

# SOCIALIST

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ORGANISER

*It will be socialism or barbarism!*

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**Ireland: do**

**the Tories**

**really want**

**peace?**



**OPEN TALKS NOW!**

Public sector workers face three-year pay freeze

# Budget will cost you £10 a week

By Chris Reynolds

**K**ENNETH Clarke's Budget will cost the average household £10 a week in a variety of tax rises. For the rich, this is a small dent in the huge gains they have made from 14 years of Tory tax cuts. For working-class households, it is another blow after 14 years in which taxes have increased for them, mainly through VAT.

VAT will be charged on fuel at 8 per cent, and then 17.5%. Pensioners will get the grand sum of 50p a week (or 35p a week each for couples) to compensate. An old person who has to keep a badly insulated home warm all day will find less than half the increase in their bills from next April covered by this hand-out.

Public sector workers' pay will be frozen — that is, cut in real terms — so that they lose out all round. In fact, Clarke proposes to freeze the public sector workers' pay budget for three years.

Unemployment benefit will be cut. Invalidity benefit will be restricted.

Numbers on invalidity benefit have risen steeply because dole offices have shoved people off onto invalidity benefit in order to keep the official jobless figures down. Where will those people go now? Not to jobs; Clarke did not even pretend to offer any action to create jobs.

His only answer to unemployment is further mean, punitive, penny-pinching measures against the unemployed.

The Government will tighten the squeeze on local authorities, to

force more cuts in services.

The much-trumpeted extra money for health and education will, from all indications, go mainly to pay for Tory messing-around in these services — to finance schools "opting out", and to pay more to the swelling numbers of NHS managers and accountants.

The prize from all this, according to Clarke, is to "sort out the problem of public borrowing once and for all". A vain boast! If he were really going to do that, he would have to start by explaining why 14 years of a Tory government loudly committed to old-fashioned "sound finances" have led to the huge deficit of £50 billion. Even in capitalist terms, this is a shoddy patch-up, make-do Budget. For the working class, it means cuts on all fronts.



Clarke's "compensation" will not cover the cost of VAT on fuel

# Justice for the Kurds!

Brenda Nixon of the National Union of Mineworkers talked to Socialist Organiser about the brutality of the Turkish military

**I** WAS ON a delegation organised by the Kurdistan Women's Association.

We arrived in Istanbul on 20 November and were held for ten minutes while heavily armed security police were found to follow us. We were trailed constantly.

We took an internal flight to the emergency state. The 12 members of the delegation were escorted by 15-20 armed gendarmes. We went straight to a

human rights organisation. People were arriving all the time telling of the atrocities: villages being burnt down; people being killed; children being shot in the head. There were photographs to back up these stories.

On Thursday 25 we went to follow up a story of atrocities at a village called Birik outside Bifmil. A man had told us that the Turkish military had burnt the village down and killed the men.

When we arrived we began taking photographs. We had heard reports that men had been shot in the back of the head. We saw bullet holes in walls and bloodstains.

An old woman came out, shouting hysterically, telling us

to get out before the military killed us. As this happened a dozen gendarmes came towards us, fully armed, pulling their balaclavas down over their heads. They led us through the village. At the back of the village we walked out into a field. Half way down the slope there was a pit. We could see mounds where we believe the villagers had been buried. And we believed that we would be shot, too, and thrown into the pit.

The Turkish military were saying that it did not matter if Kurds died and that "Turkey was for the Turks".

Villagers were sat around the burnt-out houses with some of their possessions. At intervals military people drove up with

tractors and families were loaded on and driven away. We do not know where they went.

The day we left that village we heard that a second hamlet built on the village outskirts, had been burnt down and 33 people had been killed.

We were held in detention in a gendarme headquarters from 2.30 that afternoon until 9.30 on the morning of Friday 26 November. We had slept the best we could in very cramped conditions.

We had been given one, very basic meal when we arrived which we could not eat because we were so scared. We were intimidated by guards coming into the room and loading their weapons and laughing.

They told us we were being released and were given our passports back. Instead we were driven to another gendarme building where the main torture areas are hidden in the basement.

Women at the gates risked their lives by telling us not to allow ourselves to be taken downstairs to the basement. That never happened to us. But we had two Kurdish journalists with us who were separated from us. They were interrogated in a way we never were.

When our delegation was finally released three members stayed behind to make sure the journalists were freed.

At the airport, awaiting an internal flight to Istanbul, one of the delegates phoned home.

While she was on the phone a military policeman shot at the floor. These bullets missed her foot by six inches. They laughed at her. No one at the airport dared to do anything about it. They just looked down, scared, and got on with their work.

The threats we faced were very real. But this is nothing compared to what the Kurdish people experience every day. They have to live there.

We have called for a boycott of Turkish goods — particularly the arms trade with Turkey. The world has got to stop trading with these people.

The Kurds should have a state of their own. The Turkish government should open negotiations.

## Problems for Israeli-Palestinian peace

Joel Shentov from the Israeli Trotskyist organisation Matzpen reports from Jerusalem

**R**ABIN'S 'peace policy' is gradually losing support as the process of negotiations inevitably runs into problems.

Rabin has introduced the threat into the discussions that the Israeli withdrawal from parts of the Occupied Territories, due to begin on 13 December, will not begin on time. At the moment it is just a threat, but perhaps the threat will be carried out.

Meanwhile Israel continues to hold thousands of Palestinian prisoners. These people should be released. The government thinks they cannot go too far for fear of the Israeli right.

So they are left with partial withdrawal and are continuing to hold Palestinian prisoners. However, without the

release of these people nothing will be finally settled.

The settlers on the West Bank and Gaza are heavily armed and have not submitted to the government. They form a second power in the Occupied Territories. They are not reconciled to living under any type of Palestinian rule.

The government continues to deal very softly with them. The official peace movement, Peace Now, continues to identify with the government. Their Meretz representatives form part of the government, and they are currently very passive.

On the left the Peace Bloc, in conjunction with the PLO, has organised several protests against settlements around Jerusalem and in support of the Palestinian prisoners.

The Peace Bloc does not have faith in the government, although it critically supports the agreement. Matzpen is part of the Peace Bloc.

## Italy's Rupert Murdoch backs fascists

Bob Sugden reports for Socialist Organiser from Monza

**T**HE SECOND richest capitalist in Italy, Silvio Berlusconi — Italy's Rupert Murdoch — has come out to support the neo-Nazi MSI. Berlusconi has interest in the media and construction. He used to be a Christian Democrat.

In response workers on his papers staged a half-day strike.

## France: the pot is bubbling

This article by Patrick Debrest, abridged from the French socialist weekly Rouge (25 November), describes the recent revival of industrial militancy in France.

**W**E HAVE come out of a period dominated by resignation and fatalism. We are working our way out of the reign of individualism and the illusion of searching for individual solutions.

Growing unease, which is also posed in terms of what future young people will have, boosts the impulse to act to try to re-knit positive social solidarity.

A second significant range of causes is the perception of a

growing drift in the public service and the public sector. Tens of thousands of jobs have been cut in this sector. Yet there is no shortage of unfilled needs.

And onto these anxieties are added real reasons for discontent linked to the worsening of work conditions... In short, the lid of the pot is rising, and letting the first spurts of steam out. It's bubbling down below.

The Socialist Party has also been heavily implicated in the corrup-

tion.

A part of the old system was the Communist Party — now the PDS. The PDS has survived relatively free from charges of money-taking. With its Green and other allies it has emerged as the biggest bloc after the municipal elections of Sunday 21 November.

The far right falls into two opposed groups. In the south the MSI have made a very big, surprising, surge. In many southern towns they got the largest vote of any single party. The MSI stands

for the old-fascist idea of One United Italy.

In the north, the Northern League stands for federalism, or breaking up Italy. They want the more prosperous north to ditch the poorer south.

Three or four years ago the Northern League existed just as graffiti on walls. Their rise has been phenomenal, geared into the anti-corruption drive. But the Northern League also have extremely right-wing social policies.

eration) and 17 October (FSU) could be considered relatively successful.

The most impressive revival was in action in individual industries. First there was the united demonstration by the railworkers on 6 October. On 12 October, workers in the Post Office and Telecom were on the march: the numbers out on strike reached historic levels.

Then there was the Air France strike and the boost it gave at the national level.

On Tuesday 23 November, the national power workers' demonstration rallied several tens of thousands of workers. It was unprecedented.

And then there are the different local conflicts: SMN at Caen, GEC-Alstom at Le Havre, SADEFA at Fumel (the factory

was invaded by the police at dawn on 22 November), and the Toulouse post-workers (who have just ended their action after 155 days on strike).

On 18 November about 15,000 workers from the public sector, and from some parts of industry, demonstrated in Paris. It was an undeniable success numerically, but not only that.

This initiative pushed forward the collective interest in taking action together. It allowed CFDT, CGT, CGC and other unions to demonstrate a will for unity.

These signals cannot be ignored by anyone, including at the level of the main union federations. Will it, however, be enough to get a general movement going, coordinated at the national level and between industries?

# Ireland: do the Tories really want peace?

**O**N BRITAIN'S Irish front, where once everything was clear and simple, all is now ferment and confusion. Not long ago John Major could get up in the Commons and say with seeming conviction that he would never talk to the IRA — that, he said, would “turn his stomach”. It was, and would continue to be, war to the bitter end against “terrorists”. It was right against wrong, black against white. They would never surrender!

And now we know that all the time they were talking to the Provisional IRA, looking for a deal!

They denounced John Hume MP for talking to Gerry Adams, even while they were doing the same and even though they knew that the Provisional IRA was trying to find a way to call off its war.

Now, all the posturings and certainties are crumbling and in deep disorder. The Tories show welcome signs of a new and surprising willingness to buck the Northern Ireland Unionist veto on change. No wonder the Unionists are unhappy.

We, of course, are glad that they have been talking to the Provisional IRA, glad that now they say they will officially and openly talk to them in January if the IRA declares a ceasefire. It is high time and well past time.

And yet the sour spitter-spatter of Tory cant and nonsense continues to fill the air.

Sir Patrick Mayhew prattles on in the House of Commons about how sacred the will of the Orange/Unionist democratic majority in Northern Ireland is.

The Tories are so committed to the democratic integrity of the artificial Northern Ireland entity that they do not dare let the Northern Ireland majority rule! They have not dared do so for 21 years, since they abolished the old Home Rule parliament in Belfast in March 1972.

Since 1972 they have accepted a Catholic veto on Northern Ireland majority rule because they know from experience that majority rule will be, or quickly become, sectarian rule.

This is convincing testimony, and from people who would know, against the idea that the artificial six-counties entity is a workable democratic unit.

The Northern Ireland entity is untenable fundamentally because of the massive Catholic-Nationalist-Republican minority it contains — which was never less than 33% and is now 40% and growing fast, while the Protestant-Unionist population is shrinking.

To pretend that the issues in Northern Ireland can be reduced to the question of a majority and a minority, to mere undifferentiated head-counting, is to ignore what is important there. The Tories do not

believe it — so their rejection of Northern Ireland majority rule tells us — despite what they say.

Northern Ireland's Catholics have always rejected such an approach, in pursuit of something they consider greater and more important — their national identity.

So, in the past, when Ireland was part of a common state with Great Britain, did the people of Catholic Ireland behave towards the “UK majority” when it denied them their national rights.

So, in the future, would the six-counties Protestants behave if they found themselves a locked-in and coerced minority in an all-Ireland state.

That is what sets the limits to how far they can be overridden, in the areas where they are the majority (half the six counties).

The essence of the situation in Northern Ireland, now as for twenty and more years, is that Northern Ireland can not be made to work according to the majority/minority model of states where the citizens share a common national identity. It never worked according to that pattern. For 50 years it was a one-party sectarian dictatorship. Then it broke down.

Only the British Army has held the six-counties unit under one rule. Without that, intra-Irish civil war would have bloodily redrawn the political map of Ireland.

In their own way, the Tories are, it seems, groping towards recognising all this, even though they still cant on.

It is not only on the British government side that there is ferment and confusion. The changes in the Provisional IRA position are vastly greater.

Despite the official Tory-Unionist rhetoric, the British state long ago declared that it would not stand against Irish unity if the Irish wanted it — for example, in the Sunningdale Agreement 20 years ago, and in the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement, which gives Dublin a guaranteed political voice in the way the British state runs Northern Ireland. The Provisional IRA has been altogether more dogmatic and inflexible.

They have demanded a unitary Irish state with no provision for the Protestant-Unionists as a distinct people. Nothing less would do for them. This position was an expression not of an Irish Republican viewpoint, but of the viewpoint of the six-counties Catholics — who would still be a minority in any autonomous Protestant area and can only hope to escape that if the Protestants are locked as a minority into an all-Ireland state with no self-rule on any level — and in fact it was an abandonment of the last honest pretence of an overall Republican approach

to the realities of a divided Irish people.

Twenty-two and a half years ago, the Provisional IRA launched a military campaign whose basic premise was a gross self-delusion: they contended, repeating the threadbare traditional right-wing Catholic “Republican” dogma, that Northern Ireland is nothing other than “British-occupied Ireland”.

Hiding from themselves the reality that one million people in Ireland oppose Irish unity behind indignation against Britain for Britain's role in Irish history, they made war not fundamentally on Britain, but on the Northern Ireland Protestant-Unionists and only incidentally on Britain.

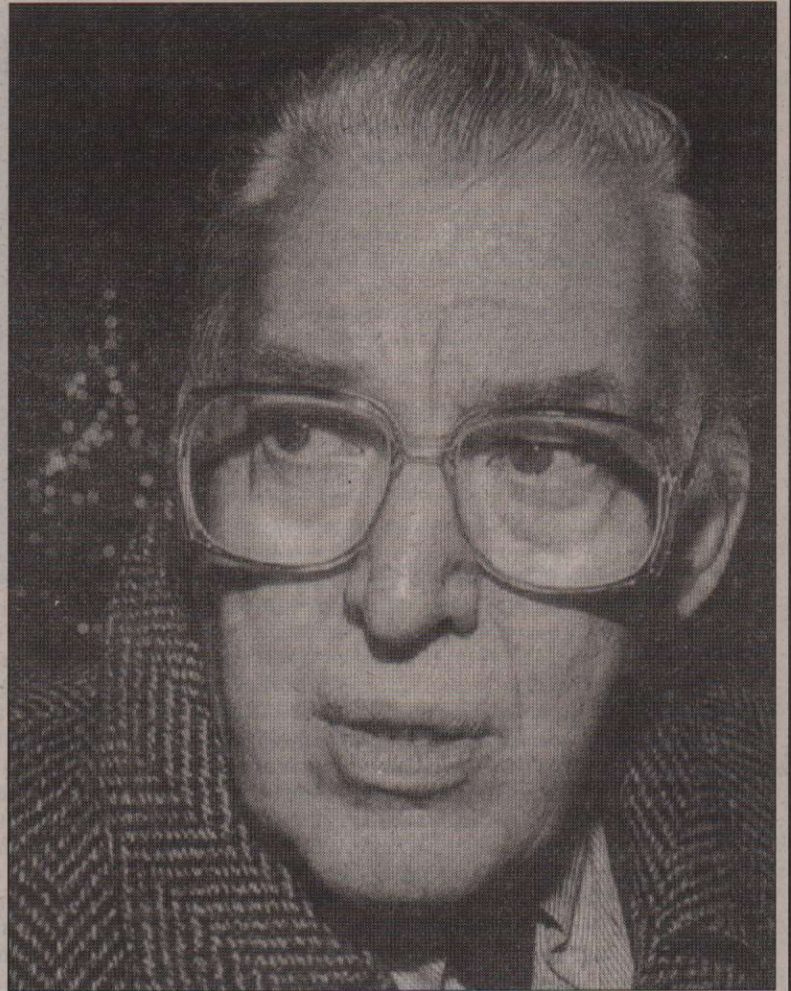
When they started their war, they were a political sect in the grip of peculiar dogmas — “physical force” on principle to “drive out the British Crown forces”, abstention from politics, and boycott on principle, even when they were elected, of the London, Belfast and Dublin parliaments. Essentially their views were a hybrid form of Catholic anarchism.

They have made a principle and a fetish out of the gun and the bomb, recognising no other road to salvation but bloodshed and self-sacrifice. They began by explicitly repudiating efforts to develop a more rational Republicanism, embodied then in that wing of the Republican movement which later evolved into the Workers' Party and the Democratic Left.

And now, a quarter of a century later, they propose to make peace with Britain and to go into “mainstream” politics! We want them to make peace because their war is futile, counterproductive, and utterly misconceived — and because it works above all else to destroy even the possibility of working-class reconciliation across the communal divide. But what a comment this proposed course of action is on all that has gone before, on the entire sorry history of the Provisionals as a political force.

And what a comment it is on more recent events in Northern Ireland! Even while they were, it seems, signalling to the Tories that they wanted a face-saving formula that would allow them to call off the “armed struggle”, they continued to bomb and kill in Ireland and in Britain. Talking peace with Tory emissaries, they continued to kill Northern Ireland workers who repaired RUC or army buildings, defining them as “collaborators”.

**W**E SHOULD be clear that with the Provisional IRA now it is not a matter of military defeat — they could choose to continue the war from their seemingly stable base in certain Catholic areas.



Will the Tories buck the Unionist veto on change?

Provo moves to stop the war are the result of a slow and painful growth of understanding about the nature of the problem they have so inappropriately tried to solve with a disguised civil war.

A quarter of a century after they split the old “left” (in fact, Stalinist-dominated) Republican movement, they have come round to the views they then rejected — killing a number of the Republicans who disagreed with them — and repudiated. In the meantime they have entrenched the communal divisions, already crippling in 1969, a great deal deeper, filling the trenches with fresh blood.

Serious socialists will not expect that a newly peaceful Sinn Fein will be a force for progress. It will not! Some of its members may learn better, but the core of the organisation will go into mainstream politics as the sectarian force it always was to a great extent and has been explicitly since it dropped federalism in 1981.

There is a layer of people in Sinn Fein who would be at home in Socialist Outlook if they lived in Britain (some of them are people who joined Sinn Fein from Outlook's Irish sister group, which was reduced to semi-collapse by the defections). They are useful to the organisation now and are tolerated when it is a matter of showing a left face to the British labour movement. They will probably get short shrift if politics becomes

central to the movement which Gerry Adams leads.

Like a number of other Republican parties which laid down the gun — Fianna Fail, Clann na Poblachta, the Workers' Party — the Provisional IRA will have an ultra-ruthless machine of ex-revolutionaries turned wheelers and dealers and “real” politicians. All such groups have rapidly become self-serving and corrupt.

An Irish socialist movement will be built against them, not by them or in collaboration with them. Nor will an effective socialist movement in Ireland be built by an ex-Provo left in alliance with die-hard militarists, denouncing Gerry Adams for selling out the “armed struggle”. Such a splinter will most likely appear.

We do not know how close peace is in Northern Ireland. The sooner, the better. No trust can be placed in the Tories. Labour in Parliament should not give them the sort of support as peacemakers which Kevin McNamara gave them in Monday's parliamentary debate (29 November).

An end to the blind senseless slaughter would be progress in itself. The work of rebuilding a political working-class movement will then begin in conditions more favourable than have existed for a quarter-century.

But if the war ends and there is not serious progress towards a constitutional solution, then this will be a lull in the long war, not its end.

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

Karl Marx

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## WE SAY

## The lying game

THE SUSPENSION of Ian Paisley from the House of Commons for calling Northern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew and Prime Minister John Major liars vividly sums up official British politics now.

Never mind what Paisley is. The question here is not Ian Paisley but the standards of British political life now.

Everybody in that packed debating chamber knew that Major, Mayhew and every other politician or official who had spoken on Ireland in the last year or more had lied, and lied, and lied again. The majority approved of what the Government was trying to do with the Provisional IRA, they knew that what Paisley said was perfectly true and even, despite Paisley's loud, blustering style of delivery, understated.

Nevertheless, they threw him out for saying it!

Lying is all right in a good cause. Lying is normal in politics and in the administration of society. Indeed, for the ruling class, lying is absolutely essential. They "have to" lie about the Health Service, for example. Lying is the lubricant of pseudo-democratic bourgeois politics, as it always was of diplomacy.

As diplomacy was war by other means, so Tory lying in politics is the class war by other means. They all know that and they all approve of it. In the judgment of the House of Commons which expelled Paisley, the fault lies not with those who tell lies or endorse them, but with the teller of inconvenient truth.

272 MPs, many of them Labour, voted to expel Paisley, (25 voted against). In doing this they inadvertently told a central truth about themselves and about the political system they run.

## Morality? The Tory big stick

THE TORY crusade for "morality" is a grim business. Of course, it is part of the "war of ideas", which is the war for control of what people do, and, more, for control of the light in which they see what they do. Explaining social delinquency and crime as a result of a mysterious decline in "morality" and rise in "evil" is a handy way for the Tory "social engineers" who have done so much since 1979 to redesign Britain to shrug off responsibility for a society in which they now perceive so much "evil" and wrong-doing.

Yet the question of "morality" goes to the heart of the socialist/Tory divide. Social morality — living by an acceptance of responsibility to others and to the society you live in, as well as to yourself and your relatives — demands social solidarity of one sort or another. In the past it has rested on class solidarity among equals, and deference to "the tops" and fear of the police, with God somewhere off-stage backing up the dominant ideas of right and wrong.

Blind acceptance of traditional ideas of right and wrong has given way more and more to reasoning about it. God no longer figures very much for most people. These days, as Mrs Thatcher might have put it, God is "out". For most people in Britain today — and perhaps especially for ill-educated young people — morality has to come from social solidarity and reason.

Socialists preach class and social solidarity, and we give reasons for it. What do the Tories preach? Obedience to the law! To a law which does not induce much fear in these days when so few crimes against the law are brought home to those who break the law.

Of course, they also try to invoke God and "traditional values", but even *they* don't take God seriously, and "tradition" here as elsewhere is largely something they make up as they go along.

At the same time they destroy — by preaching and by example — social solidarity, and work like political acid to destroy and dissolve the labour movement which is the greatest embodiment of social solidarity. They glorify greed and self-serving. For the sick, they make life itself depend on private ability to pay. They flatter wealth, with the Government caring tenderly for the rich — and the courts too, as Roger Levitt can testify. They deny, some of them, notably Mrs Thatcher, that "society" really exists at all. They lie and cheat — about the Health Service, for example — like the slimiest gangsters.

They throw young people out of the very possibility of jobs — and then they preach "morality" and deplore its decline! But all that comes down to is: "obey the law — or else!" It comes down to the big stick of the successful gangsters, in whose path the pettier criminals and the hope-deprived youngsters seek to follow.

"Morality" here is, ultimately, brutality or the threat of brutality. When they preach "morality" and obedience to the law, that is what they preach, and people, not being stupid, know it. And that is what comes back at them. We will recreate a proper morality of social solidarity only by rooting out the Tories and all they stand for.

## James Bulger murder

## Sick society is to blame!

By Mark Nevill

LONG BEFORE the guilty verdict was pronounced against the two eleven-year old boys accused of the murder of two-year old James Bulger, it had become clear that an issue other than the horrific slaughter of a small child had pushed itself to the front in British society: the treatment of the two boys after the verdict.

No one could deny that the killing was a terrible and terrifying thing. The last hours of that small child's life scarcely bear thinking about.

The response of the media was nevertheless bizarre and disgusting, even by the tabloids' own standards. They queued up to print the boys' photos and name their names under lurid headings.

But it was not only the media response.

The real lynch mob anger and violence directed at the two boys from the working-class community of Merseyside itself needs explaining. Disgust at the killing was only part of it, the reasonable part. To call for the death sentence on two eleven-year old children — as some of them did — is hysterical and unbalanced.

Apart from revulsion, we may be seeing in Liverpool a public agony of guilt. For, whatever anyone says, people know that most of us would behave as did those who witnessed the abduction and the toddler's two-and-a-half mile walk to his senseless death: we would not have intervened to help him either. People often witness startling cruelty and open brutality against children in shopping malls and in the street.

Along with guilt is a sense of powerlessness. High unemployment, poor housing and an uncertain future mean that the working-class community has no economic power and no control over whether or not workers work.

The freak abduction and killing of James Bulger has brought home to many people how little control they have



A sick society mutilates children

even over the safety of their children. The hysterical cry against 'evil' is here the same cry in the past that howled against witches in times of famine and pestilence. It is a cry of pain in a world falling apart. It is better to seek for *social* explanations!

The two boys did come from poor backgrounds. Both suffered from 'broken families'. Both suffered from poor education. Both played truant. One of them was bullied at school.

There is real evidence that one of the boys had been neglected, and the other would lapse into bouts of anger, aggression and self-mutilation. Faced with such behaviour from such a child, social workers and psychologists would normally assume that he had been very seriously abused and set out to identify the exact nature of the abuse.

Raising these issues is not to raise excuses. They do no more than suggest possible answers. But they are important.

But we must firmly reject the notion of intrinsic 'evil' as an explanation for this crime — the notion put out by the police, by the judge and by the media. These boys who behaved so brutally grew up in a 'brutalised and brutalising society'. Before they victimised a child smaller than themselves they had — all we know about them says as much — been

victimised by those bigger than themselves.

A brutal society creates brutalised people, children too. The awful killing in Liverpool is only what happens all the time taken to the ultimate extreme.

It is necessary to *understand*. Those who defend and justify the system that brutalised these boys do not *want* to understand. They cannot *afford* to understand. Stupid cant about 'intrinsic evil' and 'human nature' is easier. It lets them off the hook.

These two boys were not born evil and *they are still children*, still beings in process of primary formation. We must never forget that.

We don't clearly *know* the cause of this tragedy, the events that precipitated it, or the boys' idea of their own motivation. The most likely explanation is that here we had a gruesome domino effect — a sequence of abusive actions which got out of hand and went to a tragic and devastating conclusion.

Here, as everywhere, the Tories talk about intangible things such as 'natural evil' because they do not want to admit that society forms, shapes and to a large extent determines the actions of its members. But it does!

As socialists we must reaffirm that the individual — child or adult — is greatly influenced

by society. To forget this means that we accept the Tory contention that we cannot change, that we cannot, through collective action, change our destiny. The other side of accepting their insistence that "the individual alone is responsible" is an acceptance that we are largely powerless. Society is not powerless! The social conditions that mutilated the two young murderers and killed James Bulger *can* be changed by our actions. The biggest 'intrinsic evil' in our society right now is the self-serving stupidity of those who rule and control society!

We can not alter or undo what happened in Liverpool. We can not change anything in the short term.

But we can and must continue to fight for better housing, better childcare facilities, better education and better healthcare.

It is only when we have an open, democratic structure in our communities that we can begin to deal radically with the abuses in our society.

Until then we must call for:

- raising the age of criminal responsibility.
- confidentiality of a child's name even after a guilty verdict is found against him or her.
- care not punishment should be the principles for disturbed and damaged children.

## Bosnia

## Open Tuzla airport now!

By Liša Taylor, International Workers' Aid for Bosnia

THE first International Workers' Aid (IWA) convoy has just successfully completed its journey to Tuzla (NW Bosnia), delivering its load of food and medicine donated by workers from most European countries. The convoy team were able to witness firsthand the conditions of hunger and deprivation under which the people are living.

Tuzla represents the multi-ethnic heartland of Bosnia where Serbs, Croats and Muslims live together harmoniously.

But now the people of Tuzla face starvation as a result of the deliberate blocking of aid

routes by Serb and Croat nationalists. The Split route, which our convoy took, is long and hazardous and involves travelling through areas of central Bosnia where some of the heaviest fighting is taking place at the moment. Convoys have been looted and drivers beaten or shot. Another route, the "northern route" through the Brcko Pass, is completely unusable due to the fact that some of the most ruthless Serbian irregulars control the narrow corridor that borders Bosnian-held territory. The only way to open this route would be by a complete reversal of present UN policy, with full-scale armed intervention, something which, clearly, the UN governments have no interest in doing. Indeed, present

UN policy indicates that a large injection of troops into the area could actually end up being deployed against the *Bosnians* as the capitalist governments grow impatient with the Bosnian government's refusal to surrender to the aggressor nation's terms.

Tuzla Airport is in good condition and in fact is used regularly by the UN for their own military purposes. UN officials have privately admitted that they could have opened the airport months ago. Although technically it is true that Bosnian planes would be reachable by Serbian anti-aircraft guns, this is not believed to pose a big threat. In any case, the UN could fly its own aid in — but refuse to. Now, with Dr Owen's

recent remarks questioning whether the UN should continue providing aid at all, it seems less likely than ever that, without outside pressure, the UN will open the airport of its own accord.

On Saturday 11 December IWA is organising an International Day of Action calling for the immediate opening of the airport. Winter has come early to Bosnia and there is no time to lose. People are asked to be outside the UNHQ, 20 Buckingham Gate, London from 1-3pm. Simultaneous actions will take place in other countries across Europe. If you would like to get involved in IWA or can help with organising this event ring us now on 081-694 9799 or 071-978 8622.

# Action now to save NUS!

Four hundred students lobbied Parliament in protest against the government's attacks on student unions on Thursday 24 November. Janine Booth reports.

**L**OBBYISTS met in the Grand Committee Room in the Houses of Parliament before going to talk to MPs. Speakers included Labour MPs Tony Benn, Peter Hain and Alan Simpson. There was also a debate with Tim Kevan, Chairman of the Conservative Collegiate Forum.

The Bill to 'reform' student unions and the National Union of Students (NUS) is about to begin its passage through Parliament. The Tories' aim is for it to enter its Committee stage in the new year, be passed by Easter, and be in force for the start of next academic year.

The Bill stops student unions from using public funds to run campaigns. Students will have to 'opt in' to union campaigns, funding them from our own pockets.

But, obviously, students already 'opt in' to campaigning activity by choosing whether to be involved or not. This new proposal means that students will have to finance that choice themselves. With student hardship at an unprecedented level of desperation, there is a sick irony in the fact that students will have to pay money that they don't have in order to do anything about it!

On broader issues, black students will have to pay to fight racism, lesbian and gay and bisexual students will have to pay to fight homophobia. But they did not give us the 'choice' to 'opt in' to hardship, oppression or discrimination! Why should we have to 'opt in' to fight back?

The Bill — along with its 'code of conduct' will also take away the policy-making power of Union General Meetings (UGMs).

Currently UGMs (where they



400 students lobbied Parliament last Thursday, 24 November

happen) are the only real opportunity for ordinary students to decide what their union does.

Those student unions where UGMs no longer take place are, as a consequence, often cliquy, inactive, bureaucratic and don't involve their student membership.

The Bill gives power to the Secretary of State for Education to decide what student unions can and cannot do. Tory Tim Kevan talked about what student unions should or should not be. We say that students should decide what student unions should do!

The Tories' proposals also include a move to ban candidates in student union elections from standing on political tickets. And here lies another irony: Parliament, with one House made up entirely of people elected on political tickets, and the other House made up of people not elected at all — intends to prevent students from mentioning their politics in union elections!

Tim the Tory repeated the accusation that student unions waste public money! Students, though, can easily name lots of genuine financial waste.

• MPs voting themselves a

pay rise higher than the public sector pay limit.

- The royal family.
- Huge salaries for directors of privatised industries.
- And of course, the huge waste of both money and human potential caused by mass unemployment.

The 'public money' that is spent on providing students with the chance to organise and to have a voice for our needs and concerns is a much more valid expenditure than any of these.

John Patten's document which ushered in these proposals stated explicitly that student unions should not try to influence national policy. But national policy affects students — be it grant levels, housing rights, or indeed these proposals themselves.

With Patten's statement, the Tories are giving their real game away — they want to silence opposition, to quash dissent, to take away the voice of anyone who wants to speak out against them.

In particular, the form of dissent that the Tories hate the most is that dissent that has the power of collective organisation behind it. That's why the

Tories have over the last fourteen years set about taking apart the rights of trade unions.

So students lobbied their MPs not just on the arguments, but by making clear to them that students will fight back, and will campaign actively to defend our union rights.

Sadly, the lobby of Parliament did not get the backing of the NUS leadership. They have their own lobby planned — but only union Presidents and Vice Chancellors are allowed to attend!

They even phoned Tony Benn and asked him not to speak because it was not an 'official' lobby. Benn told them that the event would be better for it, put the phone down, and came along anyway.

Students left the lobby not only angry with our national leadership, but enthusiastic about building the fight-back in our colleges. We recognised that our only chance of beating the Tories is to build a groundswell of action around the country.

Forthcoming actions include a rally in Leeds (8 December) and, for next term, a London demonstration and a national shutdown of education.

## Post-Post Fordism

**Y**OUNGER MEMBERS may not remember the great "Post Fordism" fad of a few years ago. Like all fads, it has died away to be occasionally referred to on the *Late Show* when they're especially short of anything interesting to talk about.

The bright young things who championed Post Fordism were the intellectual giants gathered round the magazine *Marxism Today*, which was loosely connected with the Communist Party of Great Britain. These perceptive people had noticed that trade unionism in Britain had suffered quite a few set-backs since the halcyon days of the seventies when membership of the TUC-affiliated union peaked at over 12 million. Not only had membership declined but a number of crucial industrial defeats had been inflicted upon traditional bastions of working-class militancy. The miners had just been defeated, for instance, and Rupert Murdoch was putting the boot into the print unions at Wapping.

Simple folk like us waffled on about the cowardice of the union leaders in the face of Tory legislation, the debilitating effects of unemployment, the lack of any coherent political alternative from the Labour Party, etc etc. We also pointed out that industrial struggles still took place occasionally and sometimes even got a result. And union membership in Britain remained far higher (proportionately) than it had ever been in (for instance) the USA. There was even a slight increase in union "density" in new factories in the 1980s.

Nothing like the collapse of basic trade union structures that took place after the 1926 General Strike had occurred. We even had studies by the Department of Employment and ACAS to back us up.

But this kind of stuff was superficial and empiricist, said the great thinkers of *Marxism Today*. We were mired in Fordist concepts no longer appropriate to the modern world. The days of big workplaces, mass production and repetitive work-patterns that characterised "Fordism" were over — as a visit to your local branch of Sainsbury's (Sainsbury's was particularly important in all of this, as I remember) would demonstrate.

Now, of course, *Marxism Today* and the Communist Party are no more. The bright young things who brought us Post Fordism are busy writing columns for the *Sunday Times* and putting out challenging pamphlets advocating the privatisation of the BBC. Post Fordism doesn't get mentioned much anymore (except, strangely, in the *Sunday Times*). The trade union movement has not disappeared, big factories still exist, and even Sainsbury's strikes me as a remarkably 'Fordist' working environment.

The temptation is to simply sneer at these now ageing trendies and all their pretentious theories about the end of the labour movement, the end of collectivist ideology, the end of the working class itself. But I think we should resist the temptation for, say, five minutes and give some serious consideration to the small (indeed, tiny) grain of truth lurking in some of what they said.

Trade union membership has not continued to decline at the rate it did in the 1980s but it still hovers round the 8 million mark and the signs are that it is still edging downwards. Union organisation and density remain high in established manufacturing plants and the public sector. But in service industries, retailing and small workplaces unionisation is the exception rather than the rule. Crucially, attempts by unions like the TGWU and GMB to organise women, ethnic minorities, young and part-time workers, have generally been unsuccessful (the T&G's "Link Up" campaign is now forgotten and the GMB's "Flare" fizzled out years ago).

So were the *Marxism Today* trendies right after all? Well, perhaps (just perhaps) they were right about the period between the end of World War 2 and the election of Mrs Thatcher marking a never-to-be-repeated high water mark in terms of trade union membership. We shall see. But to go from that to proclaiming the "end of collectivist ideology" or even "the end of the working class" is demonstrably rubbish. Trotsky (not admittedly, one of *Marxism Today*'s favoured political writers) never expected more than the unionisation of 25% of the workforce in advanced capitalist economies. France, which has generally been more industrially militant than Britain throughout the 20th century, has always had a much lower level of union density. In other words, the level of union membership at any given time is not necessarily a measure of working class consciousness and militancy. Look at the recent Galina strike in Hackney, whereby a group of Turkish, Kurdish and Asian workers who weren't even in a union won a comprehensive victory over their sweat-shop employers.

Of course union membership levels are important. And the extent of union organisation and its resilience over 14 years of systematic attack in Britain is quite remarkable. But it's not the whole story. Union membership levels and the existence of cohesive collective class organisation are not identical. I'll admit I was wrong, if Martin Jacques will too.

### INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper

**Save our student unions!**

**Demonstrate!**

**Wednesday 8 December**  
Assemble: 2pm, Woodhouse Moor  
March then rally  
at Leeds Metropolitan  
University Student Union

**With bands, comedians, speakers**

Details: West Yorkshire NUS  
0532-452312



Tony Benn spoke at the lobby

# Moving around at the top

**D**ESPITE last week's chaos on the London tube, there's good news for some. Sir Wilfrid Newton CBE, chair of London Regional Transport, despite his entitlement to free bus and tube passes, has a chauffeur-driven company car. While thousands are stuck underground by a "life-expired" public transport system Sir Wilfrid is free to move about the surface and brave the traffic jams from the back of his limo for our sake.

And all this for the paltry remuneration of £179,938, which he ekes out with directorships of the Midland Bank, Sketchley, MetroPower and HSBC Holdings.

**B**UT OF COURSE, as our classless society department informs us, the bosses' higher pay is deserved because of all that stress they suffer.

According to a new report from the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, manual workers with routine and tedious jobs with little job security face the greatest stress, along with teachers and social workers.

The researchers also found that women workers usually suffer more stress than men. On the whole, the more stressful your job, the less you're likely to be paid.

**T**HE *Sunday Times*, the newspaper that proves that because a paper has broadsheet pages it isn't automatically "quality press", is continuing its nasty little campaign to play down the importance and impact of AIDS. Their contribution to International AIDS Day was to run a front-page article the Sunday before suggesting that AIDS is not the result of the infectious HIV virus, which they hold to be harmless, but that the disease is caused by promiscuous and especially gay sexual behaviour or drug use.

The recent article is just one in a long line of *Sunday Times* attacks on the "AIDS myth" which are connected only by the implication that AIDS poses no threat to middle-class heterosexuals.

So *Sunday Times* readers can sleep soundly in their beds. It has to be hoped for the health of all concerned that that is all they do there.

## GRAFFITI

VIVELA REVOLUCION

By Cyclops

**T**HE NHS reforms are showing some healthy signs. Health Service managers are said to be "very comfortable" as their numbers have shot up from 4,610 to 16,690 in the last few years. Some District Managers are "doing remarkably well" as their maximum salary has increased from £26,000 to £70,000. Some managers of Trust hospitals are said to be "feeling very much better", with pay and perks totalling over £100,000.

The health of the managers does not come cheap. Their pay bill has increased from £30 million to £383 million.

Also "off the danger list" are clerical and administrative staff. Their numbers are up from 18,000 to 134,000.

Meanwhile nurses are said to be "in a critical condition" as their numbers have dropped by 20,000.

And the patients? No one knows. The customer relations manager's post has yet to be filled.

**A**FTER FIDDLING the unemployment statistics, the Tories now plan to mess with the inflation figures. Saddled with a promise to increase pensions and some benefits in line with the Retail Price Index, the Tories want to keep the RPI as low as possible.

What could be simpler than downgrading the importance of a few items in the "basket of goods" used to measure inflation, little things like food or rent, and adding some goods which are not expected to go up in price in the next few years, say, new cars and houses?

What could be a more common sight than a claimant dashing from the post office with their £88 for the next fortnight straight to the local BMW show room, pausing only at the estate agent for some information on house prices for their retired mum to spend her pension on?

# When excess is better than indifference

## PRESS GANG

THE INDEPENDENT TODAY  
The Guardian Sunday PRESS

By Jim Denham

**I**T WAS, of course, inevitable that the verdict in the James Bulger case would open the floodgates.

The press could now tell us the names of "Boy A" and "Boy B" and show us their faces. The bereaved parents could be interviewed (though only the *Daily Mail* had access to their photo album). Words like "evil" and "wickedness" dominated the front pages while inside the leader-writers, politicians, policemen, psychiatrists and various other "experts" pondered the reasons and the implications.

It was a thoroughly predictable orgy of prurience, sanctimony and cant. The *Sun* (which for some weeks now has been putting itself forward as an arbiter of public morality) was in no doubt where the blame lay: video nasties.

The film *Child's Play 3*, in particular, was singled out on the grounds that it apparently contains a scene disturbingly similar to the circumstances of baby James's death. And the father of Jon Venables had rented the film just a month before the murder.

This was good enough for the *Sun*: a typical public-spirited *Sun* campaign was promptly launched. All copies of *Child's Play 3* must be burned. That other great arbiter of public morality, David Alton MP, gave his backing. Some video stores responded and put their tapes

to the torch though (unreported in the *Sun*) others reported a sudden surge in demand for the film.

If the similarities between *Child's Play 3* and the Bulger murder are as strong as the *Sun* assures us, then it is obviously a matter of the utmost importance. But, hang on a minute, the Merseyside police have discounted any link and there is no evidence that Jon Venables ever watched the video his father hired. If (and it's a big "if") either or both of the young murderers had seen the film, they were much more likely to have seen it on the telly, where it has been screened twice recently and was due to have been shown again last Friday, before being pulled by BSkyB. Yes, BSkyB. And it was them who screened it on the two previous occasions as well. Funnily enough, the *Sun* didn't mention that. Probably just an oversight.

In the *Sun's* defence, I suppose you could argue that its coverage did reflect the genuine sense of horror and impotent outrage that most people felt. However debatable the

link between video nasties and this particular crime may be, burning a video is perhaps a gesture of concern, pity and human solidarity.

**A**LASTAIR Campbell in *Today* (another Murdoch publication, of course) contrasted the "tabloid excesses" with the coverage given to the verdict in the *Financial Times*: four sentences and a tiny picture of the victim. Campbell reckons those four sentences really say "our readers couldn't give a toss — this has nothing to do with them." I think he might be right about that, just as he might be right to say of James's killers, "they are the natural product of a society devoid of spiritual values, where caring and sharing are treated with contempt... and city crooks walk free." He might have added, "And all presided over and encouraged by a government backed to the hilt by my boss, Mr Murdoch." But that would have been asking too much, I suppose.

THE *FT'S* approach would

no doubt meet with the approval of newsreader Martyn Lewis, the man who says the media concerns itself too much with bad news and ought instead to be telling us all just how wonderful life really is.

Those of us who suspect that Martyn Lewis is an over-paid sanctimonious Tory stooge got some backing last week from (of all places) the *Spectator*. Writing in the magazine's diary, Alan Rusbridger revealed that at the 1980 Moscow Olympics Lewis was approached by a member of the Afghan Team, Sadek Zarga, who informed him that a number of them wanted to defect. Naturally, this information was passed on in the strictest confidence, death being the usual penalty for defection. The story ran on ITN but of course no sources were named. The Afghan team officials then called a press conference, complete with KGB heavies, to deny the story. To the horror of the other journalists present, up popped little Martyn to identify Zarga as his informant.

Lewis apparently now says that he did this to "protect" Zarga and has since "tried" find out what happened to him. I think most of us can make a fairly educated guess at what happened to Zarga but unfortunately it wouldn't make for very "good news" in the Martyn Lewis sense of the term.

## Labour's quotas for women

# Quick fix and quick fiddle

## WOMEN'S EYE

By Mary Goode

**T**HE AMOUNT of outraged "debate" provoked by the Labour Party's recent decision to introduce a quota for women in parliamentary selections is interesting.

The heat generated is out of all proportion to the changes being implemented: the rule allows for a regional quota of 50% for women-only shortlists amongst seats which become vacant and are winnable. This rule applied to a region like London would only mean one or two more women being selected as candidates. But there is nothing like a bit of positive discrimination to have those with interest in the status quo shouting "unfair"!

From the horrible media hype you would be forgiven for thinking that there was now no place in the Labour Party for anyone who's not a black lesbian with disabilities. However, an objective assessment by your average Party member would instead acknowledge that prejudice is still alive and well in the Party and that there is still a very long way to go before male dominance of

the PLP is seriously challenged.

In reality, the only specially privileged "minority" in the Labour Party are yuppies!

In fact those of us who have fought long and hard to link the issue of women's representation in the party with the need for clear class politics now find that the issue has been hi-jacked by others with a very different agenda.

At Labour Conference 1993, attempts were made to counterpose "women's issues" to "trade union and Labour Party democracy" in the debate on trade union-Labour Party links.

Ultimately this divisive way of arguing is just the mirror image of the old right wing and another way of setting vital "bread and butter" issues against optional "equalities" issues.

At Brighton, apparently progressive women were using the argument that trade unions cannot properly represent their women members to argue for proposals which in reality increase the power of the male-dominated PLP and reduce that of collective working-class organisation, i.e. the trade unions.

This resulted in the fatal MSF union delegation 19-17 vote to abstain in the vote on John Smith's "one member, one vote" in the name of women's rights.

Members of the MSF delegation, previously no friends of

the feminist cause, voted for abstention, along with some women modernisers who maintained that they could not vote against quotas so they had to vote for levy-plus. This, of course, was a typically dishonest trick. MSF could still have voted for women-only shortlists at another point in the agenda, where it got a big majority and then became Party policy.

This cynical use of women's issues to undermine class issues is symptomatic of the superficial attitude to women's representation prevalent amongst certain layers in the party. Along with the rule changes on quotas have come attacks on the women's organisation in the Party.

Labour Party Women's Conference has been made biennial, and has no power to elect the women's representatives on the NEC. Also, the over-emphasis on more women becoming MPs overlooks the important issue of the lack of women's participation at all levels of the Labour Party and in politics in general.

The Labour Party lost the 1992 General Election partly because working-class women did not vote Labour.

There was a 9% "gender gap" in the votes of men and women.

This fact should mean that the Labour Party needs policy com-

mitments that will have a real effect on the lives of working-class women in order to attract their vote.

The Party should value the experiences and participation of working-class women in the Party and in the trade unions. Instead, the modernisers' assault on the Labour Party-union link sets back the cause of working women's rights by making the involvement of organised working women more remote from Labour Party policy and decision making.

One final point. The way constituencies are to be chosen for women-only short lists is wide open to abuse.

Walworth Road and regional full timers will be able to pick and choose. It is absolutely certain that they will choose to kick out left-wing male candidates to replace them with right-wing women.

Rather than giving such arbitrary power to the Party hierarchy, the left should campaign for some objective quota system. 100% of all places where sitting MPs are retiring would be a start.

There is no quick fix to the problem of women's exclusion from political power in the Labour Party or elsewhere. And there is no quick fix to winning the support of working-class women for Labour.

# Back to our basics

Mark, London

**J**OHN MAJOR says we should be going back to basics. Well, here's a list of the basics that youth need.

1. Jobs for all — a cut in the working week to 35 hours, with no reduction in pay, would redistribute jobs and could wipe out youth unemployment.
2. Free education and training on demand. Education is a basic right for all. There should be a minimum grant for £70 per week to allow everyone to enter post-16 education and have a decent standard of living. Students are sick of living in poverty. Training should be supported with trade union rates of pay and conditions. No cheap labour schemes!
3. Reinstatement of benefits for youth. 16-18 year olds should be able to claim benefits when they are not working. Students should be able to claim housing benefit and support in the holidays.
4. Decent housing. The government should fund local authorities to invest in a massive building and renovation programme to eradicate homelessness. Young people should have rights to housing to give them independence from parents if they want it.
5. A fair and accountable justice system. The police should be democratically controlled by the local community, and investigations into police conduct carried out by independent bodies.
6. Affordable, accessible childcare. This would give parents a break from their kids and allow them to study or work. It would give children a break from their parents, and education from an early age.
7. The right to unionise. In work, in education and in training, youth should have the right to organise to defend their rights. That means



French students are fighting back against education cuts. We need to do the same here

full trade union rights and student unions that can campaign politically.

John Major's "Back to Basics" is a

vicious attempt to off-load the blame for the crisis created by capitalism onto the worst-off — single mothers, youth, the unemployed and black

people. It's about time the labour movement got back to our basics of fighting for a society based on human need, not greed.

## No to "Truant Watch"!

Dave, Nottingham

**E**DUCATION Secretary, John Patten is considering a scheme encouraging people to spy on children who are truanting from school and report them.

Yet again the Tories are blaming young people, especially those who do not do as they are told, for the crime which inevitably infects a decaying capitalist society like Britain. In Patten's words: "It is clear, alas, that for some a life of truancy can all too quickly turn into a life of crime."

What can lead people into "a life of

crime" is to be systematically criminalised by the state. Just as working-class youth, especially black youth, are criminalised by systematic police harassment, so "truant watch" schemes will effectively criminalise children.

Socialists must stand up for the right of children who bunk off not to be harassed and detained by truancy inspectors, and not to be spied on by bus drivers and shopkeepers as part of a "truant watch" scheme.

But isn't it good for children's education to have schemes which make sure that they are all in school?

No. If a child is unwilling to go to school and therefore decides to truant, it is unlikely that forcing them to

attend school will mean that they will learn anything.

Thousands of school children are being let down by the school system because when they *do* attend, school fails to offer them anything that is interesting or exciting or relevant to them. There is no reason why a physical crackdown on truancy should change that.

If education is to work, then children should have the right to be treated as human beings, not slaves and prisoners. The answer to a poor level of education is to make schools more interesting, better resourced, and places where children feel that they have a degree of control about what and how they are taught. That way,

children will want to attend them.

Schools should also be a lot more accessible for more people, for more of the time, so that people who miss out on a decent education in childhood can learn later on in life, and so that people can use schools as a resource for learning at a time which suits them. All this would take pressure off the school system to cram as much schooling as possible into the early years of everyone's life.

The planned "truant watch" schemes would divide the working class, old and young, against each other. The labour movement must strive to unite old and young in a fight against the Tories and for better education.

## Direct action wins!

Alison, Sheffield

**T**WO HUNDRED students at Sheffield Hallam University demonstrated on Monday 24 against changes to timetabling and the lack of support staff on courses. We occupied the entrance of the main teaching block and leafleted other students as they went into their lectures.

Semesterisation and course changes have left timetabling in a mess. Out of a thirteen week term many students have only had nine weeks of lectures, due to cancellations and lack of teaching staff.

Other students have no tutors, and most students face exams the week after the Christmas holidays — not very good for students who have kids to look after over Christmas,

need to work to pay off massive overdrafts or need to use college facilities to revise (i.e. all students!).

The management of the college had previously refused to budge on any of these issues despite petitioning and lobbying. But the direct action quickly brought them to their senses, and within a couple of hours they were admitting that many students had not had adequate teaching this

term and that their exams would have to be delayed.

Negotiations on the other demands of the occupation are still under way as I write, but after these quick victories the students look determined to take further action if the college does not give in to their demands.

Student unions across the country should look to this example of direct action.



**7**  
YOUTH  
FIGHTBACK  
*Rebellion*

... the voice of  
revolutionary  
socialist youth.

This page is  
separately edited.

Editor: Mark Sandell

Phone: 071-639 7967  
for details of our  
activity.

Letters and articles  
to *Youth Fightback*  
c/o PO Box 823,  
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*Youth Fightback is...*

The biggest  
waste of  
money

**T**HIS WEEK'S Greedy Git Award goes to Peter Griffiths, former Chief Executive of Guy's Hospital Trust.

Income Data Services have found, in a survey of Hospital Trust managements, that their average wage increase was 8.7%. Compare this to the 1.5% wage ceiling imposed on health workers by the Tories.

The biggest wage hike went to Peter Griffiths who got £137,000 last year — a 33% rise in one year.

As Chief Executive of a "flag-ship" opt-out hospital and Trust he sacked hundreds of healthworkers' jobs in a £6.8 million cuts package.

The British Medical Association say these wage hikes for hospital bosses mean holding down medical staff's wages and taking money from patient care.

Peter "Greedy Git" Griffiths is the sort of boss the Tories want to run the crazy 'internal market' in the NHS. The labour movement must make it clear that we will fight to win back a health service based on human need, not crazy quasi-markets and bosses' greed.

# Nazis, thugs, Hitlerites

Jim Fraser exposes the real nature of the British National Party, which won the recent Millwall by-election in East London.

**N**ATALIE EDWARDS stood terrified outside the shop in Bedford. The BNP thug crossed the road and stood towering over her, then spat in her face. He did it because she was black.

Natalie Edwards was two years old. The BNP is Britain's largest neo-Nazi organisation. Its strategy may alternate between open and covert Nazism, but its underlying ideology of race hatred, violence and absolute dictatorship never changes.

There is a direct correlation between the strength of the BNP in a given area and the degree of racist and political violence in that area. Since they set up their headquarters in Welling that district has seen a more than 400% increase in racist violence and several racist murders.

The leader of the BNP is John Tyndall. He has a substantial criminal record with convictions dating back to 1959, including organising and controlling a paramilitary terror squad. He says that Hitler's "*Mein Kampf* is my doctrine".

Tyndall's acolytes include David Bruce, who sees himself as "the chartered accountant of Nazism," and who secretly spies on BNP members, watching for signs of disloyalty to Tyndall which he reports back to his Fuhrer.

Richard Edmonds runs their headquarters in Welling and organises distribution of their holocaust-denial broadsheet *Holocaust News*. John Morse was jailed with Tyndall for incitement, Derek Beackon, the

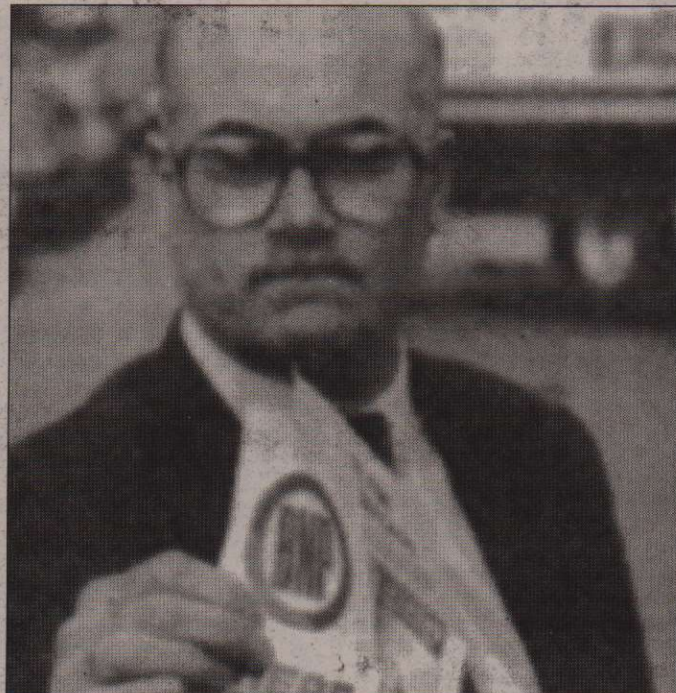
victor of the Millwall by-election, is a key figure linking the BNP with Combat 18, the paramilitary terror group.

Other important figures include Eddy Morrison, involved in Column 88 and leader of the extremely violent Leeds-based BNP of the early 1970s, a different organisation. Tony Lecomber (aka Wells, aka East) tried a nail-bomb attack on some left wingers and is currently in jail for crimes of violence. Lecomber is known as an effective street organiser, and his forthcoming release from prison will bring with it a heightened level of violence on the streets.

After the collapse of the National Front in the late 1970s Tyndall founded the "New National Front" which set up STAG, the Special Tactical Activists' Group, as its paramilitary wing.

One of the leaders of STAG was Robert Yearly, often seen putting up KKK stickers. In 1981, when the NNF were on the ferry on the way to Belgium to take part in the international Nazi festival at Dixmuide organised by the Belgian Nazi group, the VMO, a passenger objected to the NNF singing Nazi songs. Yearly had him beaten up.

Later that year, Yearly told a young Jew-



Derek Beackon, elected to Tower Hamlets council, friend to Combat 18

ish boy "last time we killed six million, next time we'll finish the job". Seconds later he and John Morse beat the boy unconscious.

In April 1982 the NNF merged with sections of the openly Nazi British Movement and other assorted neo-Nazi groups to form the British National Party.

The BNP has sought to establish links with powerful Nazi organisations on the continent like the French Front National, led by Jean-Marie Le Pen. But while there has been some nominal contact, and a small amount of finance may have come Tyndall's way from this source, Le Pen has wanted little to do with them. Instead he wants links with the right wing of the Tory Party, and views the BNP as a bunch of morons. With Beackon's election victory that may change.

The BNP is part of an international neo-Nazi set up, the Odal Ring, which brings together hardline Nazi groups like the French PFN and PNFE, the German FAP and the Wiking Jugend. The head of the Odal Ring in Britain is John Peacock, the Leicester-based Nazi and one of Tyndall's most devoted followers. Also present at Odal Ring functions has been Gus McLeod, a leading BNP activist in Scotland, and delegations from Column 88. The BNP's most important international contact is top German Nazi Manfred Roeder.

While the BNP may deny any connection with the Nazi terror group Combat 18, the two organisations conduct joint activities at several levels, and C18 frequently stewards BNP meetings. C18 draws its members from a number of Nazi, skinhead and football hooligan organisations, which have a widely overlapping membership, but most of all from the BNP. At least half of C18 are from the BNP, as are many of its leaders.

Paul Ballard, the BNP election candidate in Reigate; Peter Illing, BNP candidate in South Oxhey; John Merrit, who acts as a minder for Tyndall; and Eddy Butler, the BNP elections officer, are all active in C18. Robert Jarvis, a leader of the BNP in Loughton, is a C18 section leader.

Violent BNP heavy Ian Dell is active in C18, and C18 thug Phil Edwards has been seen regularly stewarding BNP meetings, including their election rally at Weavers Fields.

Steve Martin, a senior BNP activist, was one of the leaders of the notorious C18 attack on Anti-Nazi League leafletters in Brick Lane. Another was C18 street boss Charlie Sergeant. The following day Sergeant and Derek Beackon arrived at a BNP rally together.

At a meeting on 12 July for the neo-fascist historian David Irving, C18 were in charge of stewarding. The chief steward was Derek Beackon.

## "Rights for whites" slogan covers anti-worker aims

By Jim Fraser

**I**N THE Millwall council by-election, the neo-Nazi BNP campaigned around the slogan "rights for whites". In areas of bad housing and social deprivation this has an appeal, creating two false impressions — firstly that black people are privileged at the expense of whites, and secondly that the BNP will represent the interests of the white working class.

But the truth is that the BNP is totally anti-working-class.

The slogan "rights for whites" implies a better deal for the white unemployed. However, the BNP leadership has nothing but contempt for the unemployed, all unemployed. Tyndall has stated that if he got into power "the unemployed would get benefits for a time, then be forced into menial labouring tasks for the State".

This will be the fate of the white unemployed of East and South East London under the BNP: not decent jobs, but menial labour, and for even worse pay than YTS.

The BNP uses the slogan "pensioners before immigrants". But their true policies were revealed in a statement in *Spearhead*, John Tyndall's own personal journal. "The duty of government is not to assure citizens food, shelter, clothing and education and security against the hazards of unemployment and old age".

Tyndall spells it out. If he were in power he would not consider it his duty to provide decent housing in areas like the Isle of Dogs or Rotherhithe. As far as Britain's Nazis are concerned, if you live in bad housing you can stay in bad housing, even if you are white.

If he were in power he would not provide

"security against the hazards of unemployment and old age".

If you are old, sick, unemployed or poor, as far as the BNP is concerned, you can rot. Even if you are white.

When Hitler came to power he did not create better conditions for the German working class. He created bigger profits for German big business by cutting wages. If Hitler's disciples like Tyndall, Edmonds and Beackon came to power they would do exactly the same.

We need a housing policy that gives everyone a decent place to live, with affordable rents, not so-called market rents. We need an industrial policy that puts Britain's unemployed to work, providing decent jobs with decent wages.

We need better facilities for pensioners, for the disabled, and for youth.

The BNP will not create one new job, they will not build one new council house, they will not spend one penny on better facilities for run-down inner-city areas.

The old, the sick, the badly housed, the council house tenant, but most of all youth, would be far worse off under the BNP. The slogan "rights for whites" is a con.

Nazism stands for the complete and total physical destruction of all the organisations of the working class, and the total destruction of every democratic right ordinary working people have. They would then cut living standards far more savagely than even Thatcher has ever dreamed of.

The people who vote BNP may be deceived into thinking it represents their interests, but if the BNP ever came to power they would learn in the most painful way the true meaning of fascist dictatorship.

# What cuts,

Martin Thomas reviews the economic facts behind the Budget

**T**HE TORIES PLAN to cut welfare spending drastically. Their basic reason for doing this is that they want to channel resources away from welfare provision towards profits for their big-business friends.

But there is a £50 billion public-sector deficit. The Government has been spending £50 billion more than it gets in. Doesn't the Government have to do something to straighten that out?

The Government is not short of cash. That is not the problem. They can always print more money, or they can borrow.

There is plenty of cash around: about £600 billion, of which only about £10 billion is spent each week. Recent research showed that the average amount each person holds in notes and coins alone is £460. Given that most people hardly ever have as much as £100 in their pocket, that average figure shows that a minority holds vast amounts of cash.

Capitalist governments can and do run deficits — spend more than they get in — for year after year. This Government wants to reduce this deficit for three reasons.

Firstly, Government budget deficits tend to push up price inflation. So far inflation has stayed fairly low in Britain, despite the deficit and despite the prices of imported goods being pushed up by the fall in the value of the pound. (A German product costing 3 marks would previously cost £1, but now over £1.15).

The basic reason for this low inflation is the depth of the slump: demand for goods is so poor that capitalists have to limit price rises in order to be able to sell anything at all. But the Government is worried that inflation will explode as and when demand revives in the usual course of the economic cycle.

Secondly, each big budget deficit adds a burden to Government finances in the following years. The Government pays interest to the money-men from whom it borrows. For the £50 billion it borrowed this year, it will be paying £4 billion interest a year for the indefinite future.

## Jobs for all means shorter hours

**A** RECENT European Commission report confirms that shorter work hours could cut the jobless queues.

Between 1983 and 1991, it finds, work hours across the EC scarcely fell at all. The exception was the Netherlands, where average work hours were cut by five hours, or 13 per cent. The report reckons that "more than half" of the Netherlands' 30% increase in jobs over that period was due to the cut in work hours.

Britain's average work hours are 43.6 per week, the longest in Western Europe. A 14% cut, to an average 37.5 a week, would open the way for all four million unemployed to get jobs.



# Capitalism offers: misery, despair

But the third reason is the crucial one: welfare provision and public services are paid for out of the excess value which workers produce above and beyond their wages. All other things being equal, better public services mean lower profits.

Other things are not equal: any halfway frightened capitalist can see that capitalism benefits from having a workforce which is educated and healthy, with unemployed workers protected from collapsing into despair and ruin. These days, however, the leaders of British capitalism are more interested in immediate profits, and less in the reasonable long view. A percentage of despair and ruin is all right by them as long as they get better profits.

**Why is the Government budget deficit so big?**

In the 1980s the Government's accounts were padded by income from North Sea Oil and from sell-offs of state assets. They made huge tax cuts for the rich — though, because of higher VAT, overall tax paid by the average person has increased under the Tories.

Now there is much less padding from North Sea Oil and from sell-offs. The deficit is also increased by social-security spending on three million unemployed (or four million, if the figures were counted without fiddling). It seems, however, that a big chunk of the deficit is "structural", that is, it would continue even if joblessness declined drastically.

That "structural" deficit could be dealt with by increasing taxes on the rich and cutting military spending. But of course the Tories won't do that.

**What about the increasing proportion of old people in the population, and the rising cost of health-care technology? Isn't it true that we just can't afford the Welfare State any longer?**

No! Productivity in industry is rising rapidly all across the world. Higher productivity makes it easier, not harder, to afford the basics of healthy, comfortable life for all.

Under capitalism, resources are squandered on luxuries for the rich, irrational overproduction (£8 billion on Canary Wharf!), weaponry, and keeping millions of unemployed in idleness. People are made old before their time by unhealthy work conditions or by being thrown on the scrapheap in "early retirement".

The answer is to get rid of capitalism.

**Is the budget deficit the Tories' only big problem?**

No. In the early 1980s the Tories deliberately allowed a huge slump because they reckoned it would make British capitalism lean and mean — i.e. it would smash trade-union strength. It did weaken the trade unions, but it also ruined large parts of Britain's manufacturing industry. In many lines of industry British capitalism simply no longer competes.

Since the early 1980s, Britain has consistently imported more manufactured goods than it exports. This means that any revival of demand in the British economy is likely to lead to a huge "balance of payments" problem.

How do the Tories respond? By trying to make sure that the social-security claimants, the old, and large numbers of soon-to-be-jobless public-service workers, become too poor to buy any imports!

**Isn't the economic crisis world-wide, not just in**



While the rich stack up luxuries, they say we "can't afford" the Welfare State

**Britain?**

Yes. In the 1950s and '60s world capitalism had a relatively stable regime, underpinned by US dominance, which allowed world trade to expand without international competition having devastating effects on individual advanced economies. (In the "Third World" it was a different story even then).

Around 1968-71 that regime broke down. The 1980s saw the world become unprecedentedly open to high-speed, uncontrolled international movements of capital.

This global free-market has unleashed world-wide beggary-neighbour, with one government after another cutting public services and bashing trade unions in order to make its country's industry more competitive. It is also extremely unstable, as we saw in the world stock-market crash of 1987.

To reimpose the old economic border controls is not the answer. Now that the world economy has become so integrated, any one country which tried to opt out and build barriers round itself would suffer huge economic dislocation.

Socialists should argue for international workers' unity against multinational capitalism.

Most governments in advanced countries reckon that they must try to make their industry competitive not just by bashing workers but also by investing in education, training, research, new technology, and infrastructure (communications, transport, and so on). The British Government's long-term view is uncertain, but it seems that at least some of the

Tories reject a strategy involving heavy public investment as unaffordable and smelling of socialism.

Instead they aim to make Britain a cheap-labour, low-tax production site for multinationals, conveniently placed off the coast of Europe and enjoying the advantage of English language.

This strategy is probably unrealistic in capitalist terms, and certainly disastrous for British workers. However, many people who want more public investment are just as ruthless as the Tories about cutting welfare ser-

vices and working-class living standards.

**What should Labour propose as an alternative to the Tories' Budget?**

Higher taxes on the rich; public ownership of the major financial institutions, to allow effective democratic control of major credit and investment decisions; restored and expanded public services; a 35 hour working week; training and retraining at trade-union rates of pay; decent jobs for all; workers' unity, across Europe in the first place and world-wide.

## Rich gain, we lose

**F**INANCIER Roger Levitt has got off virtually scot-free — with 180 hours community service — for admitted fraud of tens of millions of pounds. His company was found to be £34 million in the red when the bubble finally burst.

In the same week, insurance boss Peter Wood got a special pay-out of £24 million, bringing his pay for this year to £42 million, in return for settling for a salary of "only" £350,000 a year in future.

£76 million, the combined rake-off of Levitt and Wood, would cover Income Support for a year for over 30,000 people. It would pay for 2,000 new council houses, or one-third of the cost of a new hospital.

Which can't we afford? The luxuries of



Roger Levitt

Levitt, Wood, and their like, or decent housing and health-care for the majority?

The Levitt case also shows up the realities of the Tories' vindictive and demagogic "drive against crime". While the Tories ruin the lives of tens of thousands of working-class young men and boys by driving them into jail, Levitt walks free.

It is not an isolated case. In the Guinness affair, Roger Selig

got his trial stopped because, the judge said, the strain was too much for Selig! Ernest Saunders got out of jail early on the grounds that he had Alzheimer's disease. The disease is irreversible and crippling, yet Saunders has continued a lucrative business career since his release.

# Morals, families and capitalism

John Major's "back to basics" blather, and the media outcry after the James Bulger murder trial, have echoed the American Right's call for "family values". In this article, abridged from the US socialist magazine *Against the Current*, Stephanie Coontz discusses how socialists should respond.

**T**HERE is a moral element to the current economic and political predicament of capitalism; leftists should not ignore it.

In the 1960s, having seen how conventional morality masked racism, indifference to the poor, national chauvinism, economic injustice, maltreatment of women, and suppression of dissent, many radicals tended to herald every expression of individual defiance and every rise in cynicism as a healthy development.

It is now increasingly clear that cynicism and social alienation are not necessarily precursors to social activism. Often, they operate as fail-safe devices for the system: if mindless patriotism and faith in government don't work, then the next best thing is the distrust, individualism, and ultimate passivity fostered by a diffuse hostility toward the powers that be.

Cynicism is what's left after people have dug up the lies they used to lean on but before they've filled the holes with anything else. It's not irrational to worry that in the absence of an alternative ideological foundation and set of moral guideposts, many individuals, particularly children, may fall into those holes. That concern

explains why the family values issue will not, and should not, go away.

For most Americans the issue hits home in a powerful, poignant way, and it needs to be addressed. We should admit that there are serious dilemmas involved in reconciling individual liberty with interpersonal commitments. We must say clearly that the needs of adults for independence have to be balanced by the rights of children to dependence. Only then can the left construct a persuasive answer to the right wing on this question.

The word family did originally mean a band of slaves, and for centuries it referred to power relations rather than loved ones. Even after the term came to refer to people affiliated by blood or marriage, it was not originally confined to these. Right into the 19th century, family signified all those under the authority of the household head, including slaves or servants as well as boarders and lodgers.

Traditional Anglo-American law defined the father as the absolute ruler of his family. In colonial America, disobedience to him was conceptualised as a form of treason, potentially punishable by death. Male household heads had total rights to any money earned by their children or their wives, yet had no legal obligation to support them; they could decide their children's education, marriage, occupation, or church membership without any consultation with the mother.

Most politicians who rhapsodise over "traditional" family values have broken with the real traditional family, adopting an alternative version that was pioneered in 18th-century Europe and 19th-century America by a minority of the population. This minority, largely from middle and

upper-class backgrounds, inaugurated a more sentimental definition of the term family, stressing the exclusivity of the marital-biological unit and the unique intimacy of its attachments. But there is strong historical evidence that the turn toward a more emotionally-nurturing family life was associated with a turn away from community sociability and wider same-sex friendships.

Mutual duties and personal ties that had once softened the rigidity of economic or political contracts and the

*"Cynicism and social alienation are not necessarily precursors to social activism. Often, they operate as fail-safe devices for the system."*

relentless logic of supply-and-demand in the market were increasingly banished from these realms and displaced onto the family. In the process, people may have come to owe more to their own families, but they owed less to the community as a whole.

**I**N recent years, even internal family solidarities and interpersonal relations have weakened, and in many cases this has led to both material and psychologi-

cal hardship. There is no sense in hailing all the demographic and cultural changes of the past two decades as positive. But nor should we grant any credence to the idea that current family dilemmas are the result of abandonment of tradition. We must point out instead that many "traditional" family values are part of the problem, not part of the solution.

The privatism that relies on nuclear, biological bonds to ensure the well-being of children, for example, is an obstacle to solving the problem of childhood poverty now that demographic and economic trends have redistributed income away from families that have children or other dependants. In the 1950s, when almost seventy percent of the adult population had children in school, we could rely on parents' private interests to create a pro-child bloc, in spite of government's failure to develop a coherent social policy for children.

Today, only twenty-eight percent of the adult population has children in school. Maintaining the tradition of private responsibility for children's issues ensures that education will be a minority interest, encouraging desperate parents to attack their problems ever more individualistically, sometimes by abandoning the public schools entirely.

Another example of a traditional cluster of values that is part of the problem rather than the solution is found in cases of incest and other forms of child sexual abuse. The sexual abuse of children is overwhelmingly a family affair, and it reproduces very old-fashioned gender and power relations. Ninety-two percent of the victims of child sexual abuse are girls; ninety-seven percent of the abusers are male. Incest tends to occur in families with strong patterns

of paternal dominance and authoritarianism, along with values reinforcing the submission of women and children.

Tradition, similarly, offers no solution to problems of domestic violence and sexual harassment. Men who institute violence against women tend to hold "old-fashioned" views of male prerogatives. Indeed, the traditional male function of "protecting" women contains seeds of violence against women—sometimes "for her own good"; sometimes out of the frustration of not being able to extend expected protections; sometimes out of rage at a woman's unwillingness to accept "protection" in a particular instance.

Female child batterers, while violating traditional norms of maternal patience and compassion, tend to hold very traditional values about the centrality of motherhood in women's identity. These values often lead them to bear children they do not really want or to harbour unrealistic expectations of the fulfilment they will find in their children—expectations that lead to frustration and fury when they are not met.

No identifiable pathology or unique value system separates the rapist from the respectable married man next door. But a recent study of college men who raped and a control group who did not found some intriguing differences we can use to counter stereotypes about the strengths of "traditional" families. The families of the rapists were far more likely than those of the non-rapists to contain wives who were full-time homemakers. The fathers were usually successful career men who disappointed their children by their physical and emotional distance. Rapists were more likely to feel hostile toward these distant fathers than toward their mothers, but when they did express negative feelings about their mothers these tended to revolve around fear that the mother hindered them from achieving a separate masculine identity—a common enough problem in "traditional" families that make women exclusively responsible for childrearing and emotional bonding.

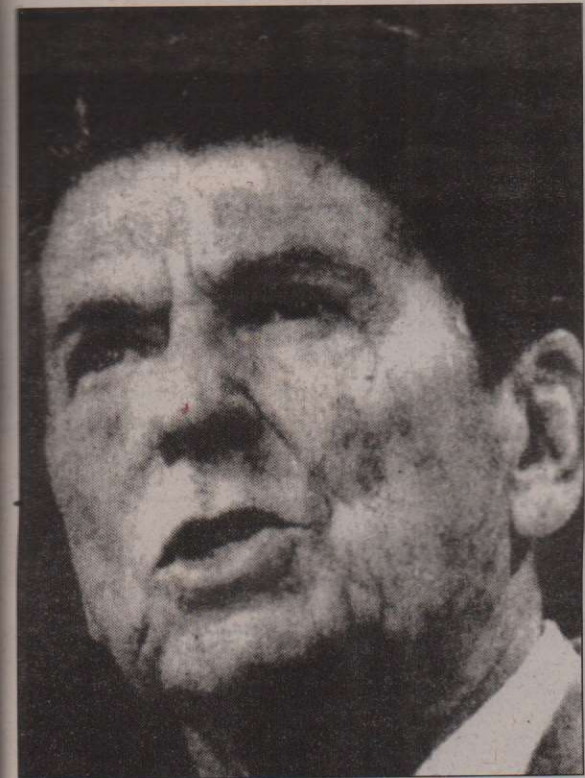
**C**ROSS-CULTURAL research suggests that such sex identity conflicts, and the male violence that often results from them, occur much more frequently in societies that impose a strictly gendered division of labour in child-rearing and production than in societies where there is more egalitarian sharing of responsibility between men and women.

Teenage pregnancy, which the overwhelming majority of Americans believe to result from the breakdown of traditional values, is a complicated issue that requires a nuanced response.

There are some serious problems associated with very early sexual



The traditional "happy family" is a myth



Reagan: reactionary demagogue



Clinton: has backed away from his wife's advocacy of children's rights

activity, and especially with early pregnancy. Teenagers have a higher level of sexually transmitted diseases than other groups of the population. Teens who give birth are more likely to have children with a variety of physical, emotional or cognitive deficits, while those who have abortions are more likely to have traumatic experiences with the abortion. Teen mothers attain lower educa-

active.

**B**UT having explained that many traditional family values are part of the problem facing Americans in the 1990s, not part of the solution, we have still more to contribute to discussion of this issue. We should not just subsume it under our general critique of economic or political trends. There is a crisis of American families that is analytically separate from — and in many ways sharper than — the general economic crisis in America. If we address it, we can speak to people's legitimate concerns about morality and interpersonal stability.

Children bear the brunt of much of the economic decline and social decay in modern America, and we need to highlight that fact more sharply. There has been an extraordinary redistribution of income in America away from children over the past two and a half decades. As declining real wages sent more wives into the workforce, two-earner families with zero to two children pulled ahead of both single-parent families and two parent families with larger numbers of children during the 1970s and 1980s. As deindustrialization and job restructuring proceeded, it has been the youngest Americans, those most likely to have young children, who have been the hardest hit. They have experienced far sharper drops in income and job prospects than other age groups. The result is that children below the age of three constitute the fastest growing poverty group in the nation.

Economic loss for adults carries special risks for children. One study in Wisconsin found that cases of child abuse increased by an average of 123 percent in counties where the unemployment rate had risen by 3.1 percent or more, counties in which unemployment declined had reduced reports of abuse. Outside the family, the United States has seen a sharp increase in child labour law violations over the past ten years; they more than doubled between 1983 and 1989.

In addition to economic trends, shifts in community relations and political priorities over the past two decades had particularly severe effects on children. Politicians have given in to voters' tax revolts by gutting children's programs. Between 1970 and 1991, the purchasing power of the typical AFDC benefit decreased by forty-two percent, primarily as a result of state and federal funding cuts. Public and private spending on preschool, primary, and secondary education in America is now lower than in almost any other industrialized country. The government halved its spending on low-income housing between 1980 and 1990.

Children are also specially victimized by our urban crisis. Poverty, decay of the urban infrastructure, and "deinstitutionalization" of the mentally ill have deprived children of safe places to play or go to school. In Chicago's central city, seventy-four percent of inner-city children have witnessed a homicide or violent assault. On top of all this has come the influx of crack cocaine, which greatly multiplies the dangers facing youth. To the thousands of children already brain-damaged by lead poisoning acquired in deteriorating homes and schools, we must add the thousands more being born to drug-addicted parents.

It is no wonder that people look at what's happening to America's children and see a crisis of the family. Our job is not to deny the evidence of their own eyes but to get them to enlarge their line of vision.

Some parents have neglected their children's needs for their own self-centred pursuits, but few have acted as irresponsibly as the federal government, which tripled its debts during the same ten years that it halved its spending on low-income housing and permitted hunger among its people to grow by nearly fifty percent.

Once they start thinking about it, most Americans agree that our society needs more than a revival of obligation within the family.

As even a noted business writer has commented, it "desperately needs an economy based upon notions of mutual obligation and reciprocity." People should be able to expect "that our home, our church, our kid's school, our bank, and the place where

we work will stay put." Without such commitments in the economy and polity, family life will remain precarious no matter how many family values people embrace. It's building such commitments that the socialist agenda is all about, and leftists should be active contributors to the current dialogue on family values, interpersonal commitments, and the needs of our society's children.

*Note: AFDC is "Assistance to Families with Dependent Children", the main social-security payment for single parents in the US.*

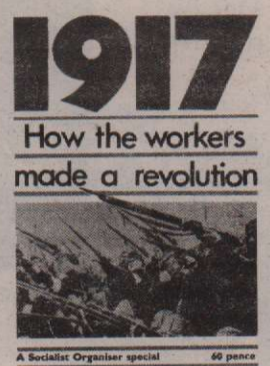
*"Children bear the brunt of much of the economic decline and social decay in modern America."*

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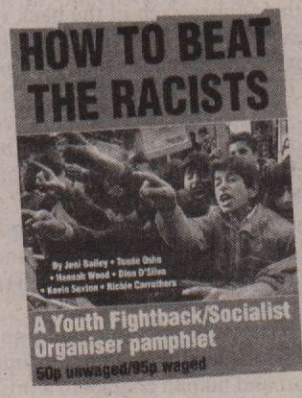
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# USA: the hideous face of legal murder



Dan Katz reviews  
*Dead Man Walking: an Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States*  
by Helen Prejean

Random House

**D**URING the Presidency of Ronald Reagan, America's prison population more than doubled — from 500,000 to over one million. Reagan always believed in brutal "justice". When Governor of California he had introduced execution by lethal injection, explaining that he had been a rancher and had seen how much better it was to kill horses with a vet's needle, rather than shoot them, as he had in the bad old days. That made all the difference!

As President, Reagan called Vernon Harvey (the step-father of a raped and murdered young woman) to tell him that the federal courts would demand the death penalty for the killer.

One of those accused — and eventually executed — for this murder was Robert Willie. In jail Willie was helped and befriended by Sister Helen Prejean, a nun in her fifties from the Catholic order of St Joseph of Medaille.

*Dead Man Walking* is the story of Helen Prejean's relationship with Willie and with other prisoners on death row.

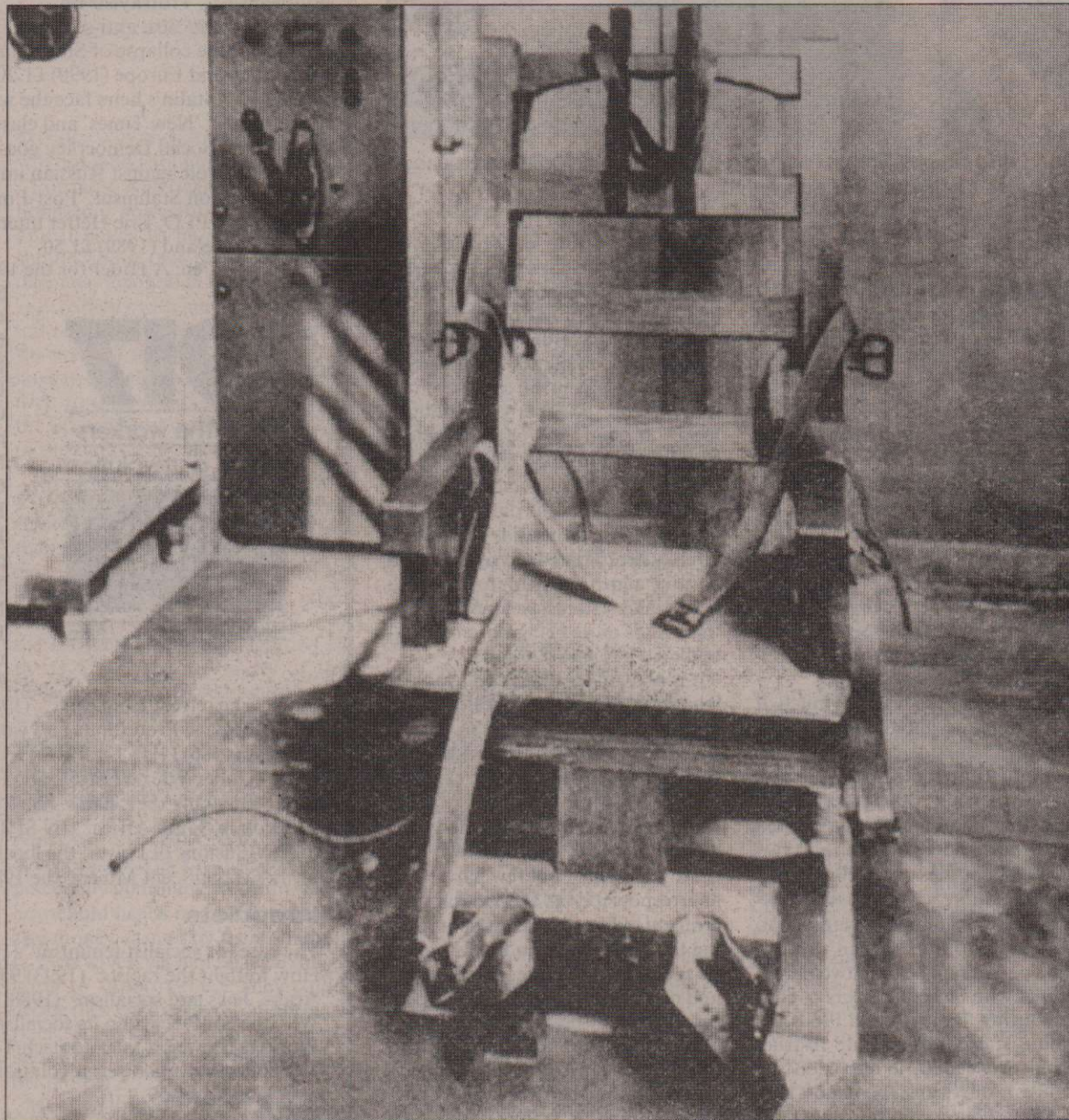
A friend asked her to become "pen pal" to a man on death row. The man was a loner who would not write to others; but he was a Cajun Catholic who might respond to a nun.

She read the file on the inmate's crime, which she found sickening — with his younger brother, he had kidnapped a high-school couple, raped the girl, and shot both the girl and her date three times each in the back of the head. After the arrest of the brothers, other young women came forward to say they had been raped by them. The two told badly concocted stories on who actually pulled the trigger, trying to confuse the authorities; but a jury had decided that Pat Sonnier, the elder, bore responsibility. He was condemned to death and his brother Eddie was condemned to life imprisonment.

Sister Helen began her correspondence with Pat simply to give some comfort and human contact to a prisoner whose family was too poor and debilitated to visit or write to him. But she would not give Pat the impression that she condoned what he did. Nonetheless, his letters multiplied, and his loneliness ached from them. She asked to visit him.

When she reached the prison, after a long drive, she was taken to see the Catholic chaplain. This priest rebuked her for not wearing a nun's habit. She works in a poor neighbourhood, wearing plain clothes, and had come to the prison in that "habit". What was wrong with that?

"The inmates", said the priest, "know that the Pope has requested



Murder by the state

nuns to wear the habit, and for you to flout authority will only encourage them to do the same." He also warned her not to trust prisoners, since every one of them is a con-man who will take advantage of her.

"Your job is to help this fellow save his soul by receiving the sacraments of the church before he dies."

Her first job, she thought, was to show some level of human concern for Pat — something the priest had clearly not done. This meant, in Sister Helen's case, taking part in Bible readings and prayer with Pat, but also trying to get his mother in to see him, and visiting the brother who was in the same prison but unable to communicate with Pat.

It meant trying to interest a good lawyer in Pat's appeal. Like most of those on death row, he was poor and had been poorly represented. There was good reason to doubt that Pat had pulled the trigger. There had been procedural errors.

But Pat Sonnier was executed. After going to confession to the prison

chaplain, he shook his head in disbelief as he told Sister Helen that after confessing his lifetime of crime — "you know, the heavy-duty stuff" — the priest asked him: "Have any impure thoughts?" Translation: do you have sexual thoughts?

After watching the grisly procedure of judicial death — the shaving of all hair, even eyebrows; the putting of a diaper on the grown man who would lose control of his bowels; the tying of the jaws to prevent shouting; the jolts of electricity that twisted one hand around — Sister Helen was picked up by friends at one o'clock and driven off. The car had to stop to let herretch by the roadside.

*"The people who are fried, gassed, poisoned to death are poor. Those that get off with lesser sentences have the money to pay for competent lawyers."*

**R**OBERT WILLIE was altogether a tougher customer than Pat had been. While serving time in another state's prison, he had joined the Aryan Brotherhood. He was a racist, and an admirer of Hitler. But he was a human being.

Yet Sister Helen quietly worked to

bring Robert's mother to the prison, to reawaken his love for his young brothers. He wanted to take a lie detector test to prove to his mother that he had not done the actual killing.

Sister Helen walked him to the chair, reading from the Christian Gospels.

Helen Prejean's book runs through the standard arguments against the death penalty: that it does not deter; that it is inflicted unequally on the poor, on southerners, on blacks; that it is expensive (the average state cost of a capital trial, review, sentencing and execution is three million dollars, against half a million dollars to incarcerate a person for forty years); that it does not, statistically, reduce crime.

But most of all, this book reveals the repulsive, sickening brutality of the US state. The people who are fried, gassed or poisoned to death are generally poor. Those that get off with lesser sentences are mostly those who have the money to pay for competent lawyers.

This is capitalist justice, and against it Sister Helen soldiers on, despite opinion polls, derision, and hate mail (accusing her of being sexual attracted to prisoners, among other things).

Good for her! In this book she shows the repulsive face of the beast against which she fights.

## Mumia Abu-Jamal has been 10 years on death row!

By Mark Osborn

**F**ORMER Philadelphia Black Panther Party spokesperson and supporter of the MOVE organisation, Mumia Abu-Jamal, is rotting on Death Row at Pennsylvania's Huntingdon Prison.

Jamal was sentenced to death over a decade ago — he had been framed for the murder of a Philadelphia police officer.

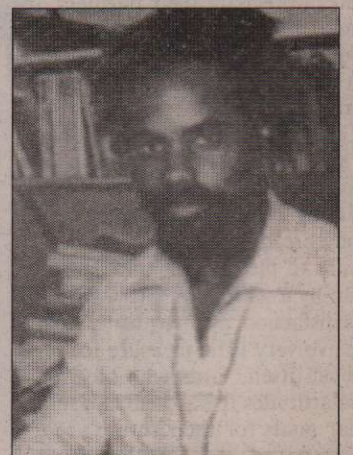
In a message to a Partisan Defence Committee rally in New York on 1 October Mumia said "I come to you from the land of the dead, with the vibration of life. This place is a place where the living are entombed by law, a law with an accent on force, a law with an absence of justice, a law that protects the outlaws of wealth and power, yet which spits on the poor and powerless".

Wadiya Jamal, Mumia's wife, added: "twelve years is long enough for an innocent man to be sitting on death row. Mumia continues to be strong".

Jamal has now exhausted his automatic appeals. Now his counsel is trying to win a new trial.

America has a long record of judicially murdering political oppositionists — from the Haymarket martyrs in the 1880s to Julius and Ethel Rosenberg during the right-wing hysteria of the 1950s. Mumia Abu-Jamal must not be the next to die.

Contact the Partisan Defence Committee, PO Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY10013, USA.



Mumia Abu-Jamal



The good white man

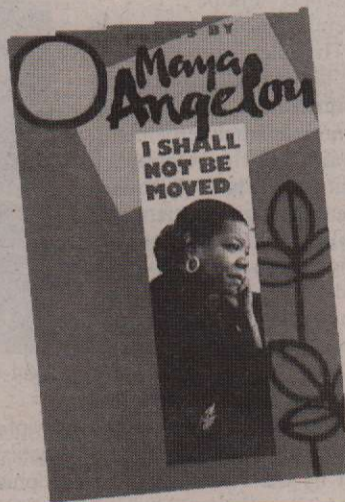
## Worker's song

By Maya Angelou

Big ships shudder  
down to the sea  
because of me  
Railroads run  
on a twinness track  
'cause of my back  
Whoppa, Whoppa  
Whoppa, Whoppa

Cars stretch to a  
super length  
'cause of my strength  
Planes fly high  
over seas and lands  
'cause of my hands  
Whoppa, Whoppa  
Whoppa, Whoppa

I wake  
start the factory humming  
I work late  
keep the whole world running  
and I got something ... something  
coming ... coming ...  
Whoppa  
Whoppa  
Whoppa



This poem is taken from Maya Angelou's volume of poems, *I shall not be moved*, published by Virago Press.

# The black cowboys



Matt Cooper  
reviews *Posse*

Directed by  
Mario Van Peebles

**A** BLACK WESTERN? Surely not. It sounds as likely as a black Robin Hood. In the classic Hollywood western the only skins that are not pale are those of poncho-wearing Mexicans and of Native Americans who, until the late 1960s, were merely blood-thirsty savages then, in the seventies, came to be portrayed as the victims of a state-sponsored genocide.

It is difficult to estimate how many cowboys were black, but reliable guesses suggest 20% and another 10% Hispanic.

On the frontier, when the cavalry came over the hill there was a similar 20% chance of their being black. Two of the ten regiments were all-black.

Along with black cowboys, there were black settlers, black farmers, black shop-keepers, not to mention black outlaws, prostitutes, card-sharps and gun-slingers.

When the image-makers got to

work they were wiped out of the picture.

First there was the rodeo, where many of the cowboys ended up as the great cattle-drivers of the 1890s came to an end. The big shows were all-white.

Only the very best, like Bulldogger Bill Pickett, made it into the big shows. "Bulldogger" wrestled bulls to the ground without using his hands, just by sinking his teeth into their lower lips in the fashion of a bulldog.

It took seventy years for the Cowboys' Hall of Fame to admit him and he is still the only black representative.

Hollywood picked up the white myth where the rodeo left off.

*Posse* isn't 'politically correct'. It is merely what it claims to be, a black western, probably more historically accurate than most the all-white westerns.

The story follows Jesse Lee as a condemned man who escaped the gallows by accepting penal servitude in the US Army. Serving in the Spanish-American war with a racist commanding officer so caricaturally evil as to be implausible even in a western. Lee escapes an unjust death at the hands of the officer with a group of black soldiers and one white deserter who make up the *Posse* of the title.

As they return to the US pursued by

the officer, Lee's past is revealed through flashbacks, a confusing tool which does not work too well in this film.

Lee is seeking to avenge the death of his father, a preacher, pacifist and educator, who attempted to set up a utopian black settlement in the west,

*"Along with black cowboys, there were black settlers, black farmers, black shop-keepers, not to mention black outlaws, prostitutes, card-sharps and gun-slingers."*

Freeville. Again, such black towns are not an invention but a part of the west's history. They were often destroyed by local racists and the Klan. In avenging his father, Lee ends up defending the town against the whites of the neighbouring town, led by their sheriff, another racist so car-

icatured as to be unbelievable.

As a western this is a little patchy and doesn't totally convince. But it is enjoyable enough. The characters do lapse into one-dimensional good and evil, but it is a western after all.

The film's great strength is its racial politics, which are ultimately also its great weakness.

Like most westerns this is not a realist film, but a sustained political allegory for the modern US.

The Hollywood white western had its political side too, first spreading the myth of rugged individualism and the American dream, and then, in the sixties, fighting a surrogate Vietnam war.

In *Posse*, all the white characters are unremittingly evil, with the excep-

tion of the white *Posse* member. All the black characters, with one exception, are good.

The film makes no secret of its 1990s allegories. In response to the racist sheriff, one character shouts "No justice, no peace", straight out of LA 1992.

As the black heroes out-shoot the white oppressors, you have to ask what the film is communicating to "posses" of the 1990s, even though Lee shoots only the guilty, not white people at random.

Inverting Hollywood's racism is not a sufficient basis for black cinema." There are apparently another five black westerns in production. *Posse* will not be the worst. I hope it is not the best.

## The age of torture



Paddy  
Dollard  
previews

*Human Rights,  
Human Wrongs*

BBC2 Tuesday 7 December

Torture is now a routine part of the work of the criminal police and politics in a very large number of countries.

This programme reveals how it is endemic in China.

## Alliance for

WORKERS' LIBERTY

## LONDON

Wednesday 8 December

**"How do we clean up the environment?"**

Debate between the AWL and the Green Party

8.00 Effra Hall Tavern, Brixton

**"How to unite the anti-racists?"**

1.00 South Bank University

Thursday 9 December

**"Is God dead?"**

Speaker: Mark Sandell

1.00 University East London

Saturday 11 December

**"The Revolutionary Paper"**

Education dayschool

12.00 — 6.00

Details: 071-639 7965

Sunday 12 December

**"Who was Rosa Luxemburg?"**

7.30 Queens Head, Kings Cross

## YORK

Monday 6 December

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

Pat Murphy (AWL) debates George Thompson (Socialist Outlook)

7.30 Priory Street Community Centre

## BRIGHTON

Thursday 9 December

**"Homes for the homeless"**

With Liz Millward (AWL) and Nicky Fisher

7.30 Brighthelm Centre, North Road

## Benefit for Quddus Ali

Friday 10 December at the Hackney Empire, Mare Street, London E8

Doors open at 8.30 Tickets £8/£6

## HOW TO BEAT THE RACISTS



How to beat the racists 95p plus 36p p&amp;p from PO Box 823, London SE15 4SE

# Marxists conclude: "Two states is the appropriate framework"

## French revolutionaries debate Israel/PLO deal

By Colin Foster

THE LATEST issue of the French Marxist magazine *Critique communiste* is mostly given over to articles on the recent Israel/PLO peace deal, surveying the issues with a seriousness which the British left would do well to learn from.

According to Christian Picquet (editor of *Rouge*, the weekly paper associated with *Critique communiste*), the deal offers "glimmers of hope".

There is a great deal yet to fight for. The Palestinians have won only limited self-government in limited areas. Israeli troops, and armed Israeli settlements, remain in the Occupied Territories. The Palestinians have no independent water supplies. The refugees of 1948 cannot return to the new PLO-ruled area.

And part of the background to the deal is a weakening of the PLO.

Yet the decisive shift in the deal has been Israel's — a shift to recognising the PLO, forced on it by the stubborn resistance in the Occupied Territories. The deal does create new openings for democratic and internationalist working-class politics.

Picquet summarises his perspective for such politics. "One cannot wipe out an injustice by committing a new one. One cannot deny that a long and complex historical process has eventually given birth to an Israeli national fact..."

"The existence of two states, with relations of cooperation, is probably the appropriate framework..."

The Moroccan socialist Abraham Serfaty is more positive about the deal, or, at least, more scathing about the alternatives.

"The collapse of these agreements would not signify a return to the status quo, but chaos. That might be the aim of the most fanatical desperados of Zionism, who see put into question the myth of 'Greater Israel', reserved for the 'Jewish people' only. It might also be the aim of the desperados of the most fanatical currents of Arab nationalism and Islamicism, who see put into question the myth which they have never renounced in their hearts, that of throwing the Jews in the sea, and, with them if not behind them, that of the Arab regimes who have only that myth to legitimise their dictatorship.

"What we as revolutionaries have to look at, is how to act, starting from the breach opened by the agreements, so that the possibility of progress and liberty in the region wins out..."

Serfaty is optimistic (too optimistic, I fear) about the abili-



Self-government in Gaza: a beginning or a trap?

ty of even the Palestinian bourgeoisie to force positive developments from the deal.

"One cannot say of the Palestinian bourgeoisie that it

*"You and your friends want to be rid of the Palestinian people; I want to repair the injustice which has been done to them."*

is 'comprador' in relation to Israeli capitalism, even if it aspires to be the caretaker for international capitalism in the region. In relation to Israeli capitalism, it is still 'national'.

"The situation is even clearer for the Palestinian middle classes. It is too often forgotten in current analyses, extrapolating a neo-colonial status for the future state of Palestine in relation to Israel, that the Palestinian people is the only one in the region... to have a level of cultural and technological development quite close to that of the peoples of the North and comparing well with that of the Israelis..."

For the Palestinian working class, says Serfaty, the issue now is to break from Arab nationalist ideology and to link up with Israeli revolutionaries.

Michel Warshawsky, leader

of the Israeli Trotskyist group LCR-Matzpen, contributes an "Open Letter to a friend in 'Peace Now' [the mainstream Israeli peace group]".

"You rejoice at this peace, and in its honour you have invited me to dance with you. No thank you.

"In contrast to you, I rejoice in the peace, but I am sad about how it looks. It is not the peace that I wanted..."

"I will do all I can to make sure that the small opening made in Oslo is not closed again, and it is very probable that we will soon be demonstrating together again against the settlers [the Israeli settlers in the West Bank and Gaza] and all those who will try to torpedo this hope..."

"[But] you have fought not for peace as such, but as a means of ensuring our security as Israelis... My handful of friends and I want peace, security, and justice for the Palestinians. You and your friends want to be rid of the Palestinian people; I want to repair the injustice which has been done to them..."

The magazine also includes an article from Trotsky, where he explains why he had come to believe that a Jewish state would be necessary although he opposed the specific project of the Zionists, and other background material.

A minority view is represented by an article from Laurent Carasso, Albert Rochal, and Luiza Toscane, arguing that the deal should be denounced as a betrayal of the Palestinian national cause. "What makes the Gaza-Jericho territories bantustans is not their area, but the fact that they are to be under Israeli supervision, and that the lead-

ership in those territories reckons to set about one essential task: repressing all those who want to attack the Zionist state".

Contesting Serfaty's analysis, they argue that: "The future of the Palestinian comprador bourgeoisie is assured by the peace agreements. This class will never fight for a national state in the full sense of the term".

Their disagreement, however, is as much one of perspective and programme as of assessment. Asserting that "in the Middle East, it is not a matter of a conflict between Jews and Arabs, but of a confrontation between imperialism and the Arab masses", they argue that "the formula of two states on the territory of historic Palestine is a denial of justice".

They do not propose that the Arab peoples should "smash Israel", in the way that the British SWP, for example, does. They seem in fact to favour "two states", but only on strict conditions.

"The solution cannot consist in a simple democratisation of the state of Israel, recognising for example the rights of its present Arab inhabitants... or great declarations of peace and coexistence. In other terms, the necessary recognition of the Israeli national fact can only be made, from the point of view of justice, on the express condition that it should not be based on the national oppression of the Palestinians. That implies the right of return for the Palestinians to their country and their lands, including in the 1948 frontiers, and the destruction of the particular, Zionist, nature of the state of Israel".

To deny the Israeli Jews national rights until they do everything we want is, it seems to me, a dead-end, and radically different from arguing both for self-determination and for sweeping democratic reform in Israel. There is no way that the injustices of 1948 can be directly reversed without creating intractable new injustices.

As an Israeli socialist manifesto from 1967, included in the magazine, puts it, "it is necessary to understand that the Israeli masses will not be liberated from the influence of Zionism and will not struggle against it unless the progressive forces in the Arab world present them with a prospect of coexistence without national oppression".

*Critique communiste* is available on subscription from Editions La Breche, 2 rue Richard-Lenoir, 93100 Montreuil: 300 francs for a year.



Imad Hakei, Hamas commander shot dead by Israeli troops

# Step up the Market Testing campaign!

## CIVIL SERVICE

By a CPSA DsHSS Section Executive Committee member

AFTER THE tremendous success of the 5 November national strike, the "official" campaign against Market Testing has all but died. CPSA members received a circular from Barry Reamsbottom (General Secretary) after the strike telling us to write to Tory MPs! Have these people learned nothing from the tragedy of the pit closure programme? If writing letters to Tory MPs saved jobs — then many more pits would still be open today.

We need a national coordinated campaign of industrial action, leading towards all-out strike action. However at present, with the existing leadership of the CPSA doing nothing to build for it, that seems a long way away. The market testing programme goes on regardless — departments like the DSS, Inland Revenue, Environment and Transport have "market tests" ongoing in virtually every office in the country.

Only last week it was announced

that an American company has won a £1 billion contract to take over the running of the Inland Revenue's computerised records for the next decade.

We are also seeing the private companies being given tours of DSS offices to size up our jobs before the first contracts are awarded early next year. Without any advice from CPSA HQ, these visits have been met with 15 minute walkouts (the most that can be done without a ballot which requires 10 days notice under the new laws!) in the East Midlands and the North East. In Nottingham a public lobby

of the office was organised by CPSA and NUCPS along with local welfare rights groups, over 50 people took part.

We need to continue to put pressure on the CPSA/NUCPS/IRSF NECs to call serious, national industrial action across the whole of the civil service, but whilst we wait for this, we need to ensure that the "left" led sections of CPSA organise campaign. The abolition of the DHSS Section Executive by the NEC hasn't helped matters. An executive meeting planned for late November was cancelled and nothing has been put in its place.

With the "debt recovery" market test feasibility study starting with office visits and the private companies rampaging around offices it's high time the left on the DHSS SEC got its act together.

Branches should:

1. Organise 15 minute walkouts and lobbies against any private companies visiting offices.
2. Ensure there is no co-operation with the Debt Recovery feasibility study.
3. Send motions to the DHSS SEC and NEC calling for further action.

## IRSF General Secretary Election

# Vote John Ellis!

By a DsHSS SEC member (CPSA)

Nominations have now closed for the position of IRSF General Secretary John Ellis, a taxworker from Crewe and current NEC member has secured 40 branch

nominations, representing branches covering around 50% of the IRSF membership. John's campaign has enthused many rank and file IRSF activists and there is a real belief that John can win. The ballot starts early in January with the result announced at the beginning of February.

John's opponent is current General Secretary Clive Brooke who has singularly failed to impress anyone with his do nothing strategy on Market Testing. A victory for John would be a massive boost for the campaign against Market Testing — all IRSF members should vote for John Ellis.

## Only democratic control and massive investment can prevent a new tube tragedy

### UNDERGROUND

By a Central Line guard

For nearly six days last week the east end of the Central Line — the biggest in the London Underground system — was completely out of order. The rest of the line was in serious chaos and other lines were disrupted.

Thankfully nobody was seriously hurt. Though thousands of people were stranded underground for many hours and hundreds of thousands of people didn't get to work.

But last week's Central Line fiasco should be a warning. Next time there is a major fault in the system people are likely to die.

It is tempting to just poke fun at our managers — after all, they spent six days searching 26 miles of track at the east end of the line with a fine-tooth comb only to discover the real source of the fault 20 miles away to the west in a power-station in Chelsea, a power-station that LUL itself owns!

But it would be wrong just to sneer. The tube system is in a terrible state of decay. Only massive public investment on at least the scale talked about by LUL managing director Tunnicliffe has any chance of stopping and reversing the rot.

But even Tunnicliffe's demand for £9 billion over ten years is not really enough given that the system has been suffering from chronic under-investment at a rate of £75-100 million for 30 years.

More staff are needed, working shorter hours. It would make the stations safer — more staff around discourages violence and crime. Meanwhile drivers, guards and signal staff would be under less pressure to cut corners and take risks if they had to work a reasonable shift system with a five-day 35-hour week. The attacks on staff levels kill. Already this year five people have died after being trapped in the doors of one-person operated trains.

The guards must be re-installed on all lines.

All of this will cost money. But the Tories are not prepared to pay up. Instead we hear calls for less "disruption" from MPs and Tory rags like the Evening Standard.

Amazingly, as we near the anniversary of the King's Cross fire, the Standard called for stations to be kept open after the fire alarms have gone off, and for untrained staff to

search the station rather than waiting for the Fire Brigade.

Another crazy idea was for more inspectors to risk violence from passengers who want to escape a hefty fine rather than cheaper fares and more station staff to encourage more people to use the system and thus increase revenue.

But if the Tories and their friends are not interested in increased investment the Labour Party and the unions

should be.

The Tories could be hammered in London on the issue of public transport.

The unions and Labour should campaign for an elected authority to run LUL comprised of 50% tubeworkers and 50% tube users. In this context the tube unions should hammer out a workers' plan for a decent, efficient, cheap and safe underground system for the 21st century.

## Council cuts crisis looms

### SHEFFIELD

By Chris Croome, Sheffield UNISON

SHEFFIELD council's opening gambit in the manoeuvres that surround the annual cuts round is a claimed £40 million shortfall in the £700 million odd budget which apparently means that between 1,200 and 2,000 jobs will be lost. In addition, the council is threatening to move off nationally negotiated terms and conditions to save money and intend to achieve this by terminating all employees' contracts and forcing the workers to agree the new conditions under threat of dismissal.

Divide and rule tactics are also being tried by the council leader who has been floating the idea of pay cuts in those departments where jobs are threatened as an 'alternative' — he knows that after a 3.25% pay cut this year and a three-day pay cut last year the workforce as a whole will not accept another one.

In the light of this there are very welcome signs that the leadership of the council's main union, UNISON, will change tack dramatically — the leadership initiated the last two pay cuts! — and call on members to take a stand. They are seriously considering a massive campaign against cuts in jobs, conditions and services leading to a programme of whole-week strikes until the threatened cuts are withdrawn.

Activists must put in a lot of work to win support for this strategy because the membership is demoralised and politically disorientated after

two pay cuts and with the near constant threat of redundancies.

However there is a real chance that there will be a fight against cuts in the new year and it couldn't come sooner for the services which are stretched to breaking point.

### SOUTHWARK

By UNISON and DLO shop stewards

SOUTHWARK council in south London is preparing for full-scale confrontation with its workforce. Proposals on the ruling Labour group's agenda include:

- pulling out of all national agreements on terms and conditions
- introduction of performance-related pay
- mass compulsory redundancies
- cuts in maternity leave and the abolition of paternity leave.

One of the UNISON branches is already looking at a series of one-day strikes over these attacks.

The rest of the unions in the council, both manual and white-collar

should back the moves.

If a Labour council like Southwark is allowed to push through such a major attack then the consequences for all council workers nationwide will be huge.

The best way to defend national agreements is to organise national action against the cuts.

There should be a one-day strike across the public service on the issue.

### INNER LONDON

ALL THE main inner London councils look set to make major cuts in the budgets next year, perhaps as high as 5%, as a result of the latest Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) figures.

These figures, which are taken from the 1990 census, systematically underestimate the real population in these boroughs due to people not registering as resident in areas with a high poll tax.

UNISON and the other local government unions across London will have to organise London-wide strike action over this issue. A one-day strike in the run-up to the March council budgets would be a start.

## Walk out saves jobs

### HAMMERSMITH

By a UNISON steward

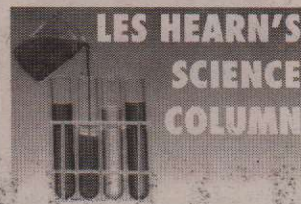
AN ATTEMPT to sack a UNISON member at Hammersmith council's Policy and Administration department failed last week after the threat of an

instant walk-out in the Housing, Social Service and Policy and Administration departments.

This is a significant victory. Twice now, attempts to make UNISON members compulsorily redundant have failed.

However, last week's attack pales into insignificance when compared to the massive attacks on jobs that are likely to come in the new year.

## Chimply wonderful



LES HEARN'S SCIENCE COLUMN

ONE OF the best-selling popular science books of the past couple of years has been Jared Diamond's *The Rise and Fall of the Chimpanzee*\*. It provides a well-written and challenging view of that most fascinating of topics — ourselves! Diamond looks at what we are, have been and may become, in a readable and interesting way.

As the title suggests, he considers humans to be not only closely related to the chimpanzees but indeed to constitute the third chimp species (after the common and pigmy chimps). His evidence for this is that we share some 98.4% of our DNA with the (other) chimps, a value typical of closely related species.

This is an intriguing fact but it may be that that is all it is. It is the major piece of evidence that Diamond puts forward to support his view. In terms of physical make-up and behaviour, chimps and humans are worlds apart — as Diamond amply illustrates.

Let us take sexual behaviour. Chimps live in mixed groups and when females ovulate, a fact which is obvious from changes to the genital region, they mate with all the

males in the group. The males have quite large testes for their body size, some four ounces in total, because those that produce most sperm tend to father more offspring under those conditions.

Our other close relatives, the gorillas, live in small groups of one male and several females. The females are sexually receptive for only a few days a year. Gorilla testes are smaller than those of chimps, about 1.5 ounces, despite their far greater body size.

Human testes are about the same size of those of the gorilla, despite us being only a quarter to a third of the goril-

la's body size! Being essentially monogamous, human males do not need such large testes as chimps. But since human ovulation is "secret", more sperm need to be produced than in the case of the gorilla as mating needs to be more frequent to be sure of offspring.

A further difference is in the size of the human penis. It is about twice the length of a chimp's. On that basis, a gorilla might be expected to have a 10 inch penis but in fact it extends to only 1.25 inches! Diamond's theory is that the human penis is for display to other males, citing the extravagant penis gourds of the New Guinean tribesmen. There are also the codpieces of the Middle Ages, I suppose, but these are all remote from the early human societies and it is perhaps dangerous to pin a whole theory on such evidence.

In terms of sexual anatomy and behaviour, humans are remote from their supposed fellow chimps. Diamond further cuts away the ground under his theory by looking at other characteristics — our lengthy childhood, our possession of language, our invention of agriculture, our abuse

of drugs.

Our recent history he sees as a conflict between our need to trade with and our xenophobic urge to destroy neighbouring societies. Here at least is a similarity with chimp societies

which frequently wage war on rival bands. Our conflicts are more lethal because of our technologies of destruction. But again it is difficult to see a parallel with trade among chimps.

Diamond sees many dangers for the world and for ourselves in our escape from the limits placed on other species by nature. Readers may not agree with his analysis or conclusions but cannot fail to be informed and entertained by Diamond's attempt to place humans in their context.

\* Verso, £6.99

Saturday 22 January 1994

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, (Holborn tube), London 10am-6pm

## Critique Conference

the decline of capitalism and the new world disorder  
Organised jointly with Radical Chains

Invited speakers: Bob Arnot, Chris Arthur, Peter Burnham, John Callaghan, Simon Clarke, Michael Cox, William Dixon, Frank Furedi, David Hillel-Rubin, John Holloway, Geoff Kay, Joe Kearney, Moshe Machover, Peter McMyler, Scott Meikle, Istvan Metzkaros, Geoff Pilling, Sandy Smith, Ken Tarback, Hillel Ticktin.

Plenaries on: is capitalism in decline? Eastern Europe and international relations, plus numerous workshops.

Unwaged £4, waged £8. For further detail please contact 041-339 8855 ext 4377 or 041 331 3312 or write to Critique, c/o The Institute for Russian and East European Studies, Bute Gardens, Glasgow University, Glasgow G12

# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

## Fight the cuts in student grants!

# Labour and unions must fight racism!

By Mark Osborn

**T**HIS weekend delegates from Labour Parties, trade unions and Trades Councils will meet at the TUC's headquarters in London to discuss labour movement campaigning against racism and fascism.

Unlike many of the other campaigns, this initiative — which comes from Bexley Trades Council — sees the labour movement as central. An open, democratic conference also makes a refreshing change.

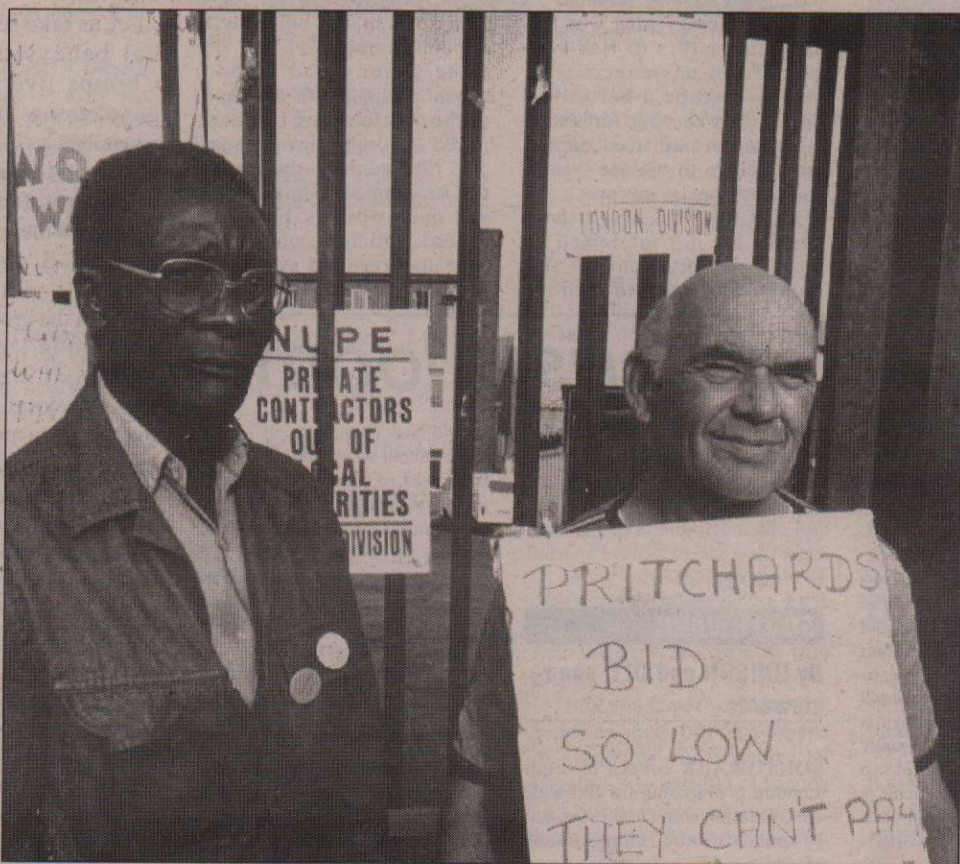
Getting the Labour Party and trade union movement geared up to fight the British National Party threat in next May's council elections is an absolute priority, and that campaign starts now.

We need a workers' movement that can tie demonstrations against fascist attacks and pickets against police racism to political action by a united, campaigning labour movement. Anti-racist activists must make the link and be prepared to campaign for Labour in the May elections.

In the process we must shake Labour and the unions up. To win white workers away from the BNP, Labour and the unions have to offer answers.

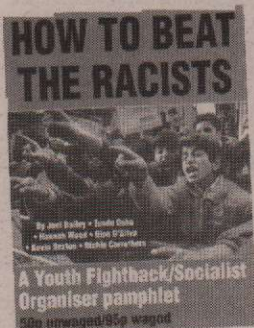
Labour councils must stop passing on Tory cuts to council workers and tenants. Labour must campaign for restoration of the NHS and jobs and houses for all. The anti-racist movement can only be effective if it is tied to fight against the capitalist system which breeds racism.

Trade union and labour conference  
against racism and fascism  
10.00 - 5.00, Saturday 4 December  
TUC HQ, Great Russell St.,  
London WC1  
(Tube: Tottenham Court Road)



The labour movement must fight for black and white workers' unity

How to beat the racists



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By Kevin Sexton, Vice President, National Union of Students

**T**HE TORIES are determined to drive students deeper into debt. The Chancellor has cut student grants by 10% and increased the maximum loan by the amount they have cut. Education Minister John Patten has said: "If students were to make a greater contribution towards the cost of their education they might be better motivated."

Oh yes! Going into massive debt, dropping out of college through poverty, having to take low-paid jobs and work long hours — all these really 'motivate' students.

The Tories want to move from a mix of grants and loans to a system of no grants and full loans. They want to push colleges into changing tuition fees, which students will pay by borrowing yet more on top of what they currently borrow to live on.

The student movement must meet these attacks with mass action — demanding a minimum grant of £70 a week for all in Post-16 education and full benefit rights.

Anyone who wants to defend the National Union of Students and student unionism from the government threat to smash them must make fighting the cut in grants a top priority.

NUS should organise a national demonstration and if they won't then student activists should organise one ourselves.

More on students see page 5

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Buses, rail, pits, public sector

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