

# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

*It will be socialism or barbarism!*

Inside this week



Labour and the 35 hour week

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Ireland: what is the answer



centre pages

## TUC demonstration 20 November

# MARCH FOR

# THE NHS!



**T**HE TORIES are killing the NHS! Up and down the country wards and entire hospitals face closure, patients go without vital operations, sick people are forced to sleep on trolleys in corridors and waiting rooms.

Thousands of health workers face the sack. 2,000 jobs are on the line at Guy's and St. Thomas's in London.

And now, former cabinet minister, David Mellor, admits that in London alone, 23 hospitals are under threat of closure.

All this points to the need for a huge fightback to defend the NHS.

The TUC's London demonstration on 20th November, in defence of the NHS, could be a rallying point for just such a fightback.

Continued on page 2

# Save the Health Service!



"Popular support is eroding on both Israeli Jewish and Palestinian sides."

# Israeli demands block peace talks



Adam Keller reports from Tel Aviv

**I**N THE wake of the peace deal Hamas is continuing its attacks — mainly on settlers and soldiers.

The settlers are using such incidents as a pretext for attacks on Palestinians. They are feeding each other.

In addition there are difficulties in the peace negotia-

tions. This is mainly because the Israeli delegation have made a very tough demand concerning withdrawal from Gaza. They are demanding that the Israeli army continues to control 30% of the Gaza Strip. They want the right to patrol all the main roads. These are things that the Palestinians are not possibly accept.

Rabin is continuing his tough negotiating style. He does not make concessions unless he considers it absolutely necessary. In the meantime the popular support — on both the Israeli Jewish and the Palestinian sides — is eroding.

On both sides people are influenced by the situation on the ground. The Israeli public will say: we made peace with the PLO, but the terrorism is continuing with Hamas.

On the Palestinian side the big question is that of the Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. There are 12,000 prisoners still being held. This means that about 150,000 Palestinians have a member of their family in detention.

Rabin has only allowed 600 Palestinian prisoners to go free. I think most of the rest will be released in the next few months in return for Palestinian concessions in the negotiations.

The political problem for the Israeli government comes when they consider those prisoners — 5-600 in total — who are regarded as "having blood on their hands." Within this group I would make a distinction between those who have killed soldiers, perhaps in an ambush, and those who, for instance, have killed civilians in the



Right-wing settlers from the occupied territories clash with Israeli police

streets of Tel Aviv. Killing the soldiers was part of the Palestinian struggle. Knife

attacks on civilians are a different matter. Adam Keller is editor of the

Israeli peace journal, *The Other Israel*, PO Box 2542, Holon, Israel.

## Socialism or barbarism

Alliance for Workers' Liberty Student weekend of debate and discussion  
Saturday 4 December 11.30-6.00  
Sunday 5 December 10.30-4.30  
Manchester Town Hall, Albert Square, Manchester

Discussions include: Roots of racism • Women, men, date rape and sexual signals • Why we need a working class women's movement • South African — after apartheid, civil war? • 1917 — a flash in the pan? • Who was Rosa Luxemburg? • Why students should be socialists for life • and lots lots more

Invited speakers: Middlebrook  
Mushrooms strikers • Steve Cohen - immigration rights • Kevin Sexton, NUS NEC

Registration: £3 with grant, £1 without grant  
More details: 071-639 7967

See also page 7

## Reinstate Ronnie Keith!

**V**OLUNTARY sector workers lobbied the November meeting of Glasgow Trades Council last week in support of victimised trade unionist Ronnie Keith.

In August of this year Ronnie, who is secretary of the UNISON West of Scotland Voluntary Sector Branch, was sacked from Milton Unemployed and Community Resource Centre (MUCRC) for allegedly misusing MUCRC's time and equipment for trade union work.

The figures provided by the MUCRC Management Committee itself (which includes two Trades Council representatives, two Labour District Councillors, and two Labour Regional Councillors) showed that Ronnie spent less than two hours a month on union business.

When the issue of Ronnie's sacking was raised at the November meeting of Glasgow Trades Council, one of the last bastions of Stalinism in the world, the decision was to do nothing.

The reason given for this was

that Ronnie was in the process of taking his case to an Industrial Tribunal. It would be wrong to do anything in the meantime.

Funnily enough, Glasgow Trades Council never applied this logic to the Timex workers in Dundee. The fact that they were taking their dismissals to an Industrial Tribunal did not prevent the Trades Council from supporting their dispute.

A number of UNISON branches, and Strathclyde FBU, have temporarily suspended payments to the One Fund For All (OFFA — a trade union fund for financing Unemployed Workers Centres) pending Ronnie's re-instatement.

The campaign for Ronnie's re-instatement must be maintained and stepped up:

- Extend the boycott of OFFA until Ronnie re-instatement;
- Provide more financial support for Ronnie's hardship and campaign fund;
- Lobby the UNISON Scottish Council meeting later this month, for which a resolution in support of Ronnie has been tabled.

## March for the NHS!

From front page

Titled "Enough is Enough" it can serve as a focus to build support for all those in the front line of defending the NHS.

A demonstration is necessary. If it were built properly by the leaders of the Trade Unions and Labour Party, it could be on the same scale as the protest against pit closures last October. It could represent an important stage in

the campaign for a Labour government pledged to dismantle the health 'market' and restore the missing millions to the NHS. But sadly that looks unlikely.

The TUC has become used to going through the motions. It is vital that socialists and trade union activists don't let them. Book coaches, organise delegations from your work place, bring your banners. All out for 20 November!

### The case for Socialist Feminism



£1.50 plus 36p postage from WL Publications, PO Box 823, London SE14 4NA.

## Save Wang Juntao!

**W**ANG JUNTAO, a leading figure in the Chinese democracy movement of 1989, is in danger of dying in prison.

His wife, Hou Xiaotian, has been able to get out of China, and says: "In 1990, while [Wang] was in Qingcheng prison, he became infected with hepatitis B... The prison authorities... did not allow him... any medical treatment for over a year. As a result the hepatitis changed into chronic hepatitis B, which last for life..."

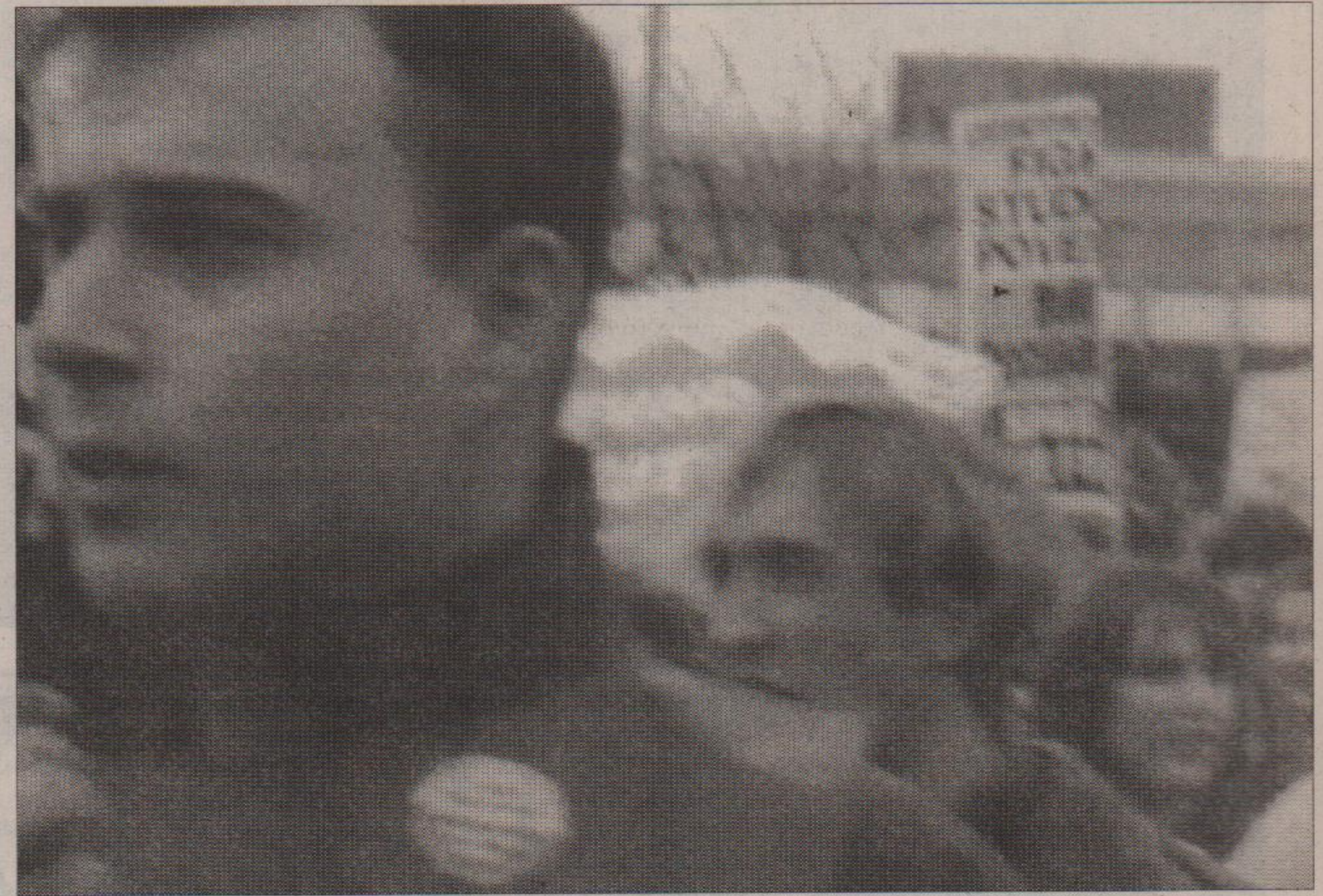
His hepatitis got worse. Then he also developed coronary heart disease... On 5 June 1993

he was sent to the Military Hospital for Infectious Diseases in Beijing.

The last news I heard was that he is still in the Military Hospital. Although he gets better medical treatment there... the guards watch him day and night. He is not allowed any contact with other patients, and... he is not free to walk about or to get fresh air...

If he is not released on bail for medical treatment as soon as possible, his health will deteriorate in jail, I will lose my husband, and the Chinese democracy movement will lose a good comrade".

Kevin Sexton, NUS Exec member, was a speaker at last week's big student anti-Tory demonstration in Manchester. 2,000 students marched in protest at Tory attacks on students and their national union





**Pro-union promises at Labour conference followed by weaselling on 35-hour week**

# Why does John Smith get away with it?

**L**ABOUR Party leader John Smith has said that he does not support a 35-hour working week, even though it is one of the main planks of the Euro-socialist manifesto for next year's Euro-elections. Disgracefully, Smith is too scared of what the Tories might say to stand by the Euro-socialists' manifesto!

Weaselling and wriggling, his assistants told the press that the manifesto was only "a menu of general principles from which parties can choose those that are relevant to their domestic situation."

"The 35-hour or four-day working week is much more relevant to socialist parties in other countries. It is not an issue that we believe should be dictated by government. In our opinion, it is a matter for negotiation between the employer and employee."

The Walworth Road yuppies did not even dare to raise the idea of a 35-hour week being negotiated by trade unions; no, they spoke only of "negotiation between the employer and [individual] employee"!

How low the Labour Party leadership has fallen! How hypocritical and empty were John Smith's promises of a new deal for workers, made at the TUC and the Labour Party conference in order to ease the way for his "One Member One Vote" carve-up! How naïve (or cynical) were those union leaders, like John Edmonds, who took (or pretended to take) those promises for good coin!

Few ideas are more "relevant" for the British working class today than the 35 hour week.

Full-time workers in Britain do an average of 43.6 hours a week. It is the longest average work-week in Western Europe.

If the average work-week were cut by 14%, to 37.5 hours — as it could be by a properly-enforced standard 35-hour week — then the same total amount of work would employ 14% more workers (assuming that the proportion of part-timers stayed the same).

14% is the real unemployment rate; so the 35-hour week, coupled with appropriate training and re-training, could create jobs for all.

It would bring hope to the four million jobless, and especially to the jobless youth who are often pushed by their frustration and desperation towards racism, fascism, drugs and crime.

It would enable the tens of thousands who now sleep on the streets to find decent homes.

It would end the crushing anxiety and pressure for workers who dare not refuse long hours or poor conditions for fear of losing their jobs.

That the Euro-socialists promise a 35-hour week does not ensure they will do anything much about it. The French Socialist Party, for example, came to power in 1981 promising a



Overwork for some, enforced idleness and poverty for others — that's capitalism

35-hour week and has been in government for most of the time since then without moving any further than 39 hours.

But for Britain's Labour leaders to refuse even to promise a 35-hour week — and to rule out the whole idea of the government (i.e. democratic legislation) shortening the work-week — is a step further down the road of pale-pink Toryism.

Offering hope to the great majority — almost everyone who lives by selling their labour-power would benefit from the 35-hour week, and not just the lowest-paid — evidently concerns them much less than trying to placate and reassure the bosses and the bankers.

The Tories and the bosses claim that a shorter work-week would make Britain uncompetitive and would impose extra costs on companies which they could offset only by cutting jobs.

But all the other countries in Western Europe have shorter work-weeks than Britain. The Tories' argument means only that British workers should work longer hours in order that British bosses can remain competitive while using less productive technology than companies overseas.

The nett cost of employing the jobless — their wages, less the money saved on state benefits — would be around £14 billion a year. At present wages and "social wages" get about 58% of output in Britain; the wealth-

owning class and the State get the other 42%. Adding another £14 billion to wages would change the split from 58:42 to 61:39. Such a change would be resisted fiercely by the rich who would lose out — but it is not impossible or unimaginable or contrary to any law of nature.

If the extra costs made British production uncompetitive, then that is an argument for international trade-

*"The 35-hour week would end the pressure on workers who dare not refuse long hours for fear of losing their jobs."*

union and socialist action to spread shorter hours to other countries. A serious Europe-wide drive for a 35-hour week by trade unions and Labour and socialist parties would inspire labour movements in other countries.

But John Smith's reasoning, reflecting the Tories', turns this upside down. As long as workers in the US, Japan, or South Korea, where unions

are weak — or China, where independent unions are banned — work long hours, then British workers are supposed to work long hours to help our bosses compete!

This logic would not just rule out Labour making reforms like the 35-hour week — it would rule out any trade-union action for shorter hours in one company while another company continued to have longer hours.

No wonder so many workers, Labour Party members and non-members alike, are disgusted with the Labour Party leadership. The need has been shown once again for organising socialists, as the Alliance for Workers' Liberty strives to organise them, to promote militant working-class policies.

But we need to do more than just organise against Smith. We need to organise effectively.

John Smith can behave as outrageously as he has done over the 35 hour week only because the Labour Party and the trade unions allow him to. And the Labour Party and the trade unions are, like it or not, the mass organisations of the working class.

To organise socialists on a perspective of building "our own" new labour movement alongside the existing one may look like a good idea, especially when you consider this 35-hour week business. The existing movement is bureaucratic and conservative. It is led by miserable

wretches like John Smith and John Edmonds. It has become discredited among many workers and, especially, youth. Why not make a fresh start?

That is the basic pitch of groups like the Socialist Workers' Party. Yet even the SWP has to recognise that things are not so simple: it works inside the existing (bureaucratic and conservative) trade unions, it votes Labour in elections.

Its 'fresh start' amounts to no more, in practice, than a refusal to get involved in the battles inside the Labour Party — in other words, a weak-kneed agreement to give John Smith a free run on issues like the 35-hour week, with no more bother than cursing from a safe distance.

We should curse John Smith; but that is not enough. In every Labour Party and every trade union we should fight to call him to account on the 35-hour week, arguing the issues and regrouping the left as we do so.

The existing labour movement has deep roots. It is decrepit now. On all historical experience, the resurgence of working-class confidence and struggle, when it comes (and it will come; indeed, it has already started, hesitantly) will revive and swell the existing movement, rather than promoting a new one.

Socialists must fight to change the movement. A real revolutionary party will be built not by sideline pretences, but by building and organising the left in the labour movement.

*"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

## Watch your pockets!

WHEN TORIES PRATE ABOUT MORALITY, watch your pockets! Each broadside from the well-fed and well-heeled gentlemen of the bosses' party against the supposedly feckless, idle, immoral and undeserving poor only means another attempt to increase exploitation and inequality.

The Budget on 30 November will include drastic social-security cuts in order to narrow the Tories' disastrous £50 billion state deficit. Ideas floated in the press include abolishing the universal state pension and cutting benefits for single mothers.

The Tories know that whatever cuts they come up with will be unpopular. They are trying to cover up the issues with a lot of bluster about "traditional values". They hope to foster a vague impression that their cuts will take us from the present chaos to a "traditional" world which in fact never existed, one of humble, frugal but happy families of rosy-cheeked mums, stern but caring fathers, and well-scrubbed and obedient children.

The cuts will do nothing of the sort! They will take Britain further down the road travelled by the last fourteen years of Tory rule — towards dog-eat-dog individualism, towards frustration, misery, and despair on one side, brutal greed on the other.

## Council bans will not stop the Nazis

ONE PROBLEM WITH RELYING ON THE authorities to 'no platform' the Nazis is that often this 'no platform' is extended to socialists and anti-racists.

In two separate instances London councils have banned anti-racist meetings.

Wandsworth Council banned a *Youth Fightback* meeting on how to beat the racists. The Council told *Youth Fightback* supporters that a publicity leaflet which said "the Nazis are getting cocky" would offend 'people' and could lead to a breach of the peace. Who, exactly, would be offended? — why, the BNP of course!

Last week Globe Town Neighbourhood Council banned the Anti-Racist Alliance from having a meeting at York Hall in Tower Hamlets. Previously the Council had let the BNP use the hall on two occasions, but now the Council had introduced a blanket ban on all political meetings deemed likely to attract disruption and breach the peace.

Council bans do not stop the Nazis. They can use other venues. Bans on anti-racist meetings can seriously disrupt the campaign to build a mass anti-racist movement.

The way to stop the Nazis is not to call on councils to refuse rooms to the BNP but to mobilise local black people, youth and labour movement activists to physically prevent the Nazis meeting, marching or campaigning anywhere.

The labour movement must fight for the right to hold anti-racist and other political meetings in council buildings.

## The left needs debate and democracy

"YOU CAN'T COME INTO OUR PUBLIC meeting". "Why?" "Because you disagree with us". That is what now passes for debate on the doors of Socialist Workers' Party meetings. It is what an SWP member told a supporter of the small left-wing group Workers' Power when barring them from an SWP meeting at Manchester Metropolitan University.

The Manchester SWP have also banned all *Socialist Organiser* supporters from their college meetings, even stopping one meeting at Manchester University as soon as an *SO* supporter entered the room.

The SWP are still refusing to respond to the charge that some of their leading members beat up two supporters of *SO* at the SWP's summer event, "Marxism '93".

When *SO* supporters have leafletted SWP meetings about it or tried to raise the issue in meetings, more often than not the SWP has simply banned us from the "public" meetings. Now the SWP are banning *Workers' Power* too. This runs alongside the increasing tendency for the SWP to run "rallies" where no debate is possible.

If socialists are to hammer out political ideas to win, then we need the oxygen of democracy and the health and vigour that debate gives our ideas. Violence and intolerance are the enemies of clear socialist ideas.

If you support democratic debate and oppose violence in the labour movement, then support our *Campaign Against Violence in the Labour Movement*.

Contact: PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

## David Dinkins's defeat

## Black mayors can not end racism



RACE AND CLASS

By Dion D'Silva

LAST WEEK New York elected its first Republican mayor for twenty-eight years. The winner, Rudolph Giuliani, is white. The loser, the former mayor David Dinkins, is black. So was it a racist backlash?

Other black officials have been booted out. Tom Bradley, mayor of Los Angeles, Harold Washington in Chicago, Wilson Goode in Philadelphia and Governor Wilder in Virginia.

The first elected black mayor was Carl Stokes in Cleveland in 1967, but it was the 1980s that saw the emergence of leading black officials. Most of the big cities had black mayors. However, New York was one of the last to turn when David Dinkins was elected in 1989.

Undoubtedly, racism played a part in Dinkins' downfall.

New York is a solidly Democrat city with registered Democrats outnumbering Republicans, five to one. Yet the majority of whites voted Republican. Ninety-five per cent of blacks stayed with Dinkins and over sixty per cent of Hispanics — seen as a key black vote.

New York is the home of Tammany Hall where politics is conducted by coalitions of ethnic blocks. The analysis of the narrow election victory for Giuliani is in part down to the Jewish vote swinging over to the Republicans, two to one. Unfortunately, it reflects the growing isolation of the black community and their conflict with other ethnic groups, for example, Jews in Crown Heights, and Korean shopkeepers.

New York is also the financial capital of international capitalism.

It is a city where splendour and luxury are within spitting distance of slums.

Thousands of New Yorkers sleep rough in the streets, often begging for mere existence and this in the richest and most powerful country in the world. The contradictions of capitalism and the necessity for socialism are nowhere more stark.

The 1980s saw the gap between rich and poor widen, and the urban black community reflects this most vividly. Black men in Harlem are less likely to reach the age of sixty-five than men in Bangladesh.

Dinkins' defeat was part of an "anti-Democrat" anti-incumbent swing as well. Clinton campaigned for Dinkins, making a direct appeal to white voters.

This sticks in the throat a bit

— Clinton, as Governor of Alabama, let a black prisoner be executed so that he could appear tough on crime. This was despite the prisoner having effectively lobotomised himself, which meant he wasn't even aware of what was happening to him.

In this campaign both candidates ran on "law and order".

Giuliani wanted to be tougher on criminals and give police more powers whereas Dinkins stressed that he had hired an extra six thousand police.

Dinkins is considered a liberal in American politics. New York is in many ways not a typical city. It is still a "union" city. Denis Rivera, president of the hospital workers' union local 1199, helped run the last campaign, making the swing away from Dinkins actually comparatively small.

Nevertheless, Dinkins was praised by the city bosses for balancing the budget in his four-year term — although New York still has a \$2 billion debt.

The balanced budget was achieved by cutting services and sacking local government

*"Black men in Harlem are less likely to reach the age of sixty-five than men in Bangladesh."*

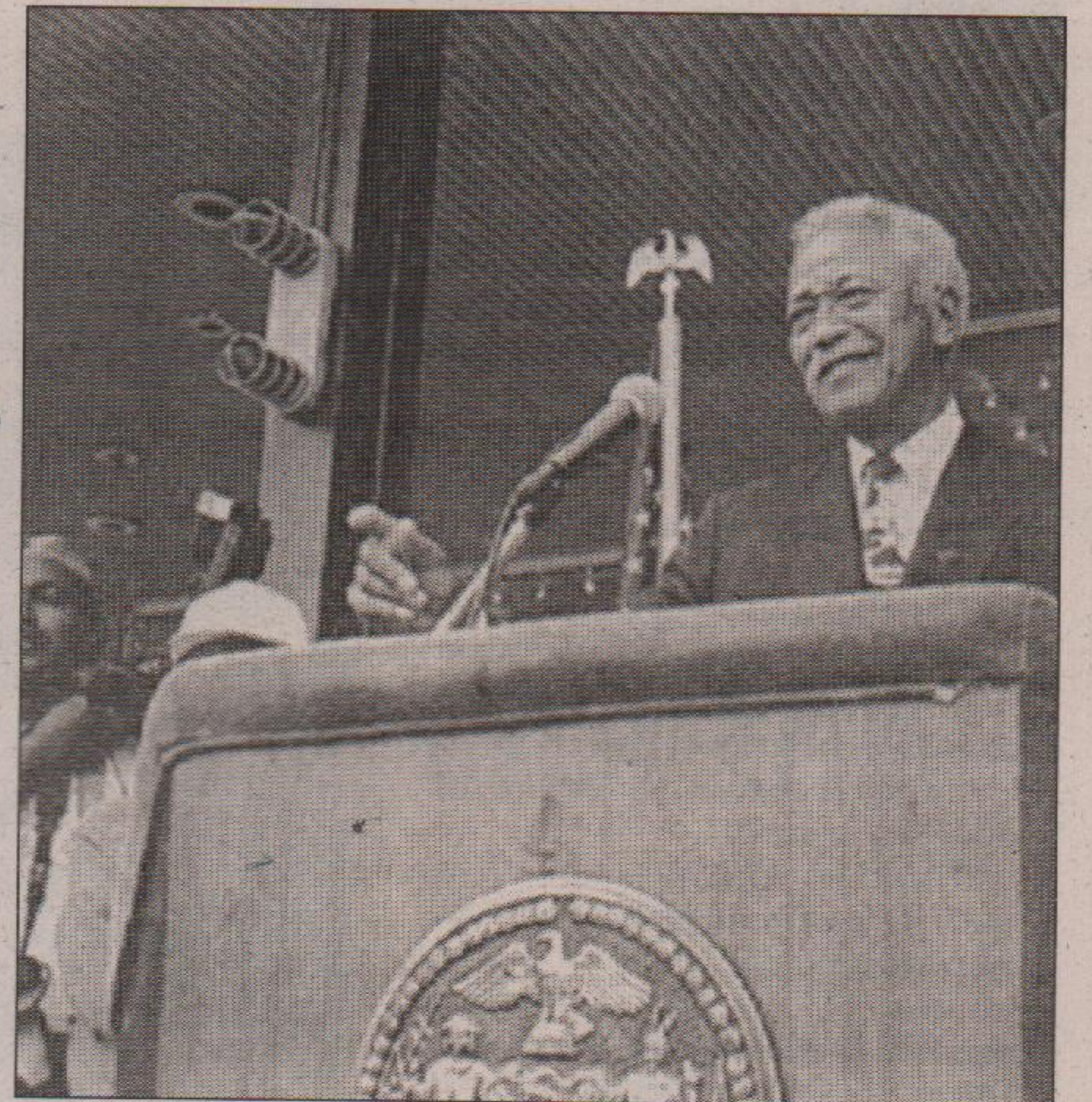
workers. This is because the Democratic Party is a capitalist party that uses trade unions simply as a means to bolster electoral support.

NO BLACK mayor can win without support from the white community, but the new black officials haven't built a movement out of their gains, but are themselves just the inheritors of the 1950s and '60s civil rights movement.

Any socialist elected would depend on black and white support — more importantly, the black and white working class. The mayor should use his position to mobilise support for an increase in service provision and jobs. That would inevitably mean taking on big business and national government — but this was never attempted.

Although ninety-five per cent of blacks who voted for Dinkins, many blacks didn't bother, feeling totally alienated from the system.

Dinkins' attacks on jobs didn't



David Dinkins

help motivate trade unionists. The coalition that we as socialists are interested in is the coalition of the working class — the trade unions, the unemployed, the homeless, the beggars and the oppressed.

Racism was involved in Dinkins' defeat. So too was the "normal" swing away from the governing party, but I think it goes further than that. The promise of black officials has taken a step backwards.

Black Power was always a vague concept but, even to the most radical, electing black mayors was seen as core.

In 1966 Stokely Carmichael argued for black political power. "Black Power will mean that if a Negro is elected sheriff, he can end police brutality... where black men have a majority, they will attempt to use it to exercise control... where Negroes lack a majority, Black Power means power representation and sharing of control".

The last twenty-five years have shown that it is not as simple as that.

Despite having a black mayor and many black policemen and women, the Los Angeles Police Department was and is still a brutal and racist armed force.

The simple truth is that power in New York is in Wall Street rather than City Hall.

Electing a mayor doesn't change the system — only the working class can. With the Americanisation of British politics, maybe we can learn this lesson quickly.

No matter how many black MPs or councillors we elect — and there are all too many careerists waiting to be elected — it doesn't fundamentally change anything unless it is part of a working-class political movement.

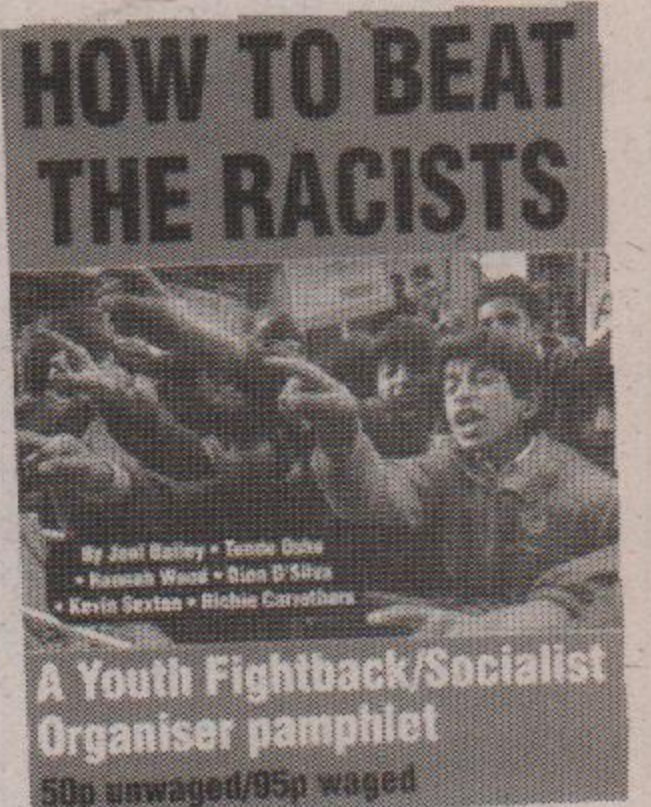
Soon after he was elected mayor of Gary, Indiana Richard Hatcher surprisingly

hit it on the head when he said: "I am a mayor of a city of roughly 90,000 black people, but we do not control the possibilities of jobs for them, of money for their schools, or state-funded social services. These things are in the hands of the United States Steel Corporation and the Country Department of Welfare... will the poor in Gary's worst slums be helped because the pawnshop owner is black, not white?"

By all accounts, David Dinkins is a pleasant, quiet-spoken man. His election in a racist city and country was in some way a mark of a civilised society. But we should shed no tears at his downfall. His conception of politics is not something we socialists can share.

## How to beat the racists

Available from WL Publications, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.



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Attend this conference

# The workers' movement must fight racism!

Graham Griffen, a conference organiser from Bexley Trades Council, spoke to *Socialist Organiser* about the TUC-backed anti-racist conference being held at Congress House on Saturday 4 December.

ALL THE various anti-racist and anti-fascist campaigns have done some good work.

However, there is a real need to base this work inside the organised working-class movement.

Our conference aims to bring together the two wings of the labour movement — the Labour Party and the trade unions — to discuss how we can most effectively defeat racism and fascism.

We held a conference in July at which around 50 labour movement delegates were present. A steering committee was elected at that event which has taken things forward. I think this conference, which is backed by the TUC, should be quite a bit bigger.

There is a big long-term need to tackle the question of educating trade unionists on these questions. And we need to organise to do so.



Black and white workers' unity on the picket line: the basis for fighting racism. Photo: Mark Salmon

Obviously the labour movement must be prepared to confront the fascists when they march or appear on the streets. Clearly we need our own demonstrations to mobilise the labour movement in opposition to racism. But one of the lessons of Welling (on 16 October) was that the local community must be closely involved. Otherwise those on the ground, locally, are just left to pick up the pieces after everyone else has gone home.

It seems that there will be a trade-union-organised anti-racist demonstration in the East End next year. If the trade

unions organise a march it must not be an *all-party* demonstration. It must be a working-class march of the Labour Party and the unions.

Crucially a demonstration of this sort must involve black

and white workers in the East End.

Finally, part of the battle must be to take up social questions. We need a movement which can unite around jobs and houses for all.

**Labour and Trade Union Conference**  
**Fighting racism and fascism**  
 Sat 4 December • 10.00-5.00  
 TUC, Congress House,  
 Great Russell Street, London WC1.  
 This is a delegate-based conference  
 Contact: Bexley TC, c/o 59 Woolwich New Road,  
 London SE18.

## Letter from Germany

# Nazis raus!

By Sandra Robinson

FROM the media reports back home in Britain one would think that Germany is overrun with crazed Nazi thugs. But where are the reports about the actions of the various anti-Nazi groups here?

How many people outside of Germany know that Solingen is a rather left-wing place where residents were as shocked and disgusted when the homes of Turks were bombed as everyone else was? They too see the racists for the vicious, ignorant scum they are!

All over Germany the anti-Nazi slogans shout out at you from the graffiti-covered walls: "Nazis raus", "Ausländer bleiben, Nazis vertreiben" [foreigners stay, drive the Nazis away]. All over the place there are advertisements, stickers, postcards and pictures of the Nazi swastika being crushed under foot or fist.

The Nazi threat is a very real one but, therefore, when racist violence erupts, the cries of disgust rise too and German people begin to take action against it.

But there is a more subtle threat. It does not come in the form of boneheads in boots, Molotov cocktails in hand. It comes in the form of state racism — institutional racism.

As far as the government authorities are concerned, people born here of non-German parents are still regarded as "Ausländer" [foreigners].

Then there are the elderly, pensioners of non-German descent who have worked here most of their lives, often in the worst of jobs. They have paid taxes and contributed as workers to Germany's wealth — but that did not earn them the right to vote.

Many of the older generation worry about this. As one "Ausländer" was heard to say: "Germany has needed us, now we need Germany". They fear being thrown out of Germany once they can no longer work. Almost all of them demand the option of double citizenship as a safeguard against expulsion.

As one woman made clear to me, German passes in their pockets do not keep them safe from hatred as foreigners, but a pass is a step in the right

direction — towards acceptance and away from discrimination. But while the authorities continue to regard them as second-class citizens, it will be a very long time before discrimination is wiped out.

And how does the German government react to extreme right-wing Nazi groups? They bow to them by tightening immigration policy. Fewer and fewer people are being allowed into the country. The theory is fewer foreigners means fewer racist attacks! But you can not eradicate racism by closing the borders. You eradicate racism by opening them. Internationalism is the way forward.

Many of the "Ausländer" here, like black people in Britain, came in when the government wanted and needed them to prop up the capitalist system. When the system falters, the "Ausländer" are blamed for its problems by the racists.

Socialists recognise that racism is an inherent part of the capitalist system. Fascism, Nazism and racism cannot be smashed unless the workers play their part.

The labour movement must

fight against all forms of racism: the racist government laws as well as racism in the form of physical attacks on "Ausländer" in the streets.

Slogans, graffiti and speeches against the Nazis are nothing more than empty rhetoric unless they are backed up by action in a united labour movement acting in the interests of all workers, of all races and colours.

Just as Britain is, Germany is in dire need of serious, socialist, *united* action.

We can only offer hope to stamp out racism in Germany and the rest of the world through striving towards the creation of a society based not upon capitalist practices and ideas — which breed prejudice — but on working for black and white unity in the interests of all workers. We must look further than the level of just national politics. We must mobilise the working class across Europe to fight against racism and for socialism.

*Wir sind alle Ausländer — überall.* [We are all foreigners — everywhere.]

## Wirral socialists fight back

HARD LABOUR

By Cate Murphy

“PEOPLE are feeling abandoned, and are looking for a beacon of hope. They look to the Labour Party — and find silence”, argued Alan Simpson, MP for Nottingham South, at the meeting called by Wallasey Socialist Campaign Group on Thursday 4 November to protest against the Labour Party's moves towards expelling six members of Wallasey Constituency Labour Party.

Because of Labour's constant capitulation to the Tories on almost every issue, said Simpson, it is hard at present to persuade people to join Labour. What is the party offering that is any different?

There are huge gaps between the mainstream political parties and the desires of ordinary people. By failing to offer any answers to the despair and hopelessness that many people feel, Labour's leaders are bringing defeat on themselves. Nothing shows that more clearly than the victory of the fascist BNP in Tower Hamlets.

The only successes the labour movement has won have been results of direct action, Simpson said. Yet this is outlawed by the Labour leaders. Wallasey is only the latest CLP to fall victim to the witch-hunters for daring to fight to defend the interests of the working class. Far from applauding those who fight against cuts in jobs and services, Labour's leaders penalise activists by suspending or expelling them and by shutting down active, campaigning constituencies.

Yes, the left has been in retreat for over a decade — but socialist ideas are not dead. We need to organise around those ideas, to set the agenda rather than react to the Labour Party front bench.

The Socialist Campaign Group Supporters' Network, argued Alan Simpson, can be the channel through which we clarify those ideas, and popularise them throughout the movement. It is time for the left to go back on the offensive, winning back those people whom Labour has lost through its abandonment of radical policies.

Socialists should argue from within the party, putting pressure on the Labour leadership, and not abandon the party to the “modernisers” and witch-hunters.

We must be optimistic. Four election defeats for Labour are a bitter blow — but in the context of history they are nothing. Socialism is still alive! It is our responsibility to arm ourselves with socialist ideas and fight for their adoption by the movement.

Paul Davies, a TGWU union official and one of the six Wallasey CLP members who are currently suspended from holding office and face moves by the National Constitutional Committee to expel them, echoed this. He declared that socialists have no right to lose heart, despite all the U-turns on policy by the Labour Party leadership and their attacks on socialists in the party.

The Labour Party bureaucracy do not want to change society: they have a vested interest in maintaining capitalism. Socialists have a duty to continue to fight for our beliefs, to achieve socialism for future generations.

Sue Williams, ex-chair of Birkenhead CLP, detailed the attacks on her CLP following their attempt to deselect the sitting MP, Frank Field, before the 1987 election.

Paul Davies challenged Field and won the ballot. Field declared that he would stand against Labour if the selection contest were not re-run. The Labour leadership obliged and, breaking every rule necessary, Frank Field managed to win the second contest.

Not content with this, Field produced his infamous “dossier”, a scurrilous collection of lies, gossip and innuendo, in which anyone and everyone who had ever dared disagree with Field was smeared. Seven members, including a councillor, Geoff Barker, were expelled, the constituency was closed down (for passing a resolution against the manipulation of the selection contest), and 13 other members were suspended.

12 of them remain suspended, and still have not officially been informed of the charges against them. Indeed, when they asked the Labour Party for details, general secretary Larry Whitty replied that the allegations “weren't written yet”!

The dossier also attacked members of Wallasey CLP, and the same type of allegations arise in the current document being used to justify the suspension of the constituency and the moves against the six individuals. Little hard fact, but lots of innuendo and smears, as Liz Williams, chairing the meeting, pointed out.

One of the charges against Liz is that she was “rude” to Frank Field at a public meeting. She did comment that seeing Frank Field in Wallasey was a rare sight. He did not appear once during the 1987 election campaign when Lol Duffy was the candidate, despite being MP for the neighbouring constituency.

His sole contribution was to call publicly for people not to vote Labour in Wallasey! Frank Field is not suspended, he is not under investigation, and he is free to speak consistently against Party policy. Lol Duffy increased Labour's vote by 39% and came within 279 votes of winning the seat. In 1992 he was barred from standing and Angela Eagle was imposed on the constituency as Labour candidate. Lol Duffy is one of the six suspended members.

Support Wallasey's fight against the witch-hunt! Contact the Wallasey Socialist Campaign Group for more information: Flat 2, 51 Egremont Prom, New Brighton, Merseyside L45



# Cost-cutting comes expensive

**T**HE government's crusade to rid the NHS of its expensive resource-sapping bureaucracy burgeons.

NHS trust hospitals have just been given £100 million to spend on publicity, legal fees and management consultancy costs! This will enable them to operate in the internal market. The cost of these cost saving reforms is now in excess of £1 billion.

**A**N APOLOGY: a couple of months ago this column suggested that, with a few exceptions, MPs are greedy, overpaid slime, ready to top up their already healthy salaries by 20% while freezing increases in public sector pay. This is not true, and we unreservedly withdraw the comment. It turns out that MPs are greedy, overpaid slime who are about to increase their already healthy salaries by twice the rate of inflation this year and the same amount next year! Never underestimate the politicians! For a backbench MP this could mean £32,538, unless an MP has a few fat directorships in which case it will only mean £24,495.

The number of Labour MPs voting for the rise outnumbered those voting against it — 56 to 16. The Government had ensured that the vote took place late enough to avoid all but the latest of late night news bulletins on TV.

The 56 who voted in favour included Margaret Beckett, who complained in the debate that MPs had to live in London and run research and secretarial support on inadequate salaries, ignoring the hefty research and secretarial allowance all MPs get.

**T**HE BIDS are now rolling in for the Government's Social Security identity card scheme. Thorn-Security Systems (a sub-section of Thorn-EMI) and Electronic Data Systems (owned by General Motors) are already eyeing up the market. The system would cost in excess of £100 million (or 43,706 years dole to a single person

## GRAFFITI



By Cyclops

over 25). Systems suggested so far include hand scans or finger printing. Computer experts claim that this does not threaten any civil liberties since the computer systems are highly complex and coppers are not very clever.

**B**ORDER GUARDS employed to stop some of the 50,000 Chinese who try to enter Hong Kong illegally every year face a new problem. 10,000 immigrants, faced with high unemployment and slums in Hong Kong, are heading back over the fences into China.

**L**IFE AT THE TOP can be such a trauma, and the elite who so successfully create the profits and industry which we all rely on are constantly looking for ways to carry out their arduous but necessary task more effectively. For example people are forever giving these important people business cards which they neither have time to look at nor to file because they are too busy making very important decisions and clinching absolutely wonderful deals. Then, horror, they discover they've lost that all-important card.

But never fear, now a Californian company have invented a machine to look after these troublesome business cards. The "CardGrabber" scans the card, digitalises the image and stores it on a microchip. The images of the cards can then be reviewed through a compatible personal computer, so long as the right connecting cable is to hand. This machine weighs only one pound and is a snip at \$325.

Next week: we look at the new machine which plays with the executive toys that no one can be bothered to play with any more.

# Has the Mirror finally cracked?

## PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

**D**EBBIE wouldn't give the *Guardian* her full name, and who can blame her? For one thing, she's a customer of the LA Fitness Club (you know, *that* gym) and for another she probably thought her views would get her into some sort of trouble: "There are so many awful things going on in the world. This is hardly a significant matter." Good for you, Debbie!

Amid the cant, hypocrisy, cynicism and fawning sycophancy on both sides of the latest royal/tabloid row, someone actually spoke up for sanity and sense.

Unfortunately, the matter of the *Mirror's* "world exclusive" pictures of the Princess of Wales in her leotard is significant, even if sensible people like you, me and Debbie don't think it should be. For a start, the whole tedious, sordid business has put privacy legislation back on the agenda just as the threat seemed to be receding.

It's no secret that a majority of MPs on both sides of the Commons would dearly like to see the introduction of new laws to muzzle the press. Until last Sunday, the newspaper industry could point to the success of the Press Complaints Commission's Code of Conduct as evidence that self-regula-

tion was working. At a single blow, David Montgomery and his editors have shattered the PPC's authority and quite possibly mortally wounded the case for self-regulation.

As though determined to rub the PPC's nose in it, Monday's *Mirror* baited the Commission's chairman, Lord McGregor as "the arch buffoon" and suggested that he "must be auditioning for a Christmas pantomime." McGregor responded by declaring the *Mirror* Group "outlaw" and urging advertisers to boycott it. *Mirror* editor David Banks — on instructions from his boss David Montgomery — then introduced the paper's resignation from the PPC.

So can there be any justification for the *Mirror's* extraordinary recklessness? It would be nice to find some, given the nauseating hypocrisy of the near-unanimous chorus of condemnation coming from the

rest of the press and politicians of all shades. Unfortunately, there is little (or to be precise, nothing) to be said in the *Mirror's* defence. The taking of the photographs in the first place was a sordid enough business. The involvement of the odious Mr Max Clifford (he of Antonia de Sancha fame) in negotiating a £100,000 price from the *Mirror* only adds another layer of slime.

The inconsistent and unconvincing "good reasons" put forward by the *Mirror* (the pictures prove that Di has conquered bulimia; they draw attention to shockingly inadequate security arrangements, etc., etc.) are worthy of little more than a horse-laugh. Just how cynical are people like David Montgomery and his toadies? More to the point, perhaps, just how stupid do they think the rest of us are?

Finally there is the small mat-

ter of the *Mirror's* 90-year reputation as a popular paper that specialises in real news, not cheap sensationalism. Or as Mr Montgomery's new slogan has it, "Honesty, Quality, Excellence." If the *Mirror* was defying the rest of the newspaper industry and the politicians in order to bring us an important news story, it would be a noble enterprise we should all support.

But this is a sleazy, trivial non-story, without even the 'public interest' justification that could be used in the case of last year's Fergie photos. The whole affair is conclusive proof that David Montgomery and his craven editors will stoop to any depths in their desperate scramble for sales. It has come to something when the *Sun* can accuse the *Mirror* of "sleaze" and no one laughs.

The *Mirror's* historic reputation is often exaggerated. Its 'serious' journalism was always counter-balanced by showbiz gossip and trivia. But the *Mirror* was a great newspaper and its greatness was based upon popular journalism and real news values. That even survived Maxwell. Under Montgomery, the *Mirror* has become a cheap comic. Worse, it is a cheap comic whose irresponsibility has put the freedom of the entire British press at risk.

# What Market Testing means for women



By Jean Lane

**"W**HAT the government is doing to us now is only the start of something bigger". So said Rowan Taylor of the Civil Service union NUCPS on her picket line in East London last Friday.

The strike was a one-day national stoppage against Market Testing, which involves putting various bits of the Civil Service out to private tender.

So far it is the subsidiary bits that have been threatened: typing, accommodation, general maintenance, security. "The core workers, like myself, in the benefits section," said Rowan, "are safe for the moment, but it won't last".

Most of the lower grade, i.e. poorer paid, workers in the Civil Service are women, as are the vast majority of the part-time workers who need the flexibility to fit in with their domestic and child-care needs.

Many stand to lose their jobs and many more stand to have their conditions of work threatened by Market Testing.

As Rowan explained: "Even if the in-house bid were to win we would lose jobs. The lowest bidder wins, so they bid on the basis of fewer workers. And the jobs that we do keep would be on a three year contract. So every three years they can change your conditions".

But while the government plays Monopoly with workers' lives, selling their ability to feed the kids and pay the bills to the lowest bidder, the top nobles in the privatised service stand to gain an unbelievable amount — at least if the other privatised industries are anything to go by. Not only do they double and treble their pay, but they make a killing on the shares they hold in their companies too.

- John Baker, Chief Executive of National Power, trebled his pay after the privatisation and break-up of the Electricity Board, and now holds options on 487,412 National Power shares worth £4.10 each. That's £2 million in all.

- Ed Wallis, at PowerGen, also trebled his pay and now

has an option on 487,500 shares which total £2,225 million.

- The directors of the water industry have seen their salaries rise by 80% since privatisation. The shares have more than doubled in that time. So they make a packet while the bills of water users have gone up by an average of 47%, rebates and benefits are being slashed and the number of disconnections have doubled. A woman with four kids is afraid to flush the toilet and can only bathe her children once a week for fear of not being able to pay the bill when it comes in.

Asked why she thought the government was attacking the Civil Service, Rowan Taylor said: "The main purpose is to save money. It's political", she explained. And when you look at who is having to tighten their belts to save the money and at who is getting so much of it they would never need to lift their fingers in a day's work in their lives again, you would have to agree. The government look after their own, and we are footing the bill.

As far as Rowan Taylor and other Civil Service strikers are concerned, the labour move-

ment must look after their own too.

"Lots of strikers", she said, "are asking what's going to happen next. There has got to be more action than this. The government attacks will make our union weaker, especially if they get away with this, so we must fight on".

Many people think that women have equality now. Women can work. Women can fight and *do* win battles for equal pay. Women can even break through the glass ceiling to get promotion. But what the government gives when it suits them, or are forced to by mass action, as long as they stay in power, they can take away again when the chips are down.

While top executives cream off the profits of privatised public services, the workers tighten their belts. And working-class women do both that and carry out the services at home that were once, and should be, provided by the state.

Equal pay and rights to promotion mean little when you are out of a job. So we haven't won equality yet because the class system won't allow it. And this government looks after its class.



Let them eat cake



# Fascists out of York!

Sarah, York

**I**N 1190, MEMBERS OF THE Jewish community in York were imprisoned in Clifford's Tower. Rather than renounce their faith they committed suicide.

Every year the BNP attempt to march on Clifford's Tower to "celebrate" that massacre.

Students from York University and North Yorkshire Area NUS organise a counter rally — surrounding the Tower — with support from local trades union branches and Anti-Fascist Action, to prevent the BNP from marching on Clifford's Tower.

The BNP have been prevented from entering York.

This year, our local Labour council has tried to ban us.

Along with the police, they have made comments to the press that students only join this protest for their own political motives, and that this anti-fascist rally is offensive to the other Remembrance Sunday events!

They suggested that we should organise our rally on a different date — which seems to have somehow missed the point.

However, the BNP still intend to march in our city on this date, and we will organise to prevent them.



"We will not allow the fascists to organise". Photo: Adrian Franklin

We ask for your support on this event. This year we intend to make it the largest show of strength yet against the fascists.

We will not allow the fascists to organise and to march within our city preaching hatred!

**Seventh Annual Anti-Fascist Rally**

**Sunday 14 November 1993**

**Assemble: 1pm, Clifford's Tower, York**

**Further details 0904 433723**

# Left Unity takes on the Tories

Elaine Jones, National Union of Students National Executive

**F**OLLOWING THE 2,000-strong student demonstration through Manchester on 3 November, Left Unity held a fringe meeting of over 150 people.

Student activists from across the country discussed what sort of campaign is necessary to defend NUS from the Tories' attacks, and how to stop the Tories introducing tuition

fees and further cuts in education.

They expressed disgust at the lack of any action being organised by the leadership of the National Union of Students, and the need to hold the leadership to account.

We heard of future activities being planned around the country, including lobbies, pickets, etc., and the ways we could win over larger sections of society to support students in their fight.

Many student unions were linking up with the Civil Service workers' strike, organising anti-fascist activities, and supporting the TUC NHS

demonstration on 20 November.

There is also going to be a national lobby of Parliament to defend NUS on 25 November, with many speakers including Tony Benn MP. This is being organised by the Save Our Student Unions Campaign.

Thirty people joined Left Unity. The message from the meeting was clear: if the leaders of NUS won't fight, then the ordinary student activists will! It was summed up for me by a letter I received two days after the demo.

"I went to the demo in Manchester on the 3 November. I know this was only a beginning. I am writing because I want to know more about Left Unity and I want to get involved with your 'fightback' against the Tories.

Melanie Williams."

Left Unity is the fighting left in the student movement. If you, like Melanie, want to join the fight against the Tories, contact us and get active!

To join Left Unity send £2 (or 50p with no grant) to:  
9 Love Walk, Camberwell, London

## Socialism or barbarism

*Alliance for Workers' Liberty Student Weekend of debate and discussion*

**4-5 December • Manchester Town Hall, Albert Square, Manchester**

*Discussions include: Roots of racism • Why we need a working-class women's movement • South Africa - after apartheid, civil war? • 1917 - a flash in the pan? • Why students should be socialists for life • and lots lots more.*

**Registration: £3 with grant/£1 without grant. Details: 071-639 7967**

**Support the health service demo on 20 November**

## Tories make you sick!

Debbie, student nurse

**T**HE TORIES are planning to close even more hospitals. Last week, it was suggested that one of the two hospitals, Guys and St Thomas's, where I've just started my nursing training, should close.

Guys and St Thomas's merged in a Trust earlier this year. One of them now looks likely to go. Over the next few years at least, 2000 hospital workers will be sacked.

171 jobs are going before the end of March 1994. Workers have already been told to reapply for their jobs.

The Tories are determined to destroy the NHS. Throughout the country, thousands of beds have gone, wards are closed, services and facilities cut.

Real waiting lists have rocketed but seem to be shorter. Why? Operations have simply been can-

celled!

There are far fewer nursing staff but, never mind — hospital administration has never been busier!

The British Medical Association has just released guidelines stating that doctors don't have to treat smokers or heavy drinkers! Thus in order to save money for other operations and treatment they take to themselves the right to condemn some NHS patients to death!

People are — literally — dying from the effects of Tory policies. What kind of a society are we living in?

The NHS cannot be so organised that it is left to "market forces" to decide who can live and who can't! Don't let the Tories screw up our health service further!

In the words of UNISON "Enough is Enough".

Join the demonstration on 20 November and help save the health service.

**YOUTH FIGHTBACK**

**Rebellion**

... 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.

**Youth Fightback is...**

**Tory discipline is not the answer**

Matt, Sheffield

**S**ATURDAY DETENTIONS for youth who swear, bunk lessons or don't do homework — these are some of the ideas the Tories are putting forward to increase discipline in schools.

They've said they would like to reintroduce caning to beat kids into behaving, but that's against the European law now. Instead they're looking at other ways of enforcing "traditional discipline."

It's another part of the Tories' drive to crack down on the morals of society. They try to make out that society is in a mess because of individual bad behaviour, rather than for any fault in the system.

In education, it's clear that this propaganda is crap. The policies they aim to introduce won't work because they don't look at the root of the problems.

Education in schools and colleges should be about inspiring young people. We should be studying a broad range of subjects relevant to our lives.

We need decent facilities in schools. Schools should be better resourced, so that more individual attention can be given to people.

It's hardly surprising lessons get out of control when classes are so big and teachers overworked.

Most importantly, we need to look at ways of giving youth a stake in society and a say in what they are taught, and how.

Young people need jobs, good training and decent wages to live on at the end of their education.

Education is something that can improve life, but to the Tories and the bosses it's a chance to impose "discipline" and ram home the ideas of the ruling class.

We need to put young people's needs at the forefront in education — not the values of a Tory government that is just looking for someone else to blame.



# Ireland: the root

## Sean Matgamna looks at the arguments

**Q: What is the root of the violence in Northern Ireland?**

**A:** In Ireland there are two quite distinct peoples: the "Ulster Protestants" and the Catholics — who are called Unionists on one side, and Nationalists/Republicans on the other. Now — though in history it was not always thus — the fundamental conflict is between those two segments of the Irish people.

**Q: Surely partition is the main problem in Northern Ireland and the main conflict is between the IRA and the British army?**

**A:** Yes and no. Yes, Britain has overall control, manipulating the two antagonistic communities. The decisive initiative for change probably lies with Britain.

No, Britain does not want to stay in Northern Ireland, in its present role. Britain now gets none of the benefits that once came to her from Ireland. Britain has repeatedly stated that it would accept a united Ireland if the Northern Irish majority would.

Britain defends the status quo because the alternative is sectarian civil war between Catholics and Protestants.

**Q: So Britain is a benevolent, neutral force in Ireland?**

**A:** Not at all! Much of the responsibility for this situation lies with Britain. Britain set up the wretched Northern Irish framework in the first place and defends it now. Britain is trapped with responsibilities it would like to shed.

**Q: What's wrong with the Northern Irish state? If it's a matter of Protestants v Catholics, is it not a solution for the Protestants to have the Northern Irish state?**

**A:** A former Northern Irish Prime Minister once called it "A Protestant state for a Protestant people". But that, pointedly, is what it is not.

Basically what is wrong is that the 6 counties of Northern Ireland are not a viable political entity! Over 40% of the population are Catholics who would prefer to be part of an all-Ireland state. They are a majority in half the land area of the 6 counties! They are a bigger minority in Northern Ireland than all the Protestants of all Ireland would be in a united Ireland.

For the 50 years before 1970 they were treated as second-class citizens in Northern Ireland, discriminated against in housing, jobs and even voting rights (in local government).

Their first revolt was not an IRA-type military campaign, but a movement for civil rights modelled on that of the US black movement of the 60s! That's the measure of how badly off they felt.

**Q: Who was responsible?**

**A:** Britain! Britain had overall responsibility, though direct responsibility lay with a Protestant majority Home Rule parliament in Belfast (Britain abolished it in 1972).

**Q: But you say Britain did not want to be there?**

**A:** No it didn't, by the '70s. When Ireland was partitioned in 1920 Britain wanted to be there very much. Ireland was very important to Britain in terms of naval bases there. They kept naval bases in the South too until 1938. After World War 2 Ireland became less and less important to Britain. Responsibility remained.

The Labour government in the mid-'60s started edging towards shedding that responsibility and, perhaps — the exact story is in dispute — moving towards a united Ireland.

They pressed the Protestant parliament in Belfast to treat the Catholic minority better. When the effete and inept Tory-Unionist politicians in Northern Ireland tried to comply with British demands, there was a Protestant bigots' backlash against them, led by Ian Paisley and with heavy working class Protestant support.

Britain had to step centre-stage and take direct control in 1969, when serious fighting broke out between Protestants and Catholics

in Derry and Belfast.

**Q: But if Britain wanted to get out, why didn't she?**

**A:** Civil war in Ireland would do Britain no good, especially as it would certainly have reverberations in, for example, Glasgow. And governments do not just scuttle and run, if they have a choice.

**Q: But how did they allow such a mess to develop? Why? Why did the Irish not sort it out among themselves, democratically?**

**A:** Because of Britain's brutal highhandedness — and because of the nature of conflicts like the Catholic-Protestant conflict.

Britain controlled Ireland for centuries and, in the period before the First World War, wanted to continue in control. The Tories allied with the Orange-Protestant-Unionists, playing the "Orange card" against the Liberals (then Britain's second biggest party) who were allied to the green-Catholic-nationalists and prepared to give limited Home Rule to all Ireland.

The Protestant-Unionists, considering themselves British more than Irish, did not want to be a minority in a Catholic-dominated Ireland. Believing that the Liberal British government could be relied on to coerce the Irish minority into a united Ireland if necessary, the dominant nationalists gave no serious thought to working out a settlement with the other, Protestant, Irish.

Both Irish groups were subordinate allies of powerful British factions. Britain came close to civil war on the question of Home Rule for Ireland on the eve of World War 1. In the upshot the Liberals betrayed the Catholic Irish. They agreed to cut the country in two and on Tory-Unionist terms. The result was that the maximum territory was given to the "Protestant state" — with the maximum Catholic minority.

**Q: Why did the Catholics accept?**

**A:** Because Britain was a great military power, occupying all of Ireland then and waging a terrorist war on the Irish — through the notorious Black and Tans who went around shooting people and burning houses, villages, factories and sometimes towns.

Besides, the Catholic Irish were cheated.

This Partition of 1921-2 was supposed to be temporary. The Catholic Northern Irish areas were to be given the right to secede to the South. Dublin politicians believed that that secession — which the Northern Catholics wanted — would render the Northern Ireland state unviable, losing half its territory, and force the Protestants into a united Ireland.

When the renegotiation fell due in 1925 the British and the Belfast politicians stood fast for what they had and bought off the southern bourgeois politicians with a lump sum of money.

**Q: So the Northern Ireland Catholics were trapped?**

**A:** Until they revolted 25 years ago in peaceful marches for civil rights, to be met with fierce violence by the sectarian Protestant police.

**Q: So the IRA grew up to defend them?**

**A:** No! — that is just myth. The IRA was a tiny rump at the end of the '60s, controlled by Stalinists (who have since evolved into the Workers' Party and the Democratic Left in the South). They played little part in defending the Catholics.

**Q: Where did the IRA come from then?**

**A:** The present IRA began as a right-wing

breakaway from the Stalinist controlled rump. They were against all politics and believed in military struggle on principle. They launched a military campaign against Britain early in 1971.

**Q: On Britain, not on the Protestants?**

**A:** They said on Britain. They had an account of Irish affairs that pretended that Northern Ireland is just "British-occupied Ireland".

**Q: It is British-occupied Ireland.**

**A:** Essentially, that's not right. It is the Northern Ireland majority who are the die-in-the-last-ditch opponents of Irish unity in an independent state. That is the decisive question: how the Catholics are to relate to the Protestant Irish minority.

**Q: How did the IRA think they would relate to them, when they launched the military campaign in 1971?**

**A:** God knows. What they did was bomb the heart out of Northern Ireland's cities.

**Q: Did the Protestants thereby become more reconciled to a united Ireland?**

**A:** Like hell! They organised a mass armed militia, perhaps 35,000 strong by 1972 (there are one million Protestants in Northern Ireland so to get the equivalent figure for Britain you'd have to multiply by 55, or 37 taking the Catholic half million into account).

**Q: Did Britain "see reason"?**

**A:** Yes, indeed! Britain abolished Northern Ireland Home Rule in March 1972 and in late 1973 set up a new assembly with built-in Catholic-Protestant power-sharing. A Council of Ireland — first proposed in the 1920s! — was to be finally set up, loosely linking Dublin and Belfast.

**Q: But Britain eventually changed its mind?**

**A:** Well, yes — not voluntarily, though. In May 1974 there was a very powerful, 10-day, Orange general strike against the

power-sharing executive and the Council of Ireland. It was a general strike against a united Ireland. It brought the executive down and shattered Britain's plans. Essentially there has been stalemate ever since. Desultory IRA war has dragged on for 20 years.

**Q: So the IRA is progressive?**

**A:** The IRA began as a right-wing sect committed to the gun and bomb on principle, rejecting negotiation on principle and pretending that the problem is Britain and not a division within the people on the island.

Their military campaign pushed tens of thousands of Protestants into the arms of the bigots and militarists of Unionist fanaticism. The IRA could not possibly win: Irish unity could and can only be got by consent. The IRA campaign pushed that consent further away. So the Provisional IRA eruption in 1970-71 was not the solution to the problem but a massive exacerbation of it. It is anything but progressive!

**Q: But they fight imperialism!**

**A:** Do they? Anyway, "imperialism" is no longer the central issue in Northern Ireland, though British imperialism gave its present shape to the problem there. Fundamentally, they fight the Unionist Irish!

**Q: Why then does the left back the IRA — Socialist Worker for example?**

**A:** They are very unsteady in their backing of the IRA — as you'll learn if you study the record. The left is more concerned with posturing than with the real problems of the real Ireland, or with solutions. The key thing for us is working-class unity. The IRA is a bitter enemy of working-class unity.

**Q: But aren't they entitled to fight fire with fire, to respond to the mad Protestant killers?**

**A:** Yes, if that is what they do! It is not what

they do — fundamentally. The real situation in Northern Ireland is one of Irish opposition to Irish unity. The logic of their politics leads the IRA to shoot Irish Protestant workers as "collaborators". They put a better ideological and political gloss on it than the Protestants-Unionist killers do, and, as a rule, their people believe the ideological slant — but the pseudo-Republicans too go in for sectarian killings.

**Q: Pseudo-Republicans?**

**A:** Yes, pseudo-Republicans! Irish republicanism can only mean what Wolfe Tone defined it as — the uniting of the people of Ireland, Protestant and Catholic alike, as equal citizens. Where one group tries to coerce another — as the IRA in essence tries to coerce the Protestants — you cannot have that.

**Q: The first coercion was the other way round, surely?**

**A:** Yes. And the Northern Irish state is unviable. But it must end by consent and agreement. To coerce the Protestants into a united Ireland without minority rights is to make of one million Protestants in a 32 County State what half a million Catholics have been in the 6 Counties for 70 years. That is not progress! The underlying IRA drive has been to coerce them, or to force the British to coerce them.

**Q: Isn't that a bit far-fetched?**

**A:** It is one of the underlying strands of Irish political history back to the days before World War 1 when the old Home Rulers relied so foolishly on the Liberals to force the rebellious Unionists into a united Ireland.

**Q: So you blame the oppressed and their representatives?**

**A:** No, we blame the British and the southern Irish bourgeoisie for letting Northern Ireland fester for so long and for not sorting things out in the last 20 years.

But identifying the Catholics as the oppressed does not settle all questions, nor absolve us of the responsibility to give honest accounts of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois politicians who lead the organisations of the oppressed in Northern Ireland.

Sinn Fein/IRA is a petty-bourgeois political formation. It has now abandoned most of its "no politics" principles and may be about to abandon "physical force on principle". For what? There is no mystery about it. Gerry Adams and his friends want to become mainstream bourgeois, albeit Catholic community-based, politicians. They have had many predecessors, who started with "the IRA gun" and wound up jobbing politicians — Fianna Fail, the main bourgeois party in the south, for example.

We judge these people from the point of view of working-class socialism!

**Q: But they are revolutionaries!**

**A:** Revolutionary politics is not the same thing as physical force. Especially in Ireland. There, the most reactionary bourgeois parties in the south (the two main parties) began as physical force parties. Revolutionary politics is a matter of programme and class.

**Q: So the pro-Republican left have got it wrong?**

**A:** Certainly. They tell themselves a ridiculous series of ideological lies. For example — that Troops Out equals a united Ireland. No, it does not! Troops Out without a prior political settlement would mean Bosnian-style civil war and repartition into two Irish states for as long as anyone can foresee.

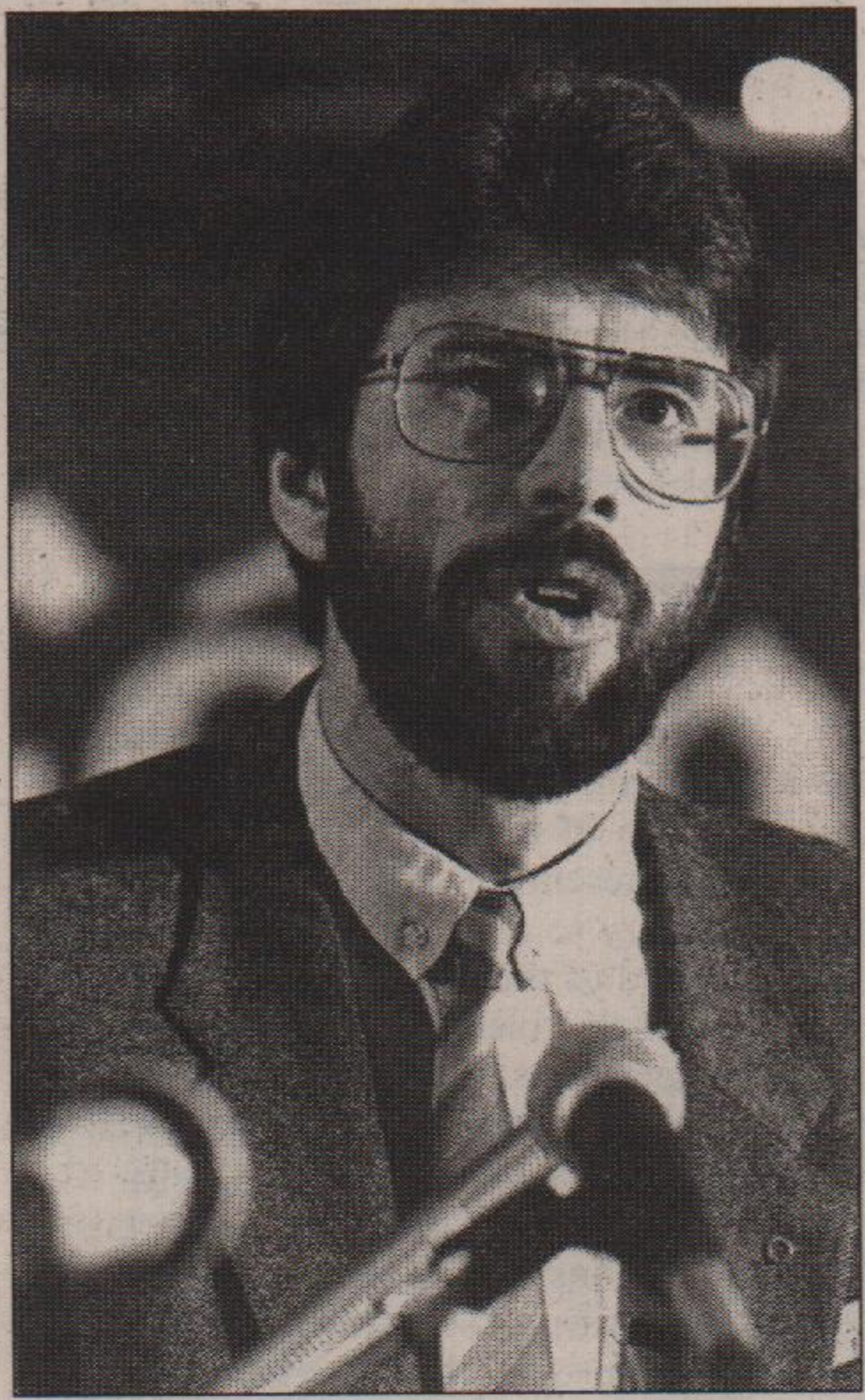
**Q: But isn't it a matter of principle for socialists to be for Troops Out Now, whatever the consequences?**

**A:** Why? We want to destroy the British state and replace it with a more democratic working class state. But we do not go around shouting "smash the state". That's for when the working class is ready, willing and able to take over. Collapse of the state into chaos and civil war, as in the former Yugoslavia — that is no way forward for the working class. That is what Troops Out without a settlement will mean in Northern Ireland. For a certainty.

*"Socialists should propose a united Ireland with self-rule for the Protestants... In the last analysis, only working-class unity in Ireland will allow real progress to be made out of the tragic blind alley."*



# s of the violence



Above: Dublin protesters back the initiative from Gerry Adams (above left) and John Hume. Left: "it is the Northern Ireland majority who are the die-in-the-last-ditch opponents of Irish unity."

**Q: Isn't the answer to get working class unity by building on the joint actions of Protestant and Catholic workers against killings, and for working class demands like wage rises?**

**A:** Yes. But it is limited unity. It is not political unity. It shatters easily whenever the "constitutional question" arises: the relationship between Protestant Northern Ireland and the rest of Ireland. The rare but much-cited cases of unity — 1907 and 1932 — prove this. Immediately afterwards the workers fought each other on sectarian-constitutional lines. Workers' unity for more than trade-union goals is impossible without an agreed programme spelling out how Protestants and Catholics can live together in peace on the island. Thus the idea of a federal solution, on which more below.

**Q: So we should support the troops as a lesser evil?**

**A:** No! We should not take responsibility for the British army in Ireland or anywhere else. But neither do we call on the British ruling class to pull out and create a Bosnia-style chaos. Neither, incidentally, do most people in Ireland. Most Northern Irish Catholics do not call for immediate troops out. Neither do

Sinn Fein or the IRA — they say they want a negotiated British withdrawal.

**Q: Surely the basic issue is self-determination for the Irish people as a whole? That will not solve all the problems, but there are no British solutions.**

**A:** There is no "Irish people as a whole"! There is bitter division, and a clash of identities. If Britain disappeared tomorrow, you would not get self-determination for Ireland as a whole, but a Protestant Unionist drive to win — by war if necessary — self-determination from the majority of the Irish.

There will be no British solutions, as you say. The Irish must reach agreement among themselves. British withdrawal without a settlement would be the worst of all "British solutions", a British decision to precipitate sectarian Bosnia-style civil war and repartition. Troops Out Now, too, is a "British solution"!

**Q: British socialists have no right to tell the Irish people what sort of united Ireland they should have.**

**A:** That is usually a code for saying we must back Sinn Fein! British socialists and Irish socialists have a right to judge the situation

and formulate policies. We have not only a right but a duty to listen to the big majority of the Irish, North and South, who oppose Troops Out without political settlement.

**Q: But shouldn't the left side with the most militant "progressives" — look at the way Socialist Worker does it!**

**A:** Yes, indeed, look at the way Socialist Worker does it! Militancy tells you nothing: in communal and national conflicts the most militant are also likely to be the most chauvinist! You can't, if you are a serious working class socialist, just reflect or mimic militancy. You need to make an honest, independent assessment. The job is to honestly understand reality and the best thing for the working class movement and socialists to do in a given situation. *Socialist Worker* makes demagogic "militant" noises, safe in the knowledge that nothing will come of it. That is invidious. It is not Marxist politics, or honest politics of any sort. It simply is not serious. It is a pretentious way of recognising your own inconsequentiality!

**Q: So what should Northern Ireland socialists do?**

**A:** Oppose the chauvinists on both sides.

• Preach working-class socialist revolution.

• Propose a united Ireland with self-rule for the Protestants, and, perhaps, closer links — to reassure the Protestants — between Dublin and London.

• Demand of the Provisional IRA that it calls off its military campaign.

That would not exclude defensive actions on behalf of the Catholics. But it needs to be said clearly: the IRA should stop shooting Protestant Unionists on any pretext!

• Reach out to the Protestant workers. Strive to organise and mobilise them to undercut the Protestants bigots and stop their murder campaign.

• Oppose British and RUC repression. Demand troops out as part of a political settlement.

• Demand that Britain and Dublin accept the Hume-Adams proposals as the basis for negotiation.

• For a united Ireland with federal rights for the Protestant communities!

In the last analysis, only working-class unity in Ireland will allow real progress to be made out of the tragic blind alley into which the 6 county entity has corralled its people, Protestant and Catholic alike.



# Your Granny is not killing the planet!

## MOTHER EARTH

By Mark Sandell

**H**AVE YOU SEEN the TV ads the Department of the Environment are running for their 'Helping the Earth begins at Home' campaign? These glossy ads are meant to show how 'green' the Tories are.

Of course this is rubbish! The whole campaign is nothing more than a 'green' PR job for the Tories. How can I save the planet? By cutting down on my energy use! They blame us for the threat to the environment and ignore the real threat from government policy and the capitalist system.

There is nothing new in this approach. Unfortunately, many 'greens' have had the same approach, blaming "people" in general. Too often green campaigns have sought solutions in individual actions by consumers.

On a world-wide scale, it is capitalism, a system based on profit for the few and ignoring the human needs of the majority, including the need for a safe environment, that is destroying the planet! The Tories worship this system. For them, profit comes first — not the planet!

The 'Helping the Earth Begins at Home' campaign is about cutting down the levels of CO<sub>2</sub> produced in the burning of fossil fuels. CO<sub>2</sub> is the main 'greenhouse gas' which could create global warming. The ads tell us it is up to us as individual consumers and ignores the far bigger effects of Tory policy.

You want an example? The campaign tells us to cut down on the use of cars by using public transport, yet the Tories have devastated public transport!

They deregulated the buses, opening bus routes to a lunatic open market that slashed services and pushed up fares.

It was the Tories who took the old Greater London Council to court for trying to reduce fares on London Transport.

They have starved British Rail of money and now plan to destroy it by privatising it.

Alongside of this attack on public transport, the Tories have built more and more motorways and have championed the car.

The Campaign tells us to save electricity. Yet the selling off of the Electricity Companies means that electricity companies will drive to sell more energy to make bigger profits!

These profit-hungry companies don't "manage" resources, they go for the quick buck. The British coal industry was destroyed when

the electricity companies built gas burning power stations simply because right now gas is cheap. This is crazy. Gas is a very valuable and limited resource. Burning it up is a criminal waste and creates CO<sub>2</sub>.

Capitalist electricity companies will never develop environmentally-friendly renewable sources of power while they can make a quick killing from cheap fossil fuels.

Even if you look at the campaign from the point of view of saving energy in houses, the campaign explains that "for a fairly typical older house with basic insulation and heating controls, the heating bill is £445. But for a modern energy efficient house it is just £151." Tory housing policy means that millions of people have been left to rot in old energy-inefficient houses.

The official campaign pamphlet admits that only a quarter of CO<sub>2</sub> comes from energy used in the home, but says nothing about cutting down CO<sub>2</sub> from industry!

The Tories try to excuse putting VAT on fuel as a 'green tax', as if old people who need a bit of heating are the enemies of planet Earth!

The main threat to our environment comes from big business and capitalist governments who collude in its destruction in the mad dash for quick profits.

Don't believe the hype! It's not your Gran who is killing the planet, it is capitalism.

Helping the earth begins with the fight against environmental destruction capitalist business and capitalist governments. Helping the earth begins in the fight by working class people to control our lives, including our planet.



The official campaign pamphlet. It says nothing about cutting down CO<sub>2</sub> from industry

# The Kerensky-Shacht 1917: the tri

LAST WEEK'S *SOCIALIST ORGANISER* was fouled up by a major production error: a quirk of our computer-typesetting system replaced the later sections of the Shachtman-Kerensky debate on the Russian Revolution by a re-run of the opening section. Menshevik sabotage probably! This week we repair the error by printing the later part of the debate.

The debate, held in 1951, is of great interest because it opposed Alexander Kerensky, head of the capitalist government overthrown by workers led by Lenin and Trotsky in 1917, to Max Shachtman, who had been a close comrade of Trotsky's for many years and continued to champion the Russian Revolution.

The first part of the report of the debate (which we reprint from the US socialist paper *Labor Action*) covered the bulk of Shachtman's opening speech. Shachtman argued that the old regime of the Tsar [emperor or king] had become discredited and bankrupt. After the Tsar fell in February 1917, the various unelected bourgeois "provisional governments" in which Kerensky served were unwilling or unable to meet the social and democratic demands of the people who had thrown out the Tsar.

Alongside those provisional governments was, however, another power: the soviets or workers' councils, elected, accountable, and democratic.

In the revolution of October 1917 those soviets, won to Bolshevik leadership by fair, open and democratic debate, overthrew the provisional government and started decisive steps to meet the people's demands.

We begin this week's coverage with the last part of Shachtman's speech, in which he deals with objections to the 1917 Revolution on the grounds of the Constituent Assembly being dissolved in January 1918 or of what happened later (Stalinism).

We also include Kerensky's opening speech, and the rebuttals of the two speakers.

**"T**HE 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 and more, lies in the struggle for democracy. The struggle for democracy receives its clarity, purpose and guarantee in the struggle for socialism; the struggle for socialism lies in the hands of the working class — the beast of burden, the despised of the earth — whose will to victory were all forever underlined by their first great

revolution, the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia."

Kerensky's presentation followed Shachtman, who had devoted his time to developing the whole picture of the unfolding revolution in Russia, in its historical context and in rounded interpretation. Kerensky devoted

his time to picking holes in this interpretation, from the viewpoint of a government official of narrow social vision.

He based himself on the necessity for the provisional government to "defend Russia" during the war, opposing the elements of extreme monarchist reaction who favoured a separate peace with Germany and likewise opposing the desire of the people to get out of the disastrous war.

He took the stand that the social reforms demanded by the people must be postponed until the war was over. The government could legitimately adopt measures such as the land reforms, the 8-hour day, the need for a constituent assembly, the right of self-determination for oppressed nationalities — but (and it was a very big but) nothing could really be done until the Constituent Assembly met, and it would be better for that body to meet only after the conclusion of the war.

After all, the organisation of a constituent assembly is a 'big job'. The Germans were advancing, and the "Lenin crisis in the rear" forced the

Constituent Assembly commission to cease its never-ending labour for only three weeks. The provisional government was "in direct contact with all forces — exception: the Bolsheviks."

**T**HIS SECTION of Kerensky's presentation had already been anticipated in Shachtman's speech, which had made clear in advance the garbled version of history which Kerensky was presenting. Nor did Kerensky even try to meet Shachtman on the ground of the meaning of democracy and the role of the masses. Instead he spent the major part of his time plucking out and attacking quotations from Lenin's writing, with a view to proving their conspiratorial, treasonous and totalitarian nature.

According to Kerensky's story, Lenin foresaw that Kerensky's proposal would win the support of the peasantry after the victory of Russia's noble but crumbling armies. Therefore Lenin had to act fast, before this happened. He had to marshal his Bolsheviks to organise army deserters in the countryside and to steer a course toward armed insurrection, before the provisional government had a sporting chance to show its sterling mettle to the peasants on some indeterminate future date after the equally indeterminate conclusion of hostilities.

The aim of Bolshevism, according to Kerensky, was to exploit the country in totalitarian fashion. The real question here, he announced, is what happened after the revolution but he abruptly stopped at this point, apparently remembering that the subject of the discussion was the revolution itself; however he picked up this theme from time to time later.

Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin, he said, were playing a double game of trickery on the country, and the government. Lenin sent various "secret instructions" to his central committee. (Kerensky, without pointing it out, was referring to the period when his own government had jailed Trotsky and other Bolsheviks and had forced Lenin to go into hiding!)

In one of these "instructions" Lenin committed the heinous crime of saying that the soviets would be of value to the people only if they carried through the needs of the revolution.

Another aim of Bolshevism, Kerensky charged, was to "distract the freest country in the world from preparing a base for the future world socialist movement." So, Lenin concluded, the provisional government had to be stopped. "For this they ruined Russian democracy," he cried, after having made clear that he understood nothing about the urgent desire of the Russian masses for the democratic and socialist reforms which only the Bolsheviks were fighting for.

**S**TRIKING a personal note, Kerensky drew some applause when he cried: "Maybe my government was unpopular but I needed no bodyguards. In Kiev when I took a walk the people liked to gather around me and speak to me. It is a special type of 'dictator'." Kerensky was presumably referring to Stalin's secluded and guarded living habits (and it is a safe bet that he was not referring



Max Shachtman



# man debate

# triumph of democracy



The Bolshevik-led government after October 1917 tried to meet people's demands

to [US President Harry] Truman's bodyguard); but while he was supposed to be discussing Lenin and the days of the Russian Revolution, he made no mention of the fact that Lenin and the other Bolshevik leaders continually mingled with the workers at all kinds of meetings and elsewhere, guarded at other times as the crisis neared only against the police vengeance of Kerensky himself.

At another point, Kerensky gained a meed of applause by referring to the Bolshevik suppression of the Kronstadt revolt against the revolutionary regime during the post-revolution civil war.

He concluded his presentation by quoting an attack by Proudhon on Marx. The French petty-bourgeois radical had denounced Marx's *Communist Manifesto* with the cry that "Communism is nothing more than inequality, subjugation and slavery." "The fight in 1917", said Kerensky, was "not a fight between capitalism and socialism, but between freedom and slavery." And "Stalin is the most faithful, most able, most talented disciple of Lenin."

**S**HACHTMAN OPENED his rebuttal with a reminder to the audience that he had initially stated that the Stalinists have the biggest lie factory against the Bolshevik Revolution but that they by no means have a monopoly on the business. He proceeded to

discuss Kerensky's garbled quotations — that is forgeries purporting to prove that Lenin favoured "treason", discussing in particular Lenin's opposition to the czar's war and the worldwide imperialist war and his views on the so-called "revolutionary defeatism."

*"The Bolshevik government took power with the support of a free vote of the broadest and most representative body ever assembled in Russia or for that matter in the world."*

The ISL chairman demanded to know "who elected" the supposedly "democratic" provisional government — which, of course, had been put into power by no popular vote of any kind. In contrast, he pointed out, the Bolshevik government took power with the support of a free vote of the broadest and most representative body ever assembled in Russia or for

that matter in the world — the soviets (councils) of the workers, peasants, and soldiers of the country — in a congress organised and prepared by enemies of the Bolsheviks.

It will be a curious spectacle for future historians to picture the president of a government whom no people had elected contesting the democratic character of the only revolutionary regime in the history of the world's revolutions which did come to power with the recorded freely voted support of the broad masses.

Shachtman presented the documentation of the recent book on *The Election to the Russian Constituent Assembly of 1917* by OH Radkey as even more conclusive proof that the compromising leadership of the Mensheviks and SRs "no longer commanded the allegiance" of the masses. He stressed the absurdity, not to speak of the slanderousness, of Kerensky's claim that the Bolsheviks were able to lead a vast, tumultuous, surging mass revolution of the people through "trickeries."

How many insurrections, he asked, had Kerensky ever organised in which he gave public instructions (not "secret instructions") so that the reaction would know the time, place and forces at his disposal?

"Whom did the Bolsheviks suppress during the civil war? White guards, czarists and Mensheviks who had taken up arms against the government and the revolution. Did that

'maniac' Lincoln ever permit the Confederate in the US Civil War to open up a recruiting station in Chicago?"

Kerensky had referred in rapturous terms to the president of the first provisional government in 1917, Prince Lvov, one of the biggest landowners in Russia, as "one of the most extraordinary democrats in the world." Shachtman stated his regret that he had no time to take up this democratic idol of Kerensky's properly, but it is worthwhile to mention Kerensky's estimate for the light it casts on his own conceptions of democracy.

Kerensky had argued that while his provisional government had denied self-determination to Finland and the Ukraine, it had granted immediate freedom to Poland. Shachtman had only to point out that this was done when (and because) Poland was under the German sword at the time! Kerensky was magnanimously giving freedom to a people whom he no longer controlled, while ruthlessly maintaining Russian control over the Finns and Ukrainians whom the Germans did not have in their power.

As reported above, Kerensky had also waved the flag of the Kronstadt revolt against the Bolsheviks, which took place in 1920 during the civil war of the White guards and foreign armies against the revolution. It was "ill-advised" for Kerensky to mention the word Kronstadt on his lips, Shachtman said. The provisional gov-

ernment — in 1917 — had "merely" ordered submarines to blow up the ships of the pro-Bolshevik Kronstadt sailors to compel their submission to the government.

In his rebuttal Kerensky differentiated his own attack on Lenin as a "German agent" (one of the crudest of all the slanders against Lenin) from that of others in that he did not accuse Lenin of being a vulgar agent for German gold. It was Lenin's "point of view", he said, that coincided with the German interests.

Taking up the question of why he had denied self-determination to the Ukrainians, he gave as his excuse the Ukrainians' "excessive" territorial demands, which for him could be solved only by the same Constituent Assembly which he was continually postponing.

His main appeal was "Why was it necessary to organise the uprising?" implying that it is "always possible for things to be worked out."

As also reported elsewhere, Shachtman, by the terms of the debate, was then supposed to have a surrebuttal, but he did not get the opportunity since the chairman adjourned the meeting due to the lateness of the hour. But even without this last word, there is little doubt that the solid, fact-buttressed, cogent picture of the Russian Revolution that he had presented clearly lighted up the socialist inspiration and democratic nature of the great revolutionary struggle.



The women's suffrage struggle and the logic of narrow "single-issue" politics

# From token to Tory



BBC1  
Monday evenings

Liz Millward  
Reviews  
*Shoulder  
To Shoulder*

WHEN the two women get up in a cafe and shout "votes for women!", the venomous hostility with which the men present react is startling and shocking.

They pelt them with bread rolls and roughly bundle them out.

The lone woman, weak from hunger, barricades herself in a cell to ward off the force-feeding doctors — who are really licensed torturers — advancing with noisy trolleys and prison warders up the corridor outside. She is hosed with icy water through a window.

For this is the time before the First World War when the militant "suffragettes" are breaking windows, slashing pictures in museums, and raising small fires — using small-scale terrorism to back the demand for women's suffrage. The lone brave woman in the prison cell is Emily Davidson: she will throw herself under the feet of the King's horse at the 1913 Derby and die.

*Shoulder To Shoulder*, made in 1974 — and now on TV again — recreates the story of that struggle, centred around the Pankhurst family — Emmeline, Christobel and Sylvia — and their circle, who led the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU).

It is a strange story, and I confess that I find it impossible not to have mixed feelings about the suffragettes.

For a start, the fact that when we speak now of the fight for woman's suffrage we say "suffragettes" and not "suffragists" is a triumph of publicity, notoriety, and self-promotion by a circle of well-connected upper-class women.

The "suffragists" were far more

numerous. They sustained a campaign for decades, while the Pankhurst movement lasted eight years, to 1914. And they were a very powerful force in the labour movement, where large numbers of working-class men, not having the property qualification, lacked the vote too.

Yet the suffragists are scarcely remembered now. And it is not that the "suffragettes" were successful. They were not; they had long given up campaigning when the vote was won in 1918, and the vote women got then was far more in line with what the suffragists fought for than the very limited immediate goals of the WSPU in the years before the First World War.

For what distinguished the Pankhurst movement was not just militancy and, finally, petty terrorism, but a willingness to narrow down their demand to votes for women "on the same terms as men". Though that would win the principle of votes for women, in practice it meant votes for only that small handful of women who were rich enough to be independent householders. It meant, as their critics said, not "votes for women" but "votes for ladies".

The suffragists, especially those of them connected with the labour movement, wanted a general extension of the franchise to working-class non-householders, men too. That was the only way large numbers of women would get a vote.

The "votes for ladies" approach made them rely more and more on "influential" upper-class ladies, despite the fact that some of them, like Annie Kenny, were of working-class origin. They moved more and more to the right and tied themselves to coteries of bourgeois and aristocratic women.

When war came they turned into savage chauvinists. The crusade to hand out white feathers for cowardice to men not in uniform is well known. There was much worse.



Demonstration for women's suffrage

Christobel and Emmeline Pankhurst leagued themselves with the Rupert Murdoch of that age, the newspaper baron Rothermere, and organised such stunts as women's demonstrations demanding the internment of all "aliens", even those who had become British citizens.

They formed a "Women's Party" which fought the 1918 election with the endorsement of Prime Minister Lloyd George. Christobel Pankhurst came within a few hundred votes of winning a seat in Parliament, thus becoming the first British woman MP. (Constance Markiewicz was the first woman elected to the House of Commons, but as a Sinn Feiner she attended the secessionist Dail Eireann in Dublin and not Westminster. An Anglicised American Tory, Nancy Astor, was the first woman to sit in the House of Commons.)

The Women's Party stood in 1918 on a programme of harsh authoritarian state control, including the suppression of trade unions, and thus could make a plausible claim to be the first British fascist party. They had come a long way!

The franchise granted to women over thirty in 1918 was limited but nevertheless far wider than that which the Pankhursts' WSPU had claimed. (Women got the vote on equal terms with men in 1928).

Christobel, the general of the movement, who ran things from safety in Paris while her mother, sister and others endured repeated hunger strikes and force-feeding, became an outright crank, writing books to prove that 90-something percent of men had gonorrhoea.

Emmeline, who was once on the executive of the Independent Labour Party, was an unsuccessful Tory candidate just before she died in the late '20s. That's where the "votes for ladies" policy had taken her.

In principle it is impossible to fault the logic of demanding the winning of the principle of votes for women, even "on the same terms as men". But in the real world it meant aban-

doning most women. That choice shaped them politically.

The glorious exception to the rightward drift of the WSPU, which had begun on the left, was Sylvia Pankhurst.

She went into the slums of East London, and when the WSPU, disdaining the "powerless" working-class women whom Sylvia organised, turned against them in favour of work amongst "influential" upper-class women in the West End, Sylvia continued her work alone.

Sylvia saw no sense in "votes for

*"The East London movement of the poorest women had to demand a general extension of the suffrage. On that basis it won the support of working-class men too, and allied with the labour movement."*

ladies". Of necessity, the East London movement of the poorest women had to demand a general extension of the suffrage. On that basis it won the support of working-class men too, and allied with the labour movement.

Sylvia, who was Keir Hardie's lover, moved not to the right but to the left.

She opposed the First World War, and broadened the "Women's Suffrage Federation" first to the "Workers' Suffrage Federation" and then to the "Workers' Socialist

Federation".

They supported the Russian Revolution, and revolution in Britain.

Sylvia's paper, *Women's* — and then *Workers'* — *Dreadnought* was the best communist paper published in Britain during the First World War, despite ultra-left tendencies. There was much more life to it and it was infinitely braver than its rivals (the British Socialist Party's *Call* and the Socialist Labour Party's *Socialist*).

In a sense, I suppose, the lesson of Mrs Pankhurst's fate is a lesson about narrow single-issue sectional politics.

Following her daughter Christobel, she went from a proper concern with women denied the vote to championing a supposedly representative group of (rich) women as first tokens for all women — and thereby abandoned most women, "for now".

By contrast, Sylvia saw that the great "section" whom she championed, women, could advance only with the whole of the oppressed class, of which most women were part.

They had a right to organise and to fight militantly — but Sylvia knew that it would be suicide for them to imagine that they could win alone; and to pretend that advancement for "token" and "representative" women was a real step forward simply made them political tools of a handful of self-serving members of the the upper layers of oppressed — in this case rich women.

That is as true about women's liberation now as it was when the issue was votes. The parallels with the black movement are striking too.

*Shoulder To Shoulder* is excellently done, from petulant, self-centred, spoiled-brat-voiced Christobel (Pat Quinn) to her doting, following, heroic mother (Sian Phillips) and the thoughtful, selfless, magnificent Sylvia (Angela Down).

Use videos of one of the episodes — someone in your group is bound to have videoed it — to start a discussion in your AWL branch!



Sylvia and Emmeline Pankhurst



# Escaping the prison of "Victorian values"



Matt  
Cooper  
reviews  
*The Piano*

Directed by  
Jane Campion



Ada (Holly Hunter) and Flora (Anna Paquin)

**W**ITH *The Piano* Jane Campion has produced a stark and compelling work, a piece saturated with a slow, brooding and evocative atmosphere. The story, set in the 19th century, concerns Ada (Holly Hunter) who, mute since the age of six, can only express herself through her piano. Her playing conveys her emotions while her face is as unexpressive as her silence. These moods expressed by Michael Nyman's score provide a relentless and powerful soundtrack for the film.

Ada has a seven year old daughter Flora (Anna Paquin), product of a wild affair with a man who disappeared, leaving her pregnant to bear the stigma of an unmarried mother in Victorian England. As a "fallen woman", Ada has to be palmed off by her family on any man who will have her. Against her will she is packed off to New Zealand to marry a man who she has never met.

Arriving in New Zealand Ada, Flora and the piano are abandoned on a storm swept beach. Eventually her husband-to-be, Stewart (Sam Neill), arrives — a cold, heartless and, though he has pretensions, uncultured man. He is a land grabbing colonist interested in little but wealth and status in the pioneering British community transplanted to the middle of a primeval forest in

New Zealand.

There, the men buy tracts of forest from the Maoris and the women perform a parody of staid Victorian drawing-room society life.

Stewart's indifference to Ada leads him to sell her piano to another settler, the Scottish illiterate Baines (Harvey Keitel). Unlike the rest of the colonists, Baines has "gone native", shedding the repression of his origins. He prefers to spend his time with the Maoris.

Baines symbolises all that is forbidden in Victorian culture. It is he,

not the supposedly cultured Stewart, who is drawn to Ada's musical self-expression, much to Stewart's annoyance. Baines offers to return the piano if Ada will play it for him while he watches.

The film is a reworking of the *Heart of Darkness* theme, in feminine form. The untamed landscape of New Zealand stands for a primal emotional energy lost to the West. Baines's link to the Maoris stands for his own sexual liberation.

The Maoris escape the indignity of being cast as "noble savages", but

appear as laid-back folk who generally think sex is a good idea, unlike their European "betters".

The main interest of the film is Ada's attempts to free herself of this repression and to learn to express herself in more than music.

Although Campion clearly wants to imply something about our own lives, this is not an "issue" film. It is about repression and self realisation in a bygone age.

For its beauty, evocative power and sheer class *The Piano* is well worth a look.

# The Prince and the Pauper in Washington



Paddy  
Dollard  
reviews  
*Dave*

Directed by  
Ivan Reitman

**D**AVE IS A cross between *The Prince and the Pauper* and *The Prisoner of Zenda*, the much-filmed "Ruritania" romance. You know the story: the hero looks like the king/prince and takes the noble one's place when conspirators kidnap him, etc.

*Dave* is an American political fantasy, with Washington as the Ruritania never-never land. That is a significant political fact.

Dave Kovic, who looks like President Bill Mitchell, runs a

small-town employment agency. He is the town's big-hearted, universal good neighbour, the shop steward for the hard-up: "For God's sake, John, give her a job, her gas is about to be cut off."

He is recruited as a stand-in for the President, on the very night that a stroke turns the President from a healthy animal astride his secretary to a brain-dead vegetable on a life support machine.

The President's paranoid Chief of Staff persuades Dave to stay on, pretending to be President for real.

The small-town good neighbour, miraculously installed as king in the plutocratic republic, behaves as a lot of Americans evidently wish that their political leaders would behave — bringing in Bills to help the unemployed and the homeless. "Not since Roosevelt's New Deal..." says a TV commentator. No.

This is also "Mr Smith goes to Washington", with slivers from an unmade film, "America's dream of Ross Perot", thrown in.

*Dave* reflects the popular American disenchantment with politics, on the crest of which Bill Clinton overturned Bush last year. Washington evidently is now a strange and hostile place to many Americans, the domain of bad kings, blood-sucking plutocrats, and evil, cold-hearted Princes Of The Dollar.

A hundred years ago the great American writer and critic Mark Twain wrote *The Prince and Pauper*, a tale about a beggar off the streets who substitutes for the head of the corrupt and predatory Tudor monarchy — in the bad old days before the American revolution showed the world the foolishness of such a system. Americans of Mark Twain's

generation, who believed in democracy as something real and not as a branch of showbiz, would be surprised indeed to learn that Americans at the end of the 20th century would feel so alienated from the Republic's institutions in Washington that the same sort of story could be woven, for mass entertainment, around the US presidency.

The old '30s movie fantasies about the "little man" sorting out 'Washington' had him working on and eventually through the system: here 'the system' is subverted, overturned for a while. "The Prince and the Pauper"...

The magically uncorrupted Vice President (Gandhi himself, Ben Kingsley) is no more than a plot device to secure a happy ending.

*Dave* lacks bite and force, though it is pleasant and watchable, and I liked it.

## How Europe underdeveloped Africa



Mark Osborn reviews

*How Europe underdeveloped Africa*

by Walter Rodney

Boyle L'Overture

**T**EN DAYS ago I went to a meeting addressed by Peter Fryer (author of *Staying Power*, a fine history of black people in Britain). Fryer spoke about the role of black people in the formation of the British labour movement. What followed was a discussion largely focused on the need for 'Black History'.

Although virtually every speaker believed there is a crying need for the teaching of Black History, it seemed to me that a number of different views were actually being expressed. On the one hand there was the very reasonable view that the history of Africa had been distorted by racist, European historians, and that the African past needed to be unearthed and debated. If this is what Black History means, fine, I would not want to quibble too much.

I might argue that there is no Black or White history, just good history and bad, the history of repression and resistance (not taught in school) and then the view of history which rests on the famous, the rich and the kings, and which excludes the poor majority. But, broadly, I agree — we should all know about Sattley Gates, about Solidarnosc and about the real history of Africa.

Nevertheless, another Black History was being promoted.

The cultural nationalists argued for a History which presents a picture of a good (black) people against a bad (white) people. In particular the issue was; were there black people who helped with and benefited from the slave trade?

Walter Rodney's great, groundbreaking work, written in 1972, answers this question and many more. Rodney describes the development of African society from communalism to colonialism. His view was that the African ruling classes joined hands with the Europeans in exploiting the African masses.

Today the cultural nationalists deny that, pretending that the whole business was exclusively white exploiting black. Peter Fryer stated that "none of the African scholars whose work (in the *Journal of African Studies* and elsewhere) I know takes such a view of African participation in the slave trade". Cultured African rulers knew about the slave trade and were made rich from the trade.

Further, Rodney describes black colonial police and armies used by European authorities in oppressing black Africa.

The conclusion? The white workers and reformers who opposed slavery in Britain were the flipside of a class-divided Africa.

Read Walter Rodney for the central role of class in African history.



## Alliance for WORKERS' LIBERTY Meetings

### LONDON

Thursday 11 November

**"Which way forward in the unions?"**

7.30, Calthorpe Arms,  
252 Gray's Inn Road, King's Cross

Wednesday 24 November

**"What future for the Welfare State?"**

7.30, Calthorpe Arms,  
252 Gray's Inn Road, King's Cross

Saturday 11 December

**"The revolutionary paper"**

Education school

Details: Mark 071-639 7965

### YORK

Tuesday 23 November

**"How do we solve the education crisis?"**

7.30, Goodericke College,  
York University

### HALIFAX

Thursday 18 November

**"Ireland - what should socialists say?"**

12.00, Calderdale College

### 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

### 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

### EDINBURGH

Wednesday 17 November

**"How to beat the pay freeze"**

7.30, Trades Council,  
Picardy Place

## Boris Kagarlitsky speaks in London

.....  
7.30 on Monday  
15 November at the  
London School of  
Economics,  
Houghton Street,  
London WC2

## LETTERS

# No unilateral IRA ceasefire!

AGREE WITH Roy Webb's call for Socialist Organiser to drop its long standing position on calling for the IRA to declare a one sided cease-fire in Ireland. Socialists should rightly criticise the tactics of the IRA.

We recognise that the only way to achieve a long-term settlement of the Irish question is to mobilise the working class of Ireland on both sides of the divide and on both sides of the border. We are for a united working class movement!

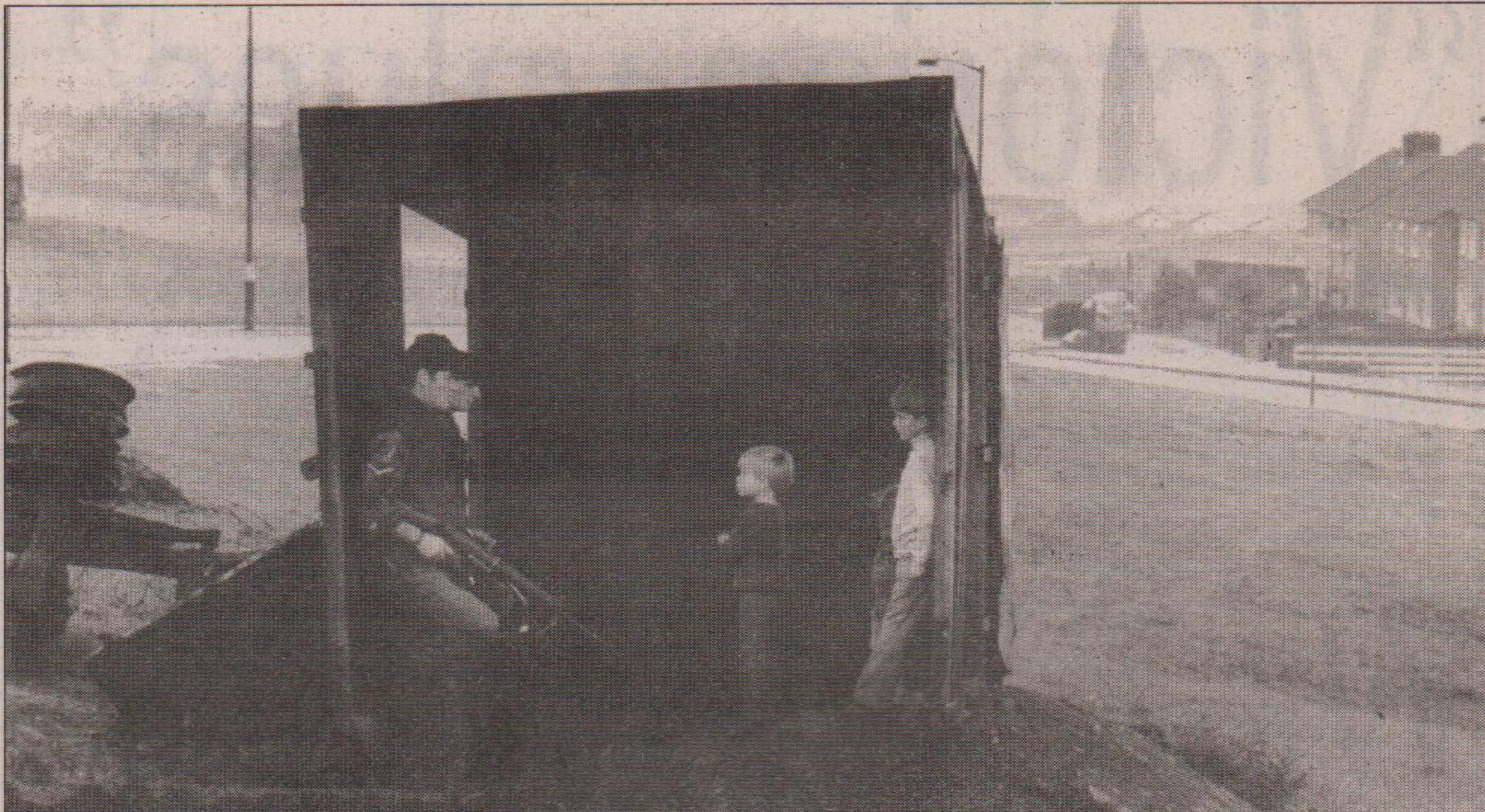
However, we also have to recognise that this is not what exists at present. Wishful thinking is no substitute for relating to a current set of problems.

These problems, at heart, are the British occupation of the six counties, the forcible partition of the country, and the reinforcing of a sectarian discrimination against the Catholics of the North.

Faced with this situation it is wrong to call on the oppressed to unilaterally give up a phase of its struggle which originated from the need to defend its own community. It would be seen as a defeat, and would probably result in reinforcing the current situation. That alone is reason for not proceeding down this path.

I think the way in which SO currently argues its position is dangerously close to saying that the Republican struggle is the cause of the North's troubles. This clearly is not the case. Loyalist violence is not a response to the IRA; it is the response of people who feel threatened by the political situation and change to the status quo. Loyalist violence will not be stopped by a unilateral IRA ceasefire, it will probably increase.

Jules Garfield, Sheffield



"The problem, at heart, is the British occupation of the six counties"

## No role for Britain

ONCE again Socialist Organiser has sided against the right of the Irish people to self-determination. The comrades are suggesting that the British government has a role to play in bringing peace to Ireland.

On the cover of SO579 we read "the British and Dublin governments' refusal to seize this chance for peace is one more crime against the Irish people", especially the workers.

This is repeated in the editorial, which glowingly says that John Hume, the leader of "the constitutional nationalist" SDLP "has a high reputation in Dublin, London and Washington." Hume's deal should be accepted by "shogun" Gerry Adams,

whose movement must declare a cease-fire and register "acceptance of a Protestant-Unionist veto on a united Ireland for the foreseeable future."

Socialist Organiser advocates the involvement of the British government in these talks and the idea that any settlement in Ireland should involve the British. It is essential that British socialists should continue to insist that there is no British solution and that the Irish people alone should determine their future. In posing a settlement as a task of the British government, the comrades surrender a basic part of the socialist programme.

Against that, the dangerous and irresponsible suggestion that the IRA calls a cease-fire when

the British state and their UFF errand boys continue to attack the Catholic community is less important. But it is still an immense error.

It is exactly because the Catholic community fights in a militant manner to defend their community and oppose their continuing oppression that the confidence of the ruling rich in British occupation is weakening. Cease-fire cannot be a precondition for settlement. Agreement is the precondition for cease-fire, and the Irish people alone — both of their communities — can create a life together without British occupation.

Duncan Chapple  
(Socialist Outlook)

Comment: It is a great shame that Socialist Outlook does not have basic reading skills as part of its induction course for new members, or as part of the training courses for its spokespeople! The proposals came out of the Hume-Adams talks. Our comments merely drew out their implications. Most of Dunean Chapple's comments are therefore — horror of horrors! — a criticism of Gerry Adams!

This is a serious break in your "solidarity" with Sinn Fein, comrades! It would be cause for hope in Outlook, except that the writer does not have the faintest idea that this is what he is doing.

## Street squads cannot bypass the labour movement

### EYE ON THE LEFT

By Mark Osborn

ABOUT 90 people, including 10 members of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty, attended the Workers' Power weekend school in London 6-7 November.

The event was dull and downbeat.

Workers' Power members were clearly disorientated on what socialists should try to do about the Labour Party.

Some of their small periphery had given up and left the Labour Party and others did not know that Workers' Power members are (often) still members of the Labour Party.

What replaced a serious orientation to the labour move-

ment was a call to "build the revolutionary party", and a type of fantasy syndicalism which talked of the miners or poll tax campaign having possibly brought down the Tories, without consideration of the alternative to the Tories.

Workers' Power seemed to be saying that there was even a possibility of going round Labour and the unions. Mark Harrison, summing up, spoke of the 16 October anti-fascist mobilisation at Welling as proof that we could now, as never before, build a revolutionary party.

The important fact about the two anti-racist marches in London on 16 October was that there was a tragic separation of the youth who were marching on the BNP in Welling from the official labour movement which backed the Anti-Racist Alliance march in Central London.

The brutal fact is this: if fascism in Britain rises to become a major threat, the only force that will be able to stop them is the working class. Concretely, that means rousing the Labour Party and unions to fight. That means educating the youth to take the workers' movement seriously and to work at revitalising it.

The point came out sharply when the lessons of the BNP victory in Millwall were discussed.

Workers' Power had not — as the AWL had — canvassed for Labour in Millwall. A lot of their people did not seem to think this was a big deal, and counterposed this work to physical defence of Asian people in the area.

Clearly self-defence is important, but the fight against racism and fascism will not be won at this level, and cer-

tainly not be a small group's peculiar obsession with (talking about) streetfighting: "There is no greater high... than wasting the fascists in open battle." (Workers' Power,

June 1993).

£60-worth of AWL publications were sold, including twenty copies of our pack of Workers' Power documents (1973-93).

### Workers' Power: a tale of kitsch Trotskyism

(100 pp)

£2 plus 52 pence p&p.

From: AWL, PO Box 823,  
London SE15 4NA.

Cheques to "WL Publications".



# 5 November round-up

## NOTTINGHAM

500 STRIKING civil servants marched against Market Testing on a day of solid support for the strike in Nottingham. At a rally after the march addressed by civil service union and UNISON speakers and Alan Simpson MP, strikers heard calls for further industrial action and for the campaign against Market Testing to be stepped up. Picket lines were lively and well respected and morale among the strikers was very high. Of 600 Inland Revenue workers in Nottingham, only 8 went into work. All the DSS Benefit Offices and Unemployment Benefit Offices were forced to close as a result of the strike.

Postal workers refused to deliver mail despite instructions from Royal Mail management to cross picket lines.

The size of the local march and rally in Notts (as big as the national rally in Central London — where most civil servants work) shows what can be done if activists on the ground work all-out to build action.

## SOUTH YORKSHIRE

THE STRIKE was tremendously well supported throughout Sheffield and South Yorkshire. In Sheffield

alone over 50 different picket lines were to be seen. In one case 6 picket lines were in evidence in one street alone.

All the reports given at a picket meeting afterwards told a story of a very solid strike. In the DSS, around 50 people out of 700+ went to work — they were either management or non-union members.

At a rally of 220 strikers, the message of further action being needed now was very well received. Non-co-operation, and immediate strike ballots in Market Tested areas, followed by a 3 days national strike ballot were accepted by everyone, with these being seen as a stepping stone towards all-out action.

## HULL

THE SUCCESS of the strike in Hull exceeded all expectations. Tax and Benefit Offices were closed. Services at the Land Registry, Combined Courts Centre and Job Centres were seriously disrupted, as was the Customs Office at King George Dock where the strike was solid. Members of FDA and IPMS at two workplaces refused to cross picket lines.

Thousands of leaflets were issued to the public before a successful march, and the biggest rally of civil

servants in the city since the GCHQ ban in 1983.

A call for the union leaders to immediately prepare further industrial action was carried unanimously.

## SCOTLAND

THE CIVIL SERVICE unions' day of action was a huge success. Big rallies were held throughout Scotland, with the largest in Glasgow. The unions estimated that 36,000 workers in Scotland responded to the call for strike action against Market Testing.

The action included workers from the Passport Office, the National Savings Bank, the MOD, the Scottish Office as well as Tax and Benefit Offices. Most of the offices were picketed. The Prison Officers Association joined the action for the first time ever by staging a three hour walkout. Barlinnie Prison in Glasgow was described as 99.9%.

Overall, the action in Scotland was very solid, showing the determination to fight to keep every civil service job and defeat Market Testing.

## LONDON

AROUND 500 people turned up to hear the general secretary of the

IRSF, Clive Brooke, NUCPS President Peter Lamb and CPSA General Secretary Barry Reamsbottom.

Clive Brooke told us that it was likely that sometime in the Spring there would be a one-day public sector wide strike. On what happens between now and then he had nothing to say. Barry Reamsbottom told us that the unions would be putting pressure on Tory MPs, especially in marginal seats, over Market Testing. No details of how this was to be done; no details on further industrial action.

It is now a matter of urgency that the unions keep the momentum up. NUCPS, the Civil Service executive and support grades union, is calling for 2 representatives from each Group (i.e. sub-section of the Union) to attend a meeting to plan for the future. In IRSF the Broad Left is putting pressure on Clive Brooke to step up the campaign. As Brooke is standing for re-election next year there is a real possibility that he will be forced to the 'left' and respond to calls for further strike action. In CPSA the right wing will no doubt be patting themselves on the back about the success of the action. Of course they had to be pressurised into taking action. It will be up to the activists to maintain that pressure.

## Towards an education link-up

### EDUCATION FOR BARBARISM

If the outcome of the struggle over school tests is to be the defeat of the Tories' model of education, rather than the restoration of that model in some other guise, we must not only state our alternative but also to Education, both in the broad sense of the systematic organisation of learning and, within that, of the capitalist education system, is a weapon in the class struggle.

Recognising this entails moving away from some views which have become common sense on the left. For example, it's useless to persist in the idea that education, under capitalism, could become purely — or even mainly — a means to personal development, if only we could stop the Tories using it in the interests of the ruling class. This could be the case only under an advanced stage of socialism. Nor does it make sense to see it simply as a prize of class struggle — as something in itself necessarily good through and through, which the working class gets when it wins. It's also not sufficient to see education as simply a means by which the ruling class produces the workforce that it wants, by skills training and/or ideological brainwashing. Even capitalist education makes available, albeit in limited and distorted forms, some information, concepts and techniques without which the working class could not run society.

The idea that education is a class struggle weapon, and that we should seek to take hold of and use it, was accepted not only by me first mass working class movement — the Chartists — but also by a large section of the left in the UK up to the late 1920s. It was the rise of Stalinist dogmatism which pushed this idea aside, fostering the assumption that struggle alone provides valid education. This approach became an element within Stalinism, and as such took so firm a hold on left thinking that aspects of it persist even in more recent thinkers who appear to repudiate it, for example Louis Althusser and Paolo Freire.

The left in general (i.e. not just left teachers) needs to free itself from this assumption. It needs to recognise that a socialist working class consciousness cannot be rebuilt solely from the class instincts of workers, but only by a systematic engagement

between those instincts and 'bourgeois' culture, as inculcated, for example, by schools and colleges. That is, it entails struggle in, for and through education.

What is needed, in the first instance, is a set of organisational measures which link teachers and lecturers, across unions, geographical areas, institutional boundaries, educational sectors and, so far as possible, political tendencies, round a common set of ideas and a common programme of action.

These measures need to be compatible with relevant existing organisations, for example the Socialist Teachers Alliance and the Socialist Lecturers Alliance. At the same time, they need to offer, in however embryonic a form, the possibility of organised collective action across the crucial fields of struggle, in particular: in the teaching/learning process itself; in the production of materials; in assessment; in curriculum development; in the relations between teachers and examining bodies; in struggles over pay, conditions, cuts and closures; and in the complex struggles where there is community involvement, for example against institutional racism.

A group of mainstream teachers and lecturers organising on this basis would be able to form links with workers in related fields.

The longer term aim, then, would be a movement which could operate consistently in four 'modes': as a rank and file across the teaching unions; as a common focus for the left within subject associations (for example, the National Association for the Teaching of English, which led the SATs boycott); as a forum for educational activity amongst a broader range of working class activists; as a campaigning body.

Such a movement — and only such a movement — could smash the dogma that education can never be anything more than what goes on now in schools and colleges, and decisively change the situation we have now, where only ministers, state and union bureaucrats, principals, headteachers, professors, advisers, newspaper editors, exam boards and employers can set the agenda within it.

This is an abridged version of the statement produced by a working group set up by the Socialist Teachers' Alliance. For more information contact Colin Waugh c/o Socialist Organiser.

## The Industrial Front

### IPMS

IN THE IPMS, the union which organises technicals and professionals in the Civil Service, many ordinary members have complained about not being balloted for strike action. It is clear that their General Secretary Bill Brett has completely misread the situation and there may be a possibility that the IPMS may join in for the public sector day of action.

### POA

THE Prison Officers' Association is to vote on a work to rule. If carried it would mean no overtime and therefore little or no new admission to prisons.

### POST OFFICE

THE STRIKERS at the Royal Mail R&D workshops in Swindon have now been out for ten weeks. Their union, the NCU, is now set to ballot workers in 24 other offices for solidarity boycott action.

Donations and messages of support: Alex Leighton NCU HQ and Development branch, 1st Floor, 123 Aldersgate Street, London EC1A 4JQ.

### VICKERS

THE SERIES of weekly one day strikes at Vickers tank builders on the Tyneside against a pay freeze continues.

**Critique conference**  
**"The decline of capitalism"**  
 10.00-6.00 on  
 Saturday 22 January  
 Conway Hall, Red  
 Lion Square, London  
 Details: 041 331  
 3312

## We need unity to beat Market Testing

### CPSA

By Trudy Saunders, CPSA DSHSS Section Executive

THIS YEAR'S CPSA Broad Left conference will be dominated by the issue of left unity.

The serious left in the union want to see broad, democratic and representative unity based on the need for effective national industrial action to defeat the Tories' "Market Testing" plans.

The reasoning behind this is clear and straightforward.

We think that the rational starting point for unity has to be resistance to the common attacks that civil service workers face. As 'Market Testing' is the central attack unity has to be based on a policy that can defeat it.

It is a mistake to hope to unite

disparate political forces into an electoral alliance simply on the basis of opposition to the existing hard-right 'Moderate' leadership of the union.

Such a policy is unlikely to succeed even in its own terms.

The easiest way to defeat the 'moderates' in union elections is to campaign on the issue — Market Testing — that is most likely to mobilise the vast majority of the membership who do not presently vote.

A two-stage approach to changing the CPSA will not work. It is not a question of campaigning for unity now to defeat the Moderates and then building unity at a later date over fighting Market Testing.

The real alternative is between giving the members a chance to vote for a fighting alternative or the left just appearing as unprincipled

political manoeuvrers who would abandon all they believe in to win office.

Tragically the proposals being floated by Militant supporters in the Broad Left are of just such an unprincipled character.

Militant want to unite with the soft-left/Kinnockite BL'84 (who do not want to fight Market Testing) on the basis of a few vague phrases and no concrete commitment to action as the issue that matters. They are trying to stitch-up a backroom deal on this basis.

This strategy will most likely lead to failure, as it did with the disastrous Albert Astbury election campaign last year. Broad Left Conference should reject it and vote instead for an open left unity conference with voting on a PR basis so that no single grouping can dominate.

## CPSA: call a special conference!

By a CPSA DHSS Section Executive member

AT THE National Executive meeting on 26 October, the ruling "Moderate" group in the low-paid civil servants' union CPSA voted to break up the section structure of the union by splitting the DHSS (Health and Social Security) and DE (Employment) sections into smaller Agency-based sections and coordinating committees.

The DHSS Section Executive has a 26-to-one majority for the Broad Left, and the DE section is controlled by the left faction of "BL84", who are currently in unity talks with the Broad Left.

Branches will now be based only on Agencies, with the smaller agencies, like the Child Support Agency and others, being split up into unworkable regional or national branches.

The National Executive received 77 submissions from branches opposing the plans, and only 11 in favour. However, they carried on regardless, because it is more important for them to attack the left than have a workable branch structure.

Both the Broad Left and BL84 have called for a special union conference. All branches should pass the following resolution:

"This meeting agrees with the principle of the union creating a regional office structure in CPSA, accountable to members and branches in the regions. However, it also believes that this cannot be at the expense of the Sections. Any structure must preserve a democratic means for members to decide policy for negotiations with their employer.

This Special General Meeting calls upon the National Executive Committee to convene a Special Delegate Conference under Rule 7.2 to discuss the proposed CPSA Regional Office Structure and Section Reorganisation.

The NEC is instructed to put its regional offices and Section plans, including any consequences for branches and NEC elections, in a Special Conference booklet, with full financial costings. This booklet should be issued to members and branches invited to submit motions on the proposals.

Finally, the NEC is instructed not to implement any of their proposals until the Special Delegate Conference has discussed them and decided union policy."

## All out for a pay rise!

### YARROWS

OVER 500 office workers at Yarrow shipyard are on indefinite strike. The strike, the first in over 20 years to involve white collar workers, is over pay.

The office workers have not had a pay rise for two years. Management's offer is a 1.8% across the board rise. An unspecified number of selected individuals would also receive additional performance related rises of up to 2.6%.

In February, other workers at the yard get a straight 3.7% rise and the office workers are demanding a similar rise.

The action involves foremen, clerical, technical, stores and administration staff. About 200 workers crossed the picket line but mass pickets are being held to persuade them to join the action.

MSF, who are heading the negotiations, have said that they are set for indefinite strike action but have indicated that they would be willing to talk to management about an improved offer.



# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Your socialist weekly needs more money

## 250,000 civil servants say "stop the Tory sell-off!"

**A**T LEAST 250,000 CIVIL SERVANTS were on strike on 5 November, in the biggest Civil Service strike since 1981.

From all accounts the vast bulk of offices were affected, with many shut down altogether.

The tax workers' union, the Inland Revenue Staff Federation, is claiming a 95% turnout for the day. That probably means that on Friday no tax was collected!

The rallies arranged across Britain and Northern Ireland were very well attended.

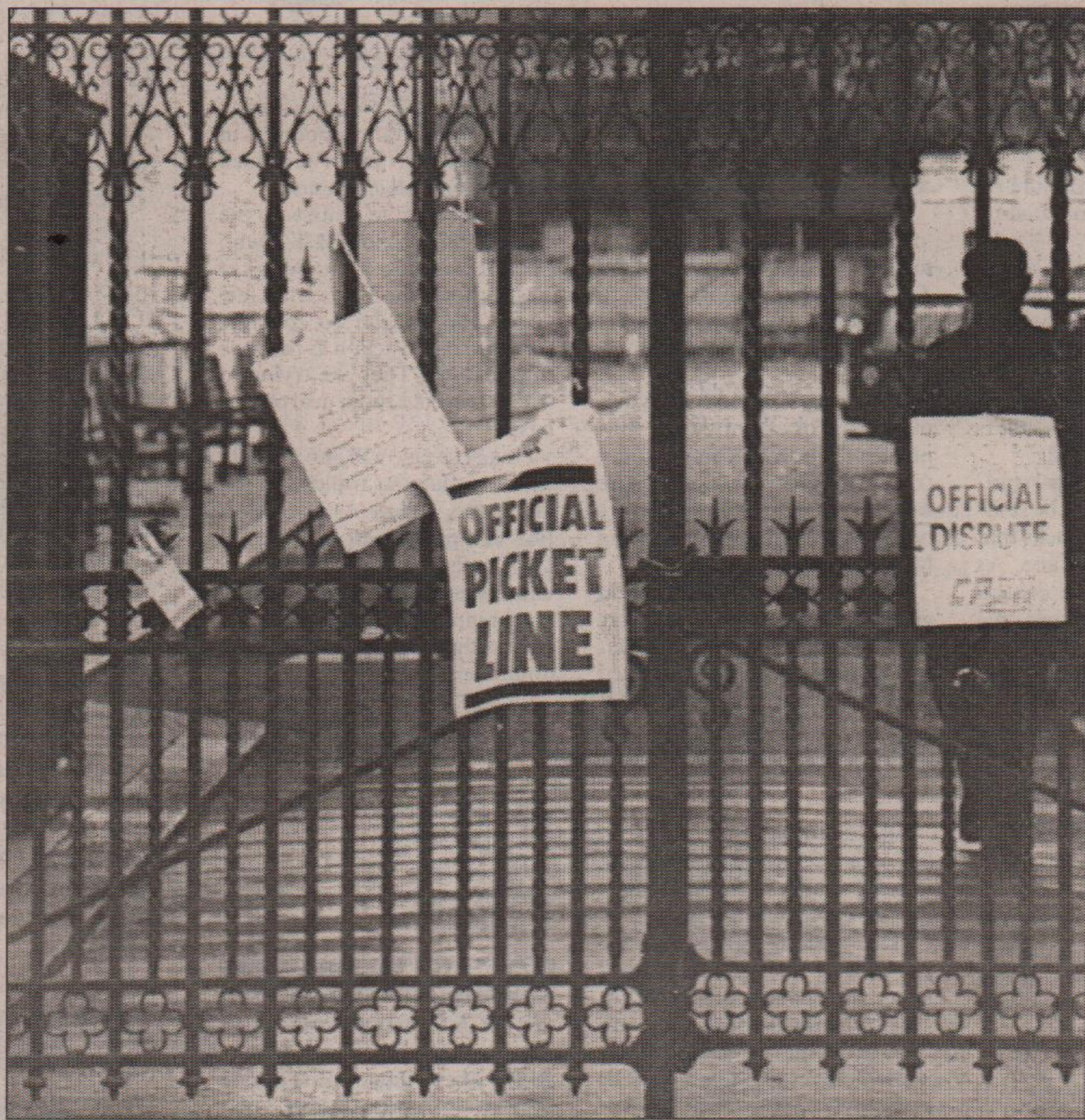
The great wave of support for last Friday's strikes shows that Market Testing can be beaten. Civil Service workers are prepared to take the kind of action needed to defeat the Tories.

### What is "Market Testing"?

**M**ARKET TESTING is the name given to contracting-out by Civil Service bosses.

The idea is that workers have to bid for their own jobs in competition with private contractors. As a result:

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



The Civil Service strike locks the gates in Whitehall

LAST WEEK, on 3 November, two thousand students marched through Manchester.

Called by the Manchester Area of the National Union of Students, the march was the only direct action so far protesting at the Tories' plans to smash student unions and bring in tuition fees. It was initiated and mainly organised by members of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty and supporters of *Socialist Organiser*. Without this paper, it would not have happened.

Neither would the campaign by our "Tubeworker" bulletin on the London Underground's Central Line, which contributed to the recent successful strike against victimisations there. Or the agitation, led by AWL members and SO supporters in the CPSA, which built up the pressure for the civil service strike against Market Testing on 5 November.

Our paper — "not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, but also a collective organiser", in Lenin's classic phrase — will also be vital in the weeks to come, building for the Health Service demonstration on 20 November, arguing for policies, and promoting such opportunities to thrash out genuine socialist ideas as the AWL student school on 4-5 December (for details, see page 7).

To do all this, the paper needs money. We have no large income from advertising, and no wealthy backers. We need donations, from everyone who supports our ideas and from everyone who recognises the need for a healthy, lively working-class press.

Thanks this week to Leeds AWL, York AWL, and East London AWL, all of whom organised car-boot sales: £131 from Leeds, £29 from York, and £44.50 from East London. Thanks also to South-West London AWL; £35.60; Mike Foley, £20; Maggie Riddell, £10; Ian Hollingworth, £10; and Angie Matthews, £5.

Send money to Socialist Organiser, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA; cheques payable to "WL Publications".

### AWL Xmas raffle

The tickets for our Alliance for Workers' Liberty Xmas raffle are out now.

FIRST PRIZE: VIDEO RECORDER • SECOND PRIZE: COLOUR TV • THIRD PRIZE: A CASE OF WINE • FOURTH PRIZE: A £20 BOOK TOKEN.

Tickets are very easy to sell. And there is a big political reason for doing so: all the profit from the raffle will go to help extend the influence of *Socialist Organiser* and help the Alliance for Workers' Liberty grow.

We ask readers and supporters to take books of tickets to sell in Labour Parties and trade unions. Books of tickets are £5 each. Phone Mark on 071-639 7965 for full details.

The draw will be on 30 December.

### Escalate the action

## For a 3-day Civil Service strike!

**I**N THE next few weeks and months activists have to be prepared to argue for and pursue a wide range of options in the battle against Market Testing.

Everything that increases confidence and a willingness to fight should be tried.

- Where we can win effective non-co-operation against Market Testing (because the process is not yet too far gone) we should push for it.
- Limited selective strikes should be organised of those workers most directly affected by particular projects.
- Meanwhile, to unite and keep up the

momentum after 5 November, the Civil Service unions should call a three-day national Civil Service strike as a step towards all-out action.

Though it is important to try and get the Civil Service unions to act in a united manner, we should not allow inter-union rivalries to divide and hold back the fight.

Activists should push for the maximum possible action inside their own respective unions.

The unofficial Campaign Against Market Testing can play an important role in building up rank-and-file links across the unions.

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Return to: Socialist Organiser, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA

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**SOCIALIST** Inside this week  
**MALCOLM**  
 Behind the hype  
 see page 13

Buses, rail, pits, public sector

**STRIKE TOGETHER!**

Unite to beat sackings, sell-offs, cuts