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THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF TROTSKY'S DEATH

workers power

British section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International

"I shall die a proletarian revolutionist, a Marxist, a dialectical materialist, and, consequently, an irreconcilable atheist.

My faith in the communist future of mankind is not less ardent, indeed it is firmer today, than it was in my youth."



Leon Trotsky's Testament 1940

● See centre pages

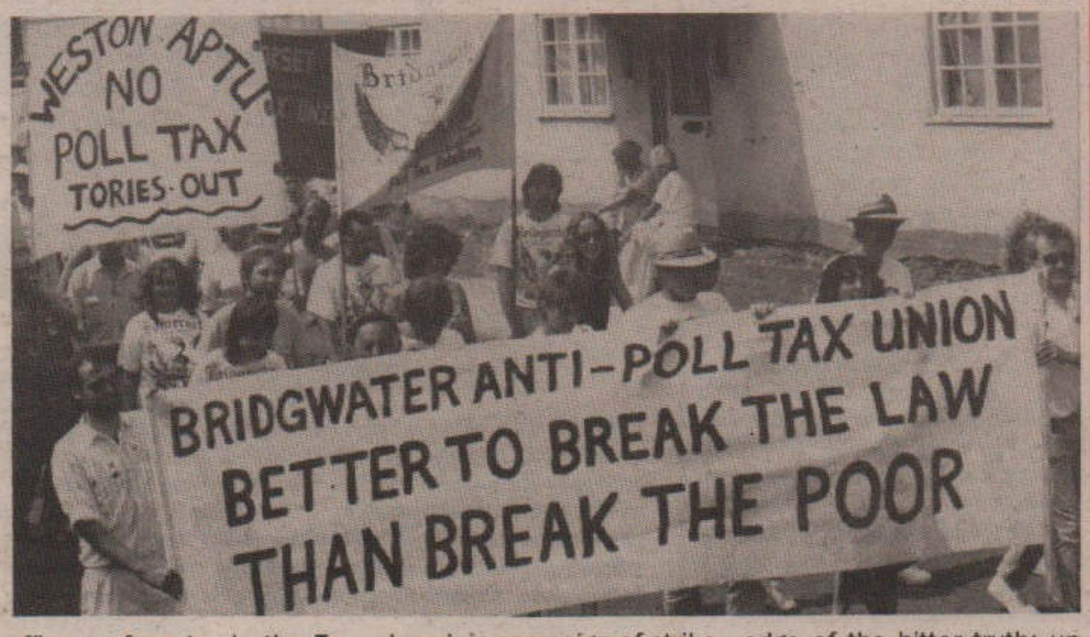
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Bailiffs, courts, wage arrestments . . .

STRIKE TO BREAK THE TAX!

TORY AND LABOUR Councils alike have decided to get tough with Poll Tax non-payers. They are lining up thousands of cases in the magistrates' courts in the hope of breaking the anti-Poll Tax struggle over the summer.

John Harris



The courts, stuffed full of Tories and right wing Labour JPs, have decided to get tough as well. They are railroading hundreds of cases, denying defendants the right to an effective defence.

They are terrorising working class families by going straight for the bailiffs, avoiding the lengthy process of taking the Poll Tax out of benefits and wages by sending round thugs to value and sell off washing machines, TVs and stereos.

In response it is vital that the whole working class gets tough with the courts, the councils and the Tory govenment.

No one should be under any illusion that the Poll Tax can be stopped in court. It is a class law, aimed against the services and living standards of ordinary workers.

But at the moment the courts provide a focus for action by the mass of working class people who are against the tax and have refused to pay. Mass pickets, occupations and the disruption of the proceedings can give the message to the Tories that we are prepared to break the Poll Tax by breaking the law.

But those who peddled the illusion that we could stop the tax by clogging up the courts are being proved wrong as the magistrates have developed effective, if blatantly unjust, ways of preventing individuals from representing themselves in court.

In turn, the councils' court victories threaten to severely dent non-payment. If the councils can make court liability orders stick, through bailiffs or "arrestment", then millions of workers could be frightened into paying up.

That is why it is vital, now, to stop the Poll Tax liability orders being carried out.

Every bailiff's office should be shut down by occupations and mass pickets. Every attempt to value or sell off household goods should be met with a militant mass picket prepared to defend itself not only against the bailiffs but against the police who will inevitably be there to help them do their job.

Workers faced with liability orders enabling the boss to take the Poll Tax from their wages should be organising strike action to demand the boss refuses to comply. They should demand that workers in the wages and salary offices refuse to do the Tories' dirty work.

Benefit workers should likewise be won to strike action against deduction of the tax from the meagre income support of the most needy sections of society.

Above all the anti-Poll Tax movement needs to abandon the kind of complacency that sees victory just around the corner.

The Labour Party and the trade union leaders have combined with the Tories to deliver a masssive stab in the back to workers fighting the Poll Tax. Like the miners' strike, like the Liverpool and Lambeth Council struggles against ratecapping, this means we face defeat unless we can defeat the labour movement's leaders and mobilise the entire working class in a campaign of strike action, boycotts and occupations to stop the Poll Tax.

We don't need another "People's March" where fifty or so young workers are marched through the oilseed rape fields throughout September. Whilst the planned People's March should be used as a focus for action, if nothing else exists by September, it would be a disaster if the whole national anti-Poll Tax movement was diverted into preparation for the march when the burning task of the day is strike action and mass pickets against the bailiffs and court orders.

This summer thousands of non-payers will be forced to make the choice: get organised or give in to the Tory legal onslaught. They must make that choice in full knowledge of the bitter truth: unless we strike against the tax we will lose. If we lose it is not just extra money from our wage packets but the whole future of local government services that is at stake.

Let off the hook by the Labour and trade union leaders Thatcher has bounced back with the threat to make tax capping tougher next year unless councils make further cuts.

Workers in Scotland, England and Wales have one chance, and one chance alone to knock the Tory plans for six: by mobilising mass strike action in the next weeks and months. If that is done then the chance to organise generalised strike action to smash the tax itself will once again be put on the immediate agenda.■

● TAX CAPPING AND COUNCIL CUTS – TURN TO PAGE

IN brief

● Clive Jenkins, the retired leader of the white collar union ASTMS, now the MSF, has launched into a tirade against union leaders who are opposed to Labour's policy of keeping the anti-union laws. In Maxwell's *Sunday Mirror*, he attacked "a small group of political activists" guilty of "endless, mindless factioneering and empty gestures". The *Mirror* described Clive as a man who "dedicated his life to the trades union movement". Not quite. By careful property speculation Clive amassed a fortune while he was still a bureaucrat. Today he is a millionaire and owns a huge tract of Tasmania! He dedicated his life to selling out workers' struggles and buying up profitable chunks of real estate.

● Justice may be blind, but judges certainly aren't. A paratrooper who recently stamped on a fourteen year old boy's head and left him with a fractured skull and internal bleeding was put on two years probation and fined £2,000. Why the leniency? Well, as a member of the 1st Battalion of the Parachute Regiment—the unit that carried out the Bloody Sunday massacre in Ireland in 1972—he got a glowing reference from the army. And when the court learnt that he had done intelligence work in Ulster his freedom from conviction was guaranteed. The judges know how to look after their own.

● Good to see that the health authorities entrusted with seeing to it that we are all kept well are keen to educate us about the dangers of AIDS. The West Midlands Health Authority recently put up posters from the Terrence Higgins Trust promoting safer sex. No sooner were the posters displayed, however, than the authority took them down so as "not to offend" staff. There was just a glimpse of a man's nipple on one of the posters. The West Midlands health chiefs obviously regard the sight of something you can see multiple versions of on any beach in the summer as more dangerous to people's health than ignorance about AIDS.

● This month's tale of the bosses' belt tightening battle with inflation hails from Cwmcarn in Gwent. At a British Telecom Consumer Electronics plant there Mr Richard Nightingale, the boss, told his 110 workers to take a £44 per week pay cut or be sacked. Their pay rates, in a company reported to be raking in £7.5 million a day, were "an unacceptable burden on our profitability." Needless to say Mr Nightingale's £53,000 salary is a burden BT are happy to bear.

Mark Lindsay

It is with sadness that we learnt of the untimely death of *Socialist Organiser* supporter Mark Lindsay. Mark died in July from the results of an epileptic fit.

We came across Mark in many arenas of struggle in South London. In the Campaign for Solidarity with Workers of the Eastern Bloc we worked alongside him right up to the eve of his death. He was determined and dedicated in all he did. We send our condolences to all his comrades, friends and family.

S London Workers Power

The real cost of community care

BY BRIDGET O'SHEA

GROWING ANXIETY about Poll Tax bills next year has pushed the government into retreat over its proposed changes to the provision of care in the community.

The changes were due to be brought in on 1 April next year, but the Tories have realised that neither the money nor the structures are there to carry them out. Rather than face a further damaging reorganisation of health and social services and a steep increase in the Poll Tax the Tories have postponed the changes until after the next election.

The decision has led to cries of protest from Labour, Tory backbenchers and those most closely involved in providing care in the community. Not because the changes were welcomed but because to pull out now has left the NHS, local authorities and consumers completely up in the air about how the services they were in the process of dismantling are going to be retained for another two years.

So what is all the debate around community care about? The broad issues relate to how society cares for people who are unable to live independently—the ill, the disabled and the infirm—and require varying levels of support from other people to carry out everyday tasks.

In the past many people with mental and physical disabilities have been kept in large institutions, separated off from their families and the rest of the community. This policy has long been challenged by liberal reformers who have promoted the integration of such care within the community. This is undoubtedly a progressive direction for such care—nobody would defend the huge asylums and workhouses of Victorian times.

But the moves towards "care in the community" by successive Labour and Tory governments have not been based on a concern for improving the quality of life for those previously in institutions. Rather "community care" has been seen as a cheap option which takes responsibility for such care away from these state institutions and places it back with the family.



Goal

The proclaimed goal of the Griffiths Report on care in the community (on which the proposed Tory changes were based) was to involve:

"Services and support which people . . . need to be able to live as independently as possible".

Very worthy. But to provide such care requires resources—housing, people to assist in domestic and personal tasks, community nursing, day centres, social activities. And all of this requires money. Unless of course, the burden of all this work is to be shouldered by unpaid workers, namely women in the family.

There are already over six million unpaid carers in the home, looking after elderly or sick relatives, the vast majority of whom are women. All moves towards care in the community have included an assumption that women are available to take on this role with minimal support from the state. By 1996 the number of people aged 85 and over will have almost doubled in twenty years from 459,000 in 1976, to 894,000. The solution to this growing "problem" of an increasing number of dependent people in the population was outlined by Griffiths. It follows the Tories' prescriptions for everything—competition. It ties in with their other tactics of privatisation, compulsory competitive tendering and the opening up of ever more opportunities for the private sector to make a profit out of the working class. This time it is to be through providing and marketing the most basic necessities (housing and personal care) required by a very vulnerable section of society.

The changes transfer responsibility for community service to local authorities. Previously it had been shared between the NHS and the local authorities. The changes include the "maximum use of the independent sector", promoting the use of voluntary "non-profit" services.

Local authorities will no longer be providing the care. They will act as agencies, buying it in from competing providers. Given that the majority of the finance for this will come direct from local government budgets the standard of care is bound to plummet as authorities look for the cheapest option in order to keep the Poll Tax lower.

Criteria

The other change is to establish criteria for assessing clients' ability to contribute to "the full economic costs of residential services". The elderly and disabled will be means tested and charged for their care accordingly.

There will also be a "concentration on those with greatest need". State provision will only be available to those who are the most in need and have the least money. In future we might see means testing and needs testing before anyone can even get into an old people's home! Home help and meals on wheels services will also be charged at "realistic" prices to those judged able to pay.

But these changes are not as cheap as the government had hoped. The latest estimates from local authorities show that community care could cost an extra £500 million, which would put an extra £15 per head on the Poll Tax! Hence the Tories' hasty retreat. If care in the community was given the resources that would make it a real step forward then it would undoubtedly cost much more than care in an institution!

The earlier phase of community care policy was the closure of long stay hospitals for the mentally ill which has been gathering pace over the last decade. It has already had serious effects. The closures have far outstripped the building of alternative accommodation. Thousands have ended up on the streets or in the already overcrowded prisons, or re-admitted to acute, and more expensive, psychiatric wards.

Referred

The number of people discharged from long-stay care who end up in prison has contributed to a massive 38% increase in the number of inmates being referred to psychiatrists, and a doubling of prison suicides in the 1980s. A study at Winchester prison found that 60% of mentally ill inmates were homeless and that many were being held on remand for allegedly committing crimes in a search for food or shelter. Yet the whole debate on the pros and cons of community care ignores the fundamental issue of poverty.

The reality is that "preserving individual independence" and "offering freedom of choice" are rights that are strictly limited by available resources.

In capitalist society the responsibilty for caring for all dependents rests first with the family and only where that fails does the state step in to provide some kind of safety net. People who are not young, able-bodied and self-sufficient are regarded as a "burden" on society.

This attitude and the inadequacy of care will continue until all people are regarded with respect for their contribution, are fully integrated into society with whatever support is required, and their care is the responsibility of a truly collective society, not just an individual family or state institution.■

No to "outing"

BY IAN HACKETT

ONE OF the most controversial issues being discussed in the lesbian and gay movement at the moment is that of "outing". Outing involves naming "closets" in high places—actors, politicians, judges, police—in order to expose the hypocrisy of the establishment.

The Aids Coalition for The Unleashing of Power (ACT UP) has been at the forefront of using this tactic. ACT UP is a direct action group, originating in the USA, committed to highlighting instances of prejudice and inequality relating to HIV and AIDS.

The Washington DC Chapter of ACT UP has recently invited lesbians and gays to send them names of Congress members who should be included on a list of politicians to be "outed". They are doing this in preparation for forthcoming votes on an emergency act for AIDS care resources, and on a bill to remove HIV from the list of prescibed illnesses which restricts immigration rights.

In the past many Congress members who are known closets have spoken and voted against progressive legislation on HIV/AIDS.

The clear implication is that "outing" can affect the outcome of important legislation. The desire to illustrate the hypocrisy of people in power is understandable. But will outing take the struggle forward? No!

Outing is a fundamental breach of personal democratic rights. We must be very clear that a person's sexuality should never be used against them, even if they are a hypocritical bourgeois politician. To do so weakens the fight for democratic rights for all lesbians and gay men. How can we say a person's sexuality is their own business, an issue that the state should keep its nose out of, and then expose others?

Outing is symptomatic of the politics of ACT UP. They believe that because a bourgeois politician is gay or lesbian they should be in favour of progressive legislation. This is a myth. The fact is that, whatever their sexuality, they are wedded to the capitalist system.

Their privileged position means that they have no necessary commitment to progressive legislation against oppression which would actually challenge fundamental structures of capitalism. You only have to look at legislation in the sphere of women's rights to see that female politicians are no guaranteed ally in the struggle for those rights, even though they can't keep their gender in the closet!

Outing will not take the struggle forward. It will put more pressure on lesbians and gay men, in prominent positions in society or not, to hide even deeper in the closet for fear that some public "revelation" of their sexuality may be used against them at some time in the future.■

EDITORIAL

The Tories' effluent tendency

IN THE months before the World Cup the Tories condemned England's football supporters at every opportunity. Colin Moynihan told Parliament that they were "the effluent tendency".

Now the Tories' own "effluent tendency" of anti-German chauvinists has been exposed. And it has influence at the very top of British politics.

Nicholas Ridley denounced the European Community as "a German racket": "I'm not against giving up sovereignty in principle, but not to this lot. You might just as well give it to Adolf Hitler, frankly" he told the *Spectator*.

No sooner had he resigned than another piece of Tory effluence hit the fan. Thatcher was so worried about German re-unification, it emerged, that she called together a meeting of historians and other pundits to discuss the German "national character". This gathering spent a whole day debating whether the Germans were still prone to "angst, aggressiveness, assertiveness, bullying, egotism, inferiority complex, sentimentality".

In the first place Thatcher and Ridley are not short on any of these qualities themselves. Every one of them was on display in Ridley's interview.

Perhaps his outburst was the result of the up-market equivalent of *Sun* journalists getting British football fans lagered-up for trouble in Italy. But however many glasses of wine he'd had Ridley's angst-ridden chauvinism was as real as that displayed by the most right wing section of the football fans

But with Ridley the cause is not an inferiority complex about the ball-control skills of the England team. It is a deep anxiety caused by the British economy's clear inferiority to Germany's in the context of 1992. Ridley's anti-German outburst indicates that a whole section of the British ruling class is gearing up for a rearguard action against Germany's economic rise in Europe.

Many workers will also ask themselves why, as the minutes of Thatcher's secret seminar put it:

"A cultured and cultivated nation allowed itself to be brainwashed into barbarism. If it had happened once, could it not happen again?"

The reply which springs to the lips of many socialists, liberals, pro-European Tories and the vast majority of working class youth is; "that was then, this is now—let's forget about the past". But this approach is, in the long run, just as dangerous as the open chauvinism of Ridley and the *Sun*.

The task of revolutionary workers is to remember the past and learn its lessons. And the lesson of the two imperialist wars is that Germany was not alone in allowing itself to be "brainwashed into barbarism". The workers of all the imperialist countries allowed themselves to be brainwashed into supporting a reactionary war. In Britain the danger is that we are *still* brainwashed by the wartime propaganda 45 years later

There is no doubt that German imperialism slaughtered six million Jews in the camps. But was this capacity for racist slaughter uniquely German? No. As the British Army reeled under Japanese attack in Bengal it managed to provoke a famine which killed four million. When the British army defeated Greek workers and peasants—who had fought Germany and now fought against the return of the right wing generals—"our boys" cut the heads off rebel corpses and stuck them on stakes. The RAF's mass bombing raids on Dresden and Leipzig deliberately incinerated and suffocated hundreds of thousands of civilians: women, children and pensioners.

The war was barbaric because it was a war to divide the world between competing capitalists. The imperialist countries were not defending the hearths and homes of their common people but the loot and plunder of the Vickers, the Krupps and the Rockefellers.

British historians often expose the role of German capitalists in bringing Hitler to power. But it forgets the role of the British and French bosses in creating the conditions that led to the growth of a mass fascist movement.

It was these democracies that imposed crippling war reparations on Germany in the robber Treaty of Versailles after the end of the First World War. After 1918 Britain and France grabbed even more of the world spoils for themselves. The defeated powers like Germany and Italy lurched from one economic and revolutionary crisis to another.

If the fortunes of war had been reversed then Britain and France would not have been able to maintain their famed democracy either. Moseley would have become a Hitler, whilst Hitler would have been consigned to the obscurity of a Moseley.

The British and French ruling classes share full and equal historic responsibility for Hitler.

The German workers bear no national guilt for Hitler's crimes. In fact the strength of the German workers' movement of the 1920s and 1930s, with its tradition of anti-fascist struggle, was one of the factors which drove the German bosses to the desperate measure of backing Hitler's fascist movement.

The brown-nosed historians gathered at Chequers tried to soothe the irate Britannia's nerves. They assured her that the German national character has changed since the war. Now the Germans are democratic, peaceable and modest with it: "we should be nice to the Germans" concludes the Chequers minute book.

But world economics dictates that the whole British ruling class will not swallow this. Thatcher and Ridley want to "fight them on the beaches" to slow down European economic integration. Howe, Hurd and Major fear exclusion from the post-1992 free for all.

British workers must reject both strategies on offer—the little Englandism of the Tory right and the false internationalism of European capitalist collaboration. Our enemies are the bosses of every country. Workers, the world over, are our biggest allies.■

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Happy families?

THATCHER DUBBED the Tories "the party of the family" in 1977. The number of children born outside of wedlock has more than doubled in the last ten years from 12.5% in 1982 to 28% in the first three months of 1990.

No wonder the supporters of "the party of the family" are fretting and sweating about the decline of family values. The International Congress for the Family, held in Brighton last month, pleaded for action to preserve the "normal" family. It was graced by the presence of that model mum, Princess Di. She couldn't say much about child benefits, but prattled on about the benefits of children being reared in a stable family environment.

The problem is that the "stable family" is not flourishing under the Tories. Quite the contrary, it is collapsing, and the right wing, the church and even the new model Labour Party are all alarmed.

Divorce

Thatcher in her Pankhurst Lecture to the "300 Group" (the campaign for more women MPs), the Centre for Policy Studies and Labour's Harriet Harman all quote the same facts when talking about the family: four out of every ten marriages end in divorce; 25% of marriages are re-marriages; one in five children under 16 will see their parents divorced; one third of all children live in "non-traditional" households; there were 800,000 single parent families on income support last year.

But the ruling class is divided over what to do about this crisis of the family. The ideologues of the church and the moral crusaders of the right want a return to bygone days when all children had two parents, one of each sex. In this ideal unit the parents should be married (to each other), and the husband earns the money whilst the wife cooks, cleans and moulds the children into the image of obedient perfection.

The people who advocate this type of family are the very same ones who want to outlaw abortion, make divorce more difficult to achieve, want tax incentives for men whose wives who do not have jobs, and believe that the welfare state is too generous to single mums. They think that sex education is the work of the devil and that homosexuality should be persecuted.

Thatcher, while prepared to use the values preached by the forces of moral reaction for propaganda purposes, has a clearer grasp of the realities and needs of modern capitalism. She knows that real changes have occurred in women's work outside of the home which have created a transformation in the hearth and home. The majority of women with children now work outside the home. Women take less time off when they have small children, and they make up an indispensible 40% of the workforce.

The current so-called demographic crisis, of falling numbers of school leavers leading to labour shortgages in many industries, has meant that even more women are now required in the workforce.

These changes to the workforce mean that the ruling class has to be very cautious. The Director of Thatcher's Centre for Policy Studies argued:

"It seems to me that the only sustainable position for the [Tory] party to take is one that tries to be neutral between women who choose to stay at home and those who go out to work."

Weapon

They want to promote the traditional family as a weapon that can discipline the working class, and a place where new generations of workers are raised without too much cost to the state. In defence of the family Thatcher therefore argues that "the children need security. These things are most likely where the parents are married and stay married."

Yet the Tories cannot afford to pursue policies which would push too many women out of work. That would leave the bosses they represent with a major labour shortage. So up to now the Tories have simply followed policies to save money such as removing the eligibility of many families for state support. The responsibility for child-care provision and financial support for families has been taken out of the hands of the state and placed back onto the individual family.

This is the philosophy behind Thatcher's recent proposals for a Child Support Agency. "Parenthood is for life" she claimed, and fathers who desert their children will be hounded by the state to pay for their care. At the moment only 25% of lone parents get maintenance, whereas 70% get state income support. The Tories hope to save £2.7 billion by these changes.

This legislation will not touch on incentives for women to work or not to work. The Tories have resisted granting tax incentives for child-care and seem determined to remain neutral. Thatcher herslf said that it was "not for the state or anyone else to dictate whether or not women work".

The effect of Tory policies on benefits have already had a major effect on families, particularly where there is a single parent. Freezing child benefit for three years, hounding women off the dole unless they can guarantee child-care if they get a job, stopping benefit to 16 to 18 year olds—these have all had the effect of impoverishing the family.

Local government spending cuts have savaged child-care provision. Britain has one of the worst records in Europe, despite having the largest proportion of women seeking work. Less than 5% of under threes get any state child-care. After-school clubs have been the first to go as many councils try to balance their budgets.

Thatcher's recent speech was described by Harriet Harman as "fine words, but failing the family." It is true that by their own bourgeois standards the Tories have overseen the impoverishment of families and children, and the break up of the traditional family. But unlike Labour we would not defend the bourgeois family—that ideal in which women are forced to do unpaid work, in which women and children are oppressed and abused, in which the working class is tamed and made obedient.

Of course we support legislation which allows working class families better standards of living. We must demand a massive increase in child benefit, full and free child-care provided by the state and controlled by workers and parents, improved maternity and paternity rights, full benefits for single parents.

Hounding fathers who leave the family is wrong. Women should not have to take sole responsibility for their children, but to make them more dependent on the contributions of the father will lead to an increase in dependency and therefore potentially to more violence and abuse of women by their ex-husbands.

Issues

The Tories have no answer to the issues around the family. They cannot resolve the contradiction between women's role in the family and at work. The cause of that contradiction is class society itself. Capitalism depends on the retention of the family, and yet its own development leads it to constantly undermine the stability of that family as more and more women are drawn into work.

The Tories will not find a solution to their dilemma. Neither will Labour. The only solution lies in getting rid of the capitalist system and with it the oppression of women and youth within the family.■

Cuts and capping

ON 17 JULY the House of Lords gave Environment Minister Chris Patten the go ahead to tax-cap 21 local council budgets. They will have to make deep cuts in spending in order to reduce Poll Tax bills to an amount deemed reasonable by the Tories.

In addition the 19 Labour councils who challenged capping now face a legal bill of £1 million. Administrative costs of sending out revised bills are £500,000 per council!

Meanwhile the real cost of the Poll Tax in jobs and services is being demonstrated up and down the country.



Workers pay the price

The picture that emerges as the Poll Tax takes its toll—through both capping and voluntary budget cuts—is a growing separation between the services enjoyed by rich and poor. It is no accident that all the capped boroughs were Labour controlled, representing large working class communities.

The Tories accuse local councils of "leisure centre-itis". When Labour councils build modern swimming pools, squash and fitness facilities and saunas it becomes a crime. When Tory voting yuppies spend half their lives in private versions of these facilities there are no complaints!

They accuse councils of frittering away money on trendy left wing and "minority" causes. But this is a smokescreen for an attack on vital services for whole sections of the working class community. In Ealing the first act of the new Tory council was to close down the women's, lesbian and gay and race equality units. They have diverted hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of grants away from the large Asian community in favour of encouraging more "scout and guide groups"!

In fact it is trendy right wing causes that have millions of pounds spent on them—even in Labour controlled authorities. Hammersmith and Fulham council has to cut over a million from its £12 million secondary school budget covering ten secondary schools. Brompton Oratory School, which opted out of the borough's education system gets over £3 million from the council by government command, before the council can even begin to spend its education budget!

Working class people who breathed a sigh of relief when the Tories capped their councils should now wake up to the fact that they will suffer from capping. The elderly will have less chance of a place in a home, fewer social services and dearer meals. Children's education will decline. Leisure and sports facilities will be open only to those who can afford them.■

Unite with anti-Poll Tax fight!

Already workers have begun to fight the cuts and sackings. In June hundreds of teachers in Bristol and Barnsley supported strike action against job losses. Barnsley teachers have voted two to one for strike action in September.

Parents occupied Crawford Primary School in Southwark, South London because there was no teacher for their children. Parents and nursery workers occupied the Victorian Grove Nursery in Hackney, one of three faced with closure in the borough.

The danger is that when council workers fight to defend their jobs and conditions the mass of working class residents in a borough will see it as a strike for bigger Poll Tax bills. That is what the tax is designed to do: divide the working class between those who provide services and those who receive them, those who can pay and those who can't.

To combat this we must make every effort to link up struggles against the effects of cuts and capping with the fight against the Poll Tax itself. Unless workers' action focuses on the cause of the attack on jobs and services it can become a demand to "cut something else—don't sack us".

The only way to prevent this is to focus directly on the council budget itself. Workers must demand the council spends the money it needs without raising the Poll Tax. This means passing an illegal, deficit budget and throwing the council into a direct struggle against the government.

Far away as this seems, given the spineless and time serving nature of the vast majority of councillors, it is the only demand which can prevent council workers' struggles against cuts becoming campaigns for cuts in other services.

In this context building councils of action to link up council workers with the wider mass non-payment campaign is vital. If workers' action can force the councils into defiance of the government, or failing that into financial chaos, mass strike action will be needed to prevent unelected commissioners simply waltzing in to make the cuts over the councils' heads.

Difficult as it is to imagine winning, we can't afford not to fight. For the comfortable Labour MPs two more years of the Poll Tax is a short time to sit and wait until Labour (maybe!) comes to power.

For the old it is two years of misery out of those they have left; for the young it is two years out of their education; for the most needy it is two more years of misery.

That is the real price of the Poll Tax—a price we can and must refuse to pay.■

- Days before the Lords' judgement Mick Walton, a father of three, committed suicide. He was a council worker in Haringey and feared that his job in the dust depot would be cut after the High Court ordered the council to slash spending by £15 million.
- The reality of charge-capping in Haringey is a massacre of jobs and services. Six out of ten libraries will close! One in two play centres will be cut, along with adult education centres and an old people's home. Up to 1,000 council workers face the sack.
- In Greenwich, where 160 council housing workers have been on strike since April against the effects of the tax on their working conditions, the picture is even worse. Leaked documents reveal proposals to slash £42.6 million from council spending over the next 18 months. Without the cuts, says the document, the Poll Tax will have to rise to £678 per head next year and "the council will be liable to be capped year after year".
- School meals' costs will rise to £4 a week. Meals on wheels for the elderly will cost £1 a day. Hundreds of council workers face the dole.
- In Barnsley 21 music teachers were served with compulsory redundancy notices. Elsewhere capped councils have chopped the "voluntary sector" of services to the bone and are now starting to make big cuts in Education and Social Services.
- Hammersmith and Fulham council is cutting thousands from its Adult and Further Education budgets—cuts which will be felt in the Autumn as hourly paid, part time teachers find themselves without work and vital evening classes and FE courses will disappear.
- And it is not just the capped councils that are feeling the pinch.

  Newham in East London narrowly avoided capping by closing a swimming pool and the area's only reference library, slashing fifty jobs in the process. Despite this Newham's residents are facing a £449 Poll Tax bill.
- Tory Wandsworth set a Poll Tax of £148 by plundering its reserves to the tune of £32 million. The low Poll Tax bought the Tories victory in the May local elections.

  But almost immediately afterwards it announced a cuts programme of £52 million. It is cutting four out of nine secondary schools.

  Already in Wandsworth 145 social workers posts are vacant. Fifty children are at risk of injury and death because of staff shortages. And the Tories plan to close council nurseries altogether. This is despite a public inquiry into the death of toddler Stephanie Fox naming a lack of social workers and nursery places as factors directly contributing to her death!

DEFEND INTERNATIONAL LABOUR REPORTS!

British garment multinational William Baird has brought a libel action against the workers' movement information magazine *International Labour Reports* (*ILR*) after it ran an article about the company. Legal aid is not available in libel cases. Small magazines like *ILR* have to bear their own legal defence costs. *ILR* needs several thousand pounds. Send Cheques to:

ILR Defence Appeal,
PO Box 45, Stain-borough,
Barnsley, S75 3EA

Oil workers strike back

ON 6 JULY 1988, 167 oil workers died in the Piper Alpha explosion. Workers on Piper Alpha had been complaining about safety conditions for years. The oil industry remains a major source of profit for British bosses. And the maintenance of that profit was put before the safety of oil workers.

The death rate in the oil industry is ten times higher than the rate in coalmining. Things haven't improved since 1988. There have been 32 serious incidents offshore in the last two years.

On the second anniversary of the disaster, the unofficial Offshore Industry Liaison Committee (OILC) brought the North Sea oilfields to a halt with two one-hour stoppages to commemorate those who died on Piper Alpha. Since early May thousands of oil workers have been working to contract to fight for a "Continental Shelf Agreement"—a full union recognition, conditions and safety agreement across the North Sea.

According to the OILC the overtime ban has hit contractors and oil companies hard:

"When 15 hour shifts were routinely worked the contractor was making a profit on an extra 507 hours per man per annum. When you stopped doing this his profits were cut back to the bone, because that's what oil companies give their tame dogs, the occasional bone".

Many oil workers are calling for the action to be stepped up. The OILC argues that it will seek to escalate the action "when the time is right".

The OILC should draw the lessons from the recent fightback by offshore workers in the Norwegian sector of the North Sea. Members of the Norwegian oilworkers union, OFS, started strike action on the North Sea rigs on 1 July after rejecting a 2.5% wage increase, with inflation around 4%. The strikes also demanded a reduction in retirement age, an increase in maternity leave for women offshore workers from six months to a year, and the right to negotiate directly with the bosses.

Within 36 hours the Conservative government of Norway had declared the strike illegal. Union leaders argued for a return to work but around 1,000 workers continued the strike, setting up strike committees in Berges and Stavanger.

The strike was solid and closed down the whole of the Norwegian sector of the North Sea. Workers blocked the helicopter decks on oil platforms to prevent scabs being flown in. The Norwegian TUC actively opposed the strike. The employers' federation sacked more than 30 strikers for the £40-£50 millon losses incurred during the strike. The bosses blocked communication between the rigs and the onshore strike committees and one by one the platforms were driven back to work.

The response of the Norwegian bosses is a useful indicator of the way any strike action called by the OILC will escalate. The TUC will doubtless follow their Norwegian counterparts and attack any unofficial action. But the Norwegian strike also showed the real strength the oil workers can wield. The strike caused a real shake-up on the international oil markets. Co-ordinated action by British and Norwegian workers would really hit the oil bosses hard.

Oil workers in the Transport and General Workers Union and the National Union of Seamen are already balloting for strike action. The AEU is expected to follow suit.

With the summer maintenance programme underway in the British sector there has never been a better time to fight for all out action across the whole North Sea. British oil workers should set up strike committees to make sure the dispute is run by strikers themselves.

The oil bosses will use the anti-union laws against the offshore activists. The strike committees must lead the fight to break the anti union laws when the trade union leaders turn tail and run.■

RAVENSCRAIG
Defend all jobs

IN APRIL 1990 the official unemployment rate for men in Lanarkshire still stood at 15.7%. Then, on 16 May the bosses at British Steel Corporation (BSC) made good their long-standing threat to axe the integrated works at Ravenscraig.

BSC announced the closure of the strip mill and with it the loss of nearly 780 jobs. BSC's top brass also made it plain that their remaining 2,500 employees and 1,300 subcontracted workers had little future at Ravenscraig.

News of the Scottish closure came within two days of management at the Brymbo steelworks in North Wales issuing a similar execution order, costing 1,200 jobs.

Chronic

Steel bosses, both in Britain and much of the European Community, face a mounting problem of chronic over-capacity because of the falling demand in the construction and car industries. This is especially true in the case of hot rolled coil and strip, Ravenscraig's principal output.

Workers at Ravenscraig and throughout BSC are still paying the price of the defeat suffered more than a decade ago. After a 13 week strike in 1980, victory over the steel workers emboldened the Tories, hell bent on privatising a "leaner, fitter" industry. The 1980s saw 115,000 jobs swept away at BSC. Productivity soared but at the expense of working conditions, with the introduction of large-scale subcontracting, short term contracts and relentless demands for increased flexibility.

Between 1981 and 1985 there was no nationally negotiated pay rise and management, with the aid of union officials, pitted workers at the remaining sites into vicious competition against each other for survival. BSC bosses concealed the actual profit figures for each of the integrated works. The stage was set for a Stock Exchange flotation and BSC's full exposure to market forces after the Tories wrote off £642 million in accumulated losses.

The ultimate blame for the disastrous defeat in 1980 lies with the craven leadership of the steel unions, above all the ISTC. They argued against a general strike, even when the Welsh TUC pledged to support it and rank and file steel workers used mass pickets and flying pickets to extend the strike to the private sector.

The names of top union bureaucrats may have changed but the policies to muzzle and divert workers' resistance have not. In response to the Ravenscraig closure the BSC union leaderships have made vague promises of ballots on strike action, but in the meantime they have pursued a media campaign of parliamentary lobbying.

The ISTC leadership has stressed the profitability and "economic viability" of the Scottish plant in the hope of forging a cross-class alliance including some wet Tories. The bureaucrats are even hoping to elect a new member of the BSC board, more sympathetic to the plight of Ravenscraig.

Rejected

At the plant itself ISTC convenor, Tommy Brennan, has already rejected strike action against the shut down. In its place steel workers face a bankrupt excuse for a strategy which smacks of both Stalinist popular frontism—long dominant in the STUC—based on lobbying the bishops and the Tories and the new realism still riding high in the labour movement as a whole.

Scottish trade unionists do, however, have a very different tradition to draw and build upon. It was apparent most recently in the brave occupation of the Caterpillar plant in Uddingston in 1987. Against closure



Ravenscraig—kept open during the miners' strike only to close now

Ravenscraig workers need to follow the example of those AEU members and seize physical control of the plant. Given the importance of the steelworks to the regional economy such an occupation could easily win enormous support from the working class as a whole.

Unlike the Caterpillar occupiers Ravenscraig workers must not be left to wage the fight in isolation. Their cause is vital for all BSC workers. Management are continuing to play divide and rule by suggesting that Llanwern and Port Talbot will benefit from a new injection of capital as a result of Ravenscraig closing. But BSC bosses have also begun a drive toward chopping another 10-12,000 jobs and the closure of another integrated works.

To counter such manoeuvres Ravenscraig workers must demand the full opening of the Corporation's books for scrutiny by them and experts of their choice. But the fight must begin from the need to defend all jobs at decent rates of pay regardless of BSC's current financial position.

The rallying cry of support for an occupation of Ravenscraig must be for an all out strike in BSC against the closure and the threat of further redundancies. Though sectionalism and regionalism have deep roots among steel workers they face a common enemy in the asset stripping bosses of BSC whose only loyalty is to higher rates of profit.

The demands of a national strike would not simply remain defensive. Workers should fight for the renationalisation of BSC as a whole including such firms as Sheffield Forgemasters, hived off before 1987.

This time, however, the plants must be under the control of workers themselves, exercising authority over the nature and levels of output while developing a sliding scale of hours which shares out available work without any loss in pay. Unlike past nationalisations workers must not bear the staggering burden of interest payments to the banks or compensation to shareholders who had more than ample time to make their killing.

Challenge

To pursue such a workers' solution to the scourge of unemployment will inevitably require defiance of the Tories' anti-union laws and a fundamental challenge to the ISTC and other union bureaucracies.

A fight against the Ravenscraig closure must lay the basis for a much broader, class-wide offensive against the root cause of mass unemployment: the profit system itself. The alternative to such a battle is the almost certain doom of Ravenscraig and the abandonment of another generation of workers to the brutal fluctuations of the market.■

Fight Labour's witch hunt!

SUPPORTERS OF the newspaper *Socialist Organiser* are the latest victims of the witch-hunt of the Labour left.

After Birkenhead Constituency Labour Party rejected sitting MP, Frank Field, Joyce Gould was given a brief to investigate the role of *Socialist Organiser* in Birkenhead Labour Party and in neighbouring Wallasey.

Her report went to the July NEC meeting. As we go to press they are expected to vote for a ban on *Socialist Organiser*.

No loyal Labour Party member, let alone class fighter, should be surprised at Birkenhead's decision to kick out Frank Field. In the 1987 election he refused to endorse Lol Duffy, the left wing Labour candidate in Wallasey.

Lol had a proud record of struggle in the area, having been a leading militant in the Cammell Laird shipyard occupation in 1984. He has often contributed articles to *Socialist Organiser*. Field hates socialists like Lol Duffy.

In the election Field, in effect, campaigned against Labour. His actions cost Labour the chance to unseat Tory minister Lynda Chalker. Duffy lost by just 279 votes.

Normally electoral sabotage would be a sin worthy of excommunication from a party which sees electoral victory as the be all and end all of "socialism".

Field believes that "Labour needs an agenda for a people's capitalism that lives up to its name". He supports the introduction of workfare slave labour schemes and thinks that it is "surprising that the government has taken so long to counter the absurd claim that a third of the population lives in poverty".

Field is not the slightest bit interested in representing the interests of the working class of Birkenhead. He is an anti-working class upstart who has sabotaged the work of Labour activists in Birkenhead and Wallasey.

Yet when he responded to his deselection with a barrage of unsubstantiated allegations against *Socialist Organiser* and other papers like *Militant*, the Labour Party Organisation Department raced in to fabricate the evidence for him.

Since the expulsion of Derek Hatton, Tony Mulhearn and other *Militant* supporters in Liverpool in 1986 the National Constitutional Committee in the Labour Party has expelled 134 members. The aim of the witch-hunt is to intimidate the left and marginalise it in the run up to the next election.

Anyone who wants to defend the working class and dares to say that the Labour leadership will not do so can expect to come under threat of expulsion.

The Labour leaders want to purge the party, making it presentable for the bosses. They want to give a clear signal to the ruling class that they will preserve and extend the gains made under the Thatcher regime and there will be no socialists around to threaten any of this.

A Labour Party which silences all internal opposition will be able to do this all the more easily. It is in every worker's interest to obstruct the witch-hunt.

***Socialist Organiser* must be defended. Bombard Labour's HQ with resolutions denouncing the enquiry into Birkenhead and Wallasey and opposing any threat of expulsion of *Socialist Organiser* supporters, and other socialists, who have stood up to Kinnock and Hattersley.■**

*"The Cold War is over. We won!" said George Kennan. He was one of the architects of the the USA's economic and political offensive against the USSR back in 1947. Last month saw the world's leaders jetting from one summit meeting to another, each one designed to set the seal on the "triumph of the west". **Colin Lloyd** examines the reality behind the rhetoric.*



Bush, Thatcher and Kaifu whoop it up at the Houston rodeo

Triumph of the west?

ON 5-6 July the 16 NATO heads of state declared the USSR "no longer an adversary" and invited Gorbachev to address a NATO meeting. US President George Bush dubbed the NATO London Declaration "a historic turning point". The heads of NATO agreed that Europe was entering "a new, promising era".

Next stop on their itinerary was Houston where the Group of Seven (G7) leading capitalist countries agreed a communique outlining plans to resolve their trade disputes and disagreements over economic aid to the USSR.

Then Gorbachev played host to NATO Secretary Manfred Wörner, followed a day later by West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. In the company of the beaming German leader Gorbachev announced an accord removing Soviet objections to German political unification and membership of NATO.

The overwhelming impression conveyed to the workers of the world by these events is of capitalism's giants systematically reshaping a new world order: the "Masters of the Universe" are tidying up the loose ends of the Cold War during banquets and rodeos.

The world order is being reshaped, but not according to the plans of the imperialists. The summits represent not a growing unity of purpose but a growing political and economic rivalry between the imperialist powers over how to divide the spoils of victory in the Cold War.

The various communiques and declarations do not reflect a new stability between the imperialist powers but a new and shifting balance of forces between them.

There are two inextricably linked processes taking place in world politics; the collapse of Stalinism and the growth of political and economic rivalry between the USA, Germany and Japan.

Stalinism's collapse in Eastern Europe is in the process of opening up that region for capitalist exploitation. But of all the major imperialist powers it is West Germany which stands to gain most. Already the dominant economy in the European Community (EC) it stands poised to dominate the markets opening up in the east.

Reunification

When the possibility of economic reunification was raised by the victory of the CDU in the East German elections Germany's most enthusiastic partners in the EC feared that this would distract German imperialism from moves to speed up economic and monetary union in Western Europe. But the momentum of reunification has done the opposite. It has placed on the agenda of a December EC summit concrete plans for monetary union, a central bank etc.

As a result the 1990s seem to open up a vista of growing economic union in Europe,in which Germany will play leading role.

But Stalinism's collapse and retreat in Eastern Europe has not proceeded according to an imperialist grand plan. It has occurred as the result of prolonged pressure on the Soviet economy and the internal contradictions of that economy. These combined to persuade the Soviet bureaucracy that it must give up Eastern Europe to buy time and goodwill to save itself in the USSR.

Unfortunately for the Stalinists they had not counted on the intervention of the East European working masses into the situation. From East Germany to Romania the masses spied their chance to finish off Stalinism once and for all. Under the leadership of various pro-capitalist formations, and with pro-market illusions, the masses toppled the Stalinist dictators without waiting for international summits.

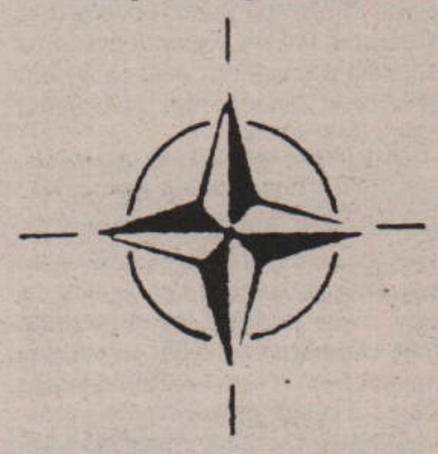
The result is a situation where pro-market Stalinist bureaucrats who hoped to act as stabilising "labour lieutenants of capital" during the process of restoration have been completely sidelined from this process everywhere except Romania and Bulgaria

Whilst the mass of workers harbour enormous illusions in the market, they want it German style—with free handouts of hard currency and access to consumer goods. The problem is that capitalism can only be restored "Polish style" in the rest of Eastern Europe — that is with massive privations for the majority of workers. Knowing this, and aware of the political instability any attempt at swift and painful restoration would cause, the imperialists are treading carefully.

Aspirations

This is doubly true because the collapse of Stalinism is not confined to the East European sphere. It is threatening Gorbachev himself. The imperialists are agreed that it is vital that Gorbachev survives to oversee a long process of restoration in Eastern Europe and prepare the way for the USSR to be opened up to capitalism on imperialism's terms. Here too the problem is the independent aspirations of the masses. The nationalities within the USSR are in no mood to wait until an imperialist/Stalinist summit decrees they can be independent. The workers are in no mood to go on paying for the crisis of bureaucratic planning.

The imperialist powers see the



dangers inherent in this situation. But they cannot agree a common solution.

After the Second World War US imperialism was economically and politically the master of the capitalist world. It launched the Marshall Plan—$13,150 million aid to Western Europe—in order to buy social stability and create markets for US goods.

Today only another handout on a similar scale could prop up the Soviet economy and ensure a relatively peaceful process of capitalist restoration in East Europe and the USSR.

But the USA is no longer the undisputed dominant economic power. The EC, under German leadership, and Japan have become economic equals. From being the world's banker the USA has become the world's biggest borrower. Even if it wanted to underwrite a new Marshall Plan it would have to borrow the money from Japan!

Divided

As a result, despite the ringing tones of the Houston communique, the G7 countries remain deeply divided over how to prop up Gorbachev.

Germany and France, who will benefit most from a new Marshall Plan for East Europe and the USSR, are the keenest on economic aid. But they cannot provide the half of it and therefore call on Britain, the USA and Japan to dig deep.

Thatcher, Bush and Kaifu, meanwhile, are wary of committing hard cash to a Soviet Union which has not yet bitten the bullet of far reaching market reforms, price rises and unemployment. Under their pressure the Houston meeting confined itself to offering technical aid and an IMF "study" (international version of a Royal Commission) of the USSR's economy.

The imperialists are confronted by a big dilemma. Only money will save the Soviet economy from deep crisis and Gorbachev from oblivion. But money deployed on a vast scale will benefit European imperialism more than its rivals and cannot be guaranteed against a national conflagration or a workers' revolution.

Politically and militarily the imperialists are on stronger ground. The NATO summit simply set the seal on an accomplished fact.

The collapse of the Stalinist regimes heralded the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the opening of Eastern Europe as a military sphere of influence for imperialism. Militarily it is only the USA and its allies who can fill the gap. Even a unified Germany, freed of the constraints of the post war "four powers agreement", will have its troops limited by international treaty.

Dominance

The NATO summit decided on a restructuring and reduction of NATO's military forces in line with the need to reduce crippling arms bills now that they are no longer "justified". At the same time it outlined the apparatus by which imperialist political and military dominance throughout the whole of Europe will be guaranteed.

NATO troops will retain and consolidate their preponderance in Europe. Whilst some short range nuclear weapons will be phased out (now uselessly pointing at pro-imperialist governed states), NATO will retain its capacity for "wargasm"—the total nuclear obliteration of the USSR. And as Thatcher insisted on reiterating in the London declaration:

"There are no circumstances in which nuclear retaliation in response to military action might be discounted."

More immediately NATO could still play its old fundamental role, as an instrument of counter-revolution. There is much talk of the need to develop a "police role" for NATO troops, of creating task forces able to operate globally. The potential victims of this re-oriented military power are the workers of Eastern Europe when they resist the costs of restoration, and the workers and peasants of the semi-colonial world when they resist the bullying and blackmail of a US imperialism trying to prove it is once again master of the world's destiny.

But whatever actions its armed forces may undertake the USA is clearly not the sole arbiter of world politics and economics. Both the London summit and Kohl's victorious visit to Gorbachev demonstrate Germany's ability to be a political power broker if not yet a military one. Bush was obliged to agree the basic text of the NATO declaration with Kohl before he even showed it to his so called special ally Thatcher.

Likewise what the USA, Britain and France could not do through diplomatic pressure, Kohl was able to do through outright bribery: that is persuade Gorbachev to give the go-ahead to German reunification. Despite the Houston disagreement over a Marshall Plan for Russia, Kohl has promised the USSR millions in immediate finanacial aid.

Rivals

But Germany alone cannot save Gorbachev. And amongst the major imperialist powers there is neither the will nor the unity to underwrite the peaceful and bountiful restoration of capitalism throughout Eastern Europe and the USSR. They cannot guarantee Gorbachev's survival. They can delay but not reverse the tendency for the economic weight of Germany and Japan to create rival regional blocs to the USA within the world economy.

In short July's summitry reveals that while the imperialists have won the Cold War their victory has not created the conditions for a new epoch of world stability.■

"Let's go down the discourse"

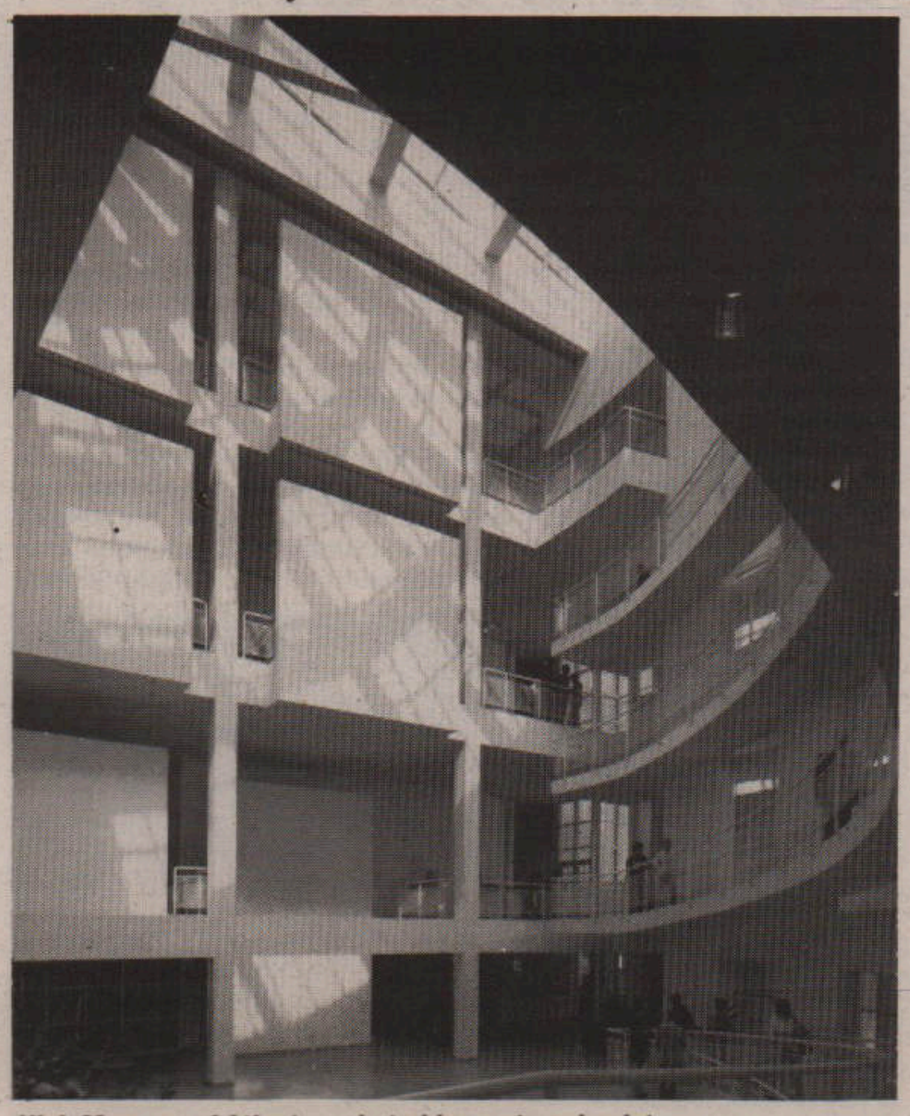
Sean O'Rourke reviews
Against Post-Modernism
by Alex Callinicos
Polity Press, £8·95

THE REVOLUTIONARY left is often accused of talking unintelligible drivel. But there is a whole group of people who have acquired fat salaries and inflated reputations by spouting drivel that is unintelligible by design. They are the theorists of "post-modernism".

In this book Alex Callinicos (a leading member of the Socialist Workers Party) tries to show the material and social roots of post-modernism as a movement in art and art criticism.

The term modernism is generally used to describe the movements in painting, music, architecture, art and literature, which took European culture by storm in the first decades of the twentieth century. Post-modernism, for its supporters, is a movement which is the radical opposite of modernism in theory and practice. They claim it is rooted in a new reality of the second half of the century.

Central to post-modernist theory is the idea that it is impossible for human beings to describe an objective reality independent of their own thought. Rooted in the "post-structuralist" theories of the French academics Derrida and Foucault, it argues that the words we use have no relation to a pre-existing reality. They relate only to each other.



High Museum of Atlanta ... hated by post-modernists

Dogmas

For the post-structuralists, therefore, systematic attempts to theorise society and its laws of motion are a waste of time. Since the truth can't be known any attempt to describe it systematically leads to dogmas, concentration camps etc, etc.

This idea is taken up directly by post-modernist thinkers like Jean-Francois Lyotard. Lyotard accuses modernism of the following evils:

"I will use the term modern to designate any science that legitimates itself with reference to a metadiscourse, making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative, such as the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth."

Post-modernism is the opposite of this (even here you may find yourself reaching for a very big dictionary to find out what Lyotard is talking about). In his book *The Post-Modern Condition* Lyotard tells us:

"The idea of progress as possible, probable and necessary was rooted in the certainty that the development of the arts, technology, knowledge and liberty would be profitable to mankind as a whole. After two centuries, we are more sensitive to signs that signify the contrary. Neither economic nor political liberalism, nor the various Marxisms, emerge from the sanguinary last two centuries free from the suspicion of crimes against mankind ... What kind of thought is able to sublate Auschwitz in a generalised process towards a universal emancipation?"

Here we see why this isn't just some egg-headed art theory; why revolutionary Marxists have to take on and defeat these ideas. If it all sounds very like Neil, the hippy from *The Young Ones*, it's no accident.

That philosophy—how do I know anything's really out there?—leads directly to the action programme of Neil and thousands of more trendy equivalents in our workplaces and colleges: do nothing!

The advantage of Callinicos' book is that it situates the development of the ideas of post modernism within the political and social struggles and defeats of the 1970s and 1980s

For Callinicos the growth of post-modernism is linked to two important social developments. The first is the growth of a "new middle class" of upper-level white collar workers:

"The Reagan-Thatcher era saw ... an important reorientation of fiscal policy, one of whose main features was a redistribution from poor to rich ... the British government's social security 'reforms' and drastic cuts in the taxation of those in higher income brackets ..."

Added to this is what Callinicos calls "the political fallout from 1968" when a generation of young radicals were won to militant political activity, only to see their expectations of imminent revolution dashed within the next decade.

The failure of the struggles of 1968 onwards as Callinicos says, lies "not in the imminent logic of the system but the dominance of the western working class movement by organisations and ideologues which ... were pledged to achieving partial reforms within a framework of class collaboration."

Callinicos draws the correct conclusion that:

"Not only does belief in a post-modern epoch generally go along with rejection of socialist revolution as either feasible or desirable, but it is the perceived failure of revolution which has helped to gain widespread acceptance of this belief."

Obscurity

Put even more bluntly post-modernism *is* the self justification of a generation of "Neils" who fought the police in 1968 but have now made their peace with capitalism. As Callinicos puts it, "What could be more reassuring for a generation ... than to be told in a style decked out with the apparent profundity and genuine obscurity of the sub-modernist rhetoric cultivated by '68 thought—that there is nothing they can do to change the world."

Callinicos explores the relationship between post-modernist theory and the political abandonment of Marxism by whole sections of the ex-Marxist intelligentsia. According to *Marxism Today*, we are in the midst of "New Times":

"Our world is being remade ... In the process of our own identities, our sense of self, our own subjectivities are being transformed. We are in a transition to a new era". (*Marxism Today*, October 1988)

Post-modernism and its political equivalent "post-Fordism" may deny the reality of the class struggle, but they are a product of it all the same and a brake upon it insofar as these ideas are taken up by workers, students and their political organisations.

Callinicos summons all the arguments against post-modernism in this book. But the book is spoiled by its over reverence for theories which Callinicos himself believes are "small calibre intellectually, usually superficial, often ignorant, sometimes incoherent".

At times he seems to have started from the idea that if you want to make propaganda to workers you have to use language that workers understand and translated it into the maxim: if you want to argue against post-modernists you have to use language that nobody understands.

The Marxist account of artistic and cultural movements in twentieth century imperialist countries has yet to be written. Nevertheless Callinicos book provides some of the fundamental arguments for Marxists to use against the latest attempt by the middle class to have the last word on culture and theory.■

Black workers in "Fortress Europe"

Nick Stone reviews
Imagine There's No Countries
by Steve Cohen
GMIA, £2

IN THE run up to 1992 there is a rising tide of racism across Europe. And it is not confined to the activities of Nazi-inspired thugs and anti-Semites. In their cultured and genteel summits the European bosses and their bureaucrats are laying the basis for a new system of immigration laws and policing which will make Europe a "fortress" against third world immigration, and a virtual prison camp for migrant and immigrant communities already in existence.

The Single European Act, which takes full effect in 1992, is designed to create an open market within the European Community (EC). As well as goods, labour will be able to move around Europe more freely according to the Act.

But as Steven Cohen tells us, in this timely pamphlet from the Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit: "What it will mean for black people is not freedom of movement but its opposite."

There will be an increase in border control restrictions at the new external borders of the EC. In practice this will mean more police, more individual checks on entrants from non-EC countries, mandatory refusal of so-called "aliens" who do not meet all the conditions for entry, and the harmonisation of European immigration laws on the basis of the most restrictive practices in operation.

Cohen shows how the European bosses are gearing up to meet the challenge of relaxed border controls within the EC with laws and agencies modelled on those of the USA.

At present citizens of 59 countries require visas for EC countries.The "Schengen Group" countries (France, Germany and the Benelux countries) want to push the number up to 115 by 1992. Other European countries will be forced to follow suit.

The abolition of international frontiers will lead to an increase in internal controls. The number of police immigration swoops on homes and workplaces will multiply.

As in the USA, employers will have to become ruthless immigration spies. Draft directives drawn up as far back as 1978 envisage the need "for providing checks on non-community labour at the place of employment".

The TREVI (Terrorism, Radicalism, Extremism, International Violence) group is a secretive coalition of interior and justice ministers of the EC countries, and concerns itself with "terrorists, immigrants, other undesirables and a common refugee policy".

Cohen uses examples of US legislation and practice to show us the reality behind the TREVI proposals. The 1903 Immigration Act denied entry to anarchists and "persons believing in the overthrow by force or violence of the government of the United States". In 1919-20 the US state arrested thousands and deported hundreds of alleged Bolshevik sympathisers amongst the USA's migrant workers.

The 1952 McCarran-Walker Act allows for the deportation from the USA of aliens "who are, or at any time have been involved in activity regarded as subversive". In Britain the Prevention of Terrorism Act operates in the same way. It is a means of internal exile for Irish republican activists and sympathisers, who can be forcibly "excluded" to Northern Ireland.

Cohen illustrates the complicity of the leaders of the labour movement in the repression of blacks and immigrant workers. In 1917 Samuel Gompers, head of the American Federation of Labor, proclaimed that "immigration was an attack on the American character and national unity".

In Britain, the TUC first called for immigration controls in 1892. Since then, successive Labour governments have been the architects of repressive immigration acts with the complicity of the trade union leaders. Cohen points to trade union support for anti-deportation campaigns like those around Viraj Mendis and Mohammed Idrish as positive alternatives. He describes the mass campaign, backed by strike action, in support of the Swift 17, Hispanic trade union militants in Des Moines, Iowa. As he puts it, immigration controls:

"... are ultimately an attempt to split labour at the point of production between those here lawfully and those who are literally outlaws ... As such they pose for the labour movement the question of class solidarity and the struggle against racism."

Despite centring on the problems of the new legislation and 1992 the book leaves no room for complacency on fighting Britain's existing immigration laws. Cohen argues:

"1992 is irrelevant to whole groups of people for whom immigration controls could not get worse ... It is impossible to exaggerate the racist extremities to which UK immigration law already aspires".

It is crucial to win the labour movement now to support for every anti-deportation campaign and to opposition to all immigration controls.

Last year Sharif Uddin walked to a railway line and lay in front of an oncoming train rather than face deportation back to Bangladesh. Siho Iyiguven burned himself to death in his cell at Harmondsworth Detention Centre under threat of deportation to Turkish Kurdistan. Their fate was tragic confirmation of Cohen's argument that:

"Black people are caught internationally between the anvil of closed borders and racist immigration laws and the hammer of immigration police ... Everywhere the ultimate price to pay for this is death."■

Fifty years ago Stalin's assassin brought an end to the life of a man who was, at one and the same time, the only survivor of the era of classical Marxism and one of the two greatest revolutionary leaders of the twentieth century. Leon Davidovich Trotsky united in his life's work, to the highest degree, the unbreakable unity of theory and practice. In these articles ***Mike Evans*** *pays tribute to this inspiring and courageous revolutionary.*

Revolutionary fighter

LEON TROTSKY



1879-1940

IN JANUARY 1905 the first Russian Revolution erupted in St Petersburg and rapidly engulfed the whole Russian empire. The Russian proletariat formed workers' councils—soviets—across the whole country. By February Trotsky had rushed back from exile.

In Petersburg his magnificent oratory powers, allied to his clear revolutionary vision, meant that he rapidly became a prominent figure in the city Soviet. This was despite, or perhaps partly because of, the fact that he was not a member of either the Menshevik or the Bolshevik factions of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. Rapidly he became the chairman of the Soviet, the inspirer and drafter of its manifestos, taking the lead in organising the mighty general strike that paralysed Russia and forced concessions from the tottering Tsarist government.

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Trotsky understood the nature and potential of the soviet, a spontaneous creation of the revolutionary proletariat that no "thinker", aloof from the class struggle, could have invented. His receptivity to its potential as the basis of a workers' government was greater than that of the Bolsheviks. But characteristically in this period of his life he underestimated the role of the party within the Soviet, fighting for leadership of it. It was the Bolshevik-led Moscow Soviet that took the struggle to its highest point, that of insurrection.

The Petersburg Soviet on the other hand was arrested en masse after the peak of the strike movement was over. Trotsky was left to deliver a fine speech of defence of the Petersburg Soviet—through the windows of the courtroom—to the entire Russian proletariat. Here he defended the right to insurrection that the soviet was able to carry out eleven years later.

The revolution of 1905 brought the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks together again into a re-united RSDLP. Consequently it enhanced the role of Trotsky the prophet of unity, of conciliation. But the defeat of the revolution and the dark years of reaction split the party once again and drove Trotsky into isolation.

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In exile again, in Vienna he produced a "non-factional" newspaper, *Pravda*. When Lenin organised the Bolsheviks into an independent party, rather than a faction, in 1912 Trotsky was his most bitter opponent. They exchanged not a few sharp and scornful polemics, which Trotsky's enemies were able to quote out of context in later years to great effect. When Lenin had been deified these sallies by Trotsky appeared the most shocking sacrilege. Lenin's characterisations of Trotsky seemed a damnation against which there was no appeal.

During the war Trotsky was a pillar of the Internationalist Movement, drafter of the Zimmerwald Manifesto, editor of anti-war papers in Paris (*Nashe Slovo*—Our Word) and in New York (*Novy Mir*—New World). But these years did not heal his breach with Lenin. Lenin saw revolutionary defeatism, defeat of one's own country, as the lesser evil, as the litmus test for a consistent anti-war position.

Trotsky refused to adopt this position. Whilst he split decisively with the social chauvinists he maintained a bloc with Martov's "Menshevik Internationalists". These in contrast refused to break absolutely with the patriotic Mensheviks. Thus Lenin, with some justice if with occasional polemical exaggeration, stigmatised Trotsky as refusing to break with the centre, internationally associated with Karl Kautsky.

It was only the Russian Revolution itself that broke Trotsky definitively from this position—which in later terminology we would call left-centrist. Lenin was then willing to wholeheartedly welcome Trotsky into the Bolshevik Party and to defend him against the petty jealousies of some of the "Old Bolsheviks". Trotsky rallied to Bolshevism in its darkest hours, during the repression that followed the July Days. His declaration landed him in jail.

As in 1905, Trotsky played a leading role in mobilising the working class and poor peasantry. In an age before the invention of microphones, he would often speak for two or three hours to a crowd several thousands strong.

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Lunacharsky, himself recognized as the Bolsheviks' greatest public speaker in 1917, was an expert witness:

"I regard Trotsky as probably the greatest orator of our age . . . His impressive appearance, his handsome sweeping gestures, the powerful rhythm of his speech, his loud but never fatiguing voice, the remarkable coherence and literary skill of his phrasing, the richness of imagery, scalding irony, his soaring pathos, his rigid logic, clear as polished steel—those are Trotsky's virtues as a speaker . . . I have seen Trotsky speaking for two and a half to three hours in front of a totally silent, standing audience listening as though spellbound to his momumental political treatise."

Seventy years later in the era of the soundbite, *when* the atomising electronic media have reduced our attention span, such a scene seems frankly incredible. That uneducated, indeed illiterate, masses should listen, understand and act on the basis of such agitation and propaganda is a reminder of what a revolution does to the oppressed masses.

But Trotsky's most important role in the Revolution was as the leader of the insurrection.

One year later, a witness to his work generously wrote:

"All the work of practical organisation of the insurrection was conducted under the immediate leadership of the chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, Trotsky. It is possible to declare with certainty that the swift passing of the garrison to the side of the Soviet and the bold execution of the work of the Military Revolutionary Committee the party owes principally and above all to comrade Trotsky."

The witness was Joseph Stalin.

From the summer of 1918 imperialists sent their armies against the revolution, plunging the country into a three year civil war. The old Tsarist army had been destroyed: a new army was needed to defend the workers' state. Trotsky, a man with no military experience, was chosen to create it.

The Red Army astounded the world not only by the rapidity with which it was formed, but also by the courage and audacity with which it fought. Trotsky proved himself a brilliant strategist. He led from the front, criss-crossing the country in an armoured train which served as a military headquarters and as a propaganda base, with its own printing press. The defeat of the imperialist invaders owed much to Trotsky, "the organiser of victory" as one of his contemporaries called him.



Trotsky showed his mettle in the darkest and most dangerous situations. Victor Serge recalls his arrival in Petrograd when all seemed lost, when even Lenin thought it was necesssary to evacuate the city. Yudenich and the White Guards were at the very gates of the proletarian capital. Then Trotsky and his staff took control of affairs. Serge writes:

"They took everything in hand, meticulously and passionately. It was magical. Trotsky kept saying, 'It is impossible for a little army of 15,000 ex-officers to master a working class capital of 700,000 inhabitants'".

With the death of Lenin the years of victory came to an end. Yet, as Trotsky later realised, the next seventeen years witnessed

. . . strat

TROTSKY WAS not only a front rank participant in the 1905 Russian Revolution, he was also its analyst. He perceived in the decaying Tsarist autocracy, with its foreign dominated capitalist industry, the impotence of the bourgeoisie and the tremendous potential of the proletariat to seize power. This was the basis for the theory of permanent revolution. This stated:

"In accordance with its immediate tasks the Russian Revolution is a bourgeois revolution. But the Russian bourgeoisie is anti-revolutionary. The victory of the revolution is therefore possible only as a result of the victory of the proletariat. But the victorious proletariat will not stop at the programme of bourgeois democracy; it will go on to the programme of socialism. The Russian Revolution will become the first stage of the socialist world revolution."

Lenin could agree with Trotsky on the need for the proletariat to seize power. This perspective united both men as against the Mensheviks. Their view was that the bourgeois character of the revolution required this class to come to power and develop a capitalist economy. Thus the proletariat was obliged to play the role of urger-on, supporter and loyal opposition to the Liberal bourgeoisie in their schema.

Lenin and Trotsky both operated with a revolutionary perspective. But for Lenin the necessity of the proletariat to ally itself with the peasantry dictated that it share power with this class and limit its programme to the fullest, most revolutionary enactment of the democratic programme: universal suffrage, armed peoples' militia, elected judiciary, expropriation of the feudal landowners etc. This regime Lenin named the "Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Peasantry".

Trotsky certainly understood the need for an alliance with the peasantry but insisted that the proletariat would be the dominant, leading force in such an alliance. As such it could not commit itself to preserving capitalism. If it did so it would rapidly be obliged to defend the capitalists against the spontaneous struggles of the workers.

History proved Trotsky right in 1917. Lenin abandoned his former perspective. Unfortunately for later developments neither man clarified the question theoretically in the years 1917-1923. It is incorrect to claim that Lenin secretly adopted Trotsky's position. He probably remained cautious about the general applicability of Trotsky's theory.

However, the factional struggle that broke out in 1923 re-raised the issue of permanent revolution in two vital respects. One related to the old disputes of 1905, the other a new issue. The new question posed by Nicholai Bukharin and Joseph Stalin was whether or not socialism could be built in a single, isolated country. Before 1923 the answer of Bolshevism was a unanimous no. Stalin, Bukharin, Lenin and Trotsky all held that the task of building socialism could only be begun in backward Russia. Stalin and Bukharin's volte-face created a theoretical banner around which the growing bureaucracy, satisfied with the privileges and power

it had accumulated due to the very isolation and backwardness of Russia, could rally. They sought to dislocate the USSR from the world revolution.

Here the new theory—socialism in one country—linked up to the old disputes over permanent revolution. Under the guise of returning to Lenin's stages theory (first democratic dictatorship and then socialist dictatorship) they actually adopted the old Menshevik view (first a bourgeois democratic revolution and later a proletarian one).

The disastrous nature of this theory and perspective was demonstrated in China in 1926-28 and thereafter in a long series of betrayed and aborted revolutions. Trotsky took up the struggle against both aspects of the theory. The theory of permanent revolution was reformulated and clarified. Its bedrock assertions were that for countries with a belated bourgeois development:

"The complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation is conceivable *only* through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all its peasant masses." (Em-

the most indispensible struggle of his life. In the remaining years of the 1920s Trotsky rallied two oppositional factions to fight the bureaucratic degeneration. The United Opposition of 1926 grouped thousands of old Bolsheviks and Young Communists around a revolutionary programme. They fought for restoration of the democracy of the soviets, the unions and the party, and an end to the concessions to the Kulaks associated with Bukharin's "socialism at a snail's pace". Above all they waged a merciless campaign against the Menshevik policies of the Communist International.

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The Opposition was defeated, expelled and exiled just in time for Stalin. The crisis the Opposition predicted forced an adventurist "left turn". Stalin took certain features of the Left Opposition's programme but robbed them of all anti-bureaucratic content. A sharp turn to industrialisation created a bureaucratically centralised command plan, at enormous cost in terms of human suffering. The "left" Third Period, with its wild adventurist refusal of the workers' united front, allowed Hitler to come to power in Germany.

Expelled from the USSR Trotsky could only ring the tocsin of warning to the world's largest Communist Party outside of the Soviet Union. Form a united front with the Social Democrats, unite the mass armed workers' militias—the Reichsbanner and the Red Front Fighters—and Hitler's SA could be halted in its tracks. Trotsky's warnings fell on the deaf ears of a brutal and self-satisfied bureaucracy.

Trotsky set about the most important task of his life, the one that centrists from Isaac Deutscher to Tony Cliff have always deprecated, always seen as "tragic" or even unworthy of his greatness. Not so. This struggle, the struggle for the Fourth International, showed Trotsky's full political and moral greatness.

The last five years of Trotsky's life were ones of an unbelievable series of defeats for the proletarian vanguard—in Austria, Spain and France. They were, in the Soviet Union, the years that Victor Serge dubbed "The midnight of the century". At least 10,000 Left Oppositionists were assassinated, lost amongst the hundreds of thousands, even millions of Stalin's victims. They went to their deaths singing the Internationale, defiantly espousing the cause of Lenin and Trotsky.

Trotsky himself lost both of his sons, Sergei in Russia and Leon Sedov in Paris to a GPU assassin. His closest collaborators and allies in building the Fourth International were also among the victims, Rudolf Klement, the secretary of the Fourth International was assassinated shortly before the founding Congress.

Any lesser figure than Trotsky would have collapsed under the pitiless pressure of these years, above all under the unbearable degree of isolation from the world's labour movement that Stalinist persecution imposed. This was symbolised in bricks and mortar in the little fortress at Coyoacan in Mexico which was Trotsky's last refuge and prison.

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Trotsky himself summed up the roots of his steadfastness and optimism in the darkest hours. It was in his experience of struggle both in the years of revolutionary flood tide and the years of ebb, when the masses "tired of the tension, became disillusioned, lost faith in themselves".

Trotsky speaking for all the Bolshevik-Leninists said:

"They learned not to fall into despair over the fact that the laws of history do not depend upon their individual tastes and are not subordinated to their own moral criteria. They learned to subordinate their individual tastes to the laws of history. They learned not to become frightened by the most powerful enemies if their power is in contradiction to the needs of historical development. They know how to swim against the stream in the deep conviction that the next historic flood will carry them to the other shore.

Not all will reach that shore, many will drown. But to participate in this movement with open eyes and with an intense will—only this can give the highest moral satisfaction to a thinking being!"■

Central London
Public Meeting

LEON TROTSKY: MAN AND FIGHTER

7.30pm Monday 20 August, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, nr Holborn tube

IN DEFENCE OF MARXISM



Political revolution and the tasks of Trotskyists

WITHOUT A revolutionary party no workers' revolution can triumph. This is as true for the workers who have overthrown Stalinism in Eastern Europe as it is for those workers who face the task of destroying capitalism.

Every real socialist was jubilant in late 1989 as the workers of Eastern Europe rose against their Stalinist oppressors.

Yet, only months after those historic events, the workers' movements appear to be either falling in behind "reforming" wings of the Stalinist oppressors or warmly welcoming the vultures of international capitalism. Nowhere has a new leadership, a Trotskyist party, been built.

Workers fell victim to a situation in which the objective conditions for the destruction of Stalinism had matured, but the subjective factor, a revolutionary class consciousness embodied in an organised party, lagged far behind.

Does this undoubted setback justify revolutionaries writing off the East European revolutions and lapsing into pessimism? If you are a revolutionary Trotskyist the answer is no. The living struggle of the masses, with all its contradictions, its advances and its setbacks, is our point of departure.

Of course revolutionary Trotskyists are not mindless optimists, oblivious of danger and blind to defeat. But we recognise that the task of constructing a revolutionary party capable of resolving the crisis of leadership and redirecting the struggles against Stalinism remains necessary and possible. We will be the last to leave the field of battle. In this we remain faithful to Trotsky's method.

In the 1930s the rise of fascism and the triumph of Stalinism, the defeat of the Spanish Civil War, thanks to Stalinist treachery, and the drive towards global war, all led Trotsky to redouble his efforts to consolidate the nucleus of an international revolutionary party. While he was being hounded from country to country, while his co-thinkers were being imprisoned and murdered, while the forces of reaction appeared ever more invincible, Trotsky remained clear about his goals and determined in his pursuit of them.

Like many on the left today he saw the dangers of revolutionary crises turning into their opposite, into counter-revolution, in the absence of a revolutionary party at the head of the working class. His answer was to address the tactical and strategic problems posed in those crises, to argue with the participants in those struggles, to bend every effort to winning supporters from their ranks equipped with a programme for victory.

In 1935 Trotsky wrote:

"In Europe in the next period great events may transpire, and we may see considerable regroupings in the working class movement. Revolutionary elements will be forced to look around for a new crystalising centre. This cannot be accomplished at one blow. Preparations must precede it. New splits in the socialist and Stalinist parties are inevitable as well as in the centrist organisations that are today in the IAG [an amorphous international grouping that included the British Independent Labour Party]. The international organisation that has the correct theoretical and political position and that is deeply impressed with the historical necessity of its cause will conquer. It would be criminal to delay the work of clarification and the gathering of forces under the banner of the Fourth International." (*Writings* 1935-36, p198)

In the period after Trotsky wrote this he was able to register successes using precisely this method. The Fourth International was formed. In the USA the Socialist Workers Party was founded, having established small but significant roots in the working class. Revolutionary continuity was maintained. The chances of building a sizeable revolutionary organisation was enhanced with every small step forward.

Addressing the tasks posed by the imminent imperialist war Trotsky remained true to his revolutionary method:

"There remains the problem of leadership. Will not the revolution be betrayed this time too, inasmuch as there are two internationals in the service of imperialism while the genuine revolutionary elements constitute a tiny minority? In other words: shall we succeed in preparing in time a party capable of leading the proletarian revolution? In order to answer this question correctly it is necessary to pose it correctly. Naturally, this or that uprising may end and surely will end in defeat owing to the immaturity of the revolutionary leadership. But it is not a question of a single uprising. It is a question of an entire revolutionary epoch. . . . . The question of tempos and time intervals is of enormous importance; but it alters neither the general historical perspective nor the direction of our policy. The conclusion is a simple one: it is necessary to carry on the work of educating and organising the proletarian vanguard with ten-fold energy. Precisely in this lies the task of the Fourth International." (*Writings* 1939-40, pp217-8)

The lessons for today are clear. Revolutionary Leninist-Trotskyists are a tiny minority in a handful of countries. The workers' movement is dominated by traitors and vacillators. They will work to mislead the working class and temporary setbacks will result. But in the course of this more and more workers will learn, more and more will see through their treacherous and cowardly leaders and will turn to answers that meet their burning needs. Only a revolutionary party can provide such answers.

Our task is to outline the revolutionary programme, to focus it towards the struggles that are taking place today, to enter those struggles as best we can and do battle with the class enemy and its agents in our ranks. In this task the events of Eastern Europe provide cause for hope because they provide opportunities to rally workers—workers mobilised in struggle and open to a welter of new ideas—to the revolutionary banner.

Pessimism can only serve to dull the revolutionary will. As Trotsky wrote, in a letter to a comrade during the Moscow trials:

"Indignation, anger, revulsion? Yes, even temporary weariness. All this is human, only too human. But I will not believe that you have succumbed to pessimism . . . This would be like passively and plaintively taking umbrage at history. How can one do that? History has to be taken as she is; and when she allows herself such extraordinary and filthy outrages, one must fight her back with one's fists."■

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With regard to the peasantry Trotsky asserted :

"No matter how great the revolutionary role of the peasantry may be, it nevertheless cannot be an independent role, still less a leading one."

Since the proletariat alone can lead the oppressed and exploited masses to the seizure and exercise of power it must then, precisely to fulfil the tasks of the democratic revolution, make "deep inroads into the rights of bourgeois property".

In Trotsky's words:

"The democratic revolution grows over directly into the socialist revolution and thereby becomes a permanent revolution."

However, a "socialist society is not feasible within national boundaries". The revolution, to be successful, must continue to unfold in a permanent manner, uninterrupted by rigid stages:

"The socialist revolution begins on the national arena, it unfolds on the international arena and is completed on the world arena."

Trotsky's theory has been tested positively and negatively countless times this century. Each time its validity has been proven. Permanent revolution is also the bedrock of Trotsky's other major theoretical developments. The negative proof of Trotsky's theory—the isolation of the Russian Revolution, the failure of the reactionary-utopian project of building socialism in one country laid the basis for his analysis of the degeneration of the USSR.

From 1923 to 1940 Trotsky analysed and re-analysed the growth of a monstrous bureaucratic caste parasitically feeding on the gains of October. He observed and fought its political expropriation of the proletariat, its creation of a Bonapartist police dictatorship, its crystallisation into a sealed off, isolated caste.

He developed a programme of political revolution for destroying this monstrous totalitarian regime, for restoring soviet power and a planned economy directed by the producers themselves.

The theory of permanent revolution lies at the root of Trotsky's other great conquest, the development of a programme of transitional demands that link the "final goal" of socialism to the workers' struggles within capitalist society and against it. In Results and Prospects Trotsky prophetically observed:

"The very fact of the proletariat's representatives entering the government, not as powerless hostages but as the leading force, destroys the borderline between maximum and minimum programme."

Trotsky was to develop this insight, drawing on the experience of Bolshevism and the mass parties of the Communist International. He arrived at the conception of transitional demands that challenge capitalism here and now. They can mobilise the workers' forces to combat capitalism and overthrow it. They create the basis for transcending capitalist society. Central to this programme were the demands related to workers' control of production and distribution—which would create a school for a socialist planned economy.

Underlying all of Trotsky's theoretical conquests was a deep, ingrained mastery of the dialectical method. With this he was able to transcend the fixed, exclusive, wooden categories of formal thinking—backward or advanced countries, bourgeois or proletarian revolution, workers' state or capitalist state, immediate demands or socialist demands. He did not confuse these necessary categories or norms but he understood how they interacted, combined and were transformed from one into another.

This showed its importance in Trotsky's last struggle against Max Shachtman and James Burnham in the Socialist Workers Party of the USA. The Hitler-Stalin Pact and the accumulated horrors of the purges convinced these shallow pragmatists that the USSR had departed so far from the norm of a workers' state that it must be some sort of new class formation.

Trotsky, however, could see that despite the monstrous political degeneration that Stalin's totalitarian regime represented, this was not an expression of the post-capitalist planned economy. Rather it was a regression from, and in contradiction to, the gains of October.

Either the proletariat will destroy the bureaucratic dictatorship bringing the political regime into conformity with its economic base or the bureaucracy and world imperialism will overthrow the planned property relations resolving the contradiction. In any case, he asserted, the phenomenon of Stalinism was not a historically necessary and long-lived phenomenon. History and recent events have proved Trotsky correct.

In the last year or so of his life as the onrush of gigantic, catastrophic events unhinged and disorientated most would-be revolutionaries, including many of his own co-thinkers Trotsky fought a battle to impart this method to future generations of Marxists.

He realised that it was not sufficient to receive Marxist doctrine as a fixed and finished accumulation of dogma. It was necessary to master the method needed to re-evaluate, to rediscover, to reject, if necessary, the conclusions inherited from the past and to make new analyses, new conquests. Only by such means does Marxism indicate its fruitfulness, its ability to truly guide the revolutionary proletariat in all the tasks that lie ahead of it.■

THE LONGEST WAR

The resistance continues

ON FRIDAY 20 July an IRA bomb blasted the Stock Exchange in the centre of the City of London. Weeks earlier the IRA carried out the daylight bombing of the Carlton Club In London's West End.

The Carlton is the rich man's gin palace where leading Tories go to unwind. According to Maxwell's *Daily Mirror* a yuppie Stock Exchange worker was asked if there had been any panic and replied, "Good Lord, no. We're British!" This is hardly believable. In the last month the Irish resistance has twice demonstrated its capacity to strike at the heart of British imperialism. Its attacks are confirmation of Secretary of State for Ireland Peter Brooke's admission that the IRA could not be defeated militarily.

The present campaign began early in May when explosive devices were discovered on an army base in Germany. This led to an escalation in security, which the IRA thwarted with a bomb attack on an MoD building in Eltham, London. Two days later a bomb killed one soldier and injured another at an army recruitment centre in Wembley.

At the beginning of June the IRA shot three soldiers, killing one, at a railway platform in Lichfield. At the same time a British army major was killed in Dortmund, West Germany. Later that month, the home of top Tory fundraiser and former treasurer of the Conservative Party, Lord MacAlpine, was bombed, and a military training centre in West Germany was attacked.

Response

In response, the British authorities have escalated their propaganda war against the republican movement. According to the press, the IRA is engaged in a criminal conspiracy to undermine British democracy through random killings.

What should workers' attitude be to all this? Are the IRA common criminals carrying out bloody attacks at random on Britain's streets?

We say the IRA is carrying out a just war, a war of liberation against the domination of British imperialism. The British government partitioned Ireland in 1921 in defiance of the wishes of the Irish people. Since then Britain has occupied the Six Counties by force of arms.

Thatcher lectured Nelson Mandela that Britain is a democracy and therefore the armed struggle different from the one in South Africa. She forgot to mention that nationalists suffer systematic discrimination in jobs, housing and education; that they face systematic repression; that the Northern Ireland state boundaries were drawn so that "democracy" within them could only mean protestant rule.

The British army was sent onto the streets of the Six Counties in 1969 to restore British rule through the bloody repression of a nationalist uprising.

For the republican masses, the memory of Bloody Sunday, 30 January 1972 is a brutal reminder of the nature of Britain's war in Ireland. On that day the first battalion of the Parachute Regiment shot dead 14 unarmed civil rights protesters in Derry. The British state demonstrated the lengths to which it was prepared to go to maintain control of its Irish colony.

The daily experience of British oppression creates a wellspring of mass support within the nationalist community for the Irish freedom struggle. In the months when the "outrages" of the IRA occupied the front page of every British newspaper, the day to day brutality of British troops on the streets of the Six Counties went, as ever, unreported.

A 16 year old, Charles Knight, was beaten senseless by the RUC at Strand Barracks. He was offered £50 to become an informer. When he refused he was beaten again. In the first week of July soldiers sexually assaulted four young children—three girls, two aged seven and one aged five and a boy aged six—after they had ordered them to stand spread eagled against a wall. The children were told they would be shot if they moved. Assaults like these are everyday occurrences for the nationalist communities of the North.

The nationalist peoples recognise that so long as Britain remains in Ireland, their communities will continue to suffer. The IRA is the legitimate representative of the nationalist people's militant refusal to consent to the presence of British troops on their streets and the forcible division of the Irish nation.

The British state has literally got away with murder in Ireland because a movement within the working class has never been built to challenge it. The task of revolutionaries in Britain is to win the working class to the side of the Irish people in their war against British imperialism. Workers must fight for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and the right to self-determination for the Irish people as a whole.

Facts

The facts are simple. There is a war going on in Ireland. On one side is the British state and its army of occupation On the other is the Irish resistance fighting for a united Ireland. While Marxists do not advocate their tactics or their middle class political outlook, we recognise the historic legitimacy of their struggle and stand with them against the British murder machine.

The British state which oppresses the Irish nation is the same state unleashed to break the miners' strike and to smash the March 31 Poll Tax demo off the streets. A defeat for Britain in Ireland would weaken the ruling class in Britain and aid the prosecution of the class struggle here.

Building an anti-imperialist solidarity movement rooted in the working class is no easy task. But British workers must be won to recognise the legitimacy of the fight for Irish freedom.

This is the only way to ensure there are no more Guildford Fours and no more Bloody Sundays.■

INDIA AND PAKISTAN

Troops out of Kashmir

Earlier this year a long standing border feud between India and Pakistan threatened to explode into full scale war over control of Kashmir, the region situated in the far north of the Indian sub-continent. At the same time the Kashmiri separatists, with links both sides of the border, have been spearheading a growing revolt, much of it against Indian rule. Workers of every country should support the Kashmiri struggle for self-determination, argues ***Laura Williams.***

SINCE APRIL 1988 mass mobilisations in the Kashmir valley have led to a series of mass demonstrations and large scale riots often paralysing the region. On 26 January 1989—Indian National Day—widespread strikes and demonstrations took place. Later in July an eight-day general strike brought the local business sectors to a standstill.

At the same time Kashmiri guerillas have carried out sporadic attacks on symbols of Indian rule. In April 1989 the Kashmir University vice-chancellor was killed by separatists. Indian owned businesses have been the target of several bombings.

In response the India government has adopted a series of brutal measures designed to crush what has become a mass movement for independence. This year alone more than 900 people have been killed, including at least sixty mown down when the Indian army fired on the funeral of a murdered Kashmiri leader.



Indian army crackdown in Srinagar

● Kashmir covers an area of 85,000 square miles. It has a population of over twelve million, 80% of whom are Muslims. Since 1947 India and Pakistan have fought two wars to gain overall control of the territory.

● Since partition in 1947 it has been divided between Pakistan (Azad Kashmir and the Northern Areas) and India (Jammu and Kashmir containing two thirds of the population and a minority of Hindus).

● Two and a half million Kashmiris live in Azad (or "free") Kashmir whilst five million live in the Northern Areas. In both states Kashmiris have been subjected to discrimination and systematic denial of social reforms and economic development.

Banned

Many more have been imprisoned or forced underground. Foreign journalists have been banned from the area and strict censorship on news has been imposed. Since January, government-assisted evacuation of Hindus from the valley heightened speculation about imminent bloody reprisals.

On 19 July New Delhi declared the entire valley a "disturbed area". Under the cover of this it has imposed direct rule on the region and has given evem greater powers to the army and police. These include powers to shoot suspected Kashmiri militants on sight and to search and demolish buildings suspected of harbouring nationalists. On the same day Indian forces killed 34 Kashmiri militants near the Pakistan border.

Hindu fundamentalism has triggered the electoral rise of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) amongst Hindus in Northern India. Its project is to alter the demography of the Kashmir valley and it advocates pre-emptive strikes into Pakistan. This has given the green light to communalist gangs, Hindu chauvinists and pogromist groups such as the RSS and the Shiv Sena movement.

The Hindus are a privileged minority in the region. Earlier bans on Muslim ownership of trade and industry helped to create today's Hindu near monopoly of those sectors of the economy. The fact that there is a small Muslim petit bourgeoisie has not served to alleviate the growing problems of mass unemployment amongst, and widespread discrimination against, the Muslim majority.

Already the response of many Kashmiris has been to rally to Islamic fundamentalist parties whose only reply to Hindu chauvinism is its Muslim mirror image. In the absence of a revolutionary working class perspective, which links the Kashmiri national struggle to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism in the whole sub-continent, the danger is that fundamentalism will lead the Kashmiri masses into the dead end of commmunalism and a confessional Islamic state.

Support

Fundamentalist groups like the Muslim Liberation Front and the Islamic Students League have been gaining support because the traditional leadership of the Kashmiri struggle—the People's League and the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front—have centred their demands on unification with Pakistan.

Whilst Pakistan supports the right of self-determination in Indian controlled Kashmir it opposes it in Azad Kashmir and the Northern Areas uder its own control.

The Northern Areas are directly governed from the Pakistan capital Islamabad. No elected representatives are sent to Pakistan's legislative assemblies and Kashmir's Shia Muslims face discrimination from the majority Sunni population of Pakistan.

Suffer

Clearly the people of Kashmir suffer national oppression within both India and Pakistan. Revolutionary communists support the right of Kashmir to self-determination up to and including secession from both states. We are for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Indian and Pakistani garrisons from Jammu and Kashmir. The constant manoeuvring and the threats of war, are smokescreens behind which the real interests of the Kashmiri people are subordinated to the grand designs of India and Pakistan.

While both India and Pakistan have been stocking up on weapons in the last period it is unlikely that there will be a war in the immediate future. Washington is placing heavy pressure on Pakistan to avoid a conflict, and the USSR is exerting what influence it has in India to the same effect

As always the result of imperialism and Stalinism's joint initiatives will be to brush aside the legitimate struggles and demands of the Kashmiri people.

Since the late 1940s the United Nations (UN) has advocated a plebiscite in Kashmir to decide under which state the Kashmiri people should suffer poverty and national oppression. A UN organised referendum would be an enormous diversion from the fight to achieve national self-determination.

The only way to resolve the national rights of the Kashmiri people is the convocation of a sovereign constituent assembly throughout the whole of Kashmir. Such an assembly could only be democratically convened and effectively protected by an armed workers' and poor peasants' militia.

No to a lash up with Pakistan! No to an Islamic state! Both would signal the stepping up of communalist terror in the region and a setback for democratic rights—particularly the rights of women.

Alongside the struggle against communalism and fundamentalism within the Kashmiri movement, and for a constituent assembly, revolutionary communists would fight for genuine workers' and poor peasants' democracy built on delegate based and recallable councils (soviets), the expropriation of the big landowners and capitalists without compensation and a programme of public works to alleviate hunger, homelesssness, disease and illiteracy.

Duty

Clearly it is the duty of workers the world over to support the struggle of those liberation fighters in pursuit of democratic, national demands whatever illusory ideology they claim allegiance to. But we oppose communalist atrocities wherever they are pursued under the false banner of national liberation.

A revolutionary party is a burning necessity, not just in Kashmir but in every state in the sub-continent.

Such a party would be the most consistent fighter against Kashmiri national oppression and therefore against its root causes: the pro-imperialist capitalist rulers of India and Pakistan.■

SOUTH AFRICA

Stalinism – alive and kicking

This month sees the launch of the South African Communist Party as a legal organisation. Workers should avoid it like the plague argues ***Lesley Day***

SINCE ITS legalisation the South African Communist Party (SACP) has gained support from many workers and youth. The executive of the metal workers' union NUMSA has gone so far as to recommend to its members that they join the new party when it opens offices for recruitment this month.

The Party is held in respect because it is identified with the years of struggle, with socialist ideas of equality and sharing the nation's wealth.

But the SACP does not represent the interest of the working class. The Party's project is to tie the working class to a cross-class allliance with the African National Congress (ANC) and to the imperialist government that will emerge from the negotiated settlement.

Party leader Joe Slovo argues that in the immediate future there will be no conflict of interest between the SACP and the ANC:

"I think it must be accepted that the day after the transformation the situation is exactly the same as the day before and therefore the objectives for which both the ANC and the SACP stand would have to be consolidated. I foresee a fairly long period in which both organsations will co-operate in order to carry out those tasks." (*Weekly Mail*, 4.5.90)

The SACP will dragoon the working class to help "consolidate" the capitalist order.

What Slovo intends is that his party should act as broker between workers and an ANC government. Like any other bureaucracy of a reformist workers' organisation, the SACP leadership will derive its authority and power from its ability to negotiate partial improvements and reforms for the working class but at the same time keep that class in check.

Commanding

There is no doubt that the SACP is now in a politically commanding position within the workers' movement.But it did not always enjoy such support. Both the programme and tactics of the SACP made it unpopular amongst substantial sections of the newly emerging militant black unions. For years it was the most slavish follower of the Moscow line, defending Stalinism to the hilt, and adopting a highly sectarian attitude to other tendencies within the working class.

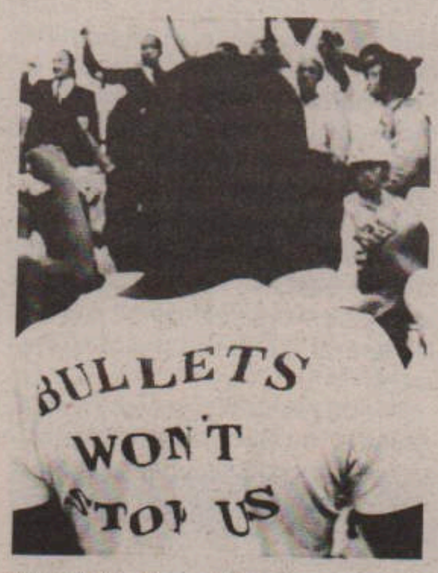
What developments have led to its current position?

First and foremost there was the failure of the emerging black workers' movement to develop a revolutionary political leadership, able to defend the workers' distinct interests within the struggle against apartheid at the same time as fighting for leadership of that struggle.

Fearful

The "workerist" leaders of the new black unions at first kept their distance from Stalinism, fearful of being tied to the "progressive" multinationals who run the factories and mines. But they fell foul of the classic syndicalist error: they left the "political struggle" to the middle class and Stalinist leaders of the ANC. After the defeat of the revolutionary situation this led them, more and more, to accept the political leadership of the ANC. Now the former "workerist" leaders are acting as recruiting sergeants for Stalinism.

The SACP has not fundamentally changed its programme or strategy. For decades the SACP has fought for the two-stage strategy advocated by Stalin in the 1920s: first a "national democratic revolution" against apartheid, in which the workers refrain from explicitly socialist demands; then, at an unspecified later date, a socialist revolution against the South African bourgeoisie.



But misleaders will!

Under pressure from left militants who protested that black workers would have little to gain unless there were fundamental economic changes, SACP theoreticians explained that because the revolution necessary to overthrow apartheid would be so thoroughgoing, the working class would be in a strong position to lead the country forward to socialism. There was, argued Slovo, "no Chinese Wall" between these stages.

This theory allowed the SACP and the ANC, with whom it had developed an "unbreakable alliance", to shift substantially to the left during the 1984-86 period of township uprisings and working class militancy.

The ANC/SACP declared that people's power was on the agenda and that a situation of dual power had been reached.

New situation

In the wake of defeat the SACP moved to the right. This shift was also promoted by the rise of Gorbachev. The crisis of Stalinism, combined with the fact that the apartheid regime has been forced to seek a negotiated settlement, has produced the new situation where the Party is able to promote a right wing variant of its stage-ist policies.

The move to the right has speeded up. As late as last year the Party's new programme could explain:

"There is no conflict between this insurrectionary perspective and the possiblity of a negotiated transfer of power."

Such talk is now fading fast. As the prospects of a bourgeois settlement increase, the watchwords are "discipline" and "non-sectarianism".

The Party calls for a constituent assembly, but its leaders are endorsing the idea of an interim government established before such an assembly is called—one which will usher in the partnership between the ANC and the existing white ruling class.

Likewise the SACP is in retreat over the economy and nationalisation. While its programme always envisaged a capitalist stage in South Africa, this included substantial nationalisation to allow the nation to break the hold of the monopoly capitalists and redistribute wealth. But in the new thinking, nationalisation fades into the background:

"Let's get away from this cliche 'nationalisation'. It's caused an enormous amount of confusion. We do support a regulated market economy and we do support a mixed economy in a post-apartheid South Africa, in which there will be a place for private domestic and foreign capital." (*Weekly Mail* 19.6.90)

Big business, argues Slovo, will not invest as philanthropists, "they will do so if they feel there is a return on their investment, on their stability and security". This stabilised capitalist South Africa "can become a "manufacturing dynamo of Southern Africa and of the African continent". This plan for imperialist South Africa to dominate the continent mirrors that of the principal multinationals which have forced De Klerk to the negotiating table.

As always Stalinism's strategy of limiting the revolution to "national democratic" goals fails to deliver even the most basic democracy and equality. The straightforwardly reformist programme advanced by Slovo accords with the consciousness of the majority of workers, especially after the experience of the 1986 defeat and now that a negotiated settlement seems a real possibility. Trotskyists and indeed all those who count themselves socialists within the South African working class must give the workers a clear warning about the intentions of the SACP.

The SACP will argue for the programme of the bourgeoisie within the working class. It will encourage the process of bureaucratisation within the trade unions. It will help Mandela and the multinationals dig the grave of the South African revolution.

The task of the day is to build a revolutionary workers' party, a Trotskyist party, to break the influence of the SACP and lead the working class to victory.■

Sandinistas save Chamorro

BY JOHN McKEE

LATE JUNE and early July saw Nicaragua's capital, Managua, paralysed by a general strike of public sector workers led by the Sandinista unions.

The airport was shut down. The borders were closed. Public sector workers were joined by rural workers. Barricades of cobblestones were built and sharp clashes took place with supporters of the government of Violeta Chamorro.

These events sent a shudder of alarm through Washington. Unplanned military manoeuvres suddenly took place in Texas. The warning was plain to the workers and peasants of Nicaragua: topple this government and we send in the troops.

The Nicaraguan workers were responding to the first attempts by Chamorro to force through her privatisation programme. In early May the government announced a series of decrees. One would remove the job security and collective agreements from public sector workers, passed by the Sandinista government. Another would return expropriated land to its original owners, starting by leasing it back immediately.

The government pushed through a series of devaluations which massively increased prices and eroded wage levels and announced a programme to "restructure" the economy by dismantling the state owned sector through a series of privatisations.

In May 60,000 public sector workers struck against these attacks. In June there was a general strike. On both occasions the Chamorro government was reeling, and forced to make some concessions. But, in both strikes the Sandinista leader, Daniel Ortega, stepped forward as a mediator.

He got the strikes settled on terms well short of their original demands, in return for some wage increases and promises that the Sandinistas would be "consulted" over the privatisation programmes. Ortega saved Chamorro from defeats that could have led to her downfall.

But then the overthrow of Chamorro is the furthest thing from the Sandinista leadership's minds.Ever since Daniel Ortega made what the imperialist media hailed as his "statesmanlike" handover speech, declaring he would ensure an orderly transition of power to the right wing UNO, he has been attempting to establish a *de facto* coalition with the "moderate" Chamorro wing of this 15 party alliance.

This is of a piece with Ortega's past record. Chamorro was a leading figure in the original "Government of National Reconstruction", the popular front government which replaced Somoza after the revolution in 1979. Ortega, was a representative of the "social democratic" wing of the Sandinistas. He always regretted the break up of this coalition with the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie. Now he is busily trying to reconstruct it, this time from below, ("governing from below" as he sometimes puts it).

Chamorro also realises the continued strength of the mass movement, and has been willing to maintain this *de facto* alliance with Ortega. She recognises the indispensibility of the Sandinista leaders for controlling the workers and peasants, especially in a period where the government is trying to erode their gains. The alternative, she knows, is renewed civil war.

She also wants to avoid becoming the prisoner of the extreme right wing "Contra" forces in her coalition. To this end she retained General Humberto Ortega (Daniel Ortega's brother) as Commander in Chief of the army, a decision that outraged her right wing coalition partners.

They needn't worry. Humberto Ortega announced after the July strikes:

"The armed forces of this country will never carry out a *coup d'état* and much less against a government led by Violeta Chamorro."

Instead he is busy reassuring the right by disarming the popular militias that were formed to fight the Contras. At the same time the Contras are being resettled in special zones, "protected" by their own armed police force!

For socialist revolutionaries in Nicaragua the key tasks are to build on the undoubted militancy of the workers and peasants in the struggle to defend their jobs, wages and land.

To co-ordinate the strikes councils of workers and peasants must be formed and extended to the army. The militias must not be disarmed. On the contrary they must be extended and democratised to defend the strikes against the Contra death squads.

The aim must be the overthrow of the Chamorro government and its replacement by a revolutionary government of the workers and peasants. The lesson of the ten years of Sandinista government is that attempting to "tame" capitalism rather than destroy it, is the road to defeat.

The growing discontent of the Sandinista rank and file with the collaborationist policies of the Ortegas' leadership must be developed into a full scale break with the bankrupt petit-bourgeois ideology of "Sandinism" and towards revolutionary Trotskyism.■

NEWS FROM THE LRCI

arbeitermacht

TROTSKYIST BULLETIN OF THE LRCI IN THE GDR

IN THE weeks before the currency union came into force in East Germany (GDR), the rapid moves towards the restoration of capitalism led to catastrophic results in production and trade. But this was only a foretaste of the future chaos that currency union would bring, *writes F Gessler from Berlin.*

For decades the defenders of the "free west" pointed to the abundance of goods as the proof of the "superiority of capitalism".

Now, as capitalism is re-established in the GDR, its first result is a drastic shortage of food and everyday needs. And this in a country which, under the planned economy, had not known shortages in this sphere for a very long time. Not only did prices rise by 400-500% at a stroke, but supply and distribution all but collapsed in the first week of July.

Exorbitant prices, often way above the level in West Germany (FRG), mean that near the border, especially in East Berlin, workers now stream into the west to shop.

The working class is going to be hit even harder in the sphere of jobs, wages, the general cost of living.

Some commentators believe that a figure of four million unemployed (out of a total population of 17 million) is realistic in the course of the coming year. With average dole money in the region of 700-800 DM, this will mean an army of dependents on social security, living well below FRG minimum standards.

The demands of German capital for an axing of East German industry are very clear: one-third of all plants are to close immediately; a similar number will have a slim chance of survival after massive redundancies and restructuring; the remaining third are promised a halfway secure future—providing they are immediately privatised.

The East German workers' hopes that 1 July would bring them nearer to the wage levels of the FRG were dashed. Instead of rising, real wages fell by an average of 10-20% because of the introduction of new income taxes, the rising cost of living and the removal of bonus payments.

The average income of a West German worker is currently DM 3,000 a month; that in the East about DM 1,100. Add to this the effects of massive short-time working (already involving 500,000 workers), redundancies amongst women, sackings and early retirement of whole workforces and, one way or another, up to one-third of the population could be plunged into serious poverty. It is not surprising, therefore, that it has been these two factors, jobs and wages, that have sparked off working class resistance.

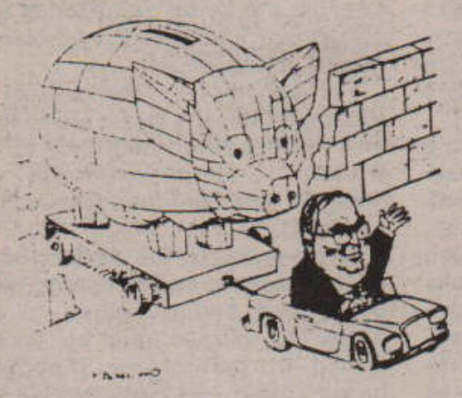
These protests remain largely localised, short and lack any general perspective of resistance to the costs of restoration. They are, by their nature, protests rather than a determined long term fight to beat the root cause of the attacks.

Such protests and preventative actions have taken place in almost all sectors of industry and trade in the last few weeks, often embracing a whole industry as in the railways, textiles, cars, coal-mining and shoe production and the docks in Rostock. Protest strikes also took place at Stern Radio and Robotron, two well-known and viable concerns which are to be closed as unwanted competition to West German firms. In Berlin itself, dustmen, town hall employees and even the police took strike action.

The high point of these actions to date has been the strikes and demonstrations of over 120,000 engineering workers in the Berlin-Brandenburg region. Under the leadership of the West German engineering union IG Metall, now established in the GDR, the engineers negotiated a year's guaranteed employment, a rise of between DM300 and 400, shorter hours and a social plan.

This limited but real victory represented a concession by capital which is hoping to pacify the best organised section of workers, and thereby prevent the development of a united resistance.

It is characteristic of the contradictory feelings amongst the workers at present that they are prepared to mount massive resistance to direct attacks at a factory and industry level which are the consequences of restoration, yet they accept capitalist unification passively as an unavoidable fate.



Everyone is now talking of a "hot Autumn". The right wing Interior Minister, Diestel, takes the perspective of widespread and angry mass protests so seriously that he has already re-equipped the police with machine pistols and rubber bullets.

Within the ruling Alliance-SPD coalition in the GDR, the SPD have openly declared that they would not accept the post of the Interior Ministry because they do not want to be forced to enact, for a second time, the role of Noske the SPD Minister who drowned the workers' movement in blood in 1919.

A social explosion in the coming months could throw aside all the plans for a peaceful unification and all-German elections. It is clear that the force of such an explosion, combining disillusionment in "really existing capitalism" with the memory of the overthrow of the bureaucracy last Autumn, could open the way to the seizure of power by the working class.■

The LRCI
Arbeiter/Innenstandpunkt (Austria), Gruppe Arbeitermacht (Germany), Irish Workers Group, Poder Obrero (Peru), Pouvoir Ouvrier (France), Workers Power Group (Britain)

Poder Obrero-OCIR (Bolivia) is in the process of discussions with the LRCI with the aim of becoming an affiliated section. The Revolutionary Trotskyist Tendency (USA) has fraternal relations with the LRCI.

SOVIET WORKERS' MOVEMENT

Dangerous liaisons

The rebirth of the independent Soviet workers movement is a cause for celebration by all real socialists. But ***John Hunt*** *warns that the forces working to put that movement at the service of the Stalinists and the bosses need to be defeated if the celebrations are to last.*

AFTER MORE than sixty years of silence as a result of political oppression at the hands of Stalinism the Soviet working class is rediscovering both its voice and its self-confidence. In the first two months of this year alone there were more strike days recorded than for the whole of 1989.

The rebirth of an independent Soviet workers' movement must be welcomed by every socialist and working class militant. But that rebirth shows signs of giving life to political tendencies within the workers' movement that we must wage a fierce ideological struggle against. Otherwise Soviet workers will suffer an historic defeat.

The Soviet political and economic crisis led workers to form a number of different organisations. Ostensibly to the left lies Sotsprof, a trade union federation deeply divided between supporters and opponents of a market economy and "popular capitalism". With a greater mass base is the new Confederation of Labour, a loose coalition of workers' independent organisations, which supports the move to a market economy in the USSR while at the same time wishing to defend the rights and living standards of workers.

In addition there is the United Front of Workers which, while opposing marketisation, supported the Patriot Group in the recent local elections. That group expressed deeply chauvinist ideas in favour of Russian separation. It worked in co-ordination with supporters of the Orthodox Church and supported the leasing of land to individual farmers.

The United Front of Workers poses the defence of the plan against the market in a manner that endorses the old system of bureaucratic oppression. It has found itself defending the most intransigent Stalinist section of the bureaucracy, the old conservative oppressive apparatus for whom "the plan" has nothing in common with either workers' rights or socialism.

The United Front of Workers has support in the highest echelons of the old official Soviet unions. Its leaders are based in the official unions' trade union school. Yet even the official unions have had to respond to the reawakening of the working class. Gorbachev gave them the leadership of this year's May Day demonstrations. And they marched with slogans opposing the market and price increases. They are now demanding the right to veto all plant closures.

But if the United Front of Workers has received support from some official quarters within the Soviet bureaucracy, it is the case that the new Confederation of Labour and its affiliates in Moscow, the Donbass, Kuzbass and Vorkuta are being courted by international forces hostile to the interests of Soviet workers.

These forces reside in the ministries and trade union offices but they also have powerful support from the official leadership of Solidarity in Poland. They all wish to create a pro-market Soviet trade union which will help Gorbachev push through the anti-working class market reforms that he is committed to. To that end they have been eagerly appointing labour attaches to the Moscow embassies and starting to court the leaders of the new workers' movement.

The US AFL-CIO has hosted a delegation of Kuzbass miners' representatives. They doubtless tried to school them in their own style of pro-capitalist trade unionism. All of the three Italian trade union confederations have worked hand in glove with the Italian government to establish a fund to support "independent" trade unions in Eastern Europe. And their view of being independent is to support the restoration of a capitalist market economy.

The rebirth of an independent Soviet workers' movement must be welcomed by every socialist and working class militant. But that rebirth shows signs of giving life to political tendencies within the workers' movement that we must wage a fierce ideological struggle against.

The right wing of the British trade union movement has also moved in to help western capitalism create a tame trade union federation in the USSR. *Daily Mirror* owner, Robert Maxwell, a man who once profited from publishing the worthless collected works of Brezhnev, Ceauscescu and Chernenko, is orchestrating a campaign, hand in hand with the UDM, to discredit the NUM in the eyes of Soviet miners. Over the last three months at least four representatives of Soviet workers' organisations have met with the UDM. In this work they have been backed by Mr George Miller and his Russian Research Foundation, which openly admits to accepting money from the US state.

Under this pressure, and with the lure of dirty money from the imperialists, the Soviet Confederation of Labour and its component parts are increasingly siding with the right wing in the international workers' movement. And in doing so they are also siding with the most pro-market elements of the bureaucracy. A minority of the Confederation's founding conference, including supporters of Sotsprof, opposed an open endorsement of the market economy. But they were defeated by a majority who were inspired to emulate the late 1980s Solidarnosc model of a pro-market trade union.

Whilst the Soviet workers' organisations are under enormous pressure from the agents of international capitalism, their new movement also intersects with the developing fragments and tendencies within the Soviet bureaucracy itself. It does so in an uneven way. The United Front of Workers both supports the Russian nationalism of Boris Yeltsin *and* opposes his radical marketeering. On most issues it stands with the most conservative elements within the bureaucracy.

The new independent miners' union and the Confederation are lining up with the most radical marketeers within the bureaucracy. Plans for an all-out strike this summer were shelved in favour of a one day strike in mid-July. That decision was made after requests from Boris Yeltsin. Yeltsin wants to buy time for his pro-market programme. At present, he is sufficiently popular with Soviet workers to succeed.

The one day strike certainly revealed the capacity of the Soviet workers to take action. In some areas workers clearly believed they were fighting the price increases and the regime. However, the strike was not as well supported as expected.

Many miners were suspicious that they were being asked to be foot-soldiers for one wing of the bureaucracy to help them in their internal struggles. As a result though the strike was strong in Vorkuta, it was less strong in the Donbass and weak in the Kuzbass. A significant number of Soviet miners clearly did decide to abstain on the issues that divide the ruling bureaucracy.

After the summer strikes, workers' committees stood candidates for the Supreme Soviets, and, particularly in the mining regions, won resounding victories against the official party candidates. This was a blow struck against the party apparatus by the Soviet workers. But it has also meant that leading strike militants have now been drawn into the mock proceedings of Gorbachev's Soviet Parliament. Their opposition to the party has led many of them to bloc with Yeltsin's "Democratic Platform" in the various Soviets and become incorporated into the most marketeering wing of bureaucratic politics. And they have backed Gorbachev's project of marketisation, with some reservations about the extent and growth of his presidential powers.

The Soviet workers are squeezed between the devil they know—the Stalinist bureaucracy—and the deep blue sea of capitalism. The most influential politicians in the USSR speak unequivocally in favour of the market. The international agencies of the bourgeoisie say the same thing. "Our" trade union leaders are hired propagandists for the same message.

It is possible to understand why, after seventy years of Stalinist planning, many workers in the USSR will be receptive to that message. This can be no excuse, however, for us to sit back and allow the Soviet workers' movement to pass through a period of market illusions at the hands of Gorbachev, Yeltsin and Wall Street. Our job, hard as it is, is to struggle for an independent workers' movement in the USSR that does not bow down to international capitalism and its agents or to any wing of the Stalinist bureaucracy that oppresses them every day.

Workers must take power into their own hands, through building genuinely democratic workers' councils. Every workers' struggle must be turned into a fight for workers' control of the planned economy, to meet workers' real needs. The destruction of the bureaucracy must result in the triumph of working class power not in the willing acceptance of capitalist restoration.■

*Poland's economy is being steered towards capitalism by Solidarnosc. **Arthur Merton** explains how and why a once mighty trade union is now set on serving the West's bosses.*

Solidarnosc then . . .

SOLIDARNOSC, THE Polish trade union, was born in struggle ten years ago. Out of a massive strike wave in July and August 1980, the working class formed a delegate based committee, the MKS.

The MKS functioned in a thoroughly democratic way. Its negotiations with the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy were transmitted directly to mass meetings of workers in the shipyards and factories of Poland's major industrial centres. Those meetings were sovereign in deciding on all the agreements reached by the negotiators.

The demands of the MKS went beyond the call for wage increases to compensate for the regime's price rises. It called for the right to form a free trade union, for the abolition of bureaucratic privileges, for the right of workers to have a say in the factories through "self-management".

Solidarnosc, a trade union explicitly opposed to the regime and embracing ten million Polish workers, was the result of these working class upheavals. Lech Walesa, an electrician from the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk, was its undisputed leader.

Today Solidarnosc is a very different type of organisation. It calls itself both a union and a "social movement". Its "political wing", organised in the Civic or Citizens Committee, is now in government. A former adviser to Walesa, Mazowiecki, is the Prime Minister. And Walesa himself is preparing to replace his former jailer, General Jaruzelski, as the president of Poland. All of this indicates that Solidarnosc has won its battle with the Stalinist regime. But as a Solidarnosc publication noted, "this incredible victory has its price: the twilight of Solidarnosc."

Solidarnosc is no longer simply a working class trade union. The Solidarnosc government, and its political base, constitute a Christian Democratic party. The Solidarnosc union is a shadow of its former self. Its membership has dwindled from ten million in 1980 to two million today. Its recent second congress was notable for the absence of direct working class democracy that characterised its early days. Special places in the hall were reserved for the world press but not for rank and file workers.

Most important, Solidarnosc in taking the reins of government as the dominant partner in a coalition with Jaruzelski, has become the mortal enemy of the working class it once represented, and a brake on the struggles of that class.

The process by which this transformation came about is clear. At its birth its emerging leaders entered the fray with a diversity of views about the future for Poland. Walesa himself was a catholic nationalist. His reactionary views range from outright opposition to abortion and homosexuality through to a full blooded-commitment to the restoration of capitalism.

Competing with Walesa and his coterie of catholic intellectuals, like Mazowiecki, were the reformists of the Workers Defence Committee (KOR), led by Kuron, now Minister of Labour and Adam Michnik, the editor of Solidarnosc's daily paper. These men believed that within a market economy, modified by workers' self-management in the factories and a workers' second chamber of the Sejm (parliament), working class interests could be protected and the economy could be made more efficient at one and the same time.

Last but not least there were whole sections of the rank and file, including many former members of the ruling Stalinist party (PUWP), that believed free unions and self-managed enterprises could be stepping stones to some sort of socialist society.

In the early Solidarnosc there was a clear crisis of leadership. No section advocated an all out struggle for workers' power and the destruction of the Stalinist bureaucracy. All united in order to establish Solidarnosc and then use it as a means of pressurising the bureaucracy itself into reform. The cost of this utopian project was the coup by Jaruzelski in 1981 and the crushing of Solidarnosc.

Only in the face of a mounting economic crisis did the bureaucracy decide that it now needed Solidarnosc to contain the working class. Jaruzelski followed repression with a policy of buying off workers' discontent. The cost of the buy off was to plunge Poland ever deeper into debt to the imperialists. Production stagnated but the debts expanded to $39 billion dollars. Repayment of interest was bleeding the economy dry. The maintenance of wage rises and price subsidies became impossible for the regime.

In 1988 the working class moved to defend itself against Jaruzelski's attempt to impose austerity. A new wave of strikes erupted and a repeat of the 1980 situation threatened. This time round Jaruselski, heartened by Walesa's role in controlling and containing the strike wave, offered Solidarnosc legality in return for co-operation. The result was the "Round Table" of 1989, the promise of reforms and the triumph of Solidarnosc in the elections that followed.

The Walesa faction was by this time dominant and the KOR activists compliant at the promise of parliamentary elections. The Stalinists were trounced at the elections and, despite having guaranteed themselves a majority, found themselves obliged to become junior partners in Mazowiecki's coalition. They became a spent force. The PUWP was wound up and replaced by a 50,000 strong Social Democratic party.

When it took office the crisis of leadership in Solidarnosc had been resolved negatively—the counter-revolutionaries had won hands down.■



Lech Walesa — with his cake and planning to eat it!

. . . and now

FACED WITH the debt crisis, with inflation at an annual rate of 2000%, and with a slump in industrial production, the Solidarnosc dominated government of Tadeusz Mazowiecki and his Thatcherite finance minister Balcerowicz, eagerly embraced an IMF austerity package. Its short term goal was to bring down inflation and stabilise the economy. Its long term goal is the restoration of capitalism.

Both goals are being achieved at the expense of the working class. Inflation has been cut by the abolition of food subsidies, the pegging of wages and the introduction of unemployment. Real purchasing power has been cut by 43%. Unemployment currently stands at half a million and is set to rise to 1.7 million within the year. Industrial production has been cut by 40% and the currency, the zloty, has been massively devalued.

Balcerowicz has been candid about the objectives of this programme. Echoing Thatcher when she came to power he stated that:

"Since inflation was very high and our major goal was to halt inflation, the policy had to be very tough."

He made clear that these "tough" policies were designed to clear the way to the privatisation of most of Poland's industrial enterprises. His aim was:

". . . to transform the Polish economy into a market economy, with the ownership structure changing in the direction of that found in the advanced industrial economies."

With capitalism peacefully restored in East Germany Poland's government is keen to follow suit. It faces a very different set of problems, however, and the road will be anything but smooth.

Germany was a divided country, one half of which already was a powerful imperialist economy. Poland is not. It is a crisis ridden economy that cannot be bailed out by its absorption into an already existing capitalist economy. If capitalism is restored then imperialism will see to it that Poland is turned into a subservient semi-colony, bled dry by the international banks and the multinationals. The scale of unemployment that would result from capitalism will be enormous. Mazowiecki's chief economic adviser has warned:

"Even those companies which are efficient may not survive, because of their technical backwardness."

It is not a question of "may not". The capitalists, following the inexorable logic of the profit motive, will close down whole swathes of Polish industry. The working class will see its benefits and wages further slashed. Poverty, on an undreamt of scale, will be the fate of millions.

The ability of Solidarnosc to sell such a fate to the working class is far from decided. While the second congress voted to support the government's austerity package, rank and file workers have begun to voice dissent. One delegate yelled at Balcerowicz:

"Your name is cursed by pensioners, farmers, single mothers, unemployed graduates."

The promise that privatisation will benefit the workers, through the guarantee that there will be an option for workers to buy 20% of all stock in the newly owned companies has cut little ice. Workers are rightly suspicious, if not of the danger of capitalism, then at least of the fact that with their real incomes plummeting they won't be able to afford any stock at all.

". . . to transform the Polish economy into a market economy, with the ownership structure changing in the direction of that found in the advanced industrial economies" Balcerowicz, Polish finance minister

Discontent exploded over all these issue in the recent rail strike. The workers demanded a whole series of progressive measures, including a 20% wage rise they had long been promised. The strike was started by Solidarnosc activists and supported by the leaders of the former state run union the OPZZ, which saw a chance to enhance its own credibility. The strike was organised in a democratic way, reminiscent of the early days of Solidarnosc. It was fiercely opposed by the government, and finally Walesa managed to get it called off.

The whole dispute was a pointer to the problems the Solidarnosc government faces. To carry out its project it is obliged to turn against its own supporters—the working class. The potential for exploiting this contradiction and regrouping the working class in opposition to Stalinism and capitalism clearly exists.

To do this, however, the Polish working class must be broken from Walesa himself. Walesa is currently trying to distance himself from the government while at the same time laying the basis for his own rise to power. He has combined statements explaining his "understanding" of workers' grievances with threats to use the police against the rail strikers. He has attacked Mazowiecki for pushing too fast on austerity while blaming him for being too slow in getting rid of the Stalinists.

Walesa's aim is to bring forward the planned presidential elections, win them and then establish a reactionary and undemocratic government. He has openly said he will rule by decree to get round parliamentary debates. He has made clear that opposition will meet with repression. And all the time he says that he, and increasingly he alone, will stand as guardian over the interests of the working class.

The great problem is that despite his treacherous role in the 1988 strikes and in the rail strike, his history as a worker militant gives him credibility amongst workers. They take his attacks on the government as good coin, especially when he paints them as the workers versus the intellectuals. He appears as an intransigent opponent of Stalinism, despite having long co-operated with Jaruzelski.

All of this poses a danger to the working class. Under no circumstances would their interests be represented by Walesa or his opponents in Solidarnosc like Michnik and Mazowiecki. Both would lead the working class to the same place—an impoverished semi-colony of imperialism.

The task ahead therefore is to exploit the conflicts that exist within Solidarnosc by developing working class resistance to the effects of austerity. Inevitably this will produce conflicts with both wings and in those conflicts the working class can be won to a revolutionary solution.

In the rail strike a member of the strike committee, who had formerly idolised Walesa, commented that Walesa's actions had cost him "not only popularity, but credibility". The striker did not believe that Balcerowicz and Mazowiecki were the alternative. Their plan would, he argued, "only make Poland politically and economically dependent on the west".

Such views must be transformed into conscious opposition to all the capitalist restorationists. In the coming period the Polish workers will once again show their fighting capacity. This time a revolutionary party must resolve their crisis of leadership and defeat the varieties of Thatcherism, Catholic nationalism and reformism that are on offer from the different wings of Solidarnosc's leadership.■

Problems of solidarity

Workers Power has disaffiliated from the Campaign for Solidarity with Workers in the Eastern Bloc (CSWEB). We did this because of the disgraceful statement on the Butchenko tour which was agreed at the July Steering Committee of CSWEB. ***Helen Ward****, previously Chair of the CSWEB National Steering Committee, explains the events surrounding the Butchenko tour, and looks at the shameful role of Socialist Organiser within CSWEB.*



These striking Soviet miners won't get solidarity from the scab UDM

CSWEB

ONE OF CSWEB's main activities was the attempt to organise tours during which militants from the new workers' organisations in Eastern Europe could make direct links with the labour movement in Britain. This kind of solidarity is essential if the left in the west are to combat the pro-market ideas which are being pushed within the new unions by enemies of the workers' movement.

The tour by Yuri Butchenko, a representative of the Kuzbass Workers' Union—a tour organised by CSWEB—was aborted after two weeks. Butchenko decided to collaborate with the National Workers' Union (NTS).

This is a right wing outfit which has promoted links between the Soviet miners and the UDM, and has agitated for the Soviet miners to join in the witch-hunt of the British NUM.

Activities

Butchenko called a meeting with CSWEB midway through the tour, bringing his NTS minder, George Miller, with him. He insisted on collaboration between CSWEB and the NTS over the remainder of the tour. He expressed anger because we had organised everything completely independently of the NTS. Indeed, it was not until Butchenko arrived in Britain that we were told he had been formally invited here by Miller. Up to that point we thought he had been sent by the union—which we ourselves had invited—and paid for by it. Subsequently we learnt, from an interview *City Limits* did with Butchenko, that Miller had paid for his flight over.

Only after Butchenko's arrival did he explain to us that he would be meeting Miller. When he did we sent someone along to ensure that Miller did not try to disrupt the tour organised by CSWEB. At that point Miller expressed no wish to participate in the CSWEB tour and he and Butchenko agreed simply that once the tour was over they would, separately from CSWEB, meet the TUC's international department. In other words there was never any ambiguity about collaboration with the NTS, and there was no agreement struck with them about the tour or anything else.

Hostile

Up to the point of Butchenko's decision to join forces with organisations openly hostile to the labour movement (the UDM and the NTS), it was important that CSWEB pursued its attempt to win him, through direct links with British workers, towards a working class perspective of solidarity. There are few enough opportunities for militants here to meet and argue with leaders of the new unions. We have an enormous job to do in countering the multi-million pound propaganda campaign of the imperialists who are promoting marketisation and capitalism, and preaching collaboration of the new unions with the restorationists.

Struggle

Arguments for class struggle independent workers' organisations are essential. It was correct to take the opportunity of a visit to this country by a trade unionist, who was keen to meet rank and file British workers, in order to have those arguments. It was equally essential to struggle against the likes of Miller getting their grubby hands on the representatives of the emerging workers' movement.

With Yuri Butchenko we lost those arguments—he was courted and won by the right wing who offered him more money, equipment and publicity than we could. He had heard the arguments and made his choice. And he left us with no choice but to condemn him outright for his collaboration with the class enemy.

There are those on the left who seem to regard the Soviet workers' movement as a lost cause already, who are unwilling to create the opportunities for an open confrontation of ideas for fear that we may, as we did with Butchenko, lose. That was the view of the Socialist Workers Party who pulled out of the tour organising committee at the very last minute. Their refusal undermined our ability to win the argument because they had opportunities to get Butchenko into more NUM branches where he could have learned first hand what miners thought of the UDM and Roy Lynk.

Even more despicable than the SWP has been the response of the WRP (*Workers Press*). With scant regard for the truth they have deployed the rancid method of amalgam they learnt from their one time hero, Gerry Healy. *Workers Power* and *Socialist Organiser* are accused of "negotiating" with the NTS "behind closed doors" to work out Butchenko's itinerary. Hey presto, we are lumped together with the NTS. Doubtless they'll be labelling us CIA agents soon. To such slanders we give one reply—give us your proof. If you can't then please shut up.

Workers Press have not participated in any attempts to build workers' solidarity in this country. They have called on their supporters to go to Moscow for a rally in August to commemorate Trotsky's assassination. All well and good if you can afford such a trip, and if you bought your ticket last year—today it's impossible to get one at such short notice because of the tourist boom in travel to the USSR. For the apparatchiks of the WRP, still living off the accumulated funds built up by Gerry Healy, such "solidarity" is possible. We prefer to build links between the workers of our respective countries, despite the difficulties.

Workers Power was correct to try and build the tour, and to try to get Butchenko to speak to as many workers as possible. We were also correct to argue with him day in, day out during the tour about the ills of the market and the necessity of fighting the restoration of capitalism. These are arguments that must be had with millions of Soviet and East European workers.

Principled

CSWEB made a principled decision to end the Butchenko tour when he placed demands on us to collaborate with the NTS, and informed us that he had visited the UDM. Either reason alone would have been grounds to end any work with him. The problem came when the CSWEB National Steering Committee discussed what statement to adopt explaining the ending of the tour.

Socialist Organiser supporters put forward a statement which failed to condemn Butchenko for his action, put the primary blame onto the NUM and Scargill whilst "understanding" the desire of Soviet workers' organisations for links with the UDM, and expressed "a large amount of sympathy for Soviet workers who are repulsed by Stalinists in the British labour movement and who relate to the right in the labour movement as a consequence".

Apology

Workers Power put forward an alternative statement which condemned Yuri Butchenko's actions and urged the Kuzbass Workers' Union to distance themselves from his decision to side with anti-working class forces. *Socialist Organiser* supporters opposed this and their draft was agreed.

Workers Power therefore decided to disaffiliate from the campaign in order to make it absolutely clear that we can in no way endorse the CSWEB position. It amounts to an apology for Butchenko siding with the class enemy. We urge all those labour movement organisations who affiliated to CSWEB or sponsored the tour to leave CSWEB.

Workers Power will continue to try and build a united working class solidarity movement with workers in Eastern Europe and the USSR. But the actions of Yuri Butchenko and of George Miller have set back the cause of such solidarity a long way.

For its part CSWEB has decided not to take up the fight to prevent the right wing gaining a stranglehold on the Soviet workers' movement. *Workers Power* cannot be party, in any way, to its decision to excuse Butchenko's treachery.■

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

SOCIALIST ORGANISER supporters hate Stalinism. Not a bad thing in itself. Stalinism has a filthy record in the workers' movement. But *Socialist Organiser* (SO) are blinded by their hatred.

They are happy to forget or excuse the crimes of left social democratic reformists. Their hatred for Stalinism is differential. It is a phobia, not a political analysis. It is an obsession, not a principled struggle.

This much is clear from their role in the Yuri Butchenko affair. Their statement on Yuri Butchenko took a step back from CSWEB's original position on solidarity. Their statement declares:

"We will continue to work for practical solidarity with the emerging labour movements of Eastern Europe—irrespective of their political ideas and affiliations."

On this basis it would be permissible to build solidarity with organisations affiliated to all sorts of scab outfits and worse. This reveals that SO's hatred of Stalinism is so fierce they are blinded to the crimes of many other would-be leaders of the workers' movement. In particular they cannot see the dangers inherent in many of the "democratic" oppositions to Stalinism.

Motto

"My enemy's enemy is my friend" is SO's motto. In Poland they called for Solidarity to take complete power in 1989. Solidarity is committed to an vicious austerity package and the introduction of capitalism. No matter, it is against Stalinism. In Romania they automatically sided with the forces ranged against the government and attacked the miners. No matter that those forces were being led by monarchists and fascists. They were against Stalinism.

This whole approach, which abandons class politics altogether, stems from SO's view of the degenerated workers' states. And it was this that caused them to excuse Yuri Butchenko.

Within SO there are at least three different positions on the nature of these states. But they all agree that the "label" given to these states, be it workers' state, state capitalist or a new form of bureaucratic collectivist state, is not important for the development of a programme for the workers.

They share a belief that Stalinism creates one of the most reactionary forms of states possible in which "workers' liberty" is denied. Any kind of democracy is seen as an advantage, even if its achievement leads to the restoration of capitalism across Eastern Europe.

Against this view we recognise that the abolition of capitalism and the bourgeoisie in these states are gains to be defended. We do not want to put the clock back.

We want to go forward by destroying the parasitic bureaucracy and by preventing the restoration of capitalism. Only the Trotskyist programme of political revolution outlines a means of doing this. Only the Trotskyist programme poses the need to advance towards socialism.

The reintroduction of private property, of a bourgeoisie, of the direct control of the economy by the imperialists—all of these things will set such a struggle back immensely. And they won't produce liberal democracies. SO's failure to understand this, their purblind anti-Stalinism leads them to abstain when it comes to taking sides in the struggle of competing class forces within the new workers' movements.

In relation to the tour of Yuri Butchenko, SO were principled in agreeing to end the tour when CSWEB was asked to collaborate with the NTS. But their Stalinophobia got the better of them and led them to apologise for Butchenko and place the blame for the betrayal on Scargill and other Stalinist trade unionists who have refused to support opposition movements in the Stalinist states and have sided with the state unions against the new workers' unions.

Fascist

Of course we too condemn Scargill and others for their complicity with the Stalinist rulers, in particular their complicity with the anti-working class practices of the state unions. But Scargill, like the Stalinist leaders in the USSR, will not be defeated by socialists taking sides with openly bourgeois forces. Neither will Stalinism be defeated if socialists refuse to take sides over the issue of capitalist restoration.

SO have long since severed their connection with Trotskyism and and with it they have ditched the revolutionary programme. Their line over the Butchenko affair has revealed the practical results of their degeneration. At a time when the issue of the apparent collaboration of Soviet workers with the UDM is a key issue being discussed in the NUM, SO take a line of apologising for Butchenko and understanding the links with the NUM, yet SO's resident miner, writing in his weekly column, argues that "Yuri Butchenko . . . is, as near as we can get to it, a bloody Russian fascist".

A long way from the SO official line which saw Butchenko as a confused worker who was "used" by Lynk to attack Scargill!■

World Cup racism

Dear Workers Power,

Your article on the World Cup in the last issue was right to criticise the role of big business in football. But there are other aspects of the relationship between capitalism and football that you failed to mention.

The World Cup was an excuse for the media to have a reactionary carnival of racism and national chauvinism. The *Daily Mail* described the Cameroon team as "Kings of the World Cup jungle". Jimmy Greaves, writing in the *Sun*, asked whether John Barnes' poor form was because "he is a Jamaican rather than English" and added:

"Maybe he cannot get the same passion for playing for England as some of his team mates."

The television commentators were just as bad, making jokes about Cameroon fans beating their jungle drums, the Latin Americans "reverting to type" every time there was a foul by Argentina and referring to the South Korean players as though they were little children.

No similar "jokes" were made about the players from the imperialist countries.

The point about this sort of racism and chauvinism is that it shows the bosses don't only use the game for profit. They use it to strengthen a false sense of national identity, and this is a means of promoting racism and reactionary nationalism, amongst working class supporters of the game.

There was no shortage of sexism either. Every day one paper or another carried a reference to "World Cup widows" and when women were shown at the game it was usually accompanied by a comment about their looks or figures. How many shots of male fans had the commentators talking about their flowing hair and shapely bodies?!

I realise that your article was written early on in the competition, but I feel it should have commented on these aspects of Italia '90 as well as on the plans of big business.

One final point. In the past you have argued that the only way to make football really a "people's game", to rid it of racists and fascists, to stop the fans being treated like dirt and to improve safety in the stadiums, was to organise a conscious working class intervention into the sport. The fight for workers' control in the game, for the nationalisation of sporting facilities, for democratic organisations of the fans who pay to watch the game and for workers' defence squads, not the police, to deal with the racists and fascists are all a Trotskyist answer to the much talked about "crisis of football". These arguments need to be restated given the way the World Cup is developing, otherwise the chances of making football a genuine "people's game" will never materialise.

Yours fraternally
Diego Mocar

Paul Foot . . . again

Dear Workers Power,

I'm a member of the SWP but I regularly buy your paper. I accept that we have political differences and I will frequently disagree with some of your articles, but, I'm getting tired of the silly and sectarian attacks on Paul Foot, the latest being the letter from Arthur Merton (WP131).

Merton claims that for Paul Foot to attack Maxwell through the columns of the *Mirror* would be akin to any militant distributing leaflets at work. This is nonsense. The point of distributing leaflets at work is to convince your fellow workers. Your defence against victimisation is the extent to which you succeed in this aim.

Most of the time it is necessary for the leaflet writers to preserve their anonymity. Good militants do not "deliberately seek the sack" as Merton seems to think they should. Instead they seek to organise their fellow workers. It is therefore quite right for Foot to conduct his battles with his boss through his NUJ Chapel rather than his newspaper columns.

I shall ignore Merton's innuendos about "Hampstead lifestyle" as anyone who knows Paul Foot and his level of commitment will treat those comments with the contempt they deserve.

More substantial is Merton's assertion that Foot should not work for Maxwell out of principle. Presumably, therefore, no socialist journalist should work in the mainstream press for none of it is "pure". Indeed, would Merton approve of any socialist selling their labour power to a capitalist?

Through his columns Paul Foot gets socialist ideas across to millions of workers who don't buy socialist newspapers. He is not responsible for anything else that appears in the *Mirror*, nor is he responsible for the actions of his boss. His weekly articles are excellent anti-Tory and anti-capitalist propaganda, of enormous benefit to all socialists.

For Merton to "demand" his resignation is crass ultra-leftism of the most infantile kind.

Fraternally,
Mort Mascarcuhas
West London

We Reply:

The reason we are printing this letter is because the Daily Mirror's witch-hunt against Scargill has reached a new and dangerous phase. It is time to take sides.

Paul Foot is a member of the SWP. He writes a regular column for Socialist Worker. Why hasn't he spoken out in that against the witch-hunt? The comrade doesn't answer this. He dodges the question.

Workers Power has nowhere "demanded" Foot "deliberately seek the sack". That quote, came from someone defending Foot in a previous letter.

What we do demand is that he denounce the witch-hunt against Scargill in his Mirror column. If, as the comrade says, that column is to be "of enormous benefit to all socialists", how about using it now to defend Scargill. To be sacked for exercising the "freedom of the press", that Maxwell hypocritically claims to defend, would be a marvelous lesson in the reality of capitalism to the millions who do read Foot's column. Again the comrade doesn't answer this point.

Finally, to say Foot is not "responsible for anything else that appears in the Mirror" is disingenuous. One of the points we made in our original article is that at public meetings he is described as a "Daily Mirror journalist". It seems the SWP is quite happy for Foot to be touted in these terms most of the time. But now, when the Mirror is leading the attack on Scargill, Foot is suddenly to be distanced from this grand title.

Yet there's no getting away from the fact that Foot is a public figure associated with the Mirror. And when, on Radio Four's Any Questions, he excused the Mirror's role in the witch-hunt by suggesting it was doing no more or less than the rest of the bourgeois press he showed the distasteful reality of his "dilemma".

The Mirror isn't the same as the rest of the press. It claims to be a Labour paper and it is is the instigator and continuator of the witch-hunt.

We repeat, Foot should speak out. Not to do so is unprincipled.

This correspondence is now closed.

Israel and Zionism

Dear Comrades,

Your centre spread on the Holocaust was both informative and useful. However, the key arguments that have to be raised today to win Jews away from Zionism must take on a contemporary and concrete form.

Israel cannot be a refuge from anti-Semitism. Economically it could never take the strain of a mass exodus of Jews from other countries. Already there are chronic shortages of jobs, homes and social services. Comparisons with the 1950s need to be smashed on the head. The world economy is not booming as it did then and capitalism is now more developed in Israel, making it much more brittle.

Further, the presence of Israel as a sanctuary obstructs the fight against fascism. Fear of fascism serves to justify the survival of the Israeli state. But that state has no interest in uncovering the real cause of fascism and war—imerialism—because its own survival depends on it.

The Jewish lobby cannot indefinitely orientate American and European imperialism in favour of Israel. The demise of the "Soviet threat", the greater penetration of Japanese capital into the Arab world, the growing economic power of certain Arab nations, e.g. Saudi Arabia and the growing dependence of the USA on Arabian oil all mean that there are definite threats on the horizon to the unqualified support the USA has given Israel. Israel as a refuge and solution to anti-Semitism diminishes in inverse proportion to the growth of anti-Semitism itself.

Yours fraternally,
H Cohen

Eastern Europe

The LRCI is actively intervening in the crisis within Eastern Europe and the USSR. The job of building revolutionary parties in these countries is a costly affair. We need money for it urgently. Thanks this month to a Sheffield comrade who donated £1,000 and to South London comrades who gave us £382. The size of these donations shows the truly internationalist spirit of our comrades. We ask all our readers to emulate it and send in money, clearly indicating that it is for our Eastern Europe/USSR fund. Cheques/POs should be made payable to Workers Power.

FIGHTING FUND

A magnificent £1,015 came in this month taking our fighting fund total up to £20,353. The importance of this cash was revealed to us this month in a dramatic way when our printers went bust. Suddenly we are faced with the prospect of massively increased printing bills. The fund will help us cope with this. But we need more to ensure that we can not only keep going but also renew and restore the equipment and machinery that we use to produce the paper. Thanks this month to readers and supporters in South London (£580), North London (£100), Sheffield (£300) and Nottingham (£35).

Central London Public Meeting

LEON TROTSKY: MAN AND FIGHTER

A commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of his death

7·30, Monday 20 August
Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq
nr Holborn Tube

workers power

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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 and the LPYS, in order to win workers within those organisations away from reformism and to the revolutionary party.

The misnamed Communist Parties are really Stalinist parties—reformist, like the Labour Party, but tied to the bureaucracy that rules in the USSR. Their strategy of alliances with the bourgeoisie (popular fronts) inflicts terrible defeats on the working class world-wide.

In the USSR and the other degenerate workers' states, Stalinist bureaucracies rule over the working class. Capitalism has ceased to exist but the workers do not hold political power. To open the road to socialism, a political revolution to smash bureaucratic tyranny is needed. Nevertheless we unconditionally defend these states against the attacks of imperialism and against internal capitalist restoration in order to defend the post-capitalist property relations.

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 and councils of action.

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 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 (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!

workers power

British section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International

INSIDE

- Poland: where is Solidarnosc going?
- Nato and the summits
- Community care crisis



DEFEND ARTHUR SCARGILL!

DOWN WITH THE WITCH HUNT

IN MARCH of this year, newspaper magnate Robert Maxwell, owner of the *Daily Mirror* and Pergamon Press, began a campaign to discredit Arthur Scargill, President of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

In this he was aided by Central Television's *The Cook Report* and right-wing officials in the NUM itself. *Fact:* Maxwell has a 20% stake in Central Television!

The basis of the smear campaign was that the NUM received money from the Soviet Union and Libya during the 1984-5 Great Strike and that Arthur Scargill, Peter Heathfield and others used Libyan cash to pay off their own debts.

To address these slanders, the NUM sets up an internal inquiry, chaired by Gavin Lightman, QC. Lightman's report cleared Scargill and Heathfield of the charges levelled against them. Even NUM sequestrators Price Waterhouse could find no trace of Libyan funds having been received by the NUM.

Smear

Yet immediately after the Lightman report was made public, the *Daily Mirror* claimed that it proved "most of our sensational disclosures". As soon as one smear was refuted, Maxwell came up with another! Recruiting the scab Union of Democratic Mineworkers (UDM) to its cause, the *Mirror* carried interviews with two purported Soviet miners' leaders who were guests at the strikebreaking UDM's annual conference. These miners called for an inquiry into what happened to £3.6 million donated to the NUM during the Great Strike.

The UDM meanwhile organised a press conference with Yuri Butchenko of the Kuzbass Union of Workers. Butchenko called for the return of £10 million which he said Russian miners donated to the NUM during the miners' strike.

The TUC Finance and General Purposes Committee has recommended a thorough scrutiny of all the documents surrounding the allegations against Scargill and Heathfield.

Finally, yielding to the press hysteria, the NUM executive unanimously decided to sue Scargill, Heathfield and Alain Simon, General Secretary of the International Miners Organisation (IMO) which is supposed to have £1.4 million of Russian miners' money donated to support the British miners in 1984-85.

In late July Scargill was prevented from flying to Paris on a ticket made out in the name of his secretary. Flying on an airline ticket in someone else's name is neither illegal nor unusual amongst jet-setting businessmen. You can hardly turn a page of the *Mirror* these days without reading about some superstar or politician travelling *incognito*! Scargill, clearly under state surveillance, was once again harrassed simply for being himself.

So what lies behind this amazing witch-hunt? A glance at some of the personalities involved gives the game away. South Wales NUM leaders like Des Dutfield and Labour MP Kim Howells have demanded the fraud squad investigate the finances of the NUM.

Howells' main claim to fame in 1984-85 came at the end of the strike when he led a campaign for a return to work without a settlement, treacherously undercutting the NUM leaders' attempt to negotiate. This left management free to victimise militants.

Dutfield, elected as a left, rapidly went over to the right. He runs the South Wales NUM like a feudal baron. He sees Scargill's leadership of the NUM as a barrier to a merger with the Transport and General Workers Union. Such a merger would strengthen the power and privileges that men like Dutfield enjoy.

"Socialist" millionaire Robert Maxwell pretends to be a friend of the "ordinary worker". But workers will remember him as the man who has slashed 40,523 jobs in the printing industry since 1981, and who declared in a *Guardian* interview in March:

"I take delight and some pride in having got rid of the militants out of the labour movement."

None of the personal allegations against Scargill have stood up for five minutes. The Lightman report does, however, highlight some technical breaches of the law during the strike and this is what Howells, Dutfield and now the entire NUM executive have latched onto.

This is not just a personal vendetta against Scargill and Heathfield. The executive know all too well that the state effecively tried to outlaw the NUM because it had dared to fight. Scargill, Heathfield and many other local, district and national officials had to bend and break the law to keep money flowing into the strike funds. They were right to do so.

"Our crime was that we sought to defeat sequestration and receivership and I apologise to no one for that"

Clearly now, to avoid the spite and vengeance of the Tory judges, they cannot and should not give these arch enemies of the working class an ounce of information as to how they did it and where the money came from. Miners and working class militants world wide should be totally indifferent as to where the money came from (with the single exception of money from fascist organisations) providing there were no strings attached which harmed the cause of the working class.

With regard to the Russian miners, of course *they* have the right to ask *their* state run pseudo-unions for an accounting of what they did with the funds collected. But they should be clear about one thing. If that money had been transferred directly to the NUM's bank accounts it would have been seized by the courts and an almightly witch-hunt launched about "Moscow gold" being behind the whole strike.

Durham miners showed what they think of the witch-hunt by giving Arthur Scargill a standing ovation at their annual gala. We must turn that support into action, as militants in Yorkshire have started to do.

Within the NUM, and every union, all branches, stewards' committees and trades councils should pass resolutions defending Scargill and condemning the statements made by Norman Willis, David Blunkett and NUM leaders like Dutfield and George Bolton. Workplace meetings should be organised to campaign in Scargill's defence.

Arthur Scargill is being witch-hunted because he refused to bow down before the Tories' anti-union laws with the rest of the trade union bureaucracy. As he put it at the Durham gala:

"Our crime was that we sought to defeat sequestration and receivership and I apologise to no one for that".

The campaign against Arthur Scargill is an outright assault on the tradition of struggle he represents. The Tories and their career bureaucrat mouthpieces in the Labour Party and TUC want to discredit the legacy of the miners' strike and push workers along the road of class collaboration charted by the "New Realist" leaders of the labour movement since the miners' defeat.

Condemning

Neil Kinnock and Norman Willis spent most of the miners' strike condemning miners who fought back against state violence as "picket line thugs". Now they want to pretend they have the miners' interests at heart.

The miners' strike did more to hold back the Tories than any of the grand speeches of Parliamentary windbags like Kinnock and Hattersley. By defending Arthur Scargill against the bosses and their agents we are defending the class struggle militancy that the great strike embodied.

- **Down with the witch-hunt!**
- **Defend Arthur Scargill!**