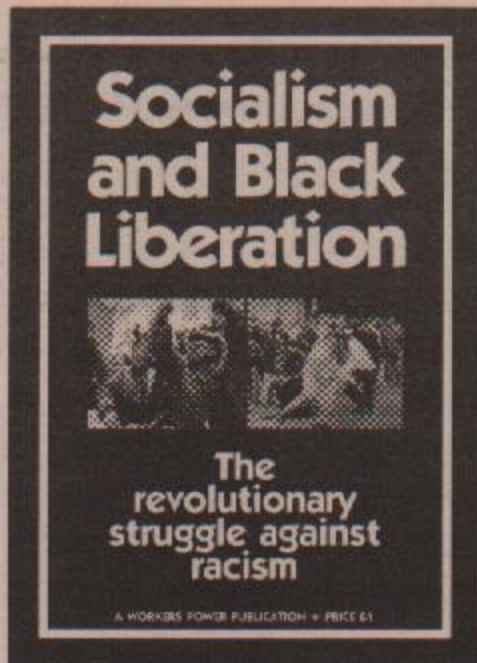
Nor is it enough just to mobilise the anger of local communities. We need to link together all the campaigns against racist injustice into a national movement aimed at eliminating state racism.

For this we will need mass demonstrations, pickets and protest strikes; we will need large-scale, high-profile peoples' tribunals to expose the truth behind every case of violence and murder; we will need a militant movement prepared to organise to take on the police and to demand support from the organised labour movement.

Above all else we need a new revolutionary socialist party; one that will not accept the restraints of the racist system, but will link the fight against every racist outrage with the fight to overthrow this state and erect in its place a new socialist system under the control of the working class majority.

A workers' government would secure access for all working class people to the best employment, housing and education available. It would have no need to divide and rule because its rule would be based firmly on the majority rather than a corrupt and privileged minority. It would be able to start the process of eradicating the real roots of racism from society, for good.■

### OUT IN JULY



Available by post for £1.50 from:  
Workers Power, BCM7750,  
London WC1N 3XX  
(cheques payable to "Workers Power")

# C The A-Z of Marxism is for Capitalism

TWO people buy the last remaining tickets for *Les Miserables* at the box office. One of them passes through to the theatre and is thoroughly entertained; the other steps outside and sells the ticket to a disappointed but desperate punter for twice the face value.

by Keith Harvey

ple, amassed huge fortunes that could be sent

back to Europe to buy labour and start up production.

As Karl Marx wrote: "If money... comes into the world with a congenital bloodstain on one cheek", capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt".

So, there is nothing at all "natural" and eternal about capitalism. It has a history created by human beings. It has a beginning, a middle and an end.

Capitalism's great merit as a system of production was that it put an end to the backwardness, localism, and narrow outlook of feudalism. In Holland, England, France and the USA, revolutions and civil wars were needed to sweep away the feudal legacy and change the system of production.

This revolutionary past of early capitalism is another thing its present day fans would like to forget.

Capitalism in its maturity grew into an industrial economy, based on co-operation in production and large-scale machinery. This allowed a tremendous advance in productivity and the development of technique. Despite the suffering brought about by its birth, capitalism was therefore progressive.

But it is progressive no more. Capitalism's success has been achieved at great social cost. Capitalism is an antagonistic class society, producing great wealth through the massive oppression of workers and ruination of whole continents.

Profit and more profit is the driving force of production and aim of all capitalists. This has ensured mass unemployment as fewer workers are forced to do increasing amounts of work and real wages are lowered to allow increased dividends for shareholders.

Capitalism has created an economy of boom and slump. Goods pile up unsold because they cannot be sold at a profit despite the fact that there is a crying need for them among millions who do not have the money.

The competitive and blind nature of capitalist production contributes to anarchy in production which ensures constant disruptions, shortages and oversupply and is also wasteful and destructive of the environment.

Most important of all, however, capitalism has created the conditions for its own end.

It has created a working class—many millions strong throughout the whole world, concentrated and educated enough to be able to run industry and commerce without the need for bosses.

It has created a level of technology and a system of communications that makes a planned economy more feasible than ever before.

And it has created semi-permanent crisis, as repression and misery force workers repeatedly to rise up against the system.

Capitalism's beginning was bloody, violent and the product of class struggle. Its end will be the same.

But the working class has no interest in creating another exploiting society. Its interest is in a classless society, in which the goal is not profit but meeting the needs of every human being on the planet.

With the creation of socialism, as Karl Marx wrote, the real history of humanity will begin.■

Piracy, plunder and the conquest of colonies was the answer.

Slavery in the Caribbean, for exam-

## China

# The great leap backwards?

China's rapid economic growth looks set to continue. Real gross domestic product has risen at an average of 12% a year for the last four years. Yet China's leaders are putting the brakes on the restoration of capitalism in China, at the same time as one of the pillars of world capitalism, the World Bank, is urging them to speed up. *Din Wong* looks at the economic problems facing China, the political pressures on the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and their increasingly aggressive foreign policy.

**I**N RUSSIA and in Eastern Europe the attempts to reintroduce capitalism in the early 1990s led, at first, to economic collapse. In China, by contrast, pro-market reforms since the late 1970s have led to uneven and destabilising growth.

The Chinese economy has expanded on average by 10% each year since 1978 and the key to this feverish growth has been the establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs). Within these zones capitalists are given free rein to establish private companies. Special tax incentives, along with a massive supply of cheap labour, have made the SEZs attractive to foreign capitalists and, especially, overseas Chinese investors.

But the spectacular growth of the SEZs has led to an increasing imbalance within the Chinese economy and to an increasing gap between different regions. There is a deepening gulf between Central Government and the Local Authorities. In November 1994, the Central Government Economic Conference decided on a continuation of the austerity policy to restrain rapid local development in order to slow down the overheated economy. The Governors of the richer Guangdong and Hainan Provinces, in their own provincial interest, opposed this and instead proposed raising the growth target.

## Development

This decentralisation has led to substantial growth in revenue for the coastal provinces, a continuing deficit for the central government and a jockeying for power between the two. The Pentagon in the USA believes that there is a 50% chance that, with Deng's demise, China will break up into a rich coastal region and a poor interior.

Another threat to further controlled

development and the continued opening up of the Chinese economy to capitalism is the suggested "reform" of the State Owned Enterprises (SOEs). This is an obstacle precisely because of the pivotal role of SOEs in the economy and politics of China.

SOEs are essential to the economy and yet contribute to the mis-allocation of investments through indirect subsidies costing up to 6% of GDP in 1993. There is little financial control in the SOEs and with their fictitious accounts and relative freedom from effective market forces, they make it difficult for China to be integrated into imperialism's trading system.

## Productivity

SOEs account for 43% of industrial output, and COEs (Collectively Owned Enterprises), owned by lower levels of government, account for another 38%. This is a dramatic fall: output from SOEs stood at 78% in 1978. And yet they still soak up 61% of fixed investment. The rate of growth of productivity in SOEs has been one third to a half of that in other enterprises. 40% of them are loss making and their losses are estimated at between 2.3% and 5.3% of GDP annually.

Since 1993 the Chinese leadership has been committed to the reform of the SOEs, but little has been done. There have been few bankruptcies. Li Peng, the Prime Minister, announced that a few prices would be freed in March this year. Any attempts to cut subsidies simply lead to an increase in inter-enterprise debt as one SOE passes on its problems to the next. And, of course, most worrying for the emerging capitalism, this inevitably also affects the private sector.

The need for further *fundamental* "reform" was spelt out in a recent report from

the World Bank. It recommends that:

"imposition of a hard budget constraint will require phasing out subsidies, collecting taxes, eliminating inter-enterprise debts and soft bank loans".

This is designed to allow SOEs to shrink or even go bankrupt.

The CCP leaders are aware of the need to swallow this "bitter medicine", but the fear of social unrest is a very real one. The

"economic miracle" has not benefited everyone in China.

SEZs like Guangdong and Shenzhen enjoy per capita GDP fifty times that of the less developed Ningxia Autonomous Region.

In the rural areas, though peasants have the right to use land, they cannot buy or sell it, and they are still restricted on what they can grow. Their income, in comparison to the newly industrialised development areas, is stagnating and made further worthless by inflation.

## Hardships

In the cities, the poorest are the peasants who have fled from the land, unemployed youth and the homeless. It is estimated that 3 out of 10 in urban areas are underemployed. A recent UNICEF report highlighted the fact that the removal of subsidised social services has led to increasing hardships; children cannot go to school because they cannot afford the school fees, the old are losing their pensions as enterprises became bankrupt and the sick cannot afford medicine.

One quarter of China's population is dependent upon a wage paid by an SOE. 100 million workers are currently employed by the SOEs. It is estimated that if the SOEs were to be put onto a commercial footing 30% to 40% of these workers would have to be sacked.

There are already signs of working class agitation in the north-east of China. Underground unions have emerged in the SEZs as a result of the appalling health and safety conditions in the factories. As the country lives through the days of the anniversary of Tiananmen and waits for news of Deng's death, the leadership of the CCP know that they are on the edge of a very dangerous precipice. ■



China is on the socialist road to capitalism, but it's a very rocky road for most Chinese workers.

## Corruption

# Beijing's dirty dealers

**B**BRITAIN IS not the only place where corruption and sleaze are in the news.

At the National People's Congress in Spring, Prime Minister Li Peng and Party Chief Jiang Zemin warned Party cadres against money-worship, conspicuous consumption, "womanising", abuse of authority and the "swallowing up of state property".

This was only one in a series of anti-corruption campaigns that have failed to reduce the number of cases of corruption, seen by many to be on a par with what went on under Chiang Kai-Shek of the Kuomintang in the 1930s.

Some of the early targets of the current anti-corruption drive are powerful figures in the Beijing party hierarchy. On 27 April Chen Xitong was fired from his post as Beijing party boss. Currently he is being held under house arrest. Another key Beijing party figure, Wang Baosen, was found dead, supposedly having committed suicide but in suspicious circumstances. It is assumed that he was about to face corruption charges.

The anti-corruption drive began last year with an investigation into the entire Beijing party launched by Wei Jianxing. The focus of the investigation are the bribes which are being paid out in return for planning permission. As the regime tries to introduce capitalism, party bureaucrats have seen the chance to make a few yen by exploiting their positions in

government.

Whilst the anti-corruption drive provided a focus for the party, drawing attention away from the impending instability which will follow Deng's death, it also holds dangers for the Chinese Stalinists.

Not least is the fact that it affects the bureaucrats themselves. It exposes their rotten position in society; it exposes their privileges to the gaze of the workers. Some are fearful that if the investigation continues it will inevitably come across some of Deng's family members. A number of those arrested are the children of party bosses.

## Dissidents

Most worrying perhaps for China's leaders is the fact that anti-corruption campaign have often promoted dissent beyond the confines of the party cadre. This one has brought new life to the dissident movement.

A recent poll by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences showed that corruption, crime and inflation are the main popular concerns.

In anticipation of the sixth anniversary of the Tiananmen Massacre, there was a crackdown and many were detained for questioning or "administrative detention", a euphemism for imprisonment without trial.

In spite of the threat of harassment and detention, two manifestos were issued in February of this year in Beijing and were

signed by well known dissidents. The appeals urged the National People's Congress to "protect by legal means basic human rights and to defend social justice", and, as the Party cannot police itself, they called for an independent judiciary to combat corruption in the Communist Party.

Many dissidents believe that reforms such as the separation of powers between legislature, judiciary and government will provide sufficient checks and balances to ward off corruption.

Like the dissidents in China, the "pro-democratic" business community in Hong Kong, too, looks to the rule of law—the Court of Final Appeal (CFA), which China and Britain agreed in 1991 to set up before the hand over in 1997, to guarantee Hong Kong's sham democracy within "one country, two systems".

A cursory look in any newspaper reveals corruption and graft in many Western "democracies"—Italy, Japan or Britain. It is illusory to think that the rule of capitalist law could guarantee the right of workers against corrupt Party officials and fat cats.

The only way to stop corruption, in China or in the West, is to ensure that the bureaucrats and the businessmen aren't in a position to use power for their own personal advantage. Their power has to be taken away from them and the only force able to do that in China and elsewhere is the working class. ■

## Foreign policy

# Roar of the Dragon

**C**HINA'S RECORD of economic growth, its increasing need for food and oil, together with its military might, has once again prompted racist jibes in the West aimed to stoke up fears of an "oriental monster".

First, there was the story of how the Chinese were getting so rich that they would buy up all the world's food and the rest of us would starve. Now we are told that the United States will have to keep its troops in Asia in order to keep an eye on China's expansionist tendencies.

So much for the freedom of the capitalist international market! Workers in the West should recognise and reject this filth for what it is: the chauvinist outpourings of our bosses worried about their own profits.

## Hawkish

But there is a danger *within* China and it affects Chinese workers. In recent months, China has been rallying its citizens around increasingly hawkish foreign policies.

China sent warships to Mischief Reef, one of the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. Despite the fact that this island has long been claimed by

the Philippines, the Chinese have declared their sovereignty over it. The Spratly Islands have a strategic importance because of their position on the main shipping lanes along which all east Asian trade passes.

China's leaders are also claiming some of the oil fields currently controlled by Indonesia. They have consistently angered the Indian government by selling arms to Pakistan. The Japanese government cut off aid to China when China exploded a nuclear test bomb on 15 May.

The resurgent nationalism of the Chinese CP is cynically calculated to divert attention away from the difficulties encountered on the road to capitalism. Elsewhere, we have seen how the Stalinists have used nationalism to rally people behind them when their economic policies have led to chaos and decline. Serbia's role in Bosnia and Russia's in Chechnya are two of the more bloody examples.

The Stalinists will try to whip up the most extreme nationalism if they think it will help them hold onto power and keep the working class divided. The working class must resist every xenophobic outburst and every nationalist claim over their regional neighbours. ■



## Ivory Coast

# "Enough is enough"

**Workers Power:** Can you tell us something about the origins of FESCE?  
**Alexis:** FESCE was created in 1990 by the students of the Ivory Coast. IRAG was formed in June 1994 to inform British public opinion and the British authorities about the situation in our country and about the nature of its regime. IRAG is largely made up of Ivorian students who are now asylum seekers in Britain.

**WP:** Can you tell us how there came to be so many student exiles from your country?

**A:** The Ivory Coast is a French speaking country and since independence in 1960 we have had many movements for real liberation in our country. Our country was ruled by President Houphout-Boigny from 1960 onwards, and he repressed all opposition groups and parties. But we looked around the world in 1990 and saw what had happened in Eastern Europe.

**WP:** The popular revolts in 1989-90?

**A:** Yes, and we were really inspired. What was going on in the Ivory Coast was really bad. The University of the Ivory Coast was built in 1964, for 7,000 students. By 1990 it had around 20,000 students! You can imagine the difficulty we had in studying. There was enormous overcrowding and there were not enough chairs to sit on for students.

**WP:** So the student action began as a protest against conditions at the University?

**A:** Yes. The students were asking the regime to improve the conditions in which they were living and studying. But the regime did not accept any of the demands of the students. What was important for the regime was to make money.

We launched a protest movement. Our country should have many universities, but our government did not want the population to have access to education because, you know, knowledge is linked to power. When you have knowledge you know how to fight.

**WP:** So what happened?

**A:** 1990 was a very crucial year in Ivorian history. We have suffered from a one-party system since independence. Many movements have fought to improve living standards of the Ivorian people and have been repressed. In 1990 our generation said "Enough is enough! We can't go on living like this". The regime can improve the living conditions of the population. We said we would no longer accept the repression, the killings and we went on strike. The movement, which started on the campus at Abidjan, spread rapidly all over the country. We were joined by workers, unemployed people and the banned political parties.

In 1990 students were at the forefront of a political strike wave in the Ivory Coast, demanding better education. It rapidly spread to include workers in a fight against the repressive regime. Many of the leaders of that movement have been forced to seek political exile in Britain. Workers Power spoke to Alexis, an exiled member of the student union of the Ivory Coast (FESCE), who lives in London. He is also a member of IRAG, the Ivorian Relief Action Group.

The parties took the opportunity to demand a multi-party system. At first the President refused, insisting that he would never allow other parties. But such was the strength of the movement—even some soldiers joined the strikes—that he had to legalise the other parties. For him this was a big defeat.

**WP:** Did the strikes stop?

**A:** No. The student strike did not stop because we did not get what we were asking for. We wanted better living conditions. Those who were in the political parties were politicians. The aim of a politician is to get to power so we did not have the same point of view. 1990 was an election year. The opposition parties after a long discussion decided to enter the elections but the conditions were not clearly defined. We had been a one-party dictatorship since 1960. The opposition was defeated because the President had complete control over all resources.

**WP:** The elections were corrupt?

**A:** Yes, and we have proof. There are elections again—presidential and parliamentary—in October this year and still the rules are not clear. The opposition wants fair elections with international monitors.

**WP:** What happened to the students after the 1990 elections?

**A:** After the election the regime decided to repress us and even to kill the student leaders. When we had meetings on campus, troops were sent in and students were arrested and beaten, some so badly they died following their release. But we kept up our fight until May 1991. During the early hours of 18 May the army was sent into the campus to kill the student leaders. But fortunately the military did not really know which building they were in. They broke down doors, they beat the students they found, they raped women students. One security man told us the following day

that two bodies had been carted off by the military.

After this barbaric attack the government decided to close down the campuses and send the students home.

The opposition parties demanded an inquiry and after a few months an official inquiry reported. It condemned the attack and asked the President to discipline the military officer who organised it. But the President—who is head of the army, head of state, head of everything—refused.

**WP:** How did the student leaders end up as political exiles?

**A:** After the attack we were obliged to live in clandestinity and go underground. It was very difficult. Even possession of a FESCE card was enough to get you arrested and imprisoned. They would stop buses and search for students. We were really in danger in the Ivory Coast. Our lives were threatened and we had to go somewhere else, which is why we ended up in this country seeking asylum.

**WP:** They did actually arrest some of the leaders?

**A:** They arrested the President of FESCE, Martial, in 1992. He was imprisoned for at least four months. Many leaders of the opposition had also been arrested for calling a demonstration when the President refused to take action against the military officer responsible for the campus raid. They were in prison between February and July 1992.

**WP:** What is the current situation in the Ivory Coast?

**A:** The President died in December 1993, and his son has been ruling the country. He has not been elected. Last year, when he proclaimed himself President, many students and journalists were arrested. Our movement is banned today and its leaders are living underground. Students are harassed and forbidden to hold meetings on

the campus. If three or four people are found talking together the army can arrest you and put you in prison. The situation is very bad. In an election year they are threatening people more because they don't want to lose power.

**WP:** Are the opposition parties legal?

**A:** Since 1990 the opposition parties have been legal but despite this they cannot operate safely. Fear exists because the government can arrest you at any time.

**WP:** What campaigning work have IRAG been doing in Britain?

**A:** IRAG's main aim is to inform international opinion about the Ivorian regime and to explain why students and workers are here to seek asylum. It is not only because we have had rigged elections. Students do not have rights to protest or hold meetings.

**WP:** Have Ivorian refugees been harassed in Britain?

**A:** Some of our comrades, Ivorian asylum seekers, spent a long time in prison. Since we launched IRAG the most important case occurred on 8 February when two women at Campsfield—Sita Kamara and Anne-Marie Brou—went on hunger strike. At the beginning of March the British authorities decided to deport Sita back to the Ivory Coast. We held a protest outside Campsfield to explain our fear and express our anger. If Sita or any other asylum seeker is sent back the Ivory Coast their life is put in danger; they would be killed. Thanks to our campaign Sita was released but every day she still has to go to Gatwick to report to the police and get medical treatment. Some of our comrades are still in prison.

**WP:** What sort of support have you had from the British labour movement?

**A:** We have been in contact with many organisations, especially in the labour movement. Thanks to some Labour MPs we have been to the House of Commons on 15 February to explain to British MPs about the regime. It is not good for us as students, young people and workers to leave our country and come here. It is just because our life is under threat and we are fighting for the liberation of our country, fighting for freedom.

**WP:** What can trade unions and student organisations do to help?

**A:** Sign the petition to the Home Secretary which explains that the Ivorians are in real danger if they are sent back to the Ivory Coast.

Publicise the repression carried out by the dictatorship. Even if some have fled, those who are still there are still suffering, still being harassed. We want international pressure on the regime. ■

## A world to win

### France

In April and May, a series of vicious attacks took place against gay men in the Nantes region in the west of France. An eight-strong gang, armed with baseball bats and knives, attacked gay men in a well known square in Nantes. One of the victims spent several days in a coma; another had his face slashed.

The police decided to respond . . . by harassing gay men! Identity checks were set up in a number of gay hang-outs, in order to seek out "child molesters". Meanwhile, the gay-bashers roamed free.

At the end of May, our French comrades of Pouvoir Ouvrier took the initiative in calling a joint meeting of gay activists and trade unionists in order to organise both a series of protest demonstrations against police harassment and defence squads against the gay-bashers.

Groups of lesbians and gay men are now arranging regular "baseball practice" in the square, patrolling the area where the gay-bashers had been active, ready to meet any further attack. ■

### Portugal

TEN THOUSAND people, black and white, demonstrated in Portugal's first mass anti-racist demonstration in June. The protest was called in response to the murder of 27 year old Alcindo Monteiro, a black Portuguese citizen born in Cape Verde, by a gang of skinheads.

The murder is not the first racist killing in Portugal, there have been eight in the last five years, but this seems to be the first to have provoked a major response. Alcindo was killed during a skinhead rampage in Lisbon—70 thugs armed with baseball bats and knuckle dusters started attacking any black person they came across.

True to form, it took two hours for the police to arrive. But unlike in Britain, nine skinheads have already been arrested and imprisoned for three months pending trial. ■

### Italy

ON WEDNESDAY 14 June hundreds of Alitalia airline pilots began to "phone in sick" to bring about the effects of a strike without losing pay. By the weekend Italy's airports were in chaos.

The management of the national airline has been trying to impose restructuring plans which will badly effect jobs and pay. The company wants to cut the wages' bill by 20% over the next 18 months. This involves sacking 1,600 staff this year alone.

This attack on the public sector is general. Railworkers were on staggered strikes to maximise disruption and minimise loss of pay. Ferries were also at a standstill.

The Dini government is overseeing drastic cuts in the public sector to balance the budget in order to meet Maastricht criteria for a single currency. On 17 June the government used legislation passed five years ago, but not used since, to force workers back to work for seven days "cooling-off" or face prosecution.

In the face of this escalation by the government on the right to strike Italian public sector workers must recognise the limits to piecemeal or backdoor actions short of full-scale indefinite action. Now that the legislation has been used the whole trade union movement must respond with a general strike to scrap these laws for good. If they are allowed to work on this occasion then they will be used against other sectors in the future. ■

## Environment

# Greenpeace Shell shock

**"BACK AGAIN";** so Greenpeace announced its dramatic occupation of Shell UK's Brent Spar oil storage platform in front page newspaper adverts. A few days later it had turned to "Thank You" after Shell's decision not to sink the platform in the North Atlantic. Greenpeace hailed it as their greatest victory—forcing the world's second largest company into a humiliating climb-down.

But behind all the hype, hidden away in the masses of newsprint you might discover some actual facts about the case of the Brent Spar. While it is true that Greenpeace made the dumping headline news in Britain, this in itself guaranteed nothing—witness Greenpeace's many heroic failures in the past.

What was significant in this case was a consumer boycott which was spreading across Europe. Such was the anger at Shell's dumping plan that Shell garages were being picketed, leafleted and stoned.

Shell has spent millions trying to persuade us that it is environment-friendly. Its public image was being tarnished day by day. A few days before they caved in Shell were forced to cancel an awards evening they were sponsoring—the awards were for helping protect the environment!

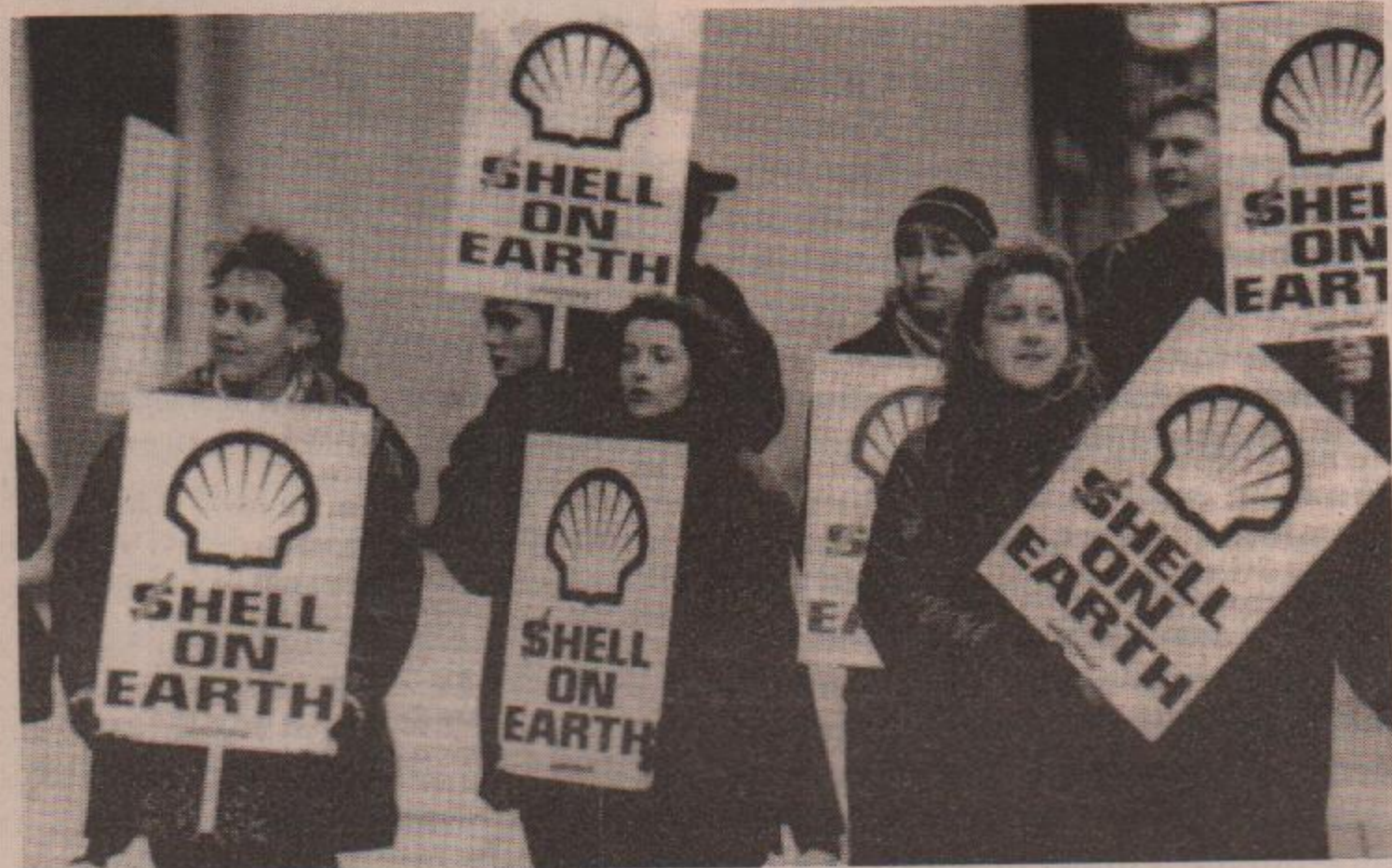
The consumer boycott was spontaneous public response, not a carefully planned and executed policy of Greenpeace's. The truth is that the boycott came before Greenpeace even took up the cause.

### Dumping

Alerted by the boycott and aware of the electoral importance of green issues, a number of governments were also opposed to the dumping. Chancellor Kohl of Germany threatened to make an issue of it at the G7 summit: the German police were even instructed to boycott Shell petrol! Holland, Belgium and the Scandinavian governments were also opposed.

The pressure of these governments had its effects on Shell's own managers in the different countries: Shell was divided internally.

Consumer boycotts, while limited in what they can achieve, do at least demonstrate the potential lodged within mass action. But Greenpeace's methods are directly opposed to the active involvement of its mass membership.



Greenpeace did play one vital role in the Brent Spar fiasco. They reminded everyone that the multinationals cannot be trusted.

Shell, like an increasing number of companies claim that they are environmentally aware. They had commissioned a series of scientific reports to assess the most environmentally friendly way of disposing of the Brent Spar. All of the highly respected scientific studies supported sinking the oil platform in deep sea, rather than bringing it into dock for dismantling.

But all these studies were based on information provided by Shell and surprise, surprise they lied. They claimed that there was only a limited amount of polluting sludge left but when Greenpeace activists investigated they discovered a lot more.

The lesson is beware bosses wearing green credentials; whatever they may say, they are damaging to your environment. ■

Greenpeace has no internal democracy. Its policies cannot be challenged at any AGM. Its actions are limited to a small group of trained staff, who rely on the friendliness of the media to give them the publicity they need.

Greenpeace's "coup" came at a time of internal division, with staff concerned about falling revenue and a lack of employment for its small fleet of ships and other vessels. Some had suggested moving away from direct action tactics, seeking closer links with business and a more analytical role countering the propaganda of the multinationals. After the Brent Spar, however, the stunts are sure to continue.

### Hazards

Greenpeace is supported by a massive 3.8 million members worldwide. It operates in thirty countries and has a staff of more than a thousand. With an annual income estimated at £95 million, it is not exactly a minnow.

But it is only necessary to consider a fraction of the environmental hazards that face us in the workplace, the home, from nuclear and chemical installations to realise how marginal Greenpeace's activities are. There is no Greenpeace banner hanging over the asbestos still found in thousands of homes, schools and factories.

If you want to defend the environment then you have to look beyond individual cases, to what motivates the polluters. The multinationals, just like all bosses, are motivated by profit. That drives them to exploit and despoil the environment, just as they are forced to exploit workers. Shell wanted to dump the platform because it was—by £32 million—the cheapest option.

The urge to maximise profit and defeat competition leads to ever-greater demands for raw materials, massive wastage and the most cost-effective solution to any problem, regardless of its effect on the environment. This is the fundamental threat to the environment. But, Greenpeace does not even set out to change this.

Ultimately, for all the brave stunts of its activists, Greenpeace is a bureaucracy whose ultimate concern is its own survival. It aspires to be incorporated within the capitalist world as a kind of environmental green peace-maker trouble-shooting between the capitalists and conflicting governments, when what is needed is a red-blooded war against capitalism. ■

# French municipal elections Le Pen breakthrough

**I**N THE recent French municipal elections, the Front National (FN) doubled its number of local councillors and managed to win control of three major towns in the South: Orange, Marignane and Toulon, the last an important port with a population of over 150,000.

This represents a vital breakthrough for the FN. For the first time, they have control over the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. They intend to use these towns as test-beds for their policy of "national priority", in other words, apartheid on a local scale.

In case anyone had any doubts, the FN have proved that they have deep roots in French society. During the recent presidential election, where Le Pen passed the 15% mark for the first time, the FN were the first choice for many unskilled workers: around 30% of them voted for the fascist Le Pen.

The reality of the FN's race-hate message was shown during the election campaign. At the beginning, FN thugs shot dead a young black man in Marseilles while they were out fly-posting. On May Day a bunch of skinheads on the FN's "Joan of Arc" march threw a young Algerian into the river Seine, where he drowned.

And yet the FN continues to gather popular support. Why?

The reason is simple. Unemployment is 12% and there is no sign of it going down. Youth feel they have no future, and huge areas of the country are being turned into human and cultural wastelands.

### Answers

Meanwhile, neither the Socialist Party nor the Communist Party has any real answers, except "vote for us". And given that these parties are largely responsible for getting the workers into the current mess, this is hardly an attractive proposition.

**H**aving won 1,600,000 votes (5%) in the first round of the Presidential election, the French "Trotskyist" organisation Lutte Ouvrière (LO) announced it was going to launch a mass workers' party. On the matter of the party's programme, LO were deliberately vague.

The local election results showed that in any case the initiative is almost certainly doomed to failure: LO did no better than the other far-left organisations with candidates.

With the notable exception of their well-liked presidential candidate, Arlette Laguiller, who won nearly 16% of the vote in her home town, LO's candidates generally got similar scores to those they received in the previous municipal elections in 1989.

LO did end up with seven municipal councillors, where before they had only one. However, this hardly represented mass support: one of them got



by Emile Gallet,  
Pouvoir Ouvrier

In this situation, Le Pen's simple answer—"Get rid of the immigrants"—appeals to many desperate workers and youth.

Tragically, nothing decisive has been done to stop the FN's rise. And now, as the election results in the South show, they are no longer a distant danger. This time the FN has won control with only a minority of votes, because of the undemocratic voting system. If nothing is done, they will eventually win outright.

Even before the results were announced, the debate had begun about how to respond to the FN seizing power in a number of towns. Sadly, these arguments have centred around worthy initiatives from sports

teams and singers. The unions have kept quiet.

In Vitrolles, faced with the possible election of FN second in command Bruno Megret, the local handball team—French champions—stated that they would wind up the club if the FN took power. In the end he was beaten thanks to a massive turn out of black youth to vote.

### Boycott

Then, as soon as it became known that the FN had won Toulon and Orange, Patrick Bruel, a Jewish teenage heartthrob, pulled out of concerts scheduled in these towns. In contrast, Algerian rai singer Cheb Khaled has said he will sing in Orange, in order to support those who voted against the FN.

Some Socialist Party leaders have called for a boycott of the FN townships; others have argued that the FN are not banned, and therefore should be treated as representatives of their electors.

All this avoids the real problem. How should municipal workers react to being ordered about by a gang of racists and their shadowy fascist henchmen until the next election in six years time?

Workers and their unions must organise a total boycott of the FN councillors, refuse to implement the Mayor's decisions and oppose every attempt of the FN to act as the voice of the workers and oppressed. Workers in local government should organise strikes and protest actions, calling on other unions for solidarity. Opponents of the FN—workers, immigrants, black people, youth—need to mobilise in these towns and elsewhere for mass demonstrations to confront the FN. The FN are still a minority. They must stay that way.

It is workers' action—not artists' boycotts—that will drive the FN back into the gutter. That includes fighting the conditions which have made their growth possible: unemployment, poverty and cuts. Successful militant action on these issues is the one sure way of winning white workers away from Le Pen. ■

# Free Alexis Corbière

**A**lexis Corbière is a 26 year-old French student leader and socialist militant—a member of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR).

On 13 June the police arrested him outside his house and proceeded to smash up his flat. Since then he has been held in Fleury Mérogis, a high-security prison for hardened killers and "terrorists".

According to Madame Le Vert, the investigating judge responsible for his arrest, Alexis represents a danger to "public order". He is accused by an informant of having acted over two years ago as a middle-man for members of the ETA Basque nationalist organisation, on the run from

the Spanish government's murder squads and looking for shelter in France.

His imprisonment is arbitrary and unjustified: all the more so because he was due to take his teacher's certificate exam on 27 June.

The judge has refused pleas from his university lecturers and from the main teachers' unions, all of whom have pointed out that Alexis risks losing his year's work due to a baseless accusation. He will remain in custody until at least 4 July.

A substantial campaign is underway in France, with trade unions, anti-racist and political organisations all calling for Alexis' immediate release. Protests from Britain

and elsewhere can help enormously. Get your trade union or political party to send a letter of protest, calling for Alexis' immediate and unconditional release.

- Send your letter to:  
Juge Le Vert, Palais de Justice de Paris, 4 bd du Palais, 75001 Paris, France
- Send a copy to:  
Sophie Zafari, 16 rue Douy Delcupe, 93100 Montreuil, France  
Fax: (00.33.1).48.59.23.28
- And write directly to:  
Alexis Corbière, n° d'écrou 246 644 S D 4, Centre pénitentiaire, 7 av. des Peupliers, 91700 Fleury-Mérogis, France.



# Why workers should support Bosnia

**T**HE BOSNIAN war has entered a new phase. Both the Serbs and the Bosnian Government have broken loose from the previously agreed ceasefires. The whole UN intervention is in crisis.

For three years open divisions between the Anglo-French imperialists on one side and the United States and Germany on the other, as well as the reviving influence of Russia, meant that united pressure for an imperialist settlement could not be brought on the warring parties. Plan after plan has failed due to the opposition of one side or the other.

Vance-Owen I and II gave way to Owen-Stoltenburg, and then to the Contact Group (Russia, Britain, France, Germany, USA). The Bosnian Serbs could not be coerced into renouncing the goal of a Greater Serbian state incorporating two thirds of Bosnia Herzegovina (BiH) as well as 30% of Croatia. After all they occupied this territory. They had ethnically cleansed hundreds of thousands of Croats and ethnic Muslims from strategic parts of it. Militarily, if not economically, it was just about viable. Why should they give it up?

The BiH government was squeezed into a tiny territory in central Bosnia, with hundreds of thousands of refugees in Bosnia, Croatia and various European Union (EU) countries. A partition would leave it with two choices: a militarily and economically non-viable state, with about 10% of the country and no access to the outside world; or joining a Croatian Federation dominated by Croat nationalists, who scarcely recognise the Bosnian Muslims ethnic or national existence. This was no choice at all.

## Federation

In 1994, under US pressure, the nationalist regime in Zagreb headed by Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, reluctantly agreed to push the Bosnian Croats into a federation with the Sarajevo government. The new political and military alliance with Croatia increased the military potential of the BiH Army. Greater supplies of medium, and some heavy, weapons came up from the coast through Croat-controlled territory.

Time was slowly running out for Karadzic and the Bosnian Serbs. The tactical pushes by the BiH army in central Bosnia were answered by the Serbs with their old tactic; shelling the cities dominated by the Muslim and multi-ethnic populations. This required the use of the heavy guns which had been put under UN inspection in early 1994. It required the general breach of the ceasefire brokered by former US president Jimmy Carter in December 1994.

This produced the NATO air raid on Pale and the consequent seizure of 400 UN "peacekeepers" as hostages. The hostage crisis yet again showed all the divisions amongst the UN and the Contact Group.

The Serbs had the three largest imperialist military powers in the world by the tenderest parts of their anatomy. And for

all the huffing and puffing, and rapid reaction forces, these divisions in the imperialist camp meant that none of them had a real inclination to intervene with decisive force.

The European powers, especially Britain and France who have taken charge of the EU's Balkan strategy since they sent in sizeable ground forces, want to do a deal with Milosevic's Serbia. Such a deal will give the Bosnian Serbs a large proportion of their territorial gains and some sort of link with Serbia.

After demonising Milosevic between 1991-93, after imposing a savage economic embargo on Serbia, they have now changed their tack. From suggesting him as a prime candidate for the Nuremberg Trials Part Two we may yet see him nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize!

The EU and the US governments have come to realise that, since the Serbs are the largest and best armed nationality in

the Balkans (with the exception of Turkey), they cannot be easily crushed or bullied into a deal short of their objectives.

Moreover they possess influential allies in Greece (an EU and NATO member, capable of vetoing decisions in the former), and Russia (capable of vetoing anything in the UN Security Council).

## Obstacles

Faced with such obstacles the imperialists have turned towards a deal brokered by Milosevic. He extracted from the UN a tacit agreement not to use air raids again, since when the Serbs have been ignoring the no-fly zone with total impunity.

The remaining reason for frictions between the imperialist powers and the Bosnian Serbs is that Karadzic has repeatedly thwarted the previous plans by demanding more territory than the imperialists dare to be seen to give. Milosevic in contrast has verbally supported all of them

since the second Vance-Owen Plan.

To date the European imperialist powers have been stopped pursuing the deal they want to do with the Serbs by the US Administration and the Republican Congress. The US, concerned principally with the stability of the Middle East and its oil supplies, has to appease its number one gendarme in the region, Turkey.

Because of its historic links to the Balkans, Turkey sees itself as the protector of the Bosnian Muslims, even though it has done little for them. The US has consequently warmly sympathised with the Muslims' cause, talked of wanting to end the arms embargo and maybe supplied a few light arms and some training.

But its threats against Serbia have never translated into serious deeds. And like Britain and France, the US was effectively humiliated by the hostage crisis.

But if the imperialists' threats and blusterings against the Serbs are hollow,

then the Serbs' episodic clashes with the UN are neither progressive, nor an "anti-imperialist struggle". The only objective of their continued war is to force the Bosnians to make peace on the basis of acceptance of most of their territorial gains. The dispute with imperialism and Milosevic is only about the scale of those gains.

A deal based on the existing territorial situation would mean that hundreds of thousands of Bosnian Muslims, Yugoslavs and large numbers of ethnic Serbs and Croats who fought alongside, or protected, their Muslim neighbours, would all find themselves homeless, permanent refugees, the Palestinians of Europe. The result of such an arch-reactionary peace deal might be a year or two of exhausted acceptance by the Bosnians. But within a few years a renewed struggle to recover their homes and lands would begin.

There can be no real or lasting peace between the national groups of BiH based on the acceptance of near genocide and entrenched national oppression of the Muslims and their multi-ethnic supporters. The recovery of their lands and the return to their homes of the population who lived there is a necessary prerequisite of peace. The UN, the EU and all their "peacekeepers" cannot and will not achieve this.

The military defeat of the Pale regime, up to and including their expulsion from all the territory they have unjustly occupied, is a justified war aim of the Muslim and multi-ethnic population, the only oppressed community in Bosnia.

## Oppressed

The empty "backing" of this community by the imperialists should not deceive workers and socialists. Workers should be on the side of this oppressed community.

Nor should they be fooled by the lies about the BiH forces being bloodthirsty fundamentalists bent on establishing an Islamic state in Europe. Such thinly disguised racism should be rejected with contempt by socialists. The population of cities like Tuzla is overwhelmingly working class, includes substantial minorities of Serbs and Croats and is committed to a Bosnia of all the nationalities.

That is why we say:

- Help multi-ethnic Bosnia to defend itself! It needs heavy artillery, tanks and aircraft.
- Lift the arms embargo!
- Open the borders to international volunteers!
- Stop the UN/NATO bombings! They are no help to the Bosnians.
- Get all UN troops out of Bosnia now! UN troops must hand over all their military equipment to the Bosnian government—not to the Serbs as they are doing at the moment.
- End the economic blockade of Serbia! It only aids Milosevic's dictatorship and harms Serbia's workers and peasants.

## ...and why the SWP won't

**T**he Socialist Workers Party (SWP), which fails to understand or solidarise with a justified and progressive national struggle on its own doorstep (Northern Ireland), equally fails to understand one in Bosnia.

The SWP argues, "sooner or later the growing number of Serbs, Croats, and Muslims will realise the only way out of this hell is for them to unite and fight the butchers and the wealthy on either side."

Marx said, "a nation which oppresses another can never itself be free". There happens to be a difference between the Serbs and the Muslims at the present time. The Serbs in Bosnia are in possession of their Muslim neighbours' lands, houses and farms.

The Muslims are penned into cities with populations that have swelled to four times their pre-war numbers. Either that or they are in refugee camps. Most have family members or friends who have been butchered in the fighting. They want justice, indeed many want revenge.

What are socialists to say to these two peoples? "It was all caused by your ruling classes"? True! But they did not do it alone.

"If you united against the bosses you could put an end to war"? True, but how do you unite the occupant of a house or farm with the person driven at gun point from that farm? How do you unite the torturer with the victim?

"Strikes in Serbia and Croatia show the way to class independence and potential of unity"? Also true, but in Bosnia most workers are unemployed and their factories idle, disrupted by the battle lines and the ethnic divisions.

The SWP's belief in the all-saving

power of strikes over immediate or economic issues is truly ridiculous when applied to Bosnia. Events from 1989 onwards have posed the national question on a massive scale. The Bosnian War has created a massive act of national oppression.

In their sheer inability to deal with this question the SWP minimise it, equate the oppressors with the victims, indeed go out of their way to excuse the perpetrators of genocide.

"Bosnia's Muslims have been the greatest victims of the fighting up to now... Yet given the chance, Muslim fighters have shown that they are just as capable of committing atrocities against civilians as Serb or Croat forces..." (Socialist Worker 10 June 1995)

Whilst there have been atrocities committed by Muslim fighters, like the Green Berets, the SWP ignores the fact that many of them have been punished. The main leader of the militia who carried out these actions has been driven out of BiH; an action unmatched by the Serb or Croatian forces.

The BiH armed forces, both their commanders and their rank and file, remain multi-ethnic. Towns like Tuzla and Sarajevo still have substantial Serb and Croat populations. The government, and far more importantly, the people in the street and the working class movement in BiH, all repeatedly proclaim that they want a multi-ethnic society.

The Serbians and the other hand proclaim the opposite: that they cannot live with Muslims, that they have a right to occupy territory that was not theirs three years ago.

Yet the SWP wilfully obscure this enor-

mous difference. They refuse to take sides in a struggle between the oppressed and those oppressing them, between those who are fighting for their violated democratic rights and those who have violated those rights. The reason? The victims might turn oppressors.

This is certainly a possibility. Some of the survivors of the gas chambers went to Israel and oppressed the Palestinians.

Is this logic to condemn us to the sidelines of every democratic and anti-imperialist struggle? Don't "socialists" have anything to say beyond "unite and fight" (for higher wages) and somehow all these other questions which divide you will fade away? According to the SWP the answer is no. And that shows just how rotten their position is on the most important conflict in Europe today.

The only thing the SWP is right about over Bosnia is that UN and NATO intervention is a bad thing. How strange then, that they support a UN Arms Embargo which specifically condemns the Bosnian Muslims and their allies to ineffective military resistance against those who bomb their cities.

Such a position can only be taken and defended in London. Let them go to the main workers' city in Bosnia—Tuzla—and tell the miners there that they support the embargo which allows Serb chauvinists' heavy guns to pound the city and kill over 70 young people in a cafe-lined square on one night.

The refusal of the SWP to support the oppressed against their oppressors is bad enough. That they should actually support their disarmament gives a new twist to their economism. It borders on treachery to the international working class. ■

Graham Smallwood, Leeds  
Workers Power, former  
*Socialist Outlook (SO)* supporter

Simon Deville takes issue with our understanding of centrism. Despite Deville's accusation, the term "centrist" was not used as an insult in the original article but as an accurate description of the USFI's practice of the last 30 years. It is Deville who has a wooden understanding of centrism if he thinks that simply because the USFI has existed for so long then it must be a stable organisation. On the contrary since it came into existence in 1963 it has accommodated to one petty bourgeois current after another.

There is more than one example where members of the USFI in the same country found themselves on different sides—in the 1974 Portuguese uprising, for example. The USFI has tail-ended movements such as the Sandinistas and Castroites in Latin America, in the early 1970s even going so far as to advocate its own armed militia on the same model.

The record of *SO* in Britain hardly gives Deville any grounds for complaint when his organisation is described as centrist.

When it split from *Socialist Action (SA)* it looked as if it might have evolved in a healthy direction, but this was proved wrong in a very short space of time. Whilst *SA* and *SO* have often been at each other's throats it has very little to do with political differences, but over which group of Left reformists to tail—for *SO* it may be Tony Benn and the Socialist Movement, for *SA* it is Ken Livingstone and the Campaign Group.

For a number of years *SO*'s political strategy depended on the evolution of the reformist mish-mash that made up the Socialist Movement. But did *SO* lead a political fight against the soft left/Eurocommunist politics of the people who were in the driving seat of the Socialist Movement? No. Organising the "Class Struggle Left" was more important than building a revolutionary organisation or taking-on the politics of left reformists.

Perhaps comrade Deville could tell us what aspect of *SO*'s or the USFI's politics and practice he considers to be revolutionary?

As both *SO* and the USFI are in acute crisis it would seem to me that the point Mark Harrison was making in the original article is vindicated: both organisations are centrist and they are not going to change in the sense that they are not going to win back to revolutionary politics.

Over the last couple of years *SO* has lost 2/3 of its membership and it is now little more than an alliance of tendencies with little in common.

A key leader, Phil Hearse, has left to join Militant Labour, and is beckoning others to follow. Another section seems likely either to rejoin *SA* or to join Socialist Organiser.

It is now clear that *SO* is in its death throes. Whilst this is no big loss, what is a tragedy is that committed militants such as Deville should go down with it. Deville ends his letter with the statement that if we want to educate him and his comrades then we should be in the USFI as he and thousands of his comrades are committed to building a revolutionary party.

This may be the case, but the organisations that they are members of are not, and when we analyse an organisation it is its political positions that are crucial, not simply the subjective desires of its members. Thousands of members of the Socialist Workers Party and its international satellites, thousands of members of the CWI (Militant's international group), and members of the LIT (Morenoites) in Latin America also want to build a revolutionary party.

Probably the only difference between these organisation and the USFI is that in the USFI you can get away with perpetual factionalism and indiscipline. Like comrade Deville you can "do your own thing" regardless of the organisation's official politics and priorities.

The results of the USFI politics can be illustrated repeatedly. In Spain the section decided to leave the USFI to fuse with a Maoist organisation. In Germany, the section split and disappeared with some going off into the Green Party and the rest fusing with an ex-Maoist Group to form the VSP.

In Australia and the United States the sections took the USFI leadership's soft attitude towards the Sandinistas one step further and left the organisation, abandoning the Trotskyist "baggage" at the same time, in order to try and get closer to "left" Stalinist currents. Are these the examples of revolutionary regroupment Deville wants to hold up as a model? ■

Simon Deville gives the impression that he feels uneasy about the USFI. But he doesn't explain what he thinks is wrong with their politics and method. Instead, he suggests a way for us to take on their politics:

"If you believe we are centrists, then using centrism as a term of abuse does little to engage with us. It would be far better for you to educate us as to why you believe our politics are wrong (which incidentally, you would be in a far better position to do as members of the USFI)."

In Germany we tried to do just that. The Gruppe Arbeitermacht (GAM) has repeatedly applied for membership of the Revolutionär Sozialistischer Bund (RSB), a group formed out of the ashes of the disastrous VSP tactic (when part of the USFI's German section fused with an ex-Maoist group).

We made clear that we would do everything to work loyally within the RSB, but also explained that we would also—as every member of a socialist group should—argue and fight within

the group for the politics we consider to be correct.

We hoped for admittance because the RSB claimed that it did not simply want to include USFI members, but to gather the largest forces possible to build a party on a Trotskyist programme in Germany.

But the GAM was not allowed to join. Why? Because we do not consider the USFI a revolutionary international and

Martin Suchanek, Gruppe  
Arbeitermacht (German  
section of the LRCI)

we made clear that we considered the USFI to be a centrist organisation. The RSB leadership knew that we would participate in the programmatic discussions in the run-up to the USFI's 14th World Congress and around an action programme for Germany.

They feared us because they knew we would fight for revolutionary politics and try to win members to our ideas by a consistent and permanent struggle.

We did not shrink from telling the truth. We did not hide our politics. We think

that every serious working class militant has a right to be told the truth, to know our full analysis of the USFI's politics and all the political conclusions to be drawn from it.

Through being honest in our positions, openly trying to lead a "active fight" for "revolutionary leadership", as comrade Deville suggests, we were excluded from the USFI-led group on the grounds that we "rejected their revolutionary programme".

But the leaders of the RSB are not so fussy when it comes to other potential candidates for regroupment. In their May Day paper they speculated about the foundation of a revolutionary socialist international together with the "strongest socialist liberation movement of the world"—the Kurdistan Stalinist PKK!

Perhaps it is wrong to label that policy right-opportunism. What would comrade Deville prefer we call it? Telling the truth, and fighting for consistent revolutionary politics clearly spoiled our chances of "operating within" the USFI. What does comrade Deville advise us to do now? ■

Per-Olof Mattsson,  
Arbetarmakt (Swedish  
section of the LRCI)

Simon Deville characterised my contribution in WP 189 as, among other things, "a very wooden understanding" of centrism and "evangelical repentance". He wants to make a distinction between the politics one defends and the organisation one belongs to. Above all, what is lacking in my letter, apparently, is an argument for why it is "not possible for revolutionaries to operate within the USFI".

His choice of terms is revealing. It is possible for revolutionaries to "operate" inside the USFI. But the decisive question is, once inside the USFI, how do you maintain your revolutionary positions?

You could form a tendency, a faction, but in the end you will have to choose between centrism and revolutionary politics. A faction is already, at least potentially, the founding of a new organisation.

Comrade Deville claims that we have been waiting in the USFI "for years for a revolutionary leadership to emerge and then left after it failed to materialise". This is a version of events promoted by the Swedish USFI leadership. Another can be found in the German language USFI publication *Inprekorr*, where we are characterised as a secret LRCI entrant group.

In reality, almost all of the comrades who left to found Arbetarmakt have been in the USFI for 10 years or more. One was a founding member, and left after 25 years! We have been involved in a number of different oppositional tendencies and factions ever since the old LIT/IMT fight in 1973-4. We have also held various positions of leadership in the Swedish section.

If there have ever been loyal, patient members in the USFI, who never dreamt about a revolutionary leadership suddenly emerging, but for many years in practice tried to change the USFI, it is the members of Arbetarmakt.

We don't regret having been members of the USFI: we have no need for repentance. We simply followed what we, at the time, thought was the best way of building a revolutionary party. We have learnt a lot, and there are still more lessons to be drawn.

The main lesson is that it is possible to be an "operator" inside the USFI and see yourself as a Trotskyist. But it is impossible to fight for revolutionary politics in the long run without giving this fight an organisational expression.

We have no plans for political self-isolation. Our decision to join the LRCI was based on agreement with its programme. The LRCI is not, today, the revolutionary international that is needed, but it aims to play a decisive role in building it.

Since the split we have been active in anti-racist and anti-fascist activities, Workers Aid for Bosnia, and the protests against government budget cuts during the spring.

Now we are able to speak with a clear voice and argue for revolutionary politics. If we had still been in the USFI, we would have been forced to promote the left-reformist politics of the Swedish Socialist Party (the USFI section)—since we have always rejected the standard procedure of many USFI oppositionists: abstention and undisciplined behaviour (without any consequences). I would ask comrade Deville, if you intend to stay in the USFI, on what programme would you be willing to fight? That is what we would like to talk to you about. ■

## Regrouping the left

# What basis for unity?

In the *Workers Power* 188 (April 1995) we carried an article on revolutionary regroupment which has stimulated debate among our readers. Last month (*WP* 190) Simon Deville, a dissident supporter of *Socialist Outlook (SO)*, argued that we would be better placed to argue for our politics if we were members of the Fourth International (USFI). Continuing this important debate, we print a selection from the numerous replies to Deville's letter we have received. All of the letters have been cut for reasons of space. We welcome further contributions.

USFI leader Earnest Mandel at an Outlook rally.  
Should we, or indeed could we, all be in his organisation, fighting for our programme?

Last month (*WP* 190), in your "revolutionary regroupment" debate Simon Deville from the *SO*-left (USFI) criticised *Workers Power*-LRCI's use of the concept "centrism" whilst defending aspects of the *Workers News*-LIT approach. Certainly *Workers Power* is correct to point at the USFI-left and LIT for downplaying the problem of centrism, or the LIT for fusing on minimal principles or inadequate programmatic positions. But also the LIT and Deville are correct to point to *Workers Power*'s wooden or mechanical application of "centrism", combined with an "agree with us and let's unite" approach. However, though highly important, these are still secondary questions.

What is paramount and unites all the above is their complete under-estimation of the degree of theoretical and programmatic conquest necessary: the size of the political leap forward that is required to build a revolutionary international in today's world. Genuine revolutionary regroupment today can only happen through a gigantic leap forward in Marxist science. The approaches above have serious flaws based upon misconceptions of the scientific terms of "centrism" and

"revolutionary", and of the transition from one to the other.

Once we grasp the degree of ideological poverty of even the best of today's "Marxists" compared with Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky; as we understand that today's highly fragmented and splintered "Marxist" movement is a result of not just opportunism and sectarianism, but essentially of political inability and petty-bourgeois influence; and when we realise that divisions and splinters reflect multiple different analyses that emerge when "Marx-

from Steve Myers  
(independent, "Fifth  
Internationalist")

ist" thinkers do not connect close enough with that one concrete world we all live in, that uniting revolutionaries requires as close an approximation to objective reality as contemporary science allows—then and only then, can we begin to take the necessary correct next steps of resolving the problem of continued human existence or not—the crisis of revolutionary leadership.

Since Trotsky's murder in August 1940



there has been no serious potential for a consistently revolutionary International on this planet and all attempts to break out of centrism failed for over half a century—yet today the LRCI, ITC, LIT and other left-centrists (and a left-centrist characterisation is not slanderous, but a compliment in today's world) defend and utilise the Fourth International's record during WW2. This is only one example of inadequacy.

What is now required is recognition of the present theoretical and programmatic inadequacy of all "Marxist" tendencies, that there is therefore no resulting revolutionary practice or organisation.

If subjective revolutionary Marxists are now to go forward, it is necessary to put revolutionary regroupment at the forefront of our activity and utilise this struggle to assist in the necessary leap forward in Marxist theory, a genuine re-discovery of dialectical and historical materialism, with detailed programmatic development taking place on the back of concrete knowledge and genuine revolutionary practice: back to basics!

This means abandoning unthinking activism which dominates "revolutionary" activity today. It requires a break from the

dominant sectarianism and point-scoring that determines relations between most organisations; it means small organisations seeing themselves more as theoretical currents than mainly activist organisations; it means a professional approach to discussions and debate.

In the first instance, it means creating numerous Marxist forums and means for this to happen: joint theoretical bulletins, local Marxist debates, backing projects like *Revolutionary History* etc; it means thinking of the next generation, Marxist groups co-operating to reprint numerous Marxist classics, or jointly utilising the Internet and IT which has phenomenal possibilities for us; above all it means we all take Lenin's advice to youth, "Study, Study, and then more Study!!!"

This is not to say we should abandon work in the labour movement—quite the opposite—only such an approach can re-establish serious revolutionary work in the labour movement. Perhaps this debate should now move on to a joint public Marxist Discussion Bulletin on Revolutionary Regroupment, that we could also put on the Internet, with perhaps a series of monthly London public meetings on the subject. ■

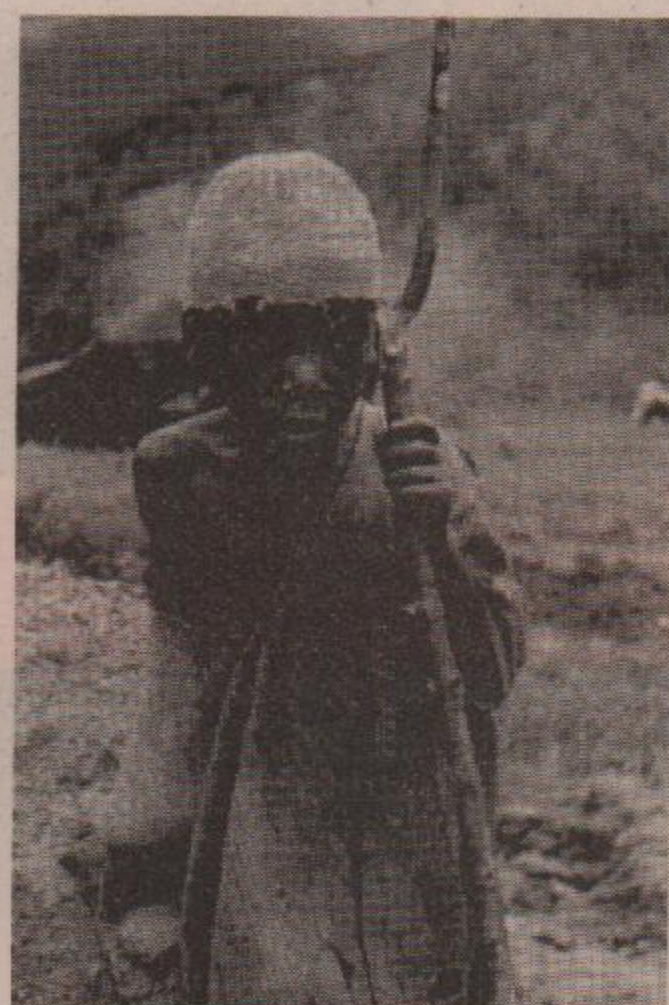
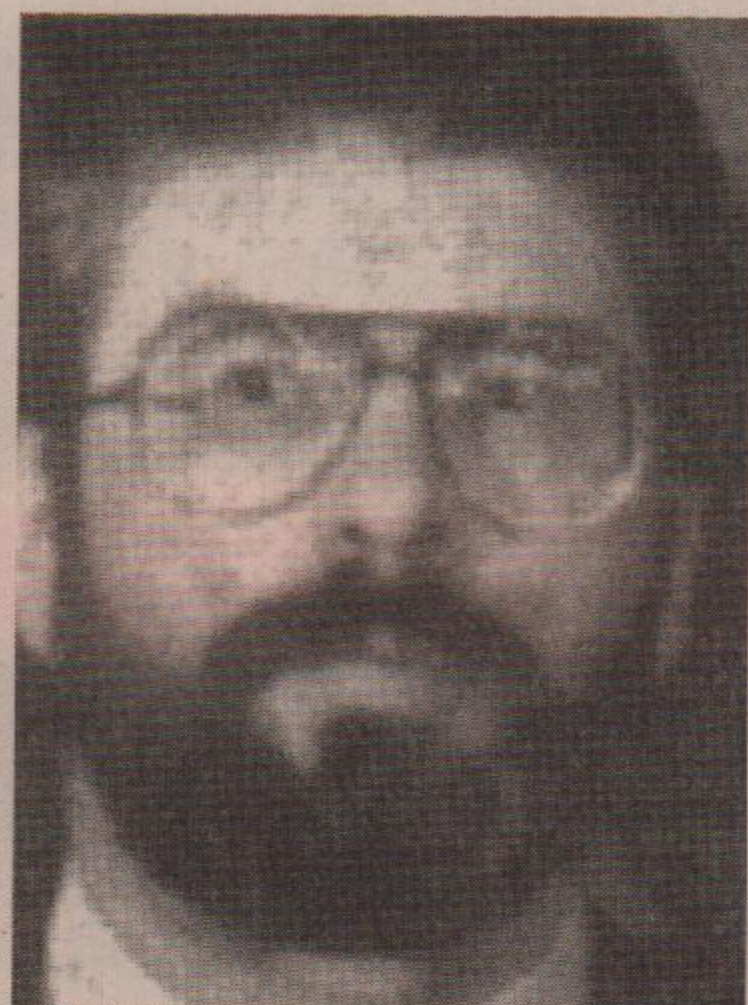
# Summer School

## Engels and revolutionary socialism today

**26 - 30 July**

Workers Power's 1995 Summer School takes place from 26 to 30 July. It will be packed with lively political discussion, Marxist education and debate. The school takes place at a residential site in Birmingham. The ticket price of £50 includes four nights bed and breakfast plus course materials and full on-site facilities.

Courses include:



## Engels

1995 marks the centenary of the death of Frederick Engels, joint founder with Karl Marx of modern revolutionary socialism. The course will examine Engels' life and work and will respond to his latter-day critics. It will trace his achievements, not only as a thinker but as a revolutionary engaged in practical political work. In particular, we will look at his role in the revolutions of 1848, his ground-breaking analysis of the origins of the family and women's oppression, his participation in the founding of the Second International and his presentation of the first overall explanation of the entire Marxist method in the spheres of philosophy, economics and political theory.

## World War Two

The truth behind the VE Day hype. This course will look at the nature of the conflict—was it a war for democracy against fascism?—and what attitude should socialists have taken towards the conflict?

## Plan and Market—is socialism possible?

The collapse of the USSR and the Eastern Bloc has led to a chorus from academics, journalists and politicians who claim that socialism has proved to be impossible. Can planning ever be made to work? Is there a realistic alternative to the capitalist system?

## Imperialism and Resistance in Africa

The economic slavery of a continent and the prospects for liberation. How can the working class come to the head of the struggle for a Socialist Africa?

## Marxism and Religion

Why is religion on the rise in the world today? What is the Marxist attitude to religion, and how should the working class respond to developments such as Islamic fundamentalism and Liberation Theology?

## Ireland

The roots of the conflict in the North of Ireland and the prospects for a settlement. Is the Irish national struggle over? What are the tasks for the working class, North and South?

Plus: A special course for young people and those new to Marxism on

## Marxism and revolutionary politics today

One-off lectures and discussions will cover subjects as diverse as the American Civil War, Crime and Punishment, the Environment, Post-modernism.

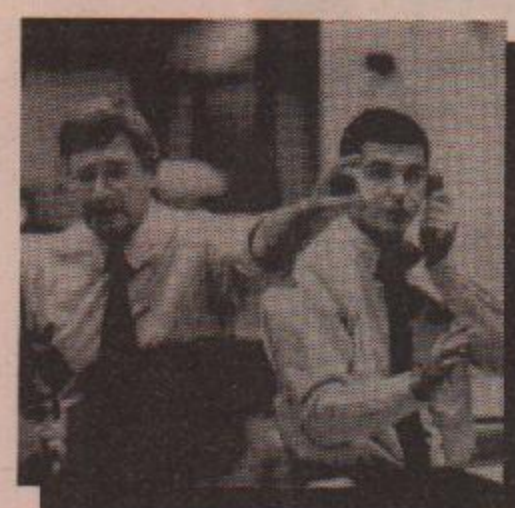
**CRECHE • BAR • BOOKS • SPORTS • BED AND BREAKFAST**

Price: £50 waged/£30 unwaged, includes 4 nights bed and breakfast  
£15 waged/£7.50 unwaged for non-residential participants. If you require accommodation some space is available nearby—please let us know as soon as possible. Further details: Workers Power, BCM 7750, London WC1N 3XX.

# FUND

July sees the start of a new Workers Power Fund Drive. Like the last one it is devoted to improving our publishing technology. We need to pay off our debts on the new equipment used to produce the new look paper, and buy a high quality Laser Printer. The Fund kicks off with donations from comrades and supporters in London totalling £450. Send your cheques to Workers Power, at BCM Box 7750 WC1N 3XX.

## Where We Stand



### 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.



### The Trade Unions

must be transformed by 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.



### October 1917

The Russian revolution established a workers' state. But Stalin 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 parasitic bu-

reaucratic 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. Stalinism has consistently betrayed the working class. The Stalinist Communist Parties' 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.



### Social oppression

is an integral feature of capitalism systematically oppressing people on the basis of 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.



### Imperialism

is a world system which oppresses nations and prevents economic development in the vast majority of third world countries. 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. But against the politics of the bourgeois and petit-bourgeois nationalists, we fight for per-

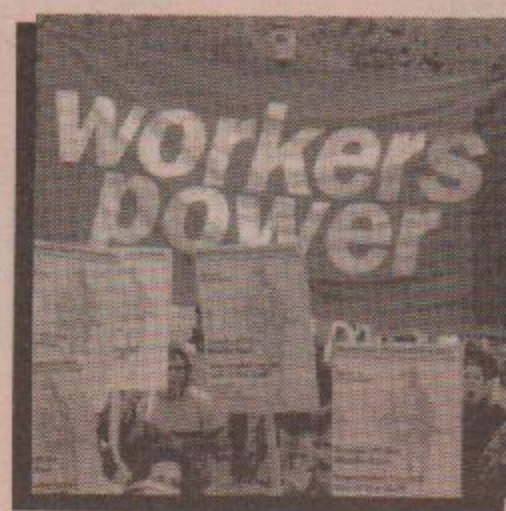
manent revolution—working class leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle under the banner of socialism and internationalism.

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 a revolutionary communist organisation. We base our programme and policies on the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, on the revolutionary documents of the first four congresses of the Third and Fourth Internationals. 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**

**China: the great leap backwards?**



**PLUS: Bosnia, Ivory Coast, Fighting fascism in France**

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

No 191 July/August 1995 ★ Price 50p

## NHS, Rail: All out to win!



**W**ORKERS ARE balancing for strike action in the NHS, British Rail and London Underground. What better time to launch united action against the Tory attacks? The ballots are on pay, but the issues raised go far deeper than the poverty wages paid to workers in the hospital trusts and railway companies.

The bosses of the NHS and British Rail are attacking workers' pay to meet the needs of privatisation and marketisation.

They are determined to take on and beat any union which shows a willingness to fight.

Even some of the union leaders are now talking about a fight—Jimmy Knapp is convinced there will be strike ac-

tion this summer. But instead of seizing the opportunity to kick the Tories while they're down, the bureaucrats are trying to limit strikes to isolated days of action. Their excuse is to avoid antagonising "public opinion".

But public opinion is massively against the Tories. And the best way to focus the anger into active struggle is to call decisive action.

In the NHS, in London Underground and on British Rail this means calling all out, indefinite strikes and demanding the active support and solidarity of the whole trade union movement.

Sheffield library workers, on all out strike action over pay and conditions, spelled out the mes-

sage for all trade unionists: "Nobody takes any notice of one day strikes".

But if the railways and Tube networks grind to a halt, if hospital services are reduced to emergency cover under the control of health workers, if thousands take to the streets in protest, the bosses will certainly take notice.

All out action can win every demand and more. A united strike wave can bring down the weak and divided Tories. ■

**Page 4/5: Sheffield Library strikers speak out; RMT: "It's got to be all out from day one"; Unison—organising the rank and file; Why we need a minimum wage.**



**Page 8&9: No justice for Joy, Brian Douglas protests grow, The truth about Bradford, The deadly silence over deaths in custody.**

THE POLICE who killed Joy Gardner have walked free from court. The two police officers who killed Brian Douglas are still on duty. Police officers are taped roaring with laughter at Bernard Manning's racist jokes.

But the racist cops who manhandled and arrested Asian teenagers in Bradford did not have such an easy time.

They were forced to beat a swift retreat when the city's youth rose up last month in defiance of police harassment.

The message is clear. Action speaks louder than all the thousands of words in court, in parliament or on passive protests.

We need organised self defence against racist police harassment—and a fighting strategy to destroy racism at its roots. ■

**Page 6: The fight to save Mumia Abu Jamal**

# How to stop police racism