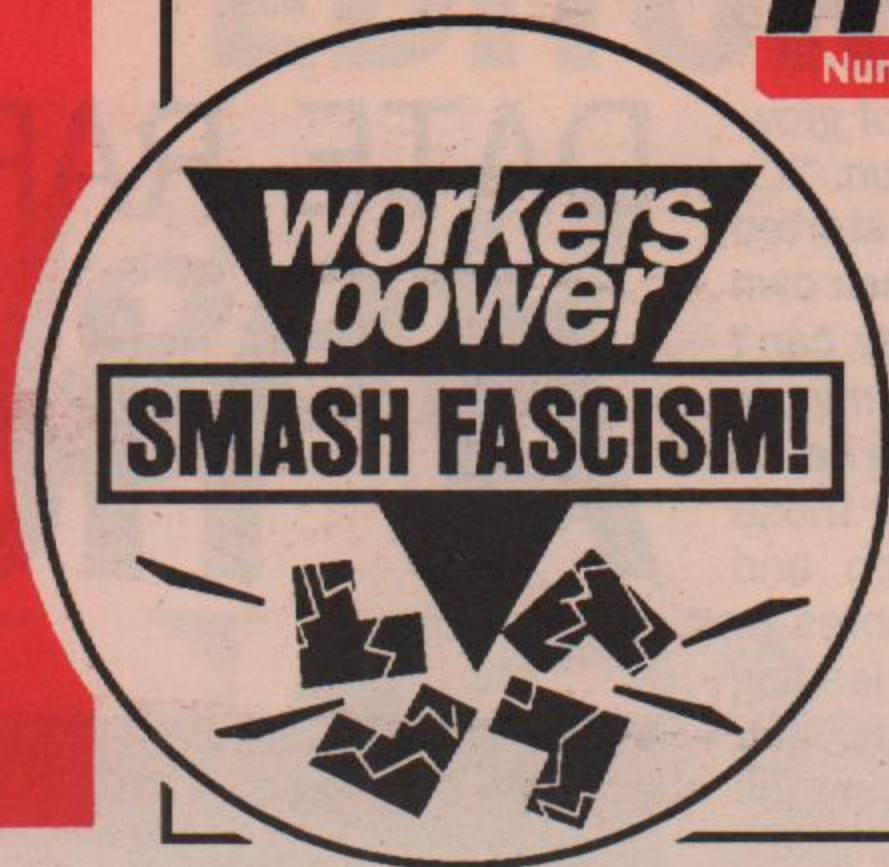


workers power

INSIDE

Number 172 November 1993



After Welling:

**Fighting
fascism**

see pages
7, 8, 9 & 10

British section of the LRCI - League for a Revolutionary Communist International

Price 40p/10p strikers Solidarity price £1

Tax the rich,

THE TORIES are still divided over their "solution" to the economic crisis. But on one thing they are agreed. Working class people will have to pay.

Major is desperate to reduce the government's £50 billion borrowing. This massive debt—more than the total sum borrowed since 1979—exists because of the Tories' destruction of manufacturing industry.



There are two approaches that Chancellor Kenneth Clarke is mulling over in the run-up to his 30 November budget. The first is taxing the poor. The second is cutting back on benefits and services for ordinary people: holding down the dole, axing universal child benefit, slashing still further at our hospitals, schools and jobs. **continued on page 3**

not the

poor!

★ **No VAT on fuel!**

★ **Hands off our benefits!**

★ **Defend our hospitals!**

DEMONSTRATE – HANDS OFF THE NHS!

Saturday 20 November 11am, Jubilee Gardens, Waterloo, London
Rally at Trafalgar Square. Called by the TUC

"DATE 'RAPE' is part of growing up" blasts the *Sun*. "It's about time women started taking full responsibility for their own sexuality and behaviour. They can't expect to act like a whore one minute and an innocent school-girl the next."

So there you have it. All those years of women's liberation and women are still basically whores or school-girls, responsible for leading men on then denying them their wicked way or complaining about the consequences. Except now, unlike thirty years ago, they can also cry "date rape" and the poor fellow will end up in court.

From the way the press dealt with the case of Austen Donnellan, the student recently acquitted of raping another student after a Christmas party, you'd think he was a hero.

"Rape trial student talks today of the new love that saved him from suicide." "Austen Donnellan is a very brave young man," argues the *Sunday Mirror* in their world exclusive. He is portrayed as an innocent young man, a "shy, slightly awkward Liverpoolian" who was inexperienced in sex and infatuated with the woman.

When they ended up in bed together drunk out of their heads, he thought she consented to sex. She can't remember consenting to sex and felt as though she had been raped. He is innocent until proven guilty, and with her alcoholic amnesia it would have been impossible to convict him based on her statements.

The woman has remained anonymous through all this publicity while he has become a household name. But rather than being protected by this anonymity, "Miss X" has faced trial by newspaper without being able to defend herself.

The *Sunday Mirror* describes her as the "assured, confident convent-educated girl from the home counties" who, according to Donnellan, was "very promiscuous", "a very heavy drinker", a "Princess Tart", who looked "sexy, dirty, slightly tart" and who, on the night of the reported rape, complained that he couldn't keep up with the sexual pace she demanded.

Victims

Regardless of the rights or wrongs of this particular case these reports expose the real problems facing women—the media, and often the courts, blame women's sexuality for the crime of rape that they are the victims of. We are told to believe that loose college girls ask for it, and that it is the poor man who is the victim.

Dr Robin Moffat, a forensic doctor with the Metropolitan Police, said at the trial:

"Rapists are violent men. They hate women and they will penetrate as wickedly and ruthlessly as they can. They are not kind, gentle and reliable like this defendant."

This reflects a common belief that rape only occurs in dark alleys, committed by violent psychopaths, and that "kind men" do not rape but are led on by wicked women.

This common belief is a big lie.

In the majority of rape cases reported to the police, and in surveys done by feminists and sociologists, the rapist is known to the woman—often a relative, husband or acquaintance. "Date rape", like rape in marriage, is common and increasingly reported.

The recognition by the Law Lords in 1991 that non-consensual sex in marriage counts as rape was an important step forward. But most women are still reluctant to come forward and report rape because they know that convictions are very difficult to achieve and that their own sexual history will be dragged through the courts as being relevant to the case.

Non-consenting sex is a dreadful experience, ranging from violent assault and penetration by a stranger

DATE RAPE

A riot of hypocrisy



Press blame women for rape

through the sex that husbands or boyfriends force upon their partners in abusive relationships, to the rape by deception of men who go with prostitutes and then refuse to pay. These different scenarios can, in court, count as rape because the woman clearly did not consent to sex.

After decades of courts refusing to take the testimony of women seriously it is important to campaign for legal recognition of women's evidence and to insist that consent cannot be assumed by the man. But it is also dangerous to suggest that therefore a man is automatically guilty of a sexual assault.

There are situations where the giv-

ing of consent is not clear, and this is one of the problems highlighted by the Donnellan case. A woman who goes out on a date with a man is under many different pressures about sex—she may feel he expects it, she may feel it is the norm and everyone else does it, or, believe it or not, she may want it. She will make a number of decisions—to go home with him or not, to kiss him or not, to go to bed with him or not—and these may or may not be explicitly discussed between them. If she decides she does not want sex, but he forces it upon her, with or without physical violence, then that is rape. It is very difficult to prove, and it is undeniable that a

woman who has consented to go home with a man and gets into bed with him would always find it very difficult to prove rape.

The response of feminists in the "No Means No" campaign was summed up by its founder, Siwan Hayward, who said "women don't lie about rape".

So are the feminists right, and should we always take the woman's word for it? No. Unfortunately women can lie, and men have a right to defend themselves in court against the charges. Otherwise rape cases can be used, and sometimes have been used, to witch-hunt men—black men in particular.

SINGLE MOTHERS

1990s she-devils?

SINGLE MOTHERS are on trial for causing everything from football hooliganism and housing shortages to the general breakdown of society.

This is how the Tories see it: the proportion of families with only one parent has gone up from 8% in 1971 to 20% today.

In the same period of time crime has rocketed, poverty escalated, homelessness escalated. Therefore... single mothers must cause all these problems.

What's more, the cost of welfare for single parent families has gone up from £2.4 billion in 1981 to £6 billion today.

By tackling the "problem" of single mothers they hope to bring down government spending.

What is the real "problem"?

- 2.1 million children live with 1.3 million single parents; 93% of them women.

- The majority of these families live in extreme poverty; 50% of single parents live on less than £100 a week.

- Only 42% of single mothers have a job outside the home, compared with 63% of married mothers, and over half of the single mothers who do have jobs earn less than £100 per week.

- 33% of single mothers are divorced, 18% separated and 6% widowed.

- 20% of single mothers report violence to be a factor in their break



up with the father of the child.

- Only 10% of single mothers are teenagers.

- For single mothers the problem is chronic poverty, lack of jobs, childcare and secure housing.

The Tories, with a nod in the direction of returning to the Victorian family ideal, are blatant in their proposals. Their suggestions are to:

- Cut single mothers' benefit unless they name the absent father, then harass the absent father into paying more in maintenance; then cut the mother's benefit by that amount (Child Support Act).

- Withhold benefits until the fathers are forced to return home (John Redwood, Secretary of State for Wales).

- Stop letting single mothers "jump the queue" for housing (Wandsworth Council).

- Set up hostels for single mothers instead of giving them council housing (Peter Lilley, Secretary of State for Social Services). Hostels "would be to their advantage but it would be a restrictive lifestyle." (David Green, Director of the Institute of Economic Affairs health and welfare unit).

- Cut the benefit single mothers between 18 and 24 receive to that of childless women of the same age.

In other words, they want to do everything they can to make single mothers even more poverty stricken and to promote contact with ex-partners, thus increasing the vulnerability of mothers and children to abuse.

And for good measure they want to demonise single mothers in the hope it will detract attention away from the misery that fourteen years of Tory rule has caused.

Our answer to the "problem" is to resist all the Tory proposals and fight for better housing, decent benefits, jobs and—crucially—good quality, free childcare in order that single women can both work and have their children properly looked after. ■

We defend the principle in bourgeois law of a defendant being innocent until proven guilty. But we recognise that in cases of sexual assault this makes conviction very difficult. The answer to this problem lies outside the law courts.

Women are oppressed in capitalism, and relations with men are unequal. Men have more economic and social power, and this affects personal and sexual relations. Many women remain in abusive relationships because they have limited alternatives—cuts in spending on safe housing and crisis centres for women are making this situation worse. Many wives and girlfriends have sex when they would prefer not to in order to avoid a row and potential violence.

The legal system, based on formal equality of individuals and their rights, cannot solve this problem. There is a whole system of oppression that denies women real equality, and the equality of "right", granted in law, does not overcome the inequality of "might" in reality.

Individual consent itself occurs in the context of this inequality—a yes can occur when a woman would rather say no but feels powerless to do so. Oppression of women is not the only factor. Class relations, hierarchies, such as in schools and colleges, age, racism—all of these affect individual relations. Abuse can occur between these social groups—bosses (male and female) abuse workers, teachers abuse pupils, parents abuse children, white people abuse black people.

While such oppression exists, the legal system can never fully protect people. We must make demands on the courts to recognise women's evidence, to stop using the woman's previous sexual history or what she was wearing as relevant to the case, and to provide better support for women taking rape cases to court.

We also need better education for women and men, a more open attitude to male and female sexuality that encourages discussion about sex, and free access to contraception, abortion and sexual health services.

Sexism

We need to challenge the sexism of the media and of education that continues to portray women as either madonnas or whores. We must campaign to change those laws and benefit systems that assume women to be dependent on men. There must be full funding for rape crisis centres, counselling and therapy for women who have been raped or abused in other ways, and better access to housing, jobs and childcare to allow women to leave abusive relationships.

But these changes, while making some improvements, will not be enough to stop rapes and abuse or make getting justice easy for women who have been raped.

A fundamental transformation of sexual relations is required, based on ridding our society of women's oppression.

Unlike the feminists, we do not think it is possible to separate the struggle for women's liberation from the general struggle against capitalism.

Equal rights for women within capitalism would not amount to liberation for the majority of women who are exploited as part of the working class.

It may seem a long way from the drunken disaster of a student Christmas party to the need for socialism, but in the end it's the only answer. ■

EDITORIAL

Stuff the Tory budget!

← continued from page 1

The Tories are terrified of increasing income tax, which could hit their middle class voters hard. With a tiny majority and the prospect of more backbench revolts this winter they are trying to find other ways of raising money.

Already they have announced VAT on home fuel bills. This is proving to be one of the most hated Tory measures since the Poll Tax. Ninety two per cent of voters oppose the tax. It is not hard to work out why.

Well off professionals like doctors and lawyers earning £650 a week spend 3% of their income on heating. But any household on £80 a week has to pay more than 10% of that on gas or electricity to keep warm.

It's even worse for the elderly. Working class people who have slogged their guts out for a lifetime stand to receive a £1 a week rise, taking their state pension to £57.10. Everyone knows how the old feel the cold. But when the VAT on fuel comes into effect next April, over a fifth of their pension will have to go on heating costs. How many more will die of hypothermia next winter?

No wonder pensioners' organisations are outraged, holding rallies up and down the country, from Westminster to the Tory heartland of Dumfries. Meanwhile there's one law for the poor, and quite another for the rich. British companies owe over £20 billion in uncollected corporation tax. What are the Tories doing to make *them* pay?

Far from backing down over VAT on fuel, the Tories are busy looking at other ways of taxing the poor. Kids' clothes is one sick idea. Another is taxing fares on public transport. Fares are already due to rise by another 6% in January. VAT would mean commuters stumping up an average £500 per year just to get to work and back.

VAT, like all indirect taxes which hit people without regard for their income or wealth, should be scrapped. The whole system is weighted against the poor. Caviar is exempt from VAT—ready salted crisps are not. That sums up everything that is wrong with tax in this country.

Instead of taxing the poor, we need a tax on the super-rich. A swingeing tax on unearned wealth—not on workers or the lower middle class—could fund a massive programme of state spending to rebuild our health service, renovate our estates, build new homes for the homeless and put millions back to work.

The Tories don't just want to screw more money out of working class people in tax. They want to cut off funding from anything that makes our lives easier but doesn't make a profit for their backers in big business.

Tory lies about dole scroungers and the sickening campaign against single mothers are all designed to soften the public up ready for the budget. Thatcher's planned successor to Major—the smarmy Treasury minister Michael Portillo—has floated a whole range of ideas, warning the public to be ready to "think the unthinkable." On the NHS he argued "I think we need to get away from dogmatic distinctions between private and public within the health service". In other



words, an end to the NHS as we know it.

There is a serious threat to child benefit and even the possibility of the dole being reduced still further, forcing millions, already well below the poverty line, into an even steeper downward spiral of despair.

Workers should not believe a word of the Tory propaganda campaign. It is the profit system that is responsible for unemployment—the profiteers should pay the price. We should demand work or full pay! If employers can't find jobs for millions to do when there are homes to be built, sick people to be cured, coal to be dug and the whole crumbling infrastructure of this country to repair and renovate, they should pay benefits at the rate of the average industrial wage.

The health service is in for a particularly violent attack from the Tories. They and their families can all afford to go private anyway. What do they care about the effect it will have on people's lives when they cut £700 million from the projected budget for the NHS for the current financial year.

They argue that there are too many hospital beds. But in South Birmingham, where Selly Oak hospital is up for closure, there is already a waiting list of 100,000 people!

All these cuts, all the proposed taxes, every attack on working class people already suffering the effects of the recession and of the madness of the market system, should be fought every inch of the way.

Labour's Gordon Brown recently declared that VAT on newspapers or kid's clothes would, "create a wave of protest from which the Tories would never recover."

But the Tories have recovered from massive waves of protest before: when millions rejected the Poll Tax, and last October when 250,000 workers took to the streets against the pit closure plan. We have been told that the Tories can never recover before: in 1983, in 1987 and in 1992.

To make sure that the Tories don't recover we need something that Gordon Brown will never call for: we need action! Workers shouldn't wait for budget day. We should start the fight now.

The leaders of the Labour Party and the trade unions should launch a massive campaign of demonstrations and rallies against the VAT increases and the coming

cuts. Pensioners, women, young people and workers should take to the streets together in a vast show of strength, building on the wave of anger that is already growing from below. On 30 November the TUC should call a one-day General Strike as a signal of what the Tories can expect as they try to push their measures through.

The unemployed need to link up their existing campaigns and action groups into a national movement, taking protest actions—like occupations of government offices and the sumptuous dining clubs of the rich—against any cut in benefits. And faced with closures of nurseries, hospitals and schools, trade unionists should launch strike action without delay until the threat is withdrawn, linking up with local users to occupy services and keep them running, whatever the Tories want.

In fighting back through direct action against all attacks on the poor, the working class movement needs to raise its horizons beyond the charmed world of parliamentary debates that John Smith and Gordon Brown inhabit. We need to finish the job started in October 1992, when the anger of millions of workers made the Tories totter.

Local committees of trade unionists and local communities should draw up their own inventory of resources and needs in their areas, to put together an emergency plan for jobs and services funded from the profits and wealth of the super-rich. That way, the goal of socialism—a society based on planning to meet basic human needs—can become more than just a vague term once employed by Labour leaders. It can become a practical goal for the working class movement, bringing the promise of an end to the poverty, suffering and desperation that wrecks millions of lives. ■

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SHEFFIELD

Bolshie Broads meeting

• Fighting Fascism

27 October, 7.30pm

Bolshie Broads meeting

The roots of social oppression

10 November, 7.30pm

See seller for venues

LEICESTER

Workers Power Public Meeting

• The fight for workers power

Wednesday 27 October, 7.30pm

Castle Community rooms (opposite prison)

BIRMINGHAM

Workers Power Open Forums:

• What is happening in Russia?

Tuesday 2 November, 8.00pm

• PLO sell out?

Tuesday 30 November, 8.00pm

See seller for venue

Workers Power Public Meeting

• The fight for workers power

Tuesday 16 November, 7.30pm

The Big Bull's Head, Digbeth,

Birmingham

LONDON

Workers Power Public Meeting

• The fight for workers power

Tuesday 28 October, 7.30pm

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,

Holborn

SHOOTS OF "sellout" and "black-mail" echoed around Dundee's Caird Hall on 14 October as officials of the AEEU all but imposed an abysmal deal on a mass meeting of the Timex strikers. Leading members of the strike committee, John Kydd Jnr, Charlie Malone and Margaret Thompson denounced the agreement between the AEEU national bureaucrats and the management of the US based multinational.

In the end relentless bullying by Jimmie Airlie, the AEEU's NEC member for Scotland, combined with increasing despair in the strikers' ranks to produce a slim majority in favour of the deal.

Under the agreed deal, more than 300 Timex workers must abandon claims of unfair dismissal against Timex in exchange for as little as £500. Those with more than thirty years service get a mere £4,000. With the prospect of waiting for two years for verdicts on industrial tribunals, and the threat by Airlie to withdraw strike pay and legal representation, many strikers finally accepted the offer.

Since late August the Dundee factory has been little more than a shell. In the absence of any move by strikers to occupy the plant, the company soon accelerated its closure plans, stripping the plant of £4 million worth of machinery by 29 August.

Earlier that week the last of the 250 scabs drove through the factory gate for the final time with meagre sums to show for months of strike-breaking, along with the odd tool pilfered from a sacked worker's locker.

Since the plant shut, Timex has opened a small customer service office in nearby Forfar to deal with the watches produced in France and the Philippines. Strikers maintained a regular picket there for six weeks as well as sending a delegation down to Timex's small west London facility and a second team of pickets to the French factory in Besançon.

While the vast majority of strikers had remained solid and public sympathy still ran high, active support for their struggle plunged sharply from late June onwards. The solidarity action of Dundee trade unionists had slumped by August.

Responsibility for the withering of this fight lies squarely with the AEEU and STUC bureaucracy. Time and

TIMEX STRIKERS

Knifed in the back by Airlie



Women strikers were always at the forefront

again, the AEEU's top brass acted to undermine support for the strike and sought to sap morale with letters threatening expulsions from the union for conducting effective picketing.

The STUC refused to defy the anti-trade union laws and their ban on solidarity action. General Secretary Campbell Christie wilfully ignored the decision of an officially convened shop

stewards' conference for a day of action on 1 July. Even so, oil refinery workers at BP's Grangemouth facility struck for half a day. Strathclyde busworkers forced their bosses to stop using a catering firm which had supplied the scab operation at Timex. Having failed to get the local Dundee labour movement to provide effective solidarity action, the strike commit-

tee turned to other Timex workers internationally.

The pickets of the French plant and the international delegations to the USA showed the importance of forging international links, especially in fighting the power and mobility of a multinational boss.

Meanwhile, the local leadership had apparently lost sight of the sig-

nificance of the Dundee plant itself. An effective and largely accountable strike committee had been an essential feature of the Timex fight but it failed to offer any effective strategy. It proved unwilling and unable to make a decisive break with the AEEU and STUC bureaucrats. Its refusal to issue its own call for open defiance of the anti-union laws and to call for an immediate occupation of the plant in the wake of the closure announcement left it with the secondary tactic of the consumer boycott which on its own was unable to win the strike.

The sorry end of the Timex battle, however demoralising for the strikers and all those workers who were inspired by their heroic resistance, must spur militants on to expose the criminal betrayal of the strike by the trade union tops and fight for rank and file control of their unions.

The AEEU's leadership squandered the militant determination of an historic nine month battle for pay, working conditions and dignity. Despite this, Timex strikers denied management their dream of running a cheap labour, non-unionised electronic plant in Scotland.

Above all else the lessons of this avoidable defeat highlight the urgency of building a rank and file movement that will challenge Jimmy Airlie and Gavin Laird along with a whole layer of time-serving parasitic bureaucrats. Such a challenge will need to prove itself capable of taking the illegal action which is vital to winning future battles for even the most basic demands. ■

BERNIE GRANT AND REPATRIATION

Here to stay, here to fight

BERNIE GRANT, the black Labour MP for Tottenham, played into the hands of every racist and fascist with his recent speech about voluntary repatriation.

Speaking to an audience at a Labour Party Conference fringe meeting marking the 25th Anniversary of Enoch Powell's infamous "rivers of blood" speech, Grant declared that he was "no longer sure that Powell was entirely wrong" on the question of growing racial conflict in Britain.

Returning

He went on to suggest the growing racism in Britain and Europe was leading "many" of his black constituents to consider returning to their countries of origins and that the issue of financial help for "repatriation" should be considered. Later in the month, on the TV programme, *Devils Advocate*, he declared that blacks had "no future" in Europe.

Once Grant's speech was made public by the black community newspaper, *The Voice*, it rightly led to a chorus of condemnation from black organisations. Coming shortly after the victory of a fascist BNP candi-

date in the Isle of Dogs, standing for the compulsory repatriation of all "immigrants", such a speech from a black leader could not have come at a worse time.

Winston Churchill, the racist right wing Tory, immediately welcomed Bernie Grant's speech. Churchill has been strident in his demands for an end to all immigration. Grant's speech opened up the opportunity for all the racists, the Tory right, the racist press, to say "there you are, even Bernie Grant agrees, blacks should be encouraged to go back home."

Black people in Britain and Europe should have nothing to do with such proposals. Any talk of "aided repatriation" or "conditional return" strengthens the racists' arguments that black people have no right to be here. The opposite is true. Black people have every right to be here. The slogan "here to stay, here to fight", is absolutely correct.

Worse, Grant's position means surrender in the anti-racist struggle. To suggest that black people have no future in Europe because of the rise of racism and fascism is saying that the battle is already lost; that



Grant's "conditional return" aids racists, not anti-racists

the only option is to leave. The real option is for black people to fight back, to unite with anti-fascist and anti-racist white workers and youth to smash the fascists and crush racism.

Under strong criticism Bernie Grant has retreated from his original comments. In a statement to the *Caribbean Times* he has declared that "conditional return", as he now

calls it, is not a solution to our problems in this country and that "it is certainly no substitute for carrying on the fight against racism". Good. But what Bernie Grant refuses to recognise is that his concession to the idea of repatriation strengthens the racist right's arguments and undermines the struggle of black people in Britain.

Grant has linked the question of

"conditional return" to the demand for reparations to Africa for the impact of slavery and hundreds of years of exploitation. In *The Voice* he has developed the theme that returning blacks could be involved in some sort of "structured programme for the rebuilding these countries".

Forgets

All this conveniently forgets that hundreds of thousand of black people in Britain were either born or brought up from an early age in this country. They have no desire to "return" anywhere since this is their country. And the same imperialist system that fosters racism in Britain will make sure that "structured programmes" to develop the third world will remain empty phrases on the lips of reformist tricksters like Grant.

Black people are here to stay and the main task of every anti-racist, black and white, is to fight for the kind of society that can kill off racism at its roots. The best thing Grant can do is start campaigning right now for the abolition of all immigration controls and self-defence against all racist attacks. ■

Last month Tory Home Secretary Michael Howard wowed the blue-rinsed Tory conference with a 27 point plan to get tough on crime.

The judiciary is too lenient and the police are powerless in the face of soaring crime levels, Howard told the Tories. If law and order is to be restored, he claimed, the "30 year in-built bias in the criminal justice system in favour of the criminal and against the public" must be corrected.

Howard's key proposals include:

- Abolition of the right to silence.
- More police powers—including the setting up of a DNA data bank and greater "stop and search" powers.
- Making it an offence to possess anything that gives "reasonable suspicion" of being connected with terrorist activities.
- Second and third cautions will be scrapped, tougher bail laws will be introduced and juveniles will be liable to longer jail sentences.

He also promised further announcements on the proposed abolition of the right to trial by jury and the introduction of formal plea bargaining in British courts.

Prisoners

To cope with the inevitable increase in prisoners as a result of this package, Howard proposes spending £60 million on building four more prisons. Only three years ago a Tory White Paper admitted: "Imprisonment can be an expensive way of making bad people worse". But Howard assured his audience that, despite all evidence to the contrary, "prison works".

The Tories are hypocrites. It isn't the lack of prisons, powerless police or lenient judges that have given rise to a recorded 116% rise in crime since 1980. It is the effects of Tory rule, the creation of mass unemployment, the dismantling of working class communities and the degeneration of the inner cities that has driven thousands of youth and desperate people into crime. In a society which says you are nothing without conspicuous personal possessions and then takes away your right to earn a living, is it any wonder that some youth turn to crime?

That being said, workers have a direct interest in stopping and reducing crime against both their property and their persons. Working class people are the main victims of crime, because we can't afford the security systems, the bodyguards, the insurance premiums and the safe private transport that cosset the rich.

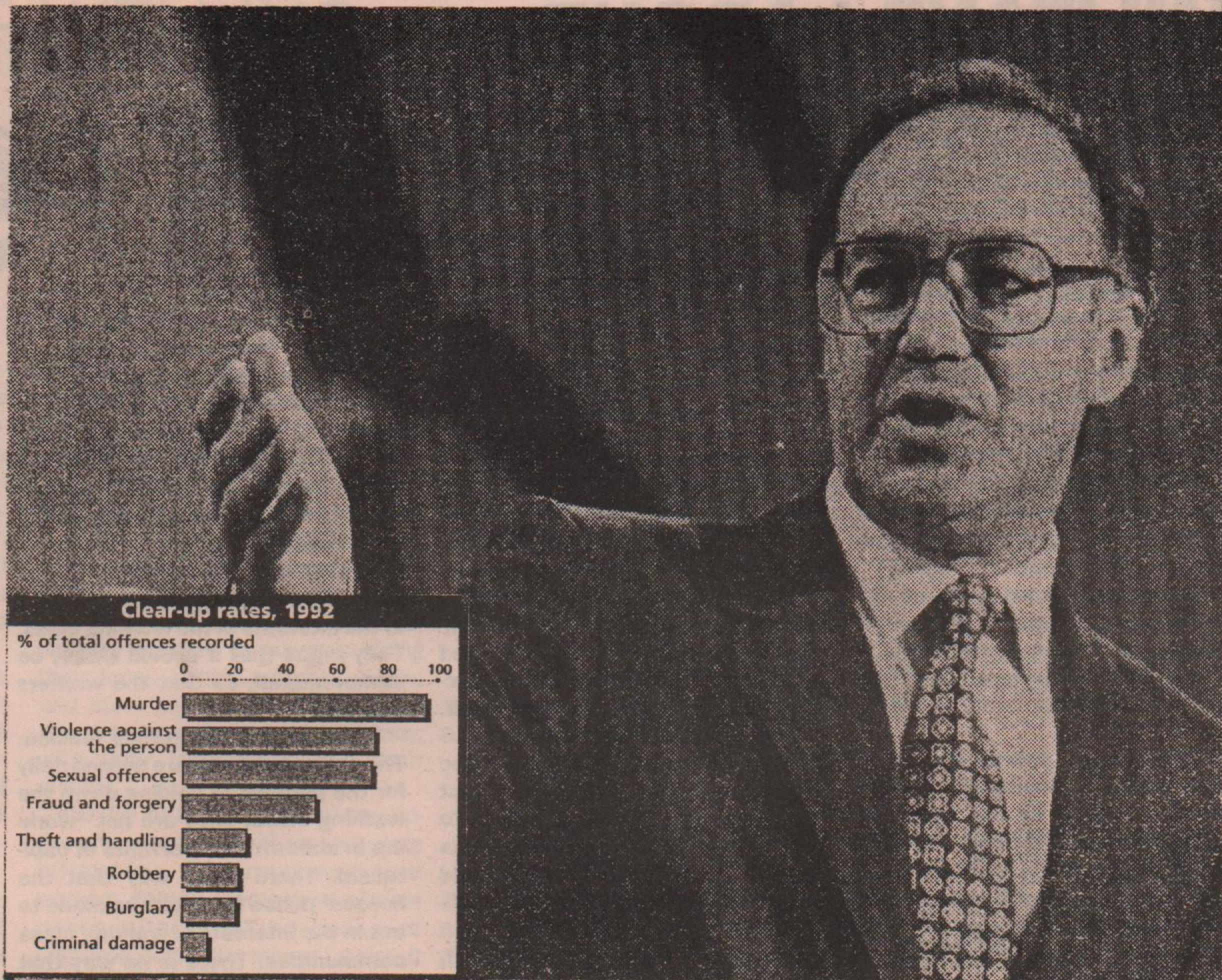
Community

There can be no doubt that crime is on the increase. Experts disagree as to the exact percentage, due to the fact that many crimes go unreported. But you don't need to be a sociologist: you just have to live in any working class community to know that burglary, car theft, vandalism and random violence are on the increase. Equally damaging is the fear of crime which haunts many elderly people and many women, reducing them to prisoners in their own homes.

Many working class people, even if they can see through the vote catching rhetoric of the "hang 'em and flog 'em" Tories, still turn in desperation to the idea of a more draconian criminal justice system.

But it will not work. The Tory proposals will not reduce crime: even most capitalist experts recognise this. One figure rarely quoted in the political battles over criminal justice is the stark fact that less than 10% of recorded crimes are punished. And according to the British Crime Survey only one in three crimes is reported.

The criminal justice system deals only with the tip of the iceberg. And that is not the legacy of the supposedly trendy-liberal 1960s. Since the Tories came to power, while real spending on the police has increased by 88%, the clear up rate for crime



CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Howard's way won't work

has fallen from 42% to 26%.

The Tories claim that US crime figures show a fall in crime as a result of a dramatic increase in prison sentences. The US has seen a 400% increase in the prison population over the last decade and claims a 26% fall in crime rates (not including homicides).

Today's prison population is 47,000. Even Home Office research concludes that it would have to rise by 25% to reduce recorded crime by 1%. By these calculations there would have to be 1.2 million in prison to abolish crime altogether!

But of course prison itself does not work. Sixty percent of male young offenders are reconvicted within two years. That is not because British

Tories in the opinion polls. Having seen Labour lurch to the right and claim the law and order issue as its own (with Tony Blair's "tough on crime and the causes of crime" slogan), the Tories have been panicked into a crackdown they know will never work.

At the same time they are on the offensive to restore a repressive apparatus that has been severely damaged by successive revelations of miscarriages of justice in political trials and investigations.

Silence

The right to silence, had it been used and respected, could have prevented the unlawful convictions of the Birmingham Six, Guildford Four,

fill the gap".

If police have to rely on the statement of the accused to secure a conviction then their case is fundamentally flawed to start with.

Like many of the Tories' law and order experiments Howard's latest proposals have been perfected in Northern Ireland. Has the abolition of the right to silence there seen a fall in house break-ins? Have the "stop and search" powers of the RUC and the British Army seen a decline in drug dealing? Have "training sentences" for juveniles prevented rampant joyriding?

No. What these repressive measures have meant is the systematic oppression of the nationalist community in Northern Ireland. Northern Ire-

criminalising and harassing the Irish community in Britain. There are already laws against terrorism, possessing a gun or explosives, even wearing a face mask in public! What objects will the police be looking for which provide "reasonable suspicion" of involvement in terrorism? Republican newspapers and calendars? Letters to or from Republican prisoners? Membership cards for the Gaelic Athletic Association?

Many commentators suspect that since a series of scandals have revealed the police to be a bunch of violent, lying criminals themselves, there has been an undeclared police go-slow on detecting crime. With this in mind many Tories hope that, by shelving the Sheehy report and giving the police powers to create more miscarriages of justice, they can improve the clear up rate.

But the police will never be trusted in working class communities where crime is greatest. The clear-up rate for crimes like murder, violence and rape is relatively high—undoubtedly because most workers see these as so repugnant that they are prepared to make statements to the police to help clear them up.

Youth

But working class youth are consistently harassed by police, most car drivers have experienced petty police harassment and abuse, and in both cases black people bear the brunt. Once inside the legal process, there is consistent discrimination against working class people in general and black people in particular.

Any worker who has been on strike will know that the police always side with the bosses, harass and attack picket lines—whilst the judiciary steals the union funds and issues injunctions against effective action.

Most residents of inner cities or run down working class estates know that the police treat the whole population, not just criminals, with contempt. No wonder they are generally wary of collaboration with the cops when it comes to burglary, car theft and vandalism.

Only a force based on and accountable to the majority of the population—the working class—has a chance of combating anti-social crime. But that cannot happen under capitalism, where the police are an arm of the repressive apparatus that keeps the ruling class in place. Only when the working class has taken control of society will the population be able to police itself effectively, through its own democratic and accountable workers' militia.

Socialists support measures which reduce crime without strengthening state repression. Likewise we demand free schemes to make workers' homes and streets as safe as possible—like the door and window lock schemes pioneered in Luton and Rochdale which significantly dented burglary figures, and the free women's bus services run by some local councils and student unions.

Cheap

We also demand a cheap universal insurance scheme which does not discriminate against working class areas. If the bosses have all these things we demand them too.

But the *real* causes of crime are poverty and unemployment, the oppression of black people, women and youth. All of these are ultimately caused by capitalism, and decaying capitalism is producing a more criminal, more violent society.

The fundamental debate on crime is not between the hard liners and the so-called liberals—neither of whom have an answer to reducing crime. The debate is over what kind of society we want.

If you want to be tough on the causes of crime—get tough on capitalism. ■

Today's prison population is 47,000. Home Office research concludes that it would have to rise by 25% to reduce crime by 1%. By these calculations there would have to be 1.2 million in prison to abolish crime altogether!

prisons are holiday camps for the prisoner—many are disgusting Victorian slums with degrading discipline, bullying and corruption. The re-offending rate is high because there is no intention of and few facilities for rehabilitation. Again, Home Office research suggests that reconviction rates are lower for community service orders.

Bigots

Even Tory bigots who reject the idea that crime has a social cause should be able to see that the "prison works" strategy cannot stop their lives being disrupted by crime. Many establishment figures, including top judges, have said precisely that.

But Howard's measures are designed to alter one statistic alone: the desperately low showing of the

Tottenham Three and the numerous people fitted-up by the West Midlands Serious Crimes Squad. In all of these cases the prosecution case was based on alleged confessions.

There is nothing to stop police forging statements, or beating them out of suspects, but the right to remain silent under police interrogation is one which must be defended. It allows the accused to make statements, should they wish to, outside of the pressure and disorientation of the police interrogation cell.

When the Tories say "no innocent person needs the right to silence" the words of Lord Scarman—no left wing agitator—should be thrown in their faces:

"If there is a weakness in the prosecution case they cannot hope to rely on abolishing the right to silence to

land has long been a testing ground for the British bosses' methods of state repression.

Rule

These measures are used to smash the struggle of the Republican movement for self determination. In Britain, Howard's proposals will be used against anti-racist fighters, the labour movement and any other forces that threaten the bosses' rule in Britain.

The setting up of a police DNA data bank will not be used to launch a massive operation against organised crime, but to aid the round up of anti-racists, socialists and workers who, in the course of struggle, come up against the state.

As for the new "anti-terrorist" measures, they are just another way of

MILITANT LABOUR, through Youth against Racism in Europe, has played an important role in mobilising thousands of youth in the fight against the Nazi BNP. But how do Militant Labour's politics match up to the present situation?

This new pamphlet presents Militant Labour's analysis of the rise of racism and fascism. It sets out their programme to tackle these immediate problems and the system that gives rise to them. In doing so, it reveals the errors that lie at the heart of Militant Labour's current programme.

The pamphlet is a short, popular presentation of their views, and has many strengths. It points to the origins of racism in slavery, and how the ruling class still use racism both to "justify the super-exploitation of the 'third world'" and to divide the working class and divert its attention from the real enemy, the capitalist class. The pamphlet also puts forward straightforward answers to the most common racist lies.

Weakness

But it is when the pamphlet starts to develop practical answers to the rise of racism that the weakness of Militant Labour's politics can be seen. This is particularly clear on

MILITANT LABOUR Democratise the police?

two vital questions for anti-racists today: what to do about the police, and how to get rid of the system that creates racism in the first place.

The pamphlet denounces the brutal killing of Joy Gardner by the police in August 1993. It goes on:

"Until there is democratic control of the police, including control of their day-to-day operations, outrages like this will continue to happen."

This is a dangerous and unrealistic argument. The police are an arm of the bosses' state. For Marxists, a correct understanding of the class based nature of the state is essential.

The state is a special apparatus which exists to coerce the population into abiding by the laws and dictates of the ruling class. The need for this apparatus arises in any society which is made up of different and antagonistic classes.

Under capitalism, a tiny class of exploiters own all the wealth. But that wealth is produced by the work-

Richard Brenner
reviews
Militant Labour against Racism and Fascism
Militant Publications
Price 50p

ing class, the overwhelming majority of the population. The state exists to repress the working class, to keep order so that the bosses' system and property can remain intact. That is the real nature of all agencies of the state, from the unelected judges, civil servants and army officers through to the police force itself.

The actions of the police on 16 October show the accuracy of the Marxist analysis. Despite the fact that they are completely unable to prevent systematic racial attacks against black youth in London and across the country, the Metropolitan Police drafted in thousands upon thousands of officers, armed with helmets, riot shields and truncheons, to smash an anti-racist demo and

protect the nazi HQ.

And this was no fluke. The story is the same every time workers oppose the bosses on the picket lines and on the streets. From Saltley to Orgreave, from Lewisham to Welling and at Trafalgar Square in 1990 the police were in the front line against us, not neutral peacekeepers caught in the middle.

Reformists argue that the capitalist state can be captured and used in the interests of the working class. They argue that it should simply be democratised, so that the workers can take it over.

But this is a dangerous illusion. The police exist and are trained daily for the purpose of holding down the working class. They are not "workers in uniform" but servants of capitalism. There is no way that the bosses' police force can be made to act in the interests of working class communities. There is no way that the bosses would give up their control over such a vital arm of their state.

That is why Marxists explain to the working class that the police, along with all the repressive arms of the state, must be broken up—*smashed*—and replaced by the armed population, a workers' militia. That is the only way that the working class, black and white, can defend its own communities from anti-social crime as well as from attacks on its organisations and its youth. It is the only way that we will be able to defend a future socialist society from the inevitable attempts of the capitalists to take "their" property back.

Agreement

Many Militant Labour members will agree with this. "OK", they will say, "but we are miles from being in a situation where the arming of the working class is on the agenda. We have to start from where we are now. That means putting forward transitional demands as a bridge between the present and the future."

That is true. But socialists need adapt their programme to the tasks that face the working class today, not to the reformist ideas that are holding workers back. Leon Trotsky, the Russian revolutionary leader who systematised the idea of transitional demands into a programme, explained that socialists have to:

"... give a clear, honest picture of the objective situation, of the historic tasks which flow from this situation, irrespective of whether or not the workers are today ripe for this. Our tasks don't depend on the mentality of the workers. The task is to develop the mentality of the workers. That is what the programme should formulate and present before the advanced workers."

That is why we argue against the illusion that the police can be democratised. Instead we argue for defence squads as a step towards a future militia. Out of permanent well-organised stewards' groups today, we can take on the BNP, defend our marches from the police, and take a desperately needed step towards establishing a defence guard for the anti-racist and working class movement.

The lessons of the 16 October demonstration and the initiative of the Asian youth patrols in Tower Hamlets all show this is not an abstract demand. It is a necessity rooted in the whole situation today. And it points the way to the future

workers' militia, the only real answer to police brutality and repression.

There is no mention of this in the Militant Labour pamphlet. Yes, amazing as it may seem for a group which participated in the organised defence of the October 16 demo, there is no mention of the basic transitional demand for defence squads.

Instead we read of the need for the existing police force to be democratised. This is the opposite of a real transitional demand. Instead of building a bridge from the needs of the struggle today to the need to overthrow the state, it builds a bridge in the opposite direction: from today's struggles towards an existing reformist illusion about the neutrality of the state and the police.

Mistake

Militant's mistake on this point leads to an even more dangerous error. The pamphlet rightly points out that "as long as capitalism exists, the employers will use racism to divide and conquer." It goes on to argue for a socialist society, in which production and distribution could be planned to meet human need, not private profit. Such a system would uproot the social conditions that give rise to racism and fascism at their source.

But nowhere do Militant Labour explain how this new system can be achieved. Although they speak of a "revolutionary struggle to plan the resources of our planet for the benefit of all", there is no explanation of how a revolutionary struggle can win only by smashing the capitalist state, only through organising workers' councils and a workers' militia to take power into the working class' own hands.

This is no accidental omission. It is linked to Militant's wrong attitude to the police and to the state as a whole. Despite its recent break from the Labour Party, Militant Labour still declares that a peaceful transformation of society could take place through parliament. Their General Secretary, Peter Taaffe, has written that they have:

"proclaimed hundreds, if not thousands of times that, armed with a clear programme and perspective, the labour movement in Britain could effect a peaceful socialist transformation".

Militant Labour members know this is not true. They know that the only road to overcoming racism and fascism once and for all is through arming the working class and socialist revolution. But instead of arguing for that openly, and putting forward demands that are linked to that goal, their leaders adapt their politics to the existing "mentality of the workers", and deliver a confused message instead of clear, practical, revolutionary demands and policies.

Appeal

Militant Labour members—and the young people around them in Youth against Racism in Europe—deserve better than this. We appeal to them to fight within Militant Labour to change their position on the police and the state, and to replace it with revolutionary transitional demands. They should start discussions with an organisation that they know shares their serious approach to the anti-racist and anti-fascist struggle, but which combines it with an uncompromising revolutionary programme: Workers Power. ■

A programme for the 1990s

"B RITAIN NEEDS a revolution. The economy is in decline. The parliamentary system is rocked by scandals exposing corruption at the highest levels of government. The country's institutions—from the monarchy to the courts and police—are deeply discredited. Misery and poverty co-exist with shameless displays of wealth...

There is permanent mass unemployment. Black people are attacked and murdered because of the colour of their skin. Local services are dilapidated, the NHS is starved of funds. The education system veers from crisis to crisis as the Tories experiment with the future of the young. Violent crime plagues the inner cities. Young people are forced to beg in the streets."

This is the stark picture painted by Workers Power's new pamphlet *The fight for workers' power*.

Revolution

But how do we get a revolution? How can the working class end the cycle of defeat and demoralisation that has plagued us for nearly twenty years? This is the central question which the pamphlet tries to answer. Subtitled "a revolutionary socialist programme for the 1990s" the pamphlet spells out Workers Power's analysis of the key developments in the British class struggle.

Starting from Britain's position in a changing imperialist world order the pamphlet explains how the evolution of the European Community has posed the British bosses with a unique dilemma. The conflict within the Tory party over Europe is not simply ideological, it asserts, but a reflection of a deep conflict of interest between different sections of capital.

Until that conflict is resolved in favour of a thoroughly pro-European integrationist strategy—a strategy which only the Liberals espouse today—capitalist government in Britain

Colin Lloyd
reviews
The fight for workers' power - a revolutionary socialist programme for the 1990s
A Workers Power pamphlet
price 50p

The fight for workers' power

a revolutionary socialist programme for the 1990s

a workers power pamphlet price 50p

is doomed to be weak and fractious. But faced with a weak and divided enemy the workers' movement itself is weak and fatally misled.

The pamphlet documents the decline of Labourism and explains that, while Labour remains a bourgeois-workers' party—the contradictory unity of a working class base and pro-capitalist politics—that situation cannot last forever.

"Labour is a party marked down for destruction. In the event of a further election defeat the whole question of the union, link could be put on the agenda again. If the union link is broken then Labour's transition to an open party of the bosses on the model of the US Democrat party could begin."

Similarly, the pamphlet argues, the price for failing to win the unions to a

new leadership and strategy will be further decline. The simplistic analyses of the left, which have ranged from the Stalinist theory of the inevitable decline of the unions to the complacent assertion of the Socialist Workers Party that the unions are "intact" and simply "sleeping giants", are rejected. The unions have been severely weakened and need a vital injection of rank and file leadership and revolutionary politics if they are to avoid shrinkage on a qualitative scale.

Workers Power undertook the drafting of an action programme not only to address the important changes in the class struggle, and the confusion they have engendered on the left. Equally important is the role of the new programme in spelling out the basic demands Workers Power fights for in the class struggle.

Method

Based on the method of Trotsky's Transitional Programme, and focusing the international programme of the LRCI, *The Trotskyist Manifesto*, towards Britain, the new pamphlet spells out the practical conclusions of revolutionary socialist politics in today's class struggle.

As well as re-affirming the central core of Trotskyist politics—the expropriation of the bosses, workers' control, the fight for workers' councils and a workers' militia—the pamphlet addresses the new questions of today's class struggle, from environmentalism to Scots and Welsh nationalism, the constitutional debate and "queer politics".

It ends with a bold re-assertion that the choice facing humanity is socialism or barbarism and an explanation of how both these alternatives are growing in the womb of decaying capitalism. *The fight for workers' power* is the new, updated programme of Workers Power. It is what we fight for and what we believe millions of workers should fight for too. ■

BATTLE OF WELLING

The Truth

INITIAL PRESS reports of the Battle of Welling read like they were written before the 40,000 demonstrators even left their assembly point on 16 October. With most of them it was a clear case of "here's one I prepared earlier"—prepared in conjunction with Paul Condon, head of the Metropolitan Police, after his press conference two days before the demo.

Condon promised there would be violence. On the day he obliged. At the time and place where he had signalled that trouble would begin, he unleashed his riot squads against the demonstration. A pitched battle between the police and demonstrators ensued.

After the event the hacks assembled for their grandstand view and only had to colour in the details of the picture that Condon had given them on the previous Thursday—extremists, smoke bombs, cowardly thugs, bricks, IRA-style balaclava masks, and so on.

Condon is no clairvoyant. He was able to predict the violence for one reason and one reason alone—he always planned to launch an attack on the march. He banked on the press reporting this attack as the mindless violence of a left wing mob, not the violence of a mob of boiler-suited police thugs on overtime. His objectives were straightforward:

- to use police violence to defend the Nazi BNP HQ
- to frighten people from demonstrating against it ever again
- to discredit the left as thugs and rioters no better than the BNP.

This was a military operation by the police against the left and the anti-fascist movement combined with a press witch-hunt against the entire left. It was pre-planned and executed with brutal rigour.

The huge march itself was minimally policed. This is highly unusual. Most marches are flanked by coppers. Yet for the bulk of the march there was hardly a uniform in sight.

But at the predicted flashpoint, behind the line of ordinary police in position for cosmetic effect, there were 7,000 officers, many in full riot gear. There were riot vans galore and more cavalry than you see on the average Hollywood Western set.

Force

This concentration of force was designed to intimidate the demonstration, not just stop it getting near the BNP HQ. This was evident in the positioning of a sizeable force blocking not only the road to the BNP HQ but also the route away from it prescribed by Condon himself. In all the lies you have read in the press about what happened on 16 October, nobody has explained why this road was blocked—not only with police but also with crash barriers. Yet it was this blockage that revealed the real intentions of the police.

By blocking every exit they wanted to stop the march, create panic and launch an attack. This intention, and not the handful of match-stick placards thrown at their lines, explains why within seconds of the march stopping, and during negotiations between stewards and police officers, an assault on the march was launched.

Needless to say the television news bulletins and the "on the spot" reports in the newspapers highlighted the marchers fighting back. They showed people throwing bricks and

kicking police officers, people who now have rewards on their heads courtesy of the editor of the *Sun*.

Workers Power offers its own reward, in the form of a bet. We bet that in four years time Channel 4 will show a documentary exposing the extent of the police brutality that provoked ordinary working class people to fight back. They will show the repeated, frenzied charges by cowards hiding their faces behind perspex masks and steel helmets, beating anyone and everyone who stood in their way, with their truncheons and their shields.

We will further wager that any police officer charged with brutality gets off scot-free. This occurs every time workers defend themselves against police attacks. It happened at Orgreave during the miners' strike. It happened at Wapping during the print strike.

For the time being the documentary makers will keep quiet, except to join in the witch-hunt which was planned alongside the police attack.

Obliged

One of the objectives of the police violence was to create the conditions for demobilising the anti-fascist struggle by branding anti-fascists as mindless thugs. Every newspaper and television channel obliged.

"Race march explodes into riot", said the *Independent on Sunday*. "PC Leslie Turner said he was attacked because he was black", claimed the *Guardian*, "These are sick and dangerous people. Next time, they must be crushed before being let loose on the streets." declared a *Daily Mirror* editorial.

The *Times*, citing the pre-emptive arrest of 57 BNP members at Brick Lane, thundered: "Equally firm pre-emptive action is clearly needed to stop militant left troublemakers hijacking future protests, even if this means restricting rights of free assembly in a handful of cases." The London *Evening Standard* managed to equate the demonstrators with English football fans in Rotterdam, laying the blame for the whole phenomenon squarely on, you guessed it, single mothers.

This crescendo of abuse is a systematic attempt to convince millions of people that the left is to blame for violence, that the left is only interested in creating mayhem and that they should have nothing to do with its campaigns or actions. For standing up to fascism a movement of tens of thousands of ordinary young working class people is to be "crushed" and denied the right of assembly, if the press gets its way.

The virulence of the witch-hunt reflects a rising panic amongst the political establishment, the police and the labour movement leaders. They are panicked because there is a growing mass anti-racist movement in Britain and they have lost control of it. Contrary to the press fantasies there were thousands of black youth, thousands of women, thousands of workers—and hundreds of these were leading the defence of the march against the cops.

Far from the stereotypical New Age Travellers the press tried to blame for the violence, it was ordinary people from ordinary estates, factories, offices and colleges. Most of them have gone home determined to build even more effective resistance to the BNP, to spread the truth to their friends

and workmates, and to return at the first opportunity with even larger forces.

Leading the panic is television reporter and self-appointed "black leader" of the Anti Racist Alliance (ARA), Marc Wadsworth.

He wants to divert the anger of thousands against racism and the BNP into a harmless legalistic campaign that protects no one and achieves nothing.

That is why he engineered a rival demonstration on 16 October. That is why the Stalinists of the *Morning Star*

and *Socialist Action*, Labourites, trade union bureaucrats and black careerists who make up ARA, supported his call and scabbed on the Unity demo. Their reward: a tiny demo of a couple of thousand, the accolades of the media and respectability.

ARA has unequivocally condemned the Welling demonstrators and their violent behaviour. On television Wadsworth announced that it was racist to have attacked the black copper.

He never uttered one word of support for the victims of the police violence. It never dawned on him that PC Leslie Turner is a traitor for joining in on the police attack on the march, an attack in which hundreds of black people were clubbed by the racist police.

In short, ARA is in league with the police, the bosses and the labour movement's bureaucracy. Their aim: to undermine any militant fight against

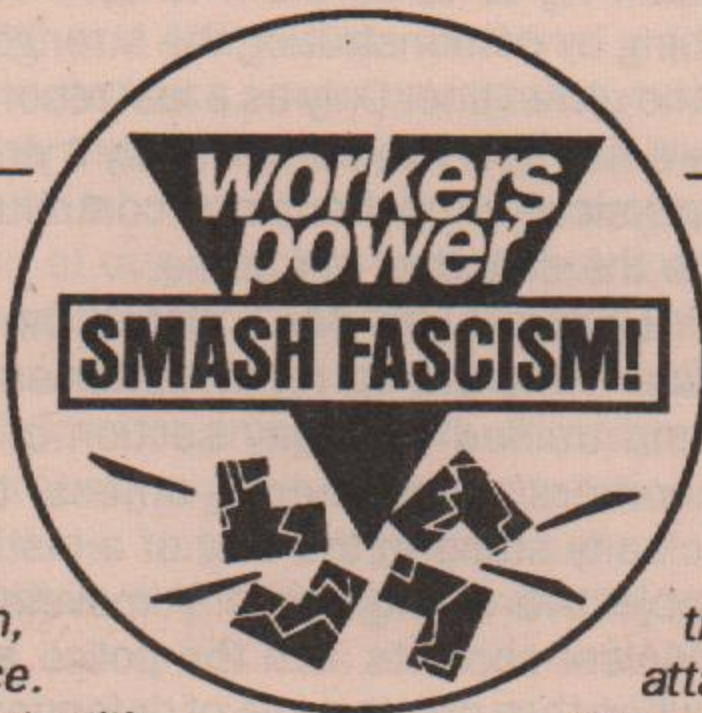
racism and fascism, and to carve out a career for themselves as respectable politicians trusted to defend the state when black youth and workers attack its racist thugs.

Workers Power states unequivocally: the workers and youth who fought back against the police in Welling were heroes, not villains. We refuse to condemn them. We support their right to self-defence.

The labour movement must defend all those arrested and demand the dropping of all charges. The same goes for all those threatened with sacking and expulsion from the unions. Sackings must be met with strike action.

The fight against fascism must be stepped up. A date should be named for a further march against the BNP bunker, this time with the stated objective of marching on it. Any attempt to ban such a march must be defied in an organised manner. In the fight to terminate the BNP presence in Welling our message must be—we'll be back!

ON 16 OCTOBER over 40,000 anti-racists assembled in Welling to march against the BNP. They were met with a vicious police assault, matched only by the viciousness of the press witch-hunt that followed. Meanwhile a few hundred union bureaucrats and ARA careerists trudged round central London, applauded by the same press and police. The Unity demonstration was magnificent, with many groups and individuals heroically defending the march and resisting the brutal attacks of the police. But everyone who was there needs to think carefully about what happened. Why there were so many marchers in-



BY HELEN WATSON,
PAUL MORRIS, MARK HARRISON
AND RICHARD BRENNER

jured and arrested? What could have been achieved on the day? Why we still have no united anti-fascist movement which can build on the success of the 16th and learn its lessons? The next four pages of *Workers Power* are devoted to answering these questions. On this page we examine the police attack and the subsequent witch-hunt and the next steps for the movement. Pages 8 and 9 detail the role of the left in the movement before and after the demo and answer the bosses' lies about the role of violence in revolutionary struggle. On page 10 we explain the principles behind the workers' united front tactic.

Where next?

THE WELLING march was called in the name of Unity against racism and the BNP, and was built for by the Anti-Nazi League (ANL), Youth Against Racism in Europe (YRE) and many other organisations, including Workers Power.

The urgent task now is to sustain the momentum of a mass anti-fascist movement.

More demos, more action against the fascists, more propaganda exposing the race hate lies of the BNP—all

of these things need to be our answer to the cowardly thugs in the police force, the red baiters in the press and the witch-hunters in the labour movement.

The size of the demonstration on 16 October shows what united action can achieve. It shows why Workers Power is right to call repeatedly for a workers' united front against fascism. But the problem of disunity remains.

The ANL is a law unto the Socialist Workers Party. Youth Against Racism (YRE) is a youth-only campaign led by Militant Labour. Alongside these major organisations there are a large number of locally based anti-racist groups or anti-fascist campaigns, like the various Anti-Fascist Action groups and Unity committees.

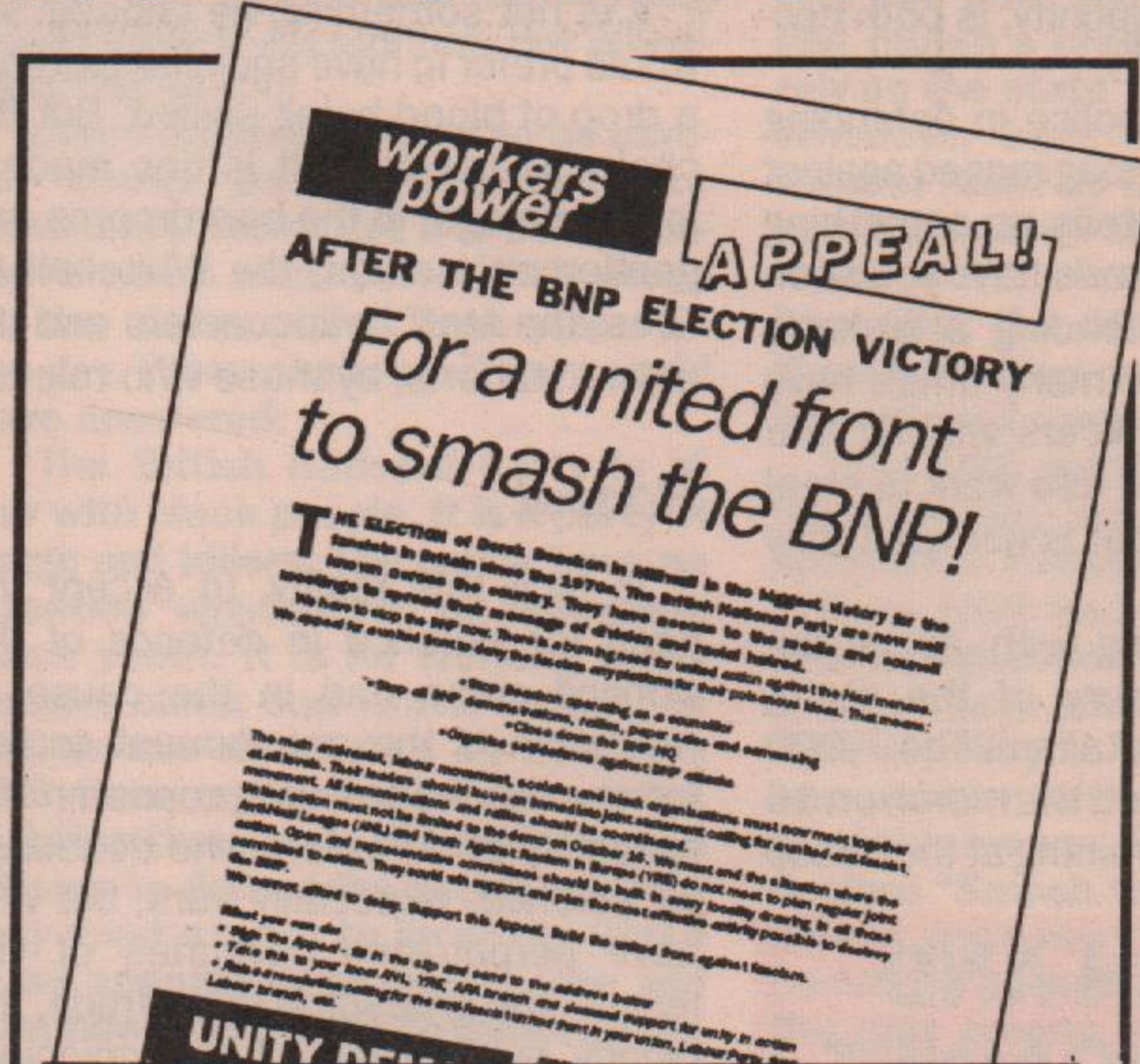
We are not demanding now that every campaign or organisation winds up into one, big, united campaign. That is our strategic objective, but it has to be fought for and proved a necessity through a series of concrete steps. But united action is far from impossible. The workers' united front, embracing the various anti-fascist and anti-racist campaigns and labour movement and black community organisations, is a real possibility in the aftermath of Welling.

To achieve this we need to ensure, with a minimum of fuss and bureaucracy, that Unity Committees are built in every town with the objective of co-ordinating action against the fascists. The ANL, the YRE, the local AFAs and where possible dissident ARA branches must be called on to sit down together in democratic Unity Committees in every locality and jointly plan their activities against the most appropriate threat.

If you are a member of an anti-racist/anti-fascist organisation which refuses to do this your task is clear. Don't just shrug your shoulders but raise a storm until the leaders are forced to unite, consistently, in action.

The minimum basis for such a united front must be to deny the fascists a platform through direct action. Every time the fascists try to march, meet or sell, they must be met with united opposition to physically stop them. Agreement on this is all that is needed for effective action. It leaves all of the campaigns, groups and parties to put forward their own message, to pursue their own stated goals. But not at the price of disunity in action against the fascists.

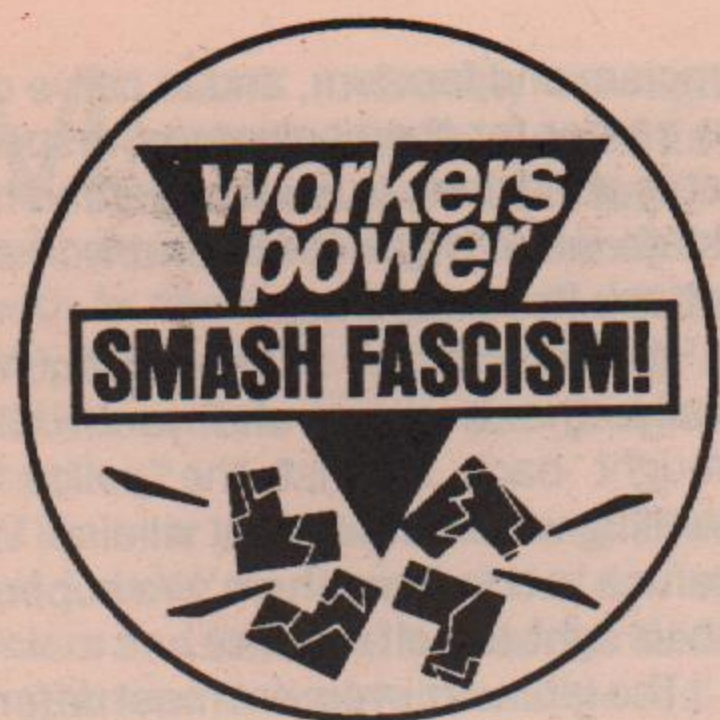
Workers Power has circulated a Unity Appeal. To date we have received widespread support for this appeal. We call on all anti-fascists to support it, not just by signing it, but by fighting in practice for the united front in every locality.



THE APPEAL for a united front of all anti-racist, anti-fascist, working class, black and socialist organisations, launched by Workers Power, has met with a widespread and favourable response.

Hundreds of demonstrators on 16 October signed the Appeal. Organisations which have so far endorsed it include the Whitechapel based Nirmul Committee, Leicester Trades Union Council, Birmingham Anti-Fascist Action and Fircroft College NUS. Many individual members of the ANL and YRE have also signed.

Copies of the Appeal are available from, Unity Appeal, BCM Box 7750, London, WC1N 3XX. Get copies now. Get organisations and individuals to sign it. Raise it in your organisation, demand that they support the call for the united front. Build Unity committees to organise action against the fascists in your area.



Their violence

Who came prepared for trouble?

EVERY NEWS report of the 16 October march stressed the violence of the occasion. The history of working class struggles against the bosses is a history of violent struggle. And the bosses' lie machine always makes out that it is workers—usually in the guise of “militants” or left-wing “outside agitators”—who are to blame for the violence.

In stigmatising the working class—and in particular socialists or anarchists—as the perpetrators, “hell bent” on violence, the bosses are playing on the widespread and genuine loathing that millions of people have for violence. They are using a propaganda ploy designed to give the forces of order the moral high ground and split the forces of revolutionary change from the great mass of people. In a word, they are lying.

Violence is an emotional issue. It is an unpleasant aspect of life. Violence leads to people being hurt, maimed or killed. Many people respond to this grim reality by judging all violence to be morally wrong.

The bosses play on this view in their campaign to win mass endorsement for the condemnation of violence by workers in the class struggle. But this “common sense” view is wrong.

Usually, when it comes to politics, the spokespeople for the bosses' system use the conjurer's trick of equating the violence of both sides in a struggle. We read that “you're all as bad as each other”, fascists and anti-fascists both use violence—therefore they're both the same.

This ignores reality. Fascists stand for the destruction of all democratic rights. Their propaganda encourages their supporters to maim and murder black people, ransack trade union offices and beat up left-wing papers sellers. Revolutionary socialists simply urge people to organise to defend themselves against these attacks. Yet, to the press “they're all the same”.

If violence is used to rob a pensioner in the street it is bad. If violence is used to stop that robber getting away with the pensioners' money is it “all the same”? The worthiness or unworthiness of violence in this case is not to be found in the violent action itself, but in the ends that the violence is designed to serve.

Equation

This analogy reveals the hollowness of the bosses' equation of fascist and anti-fascist violence. It deliberately ignores the fact that the violence of the anti-fascists is designed to stop a rerun of the 1930s and early 1940s when fascism condemned millions to the death camps.

The pivotal question with regards to political violence is: what end does the violence serve and in whose class interest is it being used?

Workers and socialists need make no apology to the bosses for using violence in the course of the class struggle. Our consciences are clear. We have used violence in order to defend ourselves and our organisations, against the forces of the bosses' state and against fascism, against racist attacks and against poll tax bailiffs.

We will use violence to smash fascist organisations and to smash the bosses' state machine—its police, armed forces, its secret service and all the other instruments it uses to attack us. Only by using such violence will we be able to clear the way to a socialist future. This is the essence of

revolution.

Is this because we are thugs, “hell bent” on violence for its own sake? The question reveals the stupidity of those who stick such labels on us. Nobody, except maybe a psychopath, is hell bent on violence for its own sake. Everybody knows that violence is something we resort to when other methods of persuasion have failed or are doomed to failure.

We don't beat up scabs at the outset of every strike. We first try to persuade them to join the strike. We then try to force them to stop scabbing by demonstrating the strength of the picket line. Only as a last resort do we risk injury to ourselves by trying to physically stop them from contributing to the defeat of our strike.

Likewise, we don't attack the police—who are currently better armed and trained than any section of the workers' movement—unless they clearly stand in the way of a justified objective of the workers' movement. Violent conflicts with the police arise when they play the role of defenders of scabs as they did at Orgreave and many other places during the miners' strike of 1984/85 and the printers' strike at Wapping in 1986.

On other occasions the police defend the nazis, as they did on 16 October. On that occasion, as during the 1990 poll tax struggle, the police decided that they could best fulfil their role by attacking the demonstrators. The violence against the police was a case of self-defence by unarmed protesters.

Context

All of these examples put violence in a context, one that reveals it is not the mindless thuggery beloved of the press. It is a context of class struggle. Political violence, to prosecute the class struggle effectively, to ensure that strikes can win, that fascism is not allowed to grow, that racists are not allowed to beat up black people on the streets with impunity, is both necessary and justified.

The role of the police in defending any and every scumbag ranged against the working class tells us something more. How many times have you seen police officers defending a picket's right to work? How many times have you seen police officers wading into scabs as they crawl into work to steal our jobs? Never. That is not what they are there to do.

The police, along with all of the repressive machinery of the state, exist to protect capitalism. The 7,000 officers who attacked the march on 16 October get more training at their base

MARCH AND RALLY AGAINST RACISM AND FASCISM

Called by WALSALL TRADES UNION COUNCIL

Saturday 13 November

Assemble 11.30am

Reedwood Park (near M6 junction 10)



in Hounslow on how to beat up workers than they do on how to catch thieves.

The capitalist state machine always and everywhere stands against the working class in struggle. The ferocity of the police attacks on the miners' strike showed the lengths they will go to, the money they will spend, the weaponry they will deploy, to defeat a single section of workers in struggle against them. Just imagine the violence they will use to attack any generalised challenge by the working class to their system of wealth, profits and privilege.

Even if such a challenge began peacefully the millionaires who run the country, and whose interests are loyally guarded by the police and army, would quickly unleash terrible violence to defend their wealth and power. That is why it is obligatory for revolutionaries to explain that violent revolution is necessary.

It is not something we choose. We would prefer to have socialism without a drop of blood being spilled. But the choice is not ours. It is one made a long time ago, in the boardrooms and gentlemen's clubs, the Whitehall offices, the staff headquarters and the police stations, by those who rule us.

Honest

To face this reality, to accept the need for violence in defence of the working class and in the cause of revolution is the only honest course for revolutionaries. We condemn the hypocrisy of our rulers who denounce all violence, especially ours, but who have perpetrated centuries of violence—the gruesome slave trade, the bloody subjugation of the colonies, the endless wars of conquest, the mass slaughter of two world wars, and endless smaller scale, but no less brutal, escapades mainly against the oppressed and exploited.

This is a message that needs to be taken to every workers' meeting in the aftermath of the events of 16 October. It is not a popular message, but it is an honest and vital one. It will prepare workers for future, inevitable battles and it will free them from the garbage stuffed into their heads, not only by the press, but by Labour and trade union reformists who believe we should make our peace with capitalism.

Amazingly, it is not the message being put by the biggest left organisation in Britain, the SWP. Instead of

defending revolutionary violence the leaders of this organisation are re-treating into a dangerous semi-pacifist stance. Anticipating events on the 16 October, but doing little to prepare the defence of the march, *Socialist Worker*, wrote that “socialists hate violence” (“Violence: What do socialists say?”, 9 October).

This line of argument plays into the hands of the bosses, because it treats all violence as the same. Of course the article goes on to distinguish the violence of the oppressed from the violence of the oppressor, but still in an apologetic way.

THE SOCIALIST Workers Party declare their support for the policy of no platform for fascists. They accept that the BNP must be denied any platform for their views.

Their paper recognises that the racist state will not carry out this job for us, and that any state ban on the fascists would be used principally against anti-fascist groups and the left. They appeal for unity in action against the nazis.

So why is it that the anti-fascist organisation promoted by the SWP—the ANL—has refused to build a united front with other forces such as Youth against Racism in Europe? Why won't it sign or implement the Unity Appeal launched by Workers Power? The Appeal argues:

“The main anti-racist, labour movement, socialist and black organisations must now meet together at all levels. Their leaders should issue an immediate joint statement calling for a united anti-fascist movement. All demonstrations and rallies should be co-ordinated. United action should not be limited to the demo on October 16. We must end the situation where the ANL and the YRE do not meet to plan regular joint action. Open and representative committees should be built in every locality drawing in all those committed to action. They could win support and plan the most effective activity possible to destroy the BNP.”

The Unity demonstration showed the massive response a joint call for action can achieve, but the ANL still refuses to unite with other forces such as the YRE to build a mass anti-fascist united front. Why?

The ANL was re-established by the SWP in January 1992. It called for the widest possible support for its aims of opposing the nazis and exposing their ideas. So far so good: all working class and black organisations need to unite in action to this end. But the ANL avoided a clear call

“Socialists do not glorify violence but we always stand with those fighting back.”

What does the SWP mean by glorify? When we celebrate the heroism, the determination and the victories of those fighting back against reactionary forces, we are applauding the successful use of violence in the course of that struggle. If that is glorifying violence then we plead guilty. Every revolutionary “glorified” the violence of the Vietnamese when they blasted US imperialism out of their country. It is impossible to abstractly glorify or denigrate violence. Violence occurs in

Where

to deny the fascists any chance of holding meetings, rallies and paper sales. In particular the ANL shrank from making clear that this would undoubtedly involve direct physical confrontation with the nazi gangs.

Avoid

This was not merely an oversight in ANL propaganda. It was a decision of the SWP to avoid talk of “No Platform” in order to win broad support. How else could they have gained backing from MPs like Labour's Peter Hain, who declared in a statement on 13 January 1992:

“We are encouraging our supporters to oppose the nazis wherever they appear from underneath the stones. As before we aim to provide a positive alternative to passivity on the one hand and punch-up politics on the other.”

The “punch-up politics” Hain was so keen to avoid have a history in the movement against fascism. In 1936 at Cable Street and in 1977 at Lewisham tens of thousands of working class youth, Jews, black people, trade unionists and socialists fought to stop the fascists marching. The police protected the fascists and attacked the anti-fascists. Punches were thrown, and a great deal more besides. No one has ever been able to come up with a realistic alternative to this strategy for stopping the nazis who, after all, do not share Hain's scruples about punch-ups.

Nobody should criticise the ANL for seeking backing from labour movement dignitaries or indeed from TV personalities like Terry Christian! The point is whether their support has

and ours



We need organised self defence!

MANY SWP members took an active part in defending the demo. But it is important that the role of the SWP leaders in disorganising the defence of that demonstration in advance is known and condemned throughout the anti-fascist movement.

They argued in the organising meetings for the Unity demo that "force of numbers" would be the key to solving all our problems on the day. Workers Power, together with Militant Labour, argued that this was wrong and dangerous.

We urged the formation of a properly organised and sizeable stewards organisation that could defend the march against police and fascist attack. Such an organisation could also have ensured that neither agents provocateurs (who were in plentiful supply on the march) or ultra-lefts who favoured undisciplined, unorganised and unfocused violence, would be able to disrupt proceedings.

The SWP's response to this simple proposal was to denounce us for "macho posturing" and to caricature

the proposed stewards team as "Dad's Army" style militarism.

Such accusations from the SWP have a sickening ring to them as we nurse our truncheon inflicted wounds. The price of their wrong position on stewarding was more casualties to our side than need have occurred. The price was an inadequately defended demo. The price was that many first-time demonstrators will be put off from coming again because the SWP refused to organise a proper defence of them against a police attack that everybody at the eve of march stewards meeting knew was coming. Every SWP member needs to challenge the irresponsibility of the SWP and ANL on this matter.

In practice, overcoming that mistake means fighting throughout the workers' movement for the protection of our marches and picket lines from the police and the fascists. This cannot be left to force of numbers, as 16 October amply shows. It requires a properly organised, properly trained workers' defence organisation.

While the building of such an or-

ganisation can begin with the left groups, it must go beyond them, drawing in more and more workers, more and more official support from labour movement organisations. Such an organisation can and must link up with the black community self-defence organisations that have developed in response to racist attacks.

It can become the vanguard force in ensuring that we are able to implement the urgent task of physically preventing the fascists any platform for their filth. Its determination against the class enemy will enhance its standing in the eyes of youth, enabling it to keep order on our own marches without being denounced for "doing the police's work".

Building such an organisation is no mere propaganda call. It is an urgent task. The development of policing in Britain has already restricted our right to march, unmolested. The police are not perfecting riot techniques for fun. Their aim is to keep up our marches. Our response must be the building of a disciplined and energetic workers' defence guard. ■

struggles, and in those struggles we take sides—"glorifying" the victories and heroism of our side.

In doing so we seek to prepare the working class for future victories. Yet the SWP are at pains to distance themselves from this stance. Why?

The reason becomes apparent, in theory and practice, when we see that the article counterposes to organised self defence the idea of simple force of numbers:

"Whenever workers mobilise in large numbers there is little violence."

The author goes on to suggest that this was also the key to victory in the

Russian revolution:

"Far from being violent, the mass involvement of workers and their determination meant the revolution was virtually bloodless."

The SWP is deceiving its supporters. The involvement of the masses is no guarantee that violence will be minimised. There were masses of miners involved in the Battle of Orgreave. It was violent. There were over 40,000 at the march in Welling. There was violence. Millions were mobilised in the Russian revolution. It was very violent. While the events in Petrograd involved little bloodshed, the fighting

in Moscow and a number of other cities was extremely vicious and the entire country soon found itself plunged into civil war.

Of course we are in favour of mobilising the biggest number of workers possible in each and every struggle. But as each of the above examples shows, this in itself is no protection against violence. Mass mobilisation against the class enemy must be combined with the organisation of defence squads, teams of stewards, organised fighters, so that we can mobilise safely—defended against police or fascist attack—and where necessary,

curb any adventurist actions by ultra-left elements on our own side.

We do not counterpose force of numbers to organised squads. We seek, as the Bolsheviks did with the factory-based Red Guards in the Russian revolution (who, curiously, don't get a mention in the *Socialist Worker* article), to link the military organisations that the working class needs, with the mass movement, making the former accountable to and controlled by the latter.

Reportedly, Socialist Workers Party leaders have had to tour their branches to quell an upsurge of criticism of the

party's tactics on October 16 (see box) not from the left but from the right. Members have complained, it is said, that the party's propaganda was "too violent" and are cursing the fact that papers like the *Daily Mirror*, instead of praising the ANL are calling for its crushing.

If the SWP leadership now has to engage in a fight against pacifism amongst its members it only has itself to blame. The theory that "strength of numbers can replace violence" whether in an anti-fascist struggle or a revolutionary situation, always disarms and disorients those who believe it. ■

is the ANL going?

been secured for effective common action, or at its expense.

We think it was the latter. That is why, despite the press and police witch-hunt following the 16 October demo, the ANL leaders have gone out of their way to avoid physical confrontation between demonstrators and the BNP. On 25 April this year there was a counter-demonstration against a nazi march in Victoria.

When a group of BNP members taunted the anti-fascist protest, rather than organising some class action against the scum, the ANL stewards tried to stop anti-racists doing just that. Rank and file SWP members showed a healthier instinct than their leaders, however, when they had a go at a group of BNP in a car nearby.

Counter

SWP leaders have denounced the very idea of organised detachments of anti-fascists to counter trained BNP gangs, arguing that such units inevitably become cut off from the mass movement. By opposing the building and training of such detachments the SWP not only fail to confront the fascists with the only kind of argument they understand, they also leave anti-fascists disarmed in the face of fascist and police assaults.

Since the BNP's election victory and the vicious attack on Qudus Ali the ANL have used radical rhetoric, keying into the mood of anger amongst black and white youth. The stickers for the 16th read "March on the BNP HQ". When the police said they would prevent that the ANL said they would defy the ban; before the march platform speakers called for

the nazi bunker to be burnt to the ground.

But this was, as ANL leader Paul Holborow admitted with disarming frankness on Channel 4's *Devil's Advocate*, nothing more than a "rhetorical flourish". In reality, the ANL had no intention whatsoever of attempting direct action to close down the BNP. They aimed, as Holborow put it, "to peacefully demonstrate our opposition to the existence of the nazi headquarters".

In the aftermath of the police attack on the demonstration, SWP members in the leadership of the ANL refused to condemn demonstrators for fighting back against the police. This was absolutely principled, and must be welcomed.

But at the same time they were obliged to rush to reassure their backers that they were in no way supporting the use of violence by marchers. On *Devil's Advocate*, and again in a letter to the *Guardian* (22 October 1993), Unity Chief Steward Julie Waterson, an SWP member, complained that "the Metropolitan police did not allow us to steward the march". Holborow and Waterson called on the police Chief Paul Condon to share with them any information he had about "infiltration by people bent on making trouble."

This suggests that the Unity stewards and police shared the same objective on the day—the preservation of a peaceful march. This is wrong on two counts. First the police had no intention of keeping the peace—they were explicitly out to attack the demo and provoke a riot. Second, it was a march on the BNP HQ, something the police had banned. It was clear well

before the march that stewarding would have to be against, not alongside, the police.

March organisers have to be careful about police attempts to criminalise them. But it is still possible to make clear where they stood on the violence that took place on the day. When challenged they could have answered:

"The British National Party is at war with black people. It is a party of thugs and killers. The police have no intention whatsoever of defending black youth. It is for working class people, black and white, to act, by any means necessary, to stop the BNP from organising. If the police mobilise thousands of heavily armed officers to defend the nazi murderers they must expect to incur the wrath of all opponents of racism. We will continue our struggle to break up the BNP, and if the police try to stop us from marching and launch assaults on anti-fascists we have the right to defend ourselves."

Mood

Such a declaration would not just strike a chord with the thousands of demonstrators who risked life and limb on 16 October. It would relate directly to the mood among anti-racists in areas like Tower Hamlets, where one poll conducted by the TV programme "After Millwall" recorded 62% of Asians, 45% of Afro-Caribbeans and 37% of whites backing the demand for No Platform for Fascists. We do not know what Terry Christian's response would be, but we are pretty sure that a whole host of Labour MPs and trade union bureau-

crats would withdraw their backing for the ANL if it took such a robust and principled line.

The same method is in evidence when the SWP confronts the question of state bans against the nazis. It should be crystal clear, from history and from the rabid editorials of last month's press, that we cannot rely on the state to ban the fascists. Whenever bans are used they are used at least as harshly, if not more harshly, against the left.

The SWP clearly opposes state bans. But the ANL clearly supports them and relies on them. As it said in its postcard campaign to John Major: "The BNP continues to have their HQ in Welling. You should demand its immediate closure".

If the SWP had struggled and lost over this question in the ANL it would at least have some excuse. But the SWP's policy is not to fight for its own position in the ANL. Think about what this means. The SWP's stickers declare "Smash the Fascists by any means necessary". But they won't commit a campaign they control to the only means possible to smash fascism. It is hypocrisy and cynicism on a grand scale.

The SWP refuses to back a workers' united front to deny the fascists a platform because it has a different type of unity in mind—unity with a collection of do-nothing dignitaries at the expense of effective action.

This is what we mean when we accuse the SWP of *opportunism*. They have sacrificed the actual interests of the fight against fascism for their own perceived short-term advantage. In the process the formal position of their party stays on paper but is not carried out in practice.

There is another reason why the SWP rejects a real united front. They want to use the ANL as a means for building their own party. This is not necessarily unprincipled—revolutionaries make no apology for building

their organisations.

But far from obstructing the task of building a socialist party, a genuine united front between the various campaigns would increase the effectiveness of action against the fascists up and down the country, and could provide socialists with an even broader network of campaigners who can potentially be won to socialism. But the SWP has a different conception. For them building the SWP is the priority, over and above the need for a real, open, democratic and active workers' united front against fascism.

Prevented

ANL leaders opposed the building of joint committees with other campaigns, such as the YRE, to mobilise for the 16 October demo. The SWP has prevented the ANL organising its claimed 60,000 members into proper regular membership meetings with full discussion, debate and democratic decision making.

The SWP fear that if this were to happen they could lose control, or face competition from other organisations arguing for different strategies against the BNP. As their *Party Notes* of 16 December 1991 put it, local groups or committees would become "an obstacle to such activity and a focus for every sectarian under the sun".

So confident are the SWP leaders in the power of their ideas that they keep 60,000 people unorganised rather than expose them to the ideas of "sectarians"! That is *real* sectarianism: setting the interests of building their group against the needs of the struggle.

SWP members need to draw the lessons. They should fight for their party to allow the ANL to be opened up to its members and to a real debate and discussion about the way forward. ■

UNITY WAS the name of the committee which organised last month's anti-BNP March in Welling. At Welling many demonstrators lashed together Anti-Nazi League and Youth against Racism in Europe placards, and raised the constant chant: "The workers' united will never be defeated".

It didn't stop two marches happening on the day. No joint committees, no regular collaboration between the campaigns, and no unified anti-fascist organisation exist. How do Marxists overcome this situation and others like it?

There are a hundred-and-one different political tendencies in the workers' movement. People coming into political action for the first time often bemoan this fact, and ask why there can't be just one political party on the left.

Experience soon answers this question. Like it or not there are huge disagreements over important political questions. These differences, as we saw on 16 October, often have crucial consequences for the day to day struggle.

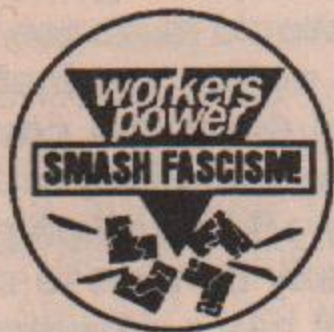
But the working class movement needs unity in action. That is why the tactic of the workers' united front, systematised by the Communist International (Comintern) after World War One, is vital. It fulfils two important tasks:

- It aims to secure the greatest possible unity in action of the working class against the enemy. The tactic demonstrates that despite our political differences with other tendencies we will never willingly obstruct the desire of the working class for that unity.

- It allows revolutionaries to prove to workers *in practice* that only our politics meet the needs of the situation, and that they should break with reformist and centrist leaders and strategies.

The tactic itself could not be simpler. According to the Comintern's *Theses on Tactics of 1922*:

"The united front tactic is simply an initiative whereby the Communists propose to join with all workers belonging to other parties and groups, and all unaligned workers in a common struggle to defend the immediate basic interests of the working class against the bourgeoisie."



What does this mean in practice?

First, revolutionaries have to identify the focus of the struggle and the action needed to win. In the case of the anti-fascist struggle today, this is the fight to deny the fascists any public platform and to organise self defence against fascist attack.

Second, we have to propose action to the whole workers' movement, including the leaders of the main organisations. Workers Power's Appeal for an anti-fascist united front is an example, outlining four concrete steps needed now to fight the BNP. It is addressed not only to the ANL, YRE and other anti-racist/anti-fascist cam-

TOWER HAMLETS NINE DROP THE CHARGES!

Nine Asian youths were arrested following the battle with police at the vigil in support of racist attack victim Qudus Ali in September.

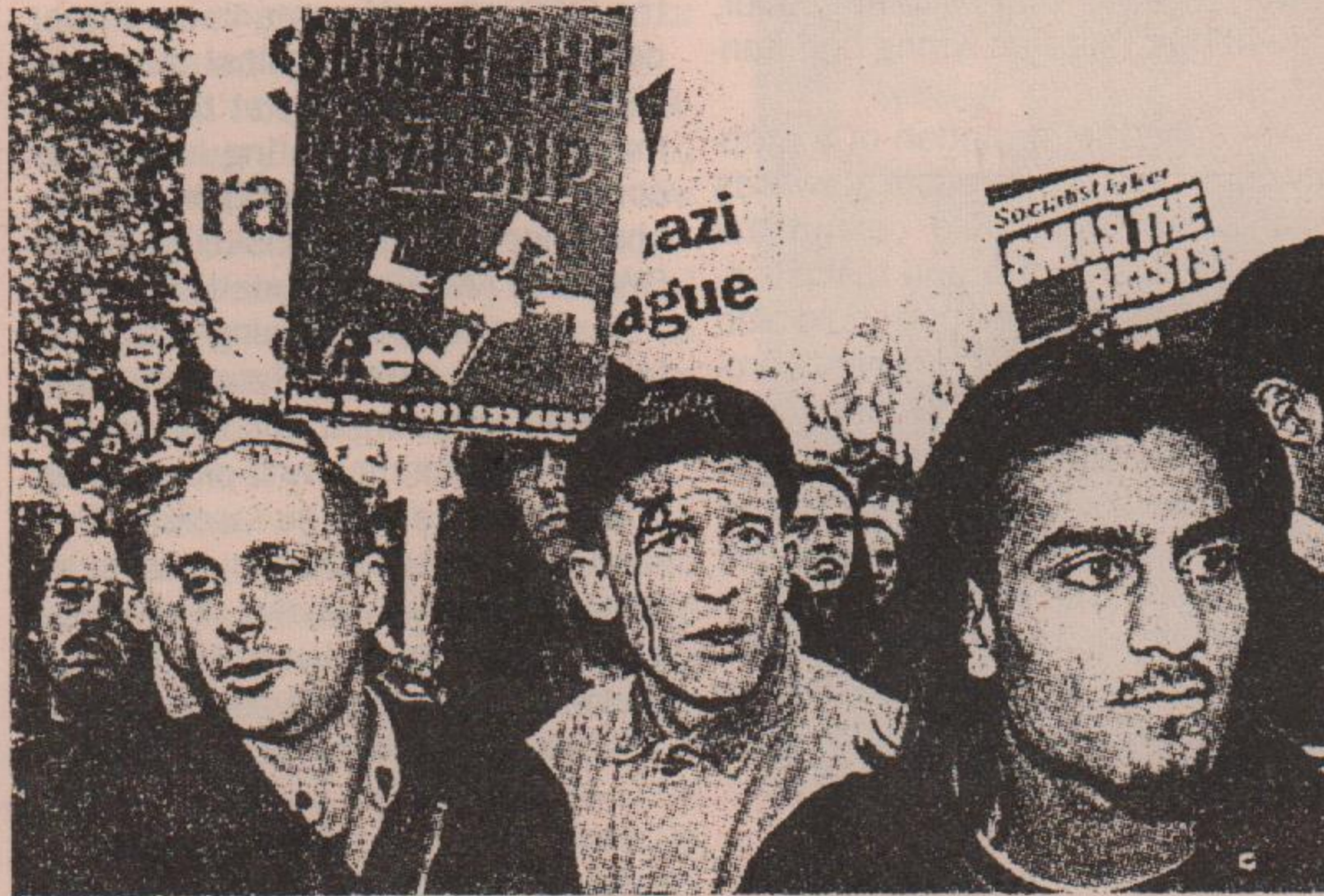
Support the campaign to defend them.

Send donations and messages of support to:

Tower Hamlets Nine
Defence Campaign
PO Box 273 London E7
Tel: 081-548 0099

The workers' united front

TOGETHER WE ARE DYNAMITE!



paigns, but also to Labour Party bodies, trade unions and community organisations.

Third we have to fight from below to make the action a reality, using whatever successes we achieve as an example to the rest of the working class. As the Comintern wrote:

"It is particularly important when using the united front tactic to achieve not just agitational but *organisational* results."

Workers Power's initiative to build real Unity committees in the run up to 16 October and after was an attempt to make sure that unity didn't start and stop on the demo itself but led to real joint organisations being created.

Fourth we have to constantly criticise the vacillations, betrayals and retreats of the misleaders in the struggle concerned, and demonstrate how these errors are rooted in their whole political outlook. That's why, before and after 16 October, Workers Power argued in meetings, bulletins and individual discussions against the political errors of the contending leaderships of the anti-racist movement.



Words instead of action?

The agreement for unity must be for action. But all too often centrist and reformist leaders use the "united front" as an excuse for a political non-aggression pact, unity in words that commits no one to any specific action.

This is self defeating. As the Russian revolutionary Trotsky wrote:

"The reformists' beloved arena is the parliamentary tribune, the arbitration boards, the ministerial ante-chambers. On the contrary we... are interested in dragging the reformists from their asylums and placing them alongside ourselves before the eyes of the struggling masses."

Today, agreement only to a general opposition to fascism, with no commitment to self-defence organisation, demonstrations, No Platform etc, leaves the Labour MPs to preside over ANL press conferences in the Commons' Committee Rooms but never obliges them to organise their

supporters for action.

Trotsky's approach combined the united front with a merciless criticism of the reformist allies. He wrote:

"No common platform with the social democracy, or with the leaders of the German trade unions: no common publications, banners or placards! March separately but strike together! Agree only how to strike, when to strike and where to strike! Such an agreement can be concluded with the devil himself, with his grandmother... On one condition: not to bind one's own hands."

Of course this does not mean that united front committees cannot issue joint leaflets such as the Unity leaflet publicising the 16 October demonstration, or even a publication, such as a bulletin or newsletter. The point is that revolutionaries should argue their own point of view clearly—with signed articles reflecting the views of different participating organisations.

They should not attempt to square the circle by coming up with arguments on the lowest common denominator. The effect of this is that instead of being a weapon for spreading revolutionary ideas to our allies, the united front becomes a propaganda bloc that obstructs that task.



Unity with the "democratic" bosses?

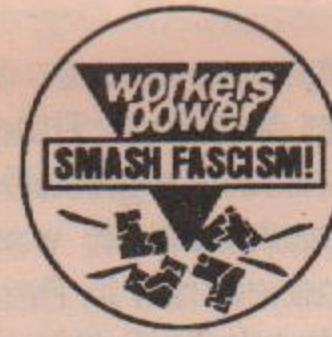
The united front has to be an agreement for action between workers' organisations. But in the 1930s the Communist parties, under the leadership of the Stalin, argued for a long-term alliance with supposedly progressive sections of the bosses, under the slogan of a "Popular Front". This strategy led to terrible defeats for the working class, including the victory of the fascists in Spain.

The "democratic" sections of the Spanish capitalist class agreed to a "joint struggle" with the Spanish workers against the fascist army in the Civil War only on condition that the workers surrendered all the gains they made in the revolution of 1936. This completely demoralised and ex-

hausted the workers' movement, and left them reliant on the treacherous bosses rather than their own strength. Of course, in the last instance the bosses preferred fascism to working class power. They sabotaged the war and let the fascists take over.

The lesson of this is that even the most liberal capitalists will always demand conditions for their support. Today the Anti Racist Alliance—which is based in the Labour and union bureaucracy but consciously seeks the support of Tories and Liberals—has to denounce the Unity demonstration and join in the press chorus against the demonstrators who fought back against police attack. To win over its hoped for bourgeois allies, the ARA leaders renounce all effective methods of fighting back.

Instead of this "popular front" strategy, revolutionaries fight for a united front of the working class the only people with a consistent interest in smashing the fascists by any means necessary.



United front from below?

Some argue that there is no point in putting demands on the leaders of mass working class or anti-racist organisations because those leaders have no intention of uniting in action. The united front, it is argued, can only be from below—never with the reformist leaders.

This position sounds very radical. But in practice it is extremely dangerous. The Stalinists in Germany in the early 1930s used exactly this excuse to reject calls on the mass reformist social democrats for a united front to stop Hitler coming to power. Instead they simply called on workers to break with the reformists and join their own front organisation.

Trotsky fought against time to convince the communists of the futility of this approach. He argued:

"To say to the social democratic workers: 'Cast your leaders aside and join our "non-party united front"' means to add just one more hollow phrase to a thousand others."

The reformist workers had not yet learnt to distrust their leaders. But a clear call to unite for practical action—addressed to the leaders and the rank and file—could have had a real effect. If the leaders had refused, it would have discredited them in the eyes of their supporters, who would increasingly demand united action and view the communists' proposals in a sympathetic light. If they agreed, then this would set the masses in motion, enabling the communists to demonstrate the value of their programme in the heat of battle.

Recent events show the importance of this approach. The effects of October 16 have reverberated and placed pressure on the leaders of all the anti-racist organisations, showing the possibility of pressuring them from

below into real effective unity in action. That is why revolutionaries appeal for the united front from above and below.



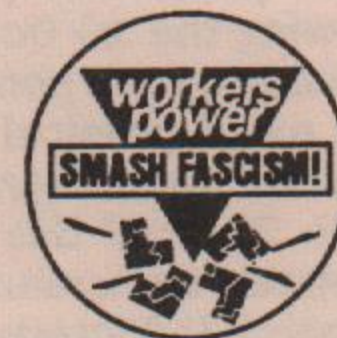
Putting conditions on the united front

If it is dangerous to dilute the common platform necessary for united action it is also dangerous to insist on agreement on a range of other questions as a *precondition* for a united front. For example today, whilst Workers Power fights to convince the entire workers' movement to oppose all immigration controls, we don't insist that everybody has to agree with that *before* they can unite in action to smash fascism. Such a precondition would limit the united front to the far left alone.

As Leon Trotsky explained:

"The programme of action should be strictly practical, without any of those artificial claims, without any reservations so that every average social democratic workers can say to himself: What the communists propose is completely indispensable for the struggle against fascism."

It is vital that revolutionaries should give reformist or centrist workers and their leaders no excuses for refusing common action. In the course of a common struggle today to smash the BNP, revolutionaries will have far more opportunities to convince reformist workers that all immigration controls should be scrapped than we would have in the absence of any common action at all.



Tactic or strategy?

Ultimately revolutionaries need to know not only when to strike a united front agreement, but also when to break it. In the face of open betrayal by reformist leaders, revolutionaries would need to end the agreement if its continuation would serve as a cover for such actions.

Above all, the united front remains a tactic to be applied in order to unite the class in action and extend the influence of the revolutionaries. As Trotsky put it:

"There can be no thought of making the revolution itself in a united front with reformist organisations."

To finally overthrow capitalism, the working class has to be united in action under the leadership of a party committed to socialist revolution.

But without a correct understanding of tactics, including the workers' united front, no revolutionary party will ever be able to win mass influence in the first place, let alone replace the reformists as the leadership of the majority of the working class. ■

SINN FÉIN

Behind the peace talks

GERRY ADAMS and John Hume seem an unlikely partnership. Hume's constitutional nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) is Sinn Féin's main competitor for the votes of the 40% nationalist minority of Northern Ireland. There is no love lost between them. No issue of Sinn Féin's paper comes off the presses without vitriolic attacks on the SDLP, who are rightly seen as collaborators with the British forces. For its part, the SDLP repeatedly condemns the IRA in the same language used by the Orange bigots and Tories.

But now the SDLP and Sinn Féin are locked in "secret" peace negotiations, which the IRA leadership has publicly welcomed.

The current round of constitutional talks has been grinding on endlessly. There is an inbuilt loyalist veto which, combined with the absence of Sinn Féin, means they were doomed from the start. Frustration with the deadlock has meant that the Hume/Adams proposals have been met sympathetically in some quarters.

Albert Reynolds, the Irish Taoiseach (Prime Minister), cautiously welcomed the initiative.

The British government has repeated the official line of no deals with Sinn Féin until they renounce

BY CHRIS BRYANT

violence. But it has refused to denounce the Hume/Adams talks, fueling speculation that the SDLP is acting as their broker in indirect negotiations with Sinn Féin.

Predictably, the loyalist Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF) issued a statement threatening to intensify their indiscriminate killing of Catholics in the North, and John Molyneux, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, described the initiative as "lunacy".

But what the Hume/Adams proposals actually contain is far from clear.

In a speech to the Dail (Irish Parliament) Reynolds said that the principles of the process would involve a cessation of all violence and the consent of the unionists to any change in their status.

Proposals

Gerry Adams emphasised a different area of the proposals, the recognition of "the right of Irish people to national self-determination". He refused to use the word "ceasefire" instead talking about a "complete demilitarisation" of the situation.

But the implication is clear. "I would of course be seeking a package which

would allow me to make definitive proposals to the IRA in relation to the future conduct of its campaign." With this Adams tipped the wink to the British government that a ceasefire could be arranged if only Sinn Féin were brought to the negotiating table. He carefully avoided the question of troop withdrawal.

The proposals reportedly do address the question of troop withdrawal—a declaration of intent to withdraw on a set date "in perhaps 25-30 years time".

Since the Northern-based leadership of Sinn Féin took over from the traditionalist Dublin leadership in the late 1970s, pragmatism rather than ultra-nationalist dogmatism has dominated its politics. This has allowed a long process of "re-definition" of republican strategy within the framework of "broad principles" of self-determination and troop withdrawal.

Last year's Sinn Féin conference marked the biggest retreat so far, clearing the path for the Hume/Adams talks.

Marginalised by the constitutional talks and their electoral stagnation, the leadership started a propagandistic "peace offensive". The manifesto *Towards a Lasting Peace in Ireland* is a vague all-embracing four point plan aimed solely at the



Hume and Adams locked in secret talks

Dublin and London governments.

Nothing is said in the manifesto about the question of troop withdrawal as a pre-condition for negotiations. Nothing is said about how the Protestants of the North can be broken from unionism. Nothing is said about the role of the working class, in the North or South, or in Britain. No road to self-determination is envisaged other than getting Britain to negotiate.

The military campaign, for all of the continued rhetoric about bombing Britain out of Ireland, now has a different aim: to bomb Britain to the negotiating table. The announcement of the Hume/Adams initiative was marked by a series of bombs against economic targets in the North.

Sinn Féin is treading the well worn petit bourgeois nationalist path of betrayal. Its leaders explicitly compare their role with that of the ANC in South Africa or the PLO in Palestine. Negotiations are seen as a victory in themselves, whatever the long-term cost.

"If someone hadn't grasped the nettle in South Africa or in Palestine... Mandela would still be slopping out his cell rather than preparing to be president", commented Adams.

Sinn Féin, despite retaining a mass working class base in the North, does not have anything like the proportion of working class support that the ANC has in South Africa. This is particularly true in the South where electoral support for Sinn Féin stagnates at around two percent while the Labour Party's has grown from 10% to 25% over the last two elections. Adams is no president-in-waiting.

Bloodbath

But in some ways the analogy is apt. The bloodbath that has followed the opening of negotiations in South Africa would be repeated in the North if a settlement was attempted without the disbanding and disarming of loyalist death squads, the abolition of the RUC and the Royal Irish Regiment (formerly the UDR) and the complete withdrawal of British troops. The ANC's truce with South African capitalism is mirrored in Sinn Féin's desire for a pan-nationalist alliance that would include the thoroughly capitalist Fianna Fáil in the South and the openly counter-revolutionary SDLP in the North.

At the moment, however, Adams' peace perspective remains a distant hope. The British government, even if it wanted to build on the Hume/Adams talks, has little room for manoeuvre this side of an election. In a personal deal between John Major and UUP leader Jim Molyneux, Major declared that he stood "four-square for the Union" in return for the support of the nine UUP MPs in July's critical Maastricht vote. Without the

deal it is unlikely that Major or his government would have survived.

Thus Hume and Adams' unholy alliance has no short-term chance of succeeding. They completely disagree on the most basic question of what national self-determination means. Adams and Sinn Féin favour an all-Ireland referendum and decision by a simple majority whereas Hume argues for separate referendums in the North and the South requiring a majority in each. In practice Hume's proposal means leaving the loyalist veto intact.

Weak

The British government is too weak and divided to move decisively on the Irish question at present and without their co-operation, the initiative means nothing.

The only way to secure a just and lasting peace and a truly independent Ireland is to tear off the blinkers of nationalism. Sinn Féin's ditching of any commitment to "socialism", its pathetic pleading with the Tories and Fianna Fáil lays bare the real limitations of petit bourgeois nationalism, no matter how militant or militarist.

Nevertheless, the struggle for Irish self-determination is a just struggle which every British worker should support. It is British bosses and their collaborators in the South who are responsible for carving up the Irish nation and creating the conditions for the war. The British working class has a vested interest in standing "four-square" with the Irish resistance against the British state regardless of the policies of its leaders.

To end the war a solution has to be put forward that goes beyond the nationalist interests of this or that group of bosses, or the middle class elements who are the backbone of the Sinn Féin leadership.

It means fighting not only against national oppression but also against the economic system that breeds it. It means linking the immediate national and economic aspirations of the masses through to the abolition of private property itself, creating the chance of breaking a section of Protestant workers from their own exploiters.

Only a socialist programme, which subordinates the armed struggle to the political mobilisation and defence of the working class can guide the anti-unionist workers to a progressive rejection of the proposed sell out. Nothing short of a socialist united Ireland as part of a Socialist United States of Europe can guarantee lasting peace.

Adams' strategy, like Mandela's and Arafat's, can only lead to the oppressed masses paying for yet another imperialist solution. ■

Loyalist death squads

LOYALIST MURDER squads are working overtime in Northern Ireland to terrorise the Catholic population into submission. When the British press bothers to report this at all it presents a picture of a tit-for-tat tragedy on all sides, with the only difference between republicans and loyalists being the body count.

But the fact remains that, with very few exceptions, the IRA targets security forces and those who service them. Loyalist death squads, in contrast, have an explicit policy of indiscriminate murder.

In an interview with a British journalist, one UFF commander explained their strategy:

"We are out to terrorise the terrorists. To get to the stage when old grannies up the Falls Road will call on the IRA to stop, because it is ordinary Catholics that are getting hit, not the Provos behind steel doors."

The reality is that the loyalist commanders do not want the IRA to stop. They want history to stop, and turn back to the days when Catholics, like black people in the Southern USA, were too frightened to claim even the meagre legal rights to work and vote allocated to them by the state.

Thus one of the latest attacks targeted a group of Catholic workers at Shorts' Aircraft factory. Under pressure from the USA to meet elementary equal opportunity policies, the fiercely loyalist Shorts bosses had begun to allow in some Catholic sub-contractors. This was good for publicity and at the same

time ensured that the relative job security of Protestant workers and the pro-loyalist culture of the core workforce was not undermined.

The UFF had different ideas. On 12 October it sprayed a vanload of eight Catholic painters with automatic fire, killing father of five Jody Reynolds and injuring five others. That day all Catholic workers left the industrial estate where Shorts is situated, some reportedly vowing not to return.

The next day there was a walk out by 1000 Protestant and Catholic workers at Shorts in opposition to this sectarian killing.

As always the security forces have proved worse than useless in preventing loyalist attacks.

The same firm of painters which was riddled with bullets last month had to face a sustained campaign of verbal abuse from police detailed to guard the entrance to Belfast harbour estate in the months before the killing. "Fenian bastards" was how police referred to the sub-contractors—the loyalist killers only turned that sentiment into action.

The rising wave of loyalist violence places high on the agenda the need for organised, mass self defence of the anti-unionist working class. That is something the IRA's guerrilla strategy constantly rejects. According to this strategy, it is the Volunteers who will "decide where and when to strike", and the anti-unionist masses have only the ballot, not the bullet, as an immediate solution.

A recent interview in *Republican News* revealed the hollowness of the IRA's response to these attacks.

"Many in the nationalist community are living in fear of these attacks. What is the IRA's response?" asked the interviewer.

Whilst correctly documenting British collusion with the death squads, and warning against individual sectarian tit-for-tat responses, the IRA could offer nothing more than a promise to take out individual UFF leaders. This is only half an answer, and the IRA leaders know it. That is what lies behind their call for "utmost discipline".

Nowhere does the IRA advocate organised mass self defence. Sinn Féin should organise self defence patrols and should call on the Catholic workers who support the SDLP to do likewise. They and their leaders are no longer safe from the UDA/UFF since they have been targeted indiscriminately as a "pan-nationalist bloc".

Such self defence organisations were a spontaneous feature of the revolutionary upsurge of the struggle in the early 1970s. If created they would bring the anti-unionist masses and their leaders into immediate conflict with the British state, which could not tolerate them for a moment. British repression would have to be met with mass strike action, demonstrations and an appeal to the whole trade union movement, including the British unions, for support.

That is not an easy strategy to follow. But it is easier than sitting as a defenceless target, secure only in the knowledge that somewhere, someday, someone else will exact revenge for your death. ■

WHEN THE US naval ship *Harlan County* sailed away from Port-au-Prince in the face of armed protesters it looked like the military leaders of Haiti had forced the United States to back down.

Washington immediately replied with a naval blockade supported by the UN. Within days oil had been cut off and petrol stations in the cities were being besieged by car and lorry drivers desperate for petrol.

What had enraged Washington was the fact that the military regime in Haiti had reneged on their carefully constructed "Governor's Island Accord", under which President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was to return to Haiti at the end of October at the head of a new civilian government.

Aristide had been ousted from power in September 1991, after only seven months in office, by a coup which was led by the current military leader, General Raoul Cedras. Prior to the signing of the Accord Aristide had received little support from Washington. During his period in office the State Department viewed him as a dangerous radical who threatened to allow the Haitian masses to settle accounts with their exploiters, thus endangering US interests.

Resisted

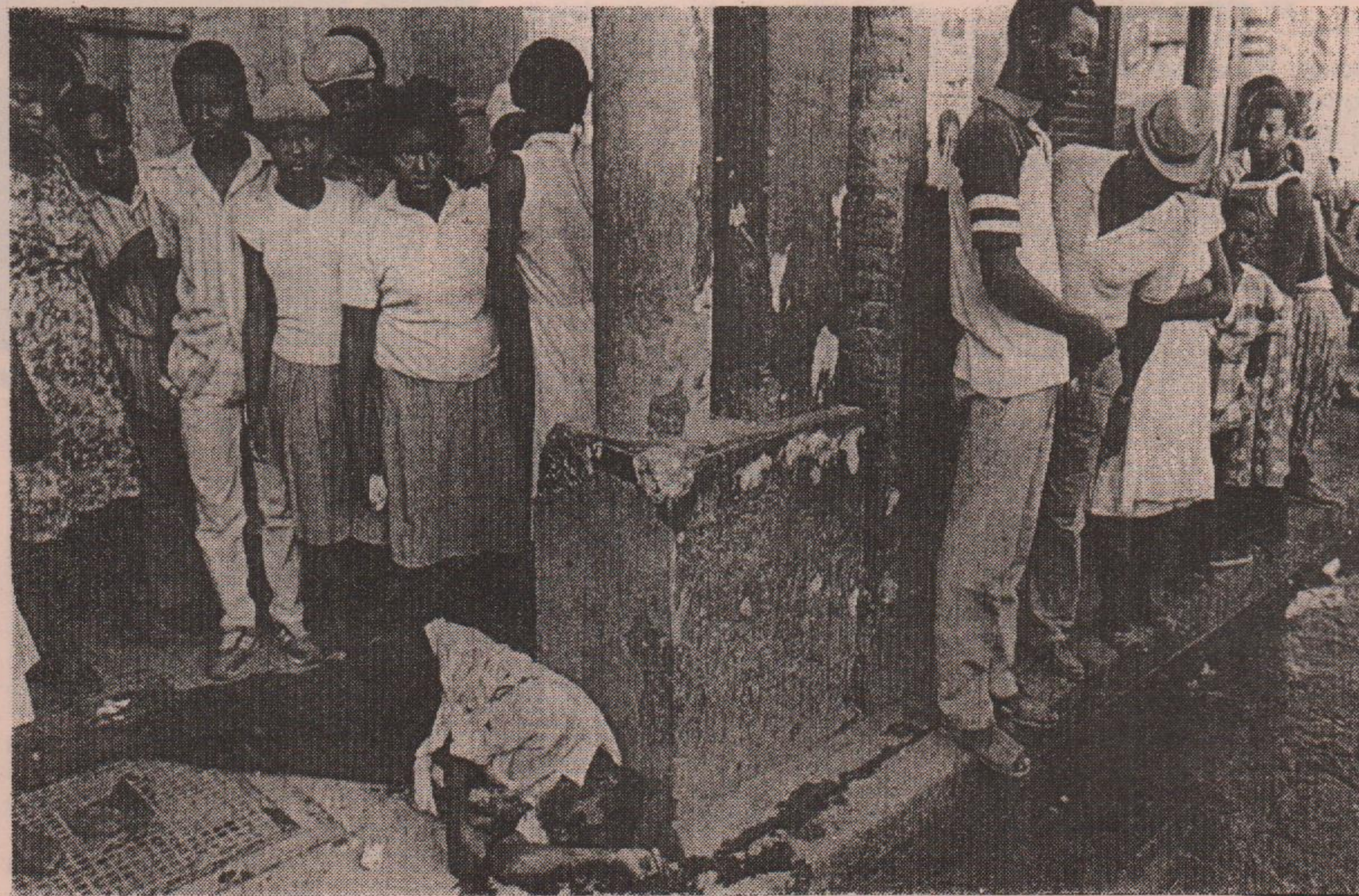
Aristide had indeed come to power in democratic elections at the head of a mass movement, the "Lavalas". He quickly found that his relatively moderate proposals for reforming the military, removing corrupt and repressive officers and trying to dismantle the old dictatorship's terror machine, the murderous Tontons Macoutes, were resisted at every stage.

His major crime in the eyes of the Bush administration was to refuse to curtail or condemn the Haitian masses when they took matters into their own hands and started dealing out revolutionary justice to the Tontons Macoutes and its supporters.

While the USA had no love for the old dictatorship, which both obstructed the development of Haiti as a profitable area for US business and

HAITI

Clinton goes for his gun



Dead victim of the Tontons Macoutes

constantly threatened the USA with waves of refugees fleeing repression, they were certainly not going to risk another Nicaragua on their doorstep. All the evidence points to US connivance in the coup which ousted Aristide, despite their hypocritical condemnation of it after the event.

Since then the USA has concen-

BY JOHN MCKEE

trated its efforts on proving to Aristide that he can only return to power on Uncle Sam's terms. An embargo on Haiti was imposed immediately after the coup by the USA and the Organisation of American States. Not surprisingly, the military regime carried

on as normal while the embargo was flouted on all sides. Oil continued to flow and the USA declared that economic blockades were always "difficult to enforce".

Only when the US administration believed it could guarantee Aristide's signature on the Accord did it seek to impose real sanctions. The Gover-

nor's Island Accord represented a complete sell out by Aristide and was denounced by many of his own supporters.

Although General Cedras and the Port-au-Prince police chief were to be sacked, there was to be an amnesty for all those involved in the coup and the repression that followed. It is estimated that at least 500 people, mostly Lavalas supporters, were gunned down in the days after the coup. Thousands were beaten and tortured. Human Rights groups suggest that up to 4,000 political murders have taken place since the coup and as many as 300,000 people in Haiti are living away from their homes in hiding.

Under the Accord those responsible will be pardoned or "retrained". The *Harlan County* was carrying the first batch of US troops to help "restructure" the army and set up a police force. Over 600 US troops were to be involved as part of a 1,600 strong UN force. Aristide was clearly going to return as the prisoner of the US/UN task force. The troops would prevent any "outbursts" from the masses while the new US-trained army would keep any new government strictly within the limits determined by the State Department.

Tamed

In return for this Aristide was allowed to appoint a new Prime Minister—but not from his own party! He appointed the businessman Robert Malval who is "well respected" by Western diplomats. Malval made it clear that he would not support Aristide if he stepped out of line.

Despite having tamed Aristide and offered the Haitian military an amnesty, this was not enough for the regime. Having signed the Accord they immediately set about undermining it. In September Antoine Izmerly, one of Aristide's close advisers, was dragged out of a church service and shot by the "attachés"—armed civilian death squads linked to the military. A few weeks later Aristide's Justice Minister, Guy Malary, died in a hail of bullets. The military is now demanding greater control of the government and even the resignation of Malval.

General Cedras has been emboldened by the ignominious retreat of US/UN forces in Somalia. He has undoubtedly been encouraged by sections of the US military or Republicans suspicious of Aristide and antagonistic to Clinton's policy, which threatens their friends in Haiti.

However no socialist should have any doubt that the UN blockade—which the British navy has just joined—must be opposed. This intervention has nothing to do with "restoring democracy" and everything to do with ensuring a smooth transition to a government subservient to US imperialism. If the masses get in the way of this they will be gunned down by the US/UN troops in the same way as they were in Somalia.

Opportunity

The way out of the appalling poverty and terror imposed on the workers and peasants of Haiti lies in the hands of the masses themselves. They showed in 1991 that they could organise their forces to take on their oppressors, arms in hand. The organisations of the workers and peasants must seize any opportunity in the current crisis, any divisions amongst their rulers, to settle accounts with the landed oligarchy and its military dictatorship.

Such a mass revolutionary struggle, sweeping away the whole military, police and death squad apparatus of the regime, could open the road to a real social revolution that expropriates the oppressors and destroys their power. Only in this way can real and lasting gains be secured by the masses of Haiti. ■

ANGOLA

Shelling, disease and starvation

BY LESLEY DAY

THE WAR in Angola has reached new and terrible proportions. In the town of Cuito alone, 25,000 have been killed by shelling, disease and starvation following the town's destruction by the right wing Unita forces.

Agriculture and transport have been devastated in all the areas of fighting. The death toll is particularly affecting children. Millions face starvation. The economy is totally dominated by the war and is now collapsing under the weight of hyperinflation and corruption.

Yet this is a war that was supposed to have been ended by a US-brokered settlement last year. A much-heralded peace deal saw elections take place. In these elections the governing party, the MPLA, won an absolute majority in parliament (63% with 34% for Unita). In the presidential elections MPLA leader Dos Santos beat Jonas Savimbi of Unita 57% to 40%.

Despite this, Savimbi and the Unita leadership have demonstrated their "democratic" credentials by refusing to accept the results and launching a renewed offensive. The war has continued since then with Unita defying various attempts by the USA, South Africa and the African National Congress to stitch up a new deal. In fact Unita dragged out talks last spring while preparing for a new onslaught.

The USA and, in its wake, the United Nations (UN), have shifted policy. The USA now has full diplomatic relations with the Luanda government. The western arms embargo against the MPLA has been lifted.

The UN World Food programme has resumed food aid. The De Klerk government is no longer backing Unita. Western news programmes are now presenting Savimbi as the main culprit.

These news programmes also suggest that the Angolan conflict has its roots in ethnic differences. This is only part of the story. Those really responsible are the very imperialist powers who are now presenting themselves as peacemakers.

In 1974, towards the end of the long anti-colonial war which forced the end of Portuguese rule in Angola, conflict broke out between the mostly urban leadership of the MPLA and other groups. Following independence this gradually developed into a war between the MPLA government and Unita, with Unita backed by South African imperialism.

The apartheid regime was trying to preserve its own existence and enforce its dominance over the Front Line states. At one point only Cuban reinforcements prevented a successful South African advance which would have toppled the MPLA. The MPLA government became dependent on support from the USSR and Cuba.

Successive US regimes backed Unita by channelling funds to it and practicing various destabilising tactics against the Luanda government.

But in 1988 a significant shift took place. The South African forces suffered a major defeat. By the end of that year the first signs of new

relations between the USA and the USSR, and the moves towards a settlement inside South Africa, brought increased pressure for peace.

Nevertheless, while the USA was talking peace and setting up negotiations, it had increased its covert support for Unita. The settlement terms gave Unita a share of power in a transitional military committee. The USA was convinced that Unita could build up an ethnic base and could do well in the elections courtesy of mounting discontent with the regime.

This turned out to be a vain hope. The MPLA had retained control of the media and could build up party funds. At the same time, Savimbi's terror campaign had made him even more unpopular than the government itself. He lost the election and after relaunching the war, lost the support of the imperialists as well.

The USA, Britain, De Klerk and Mandela now want to see a settlement, and to achieve this could try to enforce major concessions in favour of Unita. Already the UN is negotiating with Unita over the delivery of food aid.

Savimbi continues to conduct his war, financed by stockpiled diamonds and with supply lines from Zaire and South Africa. There are many reports of covert support from South African sources including Military Intelligence. There is a serious danger that Savimbi will play a role similar to that of Buthelezi in South Africa—a tool to force the Angolan government into even greater dependence on the imperialists and

constantly threatening to stir up destructive ethnic rivalries.

While Angolan workers and peasants have every interest in seeing Savimbi's army defeated, they cannot rely on the Luanda government to improve their lot. The gap between rich and poor has widened dramatically in the last two years. Oil wealth remains in the hands of a small layer and those who have benefited from being in government.

In the 1980s, the MPLA was a Stalinist-nationalist party, but one which continued to preside over a highly nationalised capitalist economy. A privileged bureaucracy ensured opposition was crushed.

Since the start of the "settlement", whatever gains were made for workers and peasants have been rapidly eroded. Privatisation has devastated welfare programmes and the "peoples' shops", which ensured that some basics were available at fixed prices, have disappeared.

The Angolan masses desperately need an end to war and the defeat of Savimbi's forces. Many will continue the desperate fight against further Unita advances. But they cannot trust either the imperialists—who are responsible for the present devastation—or the MPLA government to deliver peace or justice.

They need independent working class organisation, above all a political party, to mobilise the working class and peasantry in the struggle to crush Unita's reactionary offensive, and secure genuine independence from imperialism by leading the struggle for genuine socialism. ■

RUSSIA

Yeltsin's October counter-revolution

THE BLOODY events in Moscow last month have transformed the political situation. The storming of the White House and Yeltsin's imposition of draconian emergency powers have greatly strengthened the hand of those who are leading Russia along the fast track to capitalism.

Yeltsin, representing the pro-imperialist, radical restorationist wing of the old bureaucracy—and the new bourgeoisie—has taken a giant step towards unifying and concentrating the forces of the state into his hands.

Pavel Grachev, Yeltsin's defence minister, claimed: "The people were tired of dual power and illegality."

In fact the people have had no say in events, and the bloody assault on the constitutional Russian parliament was a massive act of illegality. But Grachev is right on one count: Yeltsin and the restorationists could not carry on in the state of dual powerlessness, where parliament and president obstructed each other's every move.

The western press painted the anti-Yeltsin rising as a failed attempt to repeat the October Revolution of 1917. They claimed it was a battle between "democracy" and Bolshevism. Both claims are ludicrous.

The October Revolution of 1917 was carried out with the support and participation of millions of workers, for the creation of a new social order. The anti-Yeltsin rising was carried out on behalf of the pathetic remnants of the Stalinist bureaucracy, by a self-appointed bloc of fascist and hard line Stalinist militias. It was desperate attempt to salvage the bureaucratically planned stagnation of Stalinism.

Conflict

The conflict between Yeltsin and the parliament was not a battle between democrats and communists. Yeltsin has violated the constitution, killed or arrested hundreds of his opponents, clamped a near total censorship on the media and dissolved the parliament. This man, who after August 1991 was lionised as the great democratic defender of parliament, has bombarded it with tanks, all but destroying it. Now he boasts that he will rebuild the White House in six months—but only to convert it into offices for the Presidency.

Rutskoi and Khasbulatov on the other hand have nothing in common with genuine Bolshevism. Rutskoi stood for election as vice-president on Yeltsin's anti-communist ticket. Both Rutskoi and Khasbulatov sided with Yeltsin against the Yanayev *putsch* in 1991, and supported him when he took power.

Both openly favour the market, privatisation and a western capitalist parliamentary system. Their differences with Yeltsin are rooted only in the method and the tempo of the restoration process.

The social base of the hardline Stalinist and Russian nationalist opposition to him lies in the displaced bureaucrats and the newly impoverished layers such as pensioners, ex-soldiers and the unemployed. In the opposition various political forces converged; monarchists, Great Russian chauvinists and open fascists rubbed shoulders with hardline Stalinists and social democratised "communists".

Their uprising against Yeltsin's presidential coup failed, not because of this



Yeltsin's elite troops storm parliament

or that military blunder, but because, from the start, it was designed as a *putsch*. It was, and had to be, a rising without the masses.

The deep social and historical reason for this is that the Rutskoi-Khasbulatov bloc represents no real historic force. Yeltsin represents capitalism and the world bourgeoisie. But Rutskoi and Khasbulatov in no way represent the historic interests of the working class.

They hate and fear the independent intervention of the workers more than they fear Yeltsin. Their programme for a "controlled" restoration of capitalism offers nothing to solve the problems facing the working class. Rutskoi's belated call for a general strike in support of parliament was ignored by the overwhelming majority of the working class. In fact neither of the two presidents demonstrated that they had mass support.

Yeltsin has lost much of his initial popularity due to the savage effects of his policies on the working population. But, despite this the masses perceive all too well that Khasbulatov and Rutskoi are merely seeking to defend the privileges of the old bureaucracy.

Together with the continued passivity of the working class this explains why no serious forces rallied to the defence of the parliament.

Revolutionaries should have critically supported the demonstration's aim of breaking the siege of parliament. Once it succeeded it was essential to try to regroup more people, to develop much bigger demonstrations and to launch mass actions in the different cities and regions. But, Rutskoi appears to have called for an insurrection. Without any determined effort to involve the masses, above all the working class, this could only prove a total adventure ending in a *putsch* not a revolution.

The rebels successfully occupied the Moscow mayor's offices, from which the siege of the parliament had been co-ordinated, but they were bloody repulsed when they tried to take *Ostankino*, the main TV station. This

BY MIKE EVANS

attack gave Yeltsin just the pretext he needed to get the army to act.

Thus, after an initial very dangerous reverse, Yeltsin was able to launch a devastating counter-offensive. In the following hours he comprehensively defeated the rebels after nearly destroying the White House in a violent assault in which several hundred people died.

Yeltsin's October Counter-Revolution a full statement by the International Secretariat of the LRCI which details the background to the Moscow events and the LRCI's full programmatic response, has been published as a special supplement to *Trotskyist International*. It is available from your Workers Power seller, price 5p, or 30p by post from:

**Trotskyist International
BCM Box 7750
London WC1N 3XX**

On Sunday 3 October the conditions simply did not exist to launch an insurrection. It was vital to draw much greater numbers into mass protests against Yeltsin, not just in Moscow but throughout the country. Faced with the masses on the streets it is very likely that the army would have refused Yeltsin's requests to fire on the masses or that more troops would have deserted to the anti-Yeltsin forces. Instead the Stalinists and the nationalists showed their fear and contempt for the masses, as well as their total lack of realism, by engaging in an attempt to seize power with a few hundred armed civilians and ex-soldiers.

It seems likely that it was the hardline Stalinist and ultra-nationalists who were the real organisers of the abortive insurrection. The elitist squads of Afghanistan veterans, trained commandos from the Union of Officers, and the brownshirts of Pamyat's fascist militia tried to overthrow Yeltsin with their own puny forces. They clearly hoped

that if they could take control of the TV station and other important buildings the army chiefs would decide to support them. Their goal was an ultra-nationalist conservative dictatorship. Clearly revolutionary communists could and can have no political solidarity with this reactionary objective.

In the battle between the parliament and Yeltsin, revolutionaries had to defend the White House and the parliament against Yeltsin's siege and attack but without giving any political support to Khasbulatov, Rutskoi, or the hardline Stalinists. We would not have made any sort of "popular front" with the ultra-nationalists and fascists. Indeed we would demand that the self-proclaimed socialists and communists break with them. The presence of these groups could only discredit the anti-Yeltsin opposition. If they gained any hold on power they could be expected to launch pogroms against Jews, national minorities and genuine communists.

During these two decisive weeks the key task of Marxists in Russia was to fight for a general strike to smash Yeltsin's grab for total power. Revolutionaries should have agitated for the trade unions and the workplace committees to form strike committees with delegates elected by rank and file workers to organise the struggle. The workers should have tried to arm themselves, calling on the soldiers to disobey Yeltsin's orders and create soldiers' councils. To aid in mobilising the working class it was indispensable for socialists to raise immediate economic and political demands that workers could feel as vital to their interests and that they would be willing to defend with their own lives.

When Yeltsin launched his coup he promised elections for a new powerless parliament in December and, six months later, presidential elections. The parliament sought only to oblige him to convene simultaneous presidential and parliamentary elections in December. This squabbling over equally bourgeois constitutional forms could present no real alternative to the population. Revo-

lutionaries should demand the abolition of both the presidency and the parliament in favour of a republic of workers' councils.

But we have to recognise that the masses remain heavily imbued with bourgeois democratic illusions. That is why we have raised and continue to raise the demand for a revolutionary constituent assembly. Elections to it should be conducted under the control of the mass workers' organisations and voting should take place in the workplaces. We should fight to make its representatives accountable to, and recallable by, assemblies of their electors, held both in the workplaces and on working class housing estates.

This would give the masses the means of doing away with Yeltsin's bonapartist presidency and with the corrupt caricature of a parliament.

The aim of revolutionaries within the campaign for such an assembly would be to fight for a new constitution to make Russia a republic of elected and recallable workers' councils, to persuade the masses in the fight for the Constituent Assembly that only a workers' republic could meet their needs and solve the question of government progressively.

For that reason it was misleading for *Workers Power's* last issue to call for the Assembly to have "full powers to adopt a new democratic constitution". The only kind of democratic constitution we are in favour of is workers' democracy, and certainly not a bourgeois democratic constitution which this phrase could be taken to suggest.

A campaign for the convening of a Constituent Assembly could be a powerful weapon in awakening the Russian masses from their atomisation, political apathy, and cynicism. This slogan became particularly important with Yeltsin's dissolution of parliament. It could also have exposed Rutskoi for the empty populist demagogue he is.

Hard on the heels of the crushing of the White House rebels Yeltsin has imposed a severe state of emergency, a strict curfew and a ban on sixteen parties, and several newspapers. He has called on both local and regional soviets to dissolve themselves and has proclaimed that elections to new councils as well as the Federal State Duma will take place on 16 December. He has remained silent on his earlier promise to bring forward presidential elections to Spring 1994. For Yeltsin to finally and completely end the dual power situation throughout the entire Federation he must crush these parliaments and leaders over the next weeks and months. He must ensure that they elect compliant tools of Moscow in the December elections.

Prepare

The working class meanwhile must now prepare for new and far worse attacks. It is seventy years since Stalinism crushed the self-organisation and democracy of the Russian proletariat. So far this colossal working class has been unable to recover its revolutionary traditions. Now, faced with the attacks Yeltsin will try to launch with the backing of the army, the working class must recover its fighting capacities or it will suffer a truly historic defeat that will affect the entire world working class.

In the six weeks or so to the elections it is doubly necessary to oppose Yeltsin's wave of dictatorial measures and prevent the installation of a permanent dictatorial regime with a fig leaf of bourgeois parliamentarism. Russian workers should also demand:

- The immediate release Rutskoi, Khasbulatov and all the political prisoners arrested during the coup.
- The lifting of the ban on all political parties, including the Russian Communist Party and on the publication of oppositionist newspapers, and for free access to the television and radio.
- The lifting of all bans on public meetings and street demonstrations and on the meetings of all parliamentary bodies and local soviets.

ABIMAEEL GUZMAN, leader of Sendero Luminoso (SL), has finally capitulated to Fujimori, the Peruvian dictator. Last month, after a year in prison, Guzmán submitted a letter to Fujimori in which he offered peace talks. He even appeared on TV to elaborate on his sell out. Although a year in solitary confinement undoubtedly produces disorientation Guzmán clearly knows what he is doing

The man who was idolised as a demi-god by SL's fighters, the man who claimed to be the living continuation of Marx, Lenin and Mao and who styled himself "Chairman Gonzalo", sent a letter in which he recognised Alberto Fujimori as the legitimate president of Peru and asked for peace negotiations to finish the 13 year war. The letter represents an astonishing capitulation to Fujimori and his dictatorship. The LRCI is the only organisation in Peru which has consistently understood the character of SL. It is at the same time an anti-imperialist, petit-bourgeois guerrilla movement and a counter-revolutionary Stalinist organisation.

Destruction

SL's strategy is thoroughly anti-proletarian. They openly call for the destruction of unions and any popular organisation that they are unable to control. They have killed numerous workers', peasants' and shanty town leaders and destroyed factories and electricity supplies. They reject the struggle for proletarian revolution and the creation of workers' councils and militias.

We demanded that the SL fighters subordinate their actions to mass assemblies, stop their attacks against the left and workers' and popular organisations and fought for a united front with them. At the same time, we condemned all state repressive measures aimed against SL, denounced the adaptation of the "left" to the repression and argued that SL should be defended against all forms of bourgeois repression.

When Guzmán was arrested one year ago *Poder Obrero* adopted a resolution that is entirely vindicated by events. In that document we said:

"What at one point gave an extraordinary power to Sendero's fundamentalism—the extreme cult of Gonzalo—now, with his capture, this is trans-

PERU

Shining path to surrender?

"Move heaven and earth to save the life of Chairman Gonzalo" read Sendero Luminoso graffiti after the capture of its leader. But Chairman Gonzalo (right)—real name Abimael Guzmán—had his own ideas about how to save his skin: he has unilaterally surrendered the Peruvian Maoist guerrilla movement in exchange for his own life. José Villa of Poder Obrero, the Peruvian publication of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI), spells out the reasons for this capitulation.

formed into a weakness. This should show to revolutionaries in Peru and the world the way in which a revolutionary party should not be built... Every Senderista was educated to believe that his or her principal task consisted in the defence of their leader, even sacrificing one's own life. But none of the leading Sendero chiefs fired a single bullet to defend Guzmán when he was arrested. All of them were captured without resistance. In jail the TV showed the terrible subversive in low morale, docile and obeying the police when they asked him to strip in front of the cameras."

To avoid execution, Guzmán, de-

cid to surrender to Fujimori. In 13 years of war, SL always refused to unite with popular or workers' organisations in the name of revolutionary intransigence. Now SL is prepared to enter into a peace process with the class enemy.

Betrayed

The letter to Fujimori was not signed by the PCP-SL Central Committee. Guzmán, who always believed that he was the party, adopted this stance together with his companion. At a stroke he has betrayed thousands of fighters and martyrs.

Guzmán's actions could lead to a

split in SL. It is possible that some sectors will denounce him as a traitor and that some loyalists will start to kill the anti-Guzmán dissidents.

While we do not support the continuation of a popular frontist war with an anti-working class strategy, we fight against SL surrendering to the capitalist state or even becoming part of it. In Peru, over a decade ago, the biggest Maoist party (Patria Roja) transformed itself from a radical organiser of street demonstrations into a corrupt parliamentary party. In Colombia the former Maoist guerrilla EPL is now part of the bourgeois parliamentary system. In Cambodia the ferocious Pol Pot now recognises

the transformation of the "Workers Republic" into a monarchy and is trying to negotiate his own integration into the state.

Like all Maoist-Stalinists SL will abandon the guerrilla strategy in favour of a turn to electoralism. There is nothing the petit bourgeoisie fears more than the organised working class. While they may carry on an armed struggle against the ruling regime they will always try to destroy working class independence and crush soviet-type bodies. They hoped that the workers would become disarmed and confused by the polarisation between the army and SL's elitist military apparatus, incapable of any independent class action.

It is becoming increasingly clear that SL will try to make a deal with the state and even offer their services to aid Fujimori's brutal suppression of the Peruvian working class. As *Poder Obrero* always argued, SL, like the MRTA, will follow the same path as the radical guerrilla squads of the APRA in the 1930's and the MIR-FIR-ELN in the 1960's: it will adapt to imperialism.

Thousands

We say to the thousands of SL and MRTA supporters and sympathisers:

- Abandon your guerrilla strategy but continue to resist! Instead of surrendering to the state put your weapons and your militias at the exclusive disposition of the workers and poor peasants, their rank and file assemblies and democratic self-defence committees
- Strengthen the unions and the popular organisations. Promote the widest workers' democracy and end all physical attacks inside the workers' and popular movement
- Fight for a united front of all the anti-imperialist and workers' organisations with the aim of launching mass demonstrations and actions against Fujimori's neo-liberal offensive
- No to a "popular" war without the people and against the working class. No capitulation to the capitalist state. Abandon all traces of Stalinism. The real alternative is to build a Marxist-Leninist-Trotskyist party inside the proletariat, to fight for workers' and peasants' councils and militias and a socialist revolution



6/7 NOVEMBER 1993

Where is Britain Going?

A weekend of discussion and debate organised by workers power

The Tories are weak and divided. The monarchy and the legal system are discredited. The press is whipping up a moral panic over the results of economic deprivation—crime, unemployment and crack wars. The last vestiges of public services and the benefits system are under attack. Racism is growing. Poverty and homelessness are on the increase.

But so is the anger of millions of working class people.

Meanwhile the trade unions decline in numbers, striking workers are locked out and victimised and the Labour Party leaders fight their own members instead of the Tories.

To change this situation we have to understand it.

Understanding Britain's position in a changing world—with the collapse of Stalinism and the emergence of a new world disorder—is a vital task for socialists. So is accounting for Labour's decline and explaining the defeats suffered by organised workers.

Where is Britain Going? is a weekend of discussion and debate devoted to explaining the changing conditions of the class struggle, and giving concrete answers to the problems facing the working class.

The economy, the Tory splits, the Labour leaders, the union bureaucrats and the rank and file, racism and black liberation, the changing role of women workers, Ireland and Bosnia—all these will come under scrutiny in two days of open discussion and debate. ★

CAXTON HOUSE, ST JOHN'S WAY, ARCHWAY, LONDON N19

Agenda

Saturday 6 November

Registration from 11am

11.45 – 1pm: ★ Will the Tories survive?

2pm – 4pm:

- ★ Britain and the Bosnian war
- ★ Can the unions fight and win?

4.30pm – 6pm:

- ★ The IRA – at an impasse or on the road to victory?
- ★ Strategies for black liberation

7.30pm – 9pm: ★ Fighting Racism Today
A panel discussion with speakers invited from Newham Monitoring Project, Workers Power, Tower Hamlets Youth against Racism, South West London Anti-Fascist Association and Manchester Anti-Fascist Youth

9 til late: ★ PARTY with bar and DJ

Sunday 7 November

10.30am – 12.30pm

- ★ Fighting fascism in the 1930s – lessons for today from Germany, France, Britain and Spain
- ★ Britain's economy – miracle or disaster
- ★ Where is Labour going?

1.30pm – 3.30pm

- ★ The life and death of Stalinism: lessons for the left
- ★ From Burnsalls to Timex: are women the new vanguard?

4pm – 5pm:

- ★ What kind of party does the working class need?

Information

Food will be on sale at lunchtime and in the evening. Tea and Coffee available all day.

Creche will run from 11 'til 6 on Saturday and from 10.30 'til 5 on Sunday.

PLEASE let us know in advance if you are bringing children for the creche.

Venue: Caxton House, St John's Way, Archway, London N19

Getting there: Transport will be arranged by Workers Power branches.

By public transport: Archway Tube (Northern Line), Upper Holloway BR, Buses 210, 41.

By road: map available from address below. There is parking at the venue.

Tickets

Tickets for *Where is Britain Going* are on sale now price: £10 waged £5 unwaged/students
Fill in the form below, and make cheques payable to Workers Power.

For further information, and a free four page guide to the event write now to the address below

Book now!

Please send me [] tickets for *Where is Britain Going?* I enclose £_____

I am bringing [] children to the creche
I need/do not need accommodation
(delete as necessary)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Send to: Workers Power BCM Box 7750 London WC1N 3XX

Burnsall's strike betrayed?

Dear Comrades,

Your article on the Burnsall's strike ("Sold Out!" WP 170) contains many inaccuracies of varying degrees of importance. Space does not allow me to correct all of them, but I make the point because any serious attempt to learn lessons from the dispute must obviously begin with a factually accurate account of what happened.

It is not helpful, for instance, to state that "Jaguar workers . . . undertook blacking action". What happened was that Jaguar management were persuaded to withdraw their custom from Burnsall, largely due to representations from two Jaguar trade unionists who refused to accept the indifference of the Jaguar Joint Shop Stewards' Committee. A minor point, perhaps, but one that throws an entirely different light upon the WP's criticism of the GMB for not having "mobilised to spread such action to other workers, demonstrating that their organised strength deterred the bosses from retaliating."

I could go on, but my main

concern is to take up your criticism of Socialist Organiser (SO) (personified, it seems, by myself!) as "self-appointed defenders" of the GMB bureaucracy. What I and other SO comrades attempted to do was draw up an objective balance sheet. It would have cost us nothing to join in the ritual chants of "sell out" and "betrayal" that most of the left indulged in well before the end of the dispute (indeed, from a purely factional point of view it was tempting to do so because my private assessment was that the strike was unlikely to win). We decided not to do this because—despite making some serious criticisms of the GMB (criticisms that form the basis of your article, incidentally)—in our assessment these did not amount to a "betrayal" or "sell out".

Not every defeat is a "sell out". Not every decision to call off a dispute is a "betrayal". Interestingly, last year, when SO did condemn a collapse of RMT/ASLEF opposition to the London Underground Company Plan in terms

that came near as dammit to shouting "sell out!", we were accused of engaging in a "childish feud" against *Socialist Outlook* (whose supporters took part in the retreat and justified it) by your paper! In that instance, a two to one majority for strike action was thrown away without any fight at all. At Burnsall, by contrast, the GMB fought hard for over a year. Which was the "sell out" comrades?

Finally, you say that my condemnation of much of the criticism directed against the GMB as objectively anti-union is "scandalous", arguing that "if we followed this reasoning to its logical conclusion the left would always have to cover up for the bureaucracy lest anti-working class forces are able to take advantage."

Well, yes: I plead guilty. If I were playing at *reductio ad absurdum* you would be right.

But my point was that *in this instance* the dividing line between legitimate criticism from the left and scurrilous misrepresentation that (whatever its motivation) helps the right, has been crossed. I think the record bears this out: look at the coverage in the bourgeois *Eastern Eye* paper or the recent Channel 4 documentary on the strike. Both were heavily influenced by the Naxalite leadership of the London Support Committee. Both quite plainly crossed the line into generalised anti-unionism, even if they used some "left" rhetoric along the way.

I am sorry to see Workers Power tail-ending such people. I am even sorer to conclude that you are incapable of addressing the real lessons to be learned from this highly significant dispute.

Yours,

Jim Denham (Birmingham)

Yes it was!

We reply:

First let's deal with the complete nonsense: the comparison that comrade Denham makes between our Burnsall's coverage and our coverage of the London Underground dispute last year is off the mark.

Our headline dealing with the events on the London Underground was "Betrayal", our first sentence read "What a sell out!" (WP 162). We know a sell out when we see one, and unlike *Socialist Organiser* we call it by its proper name.

On the Jaguar action, it is clear that the threat of blacking persuaded the management to act. Jaguar bosses are not noted for their solidarity with the cause of the working class.

The issue is, did the GMB try to build on and spread such action—the answer is no, and comrade Denham can furnish no evidence to suggest otherwise. Our criticism stands.

Are we "tail-ending" the Naxalites (an ultra-left Stalinist sect once engaged in a guerrilla war with the Indian state)? Look at what we said, and at what *Socialist Organiser* said. We argued that *Socialist Organiser's* defence of the bureaucrats and hostility to the "hidden agenda" of the black nationalists missed the central point—that the unions have a long history of complacency, and worse, on the issue of racism.

Apologising for the actions of the bureaucrats, and rejecting these criticisms as being "objectively anti-union" does nothing to either challenge this record or win black workers to trade unionism.

The attitude of *Eastern Eye* and Channel 4 is irrelevant here. We are not tail-ending them in any way.

We are saying that *in this instance*, to focus on the "hidden agenda" and to insist that the criticism aimed at the GMB by some black activists can be written off as a "boost [to] non-unionism" is a scandalous diversion from the necessary and justified attack on the GMB bureauc-

racy for their primary responsibility in selling out the Burnsall's strikers.

This brings us to the most important point comrade Denham is making—that the Burnsall's strikers were not sold out. *Socialist Organiser* has devoted pages to proving this.

Yet, in denouncing us for indulging "ritual chants" against the GMB for selling out the strike comrade Denham does not answer a single point we made in our article about the role and behaviour of the GMB.

The reason for this startling omission is that he cannot deny the treacherous behaviour of the GMB officials in ending the Burnsall's strike without allowing the Burnsall's strikers to have a say. We know that not every dispute that ends or is defeated is a sell out.

But we also know that a strike that is bureaucratically ended, a strike in which the strikers are threatened by the bureaucracy with having representation withdrawn if they decide to carry on the struggle, a strike in which John Edmonds of the GMB has repeatedly refused the requests of strikers to have official recognition restored, is a strike that has been sold out.

Comrade Denham and *Socialist Organiser* are so entrenched in their right wing politics that they cannot bring themselves to utter the word "betrayal". ■

The Burnsall's strikers are still struggling to have official recognition restored and have called a conference to win support for this aim.

The conference is on 30 October, at Newtown Community Centre, Newtown, Birmingham, B19.

Messages of support and donations (cheques payable to "Burnsall's Strike Fund") can be sent to: Burnsall's strikers c/o 82 Rosefield Road, Smethwick, West Midlands B67 6DR

WHERE WE STAND

WORKERS POWER

is a revolutionary communist organisation. We base our programme and policies on the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, on the documents of the first four congresses of the Third (Communist) International and on the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International.

Capitalism is an anarchic and crisis-ridden economic system based on production for profit. We are for the expropriation of the capitalist class and the abolition of capitalism. We are for its replacement by socialist production planned to satisfy human need.

Only the socialist revolution and the smashing of the capitalist state can achieve this goal. Only the working class, led by a revolutionary vanguard party and organised into workers' councils and workers' militia can lead such a revolution to victory and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. There is no peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism.

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

In the trade unions we fight for a rank and file movement to oust the reformist bureaucrats, to democratise the unions and win them to a revolutionary action programme based on a system of transitional demands which serve as a bridge between today's struggles and the socialist revolution. Central to this is the fight for workers' control of production.

We are for the building of fighting organisations of the working class—factory committees, industrial unions, councils of action, and workers' defence organisations.

The first victorious working class revolution, the October 1917 Revolution in Russia, established a workers' state. But Stalin and the bureaucracy destroyed workers' democracy and set about the reactionary and utopian project of building "socialism in one country". In the USSR, and the other degenerate workers' states that were established from above, capitalism was destroyed but the bureaucracy excluded the working class from power, blocking the road to democratic planning and socialism. The corrupt, parasitic bureaucratic caste has led these states to crisis and destruction. We are for the smashing of bureaucratic tyranny through proletarian political revolution and the establishment of workers' democracy. We oppose the restoration of capitalism and recognise that only workers' revolution can defend the post-capitalist property relations. In times of war we unconditionally defend workers' states against imperialism.

Internationally Stalinist Communist Parties have consistently betrayed the working class. Their strategy of alliances with the bourgeoisie (popular fronts) and their stages theory of revolution have inflicted terrible defeats on the working class world-wide. These parties are reformist and their influence in the workers' movement must be defeated.

We fight against the oppression that capitalist society inflicts on people because of their race, age, sex, or sexual orientation. We are for the liberation of women and for the building of a working class women's movement, not an "all class" autonomous movement. We are for the liberation of all of the oppressed. We fight racism and fascism. We oppose all immigration controls. We fight for labour movement support for black self-defence against racist and state attacks. We are for no platform for fascists and for driving them out of the unions.

We support the struggles of oppressed nationalities or countries against imperialism. We unconditionally support the Irish Republicans fighting to drive British troops out of Ireland. We politically oppose the nationalists (bourgeois and petit bourgeois) who lead the struggles of the oppressed nations. To their strategy we counterpose the strategy of permanent revolution, that is the leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle by the working class with a programme of socialist revolution and internationalism.

In conflicts between imperialist countries and semi-colonial countries, we are for the defeat of "our own" army and the victory of the country oppressed and exploited by imperialism. We are for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. We fight imperialist war not with pacifist pleas but with militant class struggle methods including the forcible disarmament of "our own" bosses.

Workers Power is the British Section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International. The last revolutionary International (the Fourth) collapsed in the years 1948-51.

The LRCI is pledged to fight the centrism of the degenerate fragments of the Fourth International and to refound a Leninist Trotskyist International and build a new world party of socialist revolution. We combine the struggle for a re-elaborated transitional programme with active involvement in the struggles of the working class—fighting for revolutionary leadership.

If you are a class conscious fighter against capitalism; if you are an internationalist—join us!

RCP nazi lovers

Dear comrades,

In the recent upsurge of anti-fascist protest a group calling itself the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) has reappeared. A close examination of their politics shows why they are rapidly being re-christened the Nazi-Lovers' Party.

The RCP's first reaction to the BNP election victory was to run to the *Independent* and to declare themselves "far more sympathetic to the Islanders than to the assorted collection of politicians, commentators and anti-nazi moralists"—the Islanders in question being those who voted BNP!

Commenting on the efforts of anti-fascist campaigners before the election to stop the BNP victory RCP leader Kenan Malik wrote:

"Nothing could have been more calculated to put people's backs up. For many Islanders voting BNP provided the perfect two fingers to the political establishment, right and left."

Then the RCP sprang into action. Relaunching its front campaign *East London Workers Against Racism* it mounted a campaign against building the 16 October demo in Welling.

The RCP used the full weight of its implantation into that vital arena of class struggle—TV production and the media—to get themselves on numerous TV programmes as bona fide anti-racist campaigners. Millions of viewers heard one RCP pundit claim: "we defend the BNP's democratic rights". So, the BNP campaigns for "Rights for Whites", and the RCP campaigns for "Rights for the BNP!"

Having failed to sabotage the 16 October demo the RCP turned up to gloat, standing idly by while police battered protesters, refus-

ing to participate either in the demo or its defence, on the grounds that some anti-fascists misguidedly call on the state to repress fascism.

Let's be clear: reliance on state bans against the fascists is useless. But that does not mean we "defend the democratic rights" of the fascists. We should be out to deny them democratic rights by working class methods. If the RCP is serious it should have been on the other side of the police barricades defending the bookshop.

As for its defence of the "Islanders' rejection of establishment politics": it is an insult to the workers who voted Labour. Despite the anti-working class policies of Labour in the Isle of Dogs nearly 1,400 voted Labour

either because they retain their illusions in Labour, or because they sensibly preferred a party of the trade unions to a party of the gas chambers. The RCP treats the white working class of Millwall as monolithically prone to voting nazi, and treats the least class conscious section of the working class as somehow more advanced than reformist workers.

The RCP is a party which refuses to recognise the BNP as fascist on the grounds that the label will encourage anti-German chauvinism. It refuses to fight fascism because it may have to do so alongside reformist workers. It gleefully distributes its publications through WH Smith—which is just as well because most serious anti-racists will rightly tell the middle class Nazi-Lovers' Party where to stick their clipboards and glossy magazines.

Julian Cook
Chiswick,
London

Workers power

INSIDE

Number 172 November 1993

- ★ Yeltsin's counter-revolution
- ★ "Date rape" and the law
- ★ Angolan civil war

British section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International

Price 40p/10p strikers Solidarity price £1

RISING CRIME, unemployment and homelessness are the result of Tory policies and a rotting capitalist system. But racists say everything is the fault of black people.

THEY ARE LYING!

The Tory tabloids blame black people for rising crime. Every thinking person knows the real causes of the rising crime wave—mounting poverty, disappearing facilities, crumbling estates and a society that offers millions no way forward.

Black youth are forced to live in the worst conditions. They are less likely to get work, more likely to suffer violent and fatal assaults, and are more likely to be harassed, arrested and sentenced to a prison term than any other section of society.

Every month one young black person dies in suspicious circumstances in British prisons, police cells and secure hospitals.

Metropolitan Police Chief Paul Condon says he "deplores" racism, but in the same breath claims that racial attacks are not as important as "serious crime".

The racists claim that immigrants are scroungers. Even after the savage killing of Joy Gardner by police earlier this year, Tory right winger Teresa Gorman attacked her for "bumming on the social services for five years".

Benefits

But Britain has one of the lowest benefits in Europe. Far more British workers go abroad to look for work than the 10,000 foreign nationals who claim benefits here.

Meanwhile one Tory magazine has admitted that massive profits—and tax for the government—are made by firms who employ illegal immigrants on poverty wages. The bosses and their loyal representatives are quite happy to make millions by exploiting immigrant workers who have no legal protection. But to ask for £40 a week when you can't get work: what scrounging! The Tories' hypocrisy knows no bounds.

Swamped

Once again the Tories are whipping up the idea that immigration and overcrowding are the cause of all our problems. Winston Churchill has repeated racist lies about Britain being swamped by immigrants, by which he means *black* immigrants. But what are the facts the liars never report?

● 750,000 more people have left this country than have entered it since 1964.

● there are more immigrants every year from Australia and New Zealand than from the whole of the Indian sub-continent.

If our inner cities feel overcrowded it is because every year less than a fifth of the number of council houses

The racists are lying!



are built now than were built in 1979 and 100,000 people are forced to sleep on the streets.

And even if the lies were true and hundreds of thousands of black people arrived in Britain for the first time every year—so what? Were the pits closed because of immigration? Are hospitals being shut because of an influx of black workers? The very idea is ridiculous.

Industry is being destroyed because we live in a society that puts profit before the living standards of the mass of the population. Hospitals are being shut because the rich are fed up having to pay a share of the cost of keeping people healthy.

One of the most nauseating—and widespread—lies is that black people take all the best housing because of equal opportunities policies. But:

● Black people make up 14% of London's population but 40% of the homeless.

● The Liberal council in Tower Hamlets has violated the Race Relations Act four times for discriminating *against* black people. They brought in a policy that gave priority for housing to the children of existing tenants—who are mainly white. Although Asians are 27% of the local population only 18% of properties let by the council have gone to Asians: a mere 24 of the 135 properties let since April this year.

● Three quarters of a million homes stand empty because of the profiteering of private landlords, speculators and developers.

Divert

The Tories promote racism to divert attention away from the real cause of poverty and social decay—their rotten system. Our answer is to unite black and white workers and youth in a militant struggle against that system. That unity must

be built by a common fight for decent jobs, homes and facilities for all.

But on its own that will not be enough. White workers also have to demonstrate to the black working class, in action, that we will not let the bosses divide us. White workers must support the struggles of black people against racism and bring the tremendous power of the working class into action against all discrimination and oppression. That means giving practical backing to black self-defence, not to the racist police. That means demanding an end to all immigration controls, not backing calls for tighter borders.

And it means building a party that fights not to defend Britain's role as the robber of the third world, but for a fair distribution of wealth on a world scale, for an international socialist system that can finally destroy the chaos of the profit system—and all its racist injustices. ■

Northern Ireland:
**TROOPS
OUT NOW!**

AN IRA bomb in Belfast's Shankill Road has killed ten people and injured at least 50 others. The target was the Ulster Defence Association bunker where the IRA believe the loyalists had been masterminding their murderous campaign against Catholics.

The British government and its collaborators in the loyalist murder squads must take full responsibility for the deaths.

The IRA have said that the mission went wrong when the bomb exploded prematurely, before a warning had been given. IRA members are thought to be among those hit by the blast.

Loyalist murder squads have stepped up their indiscriminate murder campaign against Catholics in recent months. Unlike the IRA, whose policy is to target security forces, collaborators and loyalist leaders, the loyalist paramilitaries consider that any Catholic is a legitimate target.

We support the IRA in its war against British imperialism, and that includes its fight against the loyalist death squads. It is time the British labour movement gave its solidarity to the Irish struggle to get the British army out of the North. As long as Ireland remains forcibly divided against the will of the majority of its population, and as long as the Republicans continue the fight against the imperialist occupation and division of Ireland, we will support them in their fight. ■

● For coverage of the Hume/Adams peace talks and more on the loyalist death squads, turn to page 11.

SCRAP ALL IMMIGRATION CONTROLS