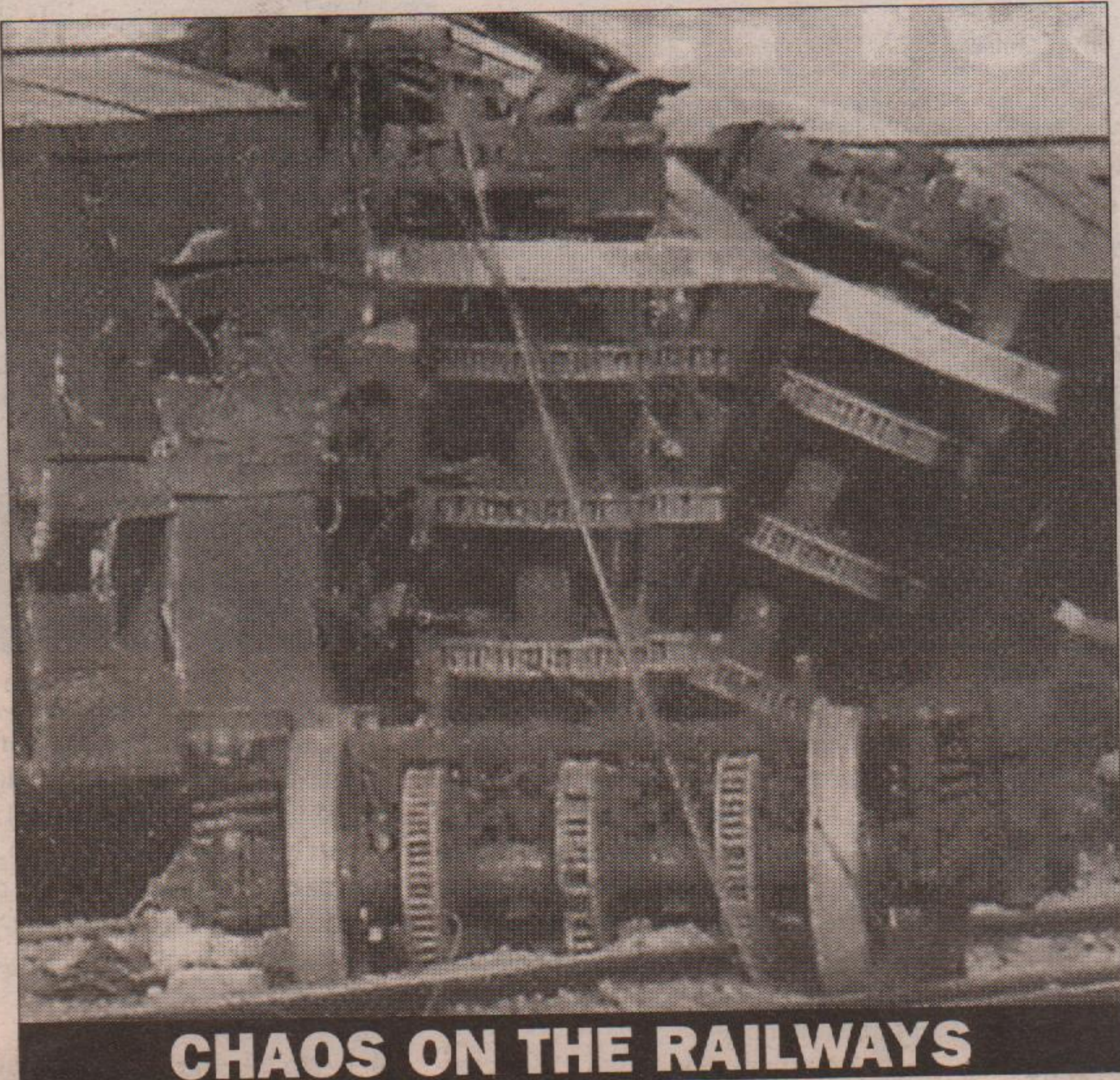
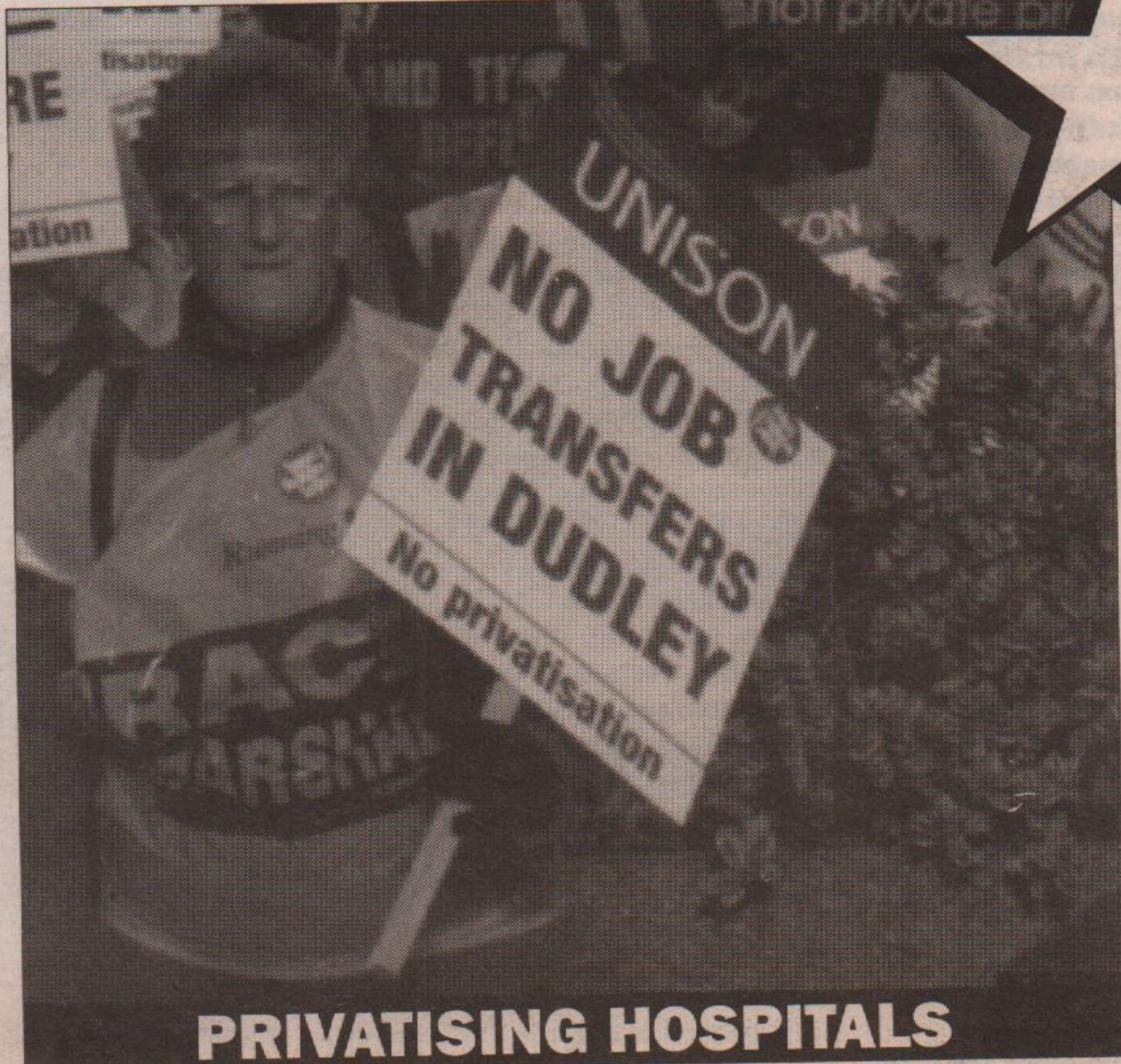


workers POWER

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CHAOS ON THE RAILWAYS



PRIVATISING HOSPITALS

Christmas greetings



COUNCIL CUTS



SCAPEGOATING ASYLUM SEEKERS

from New Labour

IN BRIEF

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) announced in late November that it would not be taking any action against the police officers involved in the death of Roger Sylvester. The CPS decision comes nearly two years after Sylvester died in hospital.

The 30-year-old African-Caribbean man was the victim of restraint methods used by the cops who arrested him outside his Tottenham home, but now the sole public investigation of the incident will be at an inquest. In response Roger's mother, Sheila Sylvester, and supporters of the family's campaign for justice have called for an independent judicial inquiry into yet another black death in custody. In a statement to the press, Sheila Sylvester said, "We can have no confidence in an investigation process that allows the police to investigate the police."

Support for the campaign's demand has so far come from London mayor Ken Livingstone, local MP David Lammy and Unison. Further information on the case can be found at: www.inquest.org.uk

The Committee to Defend Asylum Seekers (CDAS) scored a significant victory in the unions last month as delegates to Unison's black members' conference voted to affiliate to the campaign. At Unison's national conference in June the union's general secretary, Rodney Bickerstaffe, had argued against support for the CDAS-initiated national demonstration in defence of refugee rights. He claimed that black members were not involved in and did not support the campaign. So much for that lame excuse. Meanwhile, CDAS is raising funds for its activities against the government's voucher scheme and other attacks on asylum seekers through the sale of seasonal greeting and postcards, featuring a design donated by cartoonist Steve Bell (see advert on page 5). Find out more about the campaign at: www.defend-asylum.org

A prominent Colombian trade unionist, Alexander Lopez, is in Britain for most of December. Lopez, the president of the Cali district Municipal Workers' Union, is at the top of a paramilitary hit list for leading opposition to the privatisation of services. Cali and the Cauca valley have been at the sharp end of a neo-liberal cuts and privatisation programme. With the support of Unison's international department, Lopez is doing a speaking tour of union branches around Britain. To invite him or to obtain details of the tour, please contact lasocollective@hotmail.com or write to PO Box 8446, London N17 6NZ.

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HACKNEY COUNCIL

Strike to save Hackney: all out on 18 December!

THE WHOLE OF November was a month to remember in the East London Borough of Hackney. Tons of rubbish accumulated and rotted on its streets. Photos appeared of rats scavenging through torn bin liners. There was gallows humour about Hackney's very own structural adjustment programme.

The *Observer* branded Hackney as "Britain's North Korea", while *The Economist* was more charitable, calling it "Britain's worst-run borough".

But above all, last month was when the working class and its allies in this much mocked, poverty-stricken borough began to fight back. November saw demonstrations of hundreds of council workers and local residents against one of the most draconian cuts packages ever unleashed by a local authority management.

The marching, chanting and dancing in the streets to the beats of a samba band promised the start of a sustained wave of resistance to the axing of jobs and services, and the privatisation of much of what remains.

Even before October was out parents had occupied the immediately threatened Atherden and Fernbank nurseries. After 19 days the facilities reopened officially, though the council is still seeking to increase fees by a third to £100 a week for each child.

Last month's action began in earnest with an unofficial strike on 6 November by thousands of council workers. The protests included a cavalcade of 60 refuse vehicles effectively shutting down a number of streets.

Around a thousand gathered for an early afternoon march and rally, composed largely of manual workers from services threatened with privatisation from 1 December. Meanwhile, Hasidic Jewish parents blockaded a road against the threat posed to their local nursery. Turkish and Kurdish workers in textile sweatshops struck for an hour in solidarity.

More than a thousand people gathered outside the Town Hall that evening, in defiance of the stormy weather, to express the widespread anger at councillors who were about to rubber stamp a £4.5 million cuts package that is the prelude to chopping a further £20 to £25 million from local spending.

The Labour and Tory alliance now controlling the council chamber had arrived hours before the main body of demonstrators. They hid behind cordons of hundreds of police, scores of them in full riot gear. Was central government paying for this show of force in a borough that had effectively been declared bankrupt?

As November wore on the extent of the council's financial crisis became more evident. The Labour group leadership had boasted to party members that the painful medicine was working and that the government had agreed to extend the council's borrowing facility by some £14 million. But this proved to be only a small fraction of the authority's indebtedness. A leaked document that became available to Hackney Unison revealed that the shortfall probably amounts to £76 million.

There is talk of raising the borough's council tax by an average of 10 per cent a year for the next three years, while rumours circulate of an £86 million "mortgage" on council property with Lehman Brothers finance house as one



"solution" to the crisis.

Word of the latest development in the financial crisis came just as strike ballots went out by post to members of Unison, the TGWU, GMB and UCATT, following the decision of the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee to endorse the call for widespread, indefinite action. The 21 November rally at the Hackney Empire packed the Edwardian theatre to the rafters and the temperature approached boiling point as the council's chief executive, "Mad Max" Caller - determined to live up to his nickname - mounted the stage.

For whatever reason, the £150,000 a year chief executive had chosen to justify his attacks to a mass meeting of more than 1,000 workers, many of whom stand to lose their jobs, face pay cuts of up to £80 a week or the tender mercies of private contractors such as Serviceteam.

Caller was very lucky to escape without serious injury as eight stewards intervened to ward off workers who wanted to make sure that he felt their anger.

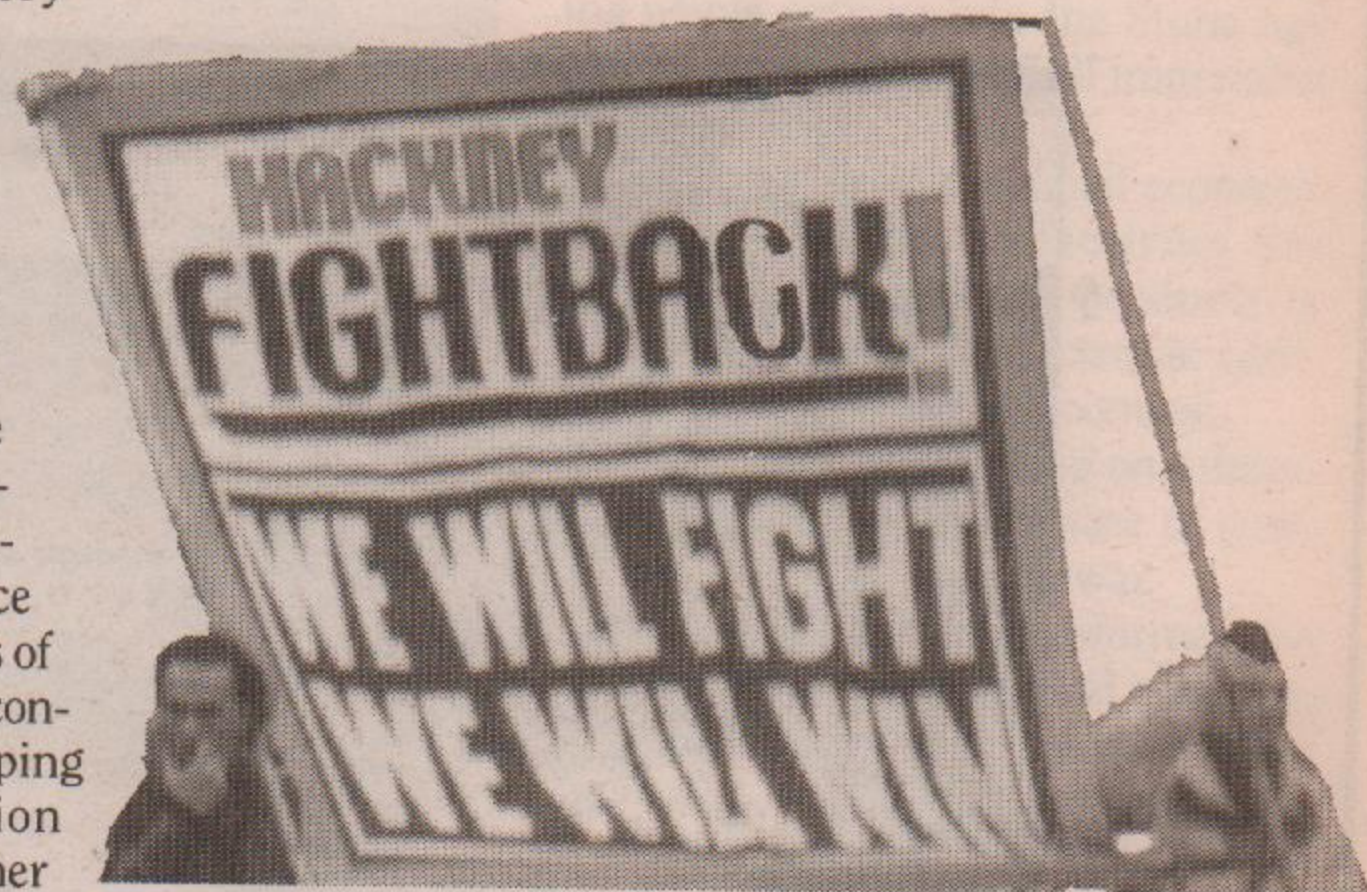
On 25 November another march took place. At a pre-march rally George Binette, a Camden Unison co-convenor, outlined the reality for workers in that borough where privateers such as Serviceteam have made big inroads. Serviceteam is due to take over refuse collection and street cleaning in Hackney from 1 December.

George told the crowd that "workers

in Camden and across London will be watching developments with keen interest. Many of us will be poised to contribute to your fight because we recognise Hackney as a testbed for the future of local government under New Labour - a future of widespread privatisations, attacks on our terms and conditions, and still worse services for the most vulnerable and needy."

The council-wide strike ballot closes on 11 December, with another borough-wide strike planned for 18 December. A massive "yes" vote is obviously crucial. Unofficial action could prove vital in those sections threatened with privatisation before then. Beyond 18 December there must be a move to escalate swiftly to indefinite action - with or without the blessing of national union bureaucrats.

There are very real concerns about the threat to public health and to vulnerable individuals of strikes in essential services. The planned 3 December Hackney community conference must look at ways of addressing those concerns and developing a council of action that brings together



council workers with tenants and service users from across the borough to ensure the maintenance, under workers' control, of certain essential services.

Such a body could start to form an alternative centre of political power to a council chamber infested by Blairite lackeys hell-bent on making things worse for the vast majority of Hackney's 200,000 people.

- No to all cuts and privatisation
- Open the council's books
- Strike and occupy against cuts, closures and sell-offs
- Spread the action, for a borough-wide general strike
- Force the government to inject tens of millions into Hackney with no strings attached.

TEACHERS: HAGGERSTON SHOWS THE WAY TO DEFEND EDUCATION

THE LABOUR/TORY coalition has sought to placate teachers in Hackney's schools with the claim that the education budget was safe from the hatchet. Of course, a significant chunk of the local education authority had already been hived off to Nord Anglia after a damning Ofsted report.

It was already obvious that a combination of library and nursery closures would have a devastating impact on educational opportunities in a borough where the vast majority of children are eligible for free school meals and where one in three households has an income of less than £5,000 a year.

Teachers in many schools were so incensed by the cuts package that they wanted to join the 6 November strike action. Unfortunately, a number of activists from the Socialist Teachers' Alliance argued strongly against striking unofficially alongside the main body of council workers. This position undermined the arguments of NUT reps at a number of schools, where management intimidation succeeded in most cases in blocking a half-day strike.

The one exception among the borough's schools was Haggerston Girls. Teachers from Haggerston were part of the afternoon demonstration after voting overwhelmingly to walk out. Instead of facing disciplinary action by local management and the possibility of an investigation by NUT headquarters, the teachers received congratulations from the school's governors, two of whom proudly announced that they had joined the demonstrations.

On 18 December Haggerston NUT members must not be alone in mounting strike action. Hackney's schools must be part of a borough-wide shutdown and teachers have still more incentive after Ofsted's 18 November report recommended wholesale privatisation of the LEA, even as GCSE results showed a dramatic improvement at most secondary schools.

Corporations win out at climate conference

Ministers and bureaucrats from more than 180 countries who met in The Hague last month at a climate change conference utterly failed to agree ways in which the world's states can combat the threats posed by rapid climate change. In fact, as *Simon Nielsen* explains, the big corporations got their way.

THE RECENT floods which devastated Britain are just one of the many indications that serious changes are underway in the global climate. Storms in Taiwan, Brazil and Canada, floods in the Alps, Bangladesh, Japan, Vietnam and India and droughts in Burundi, Croatia, Iran and Kenya suggest that extreme weather events are becoming more frequent.

This summer for the first time in at least 200,000 years water instead of ice was discovered at the North Pole, merely emphasising what many scientists have been saying for years. Human activities are changing the climate and unless action is taken now, the consequences will be severe.

In a series of conferences during the 1990s the countries present at the Hague agreed to cut their collective greenhouse emissions by an average of 5.2 per cent below 1990 levels during the years 2008-2012.

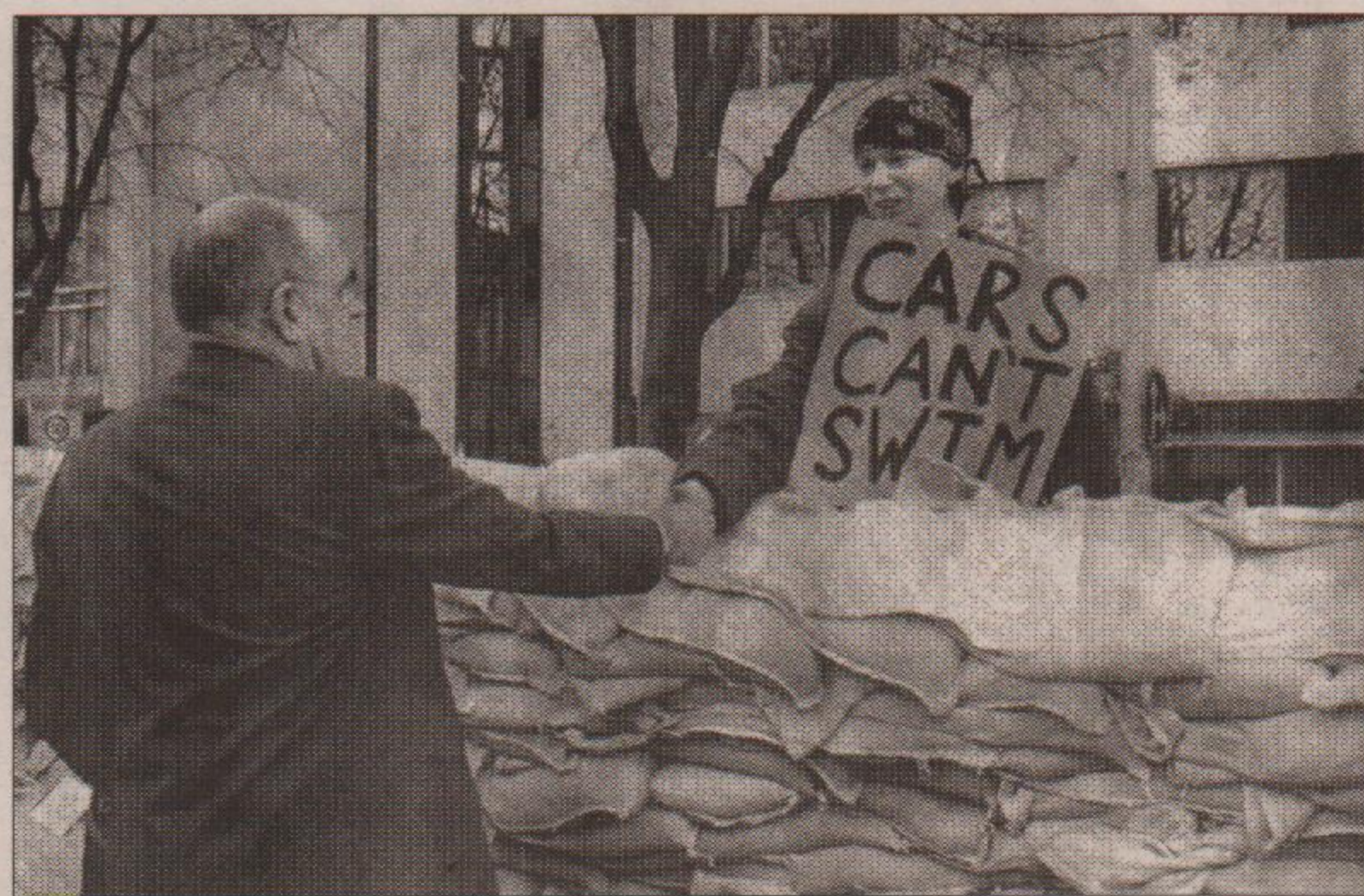
Different countries adopted different targets: the EU committed itself to a cut of 8 per cent, the USA to 7 per cent and Japan to 6 per cent. Russia and

the Ukraine agreed to stabilise their emissions at 1990 levels.

The 6th Conference of the Parties (COP6) was billed as a make-or-break gathering at which countries would either accept or refuse the terms of the Kyoto protocol – agreed in that city in 1997. In order for the protocol to come into practice, it must be ratified by 55 parties to the convention. The agreement of the developed industrial countries – North America, Europe and Japan – is essential since they account for 55 per cent of the carbon dioxide emissions.

A recent report by the United Nations Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change warns that the earth may warm up by as much as six degrees Celsius during the present century, which is double previous estimates. This means ocean levels could rise by more than 50cm, threatening many islands and large swathes of coastal areas in China, south-east Asia and Africa.

Low-lying island states, in particular, insist the issue of cutting emissions



Protester makes a point outside of the climate conference

is not just a matter of economics but one of sheer survival.

The great majority of scientists now accept that gases produced by burning fossil fuels such as oil are warming the planet, disrupting the climate and damaging the environment.

In 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was opened for signature. This expressed concern about the effects of climate change – desertification of former agricultural zones, the destruction of forests, the melting of polar ice caps and rising sea levels.

The main obstacle to any serious attempt to adhere to the Rio and Kyoto targets comes from the United States – the world's only superpower.

The US with 4 per cent of the world's population is responsible for over 25 per cent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. In fact since Rio the US has not cut its emissions at all. They have actually risen by over 1 per cent. To meet its Kyoto targets it would now have to slash its emissions by 20-30 per cent from its likely levels at the end of this decade.

The Kyoto protocol already contained a huge get-out clause for the big economic powers – mainly the USA. An industrialised country can “invest in carbon-saving technologies in developing countries” and in the “economies in transition” in Central and Eastern Europe.

This is a cynical device whereby the USA can simply buy the reduced emission levels of third world countries which are failing to industrialise due to the crippling burden of debt or those countries whose economies have shrunk by 50 per cent thanks to the restoration of capitalism, like the countries of the former USSR.

Now the World Bank – ever the faithful servant of US imperialism – has come up with the idea of a \$150 million Prototype Carbon Fund (PCF) designed to utilise a market-based carbon offset mechanism to facilitate actual trading in the right to pollute for the USA, Canada, the European Union and Japan.

The World Bank is already a massive facilitator of pollution and global warming. Most of the World Bank's portfolio is in the energy sector – and of this about 80 per cent is in carbon-intensive

power plants, notably coal-fired power plants. A study by the Institute of Policy Studies has revealed that since the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 the World Bank has funded projects that will add, rather than decrease, carbon emissions.

In addition there is the US-sponsored plan, backed also by Canada, Japan and Australia, that these countries be allowed to set against their emissions targets the amount of carbon dioxide that their trees and farmland take out of the air. Such lands are being referred to as “carbon sinks.”

Again to suddenly count existing forests and farmland avoids any serious effort to reduce emissions. The EU and many third world countries want to limit such credits to new forestation and changes in the natural environment to offset emissions.

Throughout the negotiations the EU painted themselves as the guardians of the environment. They have been arguing that at least half of all cuts must be made in domestic emissions and pressing for increased cuts. However as in previous negotiations they can talk green safe in the knowledge that the Americans will never agree and then happily accept a much watered down deal. If you want evidence of that you only have to look at the British government's enthusiasm over the economic benefits of emission trading.

The sheer economic might of the USA and its multinational corporations ensured that no serious commitment to fight global warming emerged from The Hague. This is why environmental degradation is such a key issue for the developing “anti-capitalist movement”. It is one of the issues – along with third world debt, the destruction of wage levels and social services by neo-liberalism, the domination of all aspects of life by the mega-corporations – that is waking up millions of people to the fact that to save our planet, as well as to ensure a decent life for its inhabitants CAPITALISM HAS TO GO!

Making money from a dying planet

NOT ONLY did delegates and environmentalists flock to The Hague, they were also joined by a record 3,000 industry lobbyists. In the face of overwhelming scientific evidence most corporations have now stopped denying the existence of global warming. Instead they want to make as much money out of it as possible.

So their lobbyists were there to press for the most business-friendly outcome possible, aided by the US delegation and their insistence on carbon trading. Even before any agreement had been reached on the rules governing international emission trading and joint implementation the trade in carbon has already started.

With the trade estimated to be worth in the region of \$13 trillion corporations have been scrambling to get a head start. This statement from the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions succinctly sums up why:

“Early establishment of a [trading] scheme in the UK could provide UK firms with all the advantages that stem from being first movers in a growing market, as well as helping to position the City of London as a global centre of emissions trading expertise.”

To this end energy companies such as Shell and BP have initiated internal systems of trading, whereby different sections of the company trade emission reductions with each other. Trading between companies began in June after the Canadian power company TransAlta completed a carbon trade with German firm Hamburgische Elektrats-Werke AG.

The appropriately named Gemco (Greenhouse Emissions Management Consortium) has established a scheme which purchases emissions reduction credits from farmers in Iowa and sells them to Canadian power companies. Countries such as Australia and Denmark are getting in on the act and Canada introduced a number of regional pilot schemes as long ago as 1996.

Britain also stands to “gain” after exceeding its emissions target by 8 per cent mainly due to the introduction of catalytic converters and the shift away from coal fired power stations. The UK intends to sell this so called surplus to the US for around \$200 million. Stock markets are also getting involved with dealing in emissions credits taking place in the Sydney Futures Exchange and the London International Petroleum Exchange.

Thousands of lobbyists came away from The Hague happy in the knowledge that they can continue to pollute, whilst gloating at the prospects of the billions to be earned from carbon trading.

Mass protests needed

WHAT A wonderful moment. The pieing of Frank Loy (leader of the US delegation and one of the most vociferous supporters of emission trading) in front of the world's media brought a smile to the faces of millions around the world. But it also highlighted the problems of the protests that have accompanied these talks.

Rising Tide coalition put out a call to action requesting that affinity groups come to The Hague to conduct autonomous direct action. The problem of this is that action tends to get restricted to pies and banner drops by small groups of activists.

Of course such actions have a rightful place in the struggle. But the purpose of protest is not just to get good images for the media, it is also to draw in as many people as possible and to show the minions of international capital we mean business, that corporations cannot trash our environment and then make profits from supposed emission reductions.

This requires mass action. One visitor to the Squat being used as a base for the actions reported that some people were turning up and feeling unable to participate

in autonomous actions due to their lack of experience or an affinity group. Whilst thousands of others were deterred from travelling by the elitist nature of the call. What caused the meetings in Prague and Seattle to collapse was the mass nature of the protests confronting them.

However this does not mean building the sort of passive actions advocated by Friends of the Earth and People and Planet who bussed in hundreds to place sand bags in a symbolic dyke. What is required is militant mass action, which can connect with the thousands of workers and youth who are concerned about the impact capitalism is having on the planet.

Joining with the trade unions and workers in polluting industries can prove that our fight is not with them, but with the system that compels them to work in unsafe conditions and in industries that threaten the planet.

Such a campaign could have mobilised thousands and forced the conference to take notice of the real victims of climate change rather than the industry lobbyists who are squealing about lost profits.

SCOTLAND

Scottish Unison step up the action over pay

HACKNEY HAS not been the only place in Britain where rubbish has piled up on the streets in recent weeks. In both East Lothian and Mid-Lothian in Scotland refuse workers have been mounting indefinite strike action.

In Glasgow the District Court judges have been releasing remand prisoners in response to indefinite action by court officers in Unison. Some 3,000 cases have either been postponed or abandoned altogether.

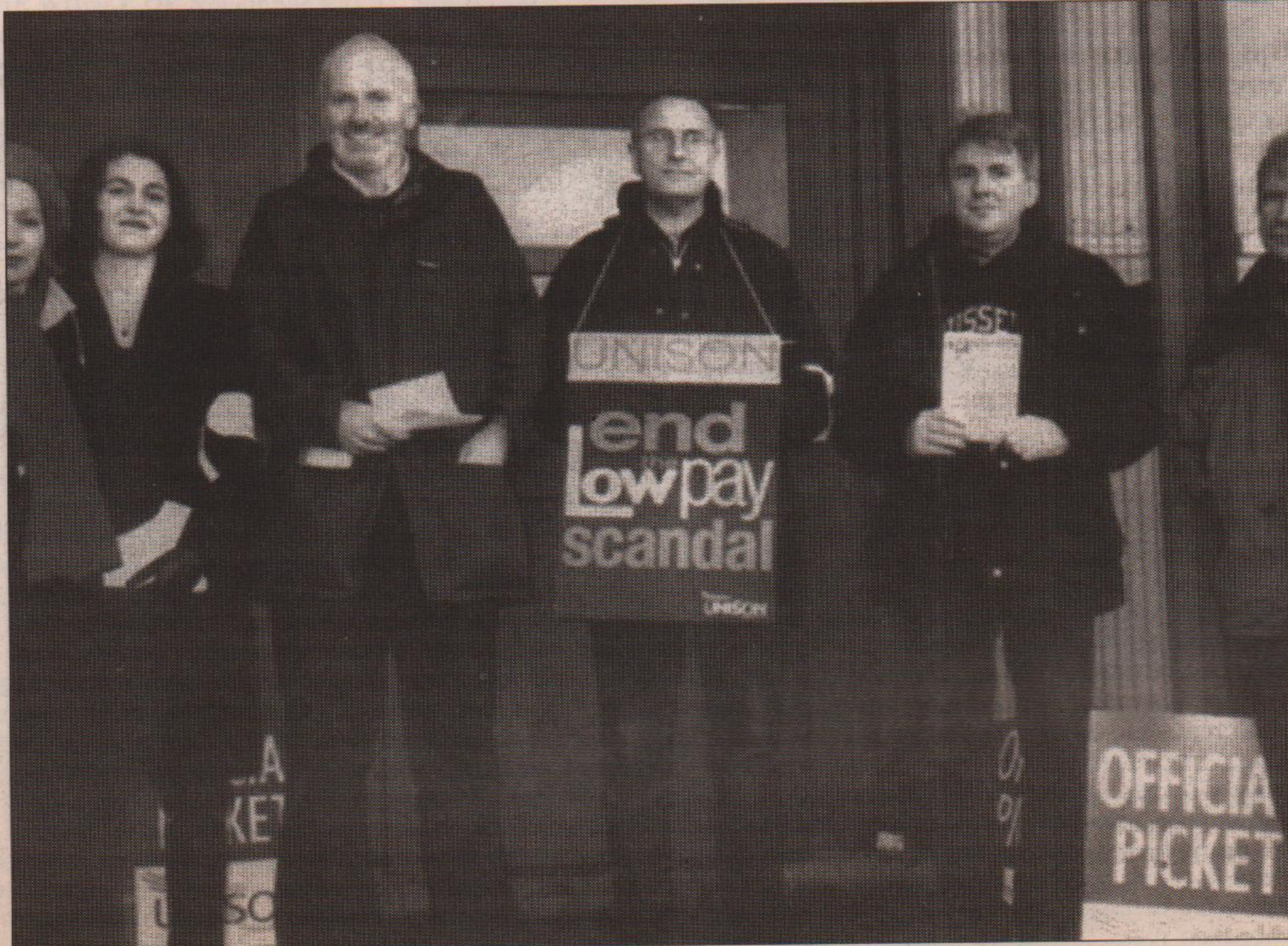
These actions form part of an intensified Unison campaign of rolling strike action against local authorities imposing a meagre pay rise on tens of thousands of their staff.

After an earlier pair of one-day strikes council bosses in the Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) upped their original offer from 2.5 per cent for a year to 6.1 per cent over two years.

To put it mildly, COSLA's claim that the money was not there to fund a decent pay rise rang hollow when local authority chief executives are boosting their pay by much more than 3 per cent. Unison members told management to get stuffed and voted in October to resume the industrial action.

All 32 of Scotland's local authorities are now facing some form of indefinite, if often limited, strike action, though so far fewer than 1,500 workers are currently out. The last action unifying the whole Unison membership across local government in Scotland came with a one-day strike on 16 November, when an estimated 90 per cent of the 70,000-strong Unison membership in Scottish local government came out.

Council bosses have upped the stakes in the current fight after a trip to court by Dundee City Council yielded an "interim interdict" on 23 November, blocking strike action by 100 council workers. The staff are scattered across four council depart-



ments including information technology and revenue collection. The council's lawyers claimed that the union had failed to provide sufficient information about the scale of the action and the judge, of course, agreed. Unison has so far abided by the injunction, though it is appealing the ruling.

Meanwhile, council managers have been making thinly veiled threats about using agency staff to scab on strike action.

In the very mild language of Unison official Joe DiPaola, any move towards strikebreaking "would risk causing a flashpoint".

Unison full-timers have indicated that they plan action "on a much

grand scale" from mid-December. This would mark a so-called third wave of strikes by key workers, though this escalation is still subject to the assent of Unison's national Industrial Action Committee.

The action by Unison is certainly welcome, especially after the other main unions had simply accepted the revised offer.

But what has happened so far will not win the full pay claim and may not even extract any further concessions from the COSLA bosses.

A rapid move to indefinite action across the maximum number of councils is essential to win the union demand quickly.

In particular, the action has made

life far too easy for management in Glasgow. To date, only committee clerks and clerical workers in the District Court have been taking indefinite action. An effective, indefinite strike in by far the largest and most strategic of Scottish cities could soon force COSLA to improve its offer once again.

To achieve this will require far greater involvement by rank and file members than has been the case to date. Practically, that means regular mass meetings that elect fully accountable strike committees.

These bodies can co-ordinate local action and mobilise to push full-time officials when they resist call for escalation.

November there was almost unanimous support for an escalation to three weeks, and huge enthusiasm for the strike to fall during the Christmas and New Year period. Paul Farmer, from Russell's Hall Hospital said, "I haven't had a Christmas at home for 10 years. It's about time we had the chance of a Christmas at home, and the managers had to do the work."

Unison's West Midlands Regional Council have called a regional day of action in support of the Dudley strikers for Wednesday 20 December. Dudley branch secretary Mark New issued the call to all "workers in the NHS, the rest of the public sector, and the private sector to show support for us on the twentieth, and show their opposition to whatever is being thrown at them in their own workplaces. If they can deliver strike action, good. Probably most can't as yet, so we are asking everyone to do what they can."

The Dudley NHS workers have shown true grit over the past four months. They can build on this and take all-out, indefinite action. Given the huge symbolic importance their fight has already gained, the move to an all-out strike would be the best way to kick-start a real fightback against PFI generally, especially in the NHS.

At a strikers' mass meeting in late

Ford workers must control jobs dispute

AFTER FIVE months of needless delay, the ballot for strike action by workers at Ford's Dagenham complex is finally underway.

Rather than a single gathering of the whole workforce, a series of several mass meetings across the Dagenham estate took place on 15 and 16 November.

These showed, however, that the mood remains to resist the corporation's threat to close the Paint, Trim and Assembly (PTA) and body plants forever, with the immediate loss of several thousand jobs and far greater devastation to the economy of surrounding communities in East London and Essex.

At the same time, however, a "yes" vote is by no means a foregone conclusion. The local leadership of the AEEU in the person of the convenor and some shop stewards at the engine plant are taking the bosses' side in a vicious game of divide and rule. In the context of just-in-time production the engine plant is crucial.

Ford management continues to state that it intends to maintain engine production at the site which supplies the whole of Ford's European operations.

It hopes to keep the skilled engineering workforce on side. If they succeed, this would seriously blunt the impact of strike action across the rest of the complex.

This means that stewards and activists from the threatened plants must support engine plant workers who have been arguing for action.

The case must be hammered home that the life expectancy of the engine plant could prove very short indeed if the rest of the factory shuts.

At the very least conditions for those still working there are likely to worsen substantially.

The stakes are high. Militants giving out leaflets outside the plant have been physically assaulted by a combination of Ford's security guards and stewards from the engine plant.

It has become obvious that the top brass of the four unions with memberships at Dagenham see the fight there as largely irrelevant.

None of them turned up for the mass meetings. Indeed, the union head offices have done precious little to put the workers' case in the media.

Assuming that the ballot is won and won convincingly, strike action on its own may only be the start of the fight.

An occupation of the complex, in particular the PTA, could well be necessary to ensure that management does not remove vital machinery from the complex.

Given that even the most "left" of the union full-timers look set to throw in the towel, workers need to wrest control of this battle away from the national officials and into the hands of the rank and file at the sharp end through a democratically elected and wholly accountable strike committee.

www.workersPOWER.COM

DUDLEY

Support anti-PFI day of action

THE STRIKES by NHS domestic and ancillary worker in the West Midlands against plans to transfer their jobs to a private sector consortium are solid.

At the root of this dispute is the determination of Dudley NHS Trust bosses to build a new hospital under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) to replace the four existing facilities in Dudley and Stourbridge. The PFI scheme would result in the loss of some 70 beds and 170 jobs.

The industrial action, a series of strikes staged by Unison members since August, continues to escalate. The strikers are currently in the midst of a 14-day walk-out due to end on 9 December. So far, the workers have been out on the picket lines for 50 days. This is a record for staff directly employed by the NHS.

The strikers' morale has been buoyed

by the AEEU's decision to ballot their members among electricians working in the Dudley hospitals, who would also see their jobs privatised under the PFI scheme. The AEEU has not yet announced a date for the ballot, but the strikers are hopeful that the electricians will soon be joining them on the picket line.

Rank and file workers across the country continue to offer their support. A growing number of union branches have moved beyond collections to set up standing orders to the Dudley strike fund. Following a series of successful local demonstrations, Unison leaders have agreed to call a national demonstration against PFI in London.

At the moment, the bureaucrats are citing the need to mobilise all Unison branches before naming a date.

Yet by naming a date they could help this mobilisation enormously, taking something positive to the rank and file. Unison branches need to keep up pressure on the union's leadership to organise such a march as rapidly as possible, in order to turn the heat up on both Trust management and the New Labour government.

At present the determination of New Labour ministers to force through PFI at all costs is keeping the Dudley NHS management from making concessions that would satisfy the strikers. It appears, however, that the determined resistance in Dudley is giving NHS Trust managements elsewhere second thoughts. Four planned PFI schemes in south-east England have been scrapped in the past month.

At a strikers' mass meeting in late

Socialist Alliance needs revolutionary campaign

THE SOCIALIST ALLIANCE scored an impressive by-election result in Preston. Its candidate, former Labour councillor Terry Cartwright, won 1,210 votes, 5.7 per cent.

In both Preston and Tottenham the Socialist Alliance saved its deposits, came fourth behind the established parties and proved itself to be a pole of attraction to workers distrustful of the Blair government. In Preston the Alliance comfortably beat both the Greens and the fascist BNP.

These results augur well for the general election campaign. The alliance plans to contest over 50 seats in England and to stand in conjunction with the Welsh Socialist Alliance and the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP - itself planning to fight all 72 Scottish constituencies). In the by-elections for both the Edinburgh and Westminster parliaments in Glasgow Anniesland the SSP gained over 7 per cent of the poll in each contest.

Such results are impressive and encouraging, especially in the face of a hostile media and a grossly unfair electoral system. The question now is, what sort of election campaign should the socialist alliances that are being built across the country wage in the general election and what sort of manifesto should fight on? The importance of this question is that whatever is decided could well determine the fate of the socialist alliances.

The main forces in the alliances are the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Socialist Party (SP). At the moment these two organisations are engaged in a fluctuating war with each other that could seriously undermine the whole project. What are they fighting over?

The SP was the original moving force within the alliances and has adopted a petulant hostility to the SWP, which it sees as a Johnny-come-lately abusing its numerical advantage to reshape the alliances. It has a sectarian attitude to the SWP. Its excuse was summed up in a document circulated to its branches:

"The September 30 2000 Socialist Alliance conference in Coventry marked the start of an attempt by the SWP to alter the course of the Alliance nationally... the SWP are now trying to change the Alliance prematurely from being a broad federal alliance to being an interim formation between an alliance and their conception of a party."

Actually, the conference marked no

such thing. What the SWP argued - and on this we agree - is that a serious general election campaign required a national, democratically elected leadership, a unified manifesto and a co-ordinated effort between all alliances. The SP are against this for one simple reason - they prefer to go it alone. They have already announced their intention to contest 18 parliamentary seats, regardless of any decisions by the Socialist Alliance itself.

Moreover, the SP's hostility to the alliances moving towards a party seems at odds with their own oft repeated call for a "mass workers party". Surely, they should be in favour of the alliances moving towards this. But because the SWP outnumber them substantially they are now busy inventing reasons to stop the alliances developing anything that resembles a party structure.

The SP's chronic sectarianism has been hardened by their inexorable decline. In the run up to the general election it really is necessary to pose a blunt question: are you in or out?

Does this mean that the SWP are on the side of the angels? Politically, certainly not.

Organisationally, the SWP have generally avoided blatantly bureaucratic methods inside the socialist alliances. They have strength in numbers and can ensure decisions go their way. But this has not translated into crude manipulation. The obvious danger is that it could. More important, however, is politics. The SWP took a long time to formulate their exact understanding of the relationship between the socialist alliances and the revolutionary party. Now it is clearer - and wrong.

On the one hand they argue clearly for a revolutionary party. But on the other they favour a broader socialist alternative to Labour - a sort of semi-party - restricted to the electoral field, but supporting worthy campaigns in order to garner electoral support. This "halfway house", they believe, can act as a transmission belt to the revolutionary party. Put crudely, the socialist alliances are a transmission belt to them as the revolutionary party.

The SWP are not anything of the sort. Politically, they are centrist - vacillating between revolution and reform. They call for revolution in the abstract, but refuse to fight for a transitional programme in the here and now that could begin to direct workers beyond their

immediate demands and towards a struggle for power.

The current Hackney crisis poses the question concretely - albeit in a very local way. There is a straightforward centralising demand that, if fought for, could achieve a revolutionary solution: build a council of action comprising workers, tenants, service users etc., as an alternative power centre to the council. The SWP regard this as too advanced. They don't go beyond calls - militant but essentially reformist - to sack the chief executive, to force the council to resign and so on. Such demands are fine, but must be linked to the fight for a revolutionary alternative.

The second reason the SWP's "halfway house" schema for the socialist alliances is that it limits, in advance, the chance of transforming the alliances into a revolutionary party, so as not to "scare off" left reformists. The socialist alternative they call for is not, and must not become, the revolutionary socialist alternative.

To this end the SWP opposed the LSA adopting a revolutionary programme for the GLA elections. Their excuse is that a minimal programme is the only way to win reformists to the project.

This method has not resulted in a serious influx of left reformists into the socialist alliances. There are individuals who have been won over but they hardly constitute a sizeable fraction of the alliances.

A minimum programme does not offer such people a real alternative to New Labour. Worse, a minimum programme of reforms, even radical ones, does nothing to attract the dynamic, potentially revolutionary youth of the anti-capitalist movement to the alliances. Reformist programmes will leave youth who want to change the world cold.

Worse, the SWP are even prepared to dilute the distinctive class content of the alliances. After repeatedly dubbing votes for the petit bourgeois Greens as "left" votes, the SWP went one step further, calling on the LSA to support Ralph Nader in the US presidential election. The fact that Nader is explicitly not a socialist and has no truck with the idea of a workers' party was beside the point. His campaign was a popular bandwagon and so a model for the alliances.

The SWP's approach is also cynical in selecting candidates. Wherever they have the chance to support a left reformist or "independent" against a revolutionary - unless they want the nomination for themselves - they will back the reformist in order to create a respectable facade. They hope for greater electoral credibility and it further serves their purpose of limiting the alliance's programme to a minimum charter of left reforms.

This schema is doomed to failure. It won't create a real socialist alternative to Labour and it won't break sizeable numbers of reformist workers from left Labourism.

The alternative to the SP's sectarianism and the SWP's opportunism is an open and honest fight to build the socialist alliances into effective mass campaigns, capable of attracting workers and anti-capitalist youth to their ranks. For this to happen they must be campaigning organisations and they must be revolutionary.

To this end Workers Power successfully moved amendments at the 30 September in Coventry spelling out the centrality of an outward campaigning orientation.

We also distributed hundreds of copies of a draft revolutionary programme for the election. We urge everyone in the alliances to support this programme at the February 2001 conference.

workers POWER

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COMMENT

Brown kick-starts election campaign

GORDON BROWN'S pre-budget report signals the countdown to the next election. Having spent the first two years of a Labour government sticking to the Tories spending limits, Brown has finally opened his purse. But while the spending figures sound large - an extra £2 billion this year, and £4 billion a year in the two years after that - they remain a pittance compared to the bosses' profits and the dividends being paid out to the rich.

Brown's spending decisions are political. Over £2 billion has been committed to buying off the hauliers who successfully blockaded fuel distribution centres in September. Each lorry run by the hauliers will get a 50 per cent refund on the excise licence this year, up to £4000 per lorry - the bigger the firm the more they get. Low sulphur diesel, used by virtually all new lorries, will also be cut by 3p a litre.

Predictably this was enough to divide and demobilise the protesters, who previously claimed to be fighting for a massive cut in all fuel taxes.

Pensioners received £5 on the single pension and winter heating allowances were doubled to £200. The Chancellor had felt the shock waves from the previous insulting increase of 75p which had led to a widespread revolt and criticism in the Labour Party itself. But even this increase only brings the basic state pension to a miserly £72.50 (£115 for a couple).

New Labour refuses to restore the link (broken by the Tories) between pensions and earnings, a decision that defrauds every pensioner who had contributed to SERPs - the state earnings related pension. Just restoring the link would have put every pensioner on £100 a week. Instead, Brown insists that a means tested Minimum Income Guarantee of £92.45 (rising to £100 by 2003) is sufficient - providing you fill in the 30 page form necessary to claim it!

The pre-budget report follows other spending commitments in the 1999 and 2000 "spending reviews" - health spending is to grow by 6.4 per cent a year after inflation to 2004, education by 5.4 per cent, transport spending to increase by even more. All these promises stretching well into the "second term" are designed to give a clear message to the voters: "If you want these commitments fulfilled vote Labour, if you want to see them torn up vote for the Tories".

Portillo and Hague have denounced Brown's "reckless spending commitments" and signalled tax giveaways and massive cuts if they get in. This is just what Labour needs to rally its supporters in the general election planned for next year.

Far from being "reckless" Brown has done little to tackle the real poverty and deprivation left by nearly two decades of Thatcherism:

- A privatised railway network that is so under-invested and geared to profit that it is incapable of getting people safely from A to B.
- Municipal housing that on the government's own estimates needs £20 billion just to bring it up to decent standards and a housing shortage that is sending prices through the roof.
- A child poverty level, one of the worst in Europe, that has been virtually untouched in three years of Labour government.
- An education system in crisis, where underfunding, truancy and oversized classes in the state sector co-exist with well funded selective and private schools in which the middle and upper classes happily segregate their children.

By the International Labour Organisation measure of unemployment, over 1.5 million people are still without jobs in Britain. Taking all those who are unemployed, part-timers who want full time work, and the "early retired" who want to work, nearly 4.5 million people in the UK want jobs. According to the DSS's own research in many inner city areas one in three adults exist on benefits of one kind or another - JSA, sickness and incapacity benefit etc.

These levels of deprivation can only be addressed by massive job creation and re-skilling programmes. A huge house, school and hospital building programme combined with a real "new deal" for the jobless would be a minimum starting point for any government determined to address these problems.

The transport crisis, combined with the need to reduce car use and reliance on fossil fuel burning energy to prevent global warming, needs a massive injection of government funds both in transport and alternative energy production. Overcoming these problems demands the expenditure of tens if not hundreds of billions in the next decade.

Labour has no intention of finding this money. To do so would mean really cutting into the massive profits of the global corporations that dominate the UK and world economy.

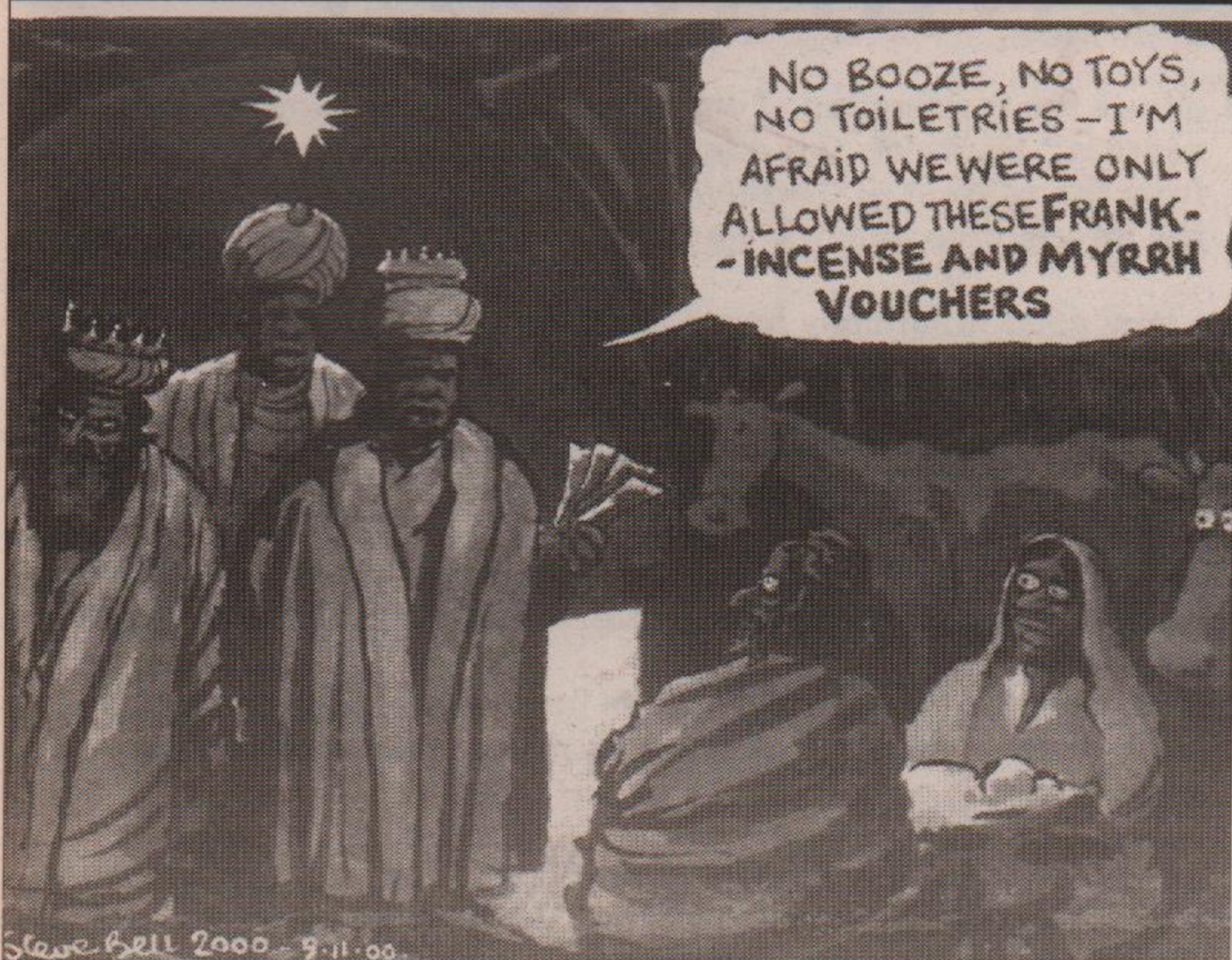
In the same month that Brown announced his £5 increase to pensioners the top four oil companies gleefully announced the largest profits ever - £10 billion in profits for the previous quarter. Yet these same companies have some of the lowest tax rates in Europe on their North Sea oil fields.

Of course the TV and press fall over themselves to congratulate Brown on his "prudent" policies. But Brown's "commitments" only last as long as the economy keeps growing. His spending plans are based on continued growth over the next four years of between 2.25 per cent and 2.5 per cent. A sharp recession in the USA would destroy such optimistic forecasts - a recession in the UK would follow and suddenly slash tax revenue.

The open handed Chancellor will become an axeman. It will be the working class, the pensioners, the sick and the low paid who pay the price. Which is why we say - don't be fooled by Brown's meagre hand-outs. Get organised and build a socialist alternative that will not only tax the rich but take the entire economy from them and begin to plan it to meet the needs of the many.

Christmas campaigning postcards

FROM THE COMMITTEE TO DEFEND ASYLUM SEEKERS



Six postcards are £5 (plus 50p postage) and are available from BCM Box 4289, London WC1N 3XX. Cheques payable to the Committee to Defend Asylum Seekers.

Victory to the Intifada!

Keith Harvey explains why the latest Palestinian uprising deserves international working class support

IN TWO months of heroic resistance to Israeli missiles and bullets more than 250, mainly young, Palestinians have died fighting to expel Zionist forces occupying their homeland.

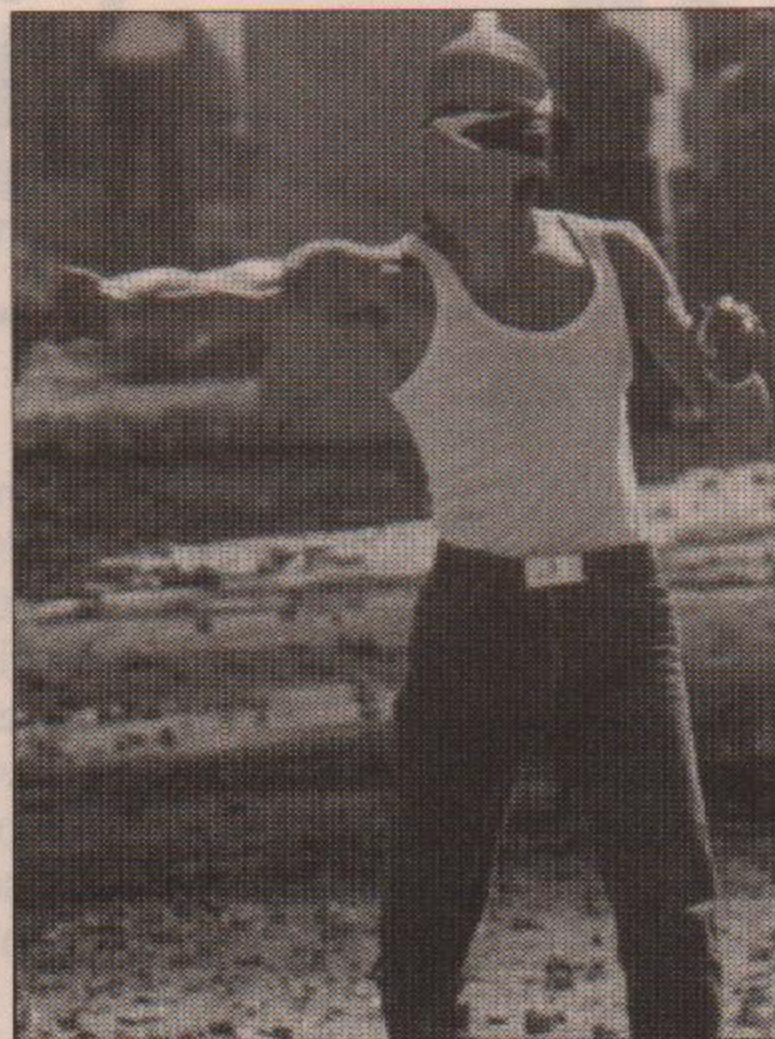
Despite the Palestinians having justice and courage on their side the international labour movement has been woeful in its response. Taking their cue from the US and EU governments, the official leaders of social democracy and the trade unions in the west have done nothing to condemn Israel's violence.

The influence of Zionism in the labour movement is pervasive. The naive belief exists among many that Israel, with all its "imperfections", is a "safe haven" for the world's Jews and that their homeland is under constant threat of attack from anti-semitic Arab neighbours. This is nonsense.

Israel was formed in 1948, with the support of the US, by ethnic cleansing against Palestine's Arab population. It had an Arab population which had lived there for centuries – a Jewish state in Palestine could only exist by expelling them or discriminating against them. Some 750,000 Arabs were driven off their land by the fear of massacres.

Soon the Jewish 33 per cent of the population came to control 75 per cent of the territory.

The racist "Law of Return" allowed



Palestinian youth fights back

Jews from anywhere in the world to come to Israel and become citizens, while discriminating against the Arab minority. Meanwhile the Palestinians lived as refugees in the Arab states, as second-class citizens in Israel, or as subjects of repressive Arab regimes in the parts of Palestine not captured by Israel (the West Bank and Gaza Strip). Palestinians have never accepted their fate and despite the overwhelming superiority of Israel's military might they keep fighting back.

American imperialism supported

Israel because it needed it to act as its watchdog in the Middle East: to protect the oil for the West and prevent the Arab masses overthrowing their corrupt pro-Western governments.

The blame for the latest uprising (intifada) lies with Israel's government and specifically the Prime Minister Ehoud Barak. Under his two year rule negotiations stalled while seizures of Arab land for more Israeli settlements multiplied. The number of settlement building projects increased 90 per cent in one year. And the provocative actions of the armed Jewish settlers in the Occupied Territories (having doubled to 200,000 in eight years) became intolerable.

The collapse of the "final status" negotiations, between Israel and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, occurred when the Palestinians refused to sign up to an agreement which offered them a joke of an "independent state": without Jerusalem, surrounded by Israeli army posts and settlements, and with no right of return for the estimated three to five million Palestinian refugees in exile.

A deliberate provocation by right-wing butcher and Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon in visiting a holy Muslim shrine in late September was the detonator.

For the first month or so of the

new uprising Israel responded with more and more force. Stones were met with bullets and rubber bullets, rifle fire met with rockets, the bombing of whole West Bank districts and the assassination of PLO leaders.

But the predictable consequence of crushing unarmed mass demonstrations of youth is to force Fatah militia and Hamas into adopting other tactics. They have now started to blow up civilian targets inside Israel. Israel has run out of military options to crush the intifada, even if they can move it off the streets.

It is in this context that both the USA and Russia have stepped up their attempt at "mediation". This really means that the Palestinians must stop their resistance and go back into negotiations. They are putting pressure on Arafat to co-operate with Israel to quash forces inside his own movement that will not agree to a ceasefire – and he has done so.

Putting a lid on the latest intifada will solve nothing. The underlying cause of Palestinian violence is the theft of their land, the denial of their national rights and the constant belligerent expansion of Jewish settlements.

The repeated collapse of the peace process shows that the search for a "two-state" solution is a farce. For as long as there exists a specifically Jewish state in Palestine, maintaining its Jewish major-

ity with racist immigration laws, the Palestinians will continue to be an oppressed nation.

The Palestinian state in this scenario will be desperately poor and dependent on Israel, its rulers acting as Israel's police against their own people. The only just and long-lasting solution is not separating Arabs and Jews into states, but a single bi-national secular and socialist state in the whole of historic Palestine, something which demands the destruction of a Zionist state based on privileges for one part of the population at the expense of another.

- Victory to the intifada!
- Israeli army out of the Occupied Territories! An end to all Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza!
- End the Zionist blockade of the Occupied Territories. Stop the assassinations, release prisoners held by Israel!
- For international aid to the Palestinians under siege!
- No return to the Oslo Peace Process! For the genuine right to self-determination for the Palestinians, one that recognises the right of return of the Palestinian Diaspora!
- For a secular workers' republic of Palestine!

Defeat the new Labour Code

Russian workers are beginning to take action against Putin's attack on their rights, writes Mark Abrams

FOR MOST of this year Russian President Vladimir Putin has been pressing the State Duma (parliament) to introduce a new Labour Code.

Despite the many pro-capitalist changes since 1991, workers have managed to use the old Soviet Labour code to their advantage. This code states that workers cannot be fired and management decisions cannot be taken without the consent of the trade unions.

Every Russian government since the mid-1990s has tried to liquidate the old Labour Code. They were prompted to do so by the IMF and the World Bank. On 7 October 1997 the World Bank approved a \$28.6 million Social Protection Implementation Loan (SPIL) to Russia. Within this, \$2.46 million of unemployment assistance was tied to a plan to "assist the government to draft a new Labour Code".

The new Code was demanded by multinational corporations as it allows them to bring down the cost of labour in Russia even lower than it is now. This new Labour Code is also demanded by Russian capitalists and managers to squeeze maximum profit out of their workers.

Sergei Kalachnikov, Russian minister of Employment, explains the bosses' position:

"The former code is full of guarantees and benefits that are economically unrealistic... The enforcement of the current code is not economically beneficial to the employers."

The draft code contains a plan for a 56-hour working week, allowing employers to create black lists of union organisers, the use of replacement workers, the imposition of contracts short

circuiting the collective bargaining process, and eliminating the ban on night work for women. Child labour at the age of 14 would also be permitted.

The Communist Party of Zyuganov (KPRF) supports the new Code. It has approved every government budget for years and has declared itself in favour of defending "honest" entrepreneurs. In fact it was on the initiative of the KPRF member Seleznev, the Speaker of the Duma, that the government's draft

Code was rushed onto the table for discussion after years of delay.

Faced with this massive attack, the working class in Russia is slowly regrouping. Striking workers at a Gazprom plant in Asktrakhan united with local residents to blockade a highway and rail line in September, demanding the construction of new housing.

The workers and people won all their demands. Car workers at the Togliatti plant in Astrakhan struck against the

closure of the factory. In southern Russia "people's committees" have emerged in response to the complete abandonment of workers' concerns by local and state government.

Such committees co-ordinate support for strikes among the local population. The campaign to defend the existing Russian Labour Code represents the first progressive working class fightback on a national scale for the Russian labour movement since 1991. It is involving

growing numbers of workers each day. The trade union Zashita (Defence of Labour) is at the forefront of the struggle.

On 1 December, there will be action against the Labour Code throughout Russia. Labour movements in other parts of the world, from Mexico City to Prague and London, will be organising solidarity protests outside Russian embassies. We urge all class conscious workers to join them.

What the code will mean

Trade unions will no longer be able:

- to make employers dismiss managers who violate the rights of workers and their union representatives
- to co-ordinate with the administration, work schedules, shift assignments and transfers, vocation schedules and vocation compensation, payment of bonuses, the revision of working conditions and work safety rules.

Trade unions will lose their right:

- to control management's actions in regard to elected union representatives, i.e., the termination of their employment, job transfers, or penalties
- to be provided with the office and the means of communication, as well as the right to verify the correctness of payrolls.

The government's draft:

- deletes Article 227 of the present code, which gives labour collectives the right to participate in the management
- abolishes the entire section on the labour collective, which stipulates that privatisation of state and municipal enterprises is allowed only with the consent of the labour collective
- allows the employer to sign short-time contracts of any duration, with anyone, and for unlimited renewals
- gives management the right to introduce a regime of part-time work without prior notification

- allows the termination of employment for "revealing commercial secrets," by which the employer can mean virtually anything, from the content of the labour contract and the profit sharing to the information about wages and salaries, and so on.

The new code drastically lowers the requirements for work conditions:

- it allows the use of women's labour in night shifts and sending mothers with small children on business trips
- paid maternity leave will be cut in half, from three years to a year and a half
- the employer is no longer required to provide special clothing for work in special climate zones (e.g. the Arctic regions), free soap and soda
- if passed, the government bill will permit bosses to employ pregnant women, adolescents, and mothers with small children in night shifts.

Moreover, the government's bill greatly broaden workers' financial liability, both individual and collective, without agreement with the trade union. It allows the employer to increase the working day up to 12 hours and the working week up to 56 hours on the basis of just an "employee's request". It also revives classical black lists, entitling management to create databases on their workers' private lives, political views, associations, and trade-union activity.

The new populism

Dave Stockton reviews *Naming the Enemy: Anticorporate Movements Confront Globalisation*, By Amory Starr, Pluto Press – Australia/Zed Books – London and New York, 2000

NAMING THE *Enemy* is the first book which sets out to make an overall analysis of the new movement which hit the world's headlines only twelve months ago in Seattle. The author, Amory Starr, teaches sociology at Colorado State University, but she has also been an activist in various anti-globalisation movements over the last five years.

Starr regards the movement as a multi-class people's movement against big, multinational capital. In her model the "people" include small entrepreneurs. The working class is accorded no special role – indeed she considers that "historical materialism is confounded by the failure of the working class to play its revolutionary role".

What we have in this book is a manifesto for neo-populism. Starr points out that "anti corporatism was part of the populist tradition". This is an old tradition in the US dating back to the last quarter of the nineteenth century when big corporations started to emerge.

It was based socially on the small farmers and had as its ideal a return to a society of small property owners and a democracy free from the influence of bankers and big business. Populism identifies only large scale monopolistic capitalism as "the enemy". It emphasises the harmfulness of international trade and big finance. It sees the answer as a return to the small scale and the local. It excoriates international culture as a corrupting factor.

Above all it assigns the working class no special role because in its view this class is too heavily bound up with large scale production. The peasantry and indigenous peoples are seen as the fount of wisdom. Its criticism of capitalism is moralistic, archaic, and its solutions a series of "back to's" – back to nature and the land, back to the small rural community, back to small businesses, back to simplicity, back to religion. Its methods of struggle and organisation are individualist not collective.

All this means that it cannot distinguish progressive from reactionary trends in the petit bourgeoisie and ends up accommodating to the latter.

Starr believes that "a community's shared values and visions provide a cultural lens for critical analysis" and that "traditional indigenous culture is the basis for critiques of oppression". These cultures provide "spiritual bulwarks against, and oases of escape from, dehumanising forces".

We can agree that this is the case for communities suffering oppression and super-exploitation – whether at the hands of corporate imperialism or at the hands of local oppressors. But there is nothing intrinsically progressive in such culture. Oppressors can also have such cultures – the Hutu chauvinists in Rwanda could carry out a genocide.

Elevating the "indigenous" means that she shies away from any serious analysis of anti-corporate popular culture. This results in a serious underestimation of the role that modern cultural action (raves, street parties, etc.) have played in the revival of a rebellious youth movement.

Starr organises her analysis around what she calls "three modes of struggle" These are "contestation and reform or restrained globalisation", "globalisation from below or democratised globalisation" and lastly "delinking, relocalisation, sovereignty". For her, only the lat-

ter is really radically anti-global.

In the first type belong movements seeking to reform the economy and social life, to change the actions of corporations, governments and global institutions. Everyone from NGOs and churches through land reform and peace movements to Reclaim the Streets and anti-sweatshop campaigns are listed under this heading.

What she does not emphasise is that the struggles for partial demands by such campaigns have an international, mass, progressive character. That they are bringing huge numbers of workers, students, peasants and indigenous peoples into alliance with one another. Certainly, this tendency needs to become conscious and to break away from its current reformist strategy and leaders who embody this.

She then moves on to the second category, "globalisation from below (democratised globalisation)" which she regards as more advanced than the former.

She sees this as uniting all those organisations who seek the development of a people's internationalist populism – the attempt to create a global civil society. Once again her list is wide-ranging – Greenpeace, key labour unions in the USA, South Korea and Mexico and most remarkably, for its inclusion at all, the Socialist International. In government in most of Europe this is the instrument of capitalist globalising policies "with a human face". In no sense is the Socialist International part of the anti-capitalist movement.

In fact this entire "socialist" sub-category is threadbare – only the US and Australian Democratic Socialists are mentioned. Apart from the latter, those organisations which openly proclaim themselves revolutionary are totally missing. Yet they have played a major role in the mobilisations, at least outside the US.

The Zapatistas are given – correctly – considerable coverage since they undoubtedly acted as a major stimulus to the convergence of all these movements in the Americas and beyond. In a series of declarations between 1995 and 1998 they linked into the anti-NAFTA movements in Mexico, the USA and Canada.

New technology obviously played a vital role in spreading these links and creating – by the time of Seattle – the sense of a common movement. Hence the presence of sizeable delegations and individual representatives of third world unions, peasant movements and indigenous people's organisations in Seattle. But even this is played down thanks to Starr's preference for the primitive.

She interprets this whole strand as striving for "an international, non-violent revolution to be achieved by the rising up of people's movements everywhere." For her there is a real danger that this will still lead to increased globalisation, centralisation, dominance, and



Protesters attacked by police at Washington WTO demonstration

the triumph of the cosmopolitan over the ethnic and local:

"The goals of globalisation from below require centralisation (which makes the system vulnerable to many of the problems of corporate globalisation. It is a set up for logics of comparative advantage that would again subordinate localities to priorities set at the centre, denying them control over their own resources."

THE CORE of her argument is that the real problem is the scale of capitalist development, its global, and even its national, character. International and national trade are bad – local trade is good. International (cosmopolitan), not just corporate, culture is bad but local indigenous culture is good. Only the local is authentic and it is good. The large scale is the enemy.

The reactionary consequences of this view come out in Starr's appreciation of the third strand of the movement – the one she most identifies with. This strand of the movement has, she believes, developed a truly correct alternative vision.

She declares her marked preference for anarchism over socialism:

"Where anarchism differs from socialism is in the post-revolutionary vision – local autonomy of worker-collectives and no state ... localised ownership of the means of production in a stateless society will enable local economic autonomy and will prohibit elite power. Whilst vigorously internationalist, the future vision of the movement is about relocalisation."

Starr testifies to her convergence with anarchism at the level of organisation in recalling her experiences in the battle of Seattle. The form for doing this was the widespread use of "affinity groups":

"My entire group felt that we should

also use anarchist principles in organising ourselves during the week of protest. Many anarchist principles were in obvious use. There was no attempt at centralisation, control, official messages, or forms of protest as whole. The only attempts at co-ordination were engaged in dialogically and person-to-person. Everyone who participated has now experienced the anarchist alternative to bureaucratic top down systems. We saw self-organisation at work and it worked."

Even in Seattle all accounts make it clear that success was the result of a (chance) convergence of the forces of organised labour and the affinity group protesters. Neither the (admittedly) bureaucratically centralised Teamsters nor the decentralised Turtles had "the organisation that worked". But the chance coalescence of their forces and the unreadiness of the police combined to achieve a historic victory, despite these weaknesses.

The full scope of the author's populism is revealed in the uncritical attitude she takes to the "sustainable development" ideologists. This movement she says "emphasises the resources and needs of the locality and focuses production almost entirely on local basic needs and simple pleasures, delinking from larger economies."

First she welcomes into the movement those who mount a "defence and celebration of small-scale entrepreneurship". This includes a prettification of some of the most savage exploiters – engaged as they are in "primitive accumulation". The investigation of most small shops and workshops would reveal this – it is not only the multinationals that engage in child and even slave labour.

Alongside this the author approves strongly of a back to the soil movement. This system, Starr believes, could act as an economic basis for small scale

communities, "secure from economic fluctuations", a "scaling back of overdevelopment".

This indicates the self-conscious primitivism of her analysis – the answer to humanity's problems lies in the past.

STARR TELLS us that "African American activists frequently describe their communities during segregation as more healthy culturally, socially and economically". She quotes (unidentified) French Jews as saying "emancipation destroyed their culture". She claims Israeli Jewish fundamentalists (Haredim) who oppose planners, big hotels, swimming pools, archaeologists and autopsies are defending their communities. Islamist jihads are also efforts to protect community and culture from corporate culture.

Starr condemns tourism for its ecological and cultural destructiveness and suggests that in a delinked, relocalised world people will not want to travel around. Several times Starr uses the word "cosmopolitanism" in a derogatory sense – a bit scary given the precedents for this in the twentieth century (Stalin and Hitler).

US racist populists come in for positive treatment. Even the Montana Militia! Sure they are racists, she admits, but they are extreme localists too. Outrageously, she suggests that "these movements should be considered within the scope of options for political economic struggle" – i.e. we should interpret their paranoia about the federal government, the United Nations, their Christian fundamentalism, as a form of legitimate anti-corporate struggle.

Likewise all these movements' extreme reactionary moralism (anti-gay, anti-women's rights) their bigotry, their rejection of the secular state can be reinterpreted as a critique of corporate amorality.

Starr's neo-populism drives her to question bourgeois democracy and human rights in a reactionary manner:

"Shall we begin by acknowledging the limits of secularism? The limits of state enforcement of civil rights? Of the civil rights process itself? Of the universalism of human rights? Of its antagonistic relationship with place and culture..... If we could just manage to grow our own food and incorporate our shit into our own soil, might that open more possibilities for others to be themselves than some universalising, inevitably bureaucratic participatory democracy?"

Amory Starr has inadequately named the enemy. Worse she has falsely named as friends or allies some of oppressed humanity's worst enemies. The enemy for Marxists is not only corporate power but capitalism and all other remaining forms of exploitation and oppression.

Amory Starr turns away from the most progressive aspect of the anti-capitalist movement – its internationalism, its creation of a world community of struggle by the oppressed. She does not want to see the central role which the working class and the propertyless poor must come to play.

It is the mass strikes and actions of these strata that point the way to the only real answer to global capitalism – world revolution and world socialism. Populism with its idealist methodology, its obscuring of class, its backward looking praise of traditional communities and cultures, has nothing to offer to the anti-capitalist movement.



Miners, cars

It's the 25 December. You have had your turkey, finished off the mince pies and shouted at the Queen during her Christmas speech. So now put your feet up and enjoy the following reviews of some of our favourite holiday books

IF YOU were there, you'll want to relive it. If you weren't, then you should read this book to find out about this extraordinary year of industrial militancy.

The official total of strike days lost – 23,909,000 – actually underestimates the extent and effect of action, as it doesn't include work-to-rules and political strikes.

A particular feature of the strikes in 1972, which the authors take as a major theme, was the number of sustained, major official strikes all marked by high levels of unofficial and rank-and-file action.

The authors concentrate on the key five disputes: the miners' pay strike which saw the deployment of new and inventive militant tactics; the railway work-to-rule which severely dented the Tory Industrial Relations Act; the dockers' dispute over containerisation which effectively smashed the Industrial Relations Act; the engineering sit-ins; and the magnificent building workers' revolt.

This focus allows the authors to pursue some vital themes, but it does have some drawbacks. Although Darlington and Lyddon are careful to locate the disputes within the general international background of rising resistance, and to point out how the strikes themselves gave a boost to other struggles, it is frustrating to find only a couple of sentences about the crucial Mansfield Hosiery strike of autumn 1972, a landmark in the fight of black workers for equality at work and against racism in the unions.

Another consequence of the book's focus is that this is overwhelmingly and strikingly a male story. This is partly just how things were: the strikes of Ford's sewing machinists and Leeds clothing workers pre-dated 1972, and the main wave of women's strikes and occupations over pay and unionisation came afterwards.

Nevertheless, the role of women would bear some discussion, especially as the first factory to take solidarity strike action with the miners in Birmingham was the predominantly female SU Carburetors. The year also saw women taking part in the flying pickets in Kent (which does get a mention) while Yorkshire miners' wives staged a lobby of the government and began the kind of organisation which was to be so vital in the Women's Support groups of 1984/5.

However, these criticisms don't detract from the book's many strengths. It combines detailed and well researched coverage of the five disputes, analysis of the relationship between the rank and file and the leadership, discussion of the role of the TUC and the government, together with a host of stories which give a flavour of the times.

A key feature of the disputes was the use of militant tactics, mostly led and controlled by rank and file leaders. These tactics spread strikes and solidarity in a way that made life hugely difficult for the employers, police, government and the TUC leadership.

The miners' strike saw the development and refinement of a number of key weapons in the working class armoury: flying pickets were used to shut down the coalfields and then, in what later became known as "secondary picketing", to shut down power supplies. Rank and file militants made the most of rather elastic official decisions to abide by picket lines.

Sometimes, this meant that only a handful of pickets were needed – in some cases the workers themselves would tip off the NUM on the need for a picket:

"A frantic telephone call to the NUM led to the immediate dispatch of two flying pickets. They unfurled a banner bearing the slogan from an overhead bridge and the train did not run."

On other occasions mass picketing by hundreds of miners was needed to shut down deliv-



Miners march, 1972

Lesley Day reviews *Glorious Summer: Class Struggle in Britain 1972* Ralph Darlington and Dave Lyddon Bookmarks £13.99

eries. And the miners themselves could not be everywhere. Solidarity action had to take another step forward. The best known and most important example came at Saltley Gate in Birmingham where Yorkshire miners, led by Arthur Scargill, then a branch delegate from Barnsley, appealed to Birmingham engineers to support the mass picket.

THE RESULTS are famous. The Saltley power station was shut down by a mass picket of miners and Birmingham workers who had downed tools and marched on the gates. The police were powerless to prevent this, and, subsequently, did not attempt to reopen the power station because it was clear that further strikes would take place across Birmingham if the attempt was made.

The authors are clear about this latter point. What should be added is that tragically the lessons of Saltley were subsequently learnt better by the ruling class than the working class leaders. From 1974 onwards, the police developed new tactics of control, riots cops, the "wedge" of special forces and so forth to break mass pickets. When it came to critical points in the 1984 Great Strike, notably the confrontation at Orgreave power station in Sheffield, the NUM brought out huge numbers of its own but did not make the appeal for solidarity strike action across Sheffield. Nor, despite incredible bravery, were they able to match the police squads with their own organised picket defence squads.

The engineering sit-ins, centred on Greater Manchester, were also rich with lessons. The sit-ins challenged the rights of managers and made it easier to hold the strikes solid in some ways. But there were drawbacks which related to the plant-by-plant nature of the action.

The engineering union officials, led by the left-winger Hugh Scanlon, had decided in favour of a plant bargaining strategy. Each strike or sit-in was trying to get an agreement from its own employer. The sit-ins in some cases became passive and isolated. In the end, the agreements struck fell far short of the aims, especially on the key question of the working week.

The greatest display of class-wide solidarity

action came later that year during the dockers' fight against containerisation (which threatened jobs). The strike was initially unofficial, and spread by unofficial means, galvanising the rank and file.

When five London dockers were arrested and imprisoned in Pentonville jail for defying a court order under the Industrial Relations Act, thousands of trade unionists round the country understood the significance of the dispute and were ready to take action. By the time the TUC called for a one-day general strike, a quarter of a million workers were either out or had been out on unofficial strike to demand the release of the Pentonville Five.

In these and other examples, political leadership within the working class was a key factor in the success or failure of action. One of the strengths of Darlington and Lyddon's book is that it reveals the background to "spontaneous" action, discussing the complex relationship between official and unofficial action and stressing the significance of the preparatory work by militants, for the most part grouped around the then influential Communist Party (CP) and its Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions.

Left Labour supporters co-operated with CP militants in, for example, the engineering Broad Left. To the left stood a smaller number of militants especially those around the small but growing International Socialists (IS), forerunners of today's Socialist Workers Party.

The authors also explain the way in which the trade union lefts like Jack Jones of the TGWU and Hugh Scanlon, would not break from the rest of the trade union leadership. Instead, they led the movement into talks with the government which paved the way for retreat and a wage freeze. They explain the way in which the CP's reformist politics meant that the *Morning Star* covered up for these left-wing leaders, sowing illusions in them, although at ground level many CP militants acted to the left.

But here we come to the book's missing link. It falls down on a key question of 1972 – how to take the militancy of the workers beyond reformism and towards a political challenge to the system? A near general strike over the dockers and the defeat of the state at Saltley showed that this was a concrete question. The election of a Labour government in 1974, on the back of the rising tide of militancy, and its deliberate demobilisation of the workers' movement in the later 1970s showed that failure

to answer it would open the way to defeat.

TWO THINGS were missing in 1972, despite the amazing level of struggle – a revolutionary party and an independent rank and file movement capable of taking on the reformist leaders within the unions. Could either have been built in 1972? We firmly believe so.

A working class capable of improvising such mighty struggles was more than capable of organising a rank and file movement – a network of militants organised to politically fight the bureaucracy not cover up for it. But for such a movement to succeed it had to go beyond the immediate demands of each struggle. It had to confront the politics of the bureaucracy. And for that to happen the militants had to be won in large numbers to a revolutionary programme and party. But for that to happen a revolutionary programme had to be fought for.

The best placed organisation to carry out this task was the IS – but its politics were marked by economism, by a tailing of the economic struggle. This was particularly acute in 1972 – and attractive. Essentially, it said the economic struggle itself will destroy the hold of reformism so long as we encourage ever greater levels of militancy. As a result it actually opposed advancing and fighting for a coherent revolutionary programme, a strategy for workers' power, that went beyond the demands of the hour.

Rank and file organisations that began to be built by IS were, therefore, limited to fighting trade union programmes. There was no attempt to win them, as organisations, to revolutionary politics. Individual recruits were won to IS, but its rank and file strategy was flawed by its belief that militant economic struggle would do the job of defeating reformism for it.

The result was that IS, despite impressive growth, was unable to dislodge the hold of the CP over many militants, let alone the Labour Party over many thousands of workers.

The failure to address these questions does not undermine the value of this book, however. It serves us with a valuable slice of working class history that can prove to any doubters around today, in either the labour movement or the anti-capitalist movement, that the British working class has a proud tradition of struggle that is sure to be revived in the years ahead.

and wizards

MOTOR INDUSTRY

THIS BOOK promises the inside story on Britain's biggest industrial drama since the miners' strike. The glowing introduction by John Towers, who fronted the successful Phoenix bid for Longbridge and is now chairman of the MG Rover Group, is the first clue that the promise won't be kept.

Dyson is chief reporter for the *Birmingham Evening Mail*, Chinn a history lecturer at Birmingham University and local BBC radio and TV personality. He is a "community historian" whose message is that the universe revolves around the "workshop of the world", that Brummie folk have always been the best at everything: the most ingenious entrepreneurs and the most noble at bearing poverty.

According to Chinn and Dyson, the crisis at Rover last spring had three causes: the BMW board stabbed Rover in the back; successive British governments since at least the mid-seventies have not understood how important manufacturing is; and assorted motoring correspondents subjected recent Rover models to unfair criticism.

What this parochial interpretation misses out is that the causes of the crisis in the car industry are global. Monopoly of auto production worldwide is now so far advanced that only giant players, who can take advantage of economies of scale, can compete in volume car production.

**Lynn Chamber reviews,
We Ain't Going Away: The Battle for
Longbridge,
by Carl Chinn and Stephen Dyson,
Brewin Books, £14.95 Paperback**

The more optimistic industry observers believe we are rapidly approaching the day when there will only be six major car manufacturers in contention, two each in America, Japan and Europe. That is why the past two years have seen Chrysler taken over by Daimler-Benz, Nissan taken over by Renault, Fiat by General Motors, and most recently the bankruptcy of Daewoo.

Chinn and the *Evening Mail* were in the forefront of those who saw the salvation of volume car production at Longbridge as coming from a national capitalist solution. They were the cheerleaders of the campaign to ensure that Longbridge should not be sold to the initially preferred bidder, the asset-strippers Alchemy, but to Phoenix, the alternative, hastily put together consortium which did promise to continue volume car production.

If there was any realistic hope that this book might reveal something new about the inside story

of the Rover crisis it would be in the secret meetings and backstairs manoeuvres that led to Alchemy being carved out, and the Phoenix bid succeeding. But the book adds no new information to the facts that were published at the time.

Despite Chinn's paean of praise to the workers at Longbridge, their shop stewards, Tony Woodley (the TGWU chief negotiator), and assorted union general secretaries and West Midlands Labour MPs, the book is worse than useless as a guide to the reasons for their support for the Phoenix bid. For Chinn, the reason is simple: Longbridge workers were enthusiastic supporters of the Phoenix bid because Brummies are too wise in the ways of the world to fall into the illusion that militancy will get anywhere.

There were some on the shop floor who were enthusiastic about Phoenix, but many more whose support was for a lesser evil that seemed to offer the only immediate prospect of avoiding mass redundancies. A section of the stewards recognised that Phoenix was not the solution for Longbridge, merely a postponement of the crisis. They believed, however, that the defeats of the past two decades meant that while militant action was necessary to save Longbridge, it would be counter-productive to call for it at the time of the spring crisis.

The battering the unions have taken at

plants like Longbridge did make it hard to get an initial hearing for arguments that occupations to force the government to nationalise are necessary. But this is the only way to take the first step towards securing a long-term future for car production, so it is necessary to put these arguments.

The sale of Rover to Phoenix and (virtually ignored by Chinn and Dyson) to Ford has not saved anything. Whether the US economy can achieve a soft landing or falls into recession, a slowdown in recent rapid rates of growth will lead to a new shakeout of global car production. The threat of the axe is again likely to face Longbridge, Land Rover or Cowley.

The events of the spring have bought some time at the cost of the jobs that have been lost, and other concessions made to the bosses. When the next crisis comes (probably sooner rather than later) a re-run of reliance on a capitalist solution would require yet more jobs to be sold, yet more speed-ups and anti-social shift patterns to be accepted.

A real telling of the inside story of the spring crisis would make at least a small contribution to building the militant working class response that will be needed when the next crunch comes. That book still has to be written.

DISCWORLD

WHERE WOULD you go to find debates about the merits of anarchism and communism on the net? Probably not to newsgroups for the readers of humorous fantasy novels. But such a debate was the topic of one recent thread in alt.fan.pratchett.

Pratchett's twenty-fifth Discworld book, *The Truth*, has just been published in time to head towards the top of the pre-Christmas period best-seller list. Pratchett's books are rumoured to have accounted for more than one per cent of total UK book sales in recent years, as well as forming the basis for a mini-industry of spin-offs, ranging from computer games to porcelain figurines.

The early Discworld books are surreal parodies of sword and sorcery fantasy fiction. But as the series matured, Pratchett developed a consistent fantasy world where the technology and political structure are reminiscent of the world around 500 hundred years ago, but where the social problems and major political events have a much more contemporary resonance.

For example, echoes of Tiananmen Square form the story line of *Interesting Times*, the Gulf

War of *Jingo*, and the opening up of Eastern Europe to international trade in *The Fifth Elephant*.

One source of the humour of the Discworld is that Pratchett makes every character the legitimate butt of jokes. Real ridicule and contempt, however, is reserved for sexists, racists, employers who super-exploit minority workers and racking landlords (i.e. all employers and all landlords), lawyers, militarists, international arms traders and agent provocateurs who infiltrate revolutionary movements.

The other source of humour is a playfulness with language and literary conventions. Puns abound, and successive jokes might draw on sources as diverse as the notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci to dog-Latin translations of catchphrases from Dirty Harry or the characters appearing in Pulp Fiction; from the mythology of ancient Egypt to the foibles of hot-dog salesmen, via digs at MS-DOS and Windows, to the absurdities of New Age pseudo-science.

The Faust legend is gently subverted in *Eric*, with fairy stories getting a similar treatment in

**Terry Pratchett: The Truth,
Doubleday, Hardback £16.99
(but usually on sale for less),
reviewed by Dave West**

Witches Abroad. Macbeth is rewritten in *Wyrd Sisters*.

It helps to have a passing acquaintance with the history of Hollywood films to get full value from *Moving Pictures*, of rock for *Soul Music*, and of opera for *Maskerade*. The breadth of cultural reference is such that it seems unlikely there could be any reader out there who could get all the jokes first time. By the same token, it would take a great deal of effort to miss the point entirely.

In this year's new addition movable type has finally been adopted on the Discworld. The Disc's first investigative reporter uncovers a coup d'état in process. The coup is being instigated by sinister conspirators who are trying to replace the existing ruler by a dupe who always listens to what he is told by the right focus group (!), so

that they can impose immigration controls.

Most of the humour in *The Truth* is rooted in the world of journalism, with running gags on human-interest stories, descriptions of oddly shaped vegetables and tabloid journalism inventing stories to sell papers. Behind this, the Discworld's sudden introduction to daily newspapers carries gentle hints of parallels with the current impact of the web. The book continues in the tone of the more political of the Discworld novels. While they are generally progressive in sentiment, the radicalism is limited to the view that the world would be a better place if individuals stood up for what was right.

The Truth is probably not the best place for new readers to sample the Disc. Like any long-established series (in fact probably more than most) there are many minor characters who make a brief appearance in most episodes, and a high quotient of in-jokes which are unlikely to make sense to newcomers. If you haven't sampled it before, why not try one of the books in the series this Christmas. You might just find it is a lot more enjoyable that watching the seventeenth TV rerun

SWITCH OFF THE TV (AND READ)

CHRISTMAS IS coming and the goose is getting fat. Please read a book or two instead of watching tat. Workers Power's editorial board suggests some good reads for the festive season and beyond. They are mostly old favourites, and none the worse for that.

James M McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom* is one of the best books on the American civil war you will ever read. It is a social, political and military history rolled into one volume. It's a long haul, but at the end you will understand why this episode in US history was actually a revolution - something most other historians try to conceal.

Another revolution, this time in France, broke out ten years after the American civil war started and Frank Jellinek's old classic, *The Paris Commune of 1871*, tells the story of the first occasion the working class seized political power beautifully. Look around second hand bookshops for this one.

And follow it up with the one book on the Russian Revolution that should be compulsory reading on every school curriculum - Trotsky's magnificent *History of the Russian Revolution*. And don't lie and claim you've read all three volumes if you haven't. Our thought police will come round and check! Two more recent revolutionary wars are well

documented in Gabriel Kolko's *Vietnam: Anatomy of War* and Patrick Bishop and Eamonn Mallie's *The Provisional IRA*. Both tell the story of guerrilla armies emerging out of mass revolutionary struggles. Kolko's book is the definitive history of the war that slayed the US giant, while *The Provisional IRA* is a fascinating explanation of the of the street battles in Belfast and Derry in 1969, the utter absence of the IRA from those battles and the contradictory social forces that came together in the Provos to put right this failure.

***Soledad Brother* by George Jackson and *Seize the Time* by Bobby Seale are both brilliant. They are personal accounts of the all encompassing racism in the US that shaped African-American militants in the 1960s and 1970s, and that made the Black Panther Party the inspiring phenomenon that it was.**

Morris Beckman's *The 43 Group* tells the story of how Jewish ex-servicemen and women got together after the war to take on British fascists who tried to spread their filth. If you've ever wondered what "No platform for fascists" means read this. Then polish your knuckleduster.

Susan Faludi's *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the Modern Man* marks a revival of serious analysis in US

feminist thinking. Her study of American men doesn't let them off their hook, but points to a combination of mounting economic pressures and the oppressive nature of the nuclear family to explain their behaviour and outlook. A welcome departure from much of the postmodern musings that have passed for serious feminist thought in the last period.

But if it is only fiction that can prise you away from the box or the web, try reading *Cloudsplitter* by Russell Banks. The abolitionist struggle of John Brown - he of the song about the mouldering body - comes to life in this powerful novel. If you've never read any Charles Dickens then use the break to found out what all the fuss is about by reading *Little Dorrit* or *Bleak House*.

And if you want a good and timely laugh about Florida's corrupt politicians, about how they are degrading the environment as well as democracy, get someone, anyone, to buy you Carl Hiasen's latest, *Sick Puppy*. You'll never look at a stuffed animal head, a Barbie doll or a shower cap in quite the same way again, ever.

Good reading, good cheer, and then gear up for struggle in 2001.

USA

Election farce drags on

"Butterfly" ballots, "pregnant" chads and serious allegations of electoral fraud and racist intimidation: GR McColl sifts through the wildest US presidential election in living memory and looks at what attacks the eventual winner has in store for the working class and oppressed.

THE WORLD'S news media has been teaching tens of millions a strange new vocabulary since the polls closed across the USA on 7 November. We now know how "butterfly" ballots caused votes intended for Al Gore to metamorphose into preferences for the extreme right populist, Pat Buchanan. The identity of the forty-third president of the United States could still hang on how a teller read a "pregnant" chad dangling from a ballot paper.

What most mainstream commentators had regarded as a close-fought but generally lacklustre contest for the world's mightiest political office suddenly became compulsive viewing, lurching from farce to melodrama and back again.

Centre stage has been the state of Florida, governed by George W Bush's brother, Jeb, and with a long and murky history of electoral skulduggery.

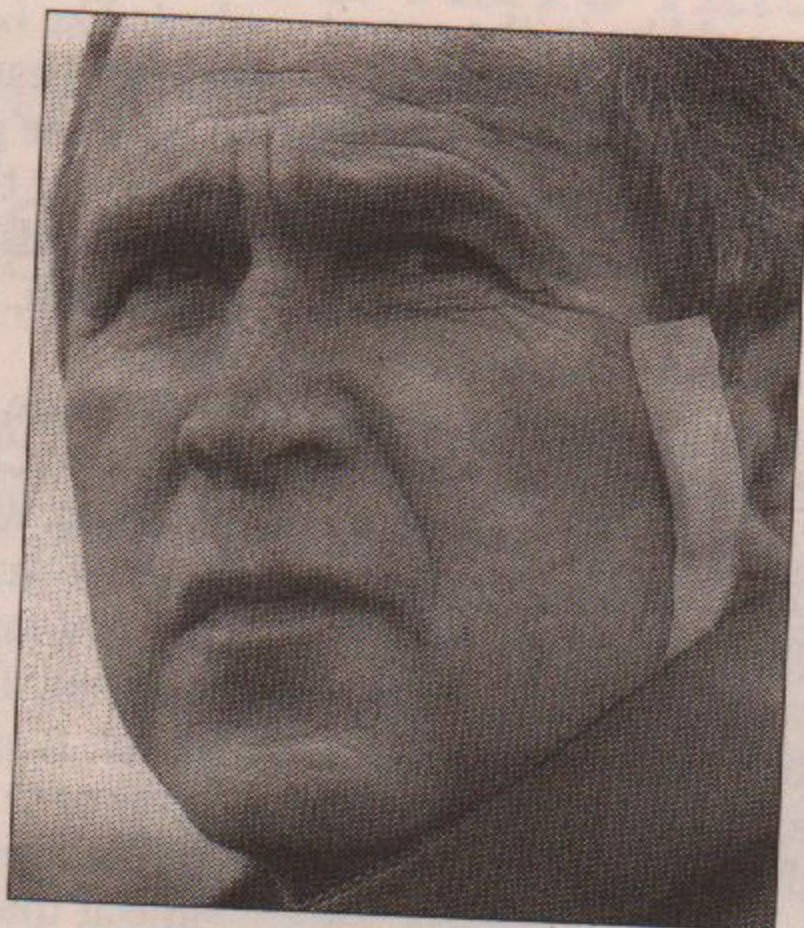
The so-called "sunshine state", with an electorate that has grown dramatically in the past 40 years and reflects many aspects of demographic change within the US, proved to be the ultimate battleground in the fight for the White House. The furor there has begun to strip bare the seamy underbelly of politics in the nation that delivers lectures on democracy to the rest of the world.

The focus on the confusion arising from the design of ballot papers tended to obscure far more serious charges of disenfranchisement. In Florida polling stations in some predominantly black areas seemingly "disappeared". There were widespread charges of heavy policing in largely black precincts.

There has been plenty to revive not so distant memories of the Jim Crow South when the vast majority of black people could not exercise the right to vote.

But the Clinton administration itself must bear the blame for depriving millions of black voters of the franchise through its vehement support for the "war on drugs". This is a thinly veiled offensive against African-American communities.

Across the US an estimated 13 per cent of African-American men have permanently lost the right to vote due to criminal convictions. Many of those have done time for possession of small quan-



tities of drugs.

In states like Texas and Florida the proportion of disenfranchised blacks rises to nearly a third. If Al Gore has to finally concede the presidency to Bush, the legally sanctioned exclusion of so many black voters will have proved a decisive, if widely ignored, factor in his ultimate defeat.

Florida had assumed such strategic importance because of its 25 votes in the 538-member electoral college, which actually chooses the president – as opposed to the 100 million who voted on 7 November.

For the first time since 1888 the verdict of the college may well be at odds with the outcome of the popular vote, which favoured Gore.

The college is an institution as old as the presidency itself and was devised to placate the southern states with large slave populations but comparatively few "free" white males.

The smaller states continue to exercise a disproportionate weight in the college. For example, the least populous state, Wyoming, has only 500,000 residents and three electoral votes, while California with a population of 31 mil-

lion receives just 54 votes in the college.

The Bush and Gore camps spent hundreds of millions of dollars in their attempt to get to the Oval office. The presidential campaign alone will account for some \$750 (£520) million in spending (see box).

The lavish expenditure, amounting to nearly \$4 for each potential voter, lured only 51 per cent of registered voters to the polls – an increase of only two percentage points over the 1996 presidential contest.

The widespread apathy and cynicism are hardly new, but were certainly fuelled by a contest between the sons of millionaires, whose daddies had bought them places at elite Ivy League universities and political careers.

Certainly, much of Ralph Nader's appeal, which far exceeded his eventual vote, reflected spontaneous agreement by millions in the electorate that "you can't spoil a system that is spoiled to the core" by the blatant corruption of campaign financing.

The disenfranchisement of black and poor people, the anti-democratic character of the electoral college and the spending power of the rich – as the protesters in Seattle a year ago chanted: "this is what democracy looks like".

Battles of the wealthy

It will certainly be a rich man's Congress, whatever the eventual outcome of the battle for the White House.

Contests for the US Senate and House of Representatives involved record expenditure on television advertising. All told an estimated \$4 billion went on federal and state election campaigns in 2000, a 50 per cent increase on 1996.

In the bitterly contested battle for a Senate seat from New York state, Hillary Clinton and her Republican rival, Rick Lazio, spent a combined total of nearly \$60 million on their campaigns. But the biggest single outlay per vote gained came from the war chest of Democrat (and Wall Street multi-millionaire) Jon Corzine. His campaign shelled out

\$37.15 a vote in winning a Senate race in New Jersey. Some \$60 million of this came from Corzine's personal fortune.

While millions poured into the coffers of both Republicans and Democrats from filthy rich individuals and major corporations, trade union contributions, not only money but time and human resources as well, played an increasingly significant role for the Democrats. Unions such as the Communication Workers of America, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and the Service Employees International Union ploughed millions in to the Gore and Democratic congressional campaigns.

There was a rich irony in the union bureaucracy rallying to the Gore cam-

paign, given that Bill Clinton has probably identified less with organised labour than any Democratic president in the twentieth century.

The leadership of the AFL-CIO may use fighting rhetoric that would never pass the lips of the TUC's John Monks, but that same bureaucracy has invested enormous sums in bolstering a Democratic Party that is, and always has been, a bosses' party pure and simple.

This money and time could and should have been used building a working class alternative to the two big bosses' parties in the US. And that is something that every militant should start demanding of the AFL-CIO leaders now – break from the bosses' parties, build a workers' party.

Nader fails to win workers' votes

RALPH NADER'S presidential candidacy was widely regarded as the most serious "left-wing" challenge to the Democratic/Republican duopoly in US politics since Henry Wallace stood for the presidency in 1948.

Earlier in the campaign some polls had suggested that Nader and the Green Party (he was its official candidate) would gain five per cent of the national vote – enough to ensure federal match funding at the 2004 presidential election and far greater media exposure.

In the event the Nader campaign fell well below that target, attracting less than 3 per cent of the total poll or slightly over 2.7 million votes. In states such as Oregon and Washington where polls had highlighted the threat posed by Nader to the Gore campaign, the Democratic Party's message that "a vote for Nader was a vote for Bush" (given the winner take all nature of the electoral college) clearly hit home and

cost Nader thousands of votes.

Nader's strongest performances came in Alaska, where he scooped up 10 per cent of the state's tiny electorate and in the six New England states – five of which went for Gore by clear margins. Nader gained some six per cent of the vote in Maine, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and seven per cent of the poll in sparsely populated Vermont.

In general these states are among the most progressive in the US on a range of social questions. All four New England states, but especially Massachusetts, have large numbers of university students among their registered electorates, along with substantial clusters of radical petit bourgeois voters.

None, however, records especially high levels of trade union membership, even by relatively modest US standards. In the more heavily unionised states of Illinois and Michigan, Gore emerged the undisputed victor, with Nader failing to

capture much more than two per cent of the vote in either state.

The Michigan result, in particular, reflected the extent to which the top reaches of the UAW union bureaucracy proved successful in mobilising their members' vote for Gore and so stifling the pro-Nader challenge mounted by elements in the union's New Directions movement.

The 2.7 million votes Nader chalked up were hardly trivial, especially compared to his minuscule showing in the 1996 election, but the available returns also show conclusively that the Nader campaign failed to make any significant inroads within the organised working class nationally.

There is still less evidence to show that Nader was at all effective in attracting African-American voters away from the Democratic Party. His vote here was negligible.

Thousands of trade unionists were

in Seattle at the World Trade Organisation meeting last year and fought the city's robocops to a standstill. This year has seen a further resurgence of a fighting spirit among US workers: in the Verizon telecoms dispute, the militant campaigns by Latino cleaning staff in California, the strike by bus drivers in Los Angeles and teachers' walk-outs in several cities this year. But this has not yet translated into large-scale support among trade unionists either for a workers' party or, indeed, a populist alternative to the Democrats led by Nader.

Above all, the recent election illustrates that breaking the mould of bourgeois politics in the US will demand an unambiguous class struggle programme that unites the interests of the working class as a whole with the interests of those most oppressed by US capitalism both domestically and globally. This was something the Nader campaign failed to offer.

American workers need a revolutionary programme

DISILLUSIONED LIBERALS, pro-choice advocates and African-American voters who were not disenfranchised flocked to Gore out of fear of a Bush administration. His governorship of Texas panicked them big time.

Texas under Bush records:

- the highest number of executions in the US, with 140 people facing lethal injection since Bush became governor in 1995
- the highest rates of child poverty of any of the 50 states
- the lowest per capita welfare spending
- a prison population nearing 150,000 – or more than twice than national average per head of population.

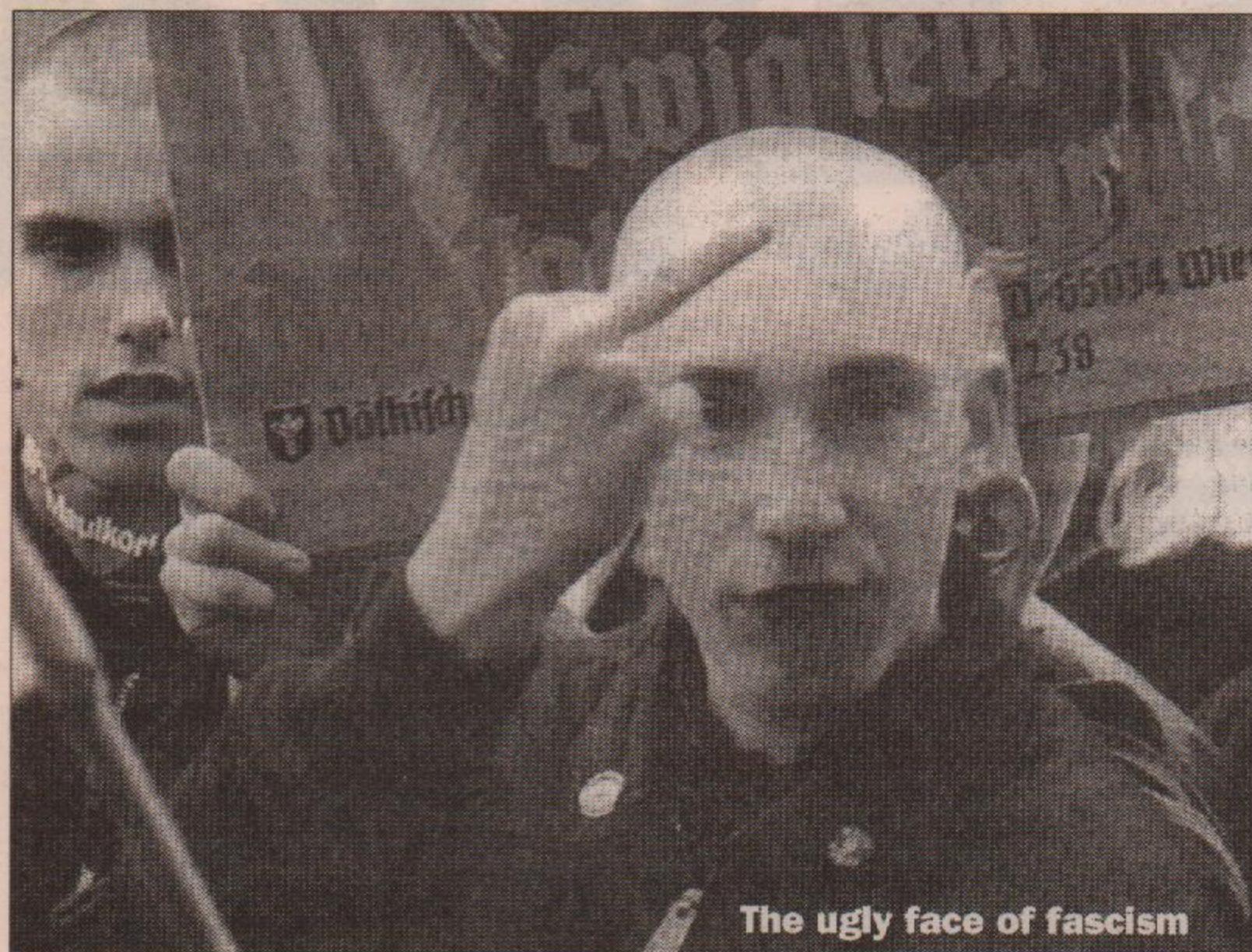
Once in the White House Bush has pledged that he will introduce an across-the-board tax cut. Bill Clinton did little to reverse the "counter-revolution" of the Reagan/Bush years, but the last few years did see some increase in direct taxation on the rich. Between 1989 and 1998 the wealthiest one per cent saw their taxes rise by 7.7 per cent, in contrast to a fall of more than 13 per cent in the previous decade.

Bush's aim is to reverse this modest shift. His "compassionate conservatism" means tax handouts for the rich and an intensification of the cuts in welfare provision that continued under Clinton and Gore.

The Republican programme talked of introducing vouchers for parents to buy places in private schools as a means of further undermining state education. Likewise, Bush threatens to dismantle the Social Security pensions system, encouraging young workers to opt out and gamble on the stock market instead.

Whoever emerges the winner, he will inherit from Clinton an economy that is slowing down after a long boom that has left many working class Americans behind. Working class and oppressed people in the USA cannot count on protection from inevitable attacks as a result of a Congress split down the middle.

The task remains for the US working class to find its own truly independent political voice that speaks from the experience of militant struggle for a revolutionary programme. Over the next four years that task can only acquire greater urgency.



The ugly face of fascism

No platform: Yes State bans: No

Germany's main political parties have voted to ban fascist organisations. But, as *Martin Suchanek* writes, Germany's bosses have stoked the flames of fascism with their racist and anti-working class policies

MORE THAN 100,000 marched through the streets of Berlin on 9 November following the call of all the parties represented in the Bundestag, the German parliament, to demonstrate for "Menschlichkeit und Toleranz" (humanity and tolerance).

On Friday 10 November, the federal chamber of the German parliament, the Bundesrat, voted to ban the fascist party NPD (National Demokratische Partei – National Democratic Party).

Later, the government voted in favour of such a ban too and the Bundestag, the first chamber of parliament, will do the same. However, it will take at least one or two more years until the German high court will finally decide on whether to ban the fascist party.

There is widespread support for banning the NPD amongst all parliamentary parties in Germany – from the ruling Social Democrat and Green coalition through the right-wing CSU to the left reformist PDS; from the trade union leadership to the bosses' associations.

Why this unity now? Why did the bourgeois parties – including all the bosses' associations – call for a demonstration against fascist and racist attacks? Why did the city council and large companies in Berlin, like Siemens and Alcatel, allow or even encourage the workers to attend the 9 November demonstration during work time?

They have certainly not become anti-fascists or anti-racists overnight. Quite the opposite.

Since the SPD/Green government took over in 1998, the minister of interior Otto Schily has tried to outflank the CDU/CSU from the right repeatedly. He has threatened to further undermine the rights of asylum seekers.

The reformist administration has deported refugees just as brutally as the Kohl government. It has repeatedly backed down in the face of racist campaigns mounted by the conservative par-

ties, as for example over dual citizenship.

The CDU/CSU constantly play the racist card in order to limit the gap opening up between them and the SPD in the polls and to soothe their petit bourgeois electoral base.

But the effects of capitalist unification and mass unemployment on the East have not only led the "respectable" bourgeois parties to play the racist card whenever it suits them. It has also stimulated the growth of the far right, of open fascist, national socialist organisations.

In the early 1990s after pogroms against asylum seekers in Rostock, Hoyerswerda and Solingen, the German state banned a number of fascist organisations. But the fascists regrouped and many of the Nazi leaders joined the Junge Nationaldemokraten (the NPD's youth organisation) and later the NPD, turning that rather old-fashioned organisation into a fighting fascist outfit.

This resulted in more aggressive tactics and a turn towards Strasserism. This means that the NPD combines its racist and anti-Semitic agitation with "anti-capitalist" rhetoric, directed against "speculative" banking, "Jewish" capital. It is an ideology named after one of the leaders of the old Nazi party, Strasser, who was purged when Hitler gained power.

The NPD has around 6,000 members and has close links to racist skinhead organisations and the so-called "Freie Kameradschaften". Its members are certainly involved in street terror. Anti-semitic attacks on synagogues or cemeteries have increased. In Düsseldorf Jewish school students were killed in a bomb attack some months ago.

Over the last couple of years, the fascists have gained a real base, particularly in East Germany and among some sections of the youth. While there is a militant anti-fascist response among many youth, which has limited the fascists' rise in the large towns, there are

many small towns and villages where the far right has become the dominant force among young people. In a number of cases trade union officials have also been attacked or their lives threatened.

But unlike the 1930s, fascism is not considered by the bosses and political establishment as a short-term option to form a government. Quite the reverse.

The ruling class does not want the violent images of far right organisations raising doubts about the modern image of German imperialism and endangering the economic prospects of German multinationals. This also explains why many multinational companies encouraged "their" workers to attend the demonstration.

For these bosses and top politicians the demonstration last month was not primarily a demonstration against racism and fascism – it was a demonstration of the "democratic" credentials of the German imperialist state, a public protest which even had the blessing of the German president.

The very same politicians who are responsible for cutting social welfare, for mounting attacks on workers' rights, and for reducing the rights of immigrants and asylum seekers dare to present themselves as the champions of the struggle against fascism.

But bourgeois anti-fascism is a myth. When the bourgeois state threatens to ban the NPD it is to serve the international political interests of the German state and corporations. It is also designed to prevent the youth, the immigrants and the working class from taking the struggle against fascism into their own hands. In other words, to prevent fascism being smashed by the working class.

During the last months we have not only seen more and more NPD demonstrations. We have seen many counter-demonstrations with thousands and thousands of young people, joined increasingly by trade unionists. In

some cases, it was possible to prevent the fascists from marching. In all these cases the police and the government defended the NPD and attacked the anti-fascists.

As Trotsky said in the 1930s, even if the bourgeois state banned the fascists, it would only do so to deceive the masses about the character of the state and fascism, and to prevent them from organising themselves against the enemy.

This is the purpose of Schroeder's "Aufstand der Anständigen" ("uprising

of the honourable"). Through the trade union officials and the SPD and PDS leaders he tries to tie the organised workers' movement to official state sponsored anti-fascism, to a block with the open bosses' parties and the capitalists' organisations.

Meanwhile, the attacks on immigrants and leftists, and the anti-semitic rampage continues. The police will not prevent such attacks, nor will the state destroy fascism by banning the NPD.

How to smash the fascists

ALL WORKERS' organisations need to break their ties with the open bosses' organisations and the state. Fascism and racism are part of the bosses' system and must be defeated as part of the workers' struggle against that system.

Despite the right-wing politics of the leaderships of the large workers' organisations, we must continue to put demands on the rank and file and on the leaders of these organisations if we are to gather together the large numbers needed to stop the fascists.

Far left and anti-capitalist youth organisations like Antifaschistische Aktion have done a lot to mobilise against the NPD. But on their own, the militant anti-fascists are not strong enough to defeat the far right.

They need links with the workers' movement and that means fighting against class collaboration inside the workers' movement. It also means linking the struggle against the NPD with the struggle against racism.

No alliances with the bosses' parties and associations or the police in the name of anti-fascism!

For a working class united front against fascism and racism! For mass mobilisations by the unions, immigrant organisations, youth and workers' parties in order to smash the NPD, the JN and all other Nazi organisations!

For organised self-defence to protect asylum hostels, immigrant communities and synagogues against fascist and racist attacks! No platform, no democratic rights to organise and assemble for the fascists!

No to all deportations! No restrictions on asylum rights! Open the borders! Scrap all immigration laws! For the right to vote and automatic right to citizenship for all who live in Germany! Remove all bans (including the ban on the PKK and Turkish left-wing organisations) and restrictions of political activity by immigrants and refugees in Germany!

Ethnic divisions threaten to boil over

FIRST THERE was Serbia, where the masses ousted Milosevic following his obvious defeat at the polls. Then in the Cote d'Ivoire mass demonstrations erupted after the 22 October elections, forcing out the dictator General Robert Guei. People power is catching on!

Unfortunately, just as with Serbia, the limits of spontaneous mass revolt rapidly became clear, only with far more tragic consequences.

No sooner than Guei was off the scene, than the two main opposition parties began a vicious struggle for power. They dragged behind them their supporters in what very soon became an ethnic conflict.

It threatens to throw the country into a civil war between the Muslim Dioula

community in the North, where Alasane Ouattara of the RPR gets his support, and the mainly Christian community in the South, which provides much of the support of Laurent Gbagbo's FPI.

Gbagbo claimed victory at the October election. However, his opponents point to the undemocratic nature of the presidential election – only five potential candidates out of 19 were allowed to stand.

For the most part, candidates, including Ouattara, were excluded due to new laws which put into question their nationality.

Stirring up ethnic divisions has been the response of political and military leaders in the Cote d'Ivoire for some time. Henri Bedié, (leader of the PDCI which

had ruled the country for thirty years) who was ousted by General Guei a year ago, was the first to raise questions about the nationality of Ouattara, his most important political rival.

By singling out both communities who are not considered "100 per cent Ivorien" and the large number of immigrants (mainly from neighbouring Burkina Faso) who have provided cheap labour for many years in the Cote d'Ivoire, Bedié hoped to ride the storm menacing his regime.

The Cote d'Ivoire has felt the full effects of globalisation. In the 1990s, France, under pressure from the IMF and the World Bank, devalued the Franc CFA, the main currency used throughout francophone Africa.

Then cocoa and coffee prices, pre-

viously protected by the state, were set free and these commodities became subject to the fluctuations of the world market, which had devastating effects on millions of peasant farmers – and on the economy as a whole.

Non-payment of wages to public servants sparked strikes across the country in 1999. It was against this background of economic crisis, that the ethnic dimension became so explosive.

With the tightening of the labour market, immigrants could easily be used as scapegoats to deflect attention from the real causes of increasing economic hardship.

The FPI, despite its socialist pretensions, has gone along with the increasingly xenophobic atmosphere in

the Cote d'Ivoire. The results of which we see today – the burning of mosques and churches in Abidjan and the cold blooded murder of young men.

Ethnic diversity does not itself condemn the Cote d'Ivoire to strife – over 60 ethnic groups have lived together since independence without becoming embroiled in ethnic conflict. Workers in the Cote d'Ivoire have to build on this and point the way to a political alternative.

This means breaking from the FPI and building a new party which can unify all the exploited and oppressed, regardless of their religion or ethnic origin and with a programme capable of solving the burning democratic and economic issues which are paralysing the country.

Unionists sidelined

THE NORTHERN IRELAND "peace process" is like a British train: hard to keep on track, with the occasional spectacular derailment leading to havoc with the timetable.

The British government may be driving the train but the Unionists, in charge of the signalling, use their power to slow it down, switch tracks or even put it into the sidings for months on end.

Sinn Fein are challenging the Unionists in the courts for seeking to prevent Sinn Fein Assembly members taking part in agreed cross-border institutions. David Trimble, the First Minister, faced another leadership challenge from those in his own party opposed to the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. These "hardliners" are demanding complete IRA disarmament (not just putting arms "verifiably out of use") or Sinn Fein's expulsion from the Executive of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Sinn Fein and the SDLP have threatened to boycott anything to do with the now re-branded RUC because of the lack of substantial reforms.

It was not supposed to be like this. When the Good Friday Agreement was put to a referendum in May 1998 most of the main parties, together with the British, Irish and US governments, campaigned hard for a yes vote. It was to be a new era of co-operation, power-sharing and peace.

A very few, this paper among them, urged rejection. The agreement was an unstable truce with little hope of justice for the anti-unionist minority (now up to 40 per cent) who had suffered systematic discrimination, first at the hands of a Unionist dominated Orange state between the partition of Ireland in 1921 and direct rule in 1972, and thereafter under Westminster.

The agreement actually legitimised the partition of Ireland, a profoundly anti-democratic act sought by the minority of unionists in Ireland after the First World War and acceded to by the British government. It resulted in a small six-county statelet with artificially drawn

boundaries that had one purpose alone; namely to ensure a sizeable majority of non-nationalists in the new entity.

From there on in the minority were treated as "disloyal" and culturally inferior, fair game for being politically excluded, denied civil rights and discriminated against in the allocation of jobs and housing. Yet the referendum in 1998 did not allow for voters to reject partition and was a negation of the right of the people of Ireland to self-determination.

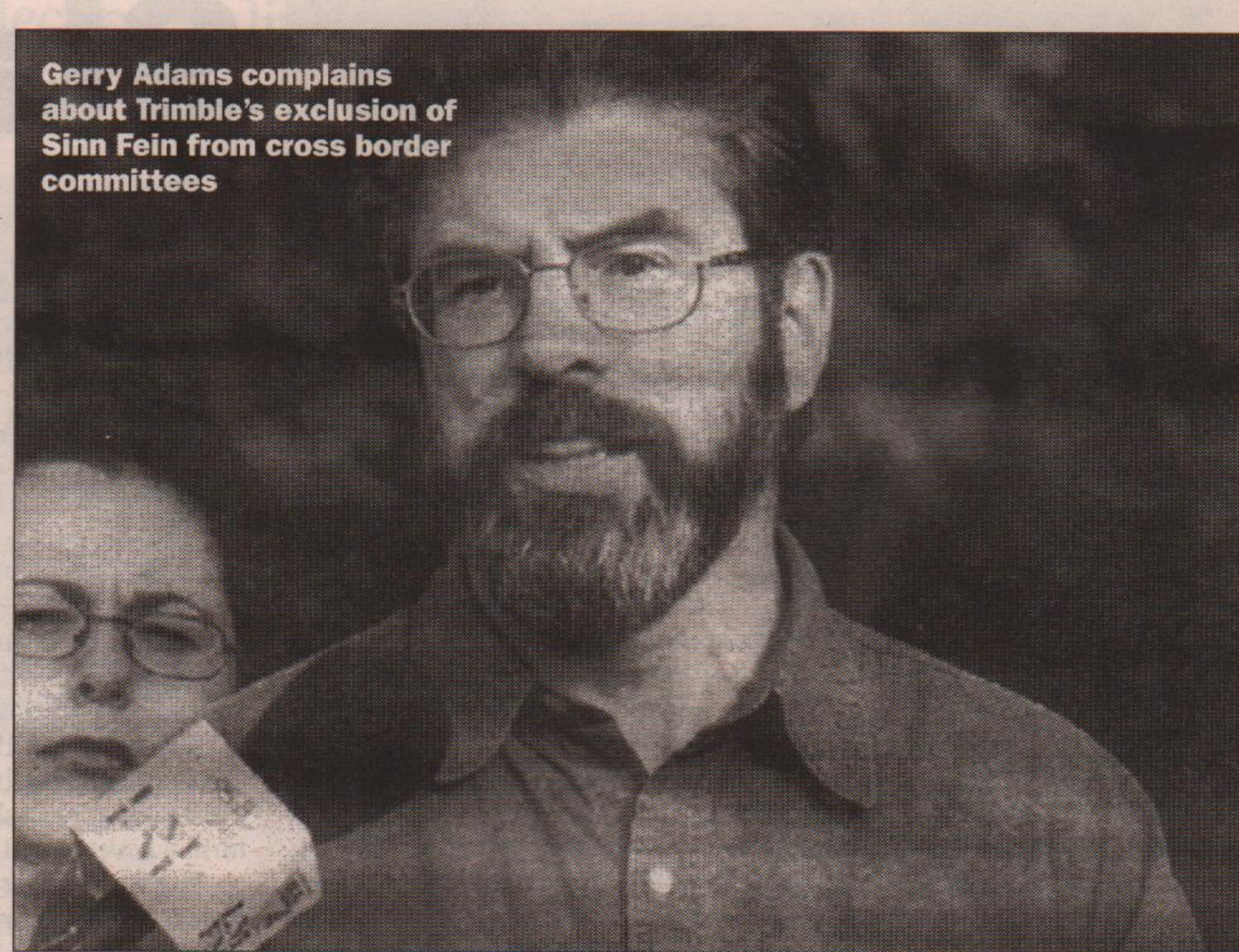
As such the agreement did not put an end to sectarianism in Northern Ireland; it institutionalised it. Members of the 108-seat assembly were elected on a confessional basis, and the voting system and distribution of ministerial posts was done according to which religious "identity" you signed up to.

The very confessional nature of the assembly inevitably meant that the built-in Unionist majority would be maintained. No matter who you voted for there would always be a Unionist first minister and Unionist majority. That was the basis on which the Northern Ireland statelet was created back in 1921 and the Good Friday agreement did nothing to challenge it. It preserved the Unionist veto over progressive change.

Moreover, the actual powers of the assembly to do anything far-reaching were severely curtailed, even compared to its Scottish and Welsh counterparts.

Despite the big majority for the agreement in the referendum in the whole of Ireland, closer inspection revealed that a substantial minority (around 40%) of the unionist population rejected the deal. This was a rather large tail that was set to wag the Unionist dog.

Those within Unionism and the Loyalist paramilitaries who voted for the agreement did so for a variety of reasons. Working class supporters of the UDA and UVF felt bitter and betrayed by



Gerry Adams complains about Trimble's exclusion of Sinn Fein from cross border committees

their middle class leaders and felt that if the IRA was to disarm and renounce a violent struggle for a united Ireland then many of them would be prepared to work with working class Catholics in an Ireland that remained institutionally attached to the UK.

Middle class and bourgeois Unionists wanted stability, new investment and a more pragmatic approach to relations with the Irish Republic within the European Union.

But many of the 100,000 or so supporters of Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and some of Trimble's own base within the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) voted no for one simple rea-

son: they hate Catholics and their culture and religion; they want to preserve the system of privilege and patronage that allows them to enjoy a better life than their Catholic neighbours.

They are the hordes that parade up and down Catholic streets in bowler hats and Orange sashes; they are the mob at Drumcree. They are the ones who cannot abide the assembly and the seats reserved there for Sinn Fein. Their leaders only attend the assembly in order to wreck its work and spout sectarian rants.

This "rejectionist" camp within Loyalism and Unionism has become more and more vocal, organised and confident over the last two and a

Reject the Police Bill

THE POLICE (Northern Ireland) Bill becomes law this month. After a year long commission looking at the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) under Tory Chris Patten, the gutting of his 175 recommendations and a tug-of-war in the House of Lords over various clauses, we are still left with a Unionist dominated police and a command structure and operational procedures that are unaccountable and intrinsically discriminatory against anti-unionists.

The history of the Bill, first published in March this year, is one of concession after concession by the British government to the reactionary pleadings of the Unionists. Most of the publicity has been focused on the fight over the name of the "new" force and the fate of flags and symbols. The Unionists were prepared to accept only one type of change: token. Sinn Fein and the SDLP, on the other hand, insisted upon a break with all references to the British state and crown in line with Patten's recommendations.

Peter Mandelson, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, has reserved the final decision on these issues to himself, in consultation with the new policing board, which itself is likely to have an in-built Unionist bias.

But this hullabaloo masked the real Unionist objective in the guerrilla war over the RUC's fate: the composition, command structure and operational control over the police force.

It is central to republicanism's perspective of reform of the sectarian statelet that the RUC be completely transformed. The problem is real enough. The RUC has 12,500 officers, less than a thousand of them catholic. This is three times the "normal" size for a police force given the population. The bulk of this brutal apparatus exists for the primary purpose of repressing the resis-

tance and protests of the anti-unionists.

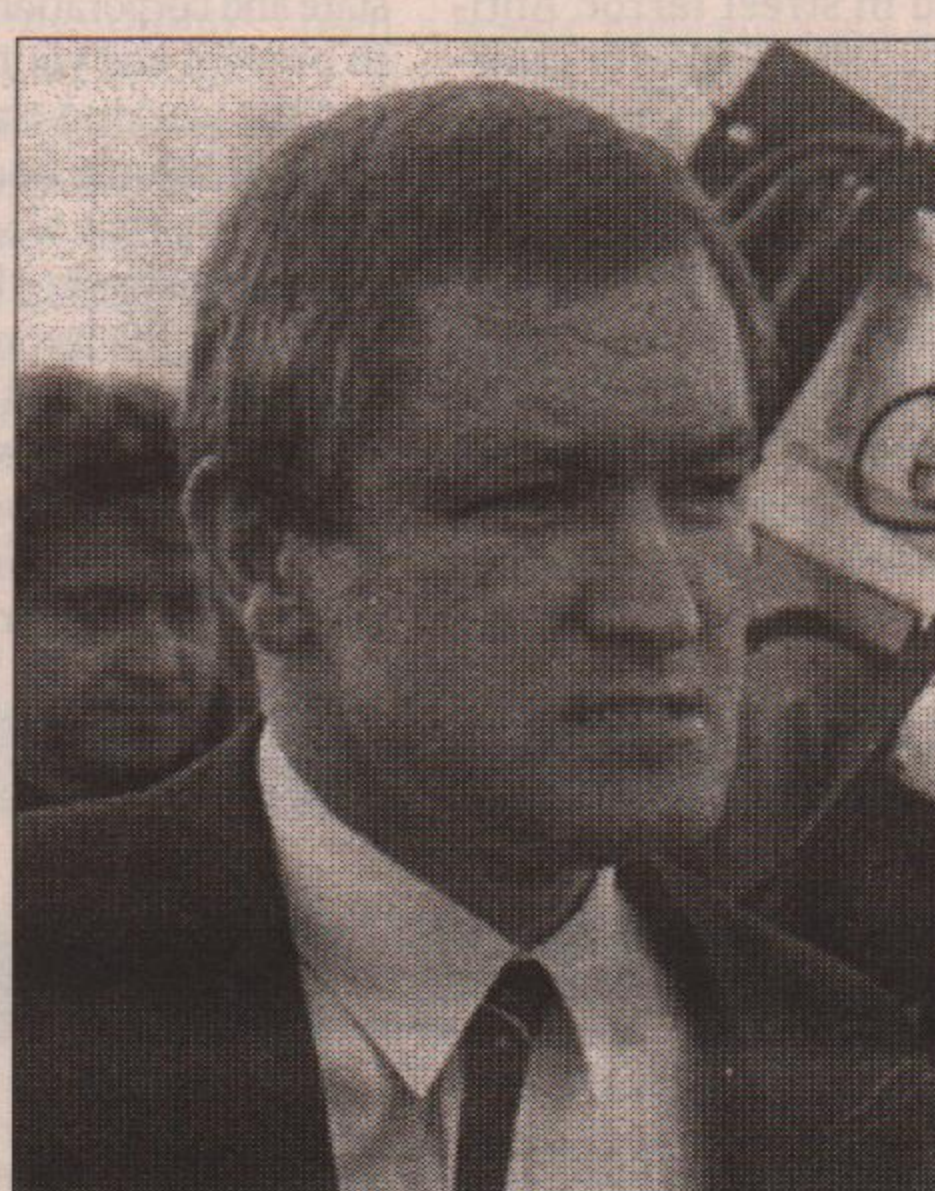
It has the worst human rights record of any police force within the EU, and was castigated last year by the UN for systematic intimidation of the lawyers of anti-unionist detainees. It colluded with Loyalist death squads in the murder of lawyers Pat Finucane and Rosemary Nelson for their role in defending republicans.

Every day this heavily armed loyalist force harasses catholic youth on the estates, hurling racist abuse at catholic residents. Meanwhile, the RUC investigates complaints against itself and unsurprisingly finds itself blameless.

Of over 2,500 complaints in 1996, only 10 led to any disciplinary proceedings and only one resulted in a guilty verdict. In April 1998, an internal RUC report revealed that, of the 5 per cent of catholics in the RUC one-third complained of discrimination in promotion and operational duties as well as regular sectarian abuse.

When they were revolutionary nationalists Sinn Fein used to insist that the RUC was completely unacceptable to anti-unionists and called for its disbandment. But now they argue that it can be made accountable to the catholic community it has routinely repressed. During the Patten commission they called for a 40 per cent cut in its size, its disarming in routine operations, immediate reform of the command structure/control over policing strategy and some kind of community policing system, which would allow catholic officers to patrol catholic estates.

The new law rejects the underlying basis of Patten report which was not just about reforms to the RUC but about changing the nature of policing and making it more accountable to the community it supposedly serves. The new law throws that idea out.



Pat Finucane: victim of collusion between the RUC and Loyalist killers

The police board has watered down powers of scrutiny over the chief constable. The Unionists insisted on a general clause which states: "if it appears" to the chief constable that any report "would, or would be likely to, prejudice the prevention or detection of crime or apprehension or prosecution of offenders" s/he may refer it to the secretary of state who may overrule the board. The law also allows the secretary of state to quash an independent inquiry initiated by the board on the same grounds.

It outlines a cut in the force's size (around 4,500 loyalists will get big pay-offs to leave over

the next 10 years). Recruitment will be on a 50:50 basis in an attempt to overcome catholic alienation. But even here this policy will lapse in three years unless renewed by the British.

Other reforms have been neutered. The Patten report recommended that the actual process of recruitment should be handed to an outside agency while the new law puts the chief constable in control of the agency. As a result of Unionist pressure only new officers will be asked to swear an oath upholding human rights and to perform their duties with "fairness" and "impartiality". Existing officers have no such obligations!

The new "Police Service of Northern Ireland" is just the RUC with a minor makeover. Mitchell McLaughlin of Sinn Fein has said: "I think Sinn Fein will be finding it impossible to recommend that nationalists should join this police service or give any allegiance or authority to it."

The SDLP have refused to date to commit to taking part in a new 19-member Police Board. Even Bernie Ahearn, the Irish PM, has said he will not call on catholics to join the "new" force.

The new RUC will remain as the old; accountable only to British state in the pursuit of repression against those who fight for a united Ireland and against sectarian discrimination. In the first place it will target those on the republican side who reject the Good Friday Agreement.

Sinn Fein must not be allowed to be sucked in to taking responsibility for this force within the anti-unionist community. The new RUC must be disbanded, the anti-unionist community dissuaded from joining up, persuaded to organise their own defence against the state, the Loyalist gangs and, indeed, any anti-social elements within their own community.

ne republicans

half years. They have found in Jeffrey Donaldson inside the UUP a leader who will articulate many of their demands and press them on David Trimble. Under this pressure he in turn demands more and more concessions from the British government over everything from disarming the IRA to RUC reform. All of it leads in the same direction: preserve as much of the old power structure as possible while stripping the anti-unionists of all means of non-constitutional resistance.

The upshot of this is that most anti-unionists have seen little in the way of real change. To be sure Sinn Fein has got its nose in the trough of the assembly, been awarded some ministerial posts and treated like statesman and women at meetings with the Irish government when they gather to deliberate on... food hygiene.

And naturally a sharp decline in bombings and assassinations is welcome as are fewer troops and watchtowers on the streets. But real and lasting social justice?

Sinn Fein's only strategy is to profess loyalty to the "peace process", to "honour" the letter of the Good Friday Agreement, to use the courts to defend their mandate and seek concessions from the IRA wherever possible to ensure that Trimble does not fall to an anti-agreement challenge from within his party.

This gambit is bankrupt and is why the Real IRA is growing and has become more effective. That is why Sinn Fein has become more intolerant and repressive of anti-agreement forces within the nationalist community. It is trapped by its own strategy of collaborating with the British and the Unionists on the basis of rejecting its historic, and just, goal of fighting for a united Ireland.

The anti-unionist movement needs a different strategy altogether. A mass movement on the streets is needed to challenge the Good Friday

Agreement and the Northern Ireland Assembly from a revolutionary democratic and socialist standpoint. A return to a guerrilla campaign of bombings in the six counties or in Britain would be counter-productive and useless. It would leave the anti-unionist masses on the sidelines and could only lead to the same dead end that Sinn Fein is in now. It cannot defeat the British state and it cannot win protestant workers away from the Unionist leaders.

Anti-unionists must build a mass movement committed to ending, once and for all, British rule and partition. Against sectarian and state violence such a movement will need armed defence – but the defenders will be based on and accountable to the mass movement, not a guerrilla elite accountable only to itself. But the failure of republicanism to deliver a united Ireland holds a vital lesson for anti-unionists. Nationalism is not the answer. Socialism is.

The fight for a socialist united Ireland, a 32 County workers' republic, must be the new goal set by the anti-unionist masses. Not only will such a goal win them support from the working class of the south, it can also win over at least sections of the protestant working class.

By fighting for common action with protestant workers against job losses, school and hospital closures, and for a secular and non-sectarian education system, those workers can be won to a class struggle perspective. They can be won to a fight to end all open and covert forms of patronage and privilege and the allocation of resources based on a sectarian head count. They must join with anti-unionists in a struggle to break up the RUC, bring down the assembly and replace it with an all-Ireland Constituent Assembly. This way a working class, anti-imperialist, democratic and socialist alternative can be built that promises a future with justice as well as peace.

Employment: same old story of discrimination

THE GOOD FRIDAY Agreement of April 1998 was justified by the republican movement on the grounds that it offered the possibility of progressively reforming the sectarian state of Northern Ireland. Political pressure from the US and Ireland on Britain, a new power-sharing administration in the six counties and EU funds could lead to a reduction and eventual elimination of more than seventy years of discrimination against the anti-unionist catholic minority.

What has been the record in the first two years after the agreement?

The pattern of employment in Northern Ireland has been notoriously sectarian. Catholics were twice as likely to be unemployed or stuck in low wage jobs. New private investment tended to be concentrated in protestant areas.

The British government set up in the 1990s two monitoring schemes that were supposed to reverse the pattern of discrimination. These were the Policy Appraisal and Fair Treatment (PAFT), whose function was to "equality proof" policy making in all areas of life in Northern Ireland; and Targeting Social Need (TSN), which was meant to skew public resources towards marginalised areas.

Under Labour, PAFT was given legislative backing but its purpose was diluted as "equality" was now just one consideration among others in arriving at policy. Positive action to compensate for past discrimination against catholics was thus rendered unlikely. TSN meanwhile was given no targets to achieve or timetable to work to.

The Industrial Development Board (IDB) supposedly exists to promote equality of opportunity between catholics and protestants in job creation. It has few powers but monitors companies and promotes best practice. Yet even here it has said, "the recruitment of employees is a matter for individual client companies". It specifically does not monitor the religion or gender of staff!

New Labour's *Strategy 2010* document, which sets out plans for economic development for Northern Ireland, specifically focuses on private sector development and does not even acknowledge the facts of long-term unemployment in the catholic community. When the government's Comprehensive Spending Review was announced in 1998 it led to cutbacks in the TSN and PAFT programmes.

The outcome of the negotiations over the powers and objectives of the Northern Ireland Assembly in the field of equality revealed the same pattern. Even if it had the political will the resources of the assembly to tackle inequality are limited by the fact that it cannot raise taxes.

The most that the Unionists and British would concede to was an aspiration to "equality of opportunity" and not "equality of outcome".

Once the assembly was set up, the proposal to set up a ministry to deal with it was abandoned and the issue became the responsibility of the First Minister – Unionist leader David Trimble. It did not help that his chief economic adviser spent the last ten years "proving" that systematic anti-Catholic discrimination did not exist.

The result of all this is that social inequality increased during the first eighteen months of the Good Friday Agreement. The predominantly catholic area of West Belfast has one-tenth of the unemployed in the region, yet it only has 3 per cent of IDB sponsored jobs. In West Belfast, which is 80 per cent catholic, less than 50 per cent of government backed industrial jobs have gone to catholics. In Belfast as a whole only 25 per cent of jobs go to catholics. There are now fewer industrial jobs in West Belfast than before the 1994 IRA ceasefire and the majority of such jobs are in Loyalist areas. In the first year after the Good Friday Agreement while unemployment in Northern Ireland fell by around 5 per cent, in West Belfast it only declined by 1 per cent.

The truth about Bloody Sunday

ADRIAN THORPE, now Britain's ambassador to Mexico, was an official at the Foreign Office in 1972. At the time of the Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry he wrote:

"I have always been in favour of encouraging the no-go areas to rot from within. There is no reason why we should not encourage the breakdown of essential services and the spread of disease etc."

This was not an aberration. It summarises perfectly the British state's attitude towards the anti-unionist resistance in Northern Ireland – break it by any means necessary. It was an attitude that led directly to the slaughter of Bloody Sunday, the day in January 1972 when 13 unarmed catholic civilians were shot dead by the 1st battalion of the Parachute Regiment; a fourteenth died later of his wounds.

Next month it will be three years since Tony Blair announced a fresh inquiry into Bloody Sunday. He said the inquiry was justified because much new material had come to light, including new eyewitness accounts, new interpretations of ballistic material and new medical evidence. He said that an inquiry was needed to get at the truth of what happened that day.

But the truth of Bloody Sunday is well known. An unarmed civil rights demonstration in Derry was blocked by the army. Minor rioting broke out. The army ordered the 1st battalion of the Parachute Regiment, to "deal" with this rioting. The Parachute Regiment was an offensive unit brought in to recapture the Bogside, a barricaded nationalist stronghold. The existence of "Free Derry" was an affront to the British Army's high command, to the British state and to the Unionists. They wanted to destroy it whatever the human cost.

The minor rioting was the army's pretext. Terror was their method.

The inquiry was forced upon Blair as part of the price demanded by Sinn Fein and the Irish government for their involvement in the peace process. A sustained campaign by relatives of the 14 people who were murdered had long ago gathered the "new" information.

The new information could have been revealed in 1972 if the original inquiry by Lord Widgery had not been such a blatant cover-up. Widgery concluded that the troops had been fired on. His evidence was the testimony of 40 troops. Of the 538 civilian testimonies offered to the inquiry he only admitted 15. He refused to take forensic evidence.

The Irish government published a dossier based on the families' work in 1997, exposing the Widgery report for the lying pro-British propaganda that it was, and proving beyond doubt that the troops were not fired on first, that the 27 minutes of carnage that they indulged in was a deliberate act of terror against the nationalist community and that the lives of 14 innocent civilians were designed to regain the initiative in the British state's war against the nationalists.

The inquiry has been working behind the scenes far more than sitting in public since it began its work. Since the inquiry started 610 soldiers, 729 civilians, 30 journalists and photographers, 20 government officials/politicians/senior military staff and 53 RUC police officers have been interviewed.

Sixty four volumes of documents have been collated as well as 5,000 photographs (some of them duplicates). It has also amassed 46 videotapes and 23 audio-tapes.

The Bloody Sunday inquiry has been in open session once more in the Guildhall, "Londonderry", since 13 November. It adjourned in June after opening presentations that lasted nine weeks. The first witnesses will give evidence in public this month.

The presentations by Counsels Clarke and Harvey on the basis of the interviews has made it abundantly clear that the Parachute Regiment were not acting "out of control" or under provocation. Testimonies of soldiers and officers, memos of the regimental staff make this clear. In the words of one private, his officer told him and others the day before the massacre: "Let's teach these buggers a lesson – we want some kills tomorrow."

It was revealed this month that the Royal Ulster Constabulary investigation into Bloody Sunday 28 years ago concluded that the first of the 13 civilians killed in the shooting was murdered by the army.

The soldier then was "not identifiable."

Today after a long court wrangle the soldiers responsible have been given anonymity. It's unlikely that prosecutions will follow. Even if they did, the real nature of British "justice" has already proven many times – most recently with the release of Private Clegg for the cold blooded murder of a young girl joyrider. Anyone shown to have blood on their hands will get off completely or with a minor sentence.

Whatever the new inquiry concludes, we must use its existence to raise these facts, especially among British people who have swallowed so many lies about the Irish war.

And we must use it to fight for justice for the families of the victims of Bloody Sunday and for justice for the entire nationalist population who have suffered so much terror at the hands of the British and whose heroic resistance has been for so long deceitfully represented as criminal "terrorism".

NICE, 6-7 DECEMBER 2000

Shutdown the euro summit

The European Union intends to make the Nice summit another milestone on the road to a federal Europe. But we say make it a focus for anti-capitalist resistance



THE NICE SUMMIT of the European Union is another milestone along the road of a federal Europe under the rule of the multinationals. But it is also another date on the post-Seattle world tour of anti-capitalist resistance. For the European bosses it is Maastricht, Amsterdam, Cologne; for the oppressed and exploited it is Seattle, Washington and Prague.

Now the two forces meet as deadly enemies in Nice. Their job: to take federalism a stage further in the service of corporate profits. Our task: to surround the summit and by direct action prevent them achieving their stated goals:

- To revise article 133 of the Amsterdam Treaty. The launch of the euro unleashed a tidal wave of mergers and rationalisations in finance, commerce and industry. But still Europe lags behind the USA in most industries.

The US corporations are supported by a federal state and one that enjoys greater power over its working class. At Nice, Europe's bosses aim to revise article 133 of the Amsterdam Treaty so that the Commission has more power to push through binding anti working class measures on member states. There is a proposal on the table from the French presidency of the EU which would make the European Commission responsible for setting the levels and terms of unemployment benefits for all member states.

- The adoption of a timetable up to 2004 to allow six East European states to join the EU. The aim is clear for the existing members: profit from the new markets while denying the applicant countries the same social rights as the existing ones. In order that the "broader Europe" is not paralysed by national disagreements the EU states will have to surrender more national sovereignty, through qualified majority voting and give more power to the Commission.

- The adoption of a proposed Charter of Fundamental Rights as a sop to disguise the fact that the summit will represent a real shift of power away from the workers of Europe. The draft

embodies "existing rights only" and does not increase the rights of EU citizens. Some of the rights already established in the weak European Social chapter have not been included in the EU Charter because this has not yet been ratified by a number of member states.

So even the feeble call in the Social chapter for "fair remuneration" is not included. There is no right to a minimum income. Even those included – such as the "right to collective bargaining and industrial action" or the "right to information and consultation" – are rendered useless by the clause that they will have effect only "in accordance with Community law and national laws and practices".

Britain's anti-union laws are therefore safe against challenge in European courts and British bosses will continue to trample on rights established in countries like Germany. The conference wants to put in place qualified majority voting on social questions.

THOUSANDS

Tens of thousands will be in Nice to stop them. Nice is the latest opportunity to turn the anti-capitalist movement towards the working class and make the workers' movement anti-capitalist once again. As Europe's bosses try to compete with North America and Asia, the unemployed, the socially excluded, the racially and nationally oppressed will all face attempts to worsen their already intolerable conditions. The increase in the size and strength of the multinational corporations will lead to attacks on workers' wage levels, health and social welfare provision, on the education of young people and the democratic rights of immigrants and those seeking asylum in Europe. For the former "Communist" countries of Eastern Europe and the countries of the "third world" it will mean intensified exploitation. Does this mean that the answer for Europe's workers is to force "their own" national states to quit the EU as small capitalist states or to fight

to break it up? No! Going back to small capitalist and imperialist states is no solution. Such "independent" states would have to adopt even more savage austerity policies than the EU, even more ruthless downsizing and rationalisation, to compete on the world market with big states like the USA and the mega-corporations. The only realistic alternative facing the workers, youth and immigrant communities is to seize control of the vast resources and productive forces of the continent which their labour has created. The answer lies not in going back but forward.

To do this we have to go beyond our nationally divided and bureaucratic labour movements. A sharp either/or faces us in the coming years. Either an intensification of exploitation and oppression or increasing unity in a militant continent-wide class struggle. Defeat is inevitable if we cling to the old strategy of the Communist Parties or the left-wing of the Social Democratic, Socialist and Labour Parties. National labour movements which pledge themselves to unity with their own "patriotic bosses" against the EU, which sever their links with their European brothers and sisters, will be politically and organisationally crippled and disarmed. Nor can we adopt the "pro-European" imperialist stance of Blair, Schroeder, Jospin or D'Alema. Workers must not sacrifice their lives to the dictates of the European Central Bank, to the united stock exchanges of Frankfurt, Paris and the City of London.

BUILD

We must not side with a new European policy designed to gain a bigger slice of the economies of the "developing countries". We must not support a European "defence force" which will bomb and terrorise states that resist subordination. We, the workers of Europe, must overtake and outstrip our bosses' unification drive. We must build a new Europe wide workers' movement independent of all fractions of the capitalist class. This new movement can be an indis-

soluble link in a even wider, truly global chain. We can do it because we have done it before.

In the 1860s, the 1890s and the 1920s, European workers launched powerful international organisations which reached out to workers on all the other continents. If the globalisation of capital is a threat then the globalisation of labour is the answer to it. The national union federations must be combined into a European trade union movement. The millions of unorganised workers must be recruited to it. Every workplace must elect its council of elected and recallable delegates. Youth, women, immigrants must likewise organise democratic mass movements to fight for their rights.

Only by concerted action across Europe can the new mega-corporations be prevented from slashing wages and working conditions, weakening or abolishing trade union rights and workplace organisation. Only by Europe-wide action can the EU leaders' plans to erode social welfare provision be defeated. Only by common action between the workers of Western and Eastern Europe can the bosses be stopped from undercutting wages and social gains in the West and restoring a brutal low wage, dependent capitalism in the East. Only by practical aid to the workers of Russia and East Europe helping them to establish powerful unions, workplace organisations and political parties, can European workers undercut the plans of the multinationals to repeatedly close and move factories to the locations of highest exploitation and lowest trade union and democratic rights.

But our goal must be more than a treadmill of defensive struggles. It must be a total alternative to capitalism. On the European continent there exist the accumulated productive forces, the scientific and technological innovations, the human skills that can lay the basis of a planned economy in which working people can end exploitation and the chaos of the market: a Socialist United States of Europe.

Challenge the rule of global capitalism

THE EUROPEAN working class must fight for measures which expose and challenge the failure of a system based on the ownership by the capitalist class; which mobilise and prepare the working class to take over control of the economy and to seize state power in a European socialist revolution.

Such a programme of measures must start from the major needs and struggles facing workers today. It must unite workers right across the continent in a common struggle and orient them both towards the expropriation of the wealth of the billionaire parasites and the multinational corporations and to the destruction of the apparatus of repression which guards their plunder.

■ Millions of unemployed in Europe want to work in socially useful employment. Drastically cut the long hours, the unhealthy and stressful condition of the employed workforce. Divide the work available between all those able to do it.

■ A maximum 35 hour working week now, right across Europe, but without any loss of pay, speed ups or flexibilisation. If employers respond by threatening closure or redundancies they must be nationalised with no compensation and workers' control instituted as step towards a training ground for a democratically planned economy.

■ For a guaranteed European minimum wage of 10 euros an hour. For a minimum income for the unemployed and pensioners set at 2/3 of the average wage. Equal pay for all workers, irrespective of gender, nationality and age. Full pay for trainees and apprentices from the first day of work.

■ Against insecure employment. Full contracts with protection against dismissal from day one. All waged workers in Europe must have the same legal rights: protection against redundancies, paid holidays, 100 per cent pay on sickness leave, maternity rights, pension rights. Across Europe, these rights have to be levelled up to the highest standard. Recognition of all qualifications across Europe.

■ No to privatisation. No to public-private joint ventures. Tax private wealth to fund public services; no to all contracting out within the public services, transport, healthcare or education. For the renationalisation of all companies or services privatised over the last two decades, without compensation and under workers' and service users' control. The EU must be stopped from signing treaties with the WTO to lower labour conditions or open up health and education to privatisation!

■ For a European wide plan under workers' control to improve public transport, social services, health services, education, cultural facilities and to counter environmental degradation. Such a programme must be paid for out of taxation and confiscation of the bosses' profits and implemented under workers' control.

■ Tax the rich. Abolish all indirect taxation – notably sales taxes. Replace it by taxes on profits and unearned wealth and a steeply progressive income tax. Workers' control in businesses, banks, and the abolition of commercial secrecy will prevent all tax evasion or the shifting of money to tax havens. Confiscation of the entire fortunes of all those who attempt it.

■ Defend the public health social services systems against cuts and privatisation. For workers' and users' control. For workers' management of all pension funds – private and public. For a guaranteed income in retirement at the average working salary. Generalise the highest and best quality welfare services already won in certain states, right across Europe. For a secure and pleasurable retirement for all. Workers' control of the social security and pension funds.

■ For the right of all to further and higher education. A living grant for all school and college students over 16, so that they are not forced to work part time as cheap labour. School and college students must have the right to study in any country of the European Union. Full civic, economic and social rights for youth. The right to vote at the age of sixteen. Abolition of all legal penalties against consensual sexual rela-

tions between young people. For state and community funded entertainment and sporting facilities under the control of the users.

Young people must not be a reserve of unemployed or poorly paid and unorganised labour used by the employers to undermine the gains of adult workers. Full wage rates, holiday entitlement and union rights for young workers. Down with job insecurity and imposed casual or flexible working. Abolish all compulsory, temporary and low paid work schemes! For minimum wages or benefits to be paid at the average adult level.

■ For 24 hour childcare paid for by the state and the bosses. For women's control over their own bodies: free abortion and contraception on demand. A minimum twelve months fully paid maternity/paternity leave. Full employment rights and equal rates of pay for part time workers. Make equal pay for equal work a reality! For an end to police and judicial tolerance of violence against women in and out of the home. Fund an expansion of women and children's refuges.

■ Lesbians and gay men are still subject to legal persecution, police harassment and employers' discrimination in most European states. We demand an end to discrimination and full legal equality, including the right to a legal status for couples equal to civil marriage, rights to custody of children, equal rights to shared housing and equal terms for life insurance.

■ Against all restrictions on movement in Europe. For open borders. Repeal the Schengen and Trevi agreements and the British immigration laws! Against all immigration controls. No restrictions of the right to work or to stay. Immediate entitlement for immigrants to full state benefits and social housing. No restrictions on their social rights and political activity. For immediate full national and European citizenship rights for all sans papiers, including the right to vote in all elections. For unrestricted the right of political asylum.

■ Against racist violence and discrimination. For the right of self-defence against police attacks, and against the violence of the far right and fascists. Smash the NPD. Mobilise the workers movement to crush all fascists. Fight racist parties the Vlaams Bloc, the Front National, the MSI, the Freiheitliche Partei. Drive all fascists and active racists out of the trade union movement.

■ No to the Common Agricultural Policy – a conspiracy to support the large and medium-sized farmer base of the conservative parties at the expense of the working and lower middle class taxpayers. No subsidies for the agrarian capitalists and agribusinesses. Expropriate the banks, cancel the debts and mortgages of the working farmers and provide them with cheap credit, for investment into modern machinery and to aid the formation of small farmers, co-operatives. The average industrial wages and social and trade union rights for all agricultural workers.

■ No special tax support or fuel price support for the haulage companies in the EU. For a uniform system of road taxes and licences in the EU. For a massive EU investment programme in rail freight.

■ European agriculture needs to be completely reorganised and planned in the interests of the direct producers, small farmers, agricultural workers and consumers. The natural environment must be preserved and restored where it has been devastated by industrial and agricultural pollution.

There must be no introduction into agriculture and the wider ecosystem of genetically modified organisms until exhaustive scientific tests – independent both of the capitalist governments and the food industry – and secure trials have been carried out. The people alone – once they have been fully informed – must make a democratic decision whether to do so. For the expropriation without compensation of all the big farms and agribusinesses, the landed estates, the food processing and GM food corporations, and the supermarket chains.

■ Workers should fight for the Europe-wide planned closure of nuclear power stations as part of a shift away from the reliance on nuclear ener-

gy. Close Temelin in the Czech republic which is not yet fully functioning. For cheap electricity from EU to applicant states who cut down their dependency on nuclear plants. The workers employed in the nuclear industry should be reallocated to research into nuclear fusion or transferred to other socially useful work without loss of pay or worsening of conditions.

Fossil fuel burning power stations must drastically reduce their emissions of greenhouse gasses and other pollutants. For a planned shift away from the burning of fossil fuels towards sustainable energy production, including solar, wave, wind power must be undertaken. No to the privatisation of energy production and the water industry – for their re-nationalisation under workers' control with no compensation to the privatisers. Open the books and records of all energy companies to inspection by workers and local communities – for a right of popular veto over all health-threatening production methods.

■ No to Nato and the European Defence Union! Not a penny not a person for the defence of the EU. Spend the billions lavished on defence of the bosses' system on abolishing unemployment and poverty. Dissolve the armies, police, the secret services, replacing them with the armed people. KFOR out of the Balkans! For immediate and unconditional economic aid to Serbia from the EU. Lift all EU trade and diplomatic sanctions against Iraq.

■ No to all anti-union laws, to any restrictions of the right to strike, to take action as soon as the workers have decided, to take solidarity action. To join a trade union. Occupations and strikes to defeat lockouts, redundancies, closures and privatisation. The excellent example of the Cellatex - Givet workers' occupation in France this summer showed the way! For militant solidarity action in support of other workers and the unemployed. Establish and use the right to take political and general strike action in all the states of the EU and across it.

■ The rank and file must control working class struggles. For mass assemblies and accountable committees of struggle, who are elected and recallable by the rank and file. Action committees of the employed and unemployed workers.

■ For a Europe wide movement of the unemployed. All unemployed must have the right to join unions.

■ For Europe wide industrial unions, starting in the multinational corporations, and a campaign to level up wages and rights to the highest level across Europe and reduce working hours. For rank and file workers' control over their own unions. Break the power of the bureaucracy – all officials to be subject to recall and to be paid the average wage of their members.

■ Build active solidarity between the workers movement in Western and Eastern Europe! For common union organisation, collective bargaining and struggles inside multinational enterprises like VW, Siemens or Bank Austria! Long live international workers' solidarity. The Western European workers movement should materially assist their brothers and sisters in the new Eastern European workers' movement!

■ Turn the European works councils from instruments of class collaboration to democratic councils of recallable delegates, organs of class struggle and workers' control. Abolish all existing legal obligations on works council representatives to observe business secrecy. For their right to organise industrial action. Build links between the rank and file of multinational companies. For cross-plant and international committees of workers in multinational companies.

■ An end to business secrecy and bureaucratic secrecy – open the accounts and the computer records of the banks, the businesses, the state and EU bureaucrats to inspection by the workforce and the public.

■ The expropriation of the large banks, industries, communications systems and the media, large farms and retail outlets. For their operation according to a system of integrated plans at a European, national, regional and local level.

All to be democratically decided on by workers and consumers and with workers management of production and distribution.

■ Solidarity with the countries exploited by the European banks and multinationals. Down with the Lome Conventions that condemn "third world" countries to economic slavery. No to military intervention, whether by Nato or the CSCE, to prop up the military alliances or exploitation by the European mining and oil companies and agribusinesses. For the complete and unconditional cancellation of these countries' debts to the European banks and states.

■ Down with all barriers, or pre-conditions on the peoples of eastern and south eastern Europe wishing to enter the European Union. The immediate and full application of all democratic and social rights existing in the EU to these states.

■ Down with the unelected European Commission, European Central Bank, European Court of Justice. Down with the monarchies of the EU, the executive presidencies, the Senates, second chambers and federal councils which thwart the democratic will.

■ For an end to national persecution and for the right of self-determination of oppressed peoples in Europe! For the right of all minorities to use their own language! End the persecution of Roma! For the release of all Basque separatist prisoners in Spain. For the abolition of the sectarian RUC in Northern Ireland and an end to the discrimination against Catholics. All British troops out now. Self determination to Ireland as a whole. For the right of the Kosovars and Chechens to independent states. No to the persecution of the Serb minority in Kosovo! No to the discrimination against Russians in the Baltic states!

■ For the election of a sovereign European Constituent Assembly by all those over the age of 16, permanently resident in the EU and from those countries who wish to join it. Down with the treaties, from Rome to Maastricht, that enshrine the rule of capital. Should such an Assembly – under the revolutionary pressure of the masses – take measures against big capital the working class must mobilise all its forces to break the sabotage and resistance of big capital and its state forces.

■ But no parliament can take effective measures to expropriate the exploiters or destroy the machinery of oppression which defends them – the armies, police and secret security forces. Only a revolution can create the rule of the European working class – through organisations based on delegates directly elected from the workplaces and the communities and defended by an armed population. The state form of working class power in Europe must be based on workers, councils. It must be:

■ The Socialist United States of Europe – fighting for WORLD REVOLUTION!

If you agree with this statement then contact the LRCI: 0773 022 0962



workers POWER

WHERE WE STAND

CAPITALISM is an anarchic and crisis-ridden economic system based on production for profit. We are for the expropriation of the capitalist class and the abolition of capitalism. We are for its replacement by socialist production planned to satisfy human need. Only the socialist revolution and the smashing of the capitalist state can achieve this goal. Only the working class, led by a revolutionary vanguard party and organised into workers' councils and workers' militia can lead such a revolution to victory and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. There is no peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism.

THE LABOUR PARTY is not a socialist party. It is a bourgeois workers' party—bourgeois in its politics and its practice, but based on the working class via the trade unions and supported by the mass of workers at the polls. We are for the building of a revolutionary tendency in the Labour Party, in order to win workers within those organisations away from reformism and to the revolutionary party.

THE TRADE UNIONS must be transformed by a rank and file movement to oust the reformist bureaucrats, to democratise the unions and win them to a revolutionary action programme based on a system of transitional demands which serve as a bridge between today's struggles and the socialist revolution. Central to this is the fight for workers' control of production. We are for the building of fighting organisations of the working class—factory committees, industrial unions, councils of action, and workers' defence organisations.

OCTOBER 1917: The Russian revolution established a workers' state. But Stalin destroyed workers' democracy and set about the reactionary and utopian project of building "socialism in one country". In the USSR, and the other degenerate workers' states that were established from above, capitalism was destroyed but the bureaucracy excluded the working class from power, blocking the road to democratic planning and socialism. The parasitic bureaucratic caste has led these states to crisis and destruction. We are for the smashing of bureaucratic tyranny through proletarian political revolution and the establishment of workers' democracy. We oppose the restoration of capitalism and recognise that only workers' revolution can defend the post-capitalist property relations. In times of war we unconditionally defend workers' states against imperialism. Stalinism has consistently betrayed the working class. The Stalinist Communist Parties' strategy of alliances with the bourgeoisie (popular fronts) and their stages theory of revolution have inflicted terrible defeats on the working class world-wide. These parties are reformist.

SOCIAL OPPRESSION is an integral feature of capitalism systematically oppressing people on the basis of race, age, sex, or sexual orientation. We are for the liberation of women and for the building of a working class women's movement, not an "all class" autonomous movement. We are for the liberation of all of the oppressed. We fight racism and fascism. We oppose all immigration controls. We fight for labour movement support for black self-defence against racist and state attacks. We are for no platform for fascists and for driving them out of the unions.

IMPERIALISM is a world system which oppresses nations and prevents economic development in the vast majority of third world countries. We support the struggles of oppressed nationalities or countries against imperialism. We unconditionally support the Irish Republicans fighting to drive British troops out of Ireland. But against the politics of the bourgeois and petit-bourgeois nationalists, we fight for permanent revolution—working class leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle under the banner of socialism and internationalism. In conflicts between imperialist countries and semi-colonial countries, we are for the defeat of the imperialist army and the victory of the country oppressed and exploited by imperialism. We are for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. We fight imperialist war not with pacifist pleas but with militant class struggle methods including the forcible disarmament of "our own" bosses.

WORKERS POWER is a revolutionary communist organisation. We base our programme and policies on the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, on the revolutionary documents of the first four congresses of the Third International and the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International. Workers Power is the British Section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International. The last revolutionary International (the Fourth) collapsed in the years 1948-51. The LRCI is pledged to fight the centrism of the degenerate fragments of the Fourth International and to refound a Leninist Trotskyist International and build a new world party of socialist revolution. If you are a class conscious fighter against capitalism; if you are an internationalist—join us!

AFTER NICE MAKE MAY DAY MASSIVE OUR WORLD IS NOT FOR SALE!

THE YEAR 2000 was massive for the world's anti-capitalist movement.

Washington in April, Millau in July, and Melbourne and Prague in September saw the anti-capitalist world tour broaden its targets and deepen its impact after the great battle of Seattle at the end of 1999 shut down the World Trade Organisation (WTO) summit.

Capitalism has globalised itself - but the forces of opposition are globalised too.

The Nice demonstration against the EU summit promises to be the biggest anti-globalisation demo Europe has seen.

The EU commission and heads of state want to create a more centralised decision-making machine. This will allow unelected eurocrats to do deals with the likes of the WTO on behalf of the multinational corporations and the national governments can avoid carrying the can for the outcome.

In 1995 the French government's plans for liberalisation of welfare and education were thrown back by mass protests and public sector strikes. Many in the EU hope they can get full liberalisation through the back door by allowing the EU commission to do all the dirty deals on their behalf.

The Nice summit centres on the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). This is all about how hitherto protected state-run and government-funded services in the EU, such as health and education, can be forcibly opened up to private firms. The EU commissioner in charge of the talks says that health and education in Britain are "ripe for liberalisation".

US financial companies like American Express actually drafted the GATS. Nice is another milestone for the anti-capitalist movement. But after Nice there will be much more to do if we are to be successful.

First, the anti-capitalist alliance needs to go beyond "summit sieges" - though these are important for exposing the crimes of the system. We need an action plan to replace capitalism with a classless society.

The same academics, journalists and politicians who tell us that there is no alternative to the market economy insist that the working class is a thing of the past, a disappearing force whose organisations have failed for good.

It is a lie. As global capitalism forces the pace of industrialisation in developing countries it has created work-

ers on every continent, numbering hundreds of millions. The organised workers are a powerhouse of resistance.

In India, in May 2000 the biggest general strike in history took place, against the International Monetary Fund's demand for more austerity and cuts despite hundreds of millions living in desperate need. In Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Ecuador, Argentina and China mass strikes are no longer aimed just at the local bosses but at

the ultimate enemy: the IMF, World Bank, World Economic Forum and WTO.

Mass action, with the working class at the centre, is the key to winning the struggles of today. Working class power is the key to a future free from poverty, exploitation and war.

The anti-capitalist youth and activists can bring to the working class movements an unequivocal hostility to the global system. The working class can bring to the anti-capitalist movement its sense of solidarity, its power, its mass character, its high levels of organisation and discipline.

The task is clear: to turn the anti-capitalist movement decisively towards the working class - and to make the workers' movement anti-capitalist.

But the present leadership of the workers' movement is at best sporadically engaged with anti-capitalist protest: they see direct action as an occasional weapon to force the employers to negotiate. But mostly the union and party bureaucrats side with the capitalists against us.

The majority of the leaders of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), charities, socialist parties and

trade unions are intimately tied to the capitalist system. We hear impassioned pleas for moderation and compromise from this layer of go-betweens. All they want is a place at the negotiating table.

Our experiences of campaigning under different national conditions can help us to develop a truly global strategy for resistance. How can we do this? By coming together to define our goals and our means. Our goals should be:

■ Cancel the entire debt owed by nations to the banks: no delays, no conditions, no compensation to the banks

■ Health, education and welfare for all - paid for by massive taxes on corporate profits and the wealth of the super-rich and by confiscating the factories, businesses, funds, real estate and technology patents of the corporate giants

■ Abolish the IMF, the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation and the World Economic Forum

■ Massive aid - free, with no strings attached - to compensate developing countries for the plunder by multinationals and the G7 mega-states. Tax the multinational corporations to fund it.

■ Root out inequality through redistribution of wealth - and a relentless challenge to all forms of discrimination on grounds of race, nationality, gender and sexuality.

■ Halt the market "reforms" that are restoring capitalism in Eastern Europe, the former USSR, China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba. For working class democratic socialism based on the rule of workers' councils.

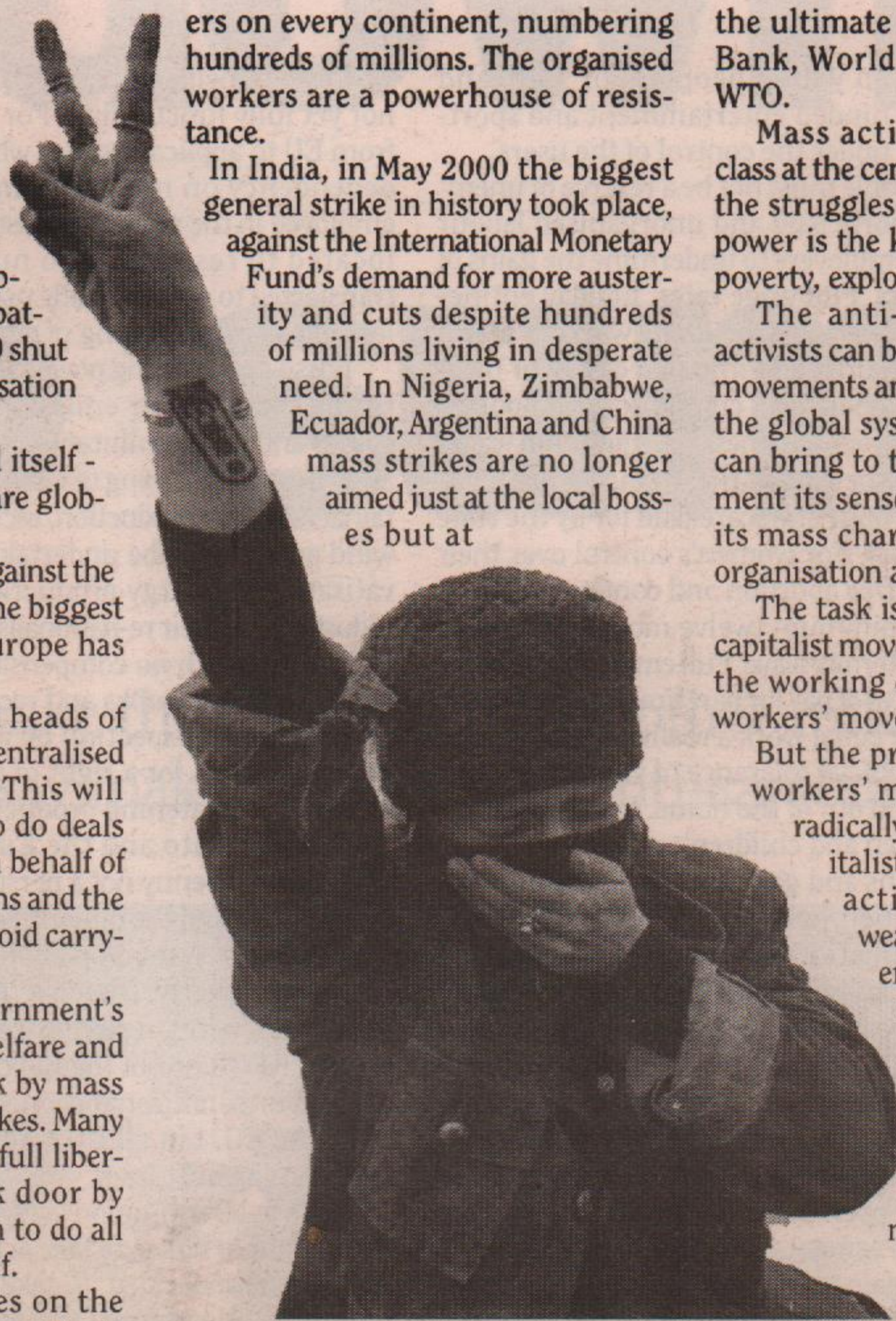
■ Save the planet through a planned global shift away from the burning of fossil fuels and nuclear fission towards sustainable forms of energy production.

■ Stop the major powers from bombing whole nations into the Stone Age by scrapping NATO and all imperialist military alliances.

■ A democratically planned economy in which society's resources are owned by all, matching products to needs through mass electronic communication and popular control.

■ A world federation based on solidarity and co-operation in place of competition, nationalism and war.

Capitalism cannot be reformed out of existence through partial constitutional measures - the exploiters' state apparatus will be used to repress any challenges to private property. It must be broken up through mass revolutionary action.



SHUTDOWN THE WORLD ON MAY DAY

The next step for our movement in the new year is to make **Tuesday 1 May 2001 a worldwide shutdown: with a one-day general strike and protest marches in every major city aimed at the symbols of corporate power.**

The Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) in Australia and Resistance youth have joined the call to build massive action on **May Day against corporate globalisation. They, Workers Power Australia and many others are adding their regional forces to help realise a Global Strike Against Corporate Tyranny on 1 May, 2001.**

"We would like to see this international solidarity not just expressed in a series of actions as the World Bank, IMF, WTO or WEF meets but in cities around the world in a simultaneous demonstration of opposition to exploitation and injustice.

Let's go on the offensive on 1 May, 2001 with a truly global action against global corporate tyranny.

Let's walk out of our workplaces, campuses and schools and converge on those temples of corporate greed, the stock exchanges."

The Korean TUC are also debating what forms of action they can take on 1 May. In addition huge trade union movements in Latin America and India/Pakistan have a long and militant tradition of action on May Day which must now be consciously coordinated with the global resistance to capitalism.

As the DSP statement says: "Let M1 unite the massive power of the victims of corporate tyranny in the First World and in the Third World!"

FEEDBACK

■ Contact us on 020 7793 1468 ■ May Day details 0773 022 0962

Workers Power is the British Section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International

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