

SOCIALIST

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As Northern Ireland lurches towards civil war, the Tories indulge in stupid cant.

The tragic reality of Ireland is that, while socialists must work now for working-class unity at every possible level, however minimal, the main initiatives that can change the situation lie with Dublin and London, and with the dominant bourgeois and petty-bourgeois Green and Orange parties.

That is why the Hume-Adams proposals are important, and why the British and Dublin governments' refusal to seize this chance for peace is one more crime against the Irish people, and, in the first place, the Irish working class, Protestant and Catholic alike.

Full report and analysis on pages 3 and 4

Yes, direct action can still win!

IT'S DELIGHTFUL to have some good news to report at last. Especially when it is the kind of news that isn't supposed to happen any more.

Over the last couple of weeks, workers in three separate industries have taken unofficial strike action and forced management to back down. What's more, they have successfully used all kinds of "intimidating" methods like mass picketing which the Iron Lady was supposed to have banished from this land forever.

On the Tyne and Wear metro, bosses had been pressing for the train crews to do the public service announcements, but had failed to get agreement. On the morning of Thursday 28 October, they suddenly tried to impose what they wanted by decree.

The drivers refused to do the announcements, and the first two were promptly sacked. The bosses said that the drivers had "dismissed themselves"; the drivers said they were locked out.

With the drivers solid, the bosses backed down, and by Friday morning the drivers were back at work, still refusing to make announcements when the trains are moving and they should be concentrating on driving them.

At Smithfield, London, 30 electricians working on the refurbishment of the meat market were sacked and then "knocked" between three and four weeks' wages when their cheques bounced. This kind of behaviour is not uncommon from the London building employers, and many workers accept it as a "fact of life".

But instead of shrugging their shoulders and walking away, the sparks decided to fight. A picket was set up and the strike was solid.

After a couple of days management were on the run. This turned to panic when agency electricians brought in to scab refused to cross picket lines. A mass meeting two days into the strike decided to stand firm, and the next day management capitulated.

The strikers won full reinstatement, full back pay, payment for their days on strike, and an increase in overtime payments.

The glass workers at Barnsley's Beatson Clarks plant did not quite win the total victory we saw at the Tyne and Wear metro and at Smithfield, but they did get a result.

Four days of mass picketing and unofficial strike action over the victimisation of shop steward Keith Jacques managed to get Beatson Clarks to agree to independent arbitration over the issue when previously the message was, "He's sacked. That's it".

If only the local union full-timers hadn't got involved, many think full reinstatement could have been won.

What lessons are to be drawn? The first is: when faced with victimisation and sackings, act fast, act decisively, and you can still win.

The long legal road which won on the London Underground Central Line (see last week's SO) may be necessary - that's a matter of assessment - but, all other things being equal, a swift response is best.

The second lesson is that where there's a will there's a way.

In all three cases, seasoned rank-and-file union activists were involved who gave a lead on the ground and encouraged their workmates.

And, finally, think on this. Unemployment is over four million. We have the most savage anti-union laws in Europe. Things like these just aren't supposed to happen. But they do.

The reason is simple. Workers, over time, adapt to new conditions.

We could - it's still only could - be on the verge of a revival of unofficial action.

In the 1950s and '60s workers had near-full employment and a tight labour market. The main obstacle to effective action was the union officials. The common strategy among stewards was to get strikes over before the officials found out. Maybe the anti-union laws, which are designed to make union officials police their rank and file, could produce the same response.

INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper

Alexander Buzgalin, a leader of the Party of Labour, reports from Moscow

IN GENERAL the situation has become a little bit better for the Russian left. Yeltsin's rule is not the rule of a Pinochet.

This is the result of a struggle - here and abroad.

Now we have a situation where only the most extreme organisations are banned. However they have been banned without the ruling of a court, simply on the judgement of Yeltsin. This type of rule creates fear as no-one knows who will be next.

Fear goes hand-in-hand with a general apathy.

Witch-hunting has begun in earnest. There is the threat of unemployment - used against those critical of the regime. For example this is being used in the universities and in the

media. Even liberal journalists are being attacked.

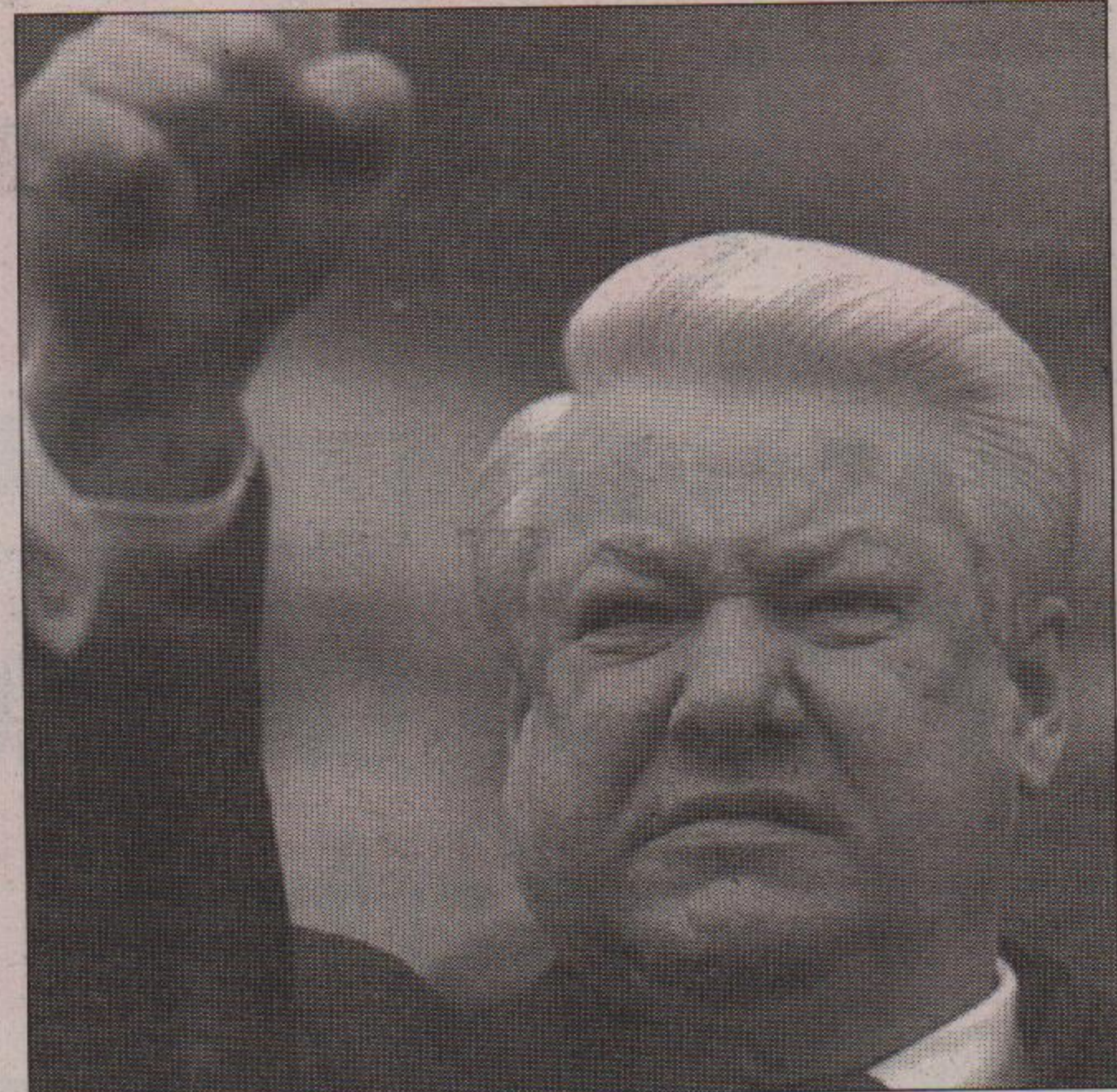
Two popular television journalists from the programme Look are now jobless because they made a more-or-less objective report of the battles in Moscow on Sunday 3 October.

There has been a big struggle to reopen 'Pravda' which will, perhaps, be in print again on Tuesday 2 November.

We have had a very big debate in the Party of Labour about what we should do in the forthcoming December elections.

According to moral standards it could be considered necessary to boycott these elections. After all, they are based on the killing of hundreds of people. However, from another point of view, the elections are a chance to make propaganda.

After many hours of discussion we took a decision to stand in order to put over our point of view. We looked for a common electoral bloc with Roy



Yeltsin's kind of rule creates fear

Medvedev's Socialist Party of Working People. I did not agree with this but went along with the common decision.

Then the SPWP formed a bloc with semi-monarchists and oil barons. We said we would not join such an alliance.

Reports that myself, Boris Kagarlitsky and others from the Party of Labour will be standing as part of this bloc are not true.

Our position now is that we will boycott these elections. Perhaps in the regional elections we will have a different position - this would be less immoral.

Why are we not standing our own candidates? Because aside from the trade unions the Party of Labour is very weak. The

leaders of the unions, under the onslaught of the government, were worried that the unions would be entirely destroyed. They decided that the unions would be under threat if they took part in the political struggle.

Last weekend an international round table ended in Moscow where questions of human rights and elections were discussed. International pressure is essential to help our struggle.

A committee for Human Rights in Russia has been set up in America. I understand a committee is to be set up in Britain. These committees will help us here.

Defend the Russian labour movement!

A COMMITTEE IS being organised in defence of the Russian labour movement.

An appeal is being circulated by Mark Osborn of the Alliance for Workers Liberty, Don Filtzer, Gus Fagan of Labour Focus on Eastern Europe and Bob Arnot for British labour movement activists to help set up the Committee to

Defend Russian Socialists and Labour Movement.

The aim is to launch an initiative which can help the hard-pressed Russian labour movement - irrespective of the views of a particular Russian union or workers' organisation.

For details of the Committee's plans contact Mark Osborn on 071-639 7965.

Canada: bad news behind Tory wipe-out

By Rhodri Evans

THE TORIES down from a parliamentary majority, with 169 seats, to just two seats!

Canada's general election result seems good. A closer look, however, shows something different.

The Tories ("Progressive Conservatives") were pushed out by new parties which are equally right-wing but which base themselves more narrowly and jealously on

Canada's two different communities - the Bloc Quebecois in French-speaking Quebec and the Reform Party in English-speaking western Canada. Canada's Labour Party, the New Democratic Party, lost ground.

An outright break-up of Canada is now much nearer, though still several steps ahead.

If the people of Quebec want to separate, then they should certainly be able to

do so; but it is vital (and it may be difficult) for the labour movement to keep links between Quebecois and Canadian workers.

The Quebec labour movement is already dominated by Quebec-only trade unions. If separation is followed by discrimination against the 20% English-speaking minority in Quebec and the substantial French-speaking minorities in some other parts of Canada, then divisions will be deepened.

Chesterfield Socialist Conference

Where strikes are "irrelevant"

By Ruth Cockroft

THIS YEAR'S Socialist Conference, in Chesterfield on 30-31 October, drew only 300 people, and only about 100 for the second day. The first Socialist Conference, in 1987, drew over 1000.

A workshop rather grandly entitled "political economy" was in fact about defending public services. We sat through an hour of platform speeches, including advice on "practical experience of implementing socialist policies" from the Cuban ambassador. Contributions from the floor were through questions written on slips and read by the chair.

Socialist Organiser supporters tried to make a contribution about the civil service strike on 5 November. We agitated with

the conference organisers that our speaker be taken, but were told that his points weren't relevant and that they did not know anything about the strike.

The discussion did, however, include the following exchange:

Conference attendee: Women love but men fall in love (with the land!)

Platform speaker: Men have difficulty learning to love (the land!)

Defeatism riddled this conference. Key contributions were made by members of the Democratic Left (ex Communist Party), who consider the future of "progressive" politics to be best safeguarded through coalition government.

A workshop on racism and fascism had been organised only as an afterthought and on the insistence of an individual. Some

people at it felt that it wasn't worth calling for a united anti-racist movement because no-one would listen.

A session on organisation and the future was heavily dominated by an incoherent denunciation of "Leninism" and undemocratic socialist organisations. Yet when a statement defining socialism was circulated as the basis on which the Socialist Movement Network could appeal for support, there was no vote on it and very little discussion.

The statement fails to call for common ownership of the means of production, and claims that socialism will be achieved through the self-organisation of the oppressed in general. All commitment to the self-emancipation of the working class has gone.

These people are simply lost!

Lobby Beackon's first council meeting!

TOWER Hamlets UNISON and other local organisations are building for a mass lobby of the first council meeting since the election of the BNP member Derek Beackon in Millwall. Ever since the BNP victory there has been a marked increase in racial tension in Tower Hamlets. In Bethnal Green, a flat was broken into and covered in racist graffiti and a pig's head nailed to the door after an Asian family had been to view the flat after having been offered it by the council. On the Isle of Dogs young Bengali children are having to go to school in a taxi after getting verbal and physical abuse. After the initial shock media interest after the by-election result has died away. Local people and trade unionists, however, feel the effect of having an elected fascist councillor. The local UNISON branch believes Beackon should be met with large protest lobbies every time he tries to put his racist policies across, whether that be in BNP meetings or the council chamber.

Lobby of council meeting
6pm Wednesday 10
November
Town Hall
Mulberry Place, E14

Ireland: open talks now!

AS NORTHERN IRELAND lurches towards civil war, the Tories indulge in stupid cant. Nothing could be more hypocritical than their pious horror at talking to Sinn Fein because they are "violent". Northern Ireland is built on violence against the majority of the Irish people, and directly on violence against the massive Catholic minority in Northern Ireland (now over 40%, and never less than 33%).

Instead of bold initiatives, they may well opt for a new experiment with internment - this time for both Protestants and Catholics. (In 1971, when internment was last used, it was applied at first only to Catholic-nationalists). Even from their own point of view this is, as Kevin McNamara, Labour's spokesperson on Northern Ireland, said, only a "quick fix".

No, Dublin and London should seize the opportunity offered by the Hume-Adams proposals.

Socialist Organiser believes that only working-class unity can ultimately solve Ireland's problems, North and South. The most terrible feature of Northern Ireland, now as for decades past, is that it works to disrupt and destroy working-class unity.

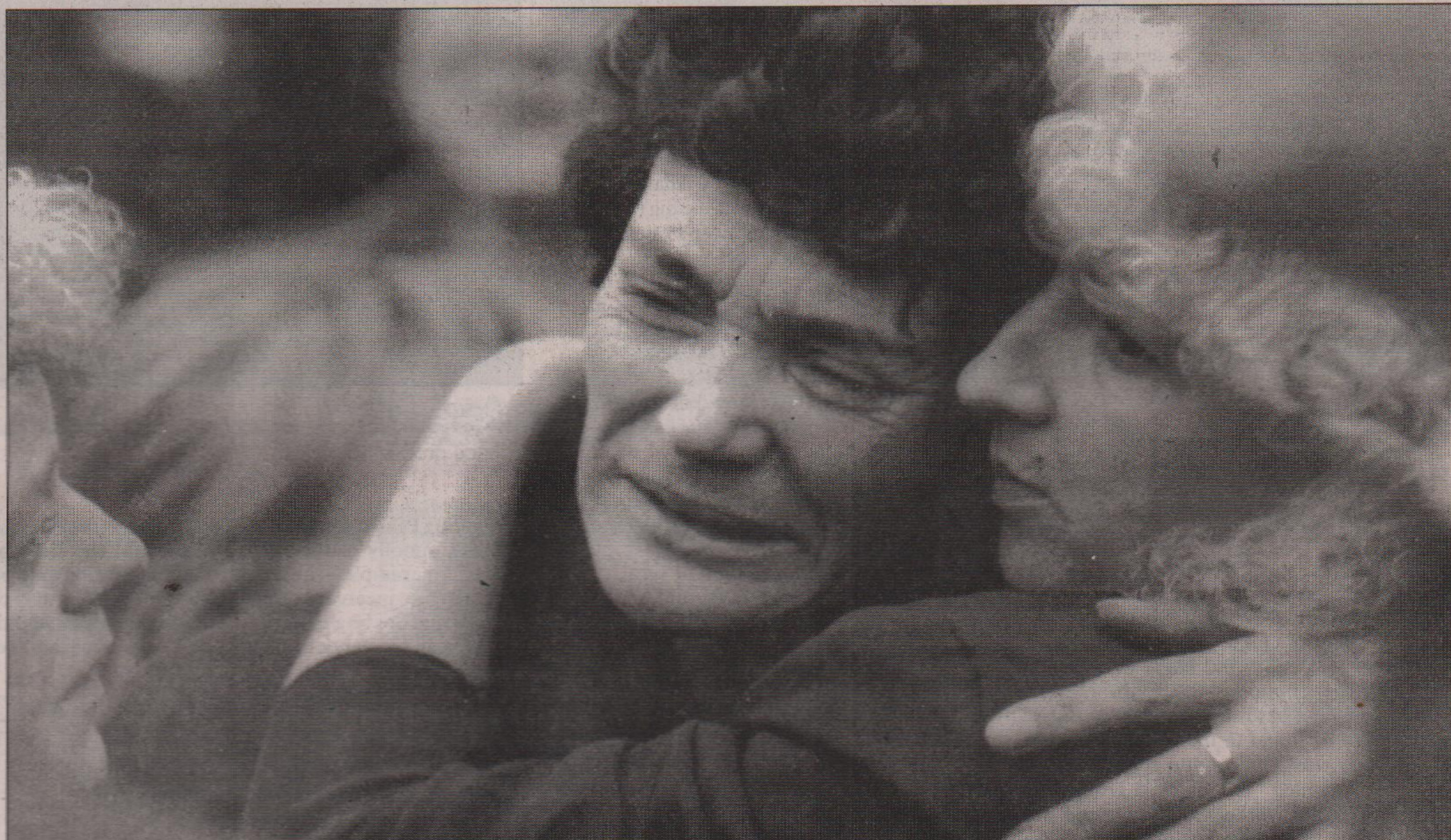
All class impulses, and even most generous human impulses across the communal divide, are stifled or drowned in blood. The first UFF victims after the Shankill Road bombings were two Catholic council workers. They were planning, with others, to come out on a protest strike that very afternoon against the Provisional IRA atrocity on the Shankill.

The tragic reality of Ireland is that, while socialists must work now for working-class unity at every possible level, however minimal, the main initiatives that can change the situation lie with Dublin and London, and with the dominant bourgeois and petty-bourgeois Green and Orange parties.

That is why the Hume-Adams proposals are important, and why the British and Dublin governments' refusal to seize this chance for peace is one more crime against the Irish people, and, in the first place, the Irish working class, Protestant and Catholic alike.

Northern Ireland has been in a condition of latent civil war for over two decades. Last week it lurched perceptibly out of the latency stage and towards the condition of active civil war.

RUC [police] chief Hugh Annesley is probably right that things are not



Women mourn after the Shankill Road bombing

yet out of the control of the police and the army. But they are less under control than for many years.

IRA slaughter by a bomb on the Protestant Shankill Road; calculated UDA/UFF mass murder of Catholics in a Co. Londonderry pub (they killed one Protestant, too) - that is Bosnia at an early stage. This is incipient communal war. Blow and counterblow can quickly escalate and multiply. The situation is very dangerous.

The IRA bomb which exploded prematurely in a Shankill Road fish shop killed nine people, some of them children, and of the bombers, 22 year old Thomas Begley. It triggered, and in the eyes of many Protestant-Unionists justified,

the savagery in the Co. Londonderry pub, and other sectarian killings.

"The Hume-Adams proposals are important, and the British and Dublin governments' refusal to seize this chance for peace is one more crime against the Irish people."

But the UFF's present campaign of sectarian slaughter - the killing of Catholics at random because they are Catholics - began months earlier. From the start of August up to the Shankill explosion, nine Catholics had been victims of sectarian assassinations. The UFF have publicly stated that their target is the "nationalist electorate" - that is, the whole Catholic population of Northern Ireland.

This campaign began in response to the Hume-Adams proposals for a settlement of the Northern Ireland conflict.

Gerry Adams, until 1992 Sinn Fein MP for West Belfast, is a leader of the Republican Movement of which the

IRA is part and which has the electoral support of one in three Northern Ireland Catholics. John Hume MP is the leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), the constitutional nationalist organisation which has the electoral support of two out of three Northern Ireland Catholics. There is bitter rivalry between these parties for Catholic/nationalist support.

For five months the party leaders have held private talks. Their proposals for peace have been passed on to the Dublin government, and by the Dublin government to London.

Hume, who is also an MEP, was one of the architects of the Anglo-Irish Agreement signed exactly eight years ago. He has a high reputation in Dublin, London, and Washington. The much-heralded Hume-Adams proposals - that is, proposals in part emanating from the IRA, and, by way of the very well-connected John Hume, proposals assumed to have both Dublin and Washington backing - have greatly alarmed and stirred up the Protestants. The UFF murder campaign is the result. (The UFF is the long-legal and recently banned UDA in openly sectarian guise).

What do Hume-Adams propose?

They want British to convene a round-table conference on the future of Northern Ireland and that Britain should bind itself in advance to accept anything this conference decides. The conference would include Sinn Fein.

So far there is nothing very new or exciting here. Britain long ago - in 1973 and again in 1985 - made declarations that it would accept a united Ireland if the Northern Ireland majority wanted it.

What is distinctive and new about the Adams-Hume proposals? Sinn Fein would only be invited to the conference after an IRA ceasefire had come into effect. Adams, who has been described as the "shogun" of the Northern Republicans, a combination of political and military leader, thereby committed himself to an IRA ceasefire.

More than that, the proposals of Hume and Adams include a prior commitment that any change in the present constitutional arrangement will require Protestant-Unionist consent. This in reality means Republican acceptance of a Protestant-Unionist veto on a united Ireland for the foreseeable future.

Continued on page 4

"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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WE SAY

Cut the hours, share the jobs!

Volkswagen car bosses in Germany plan to deal with declining markets by putting workers on a four day week, instead of cutting 30,000 jobs.

The bosses want 20% wage cuts with the four day week, to protect their profits, while the unions want to protect workers' living standards. But work-sharing, cutting the working week to allow jobs for all, is the right idea.

The jobs available in Britain should be shared out, by cutting the work week to 35 hours instead of having some people exhausted by 60 and 70 hour weeks and others idle. That would open the way for every one of the four million unemployed to get a job.

The bosses say that we can't afford it — in other words, it would cut into their profits.

But we can't afford four million jobless! We can't afford to have millions of people rotting in poverty and despair, many of them homeless. Cut the hours, share the jobs!

Labour ducks contracting-out fight

On 5 November civil service workers are striking against Government plans to hive off their jobs to private contractors.

The Labour Party should be supporting them — on general principle, and also because the Labour Party conference last month committed Labour to end "compulsory competitive tendering" (which forces council to farm out their work to private contractors) and return to direct employment of public-service workers.

That was one of several issues on which Labour's leaders leaned to the unions so as to smooth the way for their "one member, one vote" stitch-up.

Now they are ignoring what they committed themselves to. No Labour front-bencher has said a word to support the 5 November strike, or to promote the Labour conference policy against contracting-out.

Instead front-benchers like Mo Mowlam distance themselves from the unions with the claim that "our first priority is users, not workers".

This is a scandal. A political campaign by the Labour Party, linked with a trade-union campaign of industrial action, could beat Market Testing.

The issue could be linked with other aspects of the Tory assault on public services — rail privatisation, the Health Service, education — and this discredited government could be defeated.

Socialists should get in to the Labour Party and join the fight to call its leaders to account.

Socialist Worker and "Troops Out"

Everyone has heard of the well-known Sherlock Holmes story about "the dog that did not bark in the night".

Just as remarkable was the silence of Socialist Worker last week on "Troops Out of Ireland".

For many years SW has made "Troops Out" their point of honour. (They supported the troops when they first went into action, in 1969; that is another story). But "Troops Out" was nowhere to be found in their extensive coverage of Northern Ireland last week, unless you count an advert for a "pocket pamphlet" entitled "The Case for Troops Out".

They called for workers' unity, blamed Britain, and seemed to think that the Hume-Adams proposals were worth considering - but about "Troops Out" there was not a word.

Yet if SW's policy - Troops Out without a political settlement - makes any sense, then it must make sense in conditions of crisis. Otherwise it is just a bit of inconsequential "militant" demagoguery for quiet times - a bit of "fake-leftery" of the sort that hack Labour parliamentary politicians use to build an "image".

In fact the SWP, who are now beginning to call themselves "the socialists" (as if there were no other), use slogans like "Troops Out" the way the Labour Party uses catchphrases (on "law and order" now, for example) — to catch the winds of popularity and advantage.

They use slogans and ideas not as Marxists do — to convince, educate, guide, create and carve out a block of clear-headed opinion - but as mainstream politicians do. Their target audience — militant young people - is different, but their method in politics is the same.

The SWP is, of course, more primitive and less "scientific" than the Labour Party. The Labour Party leaders use opinion polls to find out what they should think, or pretend to think. The SWP relies on the "instinct" of its leader Tony Cliff to tell it what it should think, or pretend to think, at a given moment.

This is a fallible instrument. Thus, the SWP went through a semi-lunatic phase a year ago in which it called for "General Strike Now". That was soon rectified when "market research" proved it to have been a mistake!

On Ireland, a straight call for "Troops Out" right now would appear repulsively stupid to the people the SWP wants to recruit. But, never fear, it will be back, once again the badge of anti-imperialist machismo, just as soon as things quieten down. That is the SWP's style.

The dog that did not bark in the night? No — the dog from a Walt Disney cartoon who runs into a corner and hides his head under his paws when danger looms, and then swaggers around barking loudly when things go quiet again.

Socialist Worker will bark for "Troops Out" again — when it is safe and cheap.

Ireland: open talks now!

From page 3

HUME AND Adams apparently accept that the Unionist parties would initially boycott the conference they propose, but reckon that faced with such a conference, convened by Britain against a background of an IRA ceasefire, the Unionists would "come in".

What would happen then is not, of course, clear, but an immediate unitary Irish state with Protestant majority consent is inconceivable. Adams knows that.

Thus the significance of the Hume-Adams proposals is the willingness by Adams, representing at least a big faction of the Republican leadership, to accept an IRA ceasefire before negotiations and the principle of Irish unity only by consent and not by coercing the Protestant-Unionists.

Britain and Dublin would call the conference, but, if the Unionists "came in", its essential function would be intra-Irish, Unionist-nationalist, dialogue — in which, to repeat, the Republicans would abjure coercion and in effect accept the Unionist right of veto.

As we have said, a British declaration that it would accept whatever the Irish conference decided is not new, but here it would function as a mechanism for initiating the intra-Irish negotiations.

In effect the Hume-Adams scheme would mean Sinn Fein abandoning — or making a big step towards abandoning — the underlying posture which it inherits from the old pre-1914 Home Rule party — the demand that Britain should coerce the Irish minority to accept what the Irish majority wants.

These are indeed tremendously important proposals and, on Gerry Adams's part, departures and commitments. Whether Adams can "deliver" is another question.

Adams can cite venerable Republican precedent for such an approach to the Protestants



The intention of the Shankill bomb could not have had much less of a harmful effect on the "peace process".

— Padraig Pearse, leader with James Connolly of the 1916 Rising, for example — but it is virtually inconceivable that there would not be a minority Republican resistance to such ideas.

The Shankill bomb must have been the work of such people. What happened was not — the dead IRA man and his badly-wounded companion are convincing proof of it — intended to happen. But the intention — that a number of UDA leaders should be blown up — could not have had much less of a harmful effect on the "peace process" Adams was working for.

(The alternative, perhaps too Machiavellian, explanation would be that the intention was to detonate and infuriate the Protestants, to the extent that Britain is compelled to act despite them and against them, in line with the Hume-Adams proposals).

In response to the Hume-

Adams ideas the Unionist politicians and the London and Dublin governments propose abstract declarations of principle and the demand that the IRA cease its military operations and then wait, perhaps years, for negotiations to begin. This cuts loose from the hopeful dynamic of the Hume-Adams talks - Republican commitment to an immediate ceasefire and immediate cooperation in seeking a solution.

It is absurd to think that there can be a solution without the Republicans. Socialist Organiser has repeatedly argued that the Republicans should call off their military campaign - a large part of which is, in fact, a sectarian campaign against Protestants: last week, for example, they shot a contractor, the latest in a horrible series of cold-blooded killings of men engaged in maintenance work on state institutions.

But, realistically, how is the military campaign to be called off? John Hume is right that even a half-serious Provisional IRA willingness to stop its military campaign in return for an immediate place at the negotiating table is the "best chance for peace in twenty years".

Why do the governments turn it down? To make anything of it would require the governments to face down the Unionists, and would maybe

lead to a serious eruption of Unionist violence. London and Dublin have got used to the perennial level of "acceptable" IRA violence. In addition, the Tories now feel dependent on

the Ulster Unionists at Westminster. This is not the time for brave intentions!

Yet facing down Unionist violence would make sense if it were part of a process of getting a settlement which most Unionists would ultimately accept. They would accept a solution that would protect their

right to control their own affairs and would not coerce them into a united Ireland against their wishes.

These things — guarantees that would placate the Protestants and remove from them the threat of becoming in a united Ireland the sort of submerged minority which the Catholics were and are in Northern Ireland — are all, it seems, conceded in advanced in the Hume-Adams proposals. Facing down the hardline Protestants in the interests of a democratic settlement would lead Northern Ireland's people out of 20 years of bloody, simmering, incipient civil war — and there may be no other way out of it except all-out civil war and repartition.

Facing down the hardline Protestants in the interests of a democratic settlement would lead Northern Ireland's people out of 20 years of bloody, simmering, incipient civil war

Ireland: the socialist answer

This pamphlet from *Socialist Organiser* explains the historical background and what has happened since 1969. It argues for a federal united Ireland, explains what's wrong with other common "solutions", and includes debate. All for £1 plus 29 pence postage from WL Publications, PO Box, London SE15 4NA.

One million public sector jobs face Tory axe

At least a million public sector workers could lose their jobs in the next few years if the Tories manage to get away with their plans to extend massively the "contracting out" of public services to private companies.

Wages will be driven down. Full-time workers will become part-time. Insecurity will increase as groups of workers bid down each other's terms and conditions in a desperate attempt to keep their jobs. The unions could be seriously weakened.

This Friday, 5 November, the Civil Service unions are organising a one-day, national strike against "Market Testing", the name given to contracting-out by Civil Service bosses.

Trudy Saunders, DH HQ, and Mark Serwotka, Sheffield DSS, look at the issues.

A political attack

THE MASS 'MARKET TESTING' and contracting out of public services is more than 'just' an industrial attack on all working class people. It is a political attack on all working class people best understood in the context of the wider Tory attack on the public sector:

- The privatisation of British Coal, British Railways, the London buses, Parcelforce and sections of the civil service.
- The driving home of education reforms resulting in a highly selective education system and big job losses.
- The consolidation of the NHS 'internal market' — destroying services, closing hospitals, and slashing front-line jobs while bureaucratising health care.
- The continued redefinition of local authority social service departments as purchasers rather than providers of non-health social and community care.
- The break up of the housing role of local authorities, the continued forcing up of council house rents, and the moves to attack the role of housing associations.

The mass contracting out of public services is an integral and perhaps the most vital part of the Tories attempt to recast British society in the image of a more unforgiving, more savage capitalism, befitting the decrepit, uncompetitive condition of the British economy.

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 mater-

ial basis for labour politics will be substantially undermined.

- And, for the service users and taxpayers in whose name this "counter-revolution" against the welfare state is being undertaken? Worse services at greater cost!

This is the very real danger, but it is not pre-ordained that the Tories should win.

For the Tories, money gives the power to choose

IN A SPEECH TO THE Adam Smith Institute just after the last election Major promised to "shift the balance of choice in society more radically than ever before into the hands of ordinary people... In the 1990s... we mean to empower... the least well off — those most dependent on public services... [the privatisation to which Major is] most committed is the privatisation of choice."

Major proclaimed deregulation, competitive tendering and privatisation as the 'slings and stones' with which he was empowering the people.

The speech was astonishing for its presumption (from a man presiding over crippling interest rates, record unemployment, record housing repossessions, record homelessness) and banality.

Banal because the 'promises' are simply undeliverable in a capitalist society.

Major mentioned 'choice' more than twenty times in his speech, but mere repetition cannot alter the basic facts of capitalist economy. The hungry may choose to eat and the homeless to have a home, but without the money to buy those things — or a commitment to collectively delivering them — their choices remain wishful thinking.

Contracting out public services will not alter that basic fact one iota. On the contrary, insofar as it throws more people out of a job and drives down the living standards of others, it will lessen 'choice'.

The *Independent* hit the nail on the head when it commented on Major's speech: "...today we report the case of a sick child who languished on a trust hospital's waiting list for months — until her one day her father offered the asking fee of £8,500 and, presto, his daughter had her operation in a



Strikes like that at the British Library (above) can stop Market Testing, but it must be national.

matter of days; a private operation but performed in the same trust hospital, where she recovered in a public ward alongside NHS patients. This demonstrates a truism, that in a market economy, the mechanism that provides the power to choose is money." Quite so.

Undermining the unions

WITH THE DECLINE OF manufacturing industry, the public sector is now a bigger base for trade unionism than the private sector. The Tories are determined to break up the public sector "monopolies" in order to break the unions based on them.

Trade unions which have recruited and organised public sector workers on a relatively easy basis will find things a lot harder with private contractors who are vehemently anti-union and whose contracts are dependent on a cheap, docile workforce.

Derecognition and the breaking up of trade unions has been a central feature of contracting out to date. Indeed, in some cases, like civil service computing, it seems to have been the major reason for contracting out. Even where work remains in-house the possibility of contracting out squeezes serious trade unionism.

The day after the last general election the *Financial Times* stated explicitly "In practice the ability of unions to hold individual councils to ransom has been considerably weakened by Compulsory Competitive Tendering. Council or health authority manual workers must now work to targets they agree in contracts with the employer. If they take industrial action and fail to hit those targets, they may lose the contracts to the private sector. In the 1991 Liverpool strike, the council's manual workers abandoned their action before the white-collar staff, after losing some contracts to outside companies. It is

unlikely that white-collar staff will be able to hold out as long as they did in Liverpool with the imminent extension of Compulsory Competitive Tendering to their jobs. The formation of UNISON, increasing as it does the potential for abuse of union power, makes it essential that Compulsory Competitive Tendering should continue in the public services."

Don't rely on in-house bids

RELIANCE ON IN-HOUSE bids is a recipe for massive job loss and a savage worsening of employment conditions. The whole experience of the council and NHS manual unions tells us that even when in-house bids are won it is usually on the basis of job cuts and worse conditions.

Serious trade unionists will place no reliance on in-house bids; they will avoid involvement with in-house bids.

The branch-by-branch, bid-by-bid approach leads you up a blind alley. Naturally members will rely on in-house bids if there is no alternative defence. The task of the unions is to provide that defence.

Can we rely on EC law?

CAN WE RELY ON EC law? The idea that we can is most aggressively argued by NUCPS and the old NUPE, now part of UNISON. It is a complicated question. Union bureaucrats are substituting reliance on the Acquired Rights Directive for an active membership campaign.

This must be rejected: it is not even clearly established that EC law will apply to the majority of contracted out services!

Nevertheless, while arguing for a serious campaign by the members,

activists should not surrender to a knee-jerk rejection of the use of the law as a tactic — a tactic subordinate to, and flowing from, the campaign among the membership.

Women will suffer most

WOMEN ARE THE GREAT majority of the basic and low-paid grades throughout the public sector. Mass Market Testing and contracting out will significantly narrow women's employment opportunities while driving down their pay levels even further.

The 'equal opportunities' policies negotiated by the public sector unions will be eradicated by mass contracting out. Agreements on part-time working; job-sharing; special training programmes; creche and summer school play schemes will all go.

Market Testing will further widen inequalities in rates of pay and total paid income, working hours, statutory rights, contributory state pensions, state benefits, holidays and occupational pensions.

A survey last year of Barnsley Council showed 65% of the workforce to be female, 77% on low or poverty pay. One quarter of Barnsley's workforce is part-time, overwhelmingly women.

By reducing the hourly rates, the hours worked per week, the number of paid weeks per year (eliminating all-year wages or 'retainers' for school cleaners and dinner staff during school holidays, for example), and refusing paid annual, sick and maternity leave, contractors have ruthlessly driven down the living standards of part-time workers.

By removing them from the protection of employment laws the contractors have effectively casualised a whole layer of of the workforce, making them especially vulnerable to dismissal.

Loosen up before it's too late

SHOCKING figures on the sex life of Americans have cast new doubt on the moral fibre of the nation. According to a recent survey 94% of American couples who live together are married; and on average they make love just over once a week.

Only 3-4% of married people have extra-marital sex in any year, and about 85% of people remain monogamous during marriage. 89% had one or no sexual partners in the previous year. The number of active gay men seems to be about 2%.

Something should clearly be done about this appalling state of affairs, or rather lack of affairs. Such an amount of sexual repression could clearly have a very damaging effect on the very fabric of American society — a lot more people should learn to loosen up with a few drinks in a singles bar before it's too late.

FEELING depressed about still being the youngest member of your ward Labour Party after 15 years? Angry at the Labour Party bureaucracy for closing down the Young Socialists, and driving away youth? Revolted by the clowns who run the National Union of Students under the Labour Students banner, and put anyone with an ounce of socialism off Labour? Well, take consolation in this week's amazing but completely useless fact. Although the average age of Labour Party membership is 48, that of Conservative members is 63.

With life expectancy at 76, it looks like 2006 could be a good year for Labour.

AUS Air Force inquiry reports that one of their state-of-the-art F-16C fighter's seat belts got caught on a control sticks while the pilot was relieving himself in a specially designed hi-tech dehydrated sponge.

The report stated "officials were aware of the possibility of stick interference problems in conjunction with the use of piddle-packs." The pilot ejected safely. The state of

GRAFFITI

VIVELA
REVOLUCION

By Cyclops

his trousers on landing is not known.

BBRITAIN'S first self-styled "school for gifted children", Newton Preparatory School in Battersea, has run into problems. Parents complain that teaching is mainly cramming students to pass exams and not the sort of schooling that creates "full and rounded" individuals. MENZA has withdrawn its support. This is good, coming from an organisation of people who think themselves clever for learning how to score highly in IQ tests and then join a club of like minded people!

But what is a "gifted child". Aren't all children gifted, if they are given a chance to develop? The definition of "gifted" that the school uses is very loose. A child is gifted if their parents can afford fees of £1,650 a term.

California's state government has a bold and innovative solution to the problem of pollution around Los Angeles, where acidic smog is again becoming a feature of everyday life. Instead of fining or closing down factories that pollute the atmosphere, smokestack industries will have to buy pollution licences. This apparently will encourage them to save money by adopting cleaner technology and avoiding the necessity of buying licences. In the meantime the authorities have a nice little earner and the inhabitants of Los Angeles have an atmosphere that is about as healthy as surfing on the sewerage outflow.

The state authorities are, it is understood, now contemplating the extension of this principle by licensing violent crime. The fee will be increased until the gang members realise that crime doesn't pay.

Among my souvenirs...

PRESS GANG

THE INDEPENDENT TODAY
SUNDAY PRESS
THE GUARDIAN

By Jim Denham

ON TUESDAY 2 November the *Daily Mirror* was 90 years old. As I write, the official celebrations have not yet begun, but we have been promised "a brilliant 12-part souvenir" to treasure and pass on to our children and grandchildren.

Now, I'm all in favour of youngsters being given a sense of history, and perhaps the *Mirror's* souvenir issues will prove to be a useful educational tool.

"Put down that Super-Nintendo Virtual Reality device and come over here by old Granddad," I'll croak in my best Burl Ives voice. The little rascals will gather round and I'll bring out my carefully preserved collection of *Mirror* souvenir issues.

"Look at these, kids! A living history of ninety glorious years, captured in sensational pictures and startling words by Britain's most important popular newspaper!"

"What is a newspaper, Granddad?"

"Well, back in the last century, when I was a young man, peo-

ple used to buy them every day to find out what was going on in the world."

"And was the *Daily Mirror* an especially important newspaper, Granddad?"

"Well, yes, in many ways it was."

"Why?"

"Well, for a start, it was one of the very few newspapers that supported the Labour Party. For many years it attempted to provide working-class people with serious news and comment, written in a popular and accessible style. In the 1960s it had a circulation of 5¼ million — the largest ever achieved by a British newspaper. Fine writers like Bill Conner, Donald Zec, John Pilger and Paul Foot worked for it. These souvenir issues

"In 1984 a very bad man called Robert Maxwell bought the *Mirror* and turned it into a tool for his own megalomania."

are a unique contemporary history of what is now known as the epoch of war and revolution!"

"So what happened to the *Daily Mirror*, Granddad?"

"It's very sad, kids. In 1984, a very bad man called Robert Maxwell bought the *Mirror* and turned it into a tool for his own megalomania. The *Mirror* journalists and staff were all completely intimidated by this evil man and the paper became a laughing-stock."

"Is that why it doesn't exist any more, Granddad?"

"Not exactly.

Funnily enough, the *Mirror* survived the Maxwell years, and in 1991 the evil madman jumped off his yacht and died. It was the person who took over then, Mr Montgomery, who destroyed the paper."

"Was he a bad man, too?"

"Well, not as bad as Maxwell."

"But he did destroy the *Mirror*?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"It's a long story, kids and I'm getting tired now. I'll tell you another day. You can get back to your Virtual Reality game now."

FORMER *MIRROR* editor, Roy Greenslade, has been analysing the pronouncements of David Montgomery, and he's come up with a very instructive guide to 'Monty speak' for the *Oldie* magazine. Here are some examples:

- *The editors of all titles will remain in their positions:* a few weeks later, the editors of the *Daily Mirror* and *People* were fired.

- *I have definitely no plans for job cuts:* 600 sackings.

- *I will continue to recognise trade unions:* no consultation over sackings, agreements torn up, union representatives removed.

- *The editorial independence of our newspapers will be preserved:* David Banks appointed as *Mirror* editor.

- *The staff are happy:* Paul Foot, Anne Robinson, Alistair Campbell and, now, *Mirror* deputy editor, Phil Smith, resign in disgust.

- *Advancement based on favouritism has been removed:* dozens of Montgomery acolytes from *Today* appointed to top positions at the *Mirror*.

- *The newspaper is now run by professionals, it is not run by egomaniacs:* no translation required.

Yes means yes, too

WOMEN'S EYE

By Jane Edwards

THE RECENT press coverage of the alleged date rape case at King's College has raised a lot of questions regarding women's sexuality and what constitutes rape.

As Jean Lane's article pointed out, one issue is that male sexuality is portrayed as uncontrollable. The traditional wisdom is that, once aroused, a man can't stop, and that if a woman "leads him on" how can he be expected to stop? This is used to blame women for rape and to excuse the behaviour of men.

It is true that if a woman says no she means no. But the No Means No Campaign which is currently being run in some colleges makes some impor-

tant mistakes.

Firstly, it ignores the fact that if women say no it doesn't mean rape won't happen.

Secondly, there are times when women are not in a position to say no because of fear and economic dependence on men. The "No Means No" agitation can also be used, despite the good intentions of those involved in the campaign, by those who believe that women shouldn't have sex and should be protected from it.

In colleges the No Means No Campaign concentrates on getting more porters, stopping "outsiders" getting in, employing more security guards, etc.

Such demands can be used to justify the actions of those who think that rules should be introduced which stop people from inviting people back to their rooms, i.e.

which tries to stop people from having sex at all.

It seems to me that in all the discussion which has followed the recent date rape trial, an important aspect has been missed. The case is being used to create a moral panic about young people having sex. It was portrayed as out-

rageous that these young women are getting drunk, having a good time and, even worse, having sex.

Right wingers can go on to

suggest that young people's lives, especially when in college, should be policed and controlled, and often No Means No Campaigns play into the hands of such people.

While it is important that we campaign for safer environments for women, and show that date rape is wrong and that women shouldn't be blamed when it happens, we also need to stress that "yes means yes".

Young women should have the right to have sex when they want with whomever they want, and young people should have sexual freedom.

In America the moral backlash against sexual freedom is much more advanced. We need to ensure that we fight against such moral controls on sexuality before these views become more widespread and place even more restrictions on young people's sexuality.

"It was portrayed as outrageous that young women get drunk, have a good time and have sex."

Students demonstrate in Manchester

Defending our unions

Karen, London

ON WEDNESDAY 3 November students are demonstrating in Manchester against government attacks on student unions and on the National Union of Students as a national organisation.

The funding, democracy and independence of student unions is under attack by the Tory government. Not only students, but all young people should feel angry about this. It is part of the general Tory offensive against young people.

Student unions are responsible for many of the services which enable students in higher education to enjoy their time at college — entertainments, the bar, welfare for students with difficulties. Student unions argue and sometimes fight within the colleges for more rights for students.

In Further Education colleges student unions are less well developed, but a FE student union can provide many of the services available in higher education colleges.

There are many local student unions which are not well developed, but the fact remains that, at present, student unions have a right to exist, to receive funding and to run their affairs democratically, functioning as students in that college decide they should.



Students must demonstrate to save their Union. Manchester 1991

Why is the government attacking student unions? Not because it hates students but because in the past students have posed a big threat to government policies.

At present all students, including FE college students, are automatically members of their union. The National Union of Students, if it organised students to fight the Tories, could make a huge impact.

Students have run many political cam-

paings, on issues mainly of concern to students, such as the student loans campaign, and on general, social issues, such as the campaign against the poll tax.

The government does not like the idea of young people who disagree with their policies being organised and able to stand up for themselves.

This attack is not simply another government attack on a union, but also an authoritarian attempt to gag and silence young people!

Get involved in your union!

If you are at college, find out what it is doing about the Tory attacks. Even if you are not (or not yet) at college, look out for the campaign and give it your support.

Remember that this government is steadily and relentlessly destroying many of the rights and benefits young people have in society now. Don't let them get away with silencing us and destroying our organisation!

Support civil service workers!

Alison, Sheffield

NEXT TIME you are waiting for ages in a benefit queue or your housing benefit cheque is weeks late, don't just moan — think about how you can fight back!

This week 40,000 civil service workers will be striking against the government's attempts to "market test" their jobs. Market Testing means that the services provided by these workers will be tested purely according to their "cost efficiency", rather than how well they can respond to the needs of claimants. It will also mean worse wages and working conditions for civil service workers.

This strike is about the government's attacks on the benefit system as a whole, the same attacks that leave 16-18 year olds without benefits, the same attacks that pick on single parents through the Child Support Act.

Currently the unemployed and youth trainees have few ways of organising against these government attacks. That's where we have to look to the workers in the public sector.

Their trade unions are strong and able to organise effective action. The workers' jobs mean they are aware of how the government's changes are driving people into

conditions of poverty and desperation.

So when you turn up at the dole

office to sign on this Friday, don't be pissed off when it's shut. Join the picket lines and show your soli-

darity for the DSS workers. Their fight is ours and they've taken action that can change the system!

Bigots of the week

BIGOTS OF the week are husband and wife team, Sir Nicholas and Lady Fairbairn. Sir Nicholas has said: "I don't think a husband can rape his wife", and that marriage is a "bed and board contract".

Now Lady Fairbairn has been quoted in the Mirror (30 October) backing up her husband and adding: "A lot of women deserve to be raped... it is not fair on a man if a woman undresses and then changes her mind at the last minute... once a man is sexually aroused it is quite difficult to stop, isn't it?"

Lady Fairbairn said a lot of people agreed with her husband's views. "I have just been to have my hair done and everyone was laughing hysterically. They all thought it was frightfully funny".

The fact that this Victorian rubbish is still being spouted by anyone is bad enough, but Sir Nicholas Fairbairn is a Tory MP, an ex-Law Minister and a QC. How many Tory bigots and members of the legal establishment still think like this?

Everyone has the right to control their own body. It's the most basic right. The idea that women 'ask for rape' is like saying people ask to be murdered.

The idea that wives are the possessions of husbands is thousands of years old. It is why the socialist pioneer Frederick Engels described bourgeois, Victorian marriages as "legal prostitution".

Anyone who supports basic human rights must oppose dinosaurs like the Fairbairns. We should demand the removal from the legal system of those who share their vicious ideas.



Victorian rubbish

7

YOUTH
FIGHTBACK

Rebellion

Youth Fightback is...

... the voice of revolutionary socialist youth. This page is separately edited.

Editor: Mark Sandell

Phone: 071-639 7967

for details of our activity.

Letters and articles to Youth Fightback c/o PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Ireland:
how can youth unite?

Richie, West Belfast

T

HE ATROCITIES of the last week have brought tension, fear and terror to the people of Northern Ireland. Life in West Belfast is very different to how I've ever known it. Emptied streets and lifeless pubs make Belfast like a ghost town.

The rampage of the Provos and Loyalists has left many people too afraid to cross their door. This is a very real effect which never seems to be mentioned when the media deal with the 'problems' of the six counties.

Hugh Annersley, Chief Constable of the RUC, tells us that the situation is under control. Tell that to the families of the nearly 25 murdered, and countless others injured in the last week! The politicians have failed us. The British troops fuel the situation.

Where do working-class youth on both sides of the divide look? The lack of debate on this issue is a big factor in blocking progress.

Youth Fightback and the AWL jointly are holding a day of socialist debate at Queen's University, Belfast, Students' Union on 20 November, to discuss how we can have peace in Northern Ireland.

You can find out more details by telephoning Mark on 071-639 7965, or writing to: PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

1917: the triumph

Defending our October!

By Sean Matgamna

"HISTORY is, in the main, written by the victors." "History is only current politics read backwards." "History is no more than a tale agreed upon." Three well-known statements, two of them self-consciously cynical, all of them true, or partly true.

Our history — the history of the oppressed, of the exploited, of the working class, of the common people — is as a rule written by our enemies. What we did or tried to do is misrepresented and misconstrued in line with the entrenched, self-serving orthodoxies of our enemies.

The true records are distorted or obliterated by suppression and by selection. Liberators thus become dictators and emancipators, peon-makers and enslavers. Tales are agreed upon.

Thus we learn to see ourselves and our own people of the past only through *their* eyes.

So it is with the Russian working-class revolution of October 25 1917 [November 7 in the modern calendar].

Led by a party of selfless and honest women and men — the Bolshevik Party — the Russian working class, backed by the peasants, seized control of society from the capitalists and aristocrats, from the money lords and the land lords. This was, for all but those who lived by robbery and exploiting the people, a profoundly liberating revolution.

It was perhaps the greatest democratic movement in history — and certainly the most successful. Never before and never since has there been political democracy as profound, responsive and flexible as that organised by the Russian workers through their "soviets" (workers' councils).

Never before and never since has political democracy been pushed through the barriers of class rule and private property into a new dimension — economic democracy. Never before — though the working class held power in the city of Paris for six weeks in 1871 — had the working class taken, held and consolidated power.

In those great days of the Russian revolution the lying press of the money lords and land lords of the entire world tried to bury the democratic, liberating, emancipating truth of the workers' revolution under a mountain of lies. Lying atrocity stories, mockery, patronising contempt — stark class hatred in all its keys and tunes — defamed the great revolution. Socialism was said to be "impossible", "utopian".

Then, in the 1920s, when the Stalinist counter-revolution triumphed, strangling the revolution of the working class, while maintaining state collectivised property — in reality the property of the bureaucratic ruling elite — the lies about October took on a new character.

The so-called USSR, a grotesque tyranny and a grim mockery of the socialism its ruling class still proclaimed as a flag of convenience, became the lies about October. Now the great anti-socialist lie was the lie that this Stalinist system really was socialism — *the only possible socialism*. That was what the Stalinists said; that was what the bourgeois propagandists eagerly agreed to.

The Russian police state was not only living socialism, but the true and necessary continuation of the Russian revolution. So said Stalinists and bourgeois anti-socialists in a strange chorus of lies and self-deception.

Today, after the collapse of European Stalinism, that lie is still in place. The bourgeoisie have taken exclusive ownership of the old Stalinist lies — the lies of the bureaucratic victors over the Russian working class, and the dirty politics they read backwards into a history that was not theirs but ours.

The great lies of Stalinism, which buried the Bolshevik revolution, are still alive, still fed by the western bourgeoisie and by those in the labour movement who should know better.

The fight against these lies, and for the truth about the October revolution is one of the central tasks of honest socialists now.

Our real history is a precious part of our class consciousness. The Russian revolution was the single greatest event in our history. We must defend the truth about that great, emancipatory, democratic revolution.

Max Shachtman did just that in 1950, and uniquely, for he did it in a debate with Alexander Kerensky, the Prime Minister Lenin and Trotsky had chased out of St. Petersburg 34 years earlier!

The text here is a summary of the debate published in *Labor Action*, the weekly paper of the Independent Socialist League. As far as we know the verbatim text was never published.

Now, after the collapse of Stalinism, 76 years after October, more than 60 years after the victory of the Stalinist counter-revolution, it is not fashionable or immediately profitable to "defend October". But there will be another "October". Preserving the memory of October 1917 will help bring it nearer.

SELDOME DOES history record the former head of a government, deposed by social revolution, facing up in an open debate 34 years later to a modern representative of the same ideological current which swept him from power. This was the situation in the 8 February debate at the University of Chicago where Max Shachtman confronted Alexander Kerensky, the head of the regime which was overthrown by the great Russian revolution.

To recall to consciousness all the relevant facts of that vast revolution and vindicate its democratic and socialist aims and achievements, Shachtman, national chairman of the Independent Socialist League, brought a clearly defined and thoroughly Marxist appreciation of the meaning of democracy; Alexander Kerensky, erstwhile president of the short-lived Russian Provisional Government and self-styled "arch-democrat", brought no understanding whatsoever of democracy, substituting for that lack his own garbled version of historical facts and a relentless penchant for reiterating fraudulent quotations from Lenin. Indeed, how could a "democrat" proceed otherwise who could not even explain publicly that he was not put in office by popular election!

The intervening years since the revolution have witnessed the rise in Russia of the totalitarian, bureaucratic oligarchy of Stalinism. Grabbing onto this bare historical fact Kerensky sought to bury the anti-democratic crimes of his own regime by pointing an accusing finger at Lenin and the Bolsheviks as those responsible for Stalin's monstrous despotism. Shachtman thus faced a double task in this debate, one familiar enough to genuine socialists: that of establishing historical truth against the combined opposition of both capitalist and Stalinist falsifiers of the past 34 years.

This is the reason that Shachtman, in opening the discussion, found it necessary to remark: "The Stalinist regime never slackens in its efforts to portray itself as the legitimate successor of the Bolshevik Revolution. It needs this great authority to help befuddle the thinking of people and

to maintain itself in power... It came into power as the result of a counter-revolution which systematically destroyed not only every single one of the great achievements of the Bolshevik Revolution but likewise exterminated all its founders, builders and defenders.

"To conceal and suppress this incontrovertible fact, the Stalinist regime has established the biggest lie factory in all history. It does not, to be sure, have the exclusive monopoly in the work of falsifying and slandering the Bolshevik Revolution. In this work it is given signal assistance by most of its political opponents. Yet I must admit that it excels them all in the scope and depth and intensity of its labour. Indeed it has been so successful in them and so ably seconded by falsifiers and muddlers out of the camp of its opponents... that the truth is today wrapped up in obscurity so far as most people are concerned."

Scouting the idea that the evening's discussion on "Was the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 Democratic?" was of merely historical interest, Shachtman indicated its vital relationship to the most important social and political question of our time, the answer to which will determine conclusively the future of society. Formulated by Lenin, the leader of Bolshevism, that question is: the working class cannot attain socialism except through the fight for democracy, and democracy cannot be fully realised without the fight for socialism.

FOLLOWING is a running summary and digest of the presentations and rebuttals of the two speakers. The digest of Shachtman's presentation is based on his written notes.

[Shachtman] "One must judge a revolution out of the circumstances from which it sprang.

"The social structure of czarism, the most reactionary and outlived in Europe, was in a state of complete collapse. The imperialist war was bleeding the country white; a consciousness of the futility of continuing it deepened not only among the people at home but also among the soldiers at the front. At the top in official and court circles, bigotry, corruption and every conceivable form of social and intellectual leprosy was eating into the regime. At the front, a bloodletting that was as useless as it was incredible; at home a veritable orgy of war-profiteering among the capitalist classes and an unendurable growth of hunger among the working classes.

"In February the czarist regime appeared to be the most powerful in the world, with the world's biggest army at its disposal, with a subject people at once docile and impotent. Shortly after, the regime was overthrown by the same people and the same army.

"It was an imposing example to all statesmen and politicians that the patience of the people is not inexhaustible, and that once they are determined to rise in the struggle for liberty, for their aspirations, they stand on no ceremony, on no formalities. They take action directly and stop waiting for the promises of their well-wishers to be fulfilled in some distant and indefinite future. The example was also instructive to



Bolshevik troops

statesmen and politicians capable of learning from the people. As it soon turned out, not many of them are capable of learning very much.

"Tonight we are discussing democracy, the rule of the sovereign people. Democracy does not consist in imposing upon the people what their rulers by themselves decide is a good thing for the people. It consists in the free expression of the desires of the people and their ability to realise these desires through institutions manned by their freely-chosen representatives.

"What then did the people who had just put an end to czarist rule want? It would be a bold man who contended that two opinions are possible on this score.

"They wanted (1) an end to the imperialist war; (2) the convocation of a national, democratically representative Constituent Assembly; (3) an end to the rule of the predatory landlords and a distribution of land among the peasants; (4) a radical change in industry beginning with the eight-hour work day and the assuring of the beginning of the end of completely arbitrary rule of industry by the capitalist class, by the establishment of workers' control in industry; (5) the right of national self-determination for the nationalities oppressed by czarism.

"Not a single one of these desires is, by itself, the equivalent of socialism. Every single one of the demands of the Russian people was democratic through and through. And yet, as we shall see, they required a socialist revolution for their realisation.

"Virtually from the first day the revolution established what were tanta-



Max Shachtman

h of democracy



Chronology

• 1917 •

February

Workers' demonstrations overthrow Czar. Provisional Government formed under Prince Lvov. Petrograd workers' soviet formed, under Menshevik leadership.

March

First all-Russian conference of soviets.

April

Lenin returns to Petrograd. Publishes *April Theses*, arguing for "all power to the soviets". Wins Bolsheviks to this idea.

May

Trotsky returns to Petrograd from the USA, and starts working in alliance with Bolsheviks.

June

First all-Russian Congress of Soviets.

July

July Days: massive street demonstrations in Petrograd against the Provisional Government. Bolsheviks argue for restraint, because Petrograd workers are way ahead of the rest of the country, but join the demonstrations and try to keep them peaceful.

Prince Lvov resigns, Kerensky appointed as premier. Witch-hunt against Bolsheviks; Lenin has to flee to Finland. Trotsky joins Bolshevik party.

August

Attempt at coup by Czarist general Kornilov. Bolsheviks take the initiative in defending the limited gains of the revolution so far.

September

Bolsheviks gain majority in Petrograd and Moscow soviets. Trotsky elected president of Petrograd soviet.

October

9th: Lenin comes to Petrograd to persuade party to go for insurrection.

24th: Delegates to second Congress of Soviets begin to arrive.

25th, morning: Key points of city occupied by revolutionaries. Congress opens. Winter Palace taken. Bolsheviks take majority at Congress and proclaim "all power to the soviets".

mount to two governments, two powers, contesting with one another for political supremacy.

"One was the soviets; in 1917, as in 1905 they were spontaneously established. More democratic institutions it would be hard to imagine. They were directly and freely elected and sat in permanent session as direct representatives of the workers, peasants and soldiers. They were not the creation or invention of the Bolsheviks.

"The soviets were spontaneously established. More democratic institutions it would be hard to imagine."

While they were spontaneously formed without waiting for instructions from anybody, they were dominated by the right-wing socialists and the Socialist-Revolutionists. The Bolsheviks started as a tiny minority in the soviets.

"While the soviets were the only elected body on a nation-wide basis in the land, and only they could thus speak authoritatively for the people, being referred to even by Kerensky as the "revolutionary democracy," they

did not seek to become the government of Russia under their compromising leadership. But they were the real power, recognised by all: by the czarist generals who wanted to crush them and restore reaction; by all the provisional governments; by the Bolsheviks who wanted them to take all governmental power; and above all by the people. Not a single significant political or military step could be taken by the official government without their support.

"Appearing to stand above the soviets were the various provisional governments. These were not democratic, if by that term is understood a government elected by popular suffrage in regularly fixed elections and submitting its conduct to the control of any popularly elected democratic body. The provisional government was constructed exclusively from the top, bureaucratically, by agreements among party leaders, self-constituting and self-perpetuating. Unstable by its very nature, it had no independent power of its own. It depended for its existence on the unpreparedness and therefore the tolerance of the reactionary forces on the one side and the revolutionary forces on the other.

"While the soviets mistakenly thought the government could be the vehicle for the advancement of the revolution, they watched its every step, particularly its reactionary wing and allies, and tried to control each step, reflecting the attitude of the whole people. The provisional government tried to maintain itself by satisfying both the real social and political forces, the reaction and the

revolution. This aim was *utopian*; the two forces could not be reconciled. Both forces realised their life and future depended on the other's destruction. The governments became more and more governments of chaos, sure to produce nothing but that.

"The eight months' record of provisional governments in this stormy period when the desires of the people were urgent and manifest consisted of the following:

"(1) The main body of the czarist officialdom remained intact, only few changes being made at the top. Czarist officers primarily remained at the head of the army, doing everything to undermine the soldiers' soviets, soldiers' rights and even keeping enough power to threaten this same government. Cossacks, symbol of the czarist knout, were kept intact.

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Miliukov about them, he never repudiated them and refused to publish them, since such would be a 'dis-courtesy to the Allies'.

"(4) While the rule of the landlords continued, the peasants who wanted the land received promises. But they were taking the land, carrying out the revolution themselves in the traditional style of every great agrarian revolution. The provisional government forbade them to act, instead of carrying out its own reforms. It sent

Continued on page 10



Kerensky takes the salute

Democracy and class rule

From *The Programme of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), March 1919*

1. Because of the existence of private property in land and in other means of production, even the most democratic bourgeois republic, sanctified by slogans like "will of the people", "will of the nation", or "will of all classes", has inevitably proved to be a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. It is a machine for the exploitation and suppression of the overwhelming majority of the toilers by a handful of capitalists. Proletarian or Soviet democracy by contrast has transformed the mass organisations of precisely those classes oppressed by capitalism, the proletarians and the poorest peasants (semi-proletarians) who are the enormous majority of the population, into the sole and permanent basis of the entire state apparatus, local and central, from top to bottom. In this way, the Soviet government introduced (and, incidentally, in a much wider form than anywhere else) local and regional self-government, without any official authorities appointed from above. The party's task is to work untiringly for the complete realisation of this highest form of democracy which requires for its proper functioning a steady improvement in the level of the masses' culture, organisation and activity.

2. In contrast to bourgeois democracy which conceals the class nature of its state, the Soviet government openly recognises that every state must inevitably be a class state until the division of society into classes and along with it all state power finally disappears. By its very essence the Soviet state aims at crushing the resistance of the exploiters. The Soviet constitution proceeds from the standpoint that freedom of any kind is a deception if it stands opposed to the liberation of labour from the yoke of capital. It therefore does not hesitate to deprive the exploiters of their political rights. The task of the proletarian party is to suppress the exploiters' resistance decisively and to combat ideologically the deep-rooted prejudices concerning the absolute nature of bourgeois rights and liberties. At the same time, the party must explain that any curtailment of political rights or restrictions of freedom are necessary only as temporary measures to fight any attempts of the exploiters to maintain or restore their privileges. To the extent that the objective possibility of exploitation of one human being by another disappears, the necessity for such temporary measures will also vanish. The party will strive to reduce these measures and to abolish them completely.

3. Bourgeois democracy has limited itself to extending political rights and liberties such as freedom of assembly, association and the press, formally to all citizens alike. But in reality, administrative practice and above all the economic enslavement of the toilers under bourgeois democracy have always prevented them from making any wide use of these rights and liberties.

Instead of formally proclaiming rights and liberties, proletarian democracy achieves them in reality, primarily and mainly for those classes that were oppressed by capitalism, namely the proletariat and the peasantry. For this purpose the Soviet government expropriates the bourgeoisie's buildings, printing plants, paper supplies and so on and places them at the complete disposal of the workers and their organisations.

The task of the RCP is to involve the masses of the toiling population on an ever wider basis in utilising these democratic rights and liberties and to broaden the material possibilities for this.

4. For centuries bourgeois democracy has proclaimed the equality of persons regardless of sex, religion, race or nationality. But capitalism never allowed this equality to be realised in practice anywhere, and in its imperialist stage it has intensified racial and national oppression. Only because the Soviet government is the government of the toilers was it able for the first time in history to introduce this quality of rights totally and in all spheres of life. It has absolutely eliminated the last traces of women's inequality in the realm of marriage and general family law. The party's task at the present time is mainly to carry on ideological and educational work aimed at finally stamping out all traces of the former inequality and prejudices especially amongst the backward layers of the proletariat and the peasantry.

Not satisfied with the formal equality of women,

the party strives to free women from the material burden of obsolete housework by replacing it with residential communes, public dining halls, central laundries, nurseries, and so on.

5. The Soviet government guarantees the toiling masses incomparably greater opportunities than under bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism to elect and recall deputies. It provides this in a form much easier and more accessible to workers and peasants. At the same time it abolishes the negative features of parliamentarism, especially the separation of the legislative and executive powers, the isolation of the representative institutions from the masses, and so forth.

The Soviet government also brings the state apparatus closer to the masses by making the industrial division (factories, mills) rather than geographical district the electoral constituency and the basic unit of the state.

The task of the party in all its activities is to bring the organs of power and the masses of toilers even closer together on the basis of the masses' ever more rigorous and full implementation of democracy in practice. In particular, functionaries must be made responsible and accountable for their actions.

6. Bourgeois democracy, in spite of all its declarations, has converted its army into a weapon of the propertied classes by separating it from the toiling masses and opposing it to them. It has made it difficult if not impossible for soldiers to exercise their rights. The Soviet state, on the other hand, merges together its organs, the soviets of the workers and those of the soldiers, on a basis of complete equality of rights and identity of interests. The party's task is to maintain and develop this unity of workers and soldiers in the soviets, strengthening the indissoluble ties between the armed forces and the organisations of the proletariat and semi-proletariat.

7. The urban industrial proletariat played a leading role throughout the revolution because it was the most concentrated, united, enlightened section of the toiling masses, the most hardened in struggle. It assumed the leading role from the very inception of the soviets and throughout the whole course of their evolution into organs of power. Our Soviet constitution reflects this fact by preserving certain privileges for the industrial proletariat in comparison with the more scattered petty-bourgeois masses in the countryside.

The RCP must explain the temporary character of these privileges, which are historically connected with the difficulties of organising the countryside along socialist lines. The party must strive persistently and systematically to utilise this position of the industrial workers to unite the advanced workers more closely with the most backward and scattered masses of rural proletarians, semi-proletarians, and the middle peasantry as well, counteracting the narrow craft and trade union interests fostered by capitalism among the workers.

8. Only with the Soviet organisation of the state was the proletarian revolution able at one stroke to destroy and root out the old bourgeois bureaucratic, and juridical state apparatus. However, a partial revival of bureaucratism within the Soviet system has been brought about by the inadequate cultural level of the broad masses, the lack of necessary experience in administrative affairs among the workers appointed by the masses to responsible posts, the necessity of appointing specialists of the old school quickly and under difficult conditions, and the drafting into military service of the most advanced sector of the urban workers.

The RCP is conducting a most determined struggle against bureaucratism and advocates the following measures to completely eliminate this evil:

- (i) Obligatory participation by every member of the soviet in performing a defined duty in administering the state;
- (ii) Consecutive rotation of these duties so as gradually to embrace all branches of administration;
- (iii) The gradual involvement of the entire toiling population in the work of state administration.

These measures represent further progress along the road taken by the Paris Commune. Their complete and rounded application and the simplification of administrative functions, together with raising the cultural level of the toilers, will lead to the abolition of state power.

From centre pages

Cossacks against the peasants, who had never seen a Bolshevik in their lives but who were taking things into their own hands.

"(5) No changes in industry. While the capitalists sabotaged production by locking out workers, the government failed to intervene. The eight-hour work day decreed by the government was not enforced. Everything was promised for *after* the 'Constituent Assembly' met, but its convocation was constantly delayed. Workers saw that their soviets' influence in the government declined as that of the capitalists and czarists grew.

"(6) As Woodrow Wilson has said, the treatment of oppressed nationalities represented the 'acid test' for a democrat. The Finnish social-democrats obtained a majority in early June and declared for their autonomy, enjoyed previously under the czars. The provisional government dissolved the Finnish parliament, barring its doors with Russian soldiers. In June Kerensky prohibited the holding of the Ukrainian Soldiers Congress called by the nationalist Rada. Vinniehanko, head of that body and an anti-Bolshevik, attacked the provisional government for being 'imbued with the imperialist tendencies of the Russian bourgeoisie'. In October Kerensky demanded an explanation of alleged criminal agitation started there for a Ukrainian Constituent Assembly and an investigation of the Rada was ordered.

"On the basis of this record of failing to meet the continuing demands of the revolution, the provisional government of Kerensky fell. It also explains why the power of the compromiser Menshevik-SR leadership in the soviet likewise fell. They had urged confidence in the provisional government which showed it did not deserve the masses' confidence.

"After the Kornilov affair, the Bolsheviks won uninterrupted victories in the soviets, while the Mensheviks and SRs split up and declined. Bolshevik influence was won fairly, openly, democratically, in spite of huge handicaps. Their leaders were arrested or driven underground, presses and headquarters smashed, press outlawed, forbidden entry to the garrisons and a lynch spirit aroused against them as German agents.

"On November 7 the soviet congress, whose convocation had been delayed by its compromising leadership, was called together by that same leadership. The Bolsheviks had a clear majority. The congress endorsed the uprising led by the Military

Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet under Trotsky by electing a new government of Bolsheviks holding soviet power. Two weeks later the Peasant Soviet Congress, called by the compromisers, gave a majority to the Left SRs and the Bolsheviks, and the Left SRs entered the new soviet government.

"In a few days the soviet government did all the things the provisional government had failed to do: (1) gave the land to the peasants; (2) offered peace by broadcast to all governments and peoples, starting with a proposal for a three months' armistice; (3) inaugurated workers' control of production to stop bourgeois sabotage of industry; (4) decreed freedom for all nationalities, beginning with Finland and the Ukraine; (5) denounced and published all secret treaties and czarist rights in China and Persia; (6) wiped out all czarist power in the army and began creation of new workers' and peasants' army; (7) abolished special Cossack privileges and caste positions; (8) inaugurated the new soviet regime of direct representation with full right of recall.

"The Constituent Assembly finally met in January, and because of its then unrepresentative character, big changes having occurred in mass thinking since its lists were drawn and the election held, and its refusal to recognise that the revolution had conferred full power on the soviets, it was dissolved. No champions could be found among the people for it — only reaction supported it.

"The country rallied to the soviet power as the only guarantee of the great democratic achievements consolidated by the Bolshevik Revolution.

"The future proved to be a difficult one. The country was plunged into civil war by the dispossessed classes, landlords, bankers, bondholders, monarchists and reactionary scum in general who sought to arouse the wealthier peasants against the regime, and by all the imperialist powers who forgot their differences in the face of the socialist enemy.

"This civil war brought devastation to the country from which it took years to emerge. It forced upon the soviets a harsh regime, and laid the basis for the eventual rise and triumph of a counter-revolutionary bureaucracy which is in power today.

"But, in spite of that, these achievements are immortal: nothing that happened afterwards can eradicate that from history or from the thoughts of mankind. They are a monument and a guidepost.

"The road out of the blind alley into which society is being driven more

TO THE DISTRICT
SOVIETS OF WORKER'S DEPUTIES AND
SHOP-FACTORY COMMITTEES

ORDER

THE KORNILOV BANDS OF KERENSKY ARE THREATENING THE OUTSKIRTS OF OUR CAPITAL. ALL NECESSARY ORDERS HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO CRUSH MERCILESSLY EVERY COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY ATTEMPT AGAINST THE PEOPLE AND ITS CONQUESTS.

THE ARMY AND THE RED GUARD OF THE REVOLUTION ARE IN NEED OF IMMEDIATE SUPPORT OF THE WORKERS.

THE DISTRICT SOVIETS AND SHOP-FACTORY COMMITTEES ARE ORDERED:

- 1) To bring forward the largest possible number of workers to dig trenches, erect barricades and set up wire defenses;
- 2) Wherever necessary for this purpose to SUSPEND WORK in shops and factories, it must be done IMMEDIATELY.
- 3) To collect all available plain and barbed wire, as well as all tools FOR DIGGING TRENCHES AND ERECTING BARRICADES;
- 4) ALL AVAILABLE ARMS TO BE CARRIED ON PERSONS;
- 5) Strictest discipline must be preserved and all must be ready to support the Army of the Revolution to the utmost.

President of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers & Soldiers Deputies
People's Commissar LEV TROTSKY.

President of the Military-Revolutionary Committee
Chief Commander PODVOISKY.

IN DEFENCE OF OCTOBER

SELDOM DOES history record the former head of a government, deposed by social revolution, facing up in an open debate 34 years later to a modern representative of the same ideological current which swept him from power. This was the situation in the 8 February debate at the University of Chicago where Max Shachtman confronted Alexander Kerensky, the head of the regime which was overthrown by the great Russian revolution.

To recall to consciousness all the relevant facts of that vast revolution and vindicate its democratic and socialist aims and achievements, Shachtman, national chairman of the Independent Socialist League, brought a clearly defined and thoroughly Marxist appreciation of the meaning of democracy; Alexander Kerensky, erstwhile president of the short-lived Russian Provisional Government and self-styled "arch-democrat", brought no understanding whatsoever of democracy, substituting for that lack his own garbled version of historical facts and a relentless penchant for reiterating fraudulent quotations from Lenin. Indeed, how could a "democrat" proceed otherwise who could not even explain publicly that he was not put in office by popular election!

The intervening years since the revolution have witnessed the rise in Russia of the totalitarian, bureaucratic oligarchy of Stalinism. Grabbing onto this bare historical fact Kerensky sought to bury the anti-democratic crimes of his own regime by pointing an accusing finger at Lenin and the Bolsheviks as those responsible for Stalin's monstrous despotism. Shachtman thus faced a double task in this debate, one familiar enough to genuine socialists: that of establishing historical truth against the combined opposition of both capitalist and Stalinist falsifiers of the past 34 years.

This is the reason that Shachtman, in opening the discussion, found it necessary to remark: "The Stalinist regime never slackens in its efforts to portray itself as the legitimate successor of the Bolshevik Revolution. It needs this great authority to help befuddle the thinking of people and to maintain itself in power... It came into power as the result of a counter-revolution which systematically destroyed not only every single one of the great achievements of the Bolshevik Revolution but likewise exterminated all its founders, builders and defenders.

"To conceal and suppress this incontrovertible fact, the Stalinist regime has established the biggest lie factory in all history. It does not, to be sure, have the exclusive monopoly in the work of falsifying and slandering the Bolshevik Revolution. In this work it is given signal assistance by most of its political opponents. Yet I must admit that it excels them all in the scope and depth and intensity of its labour. Indeed it has been so successful in them and so ably seconded by falsifiers and muddlers out of the camp of its opponents... that the truth is today wrapped up in obscurity so far as most people are concerned."

Scouting the idea that the evening's discussion on "Was the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 Democratic?" was of merely historical interest, Shachtman indicated its vital relationship to the most important social and political question of our time, the answer to which will determine conclusively the future of society. Formulated by Lenin, the leader of Bolshevism, that question is: the

working class cannot attain socialism except through the fight for democracy, and democracy cannot be fully realised without the fight for socialism.

FOLLOWING is a running summary and digest of the presentations and rebuttals of the two speakers. The digest of Shachtman's presentation is based on his written notes.

[Shachtman] "One must judge a revolution out of the circumstances from which it sprang.

"The social structure of czarism, the most reactionary and outlived in Europe, was in a state of complete collapse. The imperialist war was bleeding the country white; a consciousness of the futility of continuing it deepened not only among the people at home but also among the soldiers at the front. At the top in official and court circles, bigotry, corruption and every conceivable form of social and intellectual leprosy was eating into the regime. At the front, a bloodletting that was as useless as it was incredible; at home a veritable orgy of war-profiteering among the capitalist classes and an unendurable growth of hunger among the working classes.

"In February the czarist regime appeared to be the most powerful in the world, with the world's biggest army at its disposal, with a subject people at once docile and impotent. Shortly after, the regime was overthrown by the same people and the

same army.

*"The Stalinists
have the biggest lie
factory against the
Bolshevik Revolution
but they by no means
have a monopoly on
the business."*

"It was an imposing example to all statesmen and politicians that the patience of the people is not inexhaustible, and that once they are determined to rise in the struggle for liberty, for their aspirations, they stand on no ceremony, on no formalities. They take action directly and stop waiting for the promises of their well-wishers

to be fulfilled in some distant and indefinite future. The example was also instructive to statesmen and politicians capable of learning from the people. As it soon turned out, not many of them are capable of learning very much.

"Tonight we are discussing democracy, the rule of the sovereign people. Democracy does not consist in imposing upon the people what their rulers by themselves decide is a good thing for the people. It consists in the free expression of the desires of the people and their ability to realise these desires through institutions manned by their freely-chosen representatives.

"What then did the people who had just put an end to czarist rule want? It would be a bold man who contended that two opinions are possible on this score.

"They wanted (1) an end to the imperialist war; (2) the convocation of a national, democratically representative Constituent Assembly; (3) an end to the rule of the predatory landlords and a distribution of land among the peasants; (4) a radical change in industry beginning with the eight-hour work day and the assuring of the beginning of the end of completely arbitrary rule of industry by the capitalist class, by the establishment of workers' control in industry; (5) the right of national self-determination for the nationalities oppressed by czarism.

"Not a single one of these desires is; by itself, the equivalent of socialism. Every single one of the demands of the Russian people was democratic through and through. And yet, as we shall see, they required a socialist revolution for their realisation.

"Virtually from the first day the revolution established what were tan-



Stalin took upwhere Lenin left off... so say bourgeois historians

The Kerensky-Shub method of 'quoting'

AS NOTED IN THE accompanying summary of the debate, Kerensky spent most of his time working over scraps of quotations from Lenin — from different periods, context, and articles indiscriminately *à la* Boris Shub — under the heading of a discussion of the Russian Revolution and democracy. While it takes at least ten times longer to nail one of these forgeries than it takes to reel off the distorted quotation, Shachtman was able to take them up effectively.

Here is one of the 'quotations' which Kerensky tossed off, for example. Quite often it was impossible for the audience to determine from his speech where his alleged quotation ended and his own commentary on it began, and his confused quote-mongering was further complicated (still from the audience's angle) by the fact that it was not always possible to clearly distinguish the words. Thus, at one point, he quoted Lenin as writing (as far as this reporter heard it) "Human nature cannot do without subordination," plus something which sounded like this: "This is not a free state and must be overthrown at any cost."

Assuming that the latter part was supposed to be a quotation from Lenin, we have no knowledge at the moment where it is supposed to be from; but we can say unequivocally, with Shachtman, that the first part is from Shub's biographical hatchet-job on Lenin, and in any case completely unrelated to the second sentence with which it was coupled by Kerensky.

In Shub's *Lenin* the author set out to show that in Lenin's philosophy it was the nature of people to want to be ruled. In his review of Shub's book in *The New Internationalist* Shachtman showed how Shub quoted Lenin to make it look as though Lenin set out to satisfy this alleged craving of the masses by ruling them with an iron hand.

tamount to two governments, two powers, contesting with one another for political supremacy.

"One was the soviets; in 1917, as in 1905 they were spontaneously established. More democratic institutions it would be hard to imagine. They were directly and freely elected and sat in permanent session as direct representatives of the workers, peasants and soldiers. They were not the creation or invention of the Bolsheviks. While they were spontaneously formed without waiting for instructions from anybody, they were dominated by the right-wing socialists and the Socialist-Revolutionists. The Bolsheviks started as a tiny minority in the soviets.

"While the soviets were the only elected body on a nation-wide basis in the land, and only they could thus speak authoritatively for the people, being referred to even by Kerensky as the "revolutionary democracy," they did not seek to become the government of Russia under their compromising leadership. But they were the real power, recognised by all: by the czarist generals who wanted to crush them and restore reaction; by all the provisional governments; by the Bolsheviks who wanted them to take all governmental power; and above all by the people. Not a single significant political or military step could be taken by the official government without their support.

"Appearing to stand above the sovi-

What Lenin actually wrote — in the passage where the phrase quoted by Kerensky crops up — conveys a diametrically opposite thought:

"We are not utopians, we do not indulge in dreams of how best to do away immediately with all administration, with all subordination; these anarchist dreams, based upon a lack of understanding of the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship, are basically foreign to Marxism, and as a matter of fact they serve but to put off the socialist revolution until human nature is different. No, we want the socialist revolution with human nature as it is now, with human nature that cannot do without subordination, control and 'managers'.

"But if there be subordination, it must be to the armed vanguard of all the exploited and the labouring, to the proletariat. The specific 'commanding' methods of the state officials can and must begin to be replaced — immediately, within 24 hours — by the simple functions of 'managers' and bookkeepers, functions which are now already within the capacity of the average city dweller and can well be performed for 'working-men's wages'."

One of Kerensky's associates in the Provisional Government, the bourgeois politician Miliukov, was also an historian of the revolution. He wrote of Kerensky's bearing and attitude at the state conference in Moscow before his downfall: "This man seemed to be trying to frighten somebody and create upon all an impression of power and force of will in the old style. In reality, he evoked only a feeling of pity".

In the breast of a fellow bourgeois politician it could be pity...

[Note: Boris Shub was a Menshevik historian, author of a widely-known biography of Lenin].

ets were the various provisional governments. These were not democratic, if by that term is understood a government elected by popular suffrage in regularly fixed elections and submitting its conduct to the control of any popularly elected democratic body. The provisional government was constructed exclusively from the top, bureaucratically, by agreements among party leaders, self-constituting and self-perpetuating. Unstable by its very nature, it had no independent power of its own. It depended for its existence on the unpreparedness and therefore the tolerance of the reactionary forces on the one side and the revolutionary forces on the other.

"While the soviets mistakenly thought the government could be the vehicle for the advancement of the revolution, they watched its every step, particularly its reactionary wing and allies, and tried to control each step, reflecting the attitude of the whole people. The provisional government tried to maintain itself by satisfying both the real social and political forces, the reaction and the revolution. This aim was *utopian*; the two forces could not be reconciled. Both forces realised their life and future depended on the other's destruction. The governments became more and more governments of chaos, sure to produce nothing but that.

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visional governments in this stormy period when the desires of the people were urgent and manifest consisted of the following:

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Trotskyism and Stalinism on the Jewish Question

By Mark Osborn

AS EARLY AS THE 1920s, Trotsky's attitude to Zionism and the Jewish question differed sharply from the Stalinists'.

The evolution of Trotsky's ideas was described, and contrasted with the Stalinists', in a talk by the German researcher Mario Kessler to a public meeting called by the journal "Revolutionary History" on 23 October.

His views were in broad consonance with ideas expressed in SO in recent years. (See John O'Mahony on Leon Trotsky and the Jews in SO's broadsheet: Two Nations, Two States.)

In his first writings on Zionism and the Jewish question, for example a comment in January 1904 on a recent Zionist congress, Trotsky followed general Marxist opinion in predicting increased assimilation of Jews in the countries where they lived, and the "decomposition and impotence" of Zionism.

As early as 1926, Trotsky saw the Stalinists using anti-semitism against the Left Opposition in the USSR, and denounced it.

Trotsky always continued to advocate that Jewish workers integrate themselves into the class struggle of the countries where they lived, and to oppose the Zionist movement. But his views on assimilation changed.

In 1934 he insisted that "There is no such thing on our planet as the idea that one has more right to land than another," but suggested that "triumphant socialism" might establish a Jewish state "on the basis of a mutual understanding or with the aid of... and international proletarian tribunal." In 1937 he commented: "During my youth I rather leaned toward the prognosis that the Jews of different countries would be assimilated and that the Jewish question would thus disappear in a quasi-automatic fashion. The last quarter of a century has not confirmed this perspective... One must reckon with the fact that the Jewish nation will maintain itself for an entire epoch to come."

As early as December 1938 — much earlier than most — he sounded the alarm about the danger of "physical extermination of the Jews."

Meanwhile, the Stalinists — Kessler based his account on the German Stalinist party — stuck to the line of Jewish assimilation. They always denounced anti-semitism but the German CP had flirted with anti-Jewish demagoguery even in its earliest years, even before Stalinism. As early as 1924, when Stalinism was still in its first stages, the veteran Marxist Klara Zetkin denounced anti-semitism inside the CP itself. In 1929 the CP supported the Arab uprisings in Palestine without qualification: Trotsky said he did not know enough for a definite opinion, but suspected the presence of "reactionary Mohammedans and anti-semitic pogromists."

In a 1930 pamphlet the CP denounced Nazi anti-semitism — but also argued that it was a fake, since the Nazis would do a deal with the Jewish capitalists.

Kessler did not continue the story after World War 2: the evolution of Stalinist "anti-Zionism" in the 1950s and '60s is described in Stan Crooke's article in "Workers Liberty" magazine no. 10, available (95p plus 29p postage) from WL Publications, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Contact "Revolutionary History" at BCM 7646, London WC1N 3XX

Against violence in the labour movement

Time for a hullabaloo

Against violence in the labour movement — for left unity in action and democratic debate about our differences

Why the SWP beats up its socialist critics

An open letter to SWP leader Tony Cliff by Sean Matgamna of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty • 80p

Martin Thomas reviews "Why the SWP beats up its socialist critics", by Sean Matgamna. AWL pamphlet, 80p plus 19p postage from WL Publications, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

FOR NEARLY 30 YEARS, until recently, the principle that disputes in the labour movement should not be settled by violence had been pretty much respected on the British left.

Then this July, at its annual "Marxism 93" event, the Socialist Workers' Party, the biggest group of the British left, openly rejected the principle. In two separate incidents Socialist Organiser supporters were attacked by leading SWP organisers.

Independent witnesses from other left groups confirm the second attack. Yet the SWP still will not investigate (or offer any serious refutation).

Some of its members say that the SO supporters "deserved it"; the nearest thing to an official SWP response is SWP leader Tony Cliff's statement, "I never even read the leaflets... I don't believe it happens, and that's all".

This new pamphlet from the Alliance for Workers' Liberty details what happened and argues that its roots lie in the "entire political culture" of the SWP — in which "building the party" is everything, and the politics not much... That also determines such episodes as the SWP's sudden switch, last October, to shouting for a "General Strike Now!"

"Such sectarian conceptions", the pamphlet argues, "... contradict what is perhaps the single irreducible idea which distinguishes Marxist socialism from all other socialisms, the idea that the emancipation of the working class must be the work of the class itself".

And the principle of dealing with disputes in the labour movement by democratic debate, rather than by violence, is rooted in that same irreducible idea. If socialism can be won by an elite with the right "blueprint" gaining enough force and power, then violence by that elite against critics makes sense.

If socialism must be the work of the working class itself, then such violence makes no sense. Then, as Leon Trotsky put it, we can attain our aims "not by armed conflicts between the various groups of working people but by real workers' democracy, by propaganda and loyal criticism, by the voluntary regrouping of the great majority of the proletariat under the flag of true communism".

Free argument is as necessary to working-class politics as oxygen is to a human being.

It is necessary even for day-to-day struggles. A good trade union leader can unite and mobilise their members only by democratic argument.

Trotskyists have had to fight against violence in the labour movement right from the start. Right through to the 1960s, in most countries, they faced thuggery and gangsterism as well as lies from the Stalinist parties.

James P Cannon records that when he and a few others started publishing a Trotskyist paper in New York, in 1928, and selling it outside the Communist Party HQ, the sellers "were set upon by hoodlums, pushed and kicked and driven away from the public streets, their papers torn up..."

"We stood our ground. We raised a big hullabaloo and scandalised them all over town. We mobilised all our forces to go there Saturday afternoons... defying the Stalinist hoodlums to drive us away..."

As the Stalinist parties declined, became discredited (partly thanks to the Trotskyists' "hullabaloo"), and lost morale, their violence faded away. But over the decades the Trotskyist movement itself, isolated and beleaguered, spawned sects which copied some of the Stalinists' venom on a smaller scale.

The main example in Britain was the grouping led by Gerry Healy, called the Socialist Labour League and then the Workers' Revolutionary Party. Although the WRP went crazy after about 1975/6 and fell apart in 1985, splintering into half a dozen groups, in its heyday of the 1960s and early '70s the SLL/WRP was by far the biggest and most impressive group on the British left, with a relative strength and an industrial base far outstripping the SWP today.

But, like the SWP today, their activity was focussed on "building the party" at all costs, with the politics disposable and anyway handed down by a preordained leadership.

In late 1966, when the SLL was sectarian but still far from crazy, a Canadian Trotskyist, Ernie Tate, was knocked to the ground and kicked by SLL stewards when he tried to sell a critical pamphlet outside a public meeting. This was the last major incident of such deliberate violence by a left group against critics — as distinct from spontaneous scuffles — before the events at "Marxism 93".

"Violence in the labour movement is a big political issue, and indeed a bigger one than particular points of policy"

The SLL used libel lawyers to stop most of the left press reporting the incident, but Workers' Fight, the forerunner of Socialist Organiser, raised as much "hullabaloo" as it could. And it had an effect.

The "Tate affair" became a marker. Even nine years later, in 1975, in a survey of the left, we could refer to "the Tate affair" as

an indictment of the political methods of the SLL/WRP without needing any footnotes or explanations of why such violence was a serious business.

The SLL/WRP remained sectarian, aggressive, full of verbal abuse and threatening talk, and increasingly crazy — but it never again launched organised violence on another left group like its assault on Tate.

For several years now the SWP has been bureaucratic and violent-talking against critics. Almost every year at its "Marxism" event SO people have had leaflets torn up, been pushed and jostled, or been thrown out of this supposed forum of broad and open debate. For SWPers to threaten SO sellers on the streets, or ban them from supposedly public SWP meetings, has become quite common. Now the SWP has stepped over the line into organised violence. It is time for a hullabaloo!

Sadly, the political responses of much of the left are duller today than they were in 1966 (or 1928). It is necessary not just to report the violence, but also to reply to many arguments used to minimise or dismiss it.

* *Yes, the SWP violence was bad (so some people say), but SO people are often provocative in argument. It's six of one and half a dozen of the other.*

Sharp (and therefore often provocative) argument is not a milder version of fisticuffs. It is the alternative to it. It is the other, and better, way of dealing with disputes in the labour movement. Violence is generated when people have a strong emotional attachment to an organisation or a political attitude, but cannot defend it by argument.

* *When asked by SO, SWP leader Tony Cliff said that violence was "not acceptable"; so the incidents at "Marxism 93" must have no long-term significance.*

As Marx put it, "in ordinary life every shop-keeper is very well able to distinguish between what somebody professes to be and what he really is", and serious socialists should be too. If Cliff responds to well-documented cases of violence by SWP organisers by saying "I never even read the leaflets... I don't believe it happens, and that's all" — then his general statements against violence are worth no more than the air which transmits them to the hearer.

* *Everybody knows (so some say) that the SWP are thugs, and it's useless labouring the point. Or (alternatively, as others say): most Labour and trade union activists see no violence from the SWPers whom they meet daily, so anyone who talks about the SWP beating up socialist critics will seem cranky.*

It is not possible for both these arguments to be true! In fact, both are false. Not all SWPers are thugs, by any means; not everyone, and not even all SWP members, knows that the SWP uses thuggish methods. We should make sure that they get to know, and explain to them how that thuggery arises out of SWP political methods which they do know.

* *The SWP is so strong on the left (some say) that no denunciation will budge them. Or (as others say): the SWP is an irrelevant sect, so why bother with denunciation?*

Again, both alternatives are false. The SWP is a force on the left. Anyone on the left who says they are so high and mighty that violence at "Marxism 93" is beneath their notice is a blustering blowhard. But if the SWP know they will face sharp questions about "Marxism 93" when they come to trade union branches for support for their ventures, then their organisers will think twice the next time before putting the boot in.

* *Yes (so yet others say) the SWP should be criticised — but on big political issues, the Middle East, or Ireland, or trade-union policy, not on these little incidents.*

Violence in the labour movement is a big political issue; and, indeed, a bigger one than those particular points of policy. With democratic debate on the left, wrong policies can be righted. But with a regime of violence against critics, the movement must wither and splinter even if the initial policies be "correct".

And if a socialist evades an immediate issue like this, where both the facts and the principles are crystal-clear, no progress can be made by skating off into more abstract and complex debates. Evasion dressed up as a desire to rise to high theory and skip sordid details is still evasion!

* *It would be different if the SWP were beating up people every day. But there were only two incidents. To make a fuss is to get them out of proportion.*

If the attacks at "Marxism 93" were spontaneous scuffles, the result of individuals over-reacting in heated argument, then they would be unimportant. But the eyewitness reports prove otherwise. The SWP's stubborn insistence either that there was no violence, or that the violence was fully "deserved", proves otherwise.

It is not a revolutionary or a Trotskyist attitude to say: "Only two people were hit. It's not worth making a fuss about until there are dozens attacked, or some seriously injured. Maybe we'll protest if things get worse".

Anyone who cares about workers' democracy should join the protest, and read this pamphlet.

When the wilderness pushes through



Matt Cooper
reviews *The
Cement Garden*

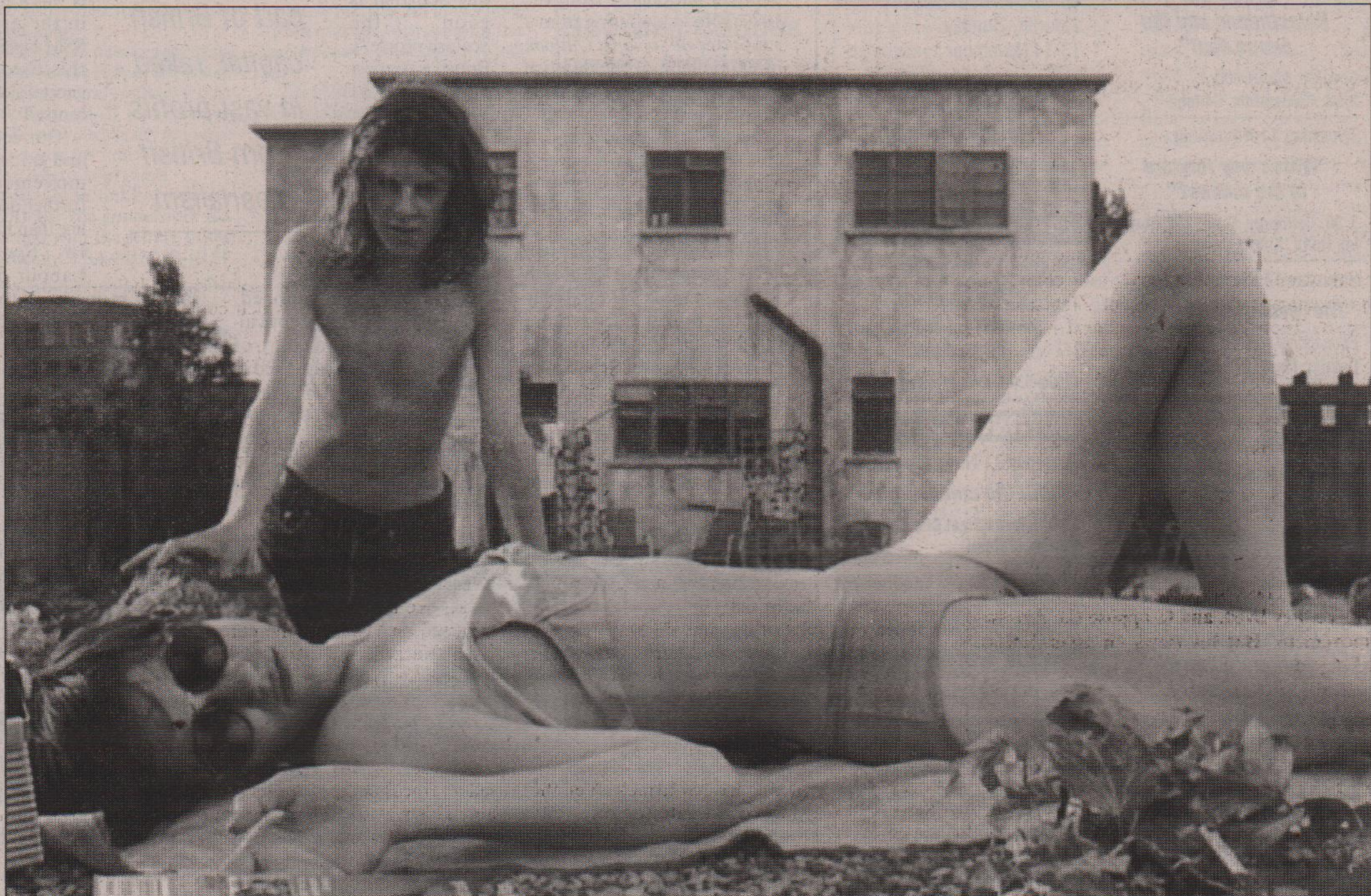
Directed by
Andy Birkin

WATCHING Andy Birkin's screen adaptation of Ian McEwan's novel "The Cement Garden" made me feel distinctly uncomfortable for a while. It has an air of untidiness the down-at-heel atmosphere of a 70s kitchen sink drama. It was only after a while that the hem-lines two inches above the knee and the schoolboys' long hair and kipper ties made sense. This film is set in the mid seventies. It uses dowdy sepia interiors to give the impression of dirt even when clean, an otherworldly feel of degeneration.

The twilight decay inside the home reflects the world outside. The family home where the film is set is isolated in fields of rubble left over from the slums and the docks. Only weeds and the occasional tower block appear to have forced their way up through the dereliction.

Inside family life is also decayed. The father (Hans Zischler) barks at his eldest son Jack (Andrew Robertson) to learn some manners and eat his food, all the time cleaning out his pipe while others eat at the dinner table, presumably to the stale smell of his tobacco. He then shouts at his eldest daughter Julie (Charlotte Gainsbourg) to let her mother eat her tea in peace. This is the nuclear family, two parents, four children, claustrophobic and unremittingly oppressive.

Father has a plan for driving away the untidiness from his gnome infested garden. He will cement it over, repress anything natural that still lurks at the rear of the house. He has already created his first cement gar-



Julie and Jack enjoy the sunshine while it lasts.

den, his family, their desires and emotions stunted beneath dull grey slabs of emotional retardation.

The two sons in particular have their repressed feelings. Jack's adolescent sexual awakening is turned inwards. He is in love with himself in more ways than one. The younger son Tom (Neddy Birkin) would much rather be a girl and avoid the necessity of fighting at school. Sadly, the daughters characters are less developed. Julie, the eldest, wants "to be a woman" although the film seems unsure as to what this means. The younger daughter doesn't seem to have any desires or needs of her own at all. Maybe this is comment on the way that the family can totally dissolve the personalities and independence of women even more corrosively than those of men, or perhaps it is the inevitable product of a film written and directed by one man (Birkin) based on a novel by another (McEwan).

The father dies. The effort of cementing the garden is just too much for him. The cement garden begins to crack as the wildness begins to push through. The children's repressed desires begin to surface, and when the mother (Sinead Cussack) dies too, the flood gates open.

The children, realising that they are now orphans and this could mean council care and the break-up of their home, take action. Knowing that they cannot report their mother's death to the authorities, they bury her in the cellar, entombing her in yet more cement.

The cement garden, now left unattended, cracks up completely. The previously repressed wildness and nature blossoms, (although if you want to know what this means you'll have to go and see the film!). "The Cement Garden" could easily have fallen into a crude and voyeuristic study of the macabre.

Fortunately it avoids these pitfalls, although at times this is at the cost of being so passive and empathetic towards the characters that it nearly grinds to a halt. Opportunities to camp it up for laughs and black comedy or to shock the audience are scrupulously avoided.

What we are left with is a highly engaging film that attempts to present the contradictions of family life. Although for their understanding of the family Birkin and McEwan certainly owe more to the radical psychiatry R.D. Laing than any Marxist

account, the film depicts the family as a deeply oppressive and unpleasant institution, creating twisted and repressed individuals, but one people

who have a strong need for the human warmth and comfort that a family, or even a "pretended family" can provide.

We have fed you all a thousand years

Author unknown

We have fed you all for a thousand years
And you hail us still unfed,
Though there's never a pound of all your wealth
But makes the workers dead.
We have yielded our best to give you rest
And you lie on crimson wool,
Then if blood be the price of all your wealth
Good God! We have paid in full.

There is never a mine blown skyward now
But we're buried alive for you,
There's never a wreck drifts shoreward now
But we are its ghostly crew.
Go reckon our dead by the forgers red
And the factories where we spin,
If blood be the price of your cursed wealth
Good God! We have paid it in.

We have fed you all for a thousand years
For that was our doom, you know,
From the days when you chained us in your fields
To the strike of a week ago.
You have taken our lives, and our babes and wives,
And we're told it's your legal share;
But if blood be the price of your lawful wealth
Good God! We have bought it fair.

PERISCOPE
Paddy Dollard
previews
*House
of Cards* and
Time Watch

House of Cards, the splendid send up of mainstream politics, is being re-run on BBC1 (Mondays, 10.10pm). Scripted by Andrew Davies, it tells a tale about Chief Whip, Francis Urquhart's rise to power in the Tory Party by way of wonderful skulduggery and lunatic ruthlessness.

A sequel is due soon, it seems. See what is left.

Time Watch (BBC2 10 November 8pm) is *Children of the Third Reich* in which children of Holocaust survivors meet children of Nazi war criminals in Tel Aviv.

Alliance for *WORKERS' LIBERTY* Public Meetings

BIRMINGHAM
Saturday 6 November
"Lessons of Millwall"
Speaker: John Moloney
7.30, Queen's Tavern

LONDON
Friday 5 November
*"Israel, the
Palestinians and the
peace deal"*
Speaker: Mark Osborn
2.00, Goldsmiths' College
Thursday 11 November
*"Which way forward
in the unions?"*
7.30, Calthorpe Arms, 252 Gray's
Inn Road, King's Cross

Saturday 11 December
"The revolutionary paper"
Educational school
Details: Mark, 071-639 7965

YORK
Tuesday 9 November
"Is Marxism out of date?"
8.00, Gooderich College, York
University

BELFAST
Saturday 20 November
*"The case for
workers' liberty"
dayschool*
12.00-5.00, Queen's University
Student Union

SHEFFIELD
Thursday 18 November
"How to fight the racists"
7.30, SCCAU, 73 West Street

Thursday 4 November
*"How to fight
Market Testing
and privatisation"*
Speakers from UNISON

and Mark Serwotka
7.30, SCCAU, 73 West Street

MANCHESTER
Thursday 11 November
*"Ireland — what
should socialists say?"*
8.00, Unicorn pub

BRIGHTON
Saturday-Sunday
13-14 November
*"The case for
workers' liberty"
weekend school*
Unemployed Centre,
Tilbury Place

LANCASTER
Saturday 13 November
*"The case for
workers' liberty"
dayschool*
11.00-5.00, Fylde College

NOTTINGHAM
Thursday 11 November
"Will the unions fight?"
7.30, International City Centre,
Mansfield Road

NEWCASTLE
Thursday 11 November
"How to beat the racists"
7.30, Rossetti Studios

OXFORD
Wednesday 10 November
"How to beat the racists"
7.30, Wadham College

EDINBURGH
Wednesday 17 November
*"How to beat the
pay freeze"*
7.30, Trades Council, Picardy
Place

EYE ON THE LEFT

By Glenn Fiddich

"THE British establishment has shown clearly that their way out of the crisis is to make the people pay. Scotland's oil resources and industrial base have been lost in a vain attempt to keep Britannia afloat."

The rantings of a looney Scottish nationalist from the 1970s? No. An offering from a supporter of *Socialist Outlook* in the bulletin of the Scottish Socialist Movement (SSM). "The British establishment," explains the *Outlook* supporter, "is still living in the era of Empire and British imperialism, and their economic policies reflect this."

But there is an alternative: "An independent Scottish Parliament would have radically different priorities from those of the British Establishment." "An independent Scottish Parliament" is not the only avenue through which democracy can be extended: "Community and workplace involvement in the government and running of their affairs

would give the Scottish people the opportunity to be true democrats."

This is the politics of populism, not Marxism. Society is viewed in terms of "the British establishment" and "the Scottish people" rather than in class-against-class terms of capitalists and workers.

The terminology is that of Scottish nationalism. British is bad ("the British establishment") but Scottish is good ("the Scottish people"). British is the past ("the era of Empire"), whilst Scottish is the future: to become "true democrats" the Scottish people merely need to be offered "the opportunity."

Basic facts are ignored. Scottish capital has historically been an integral part of British capital and has raked in vast profits from the plunder of the world by British imperialism. And the destruction of an industrial base in Scotland is not peculiar to Scotland but part of an all-British pattern.

The magic solution is posed as an assertion without facts to substantiate it. Just why would a Scottish Parliament necessarily have "radically different priorities"? Other things remaining equal, the largest party in it would be Labour, and there's certainly nothing "radical" about Labour's policies at the moment.

All this is small beer compared to an article written by another *Outlook* supporter which appeared in the previous SSM bulletin. Let this theoretical genius speak for himself:

*"Scottish capital,
an integral
part of British
capital, raked
in vast profits
from British
imperialism."*

"Our economy and trade union movement are further down the line than England. In Scotland, Labour organisations in many sectors will have to be rebuilt from the ground upwards.

"Surely in Scotland we are for funding candidates in elections who want to fight for self-determination in a class struggle way, and Scottish unions must be free to do that.

"But while Scottish unions remain part of a British labour movement, we are not neutral about the One Member, One Vote debate. Scottish trade unionists are much more 'members' of the labour movement than John Smith will ever be.

"We believe that struggling for democratic control (in the labour movement) is the best route to our own national goals and to get there we will need to break the power of the British labour bureaucrats over us."

In terms of both style and content this exercise in verbal flatulence is truly breath-taking.

To talk about the Scottish capitalist economy as "our economy" is wretched populism. And what sense does it make to compare an organisation ("our trade union move-

ment") with a country ("England")? None whatsoever.

To advocate the break-up of the labour movement is bad enough. But to advocate that it should be broken up along national lines is criminal. Further theoretical rationalisations of this idiocy are eagerly awaited.

Why are Scottish trade unionists much more "members" (why the inverted commas?) of the labour movement than John Smith? Smith himself is Scottish. So too are Gavin Laird and Jimmy Airlie. But Arthur Scargill is English. And Yasser Arafat is Palestinian, whereas Slobodan Milosevic is Serbian. So what?

The theoretical guru from *Outlook* concludes by returning to the political debates in the Russian socialist movement at the turn of the century — and ends up on the wrong side.

The Russian populists argued that "the revolution needs the workers": the revolution was a thing-in-itself which could be realised through workers' struggles. But the Marxists argued that "The workers need the revolution": the need for revolution flowed out of the position of workers in capitalist society.

The *Outlook* supporter shares the theoretical bankruptcy of the Russian populists: workers are to be mobilised to achieve "our national goals", instead of a goal being proposed on the basis of the historical role of the working class.

In fact the *Outlook* theoretician is even worse than the Russian populists. At least the populists wanted a revolution to destroy capitalism root and branch. All that the *Outlook* supporter wants is self-determination for Scotland — a rather more modest proposal.

And these people in *Outlook* have the audacity to call themselves the "real" internationalists? Keep on taking the tablets, comrades!



Nationalist internationalist, Jim Sillars



What we stand for

TODAY ONE CLASS, the working class, lives by selling its labour-power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the social means of production. Life is shaped by the capitalists' relentless drive to increase their wealth. Capitalism causes unemployment, the maiming of lives by overwork, imperialism, abuse of the environment, and much else.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty fights to convince and mobilise the working class to overthrow capitalism. We aim not to create a new labour movement, but to transform the existing workers' movement, trade unions and Labour Party.

We want socialism: public ownership of the major enterprises, workers' control, and democracy much fuller than the present system — a workers' democracy, with elected representatives recallable at any time, and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

We stand:

- For social planning, for a sustainable use of natural resources.
- For full equality for women, and social provision to free women from the burden of housework. For a mass working-class-based women's movement.
- For black and white workers' unity, organised through the labour movement, to fight racism and the despair which breeds racism. For labour movement support for black communities' self-defence against racist and fascist violence; against immigration controls.
- For equality for lesbians and gays.
- In support of the independent trade unions and the socialists in Russia and Eastern Europe. We denounce the misery caused by the drive to free-market capitalism there, but we believe that Stalinism was a system of class exploitation no better than capitalism.
- For a democratic united Europe; against the undemocratic and capitalist European Community, but for European workers' unity and socialism, not nationalism, as the alternative.
- For a united and free Ireland, with some federal system to protect the rights of the Protestant minority.
- For the Palestinians' right to a state of their own, alongside

Israel, and for a socialist federation of the Middle East with self-determination for the Israeli Jews.

- For national liberation struggles and workers' struggles worldwide.
- For a workers' charter of trade union rights — to organise, to strike, to picket effectively, to take solidarity action, and to decide their own union rules.
- For a rank and file movement in the trade unions.
- For left unity in action; clarity in debate and discussion.
- For a labour movement accessible to the most oppressed, accountable to its rank and file, and militant against capitalism.

We can beat Market Testing!

From back page

But if the unions only got involved in local disputes over particular cases then Tories can outlaw solidarity action.

Our union leaders are reluctant to organise further strike action after 5 November. We must do everything we can to force their hands. This means organising strike action at all levels of the union, wherever we can. This will ensure Market Testing projects are delayed and will be a clear sign to our union leaders of our willingness to fight.

The DsHSS in NUCPS and CPSA has a key role to play after the best supported one day strike against Market Testing in the union's recent history on 2 July. The failure of the unions to organise further strike action after 2 July has meant groups of members in the DsHSS such as typists, secretaries and those in Accommodation and Office

Support are under threat now.

Further strike action in the DsHSS would have delayed these projects and put greater pressure on our union leaders.

It has been proved that non-cooperation is a vital method of fighting and delaying Market Testing in the here and now. The Accommodation and Office Services Market Test in DSS East London and Essex Area has been delayed for 11 months, largely due to the refusal of union members to cooperate in any way with Market Testing teams.

Other areas in the CPSA DSS have also voted for total non-cooperation.

Widespread non-cooperation throughout the civil service would make life extremely difficult for the market testers. If management respond with disciplinary action we must argue for and build strike action wherever possible.

Cross-union links are vitally important. The groundwork has been laid with the setting of the unofficial CPSA-NUCPS-IRSF

Campaign Against Market Testing.

We need to build this to ensure the widest support amongst members of the three trade unions. Our union leaders have failed to build any serious unity between our unions. They called a joint strike today for sure. But over the past year, they have been blaming each other for the lack of strike action, arguing we can only have action if we are united.

Of course we need unity, not only across the civil service, but across the whole of the public sector. We all face privatisation in one form or another. But if one union is prepared to go it alone, then we should be arguing for this and pressurising other unions to join in.

The fight against Market Testing is a fight which we must win. It will be down to ordinary union members to force our leaders to lead that fight. The strikes by workers in France and Italy show that trade unions and strikes are far from dead.

We must challenge the ridicu-

lous excuses of our union leaders for failing to lead a serious fight against the government. And we must organise where we can to take on the government — and win.

Civil Service Campaign Against Market Testing — After 5 November, which way forward
Westminster Central Hall 2 pm

Socialist Caucus public meeting After 5 November — which way forward
16 November 6.30pm
Florence Nightingale pub, Westminster Bridge Road

Labour must defend NHS

NHS

By Nick Holden

The Labour Party's conference "Health and Care: a framework for the future", hosted by the new Central Region Labour Party, Skegness, 23-24 October 1993, was a step forward both in style and content.

Many of the 300 delegates were healthworkers, and so had first-hand experience of the current attempts to dismember the NHS. Workers

NHS Emergency Day — demonstrate
20 November
Assemble 11am Jubilee Gardens London SE1

from Scotland (where plans to close one in every three hospital beds were recently unveiled), London (where St Thomas's Hospital last month joined the list facing closure) and Birmingham (whose Health Authority boss recently resigned amidst allegations of mismanagement and huge losses) joined nurses, health visitors, GPs and service users in tackling the question of a healthcare strategy for a future Labour government.

Workshops, ranging from Care in the Community and Mental Health to the Alternatives to Trusts and Primary Care without Fundholding, debated policy and discussed strategy in ways which the Labour Party has all but forgotten. And speakers, including Shadow Ministers, David Blunkett, David Hinchcliffe and Iain MacCartney,

rather than just dropping in for half an hour to give a prepared speech, were subjected to lengthy sessions of comment and questioning from the floor.

Many speakers stressed the need to build support for the NHS Emergency Day demonstration on November 20 and the basis was laid for improved links between the healthcare wings of all the major unions — UNISON, MSF, GMB and TGWU.

There are still important questions to be answered, like how the results of the conference can feed into the Party's democratic structures of CLPs and trade union branches, and whether the policy reviews and commissions will be more accountable to the grass-roots membership or the Shadow Cabinet. And there was still rather a gap on ques-

tions of organising now to defend the health service — waiting for Labour to form a government in three years' time is no answer to a pensioner in need of a hip replacement.

But all the delegates I spoke to felt it had been a valuable conference. Labour had restated in fundamental terms its opposition to the sell-off of our health service, committed itself to reversing the dismissal of whistleblowers (a crucial issue in today's NHS) and pledged support for a national demonstration in defence of the NHS itself.

As the winter rolls on, the state of the health service will become an increasingly significant issue for millions of people. Labour must be leading the campaign to keep the Tories' thieving hands off our NHS!

International Workers' Aid for Bosnia

REPORT FROM BOSNIA

By Nigel Foster

After almost three months on the road, the International Workers' Aid convoy to the besieged mining town of Tuzla is still trying to find a way in.

Five members of the convoy of four nationalities (British, Swedish, Belgian, Australian) are currently in Split, attempting to negotiate their way through the hazardous and mountainous southern route.

The main convoy had failed to

secure passage through the notorious Brko Corridor, Tuzla's northern lifeline, closed for some eighteen months by Serbian soldiers who surround the area to the north of Tuzla.

I had been with the convoy since it set off from Dundee on 9 August to the moment of truth in Jupanija (80km north of Tuzla), when we discovered the road was impassable.

Next week I shall be talking about some of my experiences on the convoy, both in Britain and during the European campaign and put forward some ideas as to the direction the campaign might take in the future.

BT jobs: NCU Broad Left must lead a fight

BRITISH TELECOM

By a Central London BT engineer

The main issue at the 1993 AGM of the Broad Left of the telecom workers' union NCU was job security.

The new Appraisals procedures for BT staff are part of a strategy which will result in workers being assessed for their own jobs. "Unsatisfactory" staff will be redeployed to "surplus groups" which will become dumping grounds and targets for compulsory redundancies.

If the NCU does not act soon, it will not be able to stop staff being moved to separate groups.

Broad Left members at the AGM called for national action and a lead from the Broad Left members who are in a majority on the union's National Executive.

The union has so far withdrawn agreement from the Appraisal procedures. But we must demand a commitment to job security for BT staff and an end to the threats of compulsory redundancy. We need a national ballot now.

This is the issue to fight on, and the time to fight is now.

Picket racist police!

By Dion D'Silva

Anti-racist activists are picketing Plaistow police station on Thursday 18 November (6pm-444 Barking Road, London E3).

The picket is to protest at a number of incidents of police

harassment of local black people.

In November 1992 Lee and Tony Dray, Stephen Rozee and Chris Moore were arrested and severely beaten by Plaistow police. Their supporters will pack the public gallery when their case reaches Snaresbrooke Crown Court on 22 November.

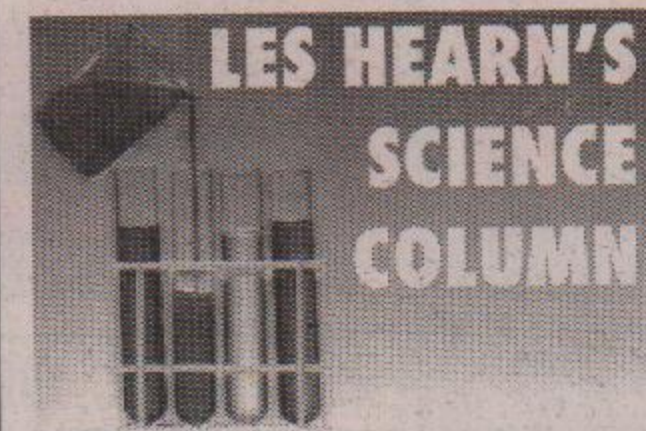
More recently Zebulon Gooden was so badly assaulted following his arrest, that he needed hospital treatment.

More details from the Newham Monitoring Project 081-552 6284.

Benefit for Oliver Campbell 8.00 till late
One Love Community Centre
Bishops Avenue, London E13
Oliver Campbell is a 23 year old black man serving life for a murder he did not commit.

Trade union and labour movement anti-fascist conference
Saturday 4 December
Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1
Called by Bromley and Bexley Trades Councils
Sponsored by the TUC
All labour and trade union organisations can send delegates

Nobel gene research



Encapsulating the vitality of modern DNA and gene research this year's Nobel Prizes for Chemistry and for Physiology and Medicine have been awarded respectively to two scientists who developed key techniques and to two who made a key discovery.

American molecular biologist Kary Mullis invented the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) which allows the identification of minute quantities of DNA. The enzyme, polymerase, copies a sample of DNA over and over again. In a few hours, there is enough to detect and identify. The test for HIV is just one use of PCR. It is also used to amplify DNA from forensic samples to help identify criminals from the genetic "fingerprints". The use of PCR to study traces of DNA in fossils was the grain of science underlying the story of Jurassic Park.

Mullis shares the Chemistry Prize with British-born chemist Michael Smith, now working in Canada, who developed site-specific mutagenesis (SSM). This technique allows precise changes to be made to genes and hence to the proteins that they code for. This can help find out what the proteins do or can alter their properties in, hopefully, a useful way. It is a considerable advance on the random mutation approach. This involves attacking the DNA with mutagenic chemicals or with gamma rays and produces lots of random changes in the DNA, most of which will be harmful or of no use. This is how variation occurs in nature.

SSM is being used by biotechnology companies to make proteins with new properties, such as a bleach-resistant enzyme for biological washing powder. Research is also being done to modify the haemoglobin molecule so that it will carry oxygen in the blood without having to be inside a blood cell. This could do away with the need for blood transfusions and hence blood donation. Natural haemoglobin requires the precise chemical environment of a red blood cell before it will release its cargo of oxygen to the body's tissues and red blood cells are only available in fresh blood. This is not only difficult to come by but is occasionally accompanied by HIV or hepatitis viruses. When Smith first tried to publish his work, the article was turned down as not being of "very general interest".

The Physiology and Medicine Prize went jointly to US-based researchers who independently discovered a peculiar feature of the structure of genes in creatures other than bacteria. British-

born Richard Roberts and Phillip Sharp published their discovery within weeks of each other in 1977. The impact of their discovery was immense, revolutionising understanding of the basic machinery of cells and of the causes of some cancers and inherited diseases.

Up to 1977, it was thought that genes were continuous "sentences" written in the 64 three-letter-word language of DNA. These sentences were translated into messages that would be used to dictate the structure of proteins, the chemicals that do most of the work of the cell.

Roberts and Sharp found that, in higher creatures, the genes were interrupted by stretches of DNA that apparently did nothing. These were dubbed "junk" DNA. In order for the gene to do its job, these nonsense sequences had first to be cut out of the messages by proteins that recognised the beginning and end of the nonsense sequences. The ends of the messages were then "spliced" together.

Rather than being an insignificant curiosity, "junk" DNA predominates in the genetic material of higher organisms. In humans, for example, it amounts to some 95% of the total DNA. It is tempting to think that it actually has some useful purpose, though what this could be is uncertain. According to a "selfish gene"-type of hypothesis, it is parasitic on the DNA with a function. It gets itself copied with the rest of the DNA but does not cause enough of a nuisance for natural selection to get rid of it.

Another theory is that it assists in the production of several proteins from one or a few genes. This is achieved by splicing together different fragments. It may also assist evolution of new proteins by allowing new combinations of fragments. This would be faster than changing the genetic "sentence" one letter at a time, a process that runs the risk of making the whole sentence nonsense.

Several disorders are known to be caused by splicing errors in such split genes. About one quarter of genetic disorders are thought to be caused in this way, including the blood disease beta-thalassaemia, common in parts of the Mediterranean. In this, some of the haemoglobin molecules do not get their second halves spliced on and are consequently useless. Some cancers are caused by splicing errors, such as chronic myeloid leukaemia, when the splicing mechanism converts a normal gene into an oncogene (cancer-causing). Recently it was announced that such oncogenes could be deactivated using "anti-sense" DNA fragments. These are mirror-image fragments that are designed to stick to the region of the DNA where the faulty splicing mechanism is causing the problem. It is also thought that thalassaemia might be treatable in the same way.

SOCIALIST

French workers' victory boosts Euro-militancy

ORGANISER

Build for all-out action

We can beat

Market Testing

By Colin Foster

“WORKERS ACROSS Europe”, reported the bosses’ daily, the Financial Times, on 1 November, “appear to have taken strength from the spectacular victory of Air France employees...”

“In Germany, Belgium, Italy, Spain and France, employers are facing increasing militancy as they demand job cuts and flexibility...”

The Financial Times listed some disputes underway or forthcoming. In France, the main union at Air France has threatened further strikes if negotiations are unsatisfactory.

Strikes are planned at the computer firm Bull and the aluminium firm Pechiney, and other companies listed for privatisation. Workers from across the public sector will join a protest strike on 18 November.

In Germany, bosses in the pivotal engineering industry have unilaterally scrapped the current wages and holiday deal. The union, which recently won improvements for East German workers by organising strikes there, has called for action in the New Year.

Last week 120,000 building workers protested against government plans to scrap their winter lay-off payments. Steelworkers, coal miners and unemployed have also demonstrated against cuts in welfare payments and a pit closure.

Volkswagen bosses are demanding 20% wage cuts, claiming that workers must choose between wage cuts and a four-day week or 30,000 job cuts. The union opposes the wage cuts.

The Financial Times also expects some protests against job cuts from Spanish workers.

The victories on the Tyne and Wear Metro and on the London Tube, and the tremendous vote for strike action against Market Testing in the civil service, show that British workers, too, can follow the French example.

Whatever fainthearts and ex-leftists say about the class struggle being dead, the bosses know different — and so do we!



Civil service workers are striking on 5 November. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni

By Trudy Saunders, CPSA DHSS Section Executive

THE OVERWHELMING “Yes” vote for strike action this Friday, 5 November by members of CPSA, NUCPS, IRSF and NIPSA is a clear sign that civil servants want to fight Market Testing.

We must be clear that only strike action can defeat Market Testing. The European Law (TUPE) cannot protect our jobs, wages and conditions. Nor can we have any faith in the winning of in-house bids. At Newcastle Central Office DSS, the winning of an in-house bid in Microfilm Search has meant 40% job losses.

The vote indicates that civil servants are aware of what Market Testing means: mass job losses, wage cuts, worse conditions, loss of redundancy payments and pensions, worse services to the public and the smashing up of the civil service trade unions.

Disgracefully, our union leaders are still refusing to face up to these facts. Instead of leading a serious fight, they are relying on TUPE and “in-house” bids.

Our union leaders had to be forced into call-

ing even the 5 November strike. Strike action at branch and departmental level in CPSA and NUCPS was a major factor in forcing their hand. If we allow it, 5 November will be the end of any strike action. But 5 November could also represent an important step forward. It all depends on what the rank and file of the union does.

Our aim should be to force the government to withdraw all future Market Testing plans, bring privatised areas back into the civil service and reinstate those who have lost their jobs as a result of Market Testing.

To achieve this we must build towards all-out strike action across the civil service.

How we build this is a matter of tactical judgement. Right now, the most effective way forward is to organise further strike action on a national level. The Tories are attempting to divide us by attacking us separately. We must argue that those who are not up for Market Testing immediately should involve themselves in strike action for the sake of those under immediate threat and for their own jobs in the future.

All civil service workers can be drawn into entirely legal strike action on this issue backing

up those in the front line — so long as the national unions continue to demand of the government that it drops its entire Market

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