

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

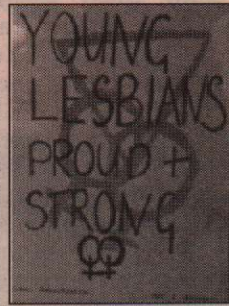
Unite the left!

Inside this week



1917: a democratic revolution

centre pages

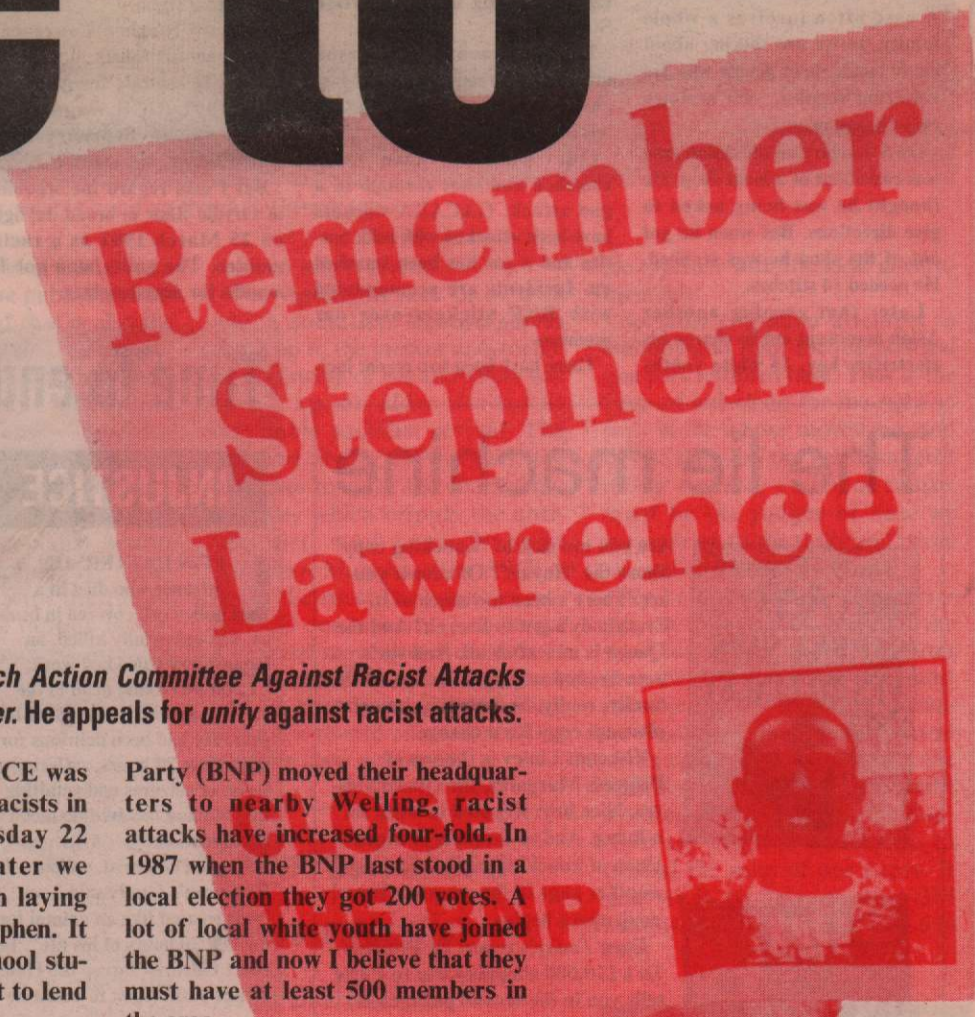


What makes someone gay? — a debate

page 8

Drive the fascists off the streets!

Unite to beat the racists!



Dev Barrah from *Greenwich Action Committee Against Racist Attacks* spoke to *Socialist Organiser*. He appeals for *unity against racist attacks*.

STEPHEN LAWRENCE was stabbed to death by racists in Greenwich on Thursday 22 April. One week later we helped to organise a wreath laying ceremony in memory of Stephen. It was very emotional; 600 school students and youth were present to lend their support.

Since the fascist British National

Party (BNP) moved their headquarters to nearby Welling, racist attacks have increased four-fold. In 1987 when the BNP last stood in a local election they got 200 votes. A lot of local white youth have joined the BNP and now I believe that they must have at least 500 members in the area.

Continued on page 2



Threat of dictatorship stands behind Moscow clashes

HUNDREDS OF people were injured when Stalinists and Russian chauvinists took to the streets in Moscow on 1 May to demonstrate for "Death to Yeltsin!", and clashed with riot police. The demonstration was led by three leaders of the

failed August 1991 Stalinist coup, including Vladimir Kryuchkov, former chief of the KGB secret police. The unrepentant Stalinists and their allies from the "patriotic" ultra-right mobilised only a few thousand, but the clashes are likely to be used as politi-

cal ammunition both by Yeltsin and by his opponents around Ruslan Khasbulatov, the speaker of the parliament elected in 1990, and vice-president Alexander Rutskoi. Khasbulatov can argue that Yeltsin is losing support; Yeltsin can argue that the threat from the

Stalinist/chauvinist coalition justifies stronger powers for himself. Behind the argument stands the threat of military dictatorship — whether headed by Yeltsin, Khasbulatov, or neither — as the only way to get a private-profit market economy functioning in Russia.

Sell-off strike costs British Airways millions

THE ONE-DAY strike over the Bank Holiday weekend by TGWU BA cabin crews at Gatwick Airport was a big success. It cost the company millions. The workers are protesting at cuts in pay and conditions which are set to result from their jobs being sold off to another company. It is now vital to spread the action to the rest of the UK.

Unite the anti-racists!

POLITICAL FRONT

By Mark Osborn

STEPHEN Lawrence was murdered by racists in south-east London on Thursday 29 April. Immediately the Militant-front organisation, Youth Against Racism in Europe, moved their planned demonstration from central London to Greenwich. The Militant's Black front organisation *Panther* is "organising a contingent on this demonstration". The SWP's front organisation, the Anti-Nazi League (ANL) has responded to the murder by organising a march for the following Saturday, 15 May.

Both marches will go past the Nazi BNP headquarters in nearby Welling. The SWP will not mobilise for the march on 8 May, the Militant will not mobilise for 15 May.

Meanwhile, the Anti-Racist Alliance, led by Labour Party Black Sections and backed by the Stalinists from the *Morning Star* and Socialist Action, have their own action, a "human chain" on the scene of the murder on Sunday 16 May.

ARA spokespersons are tremendously hostile to both the Militant/*Panther* and the SWP/ANL, and are not expected to build for either of the demonstrations.

A local GACARA leader described as "opportunist" all these organisations who are running in after a terrible racist murder.

Clearly we are not the only people who think the chronic disunity is a little obscene.

All these organisations could and should merge. Short of that, there should be agreement on common action.

The AWL supports all the anti-racist demonstrations — but clearly one large demonstration would be better than two smaller marches.

GACARA say there are now over 500 BNP members in the area. The situation is serious. It's time the left got together!

Students

Lobby Parliament on 13 May!

By Mark Sandell

WITH NO SIGN of life from the leadership of the

National Union of Students, it has been left up to activists to organise action against the government's plans to destroy student unions.

The "Save Our Student Unions" campaign has called a national lobby of Parliament including a meeting where student activists and

Tony Benn MP will speak in opposition to the ending of the automatic right of students to be in a union. In the build-up to the

lobby, activists have been organising action in their own colleges.

Goldsmiths' College student union in London is increasing union prices to average London prices on 5 May, and then closing the student union on 6 May to dramatise what the Tory proposals might mean.

Alongside that they are running a campaign with meetings and stalls to explain the threat to student unionism coming from the government.

Every student union in the country should be running a campaign like Goldsmiths'. It is essential that student activists build a mass campaign that involves ordinary students in fighting the government's plans to smash our unions.

The national lobby of Parliament called by the "Save Our Student Unions" campaign is a national focus for anyone who seriously wants to fight the Tories' union-wrecking plans.

Unite to beat the racists!

From front page

GACARA HAS recorded 218 cases of racism in the last eleven months. A case often involves a whole family, so we are talking about many hundreds of people who are suffering regular, very serious, racist harassment.

On 5 January an old Asian man was called out of a local shop. He thought he was being asked to give directions. But when he got out of the shop he was stabbed. He needed 14 stitches.

Later that evening another Asian man went out to charge his electricity key. 15 white youths

stabbed him eight or nine times. He fell over in front of the Pizza Hut, and they stabbed him again. He is lucky to be alive.

In March there was another racist stabbing in Eltham High Street.

We have recorded 27 arson attacks in Greenwich in the last eleven months — two times on our own office.

Our windows have been smashed and shot through in a gun attack. GACARA workers have been attacked with milk bottles and a car has been smashed up. Incidents are accompanied with BNP stickers over our premises.

There have been two recent inci-

dents where black men out with white women have been beaten up or stabbed. One man was set upon by four white youths and needed 27 stitches in his stomach after being stabbed.

I regard Stephen Lawrence's murder as the fourth local racist murder in the last few years. In July 1992 Rohit Duggal was killed and in February 1991 Rolan Adams was murdered.

But I also regard the stabbing of Orville Blair in broad daylight on 25 March 1991 as a racist murder. The guilty man got 18 months for manslaughter.

I think that what we need now is a bit of unity against the racists and fascists. All the anti-racist and anti-Nazi organisations are fixing up their own actions in Greenwich. But there are too many divisions.

What we need is community-based campaigns which are able to marginalise the racists.

The local Bexley Council is unwilling to deal with the BNP Headquarters. The police cannot solve the problems. The job of defeating these people is down to us.

GACARA: 081-855 4343.

Time to end the brutality!

INJUSTICE

LEOON PATTERSON, a prisoner who died in a police cell covered in bruises, was unlawfully killed, an inquest jury ruled last week.

Leon was found dead in the early hours of 27 November last year. He had been delirious for more than 20 hours, suffering a series of seizures and vomiting fits, but had received no medical treatment.

Stephen Gilchrist, solicitor for Patterson's family said Leon "was treated like an animal for the last 20 hours of his life". In court Gilchrist forced the Home Office pathologist to admit he

had faked evidence by using samples from another body.

The pathologist's conclusion — that Patterson had died from a Mogadon overdose — had only been disproved because Patterson's sister had refused to accept the findings and had commissioned an independent report which found no traces of the drug.

The family now have the option of prosecuting for corporate manslaughter.

This case highlights the routine, ignorant brutality with which prisoners are treated by Britain's police and jailers. The whole legal and policing system needs opening up to scrutiny and democratic control.

Save Our Student Unions

National lobby of Parliament

Thursday 13 May Starts 12 noon

Meeting: Grand Committee Room

Speakers include: Tony Benn MP

Extra funds for Socialist Organiser

WE RECEIVED £663.00 in donations and fundraising during week two of our latest fund-drive, making a total of £905.00.

Thanks to a comrade in the North East for a £500 donation and Glasgow AWL for £68 fundraising and donations of £60 (Leeds) and £35 (Wales). There are three reasons for needing extra money:

- We want to buy £1,000 worth of computer software. It will make our paper and

publications better produced.

- We have a number of expanding areas of work — a Black fraction and a Youth Fightback youth wing — which need more support.
- We have new opportunities to build our organisation and influence in Ireland.

If you can raise money or make a donation please send cheques/postal orders (payable to "WL Publications") to us at PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Grand summer draw

The AWL is running a fundraising raffle to be drawn at our Workers' Liberty '93 event on Sunday 4 July.

First prize: a weekend for two in Paris; second prize: a colour television; third prize: a case of wine.

Raffle ticket books are out now.

For books to be sold at work or your labour movement meetings, contact Mark on: 071-639 7965.

The lie machine



Are you too sick of "knocking copy" about the 'Royals'? Of course you are. There's been too much of it. Everybody's got to live, eh? And the Queen is nice after all. And she's been around so long. Like one of the family, really. So let's have some pleasant copy for a change.

Viscount Linley is the son of Princess Margaret, the Queen's sister. Nice boy. Reputed to work for a living. And so the slate is wiped clean of knocking copy for now and another page in the on-going Royal soap opera begins.

Even Today's report on Princess Di's £10,000 shopping trip to Paris tells you in the second paragraph what a gruelling series of public engagements the poor little thing put herself through to qualify for a little fit of harmless self-indulgence in Paris.

Meanwhile, the Sun gave almost a whole page to report that one of Princess Michael's pet cats has died!



The necessity of socialism

THE WORLD in which we live is wracked by terrible crises — by protracted economic depression, by local wars, by famine and starvation in Africa and elsewhere, by ecological disasters now and the certainty of even more terrible ecological disasters to come. The list could be made much longer.

Capitalism, which dominates the world, and Stalinism, which used to dominate a large part of it and still controls China, are the causes of these horrors. *Socialism* is the plain and obvious answer to the problems our world faces.

By socialism we mean rational, democratic planning of our social and economic affairs — which here means also of our ecological affairs — and the application of consistent democracy instead of war to the solution of the national and ethnic conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, in Ireland, in the Middle East, and in all the other places where different sorts of people have not yet learned to live together in amity.

Serious, working-class socialism remains the only possible answer to the world's problems, but it is less of a force now than it has been at any time this century so far. Stalinism, which Trotsky called the "syphilis of the labour movement", has undermined, sapped, butchered and discredited the old socialist movement.

The collapse of Stalinism in the ex-USSR and in eastern Europe clears the way for us to rebuild that movement. But before the rebuilding, and at its beginnings — that is now — the unfaltering socialists must live amidst the ruins and the devastation, the discouragement and the poisonous vapours produced by Stalinism.

We must live under — and respond to — an incessant bombardment of propaganda from the capitalists and their agents and collaborators in the labour movement, the burden of whose message is this: socialism has failed.

They take over, turn around and use for their own purposes the great syphilitic lie of the old Stalinists. Stalinism, they say, was socialism; Stalinism was Bolshevism; the Stalinist states were Marxism come to life — and therefore socialism, Bolshevism and Marxism are now deservedly dead and rotten: socialism is impossible.

This is, so to speak, the new Popular Front of the Liars Against Socialism.

The leaders of the Stalinist counter-revolution in the USSR who overthrew the rule of the working class, rewrote history to suit themselves, threading and weaving a mass of totalitarian lies into its very fabric, and centrally the grotesque lie that Stalinism was the natural and necessary and inescapable outcome of the Russian workers' revolution of 1917.

Now the western capitalist victors over the Stalinists rewrite history yet again, to suit themselves. *Their message, building on the work of the Stalinists about Bolshevism and socialism, is exactly the same.* The capitalists take over Stalinism's lies as they take



Consistent democracy is the only answer to national conflicts such as those in Bosnia (above)

over its other bankrupt stock.

We know better: we know that the Stalinists killed more communists and workers than any reactionary regime in history, not excluding Hitler's. We know that Stalinism had nothing in common with either the aims or the methods of real communism. We know that the triumph of the lie that Stalinism and socialism were identical played an enormous part for decades in hypnotising would-be communist workers throughout the world into accepting Stalinism.

"Stalinism had nothing in common with either the aims or the methods of real communism."

We — *Socialist Organiser* and the Alliance for Workers' Liberty — believe that only stubborn resistance to those lies and stubborn reiteration of the truth about socialism, about Marxism and about the real Russian revolution can stop these lies from continuing to poison the ground on which the new working class socialist movement must be built, thereby retarding the rebirth of that movement.

That is what the Alliance for

Workers Liberty is in business to do. That is why we publish *Socialist Organiser*. And that is also the reason why *Socialist Organiser* fights, by reason and argument, against those in the labour and socialist movement — *Socialist Worker* and the SWP are a good example — who, though they sincerely want to renovate Marxism and rebuild the socialist labour movement are, tragically, themselves poisoned with the toxins generated in the labour movement, and even amongst Marxists of the anti-Stalinist camp, during the long decades of Stalinist domination:

- * Demagoguery;
- * Indifference to principle;
- * Rejection of consistent democracy as the only acceptable solution to national conflict;
- * Sectarian hostility to the existing labour movement;
- * Self-organisation as undemocratic, cultish sects in which the "rank and file" have in practice no rights for most of the time, and not at any time rights the all-powerful leaders do not agree to.

These are the common traits of the existing "revolutionary" and "Trotskyist" left. They stand as an insuperable barrier between most of those calling themselves Trotskyists and the future Trotskyism must carve out for itself.

Modern socialism is the generalised, refined consciousness of the working class struggle, and that struggle will go on as long as capitalism goes on. The revival of a mass socialist movement is therefore inevitable. But *how* it revives, and *when* it revives can depend massively on the capacity and the will of the socialists who

work to help it revive.

The vigour, or lack of it, with which socialists like ourselves stand up to the present anti-socialist mudstorm of lies and abuse will speed up or slow down the inevitable socialist revival. The will and ability of Marxists like ourselves to resist the characteristic vices which cripple the anti-Stalinist and post-Stalinist sectarian Marxists (the SWP is again the most important example) and our capacity to construct a Marxist movement free of these vices — that too can play a great role in speeding up or slowing down the revival of a real socialist working class movement.

"The revival of a mass socialist movement is inevitable. But how and when depends on the socialists."

For example: if so many Marxists had not stood aloof from the struggles of the left in the political wing of the trade unions, the Labour Party in the '80s then the outcome might have been more favourable for the left. Such major class struggle events as the miners' strike could have had a radically better outcome, if strengthened by active support and common strug-

gle together with the local government left.

Socialist Organiser attempts to embody and fight for the political qualities outlined here. That is the basis of our claim for the right to exist in the labour movement, and of our claim on the active support of our readers — who, of course, must be the judges of how we measure up to the tasks and needs we outline here.

We believe *Socialist Organiser* plays a unique role, and that the need for such a paper is greater than ever. Help us then. We must increase the circulation of *Socialist Organiser*, broaden the range of its coverage and multiply the number of its connections with working class and other struggles.

We are organising a drive to expand the sales of our paper. If you want to help contact Jill Mountford for details: 071-639 7965.

"The emancipation of the working class is also the emancipation of all human beings without distinction of sex or race."

Karl Marx

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Chief Constable Baister gets on his bike to promote his 'Crime Free Day'.

Can I help you with that?

GRAFFITI

THE TORIES have a typically honest and clean campaign for the local government elections this week: in Brighton local Conservatives have been caught with their hands in the ballot box.

Tory canvassers persuaded the old and infirm of the borough to fill in proxy voting forms by telling them that they were signing applications for postal votes. The proxy votes went to local Conservatives, who interpreted the old peoples' voting intention and voted accordingly. Guess who for? The returning officer is investigating some of the other 750 proxy votes issued to Brighton voters.

LAST WEDNESDAY saw Cheshire Police embark on a glitzy public relations exercise. April 28th was designated as "Crime Free Day". The number of foot patrols was trebled to provide more visible policing. Chief Constable Brian Baister turned up on all manner of TV and radio shows to plug the scheme and sell the virtues of the British police.

The result? 230 reported crimes and 60 arrests! That's up on the daily average of 212 reported offences in 1992. But Baister is a quick-witted and perceptive copper. He was not slow to draw the lessons: the day, he said showed that "the persistent criminal could not give a damn about the police and criminal justice system".

Maybe he thought the sight of a few extra coppers on the beat would move them to rush up, hands out for the "cuffs", mouthing a bit of dialogue out of the standard "How to lie unconvincingly in court" manual issued to all rookie policemen: "It's a fair cop, Guv'nor!".

OF COURSE people do see the light and repent wayward lives. But sometimes you do have

your doubts.

Pat Burke, the Conservative Lord Mayor of Canterbury, has left the Tories and will join the Labour Party next month. "I feel" he explained "that in future, politically, I will feel more comfortable as a member of the Labour Group". Burke cites moral grounds for his switch.

Backing Burke at a Labour press conference, Jack Straw MP produced a report on "The Conservatives' declining values". This is not quite the occupation of the moral high ground that the title suggests. It details how house prices in Conservative controlled areas of Kent have fallen by 27.5% since 1989, while they have increased by 9% in Labour areas of the county.

"G REED IS good" became the capitalist watchword for the 1980s. The man who coined it, junk-bond dealer Ivan Boesky, was later fined \$100 million and spent 22 months in gaol for insider dealing. Now Boesky is to sue his ex-wife for alimony. He wants at least \$50 million: apparently he handed over a lot of his loot to her to save it from the courts.

Boesky is currently surviving on payments of \$15,000 a month from his ex-wife. He lives in one of her homes, a \$2.3 million pad in La Jolla, California.

J OHN PATTEN is playing his trump card in his contest with teachers over National Curriculum tests. It is a £700,000 advertising and publicity campaign to persuade parents that testing is a good idea after all and that they should not listen to the opinions of a small and disruptive minority known as the entire teaching profession.

Now even the Professional Association of Teachers — the teachers' association that believes that caning is good for kids — has stopped supporting tests. Patten is advertising a product that doesn't exist.

PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

IN THESE troubled times — otherwise known as the epoch of wars and revolutions — the news we watch and read is not exactly a laugh a minute. There are some people who find it all just too depressing, don't buy newspapers, and avoid the TV news bulletins: this may account for the success of *Hello* magazine and TV shows like "That's Life".

Small wonder, then, that BBC newsreader Martyn Lewis's plea for the media is to "treat both good and bad stories with the same degree of seriousness" seems to have struck a chord with a

lot of people. It's not a particularly original idea, of course. There have been several attempts to establish newspapers devoted to Good News, the most recent being Eddie Shah's original version of *Today*. All of them failed — or, in the case of *Today*, soon gave up on Good News and switched over to a more conventional diet of doom and despondency.

Older readers may also remember the BBC's "Nationwide" programme, which specialised in "uplifting" stories, often involving heroic pets, talented toddlers, and senior citizens of extraordinary athletic prowess. It lasted ten years or so, but eventually the public rumbled the fact that this was not so much "news" as a calculated insult to their intelligence. I understand that a similar fate has recently caught up with "That's Life".

But Martyn Lewis was not talking about that kind of trivial and harmless (if mildly irritating) Good News. The Gospel according to St

Martyn is altogether a more serious matter. For a start, the Lewis Good News agenda bears a remarkable similarity to the sort of stuff regularly churned out by

"The Lewis Good News agenda bears a remarkable similarity to the stuff churned out by Conservative Central Office"

Conservative Central Office: record profits for a car manufacturer, a new order for British Aerospace, EC finance ministers optimistic about the European economy, etc.

Quite apart from fitting in very conveniently with the Norman Lamont "green

shoots" line, there is also a sinister suggestion of news management. Peter Sissons hit the nail on the head when he commented: "It is not our job to go in for social engineering to make people feel better. Even if it makes people slit their wrists, we have to tell it the way it is".

The cherubic Mr Lewis is an unlikely candidate for the role of Orwellian Right-think news manager. But he does have a record of sucking up to senior Tories and may well harbour hopes of following in the footsteps of his hero Sir Alistair Burnet as a "news knight".

Undoubtedly, his outburst will be useful to a government whose stock-in-trade is to blame the media for all their misfortunes and who seem increasingly attracted to some form of legal control over the "irresponsible" media.

And isn't there something just a little nauseating about a man reputed to earn around £140,000 complaining about the lack of good news?

We need a working class women's movement

WOMEN'S EYE



By Jean Lane

A LETTER TO a women's magazine in response to a story in a previous issue about harassment of a woman building worker:

"Women stepping into male-orientated jobs don't deserve any respect if they expect burly workmen to turn into wimps — surely she had to expect a few nudges and winks. So my advice is to leave the job to someone who can handle it properly — preferably an out-of-work male breadwinner".

The letter was signed by a woman.

We assume all women having lived through the growth of the women's movement

will have developed a consciousness as a result — that they should know better. In some places it's as if the women's movement had never happened. A survey carried out by Radio 4 in pubs around the country about men's and women's attitudes to feminists found that many thought them to be bra-burning, man-hating lesbians. Ring any bells?

One day, driving across London, I noticed that the car in front of me had a notice in the back window saying "life's a bitch, then you marry one". The traffic was going quite slowly so I tried to level up with and have a long derogatory stare at the plonker in the driving seat — only to find that the driver and passenger were women.

For some reason, attitudes like this always shock me more when they come from a woman rather than a man.

The fine-artistry of oppressing a specific group of people is in getting them to do it themselves. A black person hating himself so much that he tries to lighten his skin colour, a Chinese woman going through painful surgery to remove the slant from her eyes, a

woman calling herself a bitch and excluding herself from the male world of work — self-hatred is a much more effective method than external pressure to conform.

The women's movement is dead now and has been for some time, but we still expect the effects of having to fight men's sexism and develop our own self-respect to have lasted.

"The fine-artistry of oppressing people is getting them to do it themselves."

But the women's movement of the '60s and '70s, especially the consciousness-raising part of it, never really did reach working class women. The women's movement was middle class, articulate, confident and cliquy. Any working class woman walking into a consciousness-raising group e.g. on a university campus, would have backed out again

before many seconds were over.

Also, the women's movement, for the most part, was a reformist movement: fighting for and winning demands such as equal pay, the Sex Discrimination Act, the improvement of women's lot within this society.

These are important gains for women, but the movement stopped there. In fact, during the '80s, it moved backwards into a fight for power for individual women within the structures of existing society, the unions, the mainstream parties and in business.

As long as the women's movement remained a reformist one, not challenging the basis of society which tells working class women their place, we are doomed like Sisyphus to keep pushing against the stone of male sexism and female self-hatred.

The women's movement needs to be rebuilt, learning from the past, as a working class-based women's movement that not only fights for improvements within society as it stands, but also fights with socialist politics for a different society altogether.

NEWS

Workers' Liberty '93...

...is three days of socialist debate from **Friday 2 to Sunday 4 July** at Caxton House, 129 St John's Way, Archway, North London, hosted by the **Alliance for Workers' Liberty**.

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

■ **What do we do about the police?** with *Clara Buckley* (Orville Blackwood Campaign) and *Joanne Rowe* (M25 campaign).

■ *John O'Mahony* (editor of *Socialist Organiser*) discusses the **Legacy of Max Shachtman**.

Debates:

Which way forward in the unions? *Trudy Saunders* debates the Democratic Left.

Course:

A four-part introduction to **Marxist economics** with *Martin Thomas*.

SATURDAY HIGHLIGHTS

■ Former Black Panther and current leader of the Los Angeles Coalition Against Police Abuse, *Michael Zinzun*, speaks on **What we can learn from the Black Panthers and Los Angeles, One Year On**.

■ *Winfried Wolf* from the German socialist paper *Sozialistische Zeitung* discusses the **Rise of the German Neo-Nazis and What are the prospects for German Capitalism?**

● Discussions on Human Nature, Crime, Films and Violence, The Press and Censorship ● *Anthony Arblaster* on **Opera** ● *Cathy Nugent* on the **History of Rioting** ● *Jeremy Corbyn MP* on the **Labour Party** ● *Peter Tatchell* and *Maria Exall* on **What can we learn from Queer Politics?**

International crisis:

Branka Magas on **Yugoslavia** and *Don Filtzer* on **Russia**.

Black History:

Gail Cameron from *Socialist Organiser* editorial board kicks off our Black History Course with **Marcus Garvey and the Roots of American Black Nationalism**.

Debates:

Tom Rigby discusses **How we Guarantee Individual Rights**.

SUNDAY HIGHLIGHTS

■ *Dion D'Silva* (author of the AWL pamphlet *Malcolm X*) looks at **Martin Luther King**.

■ *John O'Mahony* on the **Cliff-SWP tradition**.

● *Matt Cooper* on **Post-Modernism** ● *Mark Serwotka* on the **Unions and the Civil Service**.

Debates:

Which way forward in Ireland?

International:

Tom Rigby on **South Africa**.

Forum on Education:

Why is Education in crisis? and What sort of Education do School Students need?

ALSO AT
WORKERS' LIBERTY*Black History at Workers' Liberty*

We discuss the roots of modern, anti-Black, British racism; Garvey; Du Bois; Martin Luther King; Malcolm X; the Black Panthers; British Black workers' struggles; Black struggles in Britain today.

More agenda details next week and a full agenda out soon.

Workers' Liberty will be packed out. Be sure of getting in — get a programme now!

[Programme gives entry to the event]

● Before end June: unwaged £7; low-waged/waged £11; student £16.

● On the door: unwaged £8; low-waged/waged £12; student £19.

Cheques/postal orders payable to "WL Publications".

Send to: WL '93, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

More details:
Mark, 071-639 7965.

MICHAEL ZINZUN
SPEAKS AT WORKERS'
LIBERTY '93

Michael Zinzun, a Black community organiser in Los Angeles, is a former member of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense and a founding member of the National Black United Front. He is the co-founder and leader of the Coalition Against Police Abuse (CAPA). He is the father of six children and his wife Florence is also a former member of the Black Panther Party.

Zinzun, who was blinded in one eye by a police attack, has been an outspoken advocate of *community control of the police*. Zinzun and CAPA initiated a multi-million dollar lawsuit against the LAPD which uncovered hundreds of thousands of pages of LAPD documents which revealed the existence of illegal political surveillance squads. CAPA's research committee has also documented and exposed hundreds of acts of deliberate police brutality, murder and abuse.

Since the LA Rebellion, Zinzun has worked with other community activists in support of the on-going truce between the Crips and the Bloods. CAPA and other groups have also put forward a fifteen point proposal for the rebuilding of South Central Los Angeles.

Michael is also the host and producer of the US cable TV show "Message to the Grassroots" which has been broadcast since 1988.

Michael has spoken all over the US on the need to fight racism, white supremacy, police abuse, and the need to link local national and international struggles against capitalism, imperialism and all forms of oppression.

Finally, Zinzun urges everyone to fight the "do it for me" mentality — by explaining that "I won't do it for you, but I will do it with you".

Lesbian and Gay Rights Coalition conference, 15 May

Solidarity!
Liberation!

OUT AND PROUD

By *Elvina Magruder*

THE LONDON Lesbian and Gay Rights Coalition is holding a one-day conference on the way forward for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual rights in the 1990s.

The Coalition works within the labour movement for Lesbian and Gay rights and believes that it is only by linking up struggles for our liberation that we will be able to fight homophobia in any effective way.

The organisers are committed to ensuring that the issues and concerns of Lesbians, Black people, ethnic minorities, disabled people and those living with HIV or AIDS are integrated and included on the day.

The conference will have discussions on Queer Politics and its usefulness; whether the Labour Party can really

deliver on Lesbian and Gay rights; and whether Europe means more freedom for Lesbians and Gays or a racist fortress.

Speakers include: Cherry Smith, Savi Hensman, Peter Tatchell and Kate Richardson.

There will be workshops on: Lesbian and Gay families; fighting the Child Support Act; is private pleasure political?; out in the union — and then what?; building an anti-racist and anti-fascist Lesbian and Gay movement; Lesbian feminist politics in the 1990s; HIV, AIDS and other health issues for Lesbians and Gay men.

There is disabled access, sign language interpreters and a professionally staffed creche available.

Solidarity! Liberation!
Conference '93

10am-5pm, 15 May

Kennington Workshops,
42 Braganza Street,
London SE17

(Nearest tube: Kennington)

Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights annual conference

THE ANNUAL meeting of the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights (LCLGR) was on 24 April in London.

The day started with an open debate between LCLGR, Stonewall and Outrage on Queer Politics. The discussion focussed on the best strategy for Lesbian and Gay liberation, one that will include the concerns of all parts of the Lesbian and Gay communities.

Michael Cashman (for Stonewall) stressed the concrete demands for rights that Stonewall was making on political parties in power. Peter Tatchell (for Outrage) concentrated on the need to change ideas in society. This was necessary before we can achieve success in fighting homophobia. Rebecca Fleming (for LCLGR) was concerned to develop a strategy for liberation based upon the labour movement. This, she

argued, could motivate all of our community.

The annual meeting reviewed the events of the last year and discussed action for the year ahead.

The main areas of work were within trade unions and the anti-racist movement, within the LCLGR and in the Labour Party.

The TGWU has affiliated to LCLGR and hopefully this will encourage more support from other unions.

LCLGR members worked within the Lesbian and Gay Rights Coalition and helped organise the demonstration in October 1992 for Lesbian and Gay civil rights.

In the future, LCLGR intends to build its membership, both individual and affiliated. More members were elected onto the National Co-ordinating Committee.

1993-4 looks like being a busy year for LCLGR to fight for Lesbian and Gay liberation.

Max Shachtman

The Bolsheviks

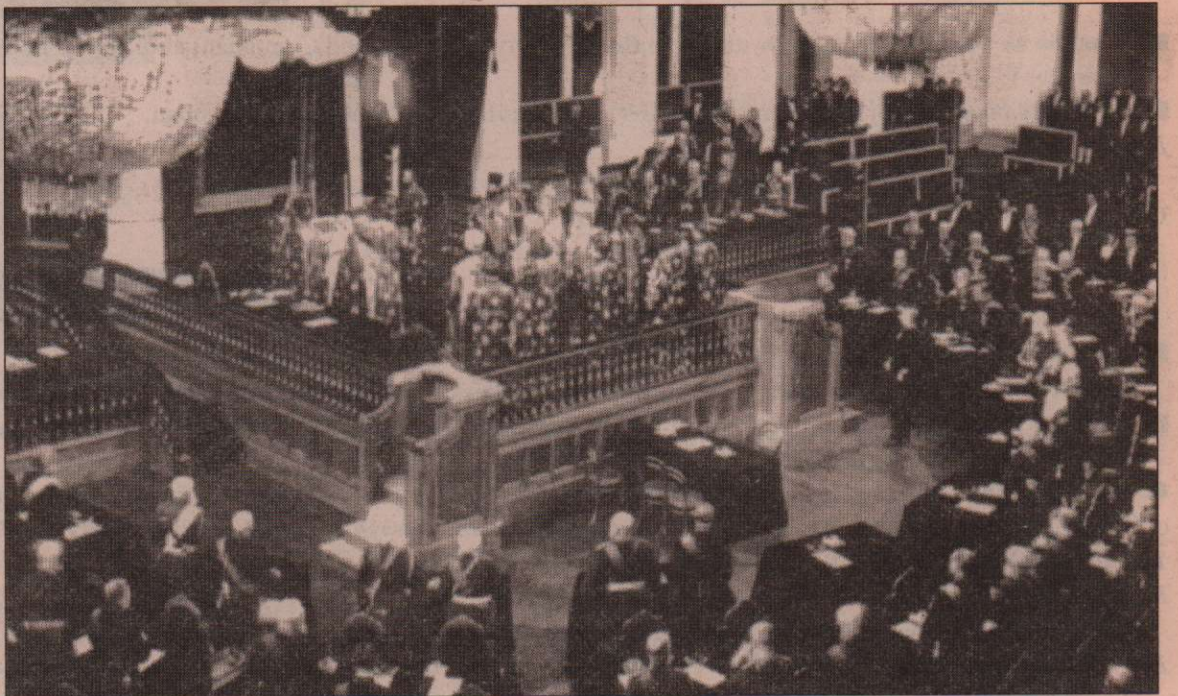
The 1917 revolution was one of the greatest democratic moments in history.

The Bolshevik Party, which is now lyingly identified in both outright bourgeois and hypocritical Labour Party style anti-socialist propaganda, as an enemy of democracy, was, above all else, the great force for democracy in the Russia of 1917. It was a force, moreover, without which the workers and peasants of the former Tsarist empire would have been crushed and their drive for democratic self-rule drowned in blood. These are the truths propounded and convincingly argued for by Max Shachtman.

Shachtman was a founder of the Trotskyist movement in the USA, who in 1940 broke with Trotsky on the question of Russia. A few months after Trotsky's death at the hands of a Stalinist assassin, Shachtman and his co-thinkers developed one of the two main currents of post-Trotsky Trotskyism. For them Stalinism was a new and unforeseen form of class society. Towards the end of his life (he died in 1972) Max Shachtman lost his belief in the possibility of working class revolution and he died a reformist.

This piece, part of a speech Shachtman made in New York on November 7 1948 on the anniversary of the Russian revolution, answers Shachtman in old age as when delivered it answered those who traduced and misrepresented Leon Trotsky and the revolutionary Russia of 1917.

Shachtman refers to a "Third World War" which he considers inevitable. He merely reports what all commentators in 1948 — the year when war nearly came over the Russian blockade of Berlin — took for granted.



After the 1905 revolution, the Russian ruling class, dominated by Tsardom, had instituted a state Duma or parliament. The parliament's electoral system was rigged and Russia continued to be a repressive and profoundly unequal society. This was the system that the Bolsheviks overthrew

LESS THAN THREE months after the victory of the Bolshevik revolution, Lenin remarked at a meeting that the Soviet power of the Russian workers had already lasted longer than the Paris Commune of 1871 which lived for only 10 weeks.

The statement was made with pride, but no doubt with some wonderment. It reflected the conditions, incredibly complicated and difficult, under which the Russian proletariat took power into its own hands so that, for the first time in history, it could proceed to translate into reality the oldest dream of man: a society of free and equal brothers.

Thirty-one years have passed since the attempt was begun. It is not a very long time as history is measured. But we live in an age when change is rapid, frequent and profound. The thirty-one years since the Russian Revolution have seen epochal changes. None is so deepgoing, so unexpected and so confounding as the change in the direction of that Revolution.

The attempt made in 1917 failed. The hideous reality of Stalinism is nothing like the noble purpose of socialism which the Bolsheviks set out to achieve. In almost every respect, the former is the gruesome caricature of the latter; in many respects it is diametrically opposite.

In the great initiative of the Bolsheviks, millions throughout the world saw the beginnings of the new freedom. In the present-day outcome in Russia, millions see the new slavery and millions more suffer in silenced anguish under it.

No great enterprise in history ever started under brighter auspices or ended under gloomier ones. When it began, there began also a stormy and confident offensive of revolutionary socialism, of Marxism, whose principles and programmes were embodied in the Bolshevik movement. With the triumph of the Stalinist counterrevolution, Marxism is today everywhere

on the defensive.

The offensive against Marxism

The ideas of Bolshevism were summed up in this: the road to freedom lies through the establishment of socialism; the road to socialism lies through the overturn of capitalism by the revolutionary power of the working class.

The offensive against Marxism is directed against these ideas, as tested in the Russian Revolution. It is an offensive on an unparalleled scale. It is sponsored by the highest government authorities. Dutifully and enthusiastically, it is carried out in virtually every number of every daily, weekly and monthly periodical.

The theme of this offensive is quite familiar: "Bolshevism leads to Stalinism. The Stalinist totalitarianism was inherent in Bolshevism itself. The Russian Revolution could have produced nothing else than what we have in Russia today". At the right wing of the stage, you hear: "Stalinist despotism is socialism, it is the only thing you can get if you fight for socialism". At the left wing of the stage, you hear a variation on the same theme: "Stalinist despotism is not socialism, to be sure, but it is the only thing you can get if you fight for socialism, which is now proved to be unattainable. In any case, it is true that Stalinism is the inevitable product of Bolshevism".

The aim of this offensive is a political one; its effects certainly are. And its political aim is a reactionary one.

The whole capitalist world, including that part of the working class world whose ideas and activities are decisively influenced by it, is now mobilised for preparations for the third world war, the war between the US and Russia. War preparations are inconceivable nowadays without ideological preparation of the people to accept the war, or at least without a campaign to prevent the people from fighting during and after the war to put an end to the social system and the regime which bred war.

Because they are worried about the popular opposition to the war and the war preparations, the warmongers try to present their course to the

people as a crusade for democracy against totalitarianism.

Because they are worried about the people bringing an end to the war the way the Russians did in 1917, they cry out in every imaginable key: "Don't even think of it! Whatever else you do, don't even dream of such a thing! Look what happened in Russia when the people took power into their own hands! All they got and all they could get and all you would be able to get is the monstrosity of Stalinist despotism! And if you don't believe us, who have such a miserable reputation, why, here are some experts whom you can believe — people right out of the socialist and even the Bolshevik movement itself..."

That is the political meaning of the contemporary offensive against the Russian Revolution. The abysmal degeneration of Stalinist Russia and of the Stalinist movement everywhere has provided the enemies of socialism with all the basic materials for the weapons in their offensive, with materials of such a kind and in such quantity as they never dreamed of having in their century-long struggle against socialism.

School of falsification

With the weapons they have thus forged, they have slashed and mutilated the true portrait of the Bolshevik revolution so that it can no longer be recognised. We know a good deal already, thanks above all to Leon Trotsky, of the Stalinist school of falsification. We do not realise, however, that there is another school of falsification about the Russian Revolution that is actively at work. It is the school run by the social-democrats, zealously assisted by turncoats from the revolutionary movement. It is at once the complement of the Stalin school and of the reactionary imperialist campaign against socialism. Like all falsifiers of history, it operates with outright lies, with snapshots of events ripped away from the attending circumstances, and in the best of cases with an utter failure to understand what a revolution is or with criteria applied to a revolution which belong at best in a drawing room discussion or a game of cricket.



The Moscow Show Trials of the 1930s. Here hundreds of dissidents, including supporters of Trotsky, and many others were forced to "confess" to fabricated crimes and then sentenced to death or exile. This was Soviet "democracy" under Stalin

and democracy



The Petrograd soviet in 1917. This was a council of ordinary soldiers and workers and became the basis for government after October

The fact which enemies of socialism are most anxious to keep in the dark is that the Bolsheviks represented not only the most revolutionary socialist movement of their time but also the most consistently vigorous democratic movement.

There is no other intelligent or intelligible explanation for the big fact that the Bolsheviks, starting as a tiny party even after the overturn of the rule of the Czar, took power and were able to maintain it for years with the support of the decisive sections of the people of Russia.

Bolsheviks supported people's demands

Whatever the forms it may take, democracy must express the will of the people. In 1917, the people of Russia were completely exhausted by the war, tired of the horrible blood-letting, tired of fighting for the imperialist aims not only of Russian Czarism but of British and French bankers and monopolists. They wanted peace above all other things. They wanted it so passionately that they overthrew the regime of the Czars which they and their ancestors had endured for centuries.

What they got in place of Czarism, was a government of the Russian capitalists which wanted to continue the war, which wanted to maintain the reactionary landlordism of Russia, which feared and hated the aroused masses and sought to circumvent the will of the people and to thwart their aspirations by all the vicious devices of modern governments. This government, the provisional government of Kerensky, was supported by the two non-Bolshevik parties which enjoyed popular support, the Mensheviks and the Social-Revolutionaries, or S.R.s.

The Bolsheviks gathered millions and ever more millions of workers, soldiers and peasants around them by militantly supporting the demands of the people. They did not only talk about them but fought for them.

They were for immediate peace, for

land to the peasants, for workers' control of the factories, for immediate convocation of a Constituent Assembly, for a truly democratic republic. And that is the fundamental reason

"Rifles raised against them, they replied with rifles. No revolutionary government worthy of the name has acted differently."

why the Soviets rallied, in one locality after another, to the support of the Bolsheviks — in the cities, in the trenches and in the villages.

The taking over of power by the Soviets was the greatest victory in history for democracy, and this victory was made possible by the Bolshevik leadership and no other.

The Bolsheviks had not invented the Soviets in some cellar or house of dogma. The Soviets were first brought into existence in 1905 by the Mensheviks. In the 1917 revolution, they were constituted and for a long time led by the Mensheviks and S.R.s — not by the Bolsheviks. But it was only the Bolsheviks who said that these most democratic organs and representatives of the people shall rule in the name of the people and in their interests.

Once in power, the Bolsheviks did everything in their power to bring peace to war-exhausted Russia. If Russia was to know very little peace within its own frontiers for the next few years, the responsibility was in no sense that of the Bolsheviks and the Soviet power. The Bolsheviks took Russia out of the imperialist war, even if it meant great sacrifices in the form of tribute to the armies of the German Kaiser. The Bolsheviks actually gave the land to the peasants, which no other political group in Russia was prepared to do except the allies of the Bolsheviks, the Left-wing S.R.s.

The Bolsheviks actually proceeded to suppress the counterrevolutionary forces and movements of the Czarists, the bankers, the clergy, the reactionary generals and the landlords. And as is befitting in a revolutionary upheaval, they proceeded by revolutionary means. When rifles were raised against the Soviet power, the Soviets replied with rifles. No revolutionary government in history worthy of the name has ever acted

differently.

The criticisms of the Bolsheviks in this case are made by people who never seem to have heard of the Great French Revolution or even the American Revolution and the Civil War.

Every revolution has its traducers and its detractors — the dilettante detractor and the malicious detractor — who complain because it acted like a revolution and did not deal with its opponents the way you deal with them at a game of bridge. The Bolshevik revolution is no exception.

Development of the Revolution

One of the greatest difficulties about a revolution is that those who oppose its victory seldom understand its purpose and its determination, seldom reconcile themselves to its working existence. Here too the Bolshevik revolution was no exception.

The Bolsheviks, for example, did not even start with the idea of suppressing the capitalist parties or of disenfranchising the capitalist class. Lenin repeatedly insisted that depriving the capitalists of the right to vote was a specifically Russian phenomenon, that it might not be necessary in the revolution of other countries, and that in any case it was not a principle of Bolshevism.

Neither did the Bolsheviks start with the idea of confiscating all capitalist property and nationalising all industry. On the contrary, they opposed it. They knew the backwardness of Russia. They knew the lack of experience and culture, not only of the workers in general but of themselves as well. They not only wanted the capitalists to remain in the factories but even guaranteed a reasonable profit.

But the logic of the class struggle is inexorable. The Russian capitalist class could not reconcile itself with the idea of a Soviet state ruled by the workers and peasants. They sabo-

tagged their own plants; they refused to cooperate in any way; they fled from the revolutionary centres and immediately launched a counterrevolutionary civil war to overturn the Soviet power. They outlawed themselves; they placed themselves, voluntarily and even eagerly, outside of Soviet legality, and nobody, least of all the Bolsheviks did that for them.

Confronted with this situation, with the fact that complete economic chaos threatened the already chaotic country, the Bolsheviks proceeded to take over industry, to nationalise it, or more accurately, to legalise the seizures of the industries which the workers themselves were spontaneously carrying out, on their own initiative.

What held for the Russian capitalist class, held in substantially the same way for the two big popular parties, the Mensheviks and the S.R.s. They could not reconcile themselves to the decisive fact that a great revolution had taken place which brought the Bolsheviks to power. They could not understand the decisive fact that the Soviets of workers, soldiers and peasants were the most democratic and the most widely supported organisations in existence, the ones through which the Russian people could rule the country in the most democratic way, the ones through which the economic reconstruction of the country could be undertaken, directed and controlled.

Instead, these two parties championed the Constituent Assembly which finally convened two months after the Bolshevik revolution but which no longer represented the people of Russia. Not only the Bolsheviks withdrew from this Assembly but also the Left-wing S.R.s, who had split with the Right-wing but who represented the big majority of the peasants.

The Soviet government was not weakened, but strengthened thereby. The Constituent Assembly could only become a rallying centre, a war-cry, for the counterrevolution in Russia, and that is why it was dispersed by the revolutionary regime. That is what the Mensheviks and Right-wing S.R.s did not understand. But its truth was soon demonstrated.

"The Assembly" became the programme of every counterrevolutionary inside and outside of Russia — from the Cossack generals to Winston Churchill, who was soon to spend millions of pounds sterling in the attempt to overturn the workers' and peasants' power in Russia.

Nowhere did the cry for the Constituent Assembly appeal successfully to the workers and peasants. They understood who championed it and why. The result was inevitable: the people rallied more firmly around the Soviets and the Soviet regime. All the efforts of the counterrevolution, organised with world-wide imperialist support, failed to overturn the new regime. Its contribution was solid, and even now it remains our permanent acquisition — for the first time in history a government of, for and by the toiling masses.

Glossary

Paris Commune: After Prussia (the biggest of the then divided German states) invaded France in 1870, the French government collapsed; the workers took over Paris and ran it for ten weeks until they were crushed.

Third World War: In 1948, almost everyone, across the political spectrum, thought that a Third World War was likely between the USA and the USSR.

Czar: The Emperor, or King, of the Russian Empire. The Czar was overthrown by a revolution in February 1917.

"Exhausted by the war": The Russian Empire took part in World War I on the same side as Britain and France. Marxists argued that the real war aims of all these powers were imperialist, that is, to seize control of more markets, sources of raw materials, and colonies.

Mensheviks: The more moderate of the two Marxist parties in the Russian Empire. Unlike the Bolsheviks, they argued that the workers must first support the bourgeoisie in making a "bourgeois revolution", and that socialism would be a far-off second stage.

SRs: Social-Revolutionaries, a socialist party which based itself not on the working class but on "the people" in general. By the time of the Bolshevik Revolution in October 1917 they were completely split into "Right SRs", allied to the Mensheviks, and "Left SRs", allied to the Bolsheviks.

Soviets: 'Soviet' is simply the Russian word for 'council'. The 'Soviets' in 1917 (and in the earlier Russian Revolution of 1905) were uniquely democratic. They were made up of delegates accountable to the workers in their workplace and recallable at any time; they represented the most direct and responsive form of workers' democracy, not distorted by any privileged and unelected bureaucracy.

Kaiser: The Emperor of Germany. In March 1918 the Bolshevik Government signed a treaty with Germany, winning peace at the expense of ceding vast areas which had been occupied by the German army.

Constituent Assembly: was convened in January 1918, and dissolved the next day, without any mass protest. The elections for the Assembly had been carried out with lists of candidates decided months before, and so many peasants who backed the Left SRs (who were in coalition with the Bolsheviks) ended up voting for Right SRs (who were in bitter opposition to the Bolsheviks). In any case the Bolsheviks had always stressed that they regarded the Soviets as more democratic than the Assembly. The Bolsheviks and the Left SRs had a clear majority in the Soviets. Between 1918 and 1921 counter-revolutionaries, assisted by the troops of some 14 other countries, fought a war to overthrow the Soviet government.

Where does sexuality come from

Nature vs. nurture

'My mother made me a homosexual,' goes the old joke 'Great! If I gave her the wool, would she make me one too?'

Since the origins of modern Gay Liberation, genetic or biological explanations for homosexuality have tended to be rejected. Our sexualities are not moulded into our chromosomes, they are acquired during our lives. It is nurture, not nature.

Recently, especially in the United States, there has been a revival of biological explanations. Studies have been carried out which allege to prove that the genetic make-up of homosexuals is different from heterosexuals. Nature is being rehabilitated.

Edward Ellis considers the issues.



"Corruption" theories underlay the Section 28 policy of the government. But we do not need to resort to genetic theories to counter it

LESBIAN AND GAY activists have always had good reason to be suspicious of genetic theories. Behind them there is the menacing implication that homosexuality is a genetic mutation which could be eliminated. If homosexuality can be detected in a foetus, perhaps the foetus could be 'engineered', or aborted, 'scientific' explanations of homosexuality carry the risk, if not in the immediate term, of projects for its abolition.

Minimally, there is the risk of redefining homosexuality as in some sense an illness, albeit a biological, rather than a psychological one.

Advocates of the new genetic theory do not see it like this. They argue that if homosexuality can be proven to be innate, there is no rational case for discrimination. In the context of the AIDS crisis, they claim, this argument could be crucial for the defence of homosexuals' rights. In particular it would undercut 'corruption' theories, such as the argument which underlay Section 28 in Britain, that the positive teaching about homosexuality in schools would 'turn kids gay'. If the kids are either gay or not since birth, this fear is groundless.

But there is every reason to remain suspicious of this line of thinking.

First, the research agenda behind these supposed discoveries is highly questionable. To investigate the genetic characteristics of heterosexuals and homosexuals presupposes that these categories are unproblematic. But they are not.

Homosexuality is a very recent concept. There is an extensive literature which shows that prior to the nineteenth century there was no mention of a 'homosexual' as a type of person. Of course, there was 'homosexual activity', and in many societies (although by no means all), it was severely punished, if it was discovered, but society did not view homosexuality as a preference, merely as a sin.

But take queer bashing today. What is

bashed is a 'type' — a queer and not for what he or she has done, but for *who he or she is*. You could have been celibate all your life: it wouldn't immunise you against queerbashing.

In the past, punishment was for direct sexual activity; and buggery, for example, was punished equally if it was between a man and a woman. The issue was nonreproductive sex of any kind. Specific 'sex crimes' still exist (although most prosecutions are for supposedly public sexual 'acts', rather than buggery alone), but now there is a completely different dimension.

The modern homosexual self-identity is similarly a recent phenomenon, although perhaps a little older than wider social perceptions of it.

How earlier 'homosexuals' saw their own feelings is hard to establish. For example, there are a number of artists — Michelangelo, Shakespeare, Marlowe — who expressed themselves homoerotically; but it is not clear that their conception of this was the same as it would be today.

In the modern world, the idea of homosexuality is not universal. On the contrary, it is confined to the advanced capitalist countries, some of the ex-Stalinist states, and the most developed parts of the Third World. In less developed countries, sexuality often has a more fluid character.

Thailand evidently has a much less rigid view of sexuality than we have in the West. A tribe in New Guinea believes that semen is not produced in males until

it has first been swallowed: homosexual sex is considered the norm, until at least young adulthood.

In Turkey, 'active' (male) homosexuality is not stigmatised (although 'passive' homosexuality is, which clearly begs an enormous question): it is only very recently that a Western conception of (male) homosexuality — with a subculture, and so on — has emerged. In much of the Arab world, homosexual activity is fairly normal among, at least, unmarried men. It is not identified at all with

homosexuality as we know it (or the Western homosexual as he is perceived in the Arab world).

Precisely because 'the homosexual' is not a category with any social meaning, for a man to have sex with another man poses no threat to his own perceived identity ('Passive' sex with a man might question his manhood, but that is a separable

issue). It is only when 'the homosexual' exists that 'heterosexuals' view same-sex experiences as a kind of question mark over their being: homosexual activity becomes a bigger deal.

Of course, it could be that underneath the social categories, labels, taboos, or whatever, there are 'homosexuals' struggling to emerge, and that given the chance, they do. It could be that capitalist development, which seems to have some connection to the development of homosexual sub-cultures, liberates this distinct group, allows it to cohere as a social phenomenon. But even if this is the case, the notion of a 'homosexual'

understood to be a particular kind of person, with distinct sexual and emotional needs, is culturally and historically specific. That is, the categories the researchers use only have meaning for certain people at a certain historical moment.

Research which pays no attention to this fact is hard to take seriously.

It is reminiscent of behavioural psychologists researching what makes women attractive, concluding that the size of the pupils is a vital factor. Yet the most cursory knowledge of history shows that 'attractiveness' can vary in time and place. Some societies at particular historical moments identify fat women as attractive, others thin, pale women.

The very question, 'What makes a woman attractive', is completely meaningless.

'What makes a person homosexual?' is a similar question. Ignoring for a moment the scientists themselves, the raw material for the research — the people answering the questions and having their genes investigated — carry with them cultural and ideological assumptions which make any supposed 'results' completely spurious. The scientist might choose to believe Heterosexual Man X that he has had no homosexual experiences, say. But what weight can be given to his claim to have had no homosexual desire? How can we be sure that such desire is not simply sublimated? Or that he is lying? How can we know what he thinks is meant by homosexual desire?

On the other hand, if we are sure that Heterosexual Man X is really 'right on', are we not by definition only dealing with a certain, limited, section of the total population?

We know as a fact that some men and women, who have been unaware of homosexual feelings, suddenly discover them, occasionally quite late in life, and adopt a homosexual lifestyle thereafter. Some people who have had a homosexual lifestyle in their youth later abandon it. There is a wide variety of experience.

The question could equally be turned on its head: What makes a person heterosexual? Clearly, this would entail a quite different series of assumptions about human sexuality. We might get some surprising results. The point is that the assumptions are themselves cultural, ideological, sometimes political. It is simply not possible to carry out 'objective' research into a matter of this nature.

'Homosexual' and 'heterosexual' are useful categories only as convenient shorthand — even leaving aside those individuals whose sexuality blurs the distinction. 'Exclusively homosexual' people are a unified group in one regard only: they prefer to have sex with other people of the same sex.

But sexuality involves much more than this. Plainly a homosexual man does not want to have sex with all other men, any more than a heterosexual woman is attracted to all men. They find particular individuals attractive, and others not at all.

Or take those white people, men and

"Homosexual" and "heterosexual" are useful categories only as convenient shorthand, even leaving aside those individuals whose sexuality blurs the distinction."



Emmanuelle Béart as Camille: "Women chose Mr Wrong all the time, because they don't feel they deserve any better"

Hidden Agenda

The right to be wrong

Sean Matgamna discusses the issues around the postponed screening of *Hidden Agenda*

AFTER THE IRA BOMB in Warrington, Ken Loach's film *Hidden Agenda* was unceremoniously yanked out of a scheduled showing on TV (it has since been screened). That a serious film by one of Britain's most important directors should be treated like that was scandalous. It was a major victory for the values and the hysterics of the tabloid press. *Hidden Agenda* should have been shown as scheduled.

Amongst those who protested — diplomatically but unmistakably — because it wasn't shown on schedule was Barry Norman, the *Radio Times* film columnist, and influential host of the BBC's regular film programme *Film '93*. Good for Barry Norman.

Norman returned to the theme in last week's *Film '93*, in which he interviewed Loach and the writer of *Hidden Agenda*, Jim Allen.

Hidden Agenda, Norman insisted on both occasions, was not a "pro-IRA" film but a film about an Ulster police (RUC) death squad in the early '80s. Therefore, he seemed to say, it should have been shown.

The problem with that argument is that it is not true. To pose the case for *Hidden Agenda* on such arguments is to try to stand on quicksand. It is a pro-IRA film.

Hidden Agenda does deal with

the RUC death squad and the investigation into the affair by British policeman John Stalker, whose police career was ruined because he refused to cover up for the RUC. It is "pro-IRA" because its picture of Northern Ireland is that of the so-called IRA — and of the least enlightened or sophisticated and most Catholic-chauvinist wing of the IRA at that.

Apart from a distant shot of marching Orangemen, about whom *nothing* is sketched in or explained, and a few Irish policemen employed by the British government, *Hidden Agenda* shows a Northern Ireland where Ireland's Protestant-Unionist minority — the majority in the Six Counties — do not exist. These one million people determined not to join an all-Ireland state form no part of the film's picture of Irish politics. The conflict is presented as a matter entirely of a colonial war waged by Britain and its stooges against a resisting Irish people.

There are big sections of the IRA and Sinn Fein who would be reduced to sniggering laughter at some of the ignorant — British left — naiveties of *Hidden Agenda*.

I conclude from this that it should be argued against, not that the decision to take it off the TV screens should be supported. But you cannot argue seriously against the ban by pretending that *Hidden Agenda* is other than what it is. The argument for *Hidden Agenda* is not that it is not "pro-IRA" but that such views are entitled to a hearing.

Bloody men!

Cinema

Belinda Weaver reviews *Un coeur en hiver*

UN COEUR EN HIVER translates as "A heart in winter". A better title might be "Bloody men".

It's about a young woman's feelings for two different men — Maxime, a gregarious, uncomplicated type who admires and loves her; the other, Stephane, a reserved, work-obsessed loner who may or may not be interested.

The woman, Camille, is an up-and-coming Parisian violinist. She meets Maxime, whose business is the making and repair of violins, and falls in love with him. Not long afterwards she meets Stephane, his partner, the "heart in winter" of the title.

Initially put off by his reticence, she finds herself drawn to him, mistaking his silence for sensitivity, his contrariness for scruples.

The film is very good on the detail of emotion, covering every stage of both Camille's growing infatuation and her eventual disillusionment.

Stephane, after showing real interest, flatly rejects her. For Camille, this is both shaming and humiliating. At first, she's incredulous. Then she gets drunk; she makes a scene; she regrets doing that. Then, she feels empty, purged of all feeling.

But even that is not the end. When she sees him again, she still feels the tug of what might have been.

If this all seems familiar, it's because it's so common. Women

choose Mr Wrong all the time, sometimes on purpose, and sometimes over and over again, because they don't feel they deserve any better. Feeling miserable about it doesn't necessarily break the pattern.

It takes a big effort to change. Mr Nice never seems as interesting as the man who is secretive, difficult, hard to read.

The film shows clearly what infatuation is: wilful blindness. It's projecting what you want on to a man regardless of what he is. Stephane warns Camille about himself; she ignores the warnings. She refuses to see that he's different from what she wants him to be.

When she can't help seeing it, she's appalled, but the charm is still not broken. She's in love with the image she created.

The film is good about the men as well, showing them whole (and complicated). It's clear Stephane is reserved out of fear; that emotions are too frightening for him to deal with. When Camille talks of love, he says he doesn't have access to feelings like that.

But this is not because he hasn't got any; rather, that he's sealed them off so they can't disturb him.

Maxime, the nice guy, is simpler. He's in love with Camille; he's mad at his partner. Yet he's insensitive too. When he breaks the news of his great love to Stephane, he's so smugly wrapped up in himself that he can't see Stephane's dismay. The film doesn't labour the point, but we get the idea that Stephane doesn't want Maxime to feel so strongly. Whether it's out of jealousy, or fear, or some repressed, never-acknowledged love, (or all three), we don't know. Certainly

Stephane admits to Camille that he felt competitive with Maxime.

Though the film is set in the world of the well-off, it should be accessible to anyone; the emotions, the experiences are so common.

It's also watchable and rewarding, the kind of film Hollywood couldn't pull off if it tried. Everything would be reduced to black and white; it wouldn't feel — as this does — like watching real lives. I can't imagine any Hollywood producer leaving in the film's discussion about elitism versus the post-modernist everything-is-equal standpoint; yet that too rings true.

It may not always be comfortable to watch, but see it anyway.



Periscope

Paddy Dollard previews *Things to Come* (Channel 4, Friday 14 May 11.10 pm)

HG WELLS, one of the inventors of science fiction, and a life-long Fabian socialist, was the man who coined one of the greatest lies in history — the World War One slogan which proclaimed that great slaughter to be a "War to end wars". He also believed in Reason and World Government. When he died in 1945, in his mid-80s, Wells was close to despair about the future of human kind.

Things to Come embodies Wells's more gimmicky fantasy about the future.

ELEMENTS OF MARXISM

The history of the state

Where does sexuality come from

Nature vs. nurture

Continued from page 12

women, gay or straight, who are only attracted to black people. Or vice versa. Any explanation for this must surely take into account psychological and cultural factors, including not infrequently racism.

Is biology to account for all manner of sexual variation? Is there a genetic cause of sado-masochistic desire? Is it genetic that some people are turned on by stockings, or rubber, or hair, or food?

Simply to register the complexity of sexual desire is to be sceptical of genetic explanations of it. Biology cannot possibly explain this subtle variety.

Nor would anyone sensibly wish to use a genetic approach to do so. Imagine a research programme investigating the genetic make-up of people who prefer Mediterraneans to Scandinavians: self-evidently, if one wanted to examine the matter at all, chromosomes would be the last place to look.

Politically, the genetic approach is necessarily conservative. Sexual liberation, as it was conceived in the 1970s, was never restricted to the idea that sexual minorities should have equal rights.

There was also the powerful notion that in class society everybody's sexual potential is stunted and mutilated: we are less complete as people because of the taboos and anxieties society imposes upon us. Sexual liberation entails the casting off of these traditions and phobias and the discovery of new forms of human relationship.

The evidence of human history supports such a view. Geneticist theory entails a depressing narrowing of our horizons. In this framework, sexuality is not the fluid, multifarious quality which it actually is, but a mere biological state: some people are driven to reproduce — and their emotions are simply the surface appearance of this drive — others are not.

Not far behind this primitive understanding of humanity is the idea, for lesbians and gay men, that they 'can't help it', so they should not be treated nastily — which is a patronising and tedious attitude with which we are already only too familiar.

It is not necessary to resort to biology to combat corruption theory. Indeed, biology avoids the issue which is actually most interesting in homophobia: its paranoia. Why do homophobic bigots evidently feel that if homosexuality is not suppressed it will take over? Isn't this ample proof of the anxiety which homosexuality arouses among many supposed heterosexuals, and the fact that it touches a deep (psychological) nerve among those sections of society who are, according to genetic theory, quite immune to it?

But isn't this just the theorising away of scientific discovery by someone who is uncomfortable with new, conclusive facts? I think not. The facts are not conclusive, and I have argued that it is hard to imagine how they ever could be. Science is not, especially when applied to human behaviour, simply objective study. It can strive to be objective, to 'approximate reality', but in this case it is glaringly apparent that the scientists themselves have only the crudest conception of the theoretical area they are dealing with.

And in this area there is a very long tradition of positivistic scientific research: indeed, most early research into sexuality was would-be scientific. We can see, looking back at the results of even so pioneering a sexologist as Havelock Ellis, that the scientific framework within which he operated was conditioned by the time in which he lived. There were no 'purely objective' criteria Ellis, for example, was influenced by eugenics, a vogue quasi-philosophy about social planning later discredited because of its conceptual affinity with Nazism.

Future scientists, not to mention socialists, will probably — I would submit, certainly — look back on the 'scientific' endeavours of today's geneticists as equally quaint and half-baked.

Capitalist propaganda tells us that the state is 'neutral', above classes, and that it looks after the interests of 'society' as a whole. Reformist socialists agree with them. The truth is very much the opposite: the state is an organ of class rule over the people. That is as true of the state in democracies as it is of openly dictatorial states. Lenin here looks at the history of the state, in the continuation of our reproduction of his "Lecture on the State".

THE STATE IS A machine for maintaining the rule of one class over another. When there were no classes in society, when, before the epoch of slavery, people laboured in primitive conditions of greater equality, in conditions when the productivity of labour was still at its lowest, and when primitive man could barely procure the wherewithal for the crudest and most primitive existence, a special group of people whose function is to rule and to dominate the rest of society, had not and could not yet have emerged. Only when the first form of the division of society into classes appeared, only when slavery appeared, when a certain class of people, by concentrating on the crudest forms of agricultural labour, could produce a certain surplus, when this surplus was not absolutely essential for the most wretched existence of the slave and passed into the hands of the slave-owner, when in this way the existence of this class of slave-owners was secure — then in order that it might take firm root it was necessary for a state to appear.

And it did appear — the slave-owning state, an apparatus which gave the slave-owners power and enabled them to

rule over the slaves. Both society and the state were then on a much smaller scale than they are now, they possessed incomparably poorer means of communication — the modern means of communication did not then exist. Mountains, rivers and seas were immeasurably greater obstacles than they are now, and the state took shape within far narrower geographical boundaries. A technically weak state apparatus served a state confined within relatively narrow boundaries and with a narrow range of action.

Nevertheless, there did exist an apparatus which compelled the slaves to remain in slavery, which kept one part of society subjugated to and oppressed by another. It is impossible to compel the greater part of society to work systematically for the other part of society without a permanent apparatus of coercion. So long as there were no classes, there was no apparatus of this sort.

When classes appeared,

everywhere and always, as the division grew and took firmer hold, there also appeared a special institution — the state. The forms of state were extremely varied. As early as the period of slavery we find diverse forms of the state in the countries that were the most advanced, cultured and civilised according to the standards of the time — for example, in ancient Greece and Rome — which were based entirely on slavery. At that time there was already a difference between monarchy and republic, between aristocracy and democracy. A monarchy is the power of a single person, a republic is the absence of any non-elected authority; an aristocracy is the power of a relatively small minority, a democracy is the power of the people (democracy in Greek literally means the power of the people).

All these differences arose in the epoch of slavery. Despite these differences, the state of the slave-owning epoch was a slave-owning state, irrespective of whether it was a monarchy or a republic, aristocratic or democratic.

In every course on the history of ancient times, in any lecture on this subject, you will hear about the struggle which was waged between the monarchical and republic states. But the fundamental fact is that the slaves were not regarded as human beings — not only were they not regarded as citizens, they were not even regarded as human

beings. Roman law regarded them as chattels. The law of manslaughter, not to mention the other laws for the protection of the person, did not extend to slaves. It defended only the slave-owners, who were alone recognised as citizens with full rights.

But whether a monarchy was instituted or a republic, it was a monarchy of the slave-owners or a republic of the slave-owners. All rights were enjoyed by the slave-owners, while the slave was a chattel in the eyes of the law; and not only could any sort of violence be perpetrated against a slave, but even the killing of a slave was not considered a crime.

Slave-owning republics differed in their internal organisation, there were aristocratic republics and democratic republics.

In an aristocratic republic only a small number of privileged persons took part in the elections; in a democratic republic everybody took part — but everybody meant only the slave-owners, that is, everybody except the slaves. This fundamental fact must be borne in mind, because it throws more light than any other on the question of the state and clearly demonstrates the nature of the state.

The state is a machine for the oppression of one class by another, a machine for holding in obedience to one class other, subordinated classes. There are various forms of this machine. The slave-owning state could be a monarchy, an aristocratic republic or even a democratic republic. In fact the forms of government varied extremely, but their essence was always the same: the slaves enjoyed no rights and constituted an oppressed class; they were not regarded as human beings. We find the same thing in the feudal state.

"When there were no classes in society a special group of people whose function is to dominate the rest of society could not yet have emerged."

Alliance for Workers' Liberty public meetings

Thurs 6 May

"Crisis in South Africa"
Sheffield AWL meeting.
7.30, SCCAU, West Street.

"Youth For Justice"

Newcastle Youth Fightback meeting.
1pm, Newcastle Tech College.

"Youth For Justice"

1pm, University of Mid-England, Birmingham, Perry Barr site.
Speakers: Joanne Rowe (M25 campaign) and Mark Sandell.

Wed 12 May

"Crisis in Russia"
Lancaster University AWL meeting. 2.00, Students Union.

Thurs 13 May

"Ireland — the socialist solution"
Manchester AWL meeting. 8.00, Unicorn pub. Speaker: Sean Matgamna.

"Fight the Child Support Act"

York Uni AWL meeting. 8.00, Goodrick College, G/20.

"Education in crisis"

Leeds AWL meeting. 8.00, Adelphi pub.

Students and youth

Sat-Sun 8-9 May

AWL student school
Followed by Left Unity AGM. Manchester Met University Students Union.

Thurs 13 May

Lobby of Parliament Against Voluntary Membership.

12 noon. Organised by Save Our Student Unions

campaign. Details: Elaine Jones, 071-272 8900.

Anti-deportation

Sally Morton, a woman born in Pakistan, is facing deportation.

Campaign details from: West Midlands Anti-deportation Campaign, 101 Villa Road, Birmingham 19. 021-551 4518.

Chinese workers

Workers' Autonomous Federation of China

April 1993 newsletter available from: 47-49 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H.

Mass turnout for Timex

LED OFF BY 200 Timex strikers and their families, over 1,500 people marched through Dundee on last Saturday's May Day march. The demonstration was ten times bigger than last year's.

The theme of the demonstration and concluding rally was solidarity with the 343 Timex workers sacked in mid-February. In order to maximise the turnout in Dundee, the regional Trades Council Federations in Fife and the Lothians had cancelled their own May Day marches.

The demonstration came at the end of a week which saw tactical divisions open up amongst Timex bosses.

Timex US director John Dryfe proposed talks with

national union officials.

His strategy now is clearly to try to fix up a shoddy deal with the likes of Jordan and Airlie to put an end to the dispute — at the expense of the Timex strikers.

Timex bosses in Dundee quickly claimed that Dryfe's statement had been misinterpreted. Their strategy was spelt out by Dundee managing director Peter Hall when he appeared before the Commons Employment Select Committee on Wednesday.

Hall admitted under pressure that he was not prepared to negotiate before the expiry of the 90-day redundancy notices on 17 May, in order to be able to pick and choose who he might be prepared to re-

employ. The response of the Timex workers to Hall's strategy was spelt out by Timex deputy convenor Willie Lesslie at the close of the May Day demonstration:

"None of us are going back after 90 days. We have built a magnificent unity. There is only one way Timex can resolve this dispute — it is by re-instating every single worker who has been sacked and by a negotiated settlement with the trade unions."

"If Timex wants a future here in Dundee, then it has got to deal with the sacked workers and their trade union."

Lesslie also called for the maximum support for the next two demonstrations of solidarity which are to be held in

Dundee.

A demonstration called by the AEEU and supported by the Scottish TUC has been organised for Saturday, 15 May.

A big turnout on the day will not only keep up the pressure on Timex but also keep the pressure on the AEEU national leadership not to abandon the strikers in any possible future negotiations with Timex.

Two days later, on Monday 17 May, the Timex shop stewards committee has called for a mass demonstration outside the factory gates at 7am.

A massive mobilisation in response to their appeal will send a clear message to Hall that only through re-instatement of all the sacked workers can the dispute be ended.

Like a co-op without the idealism

IN THE GOOD old days of the 1970s a lot of people got very excited about workers' co-operatives. Many trade unionists involved in redundancy struggles were attracted to the idea as an alternative to the demand for nationalisation. Tony Benn, at the Industry Department, encouraged co-ops and was even prepared to pump money into them. Employers like them as well, as they usually got a good price for factories and plant that was no longer profitable for them. Sadly, the end result was always massive productivity increases, wage cuts and workers fighting amongst themselves for jobs. And eventually, the harsh realities of capitalism caught up with the co-ops and one by one they went under.

All the problems and dangers associated with workers' co-ops apply to the present fad for Management Buy-Outs (MBOs). Recent events at Leyland DAF should be a salutary lesson for all of us. When the DAF group crashed earlier this year, the managers at the Washwood Heath Van plant in Birmingham immediately started to angle for a knockdown price as the only viable bidders for the plant. They have now succeeded in clinching the deal, with backing from a consortium of financiers. However, the workforce has already had to pay a terrible price.

In the immediate aftermath of the DAF collapse, nearly 600 jobs were shed — mainly long serving employees who lost all their redundancy entitlements except the bare statutory minimums. Since then another 200 jobs have gone and 200 research staff on a joint project with Renault have been put on short-term contracts.

As part of the MBO deal, wages have now been cut by 5% (there was no pay rise in 1991), flexible working hours (i.e. unpaid overtime) have been imposed and bell-to-bell working with "self-generated time" for 15 minute "Team Briefing sessions" at the end of shifts has been introduced. Sick pay will be limited to 14 days over any 12 month period and pension arrangements will be determined by the financial constraints of the new company i.e. "what the company can afford to fund" (in the words of a briefing from Personnel Director Mike Green).

Not surprisingly, the Washwood Health workforce was none too happy about all this. But after months of uncertainty, and with no obvious alternative on offer, there was no mood for resistance. The national union officers and the plant shop stewards were formally told of the plan at a meeting on Friday 16 April. In fact, it had been informally agreed with the National Automotive Officer of the TGWU at a meeting in Luton two days previously. Perhaps because of this, Mr Green's briefing urges employers to feel free to consult "your Manager, your trade union representative or the Personnel Department". The new bargaining arrangements include recognition of all existing unions (led by the majority union — the TGWU) and allows for a full time convenor for the first time. All very cosy.

Did the unions really have any choice? By April, probably not. But in February there had been real anger on the shop floor and stewards at the Lancashire plants had seriously discussed the possibility of occupying. Now, the anger has dissipated and the Leyland DAF workforce has effectively been carved up between the Van plant and the Truck plants. It looks like the sad story of Triumph Meriden is about to be replayed — but without the naive idealism.

INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper

Tax workers fight privatisation

THE TAX WORKERS' union IRSF called a 24 hour strike last Friday, 30 April, in opposition to 'partnership' — the latest service management buzzword for privatisation.

Plans to privatise computer processing work in Inland Revenue were announced last July, with the first "tranche" of workers due to move to the new "partner" early next year.

Although the contract for computer processing work has yet to be awarded, companies including IBM and ICL, have already expressed an interest. Bids for the contract amount to 2,000 pages with 10,000 pages of appendices.

But while the date of privatisation draws near, management has refused to provide any guarantees about employees' rights. As IRSF National Executive

Committee member Linda McDowell explained:

"We had no chance to put in an in-house bid. We are getting nearer the time when jobs will go, but management has not given us any assurances about pay, job security or pensions rights. There are people with 25 or 30 years service, but nothing is known about what's going to happen".

European legislation which supposedly guarantees the rights of privatised workers offers no real protection. "The legislation provides no guarantees about the length of time existing conditions must be maintained once you are in the hands of a private contractor. This is a grey area", explained Linda McDowell.

In the run up to privatisation workers' rights in the Inland Revenue are already under attack. "A restructuring exercise

is underway. People have been taken off shift work with very little notice. This is a cost-cutting preparation for privatisation," said one of the pickets.

The IRSF also stresses that privatisation will mean a worse service for the public as well. The recent contracting out of the distribution of PAYE booklets to Mailsort Ltd, for example, proved to be a costly fiasco.

Given the threat to workers' jobs and conditions posed by privatisation it was hardly surprising that there was overwhelming support amongst IRSF members for last Friday's strike: there was 70% vote in favour of strike action in the ballot, which saw a high turnout.

But balloting was restricted to the Information Technology Division of the IRSF. In order to avoid falling foul of the Tories' anti-union laws, the clerical sec-

tion of the IRSF, which likewise faces privatisation, was not balloted.

The strong support for last Friday's strike provides a solid basis for continuing and stepping up the fight against privatisation, the next stage in which will be decided by the IRSF national conference in mid-May.

New book!

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Keeping my head
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Hoover says: thanks for the deal, but we'll cut your jobs

WHILST THE Tories were announcing the end of the recession last week, Hoover warned its employees of major job losses.

According to Gerald Kamman, the European President of Hoover, the company was responsible for 80% of the losses incurred by its American parent company MAYTAG, amounting to "millions of US dollars".

A review is to be conducted in which "nothing would escape" and entire product ranges might be dropped.

The announcement was made without any prior consultation with the unions. Workers found out about the planned review when a copy of Kamman's statement was pinned up on the notice boards in Hoover's factories in Cambuslang (Glasgow) and Merthyr Tydfil.

Hoover has also made the dubious claim that the alleged losses have nothing to do with the free-flights-to America fiasco, which cost the company £20 million, and which has also flooded the market with second hand Hoovers bought solely in order to obtain the free flight tickets.

The announcement has stunned the workforce at the Cambuslang factory. In January the AEEU accepted pay cuts, longer hours, casual labour and a ban on strikes in order to attract 400 jobs away

from Hoover's factory in Dijon in France.

The transfer of the Dijon jobs has already been put back from June to July or even August. Now the jobs may never turn up at all, whilst existing jobs at Cambuslang may face the chop as well.

Nothing is to be gained by

saying to the Cambuslang workers, "we told you so".

The recent past — and not just the recent past — is littered with examples of workers who have been systematically used and abused by their employers: Ravenscraig steelworkers, Nottinghamshire miners, and TNT drivers.

Cambuslang workers should demand that the company opens its books, to establish the origins of this sudden loss; throw out the deal concluded in January, given Hoover's new attack on the workforce; link up with other Scottish engineering workers, such as the Timex workers, fighting for their jobs.

Tube: chances to hit back

14 DECEMBER saw the implementation of London Underground Ltd's Company Plan. This means 5,000 job losses and a bonfire of conditions and agreements. The way it was brought in — without a fight — has had two effects: demoralisation for us and a boost to management arrogance (as if they needed it!)

Management now believe they can do whatever they want and will no doubt go on acting like this until we show them we are ready to stand up to them.

It's also become clear that rather than being the limit of their ambitions, the Company Plan was just their starting point. This year sees a 30% cut in tube funding. P.way and signal maintenance are already threatened with further job losses. They are not likely to be alone.

However, the situation is not

quite as bleak as it may appear. The industrial action on BR and the buses has had a good effect. It has shown it is still possible to take action and has also reminded us of our potential power when we do take action. Morale amongst tube workers has improved since immediately after the Plan came in. And there are a number of issues that may provoke a fight.

One issue that may well prove important — particularly amongst traincrew — is the 5 day week.

Now most tubeworkers work on an 11 day fortnight. The 5 day week was supposedly promised to ASLEF full timer Kevin Rose in November in return for calling off the ASLEF ballot and ensuring the Company Plan came in smoothly. Since Rose did management's job for them in derailing opposition to the Plan there has been no sign of the 5 day week. Rank and file ASLEF and RMT

activists are now beginning to organise together to start the fight for a 5 day week. Formally the policy of both unions is for a 35 hour week and "5 days, 35 hours" would be an excellent slogan.

Management have now offered 1.5% for this year's pay claim. RMT may well ballot over this, the new drug and alcohol policy and compulsory redundancies. However as RMT ballot results mean nothing it's just as well not to take this too seriously — certainly tube bosses won't.

Whatever happens we must remember this: if we are to have any chance of beating management we must be united. And we desperately need a rank and file body to build that unity — in depots and workplaces — across unions and grades. Otherwise what we have seen so far from management will only be the beginning.

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Farewell, Norman.
We will forget you!

Rail: vote for action!

By a railworker

THIS THURSDAY AND FRIDAY we are to be asked to vote again on whether we fight BR on redundancies and contractors.

We have already said 'Yes' once and voted with our feet twice in displays of 100% solidarity. The RMT strike on 2 April produced only a few trains (with no passengers) on the Thames and Chiltern lines (ASLEF drivers and managers operating the power box). The RMT and ASLEF strike on the 16 April saw BR telling people not to even try to travel by train.

We have shown that we can do it and that we are willing to fight.

We also know that it is not just about contractors and redundancies.

Of course that is what the ballot paper said. That is because Knapp, along with most of the union leadership, is keen not to violate the Tory anti-trade union laws. We can only have a legal dispute after we've gone through certain procedures and the bosses have agreed that we are in dispute. It is what the Tories call "democracy".

It is not just about redundancies and contractors, they are a symptom of something else — privatisation.

The government is instructing British Rail to cut back on services because they cost money; track and stations are not being improved because they cost money; staff are being made redundant because BR are told to balance the books; and contractors are employed to cut costs.

This is all part of the drive towards privatisation. Railworkers are being lined up to provide profits for the Tories' rich friends.

Right now that drive means 7,000 jobs gone already in the last financial year, while we've seen more and more contractors doing our jobs.

That is privatisation! And BR have let it be known that there could be another 20,000 jobs to go this financial year.

They will not guarantee that these redundancies will not be compulsory, and they will not guarantee that they will not give more work to contractors while we continue to lose our jobs.

The attack is on and we need to fight back. Vote to reject BR's "offer"!

What is different about BR's offer which means it needs to be put to the vote?

Nothing much really.

BR have only said that they don't "foresee" any need for compulsory redundancies in the next two years. Most of us can't "foresee" whether or not it will rain tomorrow either, but it might.

And they don't "foresee" any need for compulsory redundancies in the workshops in the next 12 months.

So, there's your guarantee! There's your reassurance!

If this is all they will say then we have some idea of what is really in store.

BR say they have "no plans" for a major extension of the use of contractors for track maintenance over the next two years. That doesn't mean that they won't have such plans soon. Reassurance indeed.

So why the referendum ballot?

It is because a minority of the RMT's Executive Committee think that BR have given all they can. They have realised that the govern-



The solid strike on 16 April showed the way to win. Photo: John Harris

ment is behind it all and BR can only talk in general terms — about "not foreseeing" and only for the next 12 months or two years because after that BR will no longer be.

Instead, we will have Railtrack letting out P.Way, S&T, Overhead Line and Signalling work to contractors while the services are run by franchise operators.

But there is no need to feel sorry for BR management. They are in the job of actively promoting and organising privatisation, knowing that it is at the expense of ordinary railworkers and other workers who use the trains.

Meanwhile, BR management draw fat salaries. They are carrying out the government's policies and bleating while we kick back.

It is the same government that is determined to close 31 pits with the loss of 35,000 mining jobs and 70,000 in related industries; many of these in railways. That is why joint miners' and railworkers' days of action are so important.

We face a common enemy.

A minority of the Executive Committee have put a block on further action because the rule book says a two-thirds majority is needed — so one-third can stop it.

This minority want to accept. They think we've gone far enough, and, anyway, there are other issues in the pipeline — pensions, PT&R and pay. But every one of these stems from the same cause — a government hell-bent on selling us off for profit no matter what damage it does.

The government has a plan for our pension

funds after privatisation which makes Maxwell's plans look like peanuts; Promotion, Transfer & Redundancy arrangements must be torn up because they cover a national railway industry which will be torn apart; and the pay rise is to be limited to 1.5% because the government wants to make public sector workers pay for balancing its books — which is why they also need the money from railway privatisation.

Vote with the majority! Reject this offer!

TUC GENERAL secretary Norman Willis finally announced his retirement last week. Workers did not take to the streets to say goodbye to Brother Willis. Congress House was not besieged by crowds of trade unionists begging him to stay on. There were no TV specials celebrating his contribution to the working-class struggle. Our screens and airwaves were not jammed with impromptu vox pop tributes to the great man.

In fact, you had to study the news closely to find out that Willis had finally decided to pack it in.

It was all in stark contrast to the way the departure of Brian Clough was handled.

Like Willis, Cloughie, who announced his decision to quit the same day, was treated with the respect he deserved.

Cloughie was on the front pages. Norman wasn't. Cloughie was interviewed on the radio and TV. Norman wasn't. Cloughie was the subject of conversation in pubs, factories, and offices the length of the land. Norman wasn't.

Why was this? Is it just that the British working class is not interested in politics or trade unionism, and prefers football? No. The issues go much deeper.

People warmed to Brian Clough because they could tell that he stood for something. Football was meant to be played on the ground; hard men were a necessary evil; the Football League was run by idiots; and Brian Clough spoke the truth. You know where you stood with Cloughie.

He had a deserved reputation for plain speaking and forthrightness. But not Brother Norman. Who could tell you what Norman Willis stood for?

In his long career as a parasite on the workers' movement, Norman Willis never did anything of note. Things happened to him — like the wonderful moment at a rally during the 1984-5 pit strike when an angry and defiant group of Welsh miners lowered a hangman's noose above his head in full view of the TV cameras and to the obvious delight of the audience — but Norman never made things happen. He just let things be. He let the miners, the printers, the seafarers, the dockers, and many more, fight alone.

Judging by his dismal performance at a rally over the May Day weekend where he was spectacularly overshadowed and upstaged by a Timex striker, TUC new boy John Monks looks set to be just as much of a failure as Willis.

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CPSA members at the British library have struck against 'Market Testing'. But a national strike is needed. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni

Support the Bargoed strikers!

By Andrew Lloyd, CPSA
DSS Merthyr Tydfil
Branch Secretary

MEMBERS of both CPSA and NUCPS have been on strike against the closure of Bargoed DSS office in the Rhymney Valley in South Wales. To date these members have been on strike for a total of 8 days, starting with a one day strike, followed up by a 7 day strike. In the case of CPSA this strike ended unofficially as CPSA HQ refused to sanction action, ordering the members back to work to meet management. Since then CPSA members have voted to demand that the NEC backs an all-out indefinite strike. We believe that only through all-out action, backed up by the public campaign that has been launched, will we have any chance of saving our office and defending the conditions of our members, and the public which we serve.

We particularly would like to place on record our thanks to the 13 offices in Wales who took supportive action on our behalf.

Management will only back down if we can force them to. Pressure must be put on the NEC to support further strike action, not just by our members in Bargoed, but in other offices as well if need be.

Money is also important. Messages of support should be sent to: Andrew Lloyd, CPSA Branch Secretary DSS, Claude Road, Caerphilly, Mid Glamorgan.

STOP MARKET TESTING!

By Trudy Saunders DsHSS
SEC editor

AN ARTICLE IN the *Guardian* on 26 April bluntly outlined Tory plans for privatising the civil service:

- sacking as many existing civil servants as possible;
- abolishing trade union negotiating machinery;
- persuading civil service trade unions to accept mass compulsory redundancies and;
- guaranteeing civil service work to private firms without competition.

The article confirmed what many civil service trade unionists have known since the Tories began privatising and Market Testing the civil service: that mass job losses and the smashing up of our unions will be the result if we allow them to get away with it.

It is no coincidence that the Tories are discussing proposals to outlaw industrial action in the public services. They know that strike action can stop their market

testing plans and scupper their obsession with bringing market forces into the public sector.

Yet the traitorous 'Moderate' Tory stooges on the CPSA National Executive Committee (NEC) are refusing to lead a co-ordinated campaign of strike action across the civil service. Despite the fact that Market Testing means mass job losses, severe wage cuts, worse conditions, loss of pension rights, loss of paid annual, sick and maternity leave and the smashing up of civil service trade unionism, the 'Moderates' are doing little short of nothing. In fact according to the *Guardian* article mentioned above the civil service unions "suggested that members might be better off

taking redundancy and looking for new jobs, rather than joining firms committed to abolishing trade unions"!

Their 'strategy' — a help line, computer database, reliance on in-house bids and European Law — would be laughable were it not so tragic. Even in terms of their own 'strategy' the 'Moderate' CPSA leadership are useless. Local government and NHS unions such as COHSE have been at the forefront of demanding EC law/TUPE is applied when workers are contracted out. In the civil service, NUCPS and IPMS have made the running in this areas.

Yet the Tories and the big business friends break the law every day by failing to adhere to the

terms of the Health and Safety laws. They are determined to press ahead with Market Testing despite the EC laws/TUPE and will no doubt find some means around it. William Waldegrave spelt out the Tories attitude to the EC law. Asked if the EC law/TUPE would stop Market Testing, he replied "It will not..."

Reliance on in-house bids is do-it-yourself Market Testing. It is suicide for trade unionists to involve themselves in or put forward in-house bids. The aim of the Tories is to drastically cut costs. An in-house bid can only be won by job cuts, wage cuts and changes in conditions/job descriptions.

Continued over

For a national strike!

Stop market testing!

From front page

This is not speculation. It is based on the facts as seen amongst workers in local government and the NHS who won in-house bids in the 1980s. Reliance on in-house bids (most of which haven't been won in the civil service anyway) is simply saying to the Tories that we're prepared to accept their agenda and do their dirty work for them.

The 'Moderates' refuse to take on the Tories ideologically. They fail to take up the fact that the bringing of market forces into the civil service is a political attack on the working class. The carving up of 90% of the civil service into tiny privatised units has dire consequences for workers now and for the future. It means the end of a large employer offering secure employment on relatively decent terms (negotiated and won over the years by the unions) and the smashing up of a strong base of trade unionism. Tory plans for the civil service and other areas of the public sector must be seen in the context of privatisation of nationalised industries since 1979 and the decline in manufacturing industry and British capitalism generally. It is another way of the Tories putting money into the hands of their private contractor friends by taking it from the pockets of already low paid workers.

It is a severe and far-reaching attack on public sector workers who will be plunged into poverty now and in old age, and on future workers who will be forced into insecure, low paid and non-unionised work.

Contrast the campaign of the National Union of Mineworkers against pit closures now and in the 1984/5 strike with the CPSA 'Moderates' response. Arthur Scargill and the NUM leadership have combined a campaign of strike action with an ideological attack on Tory plans for pit closures and mass redundancies amongst miners.

The NUM's 'Coal Not Dole' slogan took head-on the capitalist ideal of profits rather than the need and drew out the hypocrisy and inconsistencies of Tory policies.

The 'Moderates' pathetic 'Service First' Campaign fails to draw out both the deep rooted ideology of the Tories' Market Testing plans and the fact that the most oppressed in our society — the unemployed, benefit claimants and pensioners — will receive a worse service. Coupled with Tory plans to cut benefits and pensions, and the Child Support Act, Market Testing plans are a massive attack on the most vulnerable.

What we need is a campaign of industrial action across the civil service leading to all-out strike action to force the Tories to withdraw their Market Testing plans, coupled with an ideological campaign against the ethos of bringing market forces into the public sector.

Militant supporters and their allies in the Broad Left and BL84 are already playing to the 'Moderates' agenda. Some BL84 supporters are in favour of in-house bids. On the DsHSS SEC, *Militant* supporters voted through a motion which

called for a limited programme of strike action over jobs, wages and conditions rather than demanding the withdrawal of Tory Market Testing plans in the DsHSS.

Militant supporters argued that the National Disputes Committee (NDC) would not allow a strike submission against the principle of Market Testing. Yet to do anything other than argue for action against Market Testing is a nonsense, in view of its political implications and the fact that its stated aim is to cut jobs, wages and conditions. To put up a motion such as the *Militant* did in the DsHSS is also a tactical stupidity. The 'Moderates' will now no doubt argue that the Broad Left aren't against Market Testing!

It is no coincidence that *Militant* put up this motion at a time when they are watering down their policies in order to make an electoral pact with soft left BL84. It is a disgrace that the Broad Left/BL84 Presidential/Vice Presidential election campaign revolved around vague, meaningless policies on Market Testing — policies which can mean anything to anybody. There is no call for national strike action for the withdrawal of Tory Market Testing plans, nor a clear statement against union involvement in in-house bids.

In contrast Socialist Caucus Presidential Candidate Mark Serwotka used his campaign as a platform for policies to defeat the Tories over Market Testing.

It is absolutely vital to do this at a time when the 'Moderates' are refusing to lead a fight and are refusing to allow branches and Sections to organise strike action against Market Testing. Activists must continue to take the issue out to the wider membership — as Mark's campaign has — and encourage branches and Sections to bombard the NEC with strike submissions demanding the Tories withdraw their Market Testing plans. We must argue for action necessary to win, not give in to the 'Moderates' by tailoring our demands and strategy to their bankrupt policies.

Composite Motion 355, containing virtually every motion on Market Testing whether they are different or not, falls far short of the national campaign of industrial action we need to win. Socialist Caucus and *Socialist Organiser* supporters will be putting forward such a strategy in Emergency motions. We must demand they are heard.

The next year is crucial for all civil servants. 44,000 civil service jobs will be Market Tested in this period. We must do all we can to organise action where we can — unofficial action where possible if strike submissions are turned down — organise a mass campaign amongst the membership and attempt to force the NEC to organise a national ballot for strike action, linked if possible, to other civil service and public sector unions.

"Our call set the agenda"

By Mark Serwotka DsHSS SEC and left candidate for National President

THE CENTRAL QUESTION that conference needs to address is 'Market Testing' which is a massive attack and will hit tens of thousands of CPSA members. It is essential that conference agrees a strategy of industrial action leading up to all-out action as the only realistic policy that has any hope of defeating the Tories.

Unfortunately, the only motion that calls for this come from branches that support the Socialist Caucus, so there may well be a manoeuvre to rule them out of order.

If that is the case then conference will be left with no alternative but to vote for a meaning-

less motion which will get probably unanimous support but doesn't take the union forward in any major way.

The fact that the Moderates could probably vote for the main motion tells you a lot about what kind of bankrupt policy it represents.

Pay won't be the kind of big issue it was last year, simply because the right wing railroaded through acceptance of the government's 1% offer.

So, members were faced with an entrenched leadership that obviously doesn't want to lead a fight calling on members to reluctantly accept a lousy offer. That was the reason for such a big vote to accept the lousy offer.

But the major events next week will probably take place on the fringe not in the conference hall.

All activists will be concerned about left unity.

The unity we need to beat the Moderates

By Mike Grayson British Library

THE 'MODERATE' group who presently control the CPSA are probably one of the most right wing leaderships in the British trade union movement.

The grouping is little more than 50 strong, but they dominate the NEC.

Comprising both right wing Labour supporters and an unknown number of Tories, they rest on top of a passive membership which they do their level best to keep passive. Their bedrock support comes from the Ministry of Defence.

Increasingly the 'Charter group' — containing bitter ex-leftists and talentless careerists — acts as the boot boys for the Moderates.

General Secretary Barry Reamsbottom has made a point of cultivating such people and appears to be gathering a group of full timers who are his own people rather than old fashioned Moderate hacks from an MOD background.

Chambers and Reamsbottom have a style which marks them out as very right wing. Reamsbottom, for instance, openly espouses a form of business unionism in which the members pay dues and in return receive a service from the union. But style need never be mistaken for substance.

In substance the Moderates are like most other right wing trade union leaderships.

For instance, Reamsbottom's model for how CPSA can survive Market Testing is not taken from the EETPU or right wing US business unionism. No, Reamsbottom's model is the supposedly 'soft left'-led NUPE. "They suffered but they survived", he told last year's conference. Meaning the members suffered from contracting-out but the union's apparatus survived.

The moderates are still prepared to sanction limited local action by branches, but not national

action that has any real chance of defeating the government. They oppose that kind of action because it would be 'politics'. Unfortunately they are not unique on this either. The NUPE leadership did exactly the same at last year's NUPE conference over the idea of national action against cuts in the NHS.

Yes, the moderates are vicious right wing bureaucrats, but nobody should get carried away and believe they represent some completely unique development.

They are simply the right wing of an institution that is now well over a century old, the British trade union bureaucracy.

The same methods have to be used against the Moderates, with appropriate modifications here and there, as against any other group of trade union bureaucrats.

In order to fight the bureaucracy we need to know where they come from and how they develop.

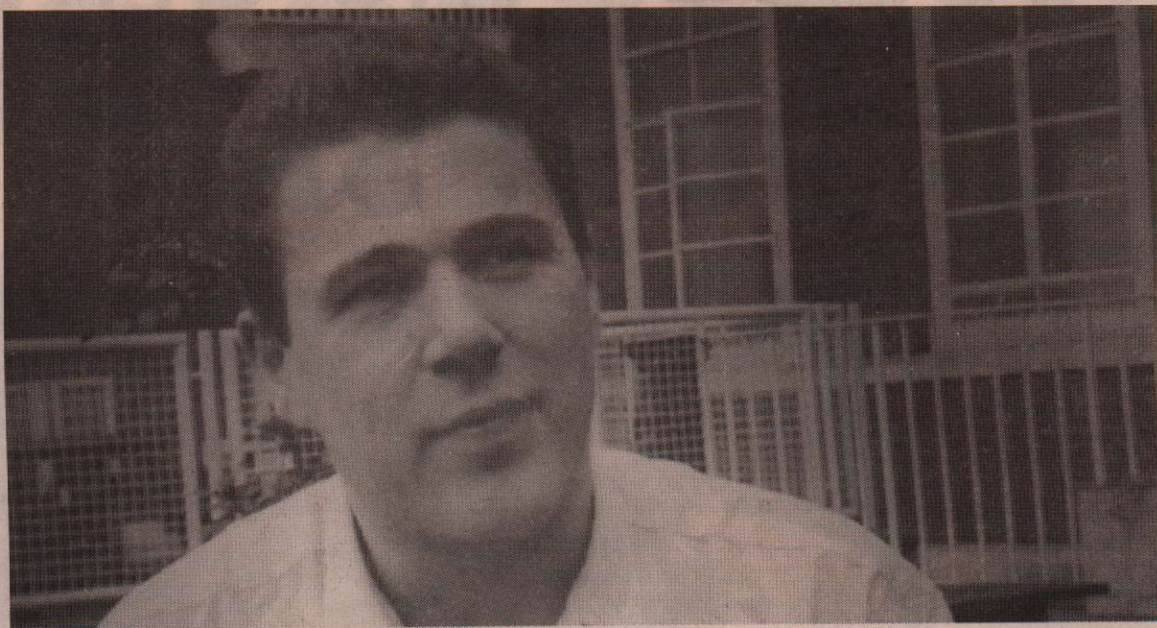
The basic organisations of the working class — the trade unions — are dominated by a layer of professional full-time union officials. They earn considerably more than the average in the trade they represent. They adopt a middle class lifestyle and lose touch with the realities of life on the shopfloor or in the office.

These people come still, in the main, from the ranks of the working class, but over time their practical role as negotiators between the workers and the bosses starts to shape everything else.

The trade union officials are therefore a major channel for the consolidation of the bosses' ideas inside the working class. Because it is the job of people to bargain within the system, they start to treat the system as if it is the only possible kind of society. They are linked with the capitalists who own and control industry. Both work together to maintain the system.

Campaign has

Why we support Mark



a”

I support Mark Serwotka because he is the only militant socialist candidate for President of the CPSA who is prepared to launch a fight against Market Testing and the pay freeze.

Rod Bacon, Hackney and Tower Hamlets DSS Branch Secretary.

Mark is the only Presidential candidate standing on a principled, fighting platform with a solid background of supporting militant action combined with accountability to the membership. My members can relate to him easily.

John Rickards, Branch Secretary DSS Avon.

I want a union run by the members, for the members, to defend the members against the attacks we face. Mark is the only presidential candidate who shares this view, that's why I'm voting for him.

Tony Reay, Branch Chair DSS Hackney and Tower Hamlets.

Members in my branch are supporting Mark as Presidential candidate as they recognise that he is the only left candidate in this election and he is standing on a platform to fight Market Testing by calling for action to defend members' jobs.

Chris Hulme, DE West London

We need a union leadership made up of people like Mark Serwotka who will relentlessly and unconditionally support all workers in dispute. Mark is the only presidential candidate who we would have complete confidence in to back us up every time and at every turn.

We know this about Mark because he was our branch secretary for eight years. He helped us build up one of the most effective and active branches in the union.

He is the only candidate who really means it when he says he supports the miners. For Mark, support will mean active practical solidarity strike action, not just signing petitions and passing resolutions. What's more, he has proved that by his action.

Andrew Lloyd, Branch Secretary Merthyr Tydfil DSS

This is the issue that my campaign has raised through leafletting and meetings in all corners of the country.

We've been saying that any unity has to be around two things.

Firstly, it has to be left unity — not unity with careerists like witch hunter Margaret Kaye, who was the preferred unity candidate to Albert Astbury, but who dropped out when she was offered a job working for NUCPS, the other major civil service union.

Secondly it has to be unity around fighting policies like a national strike to stop Market Testing. I think our campaign has set the agenda in this debate.

I certainly will be campaigning for an open conference of all activists in the union that can hammer out a programme of action that can defeat both the Moderates and the government's Market Testing attacks.

In 1991, before the Tories' election victory and their decision to pursue contracting out on such a massive scale, it was possible to talk of building unity on a basic policy of supporting all workers in struggle and opposition to witch hunts.

But things have changed since then. Market Testing dominates everything else. Unity has to be built around a policy to stop it. Those people who opposed unity in 1991 on that basis but now support it were wrong in 1991 and wrong today.

Market Testing is such an important issue, and its effects on members are so drastic, that if we could pull together effective campaign unity on the issue it would transform the situation in the union. It would make genuine left re-alignment possible.

But unity that skates over and avoids the key issue of a national strike to stop Market Test-

ing because many in BL84 oppose this will not open up the union.

That kind of "unity" will only serve to blow new life into and it will artificially exaggerate the importance of BL84 at the expense of mobilising the members to fight to defend themselves.

After conference we will be pushing for an open democratic and representative left-unity conference,,, but we expect that stand to be opposed by people in Militant and BL84 who have their own vested interests to protect.

The issues I have tried to raise can be seen most clearly in the action at Bargoed DSS, where members have realised that the only way to save their office is all-out strike action.

They have voted to strike and stayed out unofficially. They now want backing for all-out action. This shows clearly the kind of spirit which can turn the union round.

The leaders of the Labour Party are in all essentials no different. They merely do the job of bargaining across the whole of society, at the level of government, rather than in any one particular industry.

Together the professional leaders of the Labour Party and the trade unions are the biggest single internal impediment to the development of the labour movement. The secret of the bureaucracy's strength is that they work with the grain of society, re-inforcing and exaggerating the pressures that workers face. The 'Moderates' are not unique in this respect.

In a country like Britain where the traditional organisations of the working class are still millions strong, nine tenths perhaps of the job of fighting for socialism amounts to fighting to free the working class from the influence of people like Reamsbottom and Chambers.

This job will not be done by shouting and sloganising from the sidelines. It points to the need for socialists to get into the labour movement to organise, to demand that our leaders fight and to build rank and file movements which can oust or outflank them when they don't.

How we go about building an effective rank and file movement in CPSA is the real subject of the debate between supporters of Albert Astbury and Mark Serwotka.

It is a debate about the type of left we need in the CPSA and the broader trade union movement.

Mark argues that the left should concentrate on mobilising the members in struggle and that out of that struggle it will be possible to build an open, democratic and non-sectarian left. He believes that there is far more to serious socialist activity in the trade unions than trying to capture important positions and committees.

Elections are, of course, important, but they are not ends in themselves. They are merely a means to an end — mobilising workers to fight for their interests.

It is not enough to be able to make leaders, you need to be able to break them when they turn against the people who elected them.

For Mark, and for the people who are supporters of his, the unions have to be transformed, not just captured.

The strategic aim of the left in the unions has to

be to build a powerful broad-based rank-and-file movement, rooted in the branches and the workplaces which can act as a lever to transform the unions into organisations that fight relentlessly for the interests of the working class.

As well as fighting internal union elections, such a movement would take disputes and struggles seriously — it would attempt to seize the initiative and generalise any action by spreading information, agitating and organising for solidarity.

For a serious rank-and-file movement to have any hope of success, it could not possibly be treated as the backyard of any particular political organisation.

Inevitably, the rank-and-file orientation represented by Mark's campaign has come into conflict with the politics of both Militant and the Morning Star.

Both groupings and their fellow travellers see socialist trade union work as being primarily concerned with capturing official positions.

Once the union apparatus is captured, so their theory goes, it can be wielded in the interests of the working class.

Unfortunately, it is usually the union apparatus which captures these socialists rather than vice versa. Maintaining prominent positions in the unions tends to become the first priority of people

who adopt this approach, the struggle comes second.

In fact the demands of the struggle today are seen as putting at risk the possibility of mere electoral gains tomorrow.

It is the conflict between a rank-and-file and electoralist orientation that lies at the heart of the debate between supporters of Mark Serwotka and Albert Astbury.

Mark's supporters want fighting unity and fighting leadership today around the burning issues facing the members: Market Testing and job losses.

Astbury's supporters want an electoral pact today which ignores the real issues on which they are divided so as to give them a chance of capturing the union apparatus tomorrow.

Astbury's backers confuse politics with arithmetic. Changing CPSA is not just a question of cobbling together an alliance of the existing factions to oust the Moderates. That is a static, head counting approach.

The left in the union needs to be more dynamic and reach out to the passive membership, involving them in activity. But to be able to do that we must give the ordinary members something worth fighting for. That means a fight to stop Market Testing.

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In defence of working-class socialism

Why we oppose the drift to the right in the CPSA

Mark Serwotka, the left wing candidate for CPSA President, is a supporter of the weekly newspaper *Socialist Organiser* and a member of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty (AWL). Mark has been attacked for this.

He has been expelled from the Labour Party in Sheffield because along with other *Socialist Organiser* supporters and AWL members he wanted to see the local council fighting the Tories rather than sacking workers and carrying out Tory cuts.

The attacks of the Labour leadership have been echoed by people inside the CPSA like Broad Left member Steve Cawkwell, who using the same language as the 'Moderates', has labelled Mark an "extremist".

But it is not socialism that is extreme, it is the barbaric murderous capitalist system we live.

John Moloney (DoE/DTP SEC) and Caroline Henry (CPS National Branch Executive) defend the ideas of working-class socialism, and show why those ideas have allowed supporters of SO/AWL to be at the forefront of resisting the drift to the right by large sections of the CPSA left.

Capitalism, exploitation and class struggle

Capitalism dominates our world. Production is social: everyone in society is dependent on everyone else, modern technology and the development of the world market have created a situation where nothing can be produced without co-operation and collective effort.

But ownership of the social means of production is in private hands.

Those who own the means of production buy the labour power of those who own nothing but their labour-power and set them to work. At work they produce more than the equivalent of their wages. The difference (today in Britain it may be more than £20,000 a year per worker) is taken by the capitalist. This is exploitation of wage-labour by capital and it is the basic cell of capitalist society, its very heartbeat.

The purpose of production under this system is not the satisfaction of human needs but the relentless drive for capitalist profit.

Everything else flows from that. Pits close because they are "uncompetitive" while hundreds of the old and the poverty stricken die of cold every winter.

The number of homeless people multiplies while half a million building workers can't get a job. We have spiralling mass unemployment and a growing "under

class", while stress, insecurity and overwork increase for those who still have a job.

The relentless drive for profit threatens the very survival of the planet. We face an unfolding ecological disaster, new wars and the threat of fascism.

So despite all the talk of the "end of history" and the triumph of capitalism the reality is that we live under a system in decline and decay.

The workers' answer: socialism

The alternative to this system is working-class socialism. Socialism is not a sectarian dogma or a bright idea in the hands of a few intellectuals.

It is the movement of the immense majority in the interests of the immense majority. Socialism is the product of the class struggle. As Marx put it "The liberation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself".

Socialism means the abolition of wage slavery, the taking of the social economy out of private ownership into common cooperative ownership. It means the full realisation of the old demands of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Under socialism the economy will be run and planned deliberately and democratically: market mechanisms will cease to be our master and instead production will be directed to the satisfaction of human needs.

Socialism is a class movement but the end goal means the liberation of all human beings, regardless of their race, gender or sexuality.

Linking workplace and political struggles to the battle of ideas

In the struggle for socialism the workers have two main weapons: numbers and ideas. It is the job of socialists to infuse the collective organisations of the working class with the goal of reshaping society so as to allow people to fulfill their full potential as human beings.

The class struggle is not just the trade union struggle. We must combine workplace resistance, political struggle and the battle of ideas into one coherent drive. At present those who run the system understand this much more clearly than do those who lead the Labour and trade union movement.

The politics of "Market Testing"

You can see this very easily with the Tories "Market Testing" offensive.

The mass contracting out of public services is perhaps the most vital part of the Tories' attempt to shape a more unforgiving, more savage capitalism, befitting the decrepit condition of the British economy



Workers at the British Library fighting contracting out

If the Tories succeed in their plans:

- Hundreds of thousands of public sector jobs will be lost;
 - The pay and conditions of huge numbers of workers will be slashed;
 - Tens of thousands will be cast into poverty, now and in their old age (as pension rights are eroded);
 - Women will be especially hard hit;
 - A major social change will have been effected as workers are moved from historically secure to immensely insecure employment;
 - Local democracy will be further and significantly weakened;
 - British trade unionism will suffer a dreadful setback; and the material basis for Labour politics will be substantially undermined.
- And for the service users and tax payers in whose name this "counter-revolution" is being undertaken? Worse services at greater cost!

Accepting the Tories' agenda

An attack of this scale obviously requires a coherent co-ordinated and unified response, but what have the leaders of the Labour and trade union movement done? Nothing effective.

Workers have been allowed to fight isolated battles workplace by workplace and section by section. Many groups have gone down to total defeat. Those who have forced some concessions out of the private profiteers have usually lost ground at a later stage. No effective national industrial action has been organised and the leaders of the political wing of the labour movement — the Labour Party — have effectively accepted the Tories' ideological agenda and have embraced contracting out rather than opposing it and trying to build an alliance between workers and service users to defend, democratise and extend public provision.

For instance many Labour councils have used the private tendering process to break up strong union organisation in the Direct

Works departments. Instead of leading a political campaign of mass action against the government to demand more cash for public service and council house building they have used the councils cash crisis as an excuse to push through sackings, cuts in services and anti-union policies.

The central reason for this appalling performance is the fact that the Labour leadership have no coherent ideas with which to oppose the Tories' proposals for privatising.

Workers and user control versus the market

Declining British capitalism no longer has enough resources available to fund the large scale bureaucratized Welfare State that was brought in after World War 2.

So: either the Tories will succeed in their strategy of restructuring the state sector so as to open up vast new areas for exploitation by private profiteers, smash the unions and establish the market as the regulator of services; or the workers' movement will fight back and resist, in the process developing links with service users and promoting the idea of a democratically controlled public sector regulated on the basis of human needs not private profit.

To accept the second option would require of the leaders of the labour movement that they fight for a totally different kind of system. But they won't do that, so instead they seek to ameliorate the worst effects of the introduction of the market into the public sector.

You can't have a clearer illustration of the importance of politics and ideas to the trade union struggle.

For democracy and honesty in debate

But if the working class movement is to develop its political ideas properly we need democracy, clarity and honesty in debate and dis-

cussion. In order to understand the world you need to have an accurate picture of how things really are. Lies and demagoguery make this impossible.

That's why the old saying that "The truth is revolutionary" is so important.

With this in mind it is worth comparing the political methods adopted by supporters of Mark Serwotka and Albert Astbury in the recent Presidential campaign.

Mark's supporters focussed directly and relentlessly on one key issue: Market Testing. They then argued for unity around the most effective policy in CPSA to defeat it: an all-out national strike.

We did not pick this issue ourselves, or suck it out of our thumbs as a special thing to differentiate ourselves from others in the union. We put Market Testing at the top of the agenda because the Tories and the people who rule Britain had put it there. We were simply basing our policies on the logic of the class struggle.

Astbury's supporters did not do this. They have not to this day explained why an all-out national strike to defeat Market Testing is not part of their "Unity" platform.

Instead, Astbury's supporters embarked on a campaign of lies, demagoguery and anti-socialist witch hunting against Mark. This was not accidental. They couldn't argue about the real issues facing members so they focussed on silly personal allegations and spurious appeals to people's organisational loyalty to the Broad Left, even though Astbury is not a Broad Left member, and Mark's campaign has included the distribution of nearly 50,000 leaflets calling for a vote for the Broad Left NEC slate.

You can see from this that Mark's supporters have adopted the classic Marxist approach of basing their policies on a struggle to defend members' interests. We can't see any other basis on which socialists can proceed.