

SOCIALIST

APPEAL

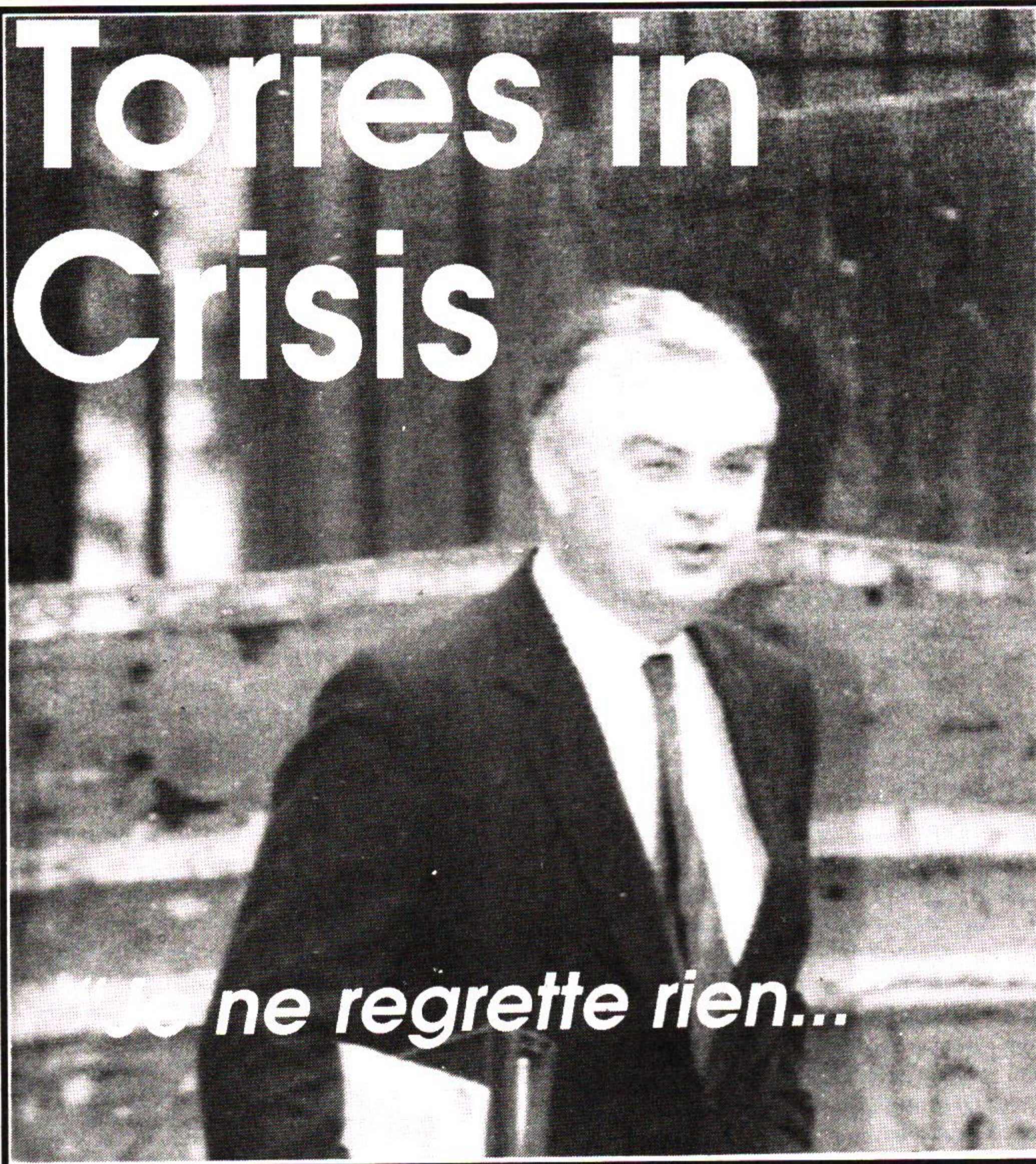
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The Marxist voice of the labour movement

Issue No.13 - June 1993

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Tories in Crisis



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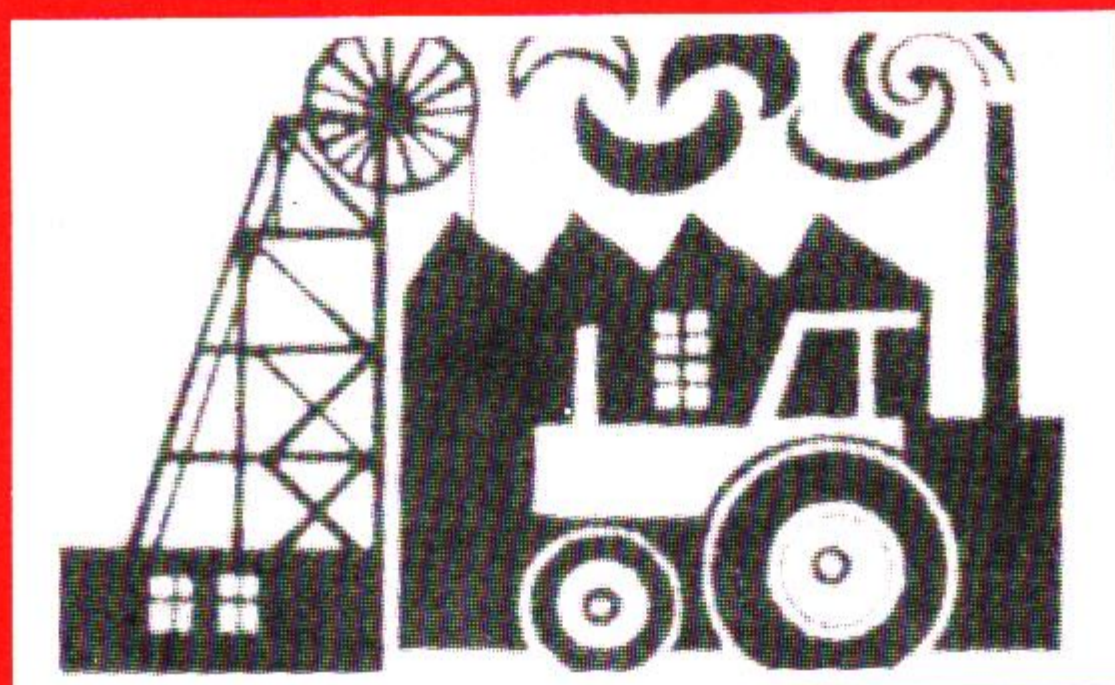
Prospects for Peace in Bosnia

Pakistan: *The Crisis in the Sindh*

Trade Unions

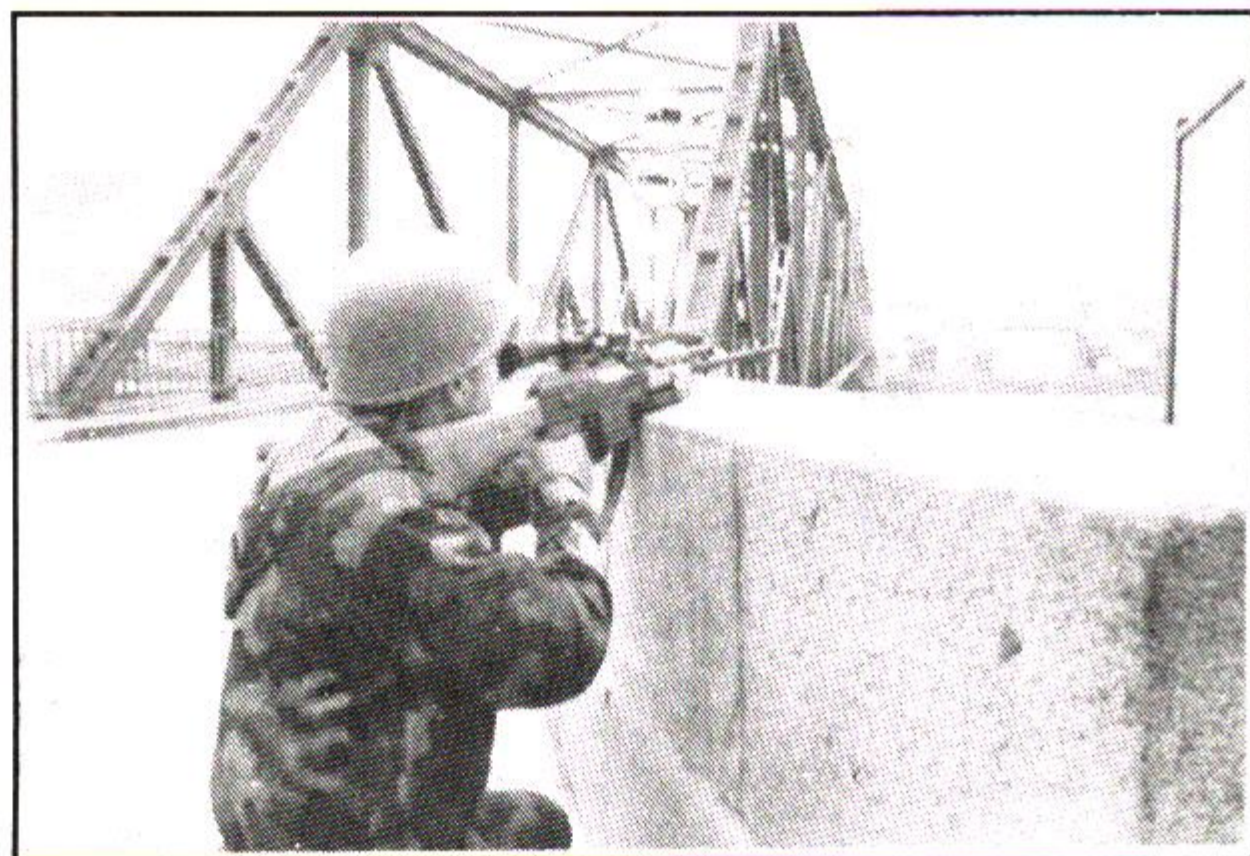
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World Economy: Recovery or Recession?

Capitalist Road to "Peace" Leads Nowhere



All hail the new peace plan! That was the cry when the latest so-called solution to the crisis in former Yugoslavia, proposed by US, Russia, Britain, France and Spain was announced. The plan was supposed to have been agreed by all sides.

And yet civil war continues to rage in Bosnia. Since the "new" plan was announced Serbian President Milosevic has refused UN monitors access to border areas with Bosnia, Turkey, one of the original sponsors has dubbed the plan a "waste of time", the UN has admitted there are not enough troops available to enforce the plan and fighting still rages between all sides with renewed shelling by Croats in Travnik and Jablanica. The Serbs holding Krajina in Croatia have pulled out of peace talks with the Croat government and 51 Islamic states have condemned the plan. **Hardly a recipe for peace!**

The plan, to create "safe havens", like the other plans before it is doomed to failure. As Islamic critics of the plan stated, it "appeared to accept the status quo imposed by the use of force and ethnic cleansing." In reality, it hands large areas conquered by the Croats and Serbs over to them as victors and leaves the muslims "at the mercy of all."

And yet just one month ago the Western imperialist leaders, especially US President Bill Clinton, seemed to be rushing headlong towards military intervention. The media was full of propaganda laying full blame for the situation at the door of the Serbs. Thatcher and others were calling for ending the arms embargo to the Bosnian Muslims. The labour leaders trying to outflank Major rattled their sabres louder and longer than the Tories. Now, however, there is a different picture. The new United Nations resolution introducing tougher sanctions on the Serbs was a last ditch hope that the Serbs could be forced to accept the Owen/Vance plan. Despite the fact that Milosevic and the Serbian government in Belgrade have now called on the Bosnian Serbs to accept and threatened to cut off supplies, the Bosnian

Serbs rejected the Owen/Vance plan in their recent referendum, 96% voted against. This should have been Clinton's cue for intervention but it now seems the West has embarked on a new "diplomatic" effort to reach some sort of "agreement". David Owen has been busy shuttling around Europe trying to broker some

sort of "peace". Clinton has been forced to back down, reflecting the pressures from US domestic opinion that intervention would be long and costly.

The New York Times, formerly a virulent advocate of military intervention, has now advised Clinton to pursue "the still shaky political and diplomatic fronts." Larry Eagleburger, former US Secretary of State, confessed, "I don't think we are in a position at this stage to be very clear about what we should do next." This reflects the quagmire in which US, and all Western policy in Bosnia, has ended up. Hugo Young, writing in the *Guardian* (18.5.93) puts it clearly: "The chimera of Vance/Owen, with its now impossible boundary requirements, must continue to be kept alive. But behind it all we see America and Europe seeking, above everything, to stay together, unembarrassed by the fact that they can do so only on the basis of an agreement not to act. Such an agreement doubtless reflects public as well as political opinion. Welcome to the new world order.."

Labour Leaders

The position of the labour leaders is now exposed in all its bankruptcy. For the present, they are the only ones still contemplating air strikes or even full scale military intervention. **The imperialists have thought long and hard and come to the conclusion that this would be no rerun of the Gulf War. Intervention would embroil thousands of Western troops in a long war of attrition more akin to Vietnam. This is why they have pulled back from the brink.**

The impasse in which the Western powers find themselves is a reflection of the fact that there is no solution to the Bosnian "problem" on the basis of capitalism. They have stepped back from military intervention for present, fearful of the consequences. As *Socialist Appeal* said last September (SA 5), "They are afraid of serious open military intervention... In World War Two, fifty seven German divisions, more than half a million men, with the repressive methods of the Nazis failed to subdue Yugoslavia." However, the Owen/Vance plan or the safe

havens plan are no more a solution either. If implemented it would lead to a new wave of war, killings and "ethnic cleansing". The Croats were first to sign up for the plan because it rewards them with all their military conquests during the civil war and more. Before the civil war 64% of land in Bosnia was registered to Serbs. The plan gives them only 44%, with little in the way of industry, mineral resources or energy facilities. 500,000 Serbs live in areas deemed by Owen as "non-Serb." This is a recipe for the continuation of the nightmare that exists.

While the Owen/Vance plan punishes the Bosnian Serbs, a new "initiative" from former Soviet President, Mikhail Gorbachev and former US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, merely recognises the reality of the situation on the ground and serves it up as a "peace proposal." This plan has the backing of the Bosnian Serbs. Their leader, Radovan Karadzic, stated, "Vance/Owen is dead and gone. Kissinger is right. Create three states. That is the reality."

Western Climbdown

But acceptance of anything other than the Owen/Vance plan would need a huge climbdown by the Western powers, plus it could well fire the wrath of the Croats and Muslims who have the most to gain from the plan. Despite the embargo, the Croats have spent \$1.2 billion on arms over the last 12 months compared to \$400 million spent by the Bosnian Serbs. If the Serbian government in Belgrade carries out its threatened embargo on arms to the Bosnian Serbs, the Croats could rapidly emerge as the dominant military force in Bosnia. **This would mean a "peace" negotiated round the status quo would soon break down in a new wave of civil war.**

It is clear there is no solution down any of the capitalist roads. Under capitalism the Balkans, just as in the past, can only look forward to national turmoil, civil war and poverty. Under Tito's Stalinist regime there was a brief respite, for the first time the different peoples lived side by side. But it was the collapse of that system, the resurgence of national tensions and the cynical policy of imperialism in attempting to break up Yugoslavia into a series of client states, mainly the EC's recognition, at the behest of Germany, of Bosnian "independence", which led directly to the start of the civil war.

As we stated last September, "there is no solution outside the working class taking control of its own destiny.. the only way out is a democratic Socialist federation of the Balkans leading to a Socialist federation of Eastern and Western Europe." Subsequent events have shown this to be 100% correct.

Contents

- Labour Movement Focus...4
- Fighting the Racists....6
- Tests Boycott...7
- Nalgo/TSSA...8
- CPSA...9
- NCU/Timex...10
- Miners..12
- Major Disaster...14
- Bosnia/Italy..16
- Film Review....18
- World Economic Prospects...20
- History of the Trade Unions (Part 4) ...24
- Crisis in Sindh...27

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Defend Swan Hunters!

A recent report given by Steve Byers, Labour MP for Wallsend, indicates that the Tories are seeking bids from other shipyards for the completion of the three frigates currently being outfitted at Swan Hunters.

This is a sign that the Tories may be planning to try and sabotage the fight to keep the yard open. The response of the shipbuilding combine, made up of senior convenors from British yards is that workers

would refuse to accept the ships if they were removed from the Tyne.

This indicates that the stakes in the fight to keep Swans open and stop the decimation of the area could be raised quickly and soon.

Already the combine position would place it in conflict with the Tories' anti-trade union laws. A campaign must be waged within the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU) and the TUC to ensure backing from the union leaderships.

Additionally, preparations must be made to ensure the ships are not sailed to other European countries. This must involve a campaign among European shipbuilding workers.

But how can workers prevent the ships being taken away? One thing is certain, strike action alone at Swans would not guarantee preventing the ships' removal. To stand on the bankside, outside the gate would allow management to remove the ships at their leisure. If the threat is serious, and it would be wrong to underestimate the situation, plans must be drawn up to occupy the yard. Occupation of the yard and the ships themselves could be the only way to prevent them being moved. We don't approach such questions in a light-minded fashion - there may be no alternative.

An occupation would require the full and active support of the Tyneside labour movement, a refusal to work on jobs which might be demanded by the government to move the frigates, material aid and support for the occupation, marches, rallies and public meetings and so on.

The decision of the combine would need to be implemented immediately with sympathy strike action to back it up.

As explained earlier, the stakes could be raised, but, given the Tories extremely difficult position at present they are unlikely to seek an all-out confrontation with the CSEU. More likely they will blunder into such a confrontation.

The watchwords of the Swans unions and of the Tyneside labour movement must be vigilance and preparation.



Reports by Terry McPartlan

The crisis at Swan Hunters is a direct consequence of Tory privatisation mania.

Prior to 1986 Swan's was part of British Shipbuilders. When the yard was privatised, the Tories' stipulated it could only be a naval shipyard. This is despite the fact that only a third of ships produced by Swans since 1900 have been warships. This has had the effect of preventing the yard claiming subsidies from the European Intervention Fund to build merchant ships. **Scandalously the Tories have split up the industry and are forcing yards to compete against each other for orders. The Tories argue this means "healthy competition" but despite these pious words the Tories have undermined the position of Swan Hunter by refusing to compensate the company for extra work on the AOR2 ship which pushed the company into debt. The labour movement must launch an investigation into the Tories' role in undermining Swans over a period of years. Tory "competition" means wasteful duplication of expensive design work and has resulted in a tendency towards private monopoly in shipbuilding.**

Renationalisation of the shipbuilding industry, but this time under democratic workers' control and management, combined with a lifting of controls on the type of ship which each yard could produce, would enable a rational plan of production to be developed, which would eliminate the sort of crisis the Tories' have caused on Tyneside.

Strikers Need Support

The long-running dispute at E. Hillier and Sons is now entering its seventh month. One of the strikers, Brian Dawson spoke to Socialist Appeal.

We were sacked for taking in part in official industrial action in December 1992. 42 of us were sacked.

Before the dispute the company was making profits but then I believe they were probably beginning to lose money and so started attacking the workforce.

We decided to take industrial action after the company cut our wages and conditions. In some cases people's wages were cut by almost 40%. They tried a whole load of other things like scrapping the sick pay scheme, cutting our holidays, no extra money for "compulsory" overtime and so on.

The company refused to talk to the unions (AEEU and MSF)

about the changes and then derecognised the unions.

We have lodged industrial tribunal claims against the company but are continuing to picket while we wait to hear the result. We have spoken at lots of meetings around the area and tens of thousands of pounds has come in from around the country. But we still need more if we are to be successful.

• Donations, made payable to Hilliers Shop Stewards Committee Strike Fund should be sent to Lynn Collick, (Strike Committee Treasurer) 8 Launceston Avenue, Caversham Park, Reading, Berks, RG4 0SW

Requests for speakers, information etc.. contact Ray Dillon (AEEU) on 0753 554100 or Dave Stoddart (MSF) on 0923 249044.

Keep the Links

MSF Conference voted overwhelmingly for maintaining links with the Labour Party. The resolution specifically commits the NEC to campaign "to maintain participation of trade unions in the election of the party leadership and NEC" and "representation of the local trade union branches...at every stage in the selection of parliamentary candidates by CLPs." and defends the union block vote and opposes any attempt to remove Clause Four..

The adoption of this resolution was backed up by an emergency resolution making the policy binding on MSF delegates to the Labour Party and other bodies. The MSF with nearly 600,000 members has dealt yet another serious blow to attempts to introduce One Member One Vote, which would disenfranchise the unions. There was another victory for the left in the Maastricht debate. The resolution which was carried overwhelmingly states "the principles enshrined in the Treaty are against the interests of working people and should be opposed." The conference instructed the NEC to campaign against measures restricting government borrowing and pass economic power to an unaccountable central European bank. Roger Lyons, right wing General Secretary revealed during conference, single union agreements the union had signed, which even NEC members were unaware of, let alone the members. A resolution condemning "sweetheart deals with employers" was passed and an amendment saying all agreements should be available to the membership was passed against the NEC's wishes.

The NEC elections held prior to conference resulted in a more right wing NEC on a 12% turn-out. However, the left candidate for Vice President, John MacIntyre won at the conference. Unfortunately, the left did not stand a candidate for President. Unity Left, the only significant left grouping, could achieve far more if it became an open, democratic, campaigning broad left. Secret deals with the right wing to share positions at conference achieve nothing except help the careers of individuals. Open campaigning is needed in the branches, workplaces and regions to defeat the right wing in future elections.

Julian Gollop, Harlow MSF and conference delegate

**Socialist Appeal Tolpuddle
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Alan Woods
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FBU Conference

Defending the Pay Formula

Firefighters are on a collision course with the government after rejecting unanimously attempts to do away with their pay formula.

Delegates at the conference voted unanimously recommend a yes vote for strike action in a ballot to be held in July to loud cheers and applause from the packed gallery.

The firefighters challenge represents an enormous opportunity to smash the Tories' 1.5% pay ceiling.

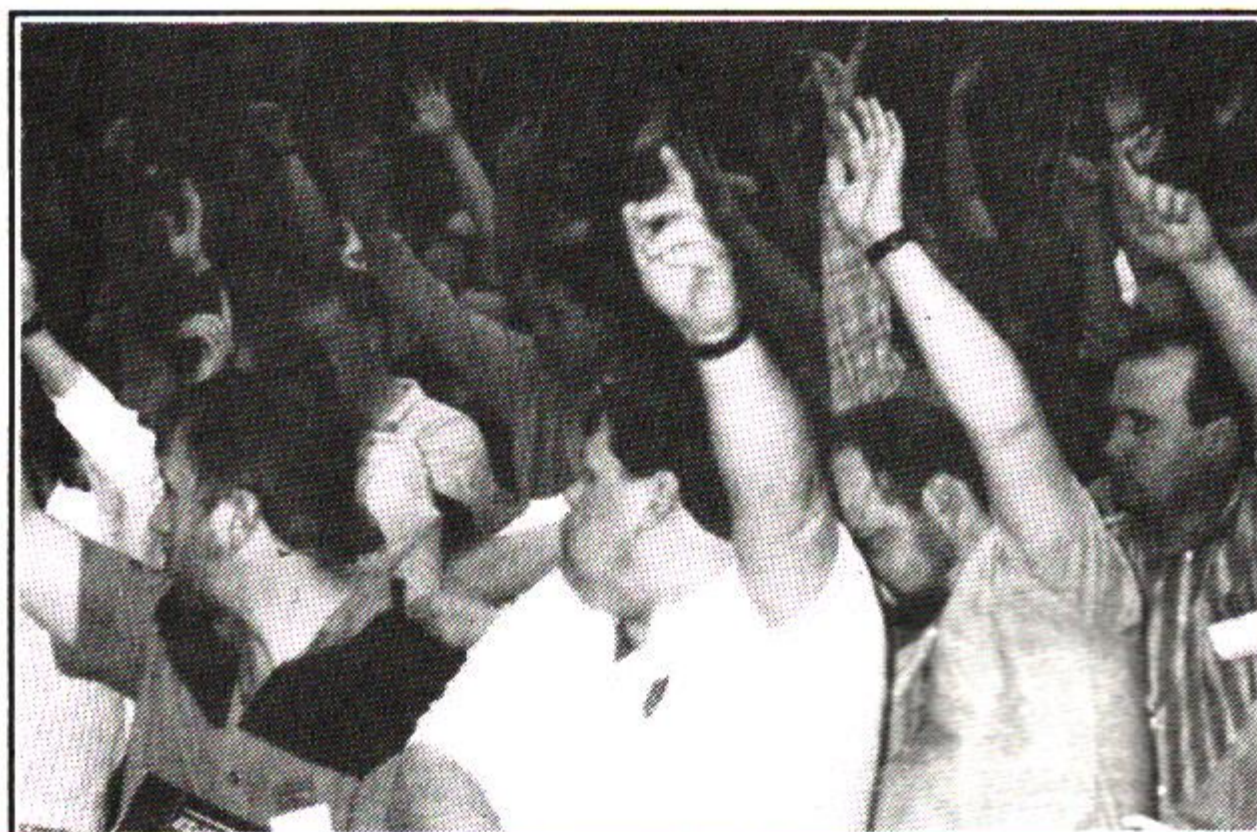
The conference also voted unanimously to ballot for strike action if one firefighter was made redundant.

General Secretary Ken Cameron told delegates that "if the government were to take on the firemen they would finish up with a worse bloody nose than at Newbury or in the local elections."

Even the Independent expressed surprise that some of the "moderate" branches had voted for action. But as Ken Cameron said: "It is not about picking a fight. It is about a decent living wage for people who do a dirty and dangerous job."

Strikes by the FBU would represent the most significant challenge to the Tories in recent years. If coupled with action by other public sector workers the Tories' pay restraint plans would be shattered.

In contrast to the debate on pay, the speech by Labour leader John Smith advocating One Member One Vote (OMOV) was received in polite silence. The message from the FBU was clear if John Smith really listens to ordinary members he should scrap plans for OMOV, breaking the links with the unions and ditching Clause Four.



Southampton Container Ports

Marching for our jobs ...Literally!

Southampton Container Ports have announced a new wave of redundancies and changes in working conditions. Steve Fricker spoke to workers at the port.

Shurely Shome Mishtake

"Sean Connery... I'll gie'ye Sean Connery."
(Rab C. Nesbitt).

The bold 007 has been at it again. Hot on the heels of Connery's endorsement of the SNP in last years general election and voiceover for one of the nationalists TV broadcasts...you guessed it, he's at it again.

From the comfort of his Marbella home he has endorsed the small right wing populist party GIL in the upcoming Spanish general election and provided a voiceover for one of their TV broadcasts.

GIL is rather modestly named after its founder and number one member Jesus Gil, Mayor of Marbella.

Jesus (no relation) is the demagogic, millionaire owner of Atletico Madrid, property tycoon and rabidly anti union, he was elected Mayor on an anti-drug, anti-prostitution, anti-crime, anti-"low spending tourist" ticket, promising to preserve the town for the rich and opulent.

Gil, heralded by some as the Spanish Le Pen, previously spent two years in prison after being found guilty of criminal negligence when one of his buildings fell down, killing 58 people!

We hope Sean's relationship with Gil will be as long and fruitful as his one with the SNP.

Now, over to Marbella South....

Following a mass meeting Southampton dockers from the city's container port marched to the offices of the recruiting agency Drake International - to apply for their own jobs!

The current plight of the dockers began several months ago when Associated British Ports (ABP) management at Southampton Container Port announced the throughput of container units would be increased from 1100 to 1350 per day. Accompanying this information was a letter detailing new working arrangements which was originally resisted by the dockers (the TGWU advised against signing originally) but later accepted, and word got out that ABP would be offering up to £40,000 redundancy.

Recruitment

Surprisingly, just a few months before this ABP had recruited 18 workers to train as dockers. This was to be the first of three groups and these were the first workers taken on full time in the docks since the early 1970s. This has now been stopped.

Only about 270 dockers remain in the container port, all of whom have resisted previous redundancy offers and to date ABP has achieved less than 30 volunteers - it requires another 97, threatening compulsion.

This would leave a fully trained workforce of just 150 dockers - casual workers would have to do most of the dockers' work.

Trained dockers would also be expected to take the skilled work currently done by riggers who would also be made redundant. Since the Dock Labour Scheme was abolished many untrained and casual workers have been em-

ployed in the rest of Southampton docks - safety standards have declined and accident levels increased amid allegations that ABP are hushing up many of the details.

Dockers marched on Drake International (who had been forewarned, the office was empty and phones left off the hook) because they have recruited staff to take the dockers' jobs.

ABP are then training them at Tilbury, where men "with country accents" have been heard in a sectioned off area of the port. **These scabs are paid a £175-a-week retainer and it seems they've also signed an undertaking that they are prepared to cross picket lines.**

It's clear that should a strike take place against the redundancies (walk-outs and mass meetings have already taken place) ABP are prepared, ready to try and bus in scabs and threaten workers with losing their £40,000 redundancy.

In addition, with spare capacity in other ABP owned ports and with a widespread belief the union leaders will fail to organise effective solidarity action now that the Dock Labour Scheme has been abolished, ABP could probably ride out a strike in Southampton.

Concessions

Southampton dockers have done everything asked of them in the last few years and still the employers continued to attack their working conditions. **This shows no amount of conciliation will appease employers hell bent on profiteering for shareholders' benefits.**

Despite expensive development of Southampton docks, profits in excess of £4 million were achieved, but for the bosses this is not enough, so the workers are made to pay with their jobs.

It is essential links are built between Southampton docks and other docks to protect all dockers' jobs. The fight to save these jobs and protect working conditions has only just begun. If private owners cannot guarantee jobs Labour and the unions should demand the ports are brought into public ownership to end the sick profiteering of ABP and other port owners.

Deadline...Deadline...Deadline...Deadline

The deadline for articles for the July issue of Socialist Appeal is June 28th.

If you've got a story for Socialist Appeal call our news desk on 021-455-9112

Racist Murders Demand



Labour Movement Response

On Saturday 8th May a riot broke out in Welling - a suburb of South East London. For over four years the fascist BNP has had its headquarters in Welling. During this time racist attacks have increased 140% in the area. There have been four racist murders in surrounding boroughs, five fire-bomb attacks on local mosques and numerous violent assaults.

Capitalism has always used racism to divide and set worker against worker. The Tories themselves have whipped up racist moods when it suited them. It is no surprise that the Tory controlled London Borough of Bexley has allowed the BNP to establish its base in the area.

On Thursday 22 April, the latest racist murder took place. Stephen Lawrence, a black 18 year old student was waiting for a

bus when he was set upon and stabbed to death. A wave of anger swept through the area, especially amongst black workers. Even white workers, who hadn't previously been involved, were beginning to say enough is enough.

Events, however, have cut across this development. In the wake of Stephen's death, and in contrast to the dignified manner in which the Lawrence family and serious anti-racists had conducted themselves, certain sectarian fronts, notably the Youth Against Racism in Europe (YRE), fought like cat and dog to make capital out of Stephen's murder. The YRE unilaterally decided to switch its planned march through Central London to Welling. Likewise, the Anti Nazi League, another front organisation, organised without consultation a march

through Welling on the week following. As neither group was prepared to back down, we were faced with two marches, neither of which had any genuine Labour and trade union backing.

The 8th May march attracted 3/4 thousand. In an extremely volatile situation many were amazed to hear the sectarian, black nationalist, separatist speeches before the march set off. With this kind of inflammatory rhetoric, the demonstration as it passed the BNP bookshop erupted into a riot. Despite the brave efforts by individual comrades, the stewards were totally unprepared for the situation, which went totally out of control. An orgy of violence resulted in windows of shops, houses, cars and a doctor's surgery being smashed in. Innocent people were hurt, some looting took place, the local Working's Mens Club was smashed up, a car was overturned, etc.

The result has been a tremendous backlash against the anti-fascist movement. The only gainers have been the BNP, who have recruited more members and sympathisers, and the Tories who can portray the fascists and anti-fascists as two gangs of political hooligans.

Genuine anti-fascist activists, who condemned this type of senseless violence, are tarred with the same brush, and the movement has now been put back on the defensive.

In the area, Socialist Appeal supporters have called for:

- 1) the unifying of all anti-fascist activity through the labour movement.
- 2) for a national labour movement demonstration against racism and fascism.
- 3) the closure of the BNP bookshop in Welling.
- 4) For a mass labour movement campaign to expose racism and fascism, and a socialist programme to deal with the underlying cause of racism, ie unemployment, low pay and bad housing.

Hampshire County Council has been under Tory control for over 100 years. On Thursday May 6th they lost overall control of the council. In the Coxford ward in Southampton, the new Labour councillor Keith Morrell is a supporter of the ideas and views of Socialist Appeal. Here he explains how the campaign increased Labour's vote.

Campaigning...and Winning!

Before the campaign began the activists in the ward decided on the structure of the campaign. The first step was to contact all ward members and ask them to support us. This included people leafletting, canvassing, sitting on polling stations and giving donations, whatever they were able to contribute to the campaign. The response from the membership was excellent with most prepared to help out in some way. For the first time we had approached the full ward membership to help prior to a campaign.

We organised two debates inviting all three candidates to expose the policies of the other candidates and promote socialist policies. Right from the start canvassing was well attended and the response from the doors encouraging. The *Coxford Call*, a newsletter written by ward activists drew special atten-

tion. The front page declared, "Tories vandalise schools," and there were articles on socialist policies, homelessness and youth.

Not only did we get vote pledges but recruited 11 new members to Labour and built good trade union links. The recently established LPYS recruited two new members during the campaign. On the last Saturday of the campaign we held a mass leaflet of the ward:

In the election we increased the Labour vote by 201 votes. The Tories lost 700 votes with most going to the Lib-Dems but we increased the majority.

The swing in Coxford was only matched by the two safest Labour wards in Southampton. Although the campaign is now over we are going back to the people who supported the socialist ideas we put forward to recruit them or get them active in the local labour movement.

By a Bexley anti-fascist

Victory in Sight

Brian Beckingham, Vice President and Equal Opportunities Officer, Oldham NUT

As the table of voting results shows, the teachers in England and Wales have made their feelings very clear: "This far and no further."

The moves to boycott the government imposed tests (SATs) has tremendous support. The first vote was back in February 1993 by NUT members who teach English in secondary schools, who voted to boycott the proposed test for 14 year olds (Key stage 3). At a series of regional consultative meetings on the pay issue just before Easter, NUT delegates told executive members they wanted action against all SATs alongside the NASUWT. At our North West region meeting we also voted in favour of a one day national protest strike on all the issues, including pay and SATs.

The NASUWT vote to boycott all testing at ages 7, 11 and 14 was on the basis of the horrendous workload imposed on teachers and set the tone with an 88% YES vote. Over Easter the teacher unions held their annual conferences. Amazingly the ATL, which is a very "moderate" union not even affiliated to the TUC, voted to ballot their members on a total boycott.

The NUT voted unanimously to do the same but had the added difficulty of a rule book which demanded the very difficult task of needing a 2/3 majority of those eligible to vote - this rule must be deleted in future as it is an obstacle to action not a democratic safeguard.

On Friday 23.4.93 the legal position was clarified. The High Court and then the Court of Appeal found against the Tory council in Wandsworth and for the NASUWT. The courts ruled that the NASUWT were engaged in a legitimate trade dispute.

After Easter, first the ATL voted YES with 82.7% in favour of the boycott and then on May 12 the NUT result was declared. A massive 96% voted YES on a 67% turnout. This result was rather higher than any Tory government has been elected on!

The boycott will be a success and very few schools, if any, will be able to implement these meaningless tests.

On Friday 7 May a courier service delivered the parcels of SATs to our school. The courier had difficulty finding anyone to sign for them and he dismally remarked that he had this trouble at every school!

The tests delivered remain unopened and will remain unused!

We can be confident of defeating the government because not only teachers but

parents, headteachers and governors have all indicated support on this issue.

The Education Minister, John Patten, like the remainder of the Tory MPs, is totally out of touch with the real world of ordinary people. They spend £750,000 on publicity to win parents over. They squander millions on the tests themselves whilst schools are starved of cash for books, staff, repairs etc. class sizes are rising and our real wages decline as the workload increases, this is the real world! Last year many Primary teachers were sinking under the weight of Key Stage 1 tests (7 year olds). NO MORE. The pension department report a record number of applications for breakdown pensions. We have had enough of this bureaucratic nightmare.

We have had enough of tests imposed by the government to enable the publishing of league tables which will be totally meaningless educationally. We have had enough of tests that will be used, along with other measures, to reimpose selective education. This will lead to poorer education for the

vast majority of children as happened when we had secondary modern schools for the 75% who failed the "eleven plus".

These SATs at 7, 11, 14 and 16 are not educationally sound and mean more and more paperwork and administration and overwork for teachers.

The votes for boycott have been brilliant and a clear indication of the mood of teachers.

The votes are not just about SATs but about all the other issues. A pay "award" of 0.55% which has meant a rise of a few pence a month for most teachers and was seen as an insult. The bullying threat to our right to strike as shown in a leaked letter from Gillian Shephard, the Employment Secretary, to John Patten: "The aim would be to make industrial action, such as that presently contemplated by the teachers unions, unlawful, even where it could be argued that the dispute came within the current definition of a trade dispute".

Where do we go from here? I believe we need to build on our success and:

- * build on our unity by immediate talks for merging the NUT and NASUWT and later even the ATL

- * campaign for a one day protest national strike for education resources, against SATs and for a decent pay rise

- * link struggles for education with other public sector workers.

Victory is here on SATs. Lets go for the rest now! For teachers and for education!

Cuts Threaten Special Education

With the media spotlight on the tests boycott other issues like pay and cuts have not received much attention recently however, this doesn't mean they are not worthy. I work in special education where the recent reorganisation of services amounted to nothing more than savage cutbacks in many authorities.

The services provided for children with special educational need has always been patchy. A few months ago I visited two authorities to assess provision for hearing impaired children - the picture that greeted me was depressing.

One of these authorities has been in the forefront of providing excellent integrated services, staffed by a high number of visiting teachers in the ordinary schools where those children were educated alongside their hearing schoolmates. The skill, dedication and efficiency of the staff was tremendous, the results excellent. The head of the service was a nationally renowned expert. So what does the county council do? Reorganise! Another way of saying cost-cutting.

The head of service and all but one of his senior team were forced to take early retirement. The service then merged with the visually impaired service, with managers in charge, most of whom no nothing about both fields - some nothing about either! 30 years work thrown away in a day!

I was assured that the field staff had not been

drastically cut. Even if true, how long can a service survive without committed, able leadership in a cost-cutting atmosphere?

many other authorities are suffering a similar fate. So far at least four authorities have not replaced a head of service for the hearing impaired after they have left "retired". Reorganisation has led to larger case loads and reduced services to children.

In the other authority I visited, a unit for hearing impaired pupils was facing closure or a move because the school they were at had opted-out. The government would only provide finance if every child had a Statement of Special Educational Need. Unfortunately the authority had only stated about 50%, so what is going to happen to them in the future is unknown.

This Tory government and many LEAs are playing with the lives and well-being of some of the most vulnerable in society. It is bad enough to be deaf, you do not need upheavals and traumas caused by putting money before people.

The magnificent action of the teachers' union in boycotting SATs will now have to be extended to other issues, like special education before irreparable damage is done to services built up over decades.

By an NUT member

Nalgo Conference

Union's Power Should be Put to Work for Members

Nalgo's last conference faces the same problems as previous conferences - massive attacks on public services.

This year we face not just the Tories reducing Council Tax Support Grants causing local authorities to make savage cuts in jobs and services and cutting expenditure on the NHS but also the imposition of the 1.5% pay limit.

This cynical attempt to make public sector workers pay for Lamont's mistakes leading to Black Wednesday should lead to widespread support for strike action by all public sector workers. The FBU is balloting its members for strike action, health service workers are also considering action over their pay claim. Never has the time been better for Nalgo members in local authorities to join these other workers to smash the government-imposed pay ceiling.

Pay Freeze

If the employers offer is accepted at group meetings then it will send a signal to the Tories to keep a pay freeze on next year too. The 1.5% represents less than £1 a week for the lowest paid Nalgo members. Contrast this to the £35,000 pay rise Eddie George, the new governor of the Bank of England will receive!

All the attacks that have taken place should have forced the TUC into action, but unfortunately apart from calling the massive miners' demonstration in October they have deflated the mood by calling days of action at such short notice and then blaming workers when only a few take part. The Nalgo proposal at the TUC Public Sector committee, calling for a day of action by all Public Sector trade unions was not even supported by our partners in Unison. The Labour Party document dealing with Compulsory Competitive Tendering appeared to endorse the Tories' plans for Enabling Authorities meeting once a year to hand out tenders for council services. Small wonder is it then that given this type of leadership, Labour authorities like Sheffield are putting forward the idea of pay cuts which are being accepted by Nalgo members. This is the second year in succession that Sheffield council workers have made sacrifices to balance the budget. This policy will be used by other authorities to hammer its own workforce. Manchester City Council attempted to use the Sheffield example.

These former left councils accepted the Dented Shield policy and now the chickens are coming home to roost.

These councils should link with other councils up and down the country and the local authority trade unions to present a united front against the Tories' attacks.

At this year's conference the issue of the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Bill will be an issue for debate. Nalgo Conference has a proud record of opposition to the Tories anti-union laws. Alan Jkinson made a radical speech at the TUC on the issue in defiance of the top table. Unfortunately this has not been translated into action. When Nalgo's NEC was threatened with court action by Liverpool and Newham councils they ordered a return to work rather than fight the Tories laws as instructed by conference.

Another item which will be a major debate will be the NEC document Nalgo into Unison. Conference will still wish to ensure that the sovereignty of conference, autonomy of branches and the right of groups to organise within Unison will be protected. The membership of Unison will number some 1.6 million, a powerful force within the trade union movement. If this is used in the best interests of the membership it could see a return to the political agenda for public services. The Unison leadership must ensure that the phrase widely used in the run-up to the ballot on merger of lay control is carried out in practice. Conference decisions democratically arrived at must not be put on one side because the leadership disagrees with them.

Real campaigning leadership is necessary to ensure that the attacks of the Tories will be resisted by a united membership. After the Newbury by-election and the County Council results the Tories are on the run. Now is the time to force Major out and for the election of a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

Shaun Moody, Beverley Nalgo and conference delegate (personal capacity)

An Opportunity Missed

Delegates at the TSSA conference made clear their anger and determination to stop the plans to privatise BR and London Underground and deregulate or privatise London Buses.

At the start of the major debate on privatisation the left succeeded in overturning standing orders to get four motions reinstated on the agenda which called for a mandate to be placed on the EC to ballot the membership for action in opposition to compulsory redundancies, line closures or obvious reductions in safety. However, the chair, used a precedent to rule them out of order. An attempt to remove the chair did not get the two-thirds required and the motion which was finally passed contained the words "may ballot".

Pressure must now be exerted to link up with the RMT and Aslef campaigns and force "may" to become "will". We cannot afford to miss this opportunity.

The shift to the left in the union continued with several left resolutions being passed, many against EC advice. These resolutions included calls to support the repeal of all the anti-trade union legislation, dis-invest from privatised companies, oppose means testing, decommission Trident and to build links at all levels with European transport unions.

Conference passed a policy of quotas for women members on delegations. This will not solve the important problem of recruiting and involving more women members.

It is a political question and requires a political solution, not organisational manoeuvres. Many lefts who supported this may find themselves voting for careerists and right wingers (and there are many in the TSSA!)

Socialist Appeal supporters produced a special conference bulletin putting forward a programme for fighting privatisation and building towards a single rail union and were instrumental in organising a youth-flavoured Broad Left discussion group meeting.

By a conference delegate



Chris Baugh

For a Five Day Week Now!

Aslef's national executive called off the strike ballot against the Company Plan on London Underground because management agreed to a five day week. That was over six months ago and we are still waiting. Pressure is now brewing from below demanding what is due.

The Company Plan has left its mark on our consciousness. There is complete contempt towards management and bewilderment towards the union leaderships for not getting their act together. Decades of conditions were swept aside with the introduction of the Company Plan. We now want them back, starting with a five day week.

Management now want strings attached before introducing what was promised. Rumours of compulsory rest day working, booking off at the other end of the line and other "concessions" are rife.

The introduction of the Company Plan will save management £60 million a year, over £12 million from traincrews alone but they still want more! But management should be warned - another bitter pill will not be swallowed. Our union leadership know they have to pull a rabbit out of the hat as demands for action pile up on their desks. No mistakes should be made this time. If our demand for a five day week with no strings is not met, industrial action should be put back at the top of the agenda.

Steve Tree, (ASLEF) Central Line

Unity shows way forward

In addition to important victories on policy and union democracy on the floor of this year's conference, the left in CPSA, was able to claim a significant victory with the election of Chris Baugh, Broad Left member and left unity candidate for CPSA Vice-President. Two other Broad Left supporters were also elected to the NEC.

The election results demonstrated that left unity is the way forward to defeat the right-wing "Moderate" grouping and reclaim the union from the bureaucracy which has led CPSA from defeat to defeat in the recent period. The Broad Left's decision to seek unity with the Broad Left 84 (BL84) group and independents within the union around a common programme on pay, opposition to market testing and for greater union democracy, has been completely vindicated.

Unity candidate Albert Astbury failed to take the presidential seat, largely as a result of the wrecking tactics of the renegade candidates from within the Broad Left and BL84 who stood against the unity slate. After the election results were announced, Chris Baugh told a packed Unity rally at the conference that "every vote for Mark Serwotka (Socialist Caucus candidate) was a vote for Marion Chambers (CPSA's right wing president.)" In the conference debate on market testing Albert Astbury called on the union to support "all-out strike action" to defeat the Tories' plans to sell off the jobs of tens of thousands of civil servants. This gave the lie to the claim of Socialist Caucus in its bulletin that the Broad Left chose to support a "right-wing" (i.e. non-Broad) candidate "rather than seri-

ously being prepared to organise rank and file opposition to things like market testing."

CPSA's right-wing leaders understand perhaps better than most that Left Unity is the one force in the union capable of defeating them in the 1994 elections. This explains their desperate attempts to stack the odds in their favour this year by refusing to follow standard procedure and publish the list of nominations for election candidates (the unity candidates received nominations from up to 100 branches more than right wingers), the inclusion of a leaflet in members' ballot envelopes which deliberately misled voters about the slates of both the Broad Left and BL84, and the leaking of confidential election material and smears against left candidates to the Tory press. Any hopes they may have had that left unity would not get off the ground have been shattered.

The results of voting for the Broad Left and BL84 candidates for the 26 NEC seats also demonstrated that, in a straight two-way fight, the left would have won a large majority on the executive this year, and delegates at the unity meeting overwhelmingly agreed on the need for a full Left Unity slate of candidates for the NEC next year.

The conferences of the Broad Left and BL84 later this year must now discuss representation on this joint slate, and consolidate the unity around the need to organise for action against pay restraint and attacks on jobs and conditions. **Unity around a programme for action is the only road to winning over the 75% of members who did not vote this year.** The momentum achieved by the unity campaign must not be allowed to dissipate

into squabbles with sectarian groups who put their own interests before those of the membership and left unity. The entire left must now combine in a united front and begin building for victory in 1994.

Jon Rubidge,
Branch Secretary,
DE West Glamorgan & Dyfed
(personal capacity)



CPSA president Marion Chambers

Following the victory for the left in the National Communications Union, Roy Wenborne spoke to Ian Cuthbert, Chair of the Communications Union Broad Left and newly elected executive member.

A Victory for the Members

Can you outline the scale of the left's victory?

The NCU has two constituencies in the postal ballot for its National Executive. The left gained an overwhelming victory in the largest - the 86000 strong Engineering group. Prior to the election the left were in a minority of 24-11 on the executive, we now have a majority of 20-15, the gains being made exclusively on the Engineering side.

One of the most pleasing aspects is that we now have more engineering women on the executive than clerical. This is remarkable given that only 4% of engineers are women against almost 60% in the clerical. We also now, for the first time, have two black members on the executive.

What factors lay behind the breakthrough?

The election marks the members verdict on both BT's attacks on jobs and particularly attendance patterns - and to a large extent the right's failure to stand up in any meaningful way to them. That such electoral gains were made amongst engineers is no surprise - for it was there that the attendance patterns caused most initial anger.

What exactly are British Telecom's attendance pattern proposals?

BT want seven day coverage, including Saturdays and Sundays as normal working days, extended days, management controlled flexible rostering and the elimination of large numbers of promotion outlets. Although at present management are concentrating on the Personal Communications Division, members rightly saw this as an initial thrust of a concerted attack on every member's conditions.

We are just not prepared to return to Victorian conditions in order to finance BT's global aspirations.

The left has been in the forefront of opposition to these proposals and for that matter the jobs slaughter over the past period. Our electoral campaign was mainly based on this opposition and clearly found an echo amongst the membership.

You say there was anger about the way the previous executive was dealing with employers - can you elaborate?

Last year, the outgoing executive presided over 30,000 jobs going - a fifth of the union's membership - with scarcely a word of protest. We were told that if we co-operated with voluntary redundancies it would avert the threat of them becoming compulsory. At rank and file level the perception was of an executive

actually helping employers to shed jobs whilst most members saw the threat of compulsory redundancies increasing. Although the bulk of our membership work for BT, there is also a very real threat of compulsory redundancies hanging over members working in the Post Office in the run up to privatisation.

We, the left, were criticised for being simplistic and unreal when we called on our leaders to say no to the employers once in a while. The members have shown in this election who was most in tune with their aspirations.

Does this election victory show that the left have nothing to fear from postal ballots?

The left has a proud tradition of campaigning within the union against anti-trade union legislation. We believe, as is now union policy, that members should have the right to determine their own rule book.

That being said, we have to deal with the world as it is. Our gains show that if you organise properly, above all armed with correct ideas, you can win irrespective of the electoral system. Perhaps there is a lesson for Labour and

others who look to pacts and changes as a substitute for principled policies.

What lessons for the wider left are there in this?

Two years ago, many saw the Communications Broad Left as facing extinction because of a split in the left mainly inspired by the so-called Democratic Left. Since then, rather than being weakened, the left in the NCU has grown in both stature and strength. As Keir Hardie said - the victory of ideals must be organised. The Communications Broad Left has developed in terms of policy and tightened organisational aspects.

A lot of work went into this election to ensure the level of dissatisfaction amongst members was channelled in a positive way. A combination of theory and practice pushed the overall turnout up by 3000 votes, almost all of which went to the left.

Now that the left has a majority, what issues does the new executive face?

In my opinion the over-riding issue is to restore

Unity in Action to Stop Redundancies

Following the strike by MSF members at Ford earlier this year, Steve Fricker, Chair of MSF Southampton General Branch looks back at the lessons of the dispute and at the way forward in the battle against redundancies.

At the end of 1992 Ford management announced it would be seeking 2,000 redundancies throughout the company amongst staff grades. Normal arrangements, i.e. last in, first out would not apply and it was clear the company was threatening its entire workforce. This reduction in staff was dramatic and the company threatened to compulsorily retire all over 55s, and certain groups were told they couldn't take voluntary redundancy.

A series of meetings were held between management and unions with no success. All sorts of pressure was used by management to achieve the level of "voluntary" redundancies they required including the threat that if you didn't apply by mid-March the redundancy terms would be worsened. Using these methods, by March, only 157 compulsory

redundancies remained and these could probably have been peacefully achieved by the end of the year. But management pressed ahead. In Southampton a ballot was held by MSF for industrial action and an overwhelming vote in favour was won. Foremen, quality control and draughtsmen took unilateral action and enforced an overtime ban, but this was called off pending a meeting with the company, and the workers felt there was nowhere for them to go without wider action.

However, following an NC meeting on March 15th it was agreed that there be a national overtime ban, the withdrawal of contract staff and a work to rule. **Each plant was to give a report of whether there should be further action and Southampton took the lead with all-out strike action on Tuesday March 16.** ACTSS members followed the lead and the plant ran with only a skeleton crew of supervisory staff and management.

The all-out strike continued until March 22 when there was a return to work prior to the national meeting with the company the following day. This was the first time quality control staff and foremen had taken such action

the badly eroded confidence amongst the membership. This election victory is basically one for the members and demonstrates that all is not lost - that working class people can change things even against seemingly insurmountable odds.

We face immediately the attendance pattern proposals. The union's annual conference will undoubtedly take a hard line on these - our job as an executive is on one hand to take the message to the employers that any attempt to impose will be met with resistance, but more importantly, to campaign amongst the members for wholehearted resistance.

We need to step up the campaign against privatisation of the Post Office. We need to press ahead, as a matter of urgency with the amalgamation with the UCW.

We need to challenge each and every proposed job cut in all the industries we organise in. I could go on and on about the industrial and political issues we face but as I said earlier, our main task is to unite the Union at all levels in opposition to the employers.

We face bosses who seek to make our members pay for both organisational change and for investment abroad. They do this through increased productivity, wage cutting and job losses.

Rather than, as the outgoing executive emphasised, "saving the companies" as if the interests of the bosses and workers were the same - we

need to spend a lot more time and effort in ensuring that the bosses plans are not financed from our members pockets. As an example, we need to mount a campaign for reduced hours. In all of the businesses our members have paid time and time again for shorter hours through increased productivity and modernisation. Our employers can afford it - so the simple slogan of cutting hours not jobs must become central.

And on the wider front?

The NCU clearly has a role to play within the wider movement, both in the Labour Party and the TUC.

For too long working class people have been told that they have no role to play, that opposition to the attacks on them is best left to the elitist old guard of bureaucrats and leaders. Every concession made in terms of policy has been met with renewed attacks from the Tories and the bosses. There comes a time when workers say enough is enough.

I believe our victory, taken alongside events like the Timex dispute, opposition to pit closures, the rail strikes, the ground swell in unions like the FBU, all mark a change in attitude.

Where leadership is given workers will respond.

Timex



Step Up the Fight!

Arriving at the Timex picket line we were appalled to see scabs arriving in cars, some too ashamed to show their faces. Two buses owned by Fife-based company Moffat and Williamson arrived carrying scabs. The buses had been repainted to try and avoid a boycott (the same company bussed in scabs during the miners strike.) One of the strikers, Jessie explained how disgusted she felt at MSF members scabbing and told us that strikers believed new scabs were being trained and the local training centre were sending workers to scab. The strikers are quite clear from their experience that the anti-union laws in Britain are the worst in Europe and they have fought to ensure Labour highlights the intimidation they have faced.

The strikers were confident as they believed the scabs were producing scrap quality work and the company was relying on expensive contractors. The AEEU leaders refused strikers demands for a boycott of work by linked companies and calls for sympathetic action, using excuses about sequestration. Other workers in Dundee have taken action despite their leaders. It is vital the Timex workers win. Other Scottish employers are keeping an eye on the outcome of this dispute. One person relayed their picket line experience - of the fear and initial feeling of intimidation at the numbers of police at the plant, clearly being used as a private army for Timex.

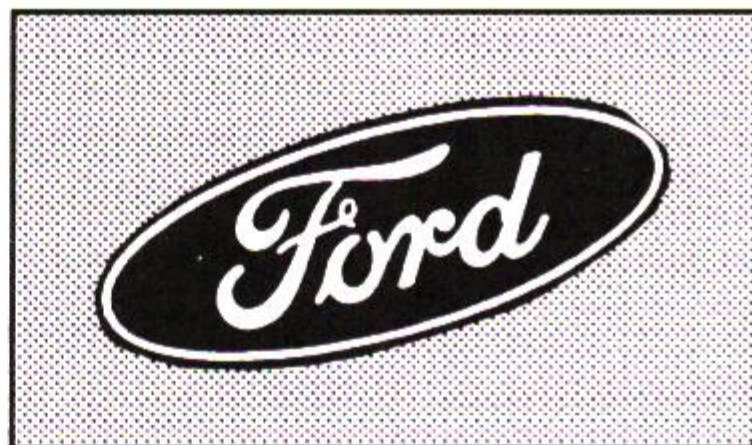
The strikers are clear that shouting at scabs is not going to win - the Scottish TUC should be mobilising to physically block the gates - they only need to call, workers will respond. Pressure needs to be put on the MSF to stop members scabbing and a labour movement boycott of the related companies enforced. The AEEU, STUC and TUC should be building for wider labour movement action. A victory for Timex strikers is a victory for every worker and will be a major morale booster to the labour movement and a warning to all bosses who attempt this tactic.

Messages of support and donations to: Timex strike committee, c/o AEEU, 2 Union St, Dundee. Tel: 0382-22406.

in Southampton and this in itself demonstrates the strength of feeling on the issue of redundancies. **The impact of the strike led some non-union members to join up and people even returned from holiday so that they could vote in the ballot to take strike action.** It seems to be felt by most in the plant that a partial victory was achieved, at least in so far as there were no compulsory redundancies. However, the way in which the "voluntary" redundancies were achieved has left a bitterness that will last a long time.

The unity displayed by the staff grades needs to be built on by the union along with building stronger ties with the manual unions, especially the TGWU.

In the past of course, MSF and ACTSS members would cross TGWU picket lines and then collect similar percentage pay rises as the manual workers had won in their own pay round. This time the boot was on the other foot. The TGWU workers crossed the picket lines having previously secured a no compulsory redundancies agreement. Relations with the TGWU were originally good, the convenor agreeing that they would not work out of the ordinary and confidence was high amongst the strikers that production would be hit. The fact that output was not drastically hit has unfortunately fuelled suspicions that all



was not as the convenor had made out. This situation needs to be overcome quickly. The irony is that both manual workers and staff have over many years contributed to the vast profits made by the Ford Motor Company. Here we had workers with many years service and experience and skills being thrown on the scrap heap with little hope of finding a job. Instead of offering the workers a shorter working week with no loss of pay, in recognition of their contribution to past profits, the capitalists demand more. Under capitalism profit comes first and people last. **The weakness of the union's strategy is evident in that it did not campaign for a shorter working week, or expose massive profits made by Ford at the workers' expense.**

In future disputes, the demand for a shorter working week should be to the fore. Demands should be made for improved conditions and health and safety in all parts of the plant and we should demand no compulsory redundancies. And if Ford cannot accept we should demand they are taken into public ownership and run, not like the old nationalised industries, but by a combination of representatives from the workers, local community and government - all elected democratically, subject to immediate recall and paid a wage equal to those on the factory floor.

Ian Lavery, newly elected NUM National Executive member for the North East and Ellington lodge secretary, spoke to Terry McParlan.

The Battle for Coal Goes On



Congratulations on getting elected to the NEC.

Thanks very much.

How are things going now?

We have been surprised by the press coverage this morning stating that Alcan UK are interested in buying Ellington colliery. This will secure 1.3 million tonnes of coal to market to Alcan. So it looks as if the union has been right in stating that Ellington could be one of the first collieries in the UK to be privatised, even before the privatisation legislation is passed through parliament.

How will this affect the jobs at Ellington?

They'll be looking at around 1000 jobs as opposed to 1400 now. It would secure the market for probably ten years as a minimum. It is encouraging that if BC decide to close the pit there will be people prepared to take it on - purely from the employment side, of course. Of course the union's stance at unit, area and national level is that we totally oppose privatisation and will continue to oppose it to the very last minute. However, this is all a new development, I only found out about it from the press and news last night. It's not totally surprising, but it was the head of the company who announced it. So now they're up front and saying they are interested, that's a new development.

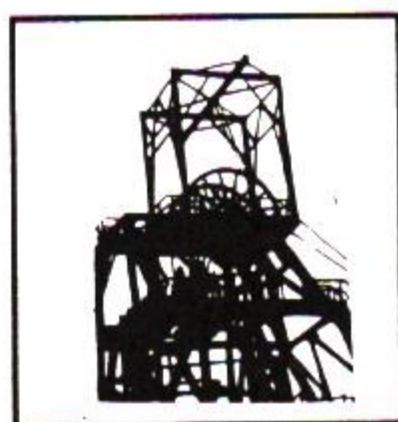
That confirms what the NUM has been saying about a market for coal, doesn't it?

The market for coal is there, the difference is, if the marketing department of British Coal gave the same effort as NUM members have since the 84-85 strike, in terms of increased productivity - we've achieved 155% and probably more this year - if they'd achieved one-tenth of that effort we'd have a wider market without a shadow of a doubt. The difference is, they haven't looked for markets. They're not interested in markets, whether abroad or not. They want the

industry closed as a whole. Not 12, 10 or 5 pits, they want the industry as a whole closed.

So how's the campaign going?

The campaign is stronger than ever. We've been at rallies every Saturday since the White Paper came out. In my opinion we need to step up the tempo. At this stage it looks as if several pits are looking towards deals with BC for maximum redundancy payments and we need to counter-act that, because at the end of the day, we've got nothing off the bosses. We should be looking to save the industry. But, I think there's been a problem and that is lack of support nationally from the TUC and Labour Party. They claim to support us 100%, but their support has been absolutely abysmal. They haven't called for support like they should have. They should have called one-day strikes initially. If it needed more than that, then that's what the TUC should have done. People are quick to blame the TUC as a group but they should realise that the members of the general council are the heads of other trade unions. So really it's the trade union movement as a whole, apart from some unions, Nalgo and the rail workers for example. The support should have been widespread, general strikes or one-day strikes. That would have made the government realise exactly what the situation is. It's desperate, no matter what group of workers you look at, its desperation stakes. The only way we'll gain anything is by all of us coming together and I'm afraid its not happening.



After the October marches, Socialist Appeal argued the TUC should move to organise a one-day general strike. I think that would have received support from

workers. What do you think?

I think you're right. Again, the TUC have

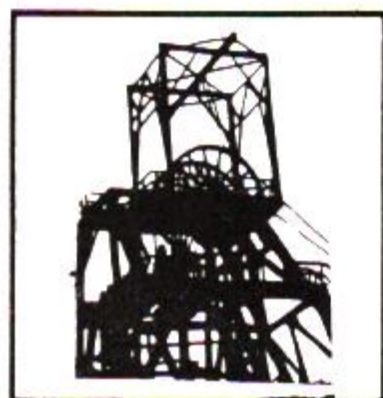
been sitting on their hands. They're quite concerned about contributions, sequestration and things of that nature. That's not what its about. The workers deserve a bit better leadership from people such as Mr Willis. Hopefully they will in the near future because he is about to resign, but at this stage of the game we should be looking at trying to tackle the anti-union laws "en bloc". We should be looking to having days of action to support each other and ourselves. We should be trying to combat the anti trade union laws. If they sequester our funds, they sequester our funds. It's happened before and it'll happen again. But at the end of the day the TUC are carrying out Tory policy. They are agreeing with them. Unless they fight now it'll mean the demise of the trade union movement. We've got to get out there and oppose these laws and oppose them actively.



Obviously there's a lot of people who support what you're saying. What would be your advice to trade union and Labour Party members as to what

they can do in their wards and branches? What we have to do? We've done a lot of marching and rallies. We need to continue with that. But we need to generate a lot of grassroots support. We need to be getting the members who support us to get through to their leaders that we need to take action. We shouldn't be hiding behind the anti-trade union laws. They are an easy get out clause for the trade union leaders to do nothing about nothing. At the grassroots level, the workers have got to force support through branches to take action, synchronised action with the miners and rail workers. That's the only way we're going to defeat the government.

We've seen the biggest rallies for decades in all parts of the country. Support has been tremendous. We've had support from people who'd never ever supported us. That feeling is still there but they're looking for more leadership, that's what we need. People are putting it to me "what are you going to do now? What's happening now, it seems to be dying a death?" The media have done their usual trick. They were on our side for a couple of months but now something else has taken over. They're more or less opposed to us now. They accepted the White Paper which was an absolute scandal. All that the subsidy is for is new markets. Heseltine's looked for new markets since October 30 so he tells us and he's not found one. So that means there's going to be no subsidy. It's just a con job and some people are believing it. It's up to the activists to get it through to people.



There have been reports of the closure of Bolsover and other pits. Do you think that will sap the campaign's strength?

I think so. We saw Easington NUM

officials approaching BC for a deal which was an absolute disgrace. What they did was a scandal, it undermined the whole national action. As yet they haven't informed the North East area officials as to what's happened. They've never been in contact with them since that day. A lot of people are at their wits end about the pit closures, a lot of people in their small communities are looking at their families and kids and saying "we're beat, at least (if we take redundancy) we can put a roof over our heads for the rest of our lives, that's something at least". But I think they're looking on the black side. We can be successful if we get this campaign on the road again. We're the cheapest producers of deep-mined coal in Europe. But there's only one answer and that's to get rid of the Tories and then we've got to get the Labour Party to fight. Although I'm a Labour Party member I don't think they've done as much as they could have done. We've had local branches, wards, constituencies support us. And individual MPs have supported us to a massive extent but the majority have sat back quietly as they normally do. These collieries should be looking at a sustainable future because there are markets. It looks as if the NUM is going to be the marketing department of BC unfortunately.

What about Nottingham. The UDM recently balloted on action, which was narrowly lost. Can the UDM survive? I think the UDM will survive, it's a bit like the Tory government. They've got no policies, no intention of taking any action, they're just sitting back as an "association" doing nothing for anybody. People and organisations like that usually do survive because it takes nothing to survive. It's just history repeating itself as far as the UDM is concerned. I'd appeal for every UDM member to rejoin the NUM. Obviously there's not a chance of taking Greatrex and the other organisers of the breakaway union back into the NUM. I'm totally opposed to that. As long as they're in charge, supporting the Tories and BC, I'm afraid they'll get their just rewards. After the strike they thought they had a great opportunity. When Heseltine made his announcement a lot of the Notts pits thought it was a betrayal. But how can anyone be betrayed by the Tories unless they trusted them in the first place? They thought "how can they do this to us after what we've done for them?" They'll get their just rewards.

Trentham Colliery Occupation

Pit Closure Battle Hots Up



Bridget Bell, Gina Earle and Brenda Procter, all members of North Staffs Miners Wives Action Group ended a four day occupation of a building at the top of a shaft at Trentham colliery on May 15.

British Coal refused to give the women any food or water until 16 hours after the occupation started. Even then it was only one bottle of water and a small pack of sandwiches.

The women had no heating or toilet facilities. British Coal also persisted in turning the lights on all night and off all day. On Thursday 13, British Coal refused to allow the local Labour MPs to visit the women with food and water. The miners' wives then took things into their own hands and pushed through the security guards and managed, despite the heavy security to throw the food and water to the three women.

On Friday 14 British Coal refused to allow a doctor in to treat Brenda after a bolt hit her in the face after falling from a girder above her.

The city council got a court order allowing an Environmental Health Officer to visit the women but British Coal refused to allow him to give the women a chemical toilet. On Saturday 15, Arthur and Ann Scargill visited the three women. When a pit manager attempted to stop them, telling them that they were trespassing, Arthur Scargill told him that the pit was not private property but it belonged to the British people.

The women ended their occupation after

speaking to the Scargills. Arthur Scargill then announced that the NUM executive had agreed to give members of Women Against Pit Closures NUM membership.

Two days after the occupation the three spoke to Socialist Appeal:

They told us that they had heard from a pit manager at Trentham that the orders to treat the women as they had been had come from British Coal at the top level, which they said meant it was more than likely the government had a say in what those order were. Brenda said that her face was still in a great deal of pain. She hadn't had an X-ray yet, but her GP suspected that her nose was broken. She said she was "living on paracetamol."

The women felt the occupation had been a success as it had brought the campaign to save the pits back to the attention of the general public.

The women were honoured to have been given NUM membership but they pointed out that this was really a recognition of their activity during and since the last dispute too.

All the women welcomed Norman Willis' resignation. They felt he was getting out because he "couldn't handle the pressure" he was under to call wider labour movement action. "All he wanted was a quiet life" they said.

All three were keen to make it clear that the real fight was still to come with the deadline British Coal had set for the closure of Trentham colliery.

Mike Lievens, Stoke Miners' Support Group

Major Nightmare at Newbury

The Newbury by-election and the county council elections, involving 12 million voters, were the biggest test of public opinion since the 1992 general election. The results were an humiliating defeat for the Tories.

The Newbury result recorded the biggest swing - over 28% - in post war by-election history, turning a 12,000 Tory majority into a 22,000 majority for the Liberal Democrats. It ended 70 years of unbroken Tory tenure. In the county council elections, the Tories only managed to secure Buckinghamshire. This Tory defeat represents the biggest debacle for over 100 years.

Opinion Swings

This colossal swing of opinion against the Government resulted from growing discontent over unemployment, the council tax, falling house prices, education and health. Above all it was a realisation that the Tories would not be able to bring back the prosperity of the 1980's. "People feel bruised", said Major, "they feel hurt." This groundswell of opposition was even more bruised by Norman Lamont's "Je ne regrette rien" (I regret nothing) phrase, which epitomised stone-faced Toryism. It was almost on par with Marie-Antoinette's "Qu'ils mangent de la brioche" (Let them eat cake). "Whoever decided to wheel him out in Newbury should be presented with a revolver on a silver tray", (the next best thing to a guillotine) stated Sir George Gardiner, member of the Tory 1922 executive.

If a general election was held now, based on these results, Labour would have a 100 seat majority. The depth of the Government's humiliation was reflected in the loss in the South East of England of 10 counties, including Surrey and Kent. Their seats declined from 717 to 448. Nationally, the Tories have been reduced to running one county council, one metropolitan borough, no Scottish regions and only eleven London boroughs. All this within 12 months of their general election victory!

Despite the dismissal of the Tory press, Labour emerged as the real victor, with the control of 14 councils, against the Liberal Democrats' three and the Tories' one. The Labour Party also won the greatest number of council seats across the board.

A recent Gallop/Daily Telegraph poll gave Labour a massive 17-point lead. This

represents a colossal shift in the mood of society, beginning last October, which in turn, reflects the impasse of the system. It expresses a belated catching up in the consciousness of people arising from the experience of the 1990 - 92 recession.

Tory Backbenchers

This catastrophe for Major has created panic amongst Tory back-benchers. They are terrified of a further defeat at the Christchurch by-election. The knives are already out for Lamont. "I think he should be sacked - his time is up", declared Tory MP Michael Colvin. His colleague John Carlisle widened his attack to the Prime Minister himself. It represents the biggest Government crisis since 1981, when Thatcher considered resigning.

While the official news is the recession is over, the economy is still experiencing stagnation. Even capitalist economists are doubtful that the modest pace of the 'recovery' can be sustained. The strong pound, together with the recession in Europe, threatens to hit British exports. The initial euphoria about the US recovery has subsided with the latest figures indicating a fall back on the previous quarter. Some economists have talked about a possible 'triple-dip' recession. Meanwhile the CBI warned that manufacturing was still cutting investment and were set to cut 30,000 jobs in the next three months. The threatened closure of Swan Hunter on Tyneside is the latest blow

to an area hard hit by unemployment. Any economic recovery of British capitalism, given the de-industrialisation, will serve to drag in imports and lead to a balance of payments crisis, which in turn, could force up interest rates and choke off growth. Over the last decade, with the squandering of the £100 billion oil revenues, as well as the assets from privatisation, the government budget deficit has swollen to around £50 billion.

This has led to calls by Ministers for wide spread cuts. Michael Portillo, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, refused to rule out pensioners and others losing their right to free prescriptions as part of a general cuts package. He even went so far as to state that the reason why the Tories did so badly in the council elections, was a protest against high public spending! He said the Government would not rest until the deficit was reduced from 8% of the GDP to 3.75% in 1997-8. Portillo wants to bite the bullet and carry through massive cuts: "containing public spending", he said, "means courting unpopularity".

The Tories are hell bent on reviving British capitalism on the basis of a low wage economy. The bosses, instead of investing and modernising industry, have driven down wages and conditions.

With two million less workers in manufacturing, output has risen by 24%. Productivity - output per worker - has outstripped the USA and West Germany in the 1980's, but this was accomplished not primarily through new machinery, but sweated labour. "Of course we need to do better. Much better," states Major. "French soups to Paris? Pizzas to Italy? Why not?" No doubt part of this recipe for revival is cheap labour. The Government have already placed advertisements in the German press promoting Britain as a "cheap labour country". German bosses are being invited to contact the British consulate in Dusseldorf "to find



Major under pressure?

out more about how your firm can profit." The short-sightedness of British capitalism prevents them from realising that a cheap labour economy faced with competition from modern technique and industry is doomed in the long run.

The groundswell of anti-Tory moods has begun to reflect itself in the unions, with the recent gains for the left. The victory of Broad Left/Unity candidate, Chris Baugh, for the vice president of the CPSA, has pushed the union's right-wing onto the defensive. With the development of the Unity campaign in the union, the right wing can be routed next year. The magnificent victory of the Broad Left in the NCU, after a decade of opposition, in the Engineering Section and on the NEC, reflects the changed mood in the union. Teaching unions have successfully balloted to boycott testing. Again the unanimous decision by the Fire Brigades Union conference to ballot for industrial action over pay is extremely symptomatic. Such a dispute, as in 1977/78, could break the log-jam and open the flood gates for generalised industrial action.

TUC leadership

However, this mood has not been fully reflected as yet on the industrial front. Although the RMT is balloting over pay on the London Underground, the series of defensive struggles over redundancies, especially in the pits and on the railways, have hit problems due to the abdication of leadership by the TUC. The government have waged an intense campaign to undermine these struggles since the mass reaction to the pit closure programme announced last October. Huge sums of money are being offered to those accepting voluntary redundancy. Arthur Scargill said miners were being "blackmailed, harassed and intimidated" into accepting redundancy. The decision to call off the series of one day strikes on the railways is a set-back to the fight against job losses. The ballot for continued action amongst RMT members was narrowly lost, 18,361 to 18,544, a majority of only 183. The BR managements' proposals were also accepted by the engineers. If the RMT leaders had conducted a proper campaign amongst the members the outcome would have been entirely different. For the moment, the opportunity to develop a united campaign against redundancies has been lost. The TUC leaders have sat on their hands, leaving the NUM to fight on alone. This situation has not fallen from the skies, but has been a product of more than a decade of 'New Realism', of the attempt by the TUC to come to an understanding with the bosses and the Tory Government.

The shift to the right in the trade union leadership, underpinned by the boom of the

1980's, has also been mirrored in the Labour Party. Participation in the Party has been at an all-time low, as the leadership swung over to embrace the 'market'. The 1992 general election defeat marked the beginning of a campaign by the ruling class to break the union link, eliminate Clause Four and transform the Labour Party into a version of the American Democratic Party. Over the past decade the right wing have succeeded in undermining the gains of the early 1980's. The plan was to carry this 'counter revolution' through to the end. However, things began to unravel. Kinnoek's plans to completely restructure

One member, one vote in reality disenfranchises the trade union affiliated membership and weakens the links with the trade unions

party conference had to be watered down. In the leadership, cracks began to open up between the 'modernisers' and the 'traditionalists'. Resistance to weakening the trade union links began to grow in the unions - even amongst the right wing union leaders who feared a complete loss of power over the Party leadership.

Clause Four

Not to fight on too many fronts, the right have temporarily retreated over eliminating Clause Four. They have been forced to concentrate their efforts on overturning the electoral college (where the unions get 40% of the votes), and winning so-called 'one member, one vote' for the election of leader and parliamentary candidates. Originally they proposed the votes for the election of leader and deputy leader be divided 50% for CLPs and 50% for MPs and Euro MPs. Smith has now back-tracked on this proposal. He has now proposed retaining trade union links by allowing political levy-paying members full party membership on a reduced subscription. The AEEU, the proponent of pure 'one member one vote', believe this compromise is unworkable. In reality, every member of the party has the right to vote on their representatives through party branches, CLP's, and affiliated organisations. This provides a means of accountability over our elected representatives. The attempt to water this down by individual balloting, rather than strengthening party democracy, serves to undermine it. Again, 'one member one vote' in reality

disenfranchises the trade union affiliated membership, and weakens the links with the trade unions. To the dismay of the right wing, seven out of ten regional Labour Party conferences have already voted to retain union participation in the election of parliamentary candidates. Despite John Smith's manoeuvres, he is still facing possible defeat at the October Party Conference. Six big unions TGWU, GMB, NUPE, MSF, RMT, and UCW (whose votes account for 40% of the vote at Party Conference) have all come out against Smith's original proposals, and have big fears about his new position. A recent Mori poll of 2,000 affiliated trade unionists, 75% wanted to keep the union links. Of the 70% who supported Labour, 66% favoured continued union involvement in selecting parliamentary candidates and 62% for party leader. More significantly, those who supported Labour, only 5% were individual members. Of the rest, one in six (equivalent to about 235,000) said they would be interested in joining. At this stage the party has failed to reach these workers. With a bold campaign on unemployment, low pay, etc., these workers could be drawn in.

Given the strength of feeling against OMOV, together with the lack of agreement over any alternative, it is possible that all proposals could be voted down, and the status quo remain. Under the circumstances, that would be the best option. Whatever happens, the right wing's original proposal is doomed. This marks a change in the situation within the Labour Party. The right wing "counter revolution" has reached its limits. On the basis of the changed objective conditions, a recoil can take place. However a real transformation of the Labour Movement will unfold on the basis of big events. Movements on the industrial front will reflect themselves in the Labour Party.

Leftward Shift

These cracks and set-backs for the right represent a harbinger of what will come. What is certain, is that no amount of constitutional changes will prevent the shift to the left of the party once the workers begin to move on the political front. The task for activists will be to fight within the movement for socialist policies that can take the struggle forward. The bringing down of this weak Tory government is of paramount importance. However the struggle for a Labour Government, committed to socialist policies, based on the taking over of the commanding heights of the economy under workers' control and management, and the establishment of a plan of production, will avoid the pitfalls of the past, and generate the resources needed to tackle the problems facing the working class.

Dave Sims



How Can We Stop the Bosnian Carnage?

The letter on the left was received from a reader questioning the role British workers can play in aiding workers in the former Yugoslavia. We reprint the letter and a reply from the editor. We would urge other readers to let us know what they think.

Dear comrades,

I found the article on Bosnia very interesting and especially valuable for being right up to date. I agree with the analysis, that the crisis has its roots in the historical development of the Balkan state, for which imperialism is to blame and the subsequent inability of Yugoslav Stalinism to completely overcome national divisions.

It is a vital task for Marxists, especially when confronted with a very complex situation, to analyse and explain the independent role of the working class as the force that can end the nightmare, by the establishment of a genuine socialist federation of the former Yugoslav states. However, having made a correct analysis, I do not think the article took a sufficiently transitional approach to its conclusions.

The majority of workers, including most who regard themselves as being politically aware socialists, when confronted with horrors of the civil war, would feel the idea of a socialist federation at best being pie in the sky and at worst as hand washing. This is especially so at present when it seems that urban life in many areas has been reduced to a desperate struggle for mere survival - not the most fertile ground for class struggle.

Not only should an analysis say what the labour leaders should not do, it should also place positive demands on them. An instinctive mood of many socialists has been "what can we do?". While criticising the labour leaders for tail-ending the Tories over options for military intervention, we should raise the demand that they give workers an independent role by organising humanitarian aid, under the control of the labour movement. This would have circumvented the role of the UN, itself a cover for the motives of imperialism, thinly veiled since the embarrassing discovery of arms on a UN convoy.

In raising such a demand we would explain that the labour movement alone could organise the disposal of aid in a non-sectarian manner, for example to workers in similar industries in former Yugoslavia. The demand would also expose those labour leaders that insist we must "take sides". Given the horror and revulsion felt by all workers over the TV pictures of the last few months, a clear call from the TUC and labour leaders for the collection of material aid such as clothing, food, medical supplies etc., could gain a big echo. Of course there would be practical problems to overcome in transport and distribution, but in the past the labour movement has managed to arrange aid to Chilean workers under Pinochet.

Most importantly, the support of the workers organisations internationally could assist those workers and peasants of the region who are war weary, to begin to find a road to rebuild their shattered organisations. This would be the basis on which class values could begin to reassert themselves over the nightmare of national civil war and genocide.

Raising such a demand for the labour movement would not mean abandoning our clear analysis and programme, but the opposite. It would help to gain a hearing from workers in the labour movement who otherwise would be sceptical or impatient of the need for socialist internationalism.

Keith Robert (London)



Keith's letter raises some very important and vital questions for Marxists. The question of what demands and ideas should be raised at any particular time and in any particular situation is complex. The intention of last month's article was a brief summary of recent developments complementing previous articles in Socialist Appeal. The conclusion dealing with the Socialist federation could have been amplified somewhat by stating that the main task confronting workers in both Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia is the overthrow of their respective dictatorships. A movement of class unity has to be forged within these republics with the expressed aim of overthrowing Tudjman, Milosevic and the other gangsters. Concrete demands can only emerge out of the experience of workers in the course of that struggle.

Therefore, to start from the idea that the demand for a genuine socialist federation of all the former Yugoslav republics would be seen as "pie in the sky" by workers in Britain will inevitably lead us along the wrong path.

The demand for the socialist transformation of Britain could also be regarded in the same way, at least as

an immediate perspective, yet we still put forward the idea. It is necessary to do so because class conscious workers must understand the situation as it really is - that there is no real solution under capitalism. Much more so with the complicated situation in Yugoslavia. There is no simple solution to be offered.

In a situation like this, to put forward the idea that the British labour movement could intervene through the collection and distribution of aid is entirely impractical. To raise this demand poses a key question: how? Even if the labour leaders were to take up such a call, how can it be achieved? Across armed frontiers? The gangster militias of Bosnian Serbs, Croats and Muslims would give them short shrift. The aid would be seized and a few executions would ensue into the bargain. Only if in the West there was a movement towards socialist transformation, or in the East a move to political or social revolution would that situation change.

The role of the United Nations can be seen clearly. It is because of the horrors seen nightly on Western televisions that they have been forced to attempt to send in humanitarian aid as a cover for their real aims. Al-

Ruling Class Split: Occhetto Must Act

By supporters of
Falce Martello

though not opposing this aid organised by the UN (ie. the imperialist powers), just as Lenin and Trotsky did not oppose the aid given in the Ukraine three sides in the Bosnian civil war there will be elements which will look with horror at the hundreds of thousands killed and millions displaced. At some stage there will be a recoil against these crimes. Then, if there were Marxist cadres in former Yugoslavia they would begin to get an echo and a hearing for the demand for a socialist federation.

Under all conditions the main enemy of the working class in all capitalist countries is at home. We must expose their deceits, lies and distortions. In that way we will develop the cadres who will be educated in a class and internationalist spirit and prepare the way for a calling to account for all the crimes of capitalism and Stalinism.

In Britain, the main task for Marxists at present is to expose the tail-ending of the labour leaders behind the Conservative/imperialist government, and, what is even worse, their demand for British (ie. capitalist/imperialist) armed intervention. To their policy must be opposed a class policy of irreconcilable opposition to the aims of the imperialists and the support of internationalist and class aims at home and abroad, especially in the complex situation that exists in Yugoslavia.

Italy's political crisis continues. The international press have spoken of revolution and although the term has been used for propaganda purposes it contains an element of truth. Never in the past 60 years has the capitalist class of Italy been so divided.

When, 16 months ago, judicial enquiries began against corrupt politicians there was a chorus from company boards: "This should go through to the end." Since then, the biggest Italian company, Fiat, which produces 4% of GNP and was implicated in the system of bribes, has presented itself as the "victim of the politicians." Everything seemed to be going well and while the "corrupters" passed through the prisons, the flower of the capitalist class stood forward as the "healthy part of the nation", the only part capable of cleaning up society and imposing "just values" of enterprise. We have seen a flowering of "new" political groupings (associations, clubs and committees) in which "new" standards are being created, to make a "clean sweep" possible. The leading figure in this campaign has been Segni, whose father was a reactionary president of the republic, involved in various coup attempts in the 60s. This Christian Democrat (DC) deputy, who has been in parliament for 20 years, organised a new current in the party and clashed with the DC leadership.

New Bourgeois Party

His aim was to form a new party using significant parts of the DC together with elements from other bourgeois parties. This "new" party was supposed to replace the DC and the operation was supported by all the big capitalists. Press, radio and TV set up a multi-million pound campaign to support him. But in spite of everything it didn't work.

In the DC the different "leaders" had doubts. Segni proposed they should leave the DC but Martinazzoli, the new secretary has assured them that the DC will not die and is moving to change the party's name and hold a "constituent" congress.

Time went by and if it hadn't been for the fact that Segni was able to use the PDS (ex-Communist Party), including it in a "democratic alliance", he would hardly have succeeded in collecting enough signatures to call the April referendum against proportional representation. The entire referendum campaign was carried out with the support of the PDS leaders who had illusions that things would improve when really it was a case of "change everything so nothing will change."

The referendum result (80% in favour of a simple majority system) was rapidly exploited by Segni who turned the Democratic Alliance into an electoral coalition to stand candidates in the next election.

Despite this the bourgeoisie remains deeply divided. The explanation for this is that the capitalists hold on society is shaky, a result of the historic weakness of the Italian capitalist class and of the need for continuous compromises with different layers and sectors of society.

Segni's operation has not worked out how he hoped because the church didn't support it and because in most industrialised parts of the country he came up against the party of petty bourgeois reaction, the Northern League.

The biggest example of the divisions within the bourgeoisie is the Milan local elections. Apart from the Northern League, there are three other bourgeois lists.

The PDS and PRC, together with the Greens and the Network (a split-off from the DC) have formed a classic Popular Front and support Nando Dalla Chiesa, son of a police general who was famous for capturing members of the Red Brigades but particularly famous for being assassinated by the Mafia just a few months after being appointed governor of Palermo.

No Programme

This petty bourgeois sociologist stands as "the honest man" who will bring salvation in the form of "greater efficiency, more dialogue with the citizens, a more liveable-in city". **This is not even a reformist programme.** He says nothing about the cuts in local authorities carried out by the government, but is supported by many youth and some workers who are looking for an alternative. **As with the Popular Front of the 30s the workers' parties supply the activists while the petty bourgeoisie imposes the programme.**

In this political context the Amato government has been replaced by that of Ciampi (Bank of Italy governor and architect of anti-working class policies culminating in the Maastricht agreement). The PDS leaders gave a positive opinion of this government and as a result Ingrao (leader of the "democratic communists" tendency) decided to leave the party and work for "a new pole of the left."

There is much confusion among many activists and this situation has reaped benefits for the ideas of Marxism in the PDS and PRC. Never before has our paper and its Marxist analysis been so well received in the factories, on the streets and in shop stewards' meetings.

Film Review

Roger and Me

written, produced and directed by
Michael Moore

Channel 4
Thursday July 8
9.30pm

Roger and Me is a deeply moving and thoroughly watchable film about the death of a once wealthy city with a high standard of living due to the General Motors factories which surrounded the city.

Flint was the birthplace of General Motors and also the birthplace of the American car workers union, UAW which won recognition in 1937 following a sit-down strike for better conditions. Flint was an automotive city and when the factory closures took place it devastated nearly every working class household.

Michael Moore, who made the film was the only person in generations of his family not to have worked for GM. He decided to try and persuade Roger Smith, GM chairman to come to Flint to see what devastation the closure decision had brought.

Quest for Profits

Moore does not appear to be overtly political but just by filming the closures and the resulting poverty and attempting to get Roger Smith there (it took him three years to even get to speak to Smith) Moore shows graphically the real nature of international capitalism - the quest for profits for the fat cats while the workers who make the profits are thrown on the scrap-heap.

There are numerous striking similarities to the situation faced by workers in Britain. For Flint you could easily substitute South Wales or Grimethorpe or Swan Hunters. Communities that have given their lives to building cars or ships or digging coal are wrecked along with the people's hopes and aspirations by multi-nationals and capitalist governments in their drive for profits.

In fact, Moore explains that despite making

billions of dollars profits GM shut 11 plants in the USA nearly all in Flint jettisoning 35000 jobs in Flint alone. Then GM opened 11 factories in Mexico to make use of the non-unionised labour, paying workers 70 cents an hour and then investing the extra profits in arms manufacturing and high tech industries with high dividends. That's the true face of international capitalism.

After watching the film I travelled to work with several of my work mates and I saw many similarities with what Flint workers were facing. We stop at the Cowley roundabout and all that can be seen is empty factories being demolished, years of hard work being knocked down to make way for a theme park, hotel and Tesco superstore - this is supposed to take the place of car manufacturing.

While watching Moore's film the last car roll off the lines at the Flint factories I was reminded of when the last car rolled off the lines in South Wales after 60 years of production. Like the workers in the film we cheered, but underneath, like them, we had seen 3000 of our work mates made redundant.

The film has two angles to it. One was Moore trying to find Roger Smith, the other

is the contrast between rich and poor. Moore continually cuts in interviews with the rich and famous of Flint who are out of touch with reality. The cutting from the rich blaming "lazy workers" to another poor family being evicted onto the streets is powerful. In one instance a bailiff, an ex-GM employee, throws a family's Xmas tree onto the street on Xmas eve to the backdrop of Roger Smith's annual "Christian Christmas message."

American Dream Shattered

This was just one of the sickening aspects of the shattered American Dream portrayed by Moore. Equally sickening was the sight of fat cats employing ex-workers from GM to act as statues at their parties for their guests to gaze at! I was angry at the "stars" who came to Flint to preach to the unemployed workers to get off their arses and do something. Only the rich are preaching the American Dream.

The film continually shows the human tragedy of closures and also the scars of working on an assembly line by interviewing an ex-GM employee who one night cracked under the strain of working on the tracks, ran out of the door, switched on his radio on the way home only to hear the Beach Boys' 'Wouldn't It Be Nice?' He ended up in an institution.

The film vividly shows the results of a city losing its sole employment - rising crime, with new jails being built to be filled with ex-GM car workers. The attempts by city officials and business people to substitute real jobs with theme parks and a rich hotel in the middle of an industrial estate are madness. It was no surprise to see that after six months both went out of business!

The film subconsciously deals with the



UAW workers protest against another round of job cuts

question of the role of unions in the closures. During a march to commemorate the sit-down strike Moores interviews workers who were angry at the union leadership's role. **One man said that "there are too many guys in the union that are friends with the management."** The same guy seems to sum up the feeling of many with the comment that "some people know what time it is, some don't."

Leaders' Role

The film finally shows, two weeks before Xmas, the closure of the plant where the sit-down strike took place. The UAW called for a massive demonstration to commemorate the strike - only four workers showed up. Like many other instances in the film Moores draws no conclusions. I drew my own. If the leaders don't fight closures then workers will become demoralised and

defeated, leaving with almost no dignity - an experience I shared when watching my best mates leaving the day in 1990 when they were forced out by management with the union leadership looking on.

Moores draws out a real irony when he films the workers being given flowers when they leave for the last time. One worker comments, "I thought you only get given flowers when you're dead."

There is some comedy amidst the tragedy. Moores possesses a wicked sense of humour.

When Flint became a national spotlight for ABC News as an unemployment blackspot, ABC were due to broadcast live in Flint Council headquarters until some ex-GM employee drove away in the transmission

lorry taking all the equipment and satellites with him.

Probably the only thing which kept the people alive was the ability to laugh even when times are so hard.

Roger and Me is a brilliantly made film about capitalism in the raw. It is an indictment of the American Dream.

There is no happy ending, only a final ironic twist with Tom Kay, a GM lobbyist and right wing exponent of free enterprise saying, "if it takes 100,000 job losses to keep GM in profits then so be it."

The only happy ending can be the ending of the international capitalist system and its replacement with a socialist society which will eradicate poverty once and for all.

**Reviewed by a TGWU shop steward,
Rover, Cowley**

Building Socialist Appeal

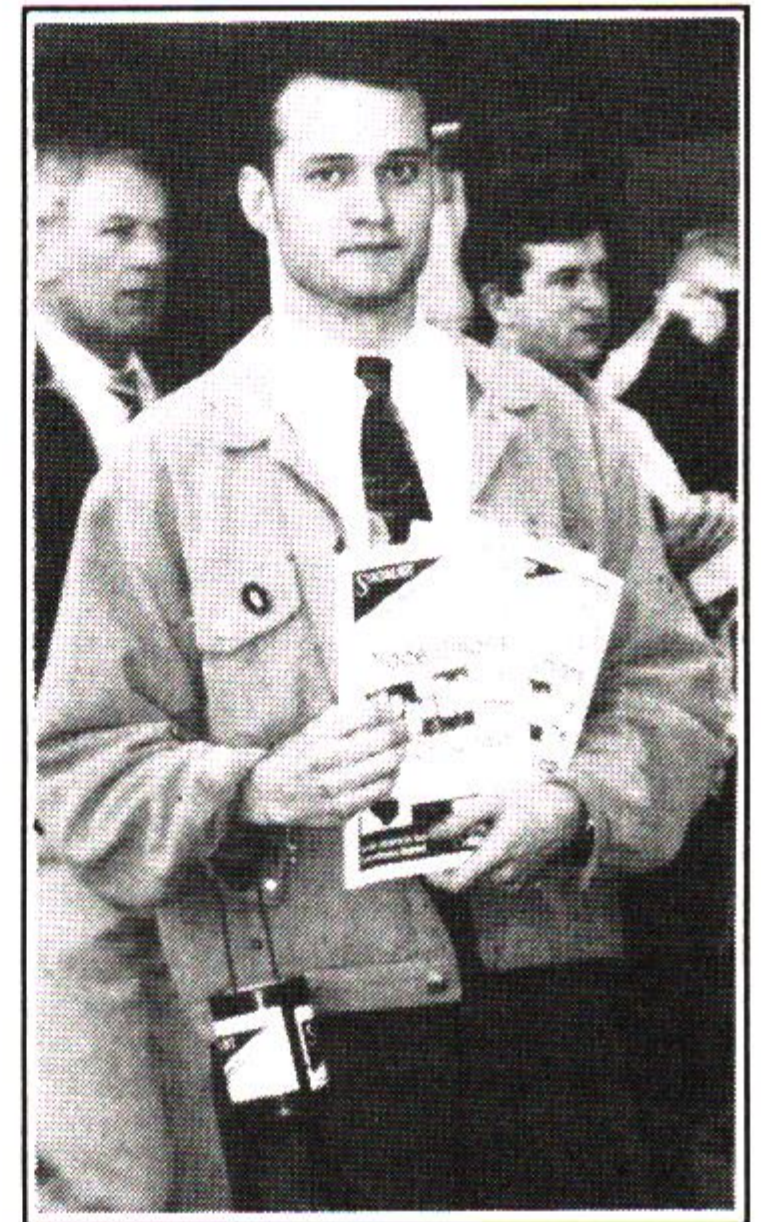
The good weather has seen a number of areas get out on the streets with their journals, stalls around local or national issues, collecting tins and petitions.

Supporters in Tyneside responded to the threatened closure of Swan Hunters with a special supplement. They are currently producing a second edition such has been the response. Socialist Appeal supporters also joined Timex workers on their march and picket line in Dundee, selling copies of both a special supplement and Socialist Appeal. The first round of trade union conferences has also resulted in a number of excellent sales. Over 60 copies were sold at the CPSA conference and sellers have also reported good successes at MSF conference and taxi drivers who won a strike for better conditions featured in last month's issue ordered ten copies. A GPMU member in Walsall has also asked for a bulk order every month to sell at work and in the local Labour Party. Supporters in Southampton reported excellent sales during the local election campaign, where Marxist Keith Morrell was elected as a Labour councillor. Increased sales should also be reflected in an increase in the collections for the Press Fund. During the past month, five special supplements

have been produced for demonstrations, union conferences and local campaigns. All these supplements take up scarce resources and it is vital if we are to ensure the Marxist voice is heard loud and clear by the delegates at this year's trade union conferences that we raise the finance needed to produce bigger and better leaflets and supplements.

Any readers wishing to make a regular donation to our Press Fund can contact the office and ask for a standing order form, which saves you the trouble of posting a donation every month and ensures we have a regular guaranteed income.

Once again many thanks to all those who have donated during the past month.



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The leaders of the top seven capitalist states (G7) meet next month in Tokyo for their annual review of the state of the world capitalist economy and the prospects for the next year. While they will no doubt issue another bland press release full of optimistic forecasts, the politicians remain full of uncertainty and doubt. Michael Roberts reviews the prospects for the world economy in the coming period

World Economy Grinds On

While the US and the other so-called Anglo-Saxon economies of the UK, Canada, Australia and Scandinavia have turned the corner after their longest economic recession since the 1930s, their economic recovery is still weak and faltering. At the same time much of continental Europe (led by Germany) and Japan is now in deepest recession with growth either petering to a halt (France, Italy, Spain, Japan) or in absolute free fall (Germany). This desynchronisation of the capitalist trade cycle has been a feature of the period of downturn since 1975 and it means that any economic recovery in the US is offset by recession elsewhere, so that overall growth in the 26 advanced capitalist economies of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) looks like being not much higher than 1.5%. The G7 leaders' optimism is likely to be directed towards a more general recovery in 1994.

World Recessions

Since 1973 there have now been three major world recessions: 1974-5, 1980-2 and 1990-2. Each has unfolded in a slightly different way. But despite all the attempts of capitalist governments and their experts, they have been unable to avoid what Marx said would be inevitable under the capitalist system of production: boom and slump, prosperity followed by crisis wasting trillions of dollars of resources in closed and unused productive capacity and in throwing millions of skilled human labour onto the scrap heap. What is now clear is that after 1973 capitalism entered a new economic epoch. The last two decades have not been a period of generally uninterrupted growth of production and incomes, of full employment and rising investment and expanding profits like the previous 25 years. Quite the reverse, each recession has seen a vicious spiral of downward profits, investment and production coupled with rising unemployment and bankrupt industries. Just like the 1920s and 1930s, we are now in

an epoch of economic instability, of boom followed by slump, the reassertion of the classical capitalist trade cycle that Marx and Engels first identified nearly 150 years ago and which is an irremovable feature of the capitalist system from the time it first established itself as the dominant economic world system.

The proof of this is in the figures of the capitalist economies themselves. Since 1973, profit rates, investment, productivity, production and trade growth have all been lower or slower than in the period of the long economic upswing of 1948-73.

OECD Economies Record (% Change)

	1960-73	1974-9	1980-9	1990-2
Output	4.9	2.7	2.5	1.6
Investment	7.6	2.3	4.7	0.8
Trade	9.1	2.3	4.5	3.2
Productivity	3.8	1.6	1.8	n/a
Prices	4.1	9.7	5.7	4.1

Source: OECD Economic Outlook December 1992

Above all, at each succeeding peak and trough in the cycle since 1973, unemployment rose to new levels, and at the peak of the last boom (1988-90) it was nearly double (6.5%) the rate that it stood in 1973 (3.4%). **The epoch of full employment under capitalism is increasingly a distant memory for this generation of workers in the OECD states. The current recession is likely to drive OECD unemployment (on official figures) up to a peak of 8.1% in 1994, or close on 35 million out of work.** However, during this epoch of downturn, as well as three recessions, there have been booms. The recession of 1974-5 was followed by the boom of 1976-9; the

recession of 1980-2 was followed by the boom of 1982-90. This current recession is now coming to an end and will be followed by another boom (1993-97??).

The US was one of the first economies to go into the recession. The US economy is still a colossus, but whereas in 1950 it produced over 35% of the world's total GNP, that has now fallen to under 25%. German and Japanese economic power has increased relatively to that of the US, where investment continues to grow slower and also fall as a share of GNP, unlike Japan and Germany.

Real Wages

The boom of 1982-90 in the US was based not on sharp increases in productive capital investment in technique, plant and machinery, but on arms spending, borrowing from abroad and by holding down the real incomes of US workers. In the USA average real wages per hour are now 13% lower than they were in 1973. In this way extra productivity was dragged out of US workers to compensate for the failure of US capitalism to invest. But such methods only create conditions for a more severe recession when the economic climate changes. That is why the US suffered an absolute fall in production in 1991 and now has a very late and weak recovery. In Germany the situation was different. Public spending was kept under control while German capitalists continued to invest heavily in productive capital. The boom was a real one, particularly in the late 1980s. However, once the US and the other Anglo-Saxon economies entered a recession, markets for German exports were restricted. The economy slowed. Then the collapse of stalinism in the East left the German capitalists with a huge problem: how to finance the transformation of East Germany into a part of the capitalist West without provoking the workers of the East into revolt against unemployment and low wages, while at the same time maintaining the incomes of the workers in the West by avoiding large

tax increases. Chancellor Kohl thought he could do this by introducing a huge public spending programme for social security and industrial restructuring in the East, paid for by higher interest rates (and higher saving) and the continuation of the world boom. Once the recession began he could not square the circle. Government borrowing is likely to reach DM 170 billion this year, or 6% of the GDP, much higher than Reagan's borrowing in the 1980s. Taxes have been raised and inflation has accelerated, provoking a wave of strikes in the West. However, the East has not been transformed: unem-



Despite promises of aid, little has improved in Russia

ployment there is soaring, and production is at best stagnant.

Now Germany has entered probably its deepest recession since the 1930s. National output is expected to fall absolutely by 1.5% this year. Industrial output fell nearly 11% in the year to March 1993, while investment was down 16%. By maintaining a strong Deutsche mark through high interest rates, the Bundesbank (the German central bank) has lengthened and deepened the recession because German industry cannot compensate for a declining home market by exporting because its export prices are too high. Moreover German hourly labour costs are now the highest in the OECD, and almost twice that of the UK. **Only massive redundancies, closures of plant and tougher working conditions can put German capitalism back on a competitive footing. That means that unemployment is likely to rise to five million this year (one in seven) and perhaps even seven million by 1995. Economic recovery is certainly delayed until 1994 at the earliest.** In Japan, long the dynamo of world capitalism, the recession also came late. But when it came, it came with a vengeance. Profits and industrial investment fell back by more than 15-20% in the last 12 months. Industry

leaders like Toyota stated that conditions were worse than they were in the recessions of 1974-5 and the early 1980s. For the first time in its history, Sony made a loss on its business operations. The reaction of the highly overinflated Japanese stock market was swift and devastating. Whereas it hardly fell in the great crash of 1987 and quickly recovered, this time, faced with a slump in the real economy, it plunged nearly 80%, wiping out many speculative deals particularly in property. Bankruptcies were up 30%.

The government reacted by introducing two budget packages of tax cuts and lowering interest rates. The stock market is recovering slowly and unsteadily, but so far the economy has not responded, and output growth is likely to be less than 1% this year, and perhaps just

2% in 1994 - by Japanese standards the worst figures since the early 1950s.

Closures and Lay-Offs

However, the world recession is coming to an end and by 1994 most of the advanced capitalist economies should be growing again. **The recession has done its work. Through industry closures and mass unemployment, profit rates have been stabilised and even turned after falling through the recession.** By cutting back on productive capacity and employment, capitalists can lower production costs sufficiently to raise profitability and begin investment anew - of course only after millions are thrown onto the dole and thousands of businesses are closed and many industries in various national economies are shut for good. Such is the "cleansing" process of the capitalist slump - and such is the horrible waste of the capitalist system of production.

The US economy was the first to show signs of recovery from mid-1991, picking up pace during 1992. In the last quarter of 1992 production spurted ahead at an annual rate of over 4.5%. However, that burst appears to have faltered and output grew only 1.5%

annually in the first quarter of 1993. **This is the weakest rate of recovery after a recession that the US has achieved - it usually grows at 6% after a slump in the first few months. It is not enough to stop unemployment rising in the US or provide sufficient markets to stop the continuing slump in industrial production in Germany and Japan. It's two steps forward and one step back.**

So it is likely that 1993 will see little overall recovery in growth over 1992: the OECD predicts just 1.5% for all OECD economies. World trade grew less than 4.5% in 1992, much lower than the average, and it is predicted to rise just under 5% this year. The recession has been extended because the major capitalist economies are at different stages in their trade cycle and it seems that a proper synchronised recovery will be postponed until 1994. But even then overall growth is likely to be under 3%, and it is **becoming increasingly clear that the next recovery is likely to be the weakest since 1948, in other words the slowest in this current epoch of instability.**

This weak boom may last three or four years and then give way to a further recession or perhaps even major slump if a trade war breaks out, say in 1996 or 1997. The best indicators of the length of any new recovery and further recession will be: the level of productivity and investment, the size and growth of profits, whether the rate of profit and the real rate of interest (interest after inflation) are rising or falling, and the extent of the expansion of world trade.

At present those indicators show falls in investment, productivity and profits in Germany and most of Continental Europe plus Japan, with small rises or stagnation in the Anglo-Saxon economies. The real rate of interest is falling in all countries now, while world trade is accelerating slightly. Profitability is expected to rise modestly to about 15% this year. These are signs of a new but weak boom.

Booms and Slumps

This time last year we considered whether there were any long-term factors that could lift capitalism out of this cycle of boom and slump and create new conditions for a sustained economic upswing. First, capitalist commentators have made much of the boost to world markets and capitalism that an agreement between the major capitalist powers in the latest (Uruguay) round of trade talks under GATT could achieve.

Over the post-war period an expanding world economy has enabled capitalist states to reach agreement to cut tariffs on imports at successive meetings of GATT. However, further progress depends on dealing with subsidies and quotas that protect inefficient farmers and textile

producers from more efficient competition - and agriculture (10%), textiles (5%) and services (19%) constitute a sizeable share of world trade. If these subsidies and restrictions were removed, trade could be expanded.

It has been estimated in a detailed survey by some Canadian economists, that if the GATT talks agreed to substantial cuts in agricultural subsidies (70%) and services (20%) then about \$250 billion a year extra production could be generated from world trade, which is equivalent to raising growth rates by one percentage point. However, such a radical agreement is completely ruled out by capitalist governments. Even so, the current negotiating terms would, if met, cut agricultural subsidies by 30% and services by 10%. That could add \$120 billion a year to production, or 0.5% to annual growth rates.

But such a radical reform of agriculture and services would also mean the loss of livelihoods and jobs for millions of farmers and small businesses throughout Europe, Japan and the US. Big business would be boosted at the expense of the small. So each capitalist bloc, North America, Japan and Europe, has stalled on making a deal which could cause widespread social upheaval. Japan alone spends 3.2% of its GNP on subsidising its agricultural sector. If it was to cut that, the government would face mass opposition.

It is now three years since G7 summit leaders promised a deal, and still there is no sign of an agreement. Neither the EC nor the US can afford to concede too much to the other, and now there is a recession they are even more reluctant. And yet because there is recession, capitalist commentators are more insistent that there should be a deal. **It could be that some compromise may be reached which would allow some limited further competition in world trade. If there is not an agreement, then there is every possibility that capitalism could slip into a series of trade wars which could push the world economy into a serious slump.**

This is because it is increasingly the case that the major capitalist trading blocs are looking to strengthen their own spheres of trading influence against the other through regional agreements.

European Market

Capitalists in Europe now talk about the Greater Europe market composed of the EC countries and the old EFTA nations, 380 million people producing \$6.5 trillion and controlling 22% of world trade. The US, Canada and Mexico are presently negotiating for a North American Free Trade Trading Agreement. This would involve 360 million people, producing \$6.2 trillion

and controlling 11% of world trade. And Japanese leaders talk of forming an East Asia Economic Agreement which could encompass 510 million, producing \$3.7 million and controlling 13% of world trade.

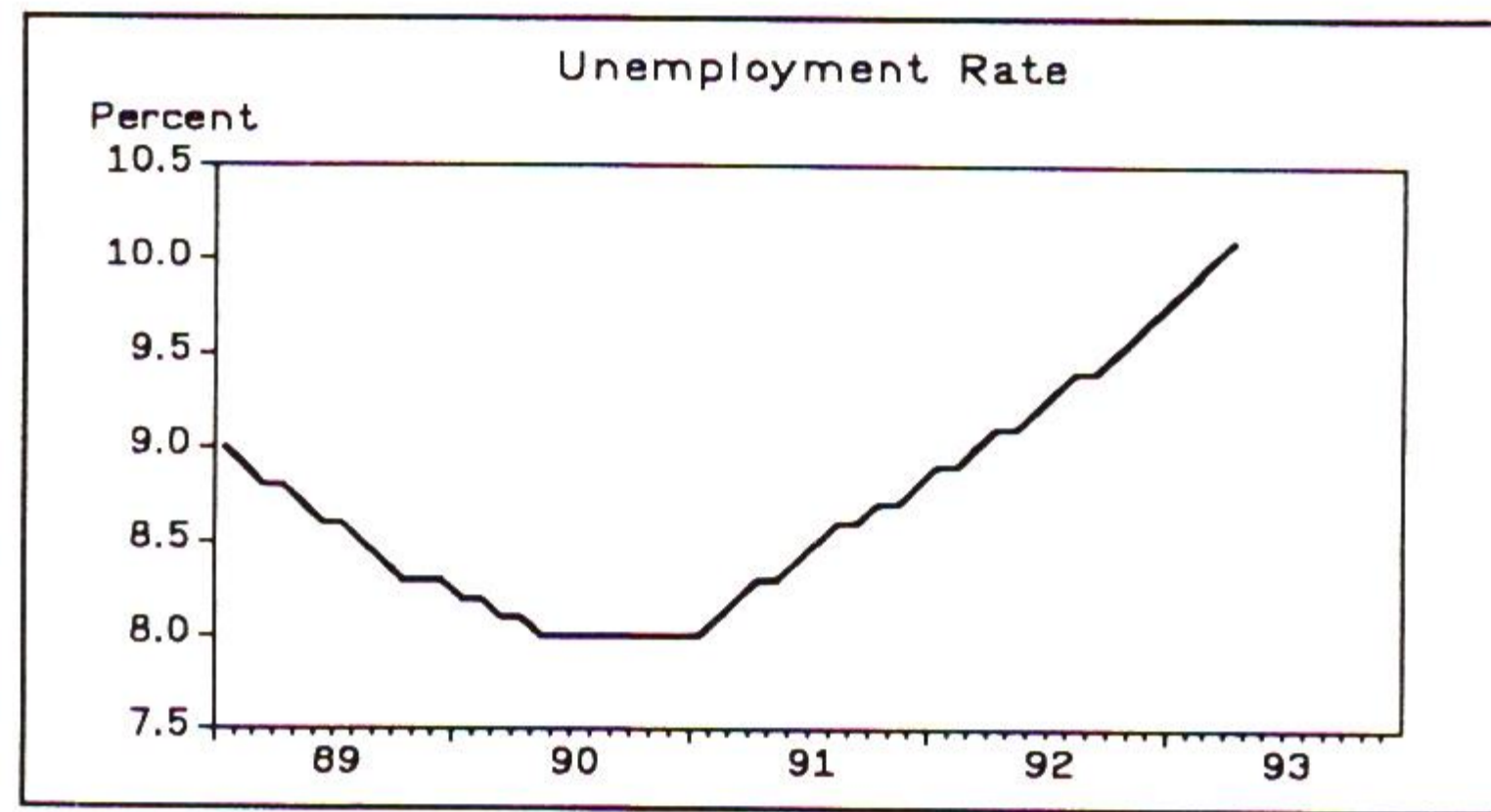
If there is no guarantee for each bloc that it can gain from an ever expanding capitalist world market, it may increasingly move to protecting its own trading bloc from the imports of others. However, so far from being a boost to capitalism overall, regional trade blocs would lower efficiency and reduce world markets. As over 40% of world trade is between the trading blocs, reverting to relying on trade within the regions would seriously damage overall growth of trade. And even within the blocs there are contradictions. Much has been made of the boost to Europe's production and trade that the move to a Single European Market and a single currency could achieve.

Integration

But the interests of each national capitalist state in the EC in an epoch of economic instability are driving apart the attempts to increase integration. The breakup of the ERM, which was supposed to maintain fixed exchange rates as a step towards a single currency, began last September when Britain and Italy were forced to leave the system and devalue, was followed by further devaluations by Spain, Ireland and Portugal.

Monetary union, planned for the end of the century, is a mirage even if every country in the EC adopts the Maastricht treaty after the second Danish referendum. The Maastricht agreement set criteria for each EC economy to achieve in order to bring about a convergence of all the economies: lower inflation, tighter public spending, etc. As of now, very few of the 12 EC economies can meet these criteria and the prospects are not hopeful of them achieving the targets by 1996-7 when greater monetary unity is supposed to begin.

True integration of the EC economies would necessitate a transfer of resources from the richer economies in order to speed up the development of the poorer economies. Also it would involve opening up markets for the products of the impoverished but cheap labour emerging capitalist economies of Eastern Europe. Otherwise trade and investment would merely benefit the large economies and crush the small. It has been



Unemployment is inexorably rising, especially in Europe

estimated that a minimum of 10% of the GNP of the EC economies would have to be redistributed through the EC budget over a decade or more to begin to achieve this. At present only 1% is distributed and recent proposals by EC President Jacques Delors to raise this spending by just 30% over three years was quickly shelved by the EC national governments. At the same time the EC is refusing to allow the import from Eastern Europe of their key exports of steel, textiles and agricultural produce. So the prospect of a super European market or state remains just a pipe dream. In fact, the risk of disintegration has grown sharply, despite the Danish yes vote.

But what of the prospect of new markets for capitalism from the transformation of the old Soviet Union and Eastern Europe into fields for capitalism?

Profitable gains still seem a long way off. The terrible slump in production, investment, employment and trade in all these countries, which began in 1990, remains unabated. The United Nations Economic Commission reports that output has fallen 25% in Eastern Europe in the last two years and is still falling.

Forecasts for Eastern Europe Output (% Chg)

	1991	1992	1993
Czech	-14	-7	-4
Hungary	-12	-5	-2
Poland	-8	0.5	1.0
Bulgaria	-17	-15	-5
Romania	-14	-15	-5

Source: Vienna Institute

Recent studies have shown that to restore the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as profit-

able markets for capitalism would require the transfer of resources from West to East of between \$75 billion to \$167 billion each year for the next decade. The West has so far given just \$12 billion in mainly loans to Russia and the recent package prepared to help Yeltsin stay in power offers at most another \$24 billion over several years. If it fails to invest at the required levels, there is no likelihood that these former planned economies could become profitable markets for the West, except perhaps in a few sectors like oil and gas. And yet the cost of putting these economies on a capitalist footing is just 2% of the OECD's GNP each year, much less than the US transferred to Western Europe under the Marshall Plan after the second world war.

Western Investment

Why does Western capitalism not make the investment, even though it knows it should? For two reasons: first, in a economic epoch of booms and slumps where production growth fluctuates wildly and is now seldom above 3% overall each year, a deduction of 2% from growth rates would be a serious cut. In the case of economies like the UK it would mean cutting living standards to help Russian capitalism. **No Western government can expect to do that and keep social peace at home - look at the strains that German capitalism faces trying to integrate just East Germany.**

Also even if the investments are made it will take a decade or more before the returns in profits can be reaped. As it is much of the money given to Russia has been stolen by corrupt officials and mafia capitalists (although \$12 billion went into Russia last year, over \$15 billion left the country into Swiss bank accounts). Also, there is no guarantee that Western investors can gain real control over the industries they want to invest in. In each Eastern European country the battle to privatise the state-owned sector (still dominant in all) is just being waged. The reaction of workers to mass unemployment that will flow from successful privatisation is still unknown. In Russia, only 20% of the workforce is in the private sector,

which is mostly shops, services and small businesses. In order to privatise the big state-owned firms, the government is planning to give workers share vouchers which they can keep or sell. What worries foreign investors that in most factories the workers plan to keep 51% control.

Where markets are unstable and recessions can occur periodically Western capitalists will consider the risk in investing in Eastern Europe is too great and, on the whole, look for investments could earn a better return elsewhere.

One area where capitalist investors are turning to with enthusiasm has been the fast growing Asian economies on the Pacific rim: Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong. And now in recent years, the Chinese Economic Area (CEA) composed of the stalinist-run China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, has become the fastest growing area in the world. The huge market of China had the world's fastest growth rate last year, 14.5%. Investment was up 70%.

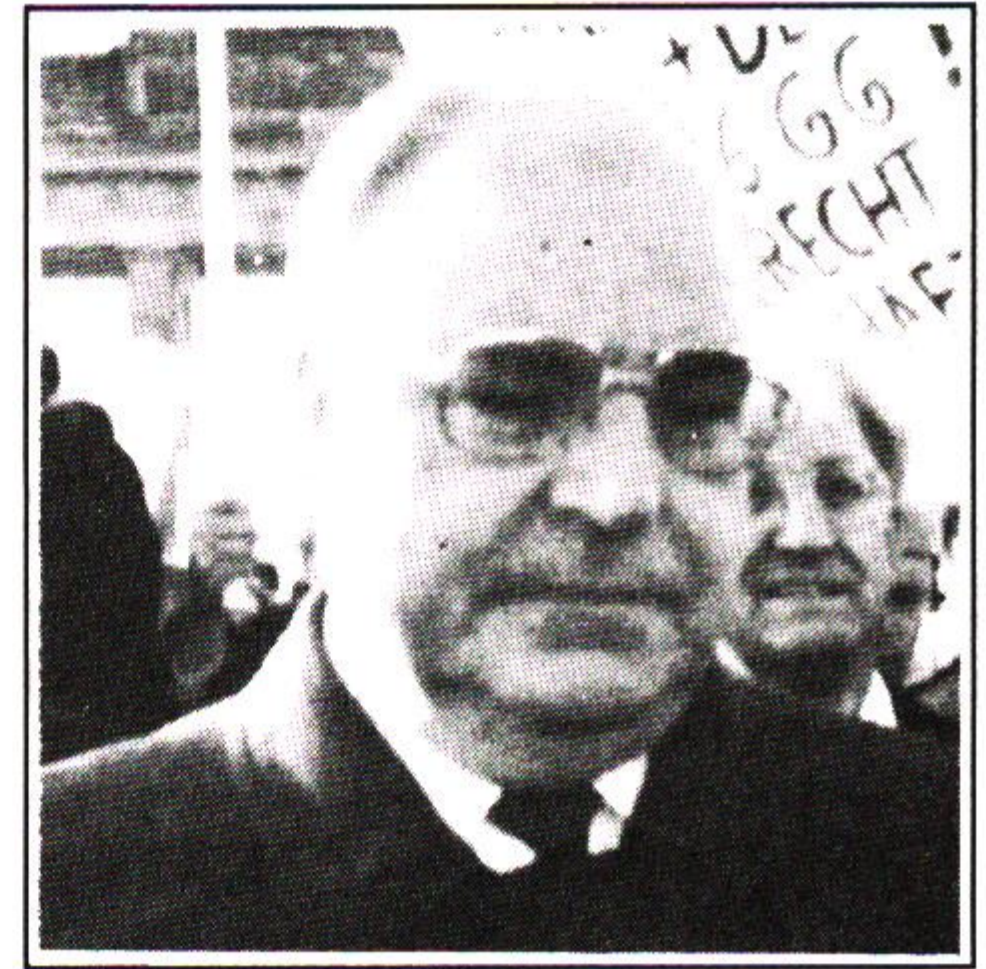
This year growth is still likely to be in double figures. This new dynamism was based on the decision of the stalinist elite in power to break up the centralised state plan and devolve power to the regions. The state monopoly of foreign trade was ended and companies were allowed to trade on their own account.

Chinese Growth

Certain areas, particularly, in Guangdong, a special economic zone next to Hong Kong, were handed lock, stock and barrel over to private foreign investors to exploit the plentiful and cheap Chinese labour and export goods through Hong Kong to the West. Now China has 4.5% of world trade, a share which is still growing.

It would appear that this huge market of 1.5 billion people could become a magnet for capitalist growth and provide a new lease of life for world capitalism. However, there are big problems: most of Chinese industry is still state-owned and more than three-quarters of industrial workers are employed by the state sector on low wages but guaranteed employment. If the government is

really to provide opportunities for capitalist investment they will have to bite the bullet and privatise these sectors. If they do not then the state sector, which is being starved of funds will have to be heavily subsidised and so drive up the budget deficit (which is already rising). This



Chancellor Kohl - facing the deepest recession since the 30s

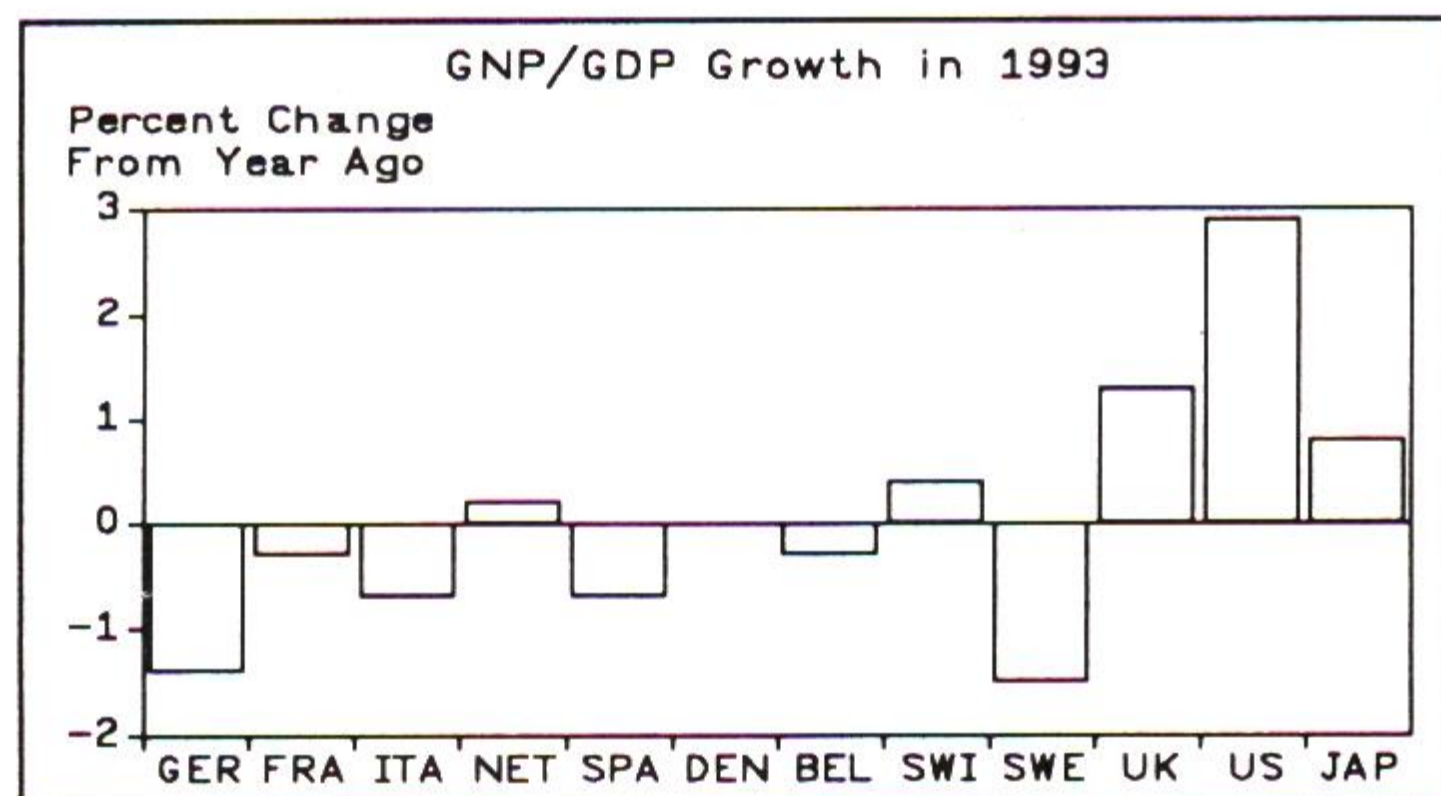
will add to the rising inflation which China is now suffering from because of the uncontrolled burst of credit-financed expansion in the private enterprise zones. Inflation is now at 17% and rising (steel prices rose 137% last year). **Inequalities of wealth and income between regions and workers are sharply increasing. Soon the government will be forced to rein back to profiteers and cut subsidies to the state sector. The reaction of the workers in the large state firms is awaited.**

Instability

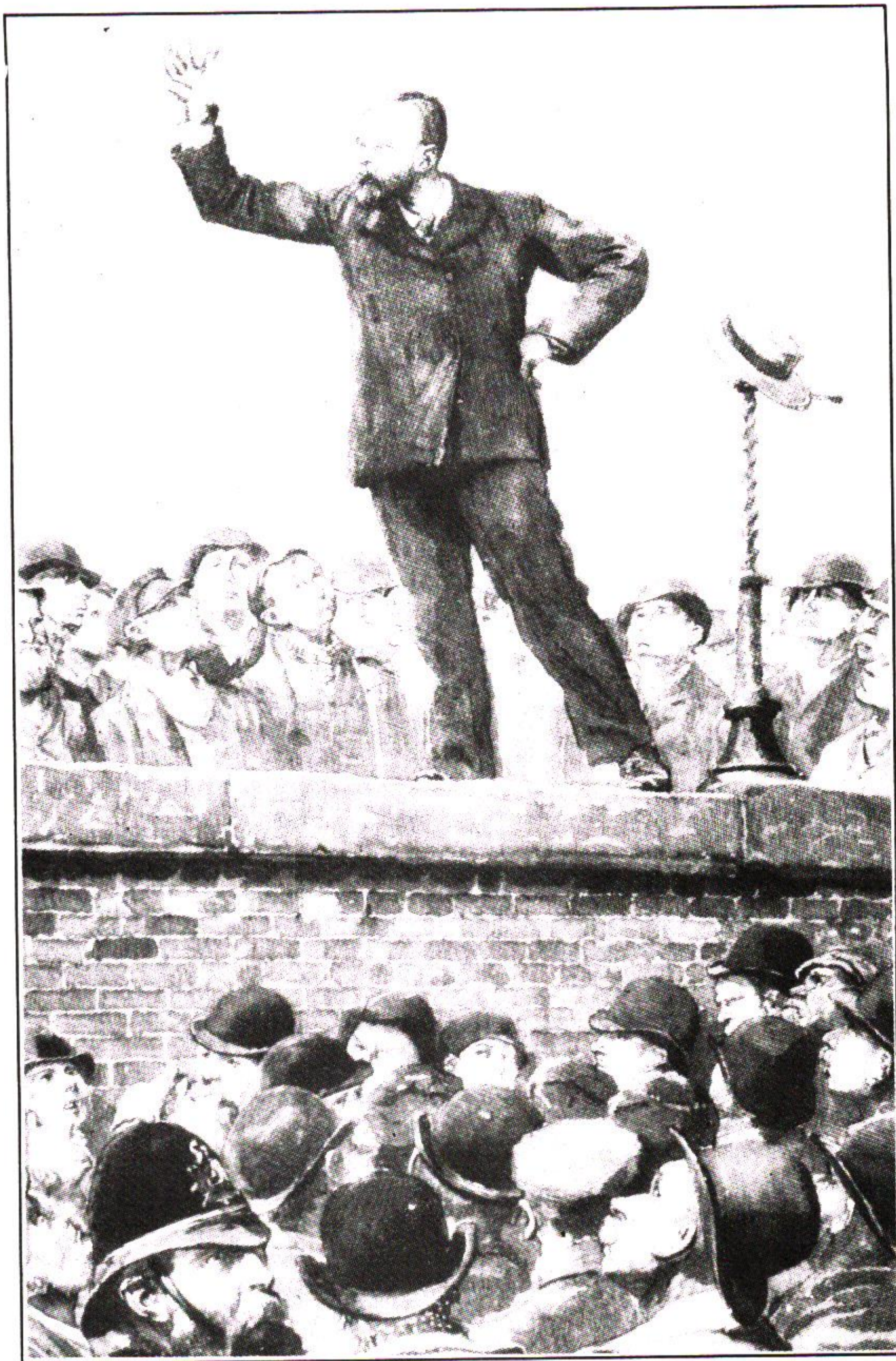
Thus it seems unlikely that capitalism can be set on a new course of sustained prosperity through world trade agreements and the development of the old stalinist states. It is possible that with an agreement at GATT, followed by a new economic boom, the further integration of Europe and North America could continue, especially if the accelerating expansion of production in the Pacific rim is maintained. In turn this could provide the incentive and funds to invest in Eastern Europe which in turn could open up a new phase of capitalist expansion in the 21st century.

However, we are not in an epoch of uninterrupted economic growth, but one of booms and slumps. This instability and fluctuation forces national capitalist states to turn inwards and protect what they have. The next boom will probably be followed by another recession. **Moreover, if the GATT talks fail, this will increase the pressure towards trade wars, which means cutting back on foreign investment and attempting to stave off rising unemployment and falling production by protecting markets at home and reducing integration.**

This is a scenario not for harmonious capitalist progress, but economic slump and social upheaval and mass movements of the working class to end the inequality, waste and destruction of the private profit system.



Growth prospects for most of Europe are poor

In the Cause of Labour:

Towards a Party of Labour

The emergence of 'New Unionism' in the 1890's proved a decisive historical break in the development of the British labour movement. In one year alone, 1889 - 1890, the number of trade union members more than doubled. The organisation of the mass of unskilled workers drew new forces into the movement, revived a thirst for socialist ideas and eventually laid the basis for a new party of organised labour. The stormy developments of the 19th century had begun to transform the working class from a passive exploited mass into a conscious independent force, in the words of Marx, from a "class in itself" into a "class for itself".

Socialists played a key role in the formation of 'New Unionism'. Tom Mann, John Burns, Will Thorne and others pioneered trade unionism amongst the labourers and unskilled on the docks, gas works, transport and other industries. Many of these leading class fighters were members of the Social Democratic Federation, a pseudo-Marxist organisation established in 1881. Although revolutionary in words, the SDF preached a dogmatic sterile type of Marxism detached from the real struggles of the working class.

However, amongst the SDF trade unionists, this approach was largely tempered by the experience of the workers' movement itself.

The sectarianism of the SDF was sharply criticised by both Marx and Engels. In a letter to Sorge in May 1894, Engels explained, "the masses are moving forward", however, "*the SDF here shares with your German - American Socialists the distinction of being the only parties who have contrived to reduce the Marxist theory of development to a rigid orthodoxy. This theory is to be forced down the throats of the workers at once and without development as articles of faith, instead of making the workers raise themselves to its level by dint of their own class instinct. That is why both remain mere sects and, as Hegel says, come from nothing through nothing to nothing.*" Again in a letter to America in January 1895: "*In brief, nothing but sects and no party.*"

Breaking with Liberalism

Marx and Engels, who were living in England, consistently argued for British workers to break from the tail-coats of Liberalism and establish an independent party of labour, even if it hasn't "*theoretically perfectly correct lines.*" This would be rectified by experience itself. In a letter written in December 1886, Engels pointed out, "*The great thing is to get the working class to move as a class; that once obtained, they will soon find the right direction, and all who resist, Henry George or Powderly, will be left out in the cold with small sects of their own.*"

He went on, "*A million or two of working men's votes next November for a bona fide working men's party is worth infinitely more at present than a hundred thousand votes for a doctrinally perfect platform.*" Two months later Engels hammered the point home against sectarianism: "*Had we from 1864-73 insisted on*

working together with those who openly adopted our platform - where should we be today? I think all our practice has shown that it is possible to work along with the general movement of the working class at every one of its stages without giving up or hiding our own distinct position and even organisation, and I am afraid that if the German Americans choose a different line they will commit a great mistake..."

Keir Hardie

In 1888, under the leadership of Keir Hardie, the Scottish Labour Party was formed. At the general election four years later, Hardie, together with Havelock Wilson and John Burns won seats on an independent ticket. Ten other workers were elected as Liberals. Whereas Wilson and Burns made their peace with Liberalism (as some Labour MPs are doing 100 years later), Hardie fought for a new party of labour. At the 1892 TUC he carried a resolution instructing the Parliamentary Committee to draw up a plan for a labour representation fund. Although the decision was reaffirmed in 1893, together with a resolution urging unions to support only candidates pledged to 'the collective ownership and control of the means of production, distribution, and exchange', the Committee dragged its feet.

In the same year, the Independent Labour Party was founded, but the SDF - embroiled in its own sectarianism - remained aloof from this development. In fact a group of SDF delegates did attend, but simply condemned the compromising tactics of the new party, and departed. Nevertheless, ILP trade union activists, headed by Keir Hardie of the Ayrshire miners, targeted union branches and trade councils in order to get a wider audience for their views. The prospects of creating a mass workers' party were promising. For this reason Engels welcomed it. Although the SDF remained on the sidelines, Marxists like Edward Aveling

The ending of Britain's industrial monopoly had brought into being, as Marxists had forecast, a new and revolutionary mass movement.

The problem lay, as on the Continent, in the creation of a mass revolutionary workers' party.

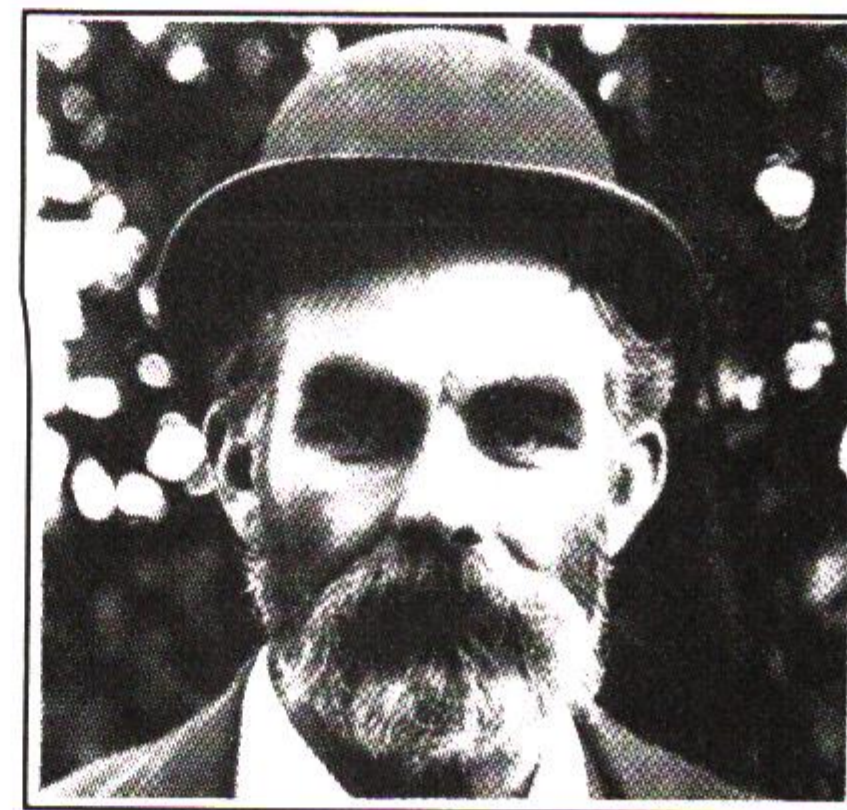
and revolutionary trade unionists like Tom Mann (shortly to become ILP secretary for a time) played a role on its Executive. Unfortunately the ILP proved unable to unify all socialist forces into a single party. The chief weakness of the ILP lay in its theoretical confusion; above all its rejection of Marxism and the class struggle. As a result the party soon veered towards opportunism and attracted liberal careerists like Ramsey MacDonald and Philip Snowden into its leadership. In the general election of 1895, the ILP put up 28 candidates, the SDF 5; all were defeated, including Keir Hardie in West Ham.

Mass Movements

The ending of Britain's industrial monopoly had brought into being, as the Marxists had forecast, a new and revolutionary mass movement. At every stage, this perspective as expressed particularly by Engels had proved correct. The problem lay, as on the Continent, in the creation of a mass revolutionary Workers' Party. What was lacking according to Engels was a trained cadre capable of welding all this potential together: "The mass instinct that the workers must form a Party of their own," he wrote in May 1894, "against the two official Parties is getting stronger and stronger: again showed itself more than ever in the municipal elections of November 1. But the old traditional memories of various kinds, and the lack of people able to turn this instinct into conscious action and to rally it together all over the country... The SDF has managed to transform our theory into the rigid dogma of an orthodox sect, is narrow-mindedly exclusive. The ILP is extremely uncertain in its tactics, and its leader Keir Hardie is a more than crafty Scot." He also stated that if it were possible to gather together "a kernel of people who have good theoretical understanding, much will be gained for a genuine mass movement."

Although there was a small nucleus around Engels, their lack of theoretical ability led them off the rails after Engels died in 1895, and the wreck of Eleanor Marx's life led to her tragic suicide three years later. Edward Aveling did not long survive her. This tragedy eliminated the key personnel of the Marxist leadership in Britain. The working class moved on towards the creation of a mass party of labour, but with a leadership not based on class struggle but opportunism. The revolutionary socialists around the SDF who could have provided the revolutionary leaven to the movement, remained in splendid isolation.

The decisive impetus for independent Labour politics in these years came from a reaction to the attacks from the bosses. A series of lock-outs and battles were followed by a turn by the employers towards legal action to



John Burns

cripple trade unionism.

Despite the legal guarantees contained in the 1871 and 1875 Acts, new judgements were made by the courts throughout the 1890's which challenged in particular peaceful picketing and the protection from liability for damages. The formation of the new general employers' organisation, the Employers Parliamentary Council, which agitated for action against the unions, pushed the TUC further down the road of political independence.

Independent Representation

The 1899 Plymouth TUC passed an historic resolution from the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants calling on the Parliamentary Committee to join with the Socialist societies and cooperative societies in summoning a special conference to discuss independent labour representation. The card vote was won by 546,000 to 434,000, with the miners and cotton unions abstaining. In February 1900, delegates representing trade unions, ILP, SDF and Fabians met at the Memorial Hall, London. It decided to establish the Labour Representation Committee. In the words of the Socialist weekly, the Clarion, it was "a little cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, which may grow into a United Labour Party. Lenin, writing a few years later believed the formation of the Labour Party "represents the first step on the part of the really proletarian organisations of Britain towards a conscious class policy and towards a socialist workers' party." (Lenin on Britain, p 112.).

Again referring to Engels' letters he states, "These lessons of Engels's have been corroborated by the subsequent development of events, when the British trade unions, insular, aristocratic, philistinely selfish, and hostile to socialism, which have produced a number of outright traitors to the working class who have sold themselves to the bourgeoisie for ministerial posts (like the scoundrel John Burns), have nevertheless begun to move towards socialism, awkwardly, inconsistently, in zig-zag fashion, but are still moving towards socialism." (ibid., p114)

The founding LRC conference represented three tendencies. John Burn, now travelling on a road that would end in a post in the Liberal Cabinet, defended class collaboration with the Liberal/Radicals. "I am getting tired", he said, "of working class boots, working class brains, working class houses and working class margarine." He continued, "I believe the time has arrived when we should not be prisoners to class prejudice." The views of the ILP were expressed by Hardie and others. They opposed an alliance with the Liberals, and advocated a formal trade union - socialist alliance, where in effect the unions put up the money and the socialists would promote the cause. Harry Quelch for the SDF opposed all this. Nothing but a class conscious Socialist Party was needed, with no truck of any kind with Liberalism. The ILP viewpoint prevailed, and the SDF, having failed to get its resolution on public ownership adopted, withdrew the following year, leaving the field clear for the ILP. James Ramsey MacDonald, who had recently exchanged Liberalism for the ILP was newly appointed secretary.

Union Affiliations

Despite the founding of the LRC, many unions held back their affiliations. At the general election of 1900, the LRC only fielded 15 candidates, two of whom were successful: Keir Hardie (Merthyr) and Richard Bell (Derby). The Tories secured a large majority at the expense of the Liberals and 'Lib-Labs'. However a dramatic change in the situation was to occur that was to prove decisive. In August 1900, a strike broke out over victimisation on the Taff Vale railway in South Wales, which secured the official backing of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. Richard Bell, general secretary, went down to Cardiff to organise the picketing against scab labour. Tracks were greased, trucks uncoupled and locomotive engines put out of action. Furious employers plotted with the strike-breaking National Free Labour Association and the Employers Parliamentary Council to smash the strike and take out an injunction against the union, which was duly granted. Although the strike was settled by mediation after only eleven days, the employers successfully sued for damages against the union to the tune of around £30,000. This infamous Taff Vale judgement of July 1901 was a "judicial coup d'état", in effect destroying the entire legal right of trade unions as established by the Acts of 1871 - 76, and to make strikes to all intents and purposes illegal. There was alarm at the Swansea TUC in August, where John Hodge, secretary of the Steel Smelters, had

declared he had "made over his little possessions to his wife by deed of gift". The result was affiliations to the LRC jumped by 100,000 within a year, and in 1902-3 practically doubled. This was the chosen moment that the SDF sectarians left the LRC!

In the following few years the LRC scored a number of victories at by-elections. However, at the general election of 1906, to the horror of the ruling class, where fifty Labour candidates were fielded, no less than 29 were returned. This number was later boosted to 40 by an order by the Miners' Federation instructing its 'Lib-Lab' to join the newcomers. The Labour Party was firmly established. The new Liberal government, in an attempt to placate Labour, redressed the legal position with the passage of the Trades Dispute Act (1906), which absolved the unions of any legal responsibility for civil damages in strikes, and ensured the legality of picketing. The Taff Vale judgement was dead. Under pressure from Labour, the Liberal Government of Lloyd George enacted a number of reforms on pensions, unemployment and health insurance, minimum wage and eight hour day for miners, etc., which bound the Labour Party in these years close to the Liberals. In fact it was not until 1908, that the Labour Party Conference in Hull passed a resolution adopting socialist objectives.

Class Gulf Widens

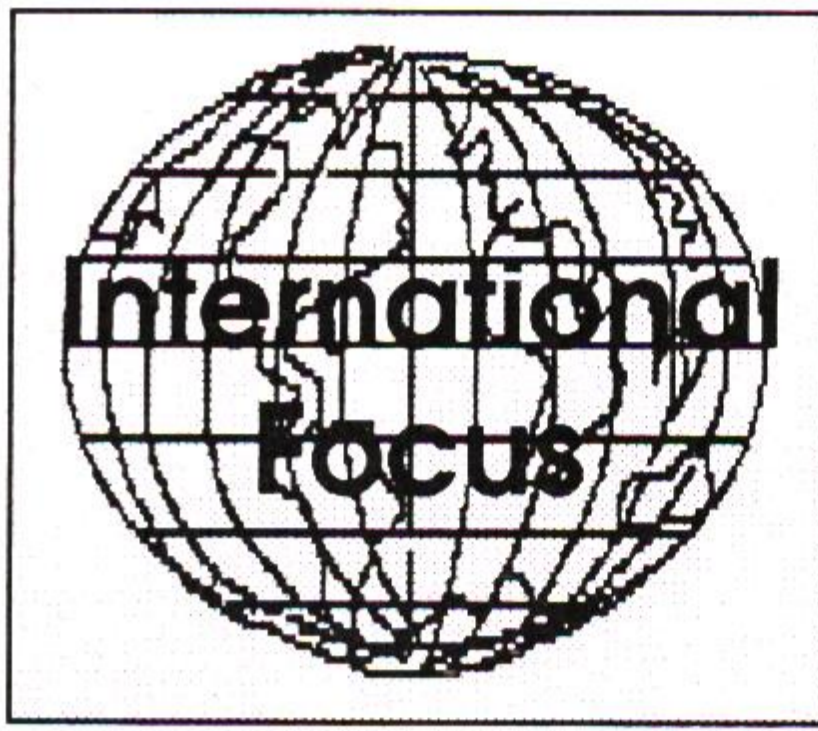
Despite Liberal reforms, the social gulf between the classes was continuing to widen. In a study by Chiozza Money entitled *Riches and Poverty* (1905), out of a population of 43,000,000 no less than 38,000,000 were categorised as poor. Wages between 1900 and 1908 had increased by only 1%, while the cost of living rose steadily. Under these conditions strikes developed across the board. A strike of music hall employees won union recognition and improved conditions in February 1907, after business was stopped by 2,500 pickets. Engineers struck for seven months, and shipwrights and joiners for nearly five months over wage cuts. In Belfast, a docks strike led by Jim Larkin and James Connolly, united Catholic and Protestant workers, practically culminated in civil war when 10,000 troops were called out to break the strike. The ruling class, fearful of the growing strength and confidence of organised labour, attempted to undermine the Labour Party through its finances. In 1909, another legal



Coal workers join a union demonstration through London

attack was undertaken against the rights of trade unions to political representation. A Liberal trade unionist, W. V. Osborne, with the full backing of the employers, took legal action against the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, for using its funds for political purposes. After success in the Appeal Court, the matter was taken to the House of Lords. The Law Lords upheld the appeal and declared in the Osborne Judgement that it was illegal for trade unions to finance Labour candidates or indeed any political objective. This served to cripple the Labour Party. There was no payment for MPs at this time. Immediately following the judgement, injunctions were issued against no fewer than 22 unions forbidding them to continue their political activities. By borrowing and scraping donations together, the Labour Party managed to fight the two 1910 general elections. It was not until 1913 that the Liberal government finally acceded to demands for new legislation to redress the situation. Even then, the Trade Union (Amendment) Act placed all kinds of restrictions and regulations in the unions financing the Labour Party. There needed to be a ballot of members, a special political fund had to be established, and any objector could 'contract out' of paying the fund. Despite these attacks on organised labour, trade union membership had grown to two and a half million by 1910. However, the Lib-Lab approach of the parliamentary leadership, together with the class collaboration of the trade union leaders, led to growing discontent amongst the rank and file. This frustration led to a growth of syndicalist ideas in many unions, of a rejection of political parties and the erroneous belief that trade union action alone was sufficient to solve the problems of the working class. Nevertheless, this firmness in the ranks of the unions proved to be the precursor to the biggest revolutionary upsurge of the British working class. A stormy period of bitter industrial conflict opened up known in Labour history as the 'Great Unrest'.

By Rob Sewell



Sindh has seen a period of communal and ethnic violence, discrimination and continuing poverty. International focus looks at prospects for the region and puts forward a class programme to tackle the region's problems

Class Unity the Only Answer to Sindh's Crisis

On the eve of the first visit of the newly appointed Military Chief, army-controlled Hyderabad was rocked by at least seven bomb explosions.

These explosions resulted in the death of 32 people and hundreds were injured. That night was a nightmare for the people of Hyderabad, Sindh's second largest city after Karachi. The wailing sirens of ambulances and the speeding, armed military vehicles presented a picture like a foreign invasion. Fear of the outbreak of another communal blood bath loomed large over the city. The facade of success of the Sindh Military Operation had been shattered. Terrorism and violence had hit the streets again.

Communal Violence

Communal and ethnic conflict are not new to Hyderabad and the rest of Sindh. For almost a decade Hyderabad has faced more violence and bloodshed than in the whole of its previous history. Murders, kidnapping, genocide, looting and arson have been the order of the day since the mid-80s. Hyderabad, Karachi and other cities have seen a rapid rise in drug abuse and a deteriorating infrastructure which has led to a severe social crisis.

Hyderabad seems to be sinking in dirt as heaps of garbage pile up. In working class areas in Karachi and other Sindh towns and cities clean water, sewage facilities, proper education and health care are luxuries for the few. These social conditions have created a cesspool of insoluble contradictions. **In the absence of a clear solution and lack of a perspective amongst the working people of the region, a seemingly unending bout of violence and bloodshed has been unleashed.** But the roots go much deeper, historically and socially, than just the present crisis.

The cities of Sindh have a very high concentration of industry, yet the province is so backward that in large areas people live in nomadic conditions. The Sindh population is divided on national, communal, ethnic and lingual lines. Sindh is a graphic illustration of the uneven and combined nature of capitalist development. Most workers in the industries of Sindh are non-Sindhis. In the cities non-Sindhis outnumber native Sindhis by a vast margin. Today there is widespread fear amongst the Sindh population of becoming a minority in their own land. This feeling of nationalistic deprivation and exploitation has given impetus to a resurgence of the national question, especially during the past two decades.

The increase in population in Pakistan as a whole

in the last ten years has been about 3.2% p.a., while that of Karachi was 5.7%. The total inter-provincial migration between 1980-85 was 1.8 million - of this 1.1 million ended up in the Sindh. Since 1991 the influx has grown even faster. According to the Pakistan Foreign Office in January there were 600,000 "illegal" Indians living in Karachi as well as Sri Lankans, Bengalis and Phillipinos.

Apart from the "migration" question, the political and economic exploitation of the Sindh by the ruling Pakistani state, dominated by Punjabi, Mohajir and to some extent Pushtun elites has led to an increased nationalist exploitation of the Sindhis since the creation of Pakistan.

Initially the huge influx of Mohajirs from India as a result of partition in 1947 went to Karachi and Sindh. As far back as 1948 the Mohajir elite came up with the idea of making Karachi a separate province. But this provoked demonstrations and street protests as a result of which the Assembly had to pass a resolution against it and withdraw the proposal.

Exploitation

In 1956 the Karachi Syndicate rejected Sindhi as the language for examinations and closed down the Sindhi department in the University of Karachi. (1300 Sindhi schools had already been closed down in 1948.) Even under the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) government in 1975, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, the then chief minister of Sindh banned 35 Sindhi magazines to appease the ruling elite.

In 1957, the non-Sindhi bureaucracy started handing over large portions of land to non-Sindhi civilian and military officers. Today, over 35% of irrigated land around Sukkur, Guddu and Kotri barrages is owned by non-Sindhis.

Government expenditure on the provinces has also heavily discriminated against the Sindh, in spite of the fact the government receives higher revenues from Sindh, not only from its industrial and agrarian production but also from its natural resources, coal and gas.

Within the armed forces and the Punjabi dominated state, the discrimination against Sindhis reached racist proportions. The upsurge of 1968, which was on a class basis and led by a Sindhi, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, left an impact of hatred in the minds of the Pakistani ruling elite. The assassination of Z.A. Bhutto by General Zia ul Haq also aggravated the feeling of national oppression and deprivation amongst the people of Sindh. The 1983 and 1986 movements against the dictatorship were especially strong in the Sindh interior mainly due to the nationalistic overtones in the repression by Zia ul Haq's military police dictatorship.

But the national liberation movement in Sindh has also been incoherent, diverse and confused. **The movement has been a victim of splits and internal conflicts both due to the nature of the objective realities into which Sindh has entered and the lack of a clear programme and perspectives by the nationalist leadership in Sindh.**

It is ironic that the first Assembly in Pre-partition



Transport workers in Karachi strike against communal murders

India to take a decision to accede to Pakistan was the Sind Assembly.

However, things changed after partition. The generalised hatred against the national oppression by the Pakistani ruling elite started to forge, over the years, the Jeeay Sindh, a broad-based front with fluctuating demands from partial autonomy to full independence for Sindh.

Sindhi Nationalists

The movement continued throughout the 50s and 60s but it had not yet become a serious threat to the Pakistani state. However, Z.A. Bhutto's assassination and the army's brutal repression in Sindh after 1977 proved to be a turning point for Sindh nationalism.

Although Jeeay Sindh was a broad-based movement, many organised groupings and parties, mainly with Stalinist leaderships, emerged and tried to dissolve themselves into the nationalist movement on the basis of their Stalinist two stages theory. There also developed strong nationalist currents within the PPP in Sindh. For example, it still has two student wings in Sindh - one is the SPAF which is totally Sindhi dominated and the other is the PSF Sind which has members from various nationalities.

The Sindhi ruling classes, with their own grievances with the Punjabi-Mohajir-Pushtun ruling elite, joined the fray of Sindhi nationalism to keep their own control and use it as a bargaining card. Various alliances emerged during 1980 to forge a unity in the national movement and the SNA (Sindh National Alliance) was formed in the early 80s. The left leaders, seeing the leadership being taken over by the Sindhi landlords and capitalists rebelled to form the SPNA (Sindh Peoples National Alliance). But during the 80s the national movement was unable to take off in spite of strong nationalist currents due to a number of reasons, chief among them:

- The influx of the non-Sindhi population changed the demographic ratio in the province to such an extent that any movement in Sindh could not ignore non-Sindhi workers.
- The diverse Sindhi leadership could not determine relations with other ethnic groups. There were widespread differences about the inclusion of peoples of different nationalities.
- The relations with the federation and the state were not resolved nor was there any unanimity of the destination of the struggle or movement. Ideas ranged from autonomy, to self-determination to confederation, secession and independence.
- The most important question was, and is, the class question. The experience of struggle and resistance against the army had created a radicalisation in Sindh. In the 70s and early 80s the left was strongest in Sindh. **Whenever an alliance on Sindhi nationalism was forged, the class question came up, and the cadres and activists of left parties, even with Stalinist/Maoist leaderships would not tolerate the Sindhi landlords and capitalists.** Sooner or later the class conflict would emerge and the alliances would be broken. The exploitation of



Troops and police charge during ethnic violence

Sindhi landlords was too stark and brutal to be ignored. When the class question emerged, the linkage, not only with the non-Sindhi workers in Sindh but also with the peasants and workers in Punjab and elsewhere would come to the fore. **How could Sindhi workers alone develop a movement on class lines when they worked with Punjabi, Mohajir, Pushtun and other non-Sindhi workers in the factories and farms.**

Hence the national movement has been unable to gain a mass basis amongst the working class. It has been mainly based amongst the Sindhi intelligentsia, students, certain layers of the petty bourgeoisie, peasants and Sindhi landlords and capitalists. Time and again these landlords and capitalists have betrayed the movement when their interests were fulfilled by striking compromises with the Punjabi rulers at provincial or federal levels. Different nationalist leaders joined hands with Zia ul Haq, Jam Sadiq, Nawaz Sharif and other reactionaries.

This led to further splits amongst the Sindhi intellectuals and various factions of the Jeeay Sindh and other nationalist organisations. The frustrations amongst the youth led them either to terrorism or opportunism. The formation of the Jeeay Sindh Mahaz, the Jeeay Sindh Taraqi Pasand Partu (JSTPP) and other organisations are the result of the same process. **But again these organisations face the dilemma - on what basis to achieve the national liberation of Sindh?**

National Liberation

Another aspect of the national movement has been the illusion that independence could be achieved through the support of India. With the collapse of Stalinism and the emergence of US imperialism as a promoter of "democracy", not only the bourgeois nationalists but also the ex-left nationalists are now seeking US support for Sindh's "independence".

They try to argue that a conflict is developing between the Pakistani theocratic state and US imperialism. This argument is as absurd as that of "Indian support" for Sindh's liberation. The Indian ruling class has imperialist designs in the

region. **Even if Sindh is liberated from the Pakistani ruling elite, it would be stranded in the yoke of Indian imperialism. The same goes for US imperialism whose only interest in the so-called New World Order is to develop its vested interests and enhance its exploitation of the colonial world. Sindh would remain a part of the colonial world and a victim of US imperialism, even if it gets its "independence".** With the increasing socio-economic and political crisis the national question in Sindh cannot be resolved without the active participation of the workers of all ethnic and linguistic groups in Sindh.

The story of the MQM is far from over. The main objective of military action against the MQM was to curb down its excesses which were going even beyond the control of its mentors. At the same time the army operation has tried to develop a new, moderate and more subservient MQM which could be used for the purposes of state intervention to break up a class movement on communal and ethnic lines. Those MQM terrorists who subscribed to the policies of the army were exonerated and rehabilitated by the military operation. The MQM arose from the lull and disarray in the working class due to its inability to capture power in the wake of the 1968-9 revolution. The degeneration of the working class and trade union leaders along nationalist lines created a mess in Karachi and Hyderabad where the forces of reaction like MQM were unleashed. Basing themselves on stirring up communal and ethnic antagonisms, the petty bourgeois MQM leaders fully exploited the widespread alienation amongst the Mohajir population. **When the way forward on a class basis was blocked the overwhelming majority of Mohajir youth plagued by unemployment and poverty turned towards Mohajir nationalism.** The majority of Sindhi, Balochi and Pushtun "left" leaders presented themselves as die-hard nationalists. The Mohajir "left" leaders also subscribed to this narrow nationalism. The first youth who formed the APMSO (All Pakistan Mohajir Students Organisation) the predecessor of MQM, were from opposite ends of the political spectrum - the left wing NSF

(National Students Federation) members and activists of the fundamentalist IJT. Whipping up nationalist fervour, the MQM leadership built a rapid base amongst the Mohajir population of Sindh. A siege mentality was developed amongst the Mohajir community. Fascist tendencies developed rapidly and armed wings were propped up by the leaders to terrorise other communities and crush dissent which surfaced over the MQM torture cells. A number of the gangsters running those cells are now being patronised by the army after switching loyalties. The armed forces and intelligence agencies have played a not insignificant role in sponsoring, organising and constructing the MQM.

By 1990 the MQM leaders were fully entrenched in the echelons of power. They controlled Hyderabad and Karachi almost totally. However, the main slogan of MQM - rights or death - became pushed to the back as the petty bourgeois mayors, ministers and MPs made a meteoric rise to power. They used their positions to

amass wealth and carried out an orgy of corruption. MQM promises of an end to unemployment among Mohajir youth, of "cleansings" in Karachi and Hyderabad and other "advances" proved to be empty. Their support started dwindling and the Mafia style internal control began to crack. Dissent first appeared in Hyderabad during 1990. Later it took the organised form of the Haqqiqi group. If there is any difference between the two groups, it is only in the intensity of their narrow Mohajir nationalism.

The hatred among even the Mohajir population towards MQM gangsters had crossed the rubicon and before the military operation the MQM was on its way out. **In reality the army intervened to salvage it. And the army's excesses may have given a new lease of life to a section of the MQM.** In the absence of a class movement the MQM could continue its violence both in internal and external communal conflicts. The state will also use it to curb the class struggle in the next period.

The PPP is by far the largest player in Sindh. Not only does it command vast support in the Sindh interior but in the 1990 elections it came second in the urban areas of Sindh behind the MQM. Any concerted move against the Islamabad regime expands and rejuvenates support for the PPP. The party's support comes from the fact that it is lead by the Bhuttos, a Sindhi family, but

also, and more importantly, because it is the symbol of protest against the establishment and class rule. In spite of the participation of various left wing organisations in the 1983 and 86 movements the credit went to the PPP. Its traditional character emerged from the 1968-9 revolution. In a way its support also represents the mass nostalgia for those revolutionary events which had brought power into the factories, streets and villages. Bhutto became the personification of that movement.

PPP Programme

The PPP's partial merging into the structures of the ruling state dented this support but the state attacks on the PPP in the subsequent period and assassination of ZA Bhutto revitalised the support.

In spite of the imposition of landlords and capitalists on the helm of party affairs, the bonapartist leadership of the party has to adopt a radical stance on both class and national questions in response to pressures from below. Although the leadership continually tries to pose a moderate or social-democratic position in essence its support is based on the revolutionary or socialist aspirations of the party rank and file and its history. All the efforts of the leadership to water down the party's programme and recent compromises with the IJI government and right wing parties only results in pacification and erosion of the party's support.

The fate of Sindh and for that matter Pakistan is linked with that of the PPP. Another PPP term of office, which under existing conditions would only be granted as part of a national government, eighth amendment, or any other constitutional jargon, will be a turning point in the perspectives for Pakistan. Failure to deliver the goods or to fulfil the aspirations of the masses would inflict a major blow to its traditional support.

A new wave of radical nationalism could erupt in Sindh. Real splits could develop in the PPP Sindh and the base of support for the Sindhi nationalists could expand rapidly. This could initially develop amongst the intelligentsia and youth. **But a movement based on purely nationalistic lines could invoke a communal blood bath of proportions yet unforeseen in Sindh.** The advance of such a movement could even lead to the secession of Sindh and the unprecedented horrors of civil war, genocide and pogroms. Sindh is riddled with weapons and ammunition. The army would be unable to cope with the situation. A similar wave of nationalist reaction could be seen in other areas. Capitalism is incapable of carrying through the development of the infrastructure and basic facilities which could improve the living standards and

quality of life in the slums, shanty towns and villages of Sindh. A PPP government could attempt reforms but with the present economic constraints their attempts will come to nothing. The social democratic reforms policy in a colonial country being crushed by imperialist exploitation and heavy military expenditure cannot work. The reform programme is more a self-deception on the part of the leadership than any serious attempt to solve the impending catastrophe.

The conflagration of the national conflict into a full scale civil war can only be averted by a revolutionary programme. On one hand the right of self-determination of Sindhis should be supported against the nationalist oppression by the Pakistani ruling elite in Islamabad. This should be accompanied with the demand for equal rights for Mohajirs, Punjabis and Pushtoons and other ethnic and national minorities in Sindh.

On the other hand this should be subservient to a revolutionary programme of class struggle. The aim should be to unify the workers and peasants of all ethnic groups in Sindh.

Class Unity

The only option left for the emancipation of the people in Sindh and elsewhere is a class unity. No other form of unity is possible.

Religion has failed to provide a basis of national unification in Pakistan. Nor can the military bureaucratic state machine hold together the various nationalities in Pakistan through repression and state terror. Neither would the secession of Sindh solve any of the problems of the working class leaving it at the mercy of the capitalists and imperialists.

But to forge class unity a clear programme is vital. A programme which guarantees health, education, electric, gas, clean water, and other infrastructural facilities along with national, cultural, democratic and linguistic rights, linked to the overthrow of the capitalist/ landlord system of exploitation and imperialist domination is vital. The expropriation of finance capital, landed estates, imperialist loans and assets will have to be carried through to provide funds for the development of society on a modern basis. Nothing less than the socialist revolution is necessary to accomplish this historic task.

The only force capable of doing this is the PPP. But to carry it through the party will have to base itself not on the programme of social democracy but on its founding programme (which contains the demands listed above).

Time and again the class movement in Sindh and elsewhere has cut across all ethnic and national divisions and rivalries. It has emerged into the arena of history to transform its own destiny and change society.

This transformation was only prevented by the lack of revolutionary leadership and a party organised on the basis of democratic centralism. Such movements will re-emerge. It is a universal law. But to fulfil its goal, the traditional party of the masses, the PPP will have to be transformed

Lal Khan

Lest We Forget

Raymond Challinor - A Radical Lawyer in Victorian England: WP Roberts and the Struggle for Workers Rights

If ever a book was undersold by its title, this must be it. W.P. Roberts has never been entirely forgotten for his struggles - he appears at the Durham Miners' Gala every year on the Monkwearmouth Miners' lodge banner - but neither is he really "known".

His contributions to Chartism, the miners' cause, the post-Chartist development of the labour movement, as a lawyer to Marx and Engels, and defender of the Fenian martyrs all require recognition - and this book more than adequately achieves it.

Reviewed by Ian Hunter

But as with all the best biographies, this is far more than just a biography, for the life of W.P. Roberts provides a unique insight into the continuum of experience of the working class in 19th century Britain. Trotsky, pointed out that immense lessons were to be learned from the experiences of the Chartists. These lessons, particularly of the class nature of the British state and legal system, are part of what Challinor draws out, and the passage of over a century has not made these lessons any less relevant today.

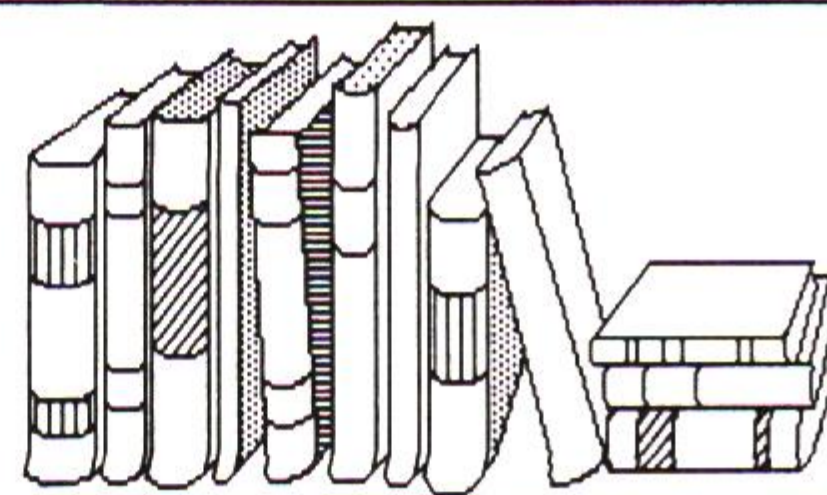
Distortions

Probably no subject in British history has suffered more distortion than that of the early nineteenth century labour struggles. The political hiatus of the mid-century provided a sufficient break of continuity for the later Fabian and reformist currents to deny and bury the revolutionary traditions of 1848. The descendants of the very fighters, who had not just stood side by side with Marx and Engels, but from whom Marx and Engels had learned so much, were told that revolution, class struggle and Marxism were alien and foreign imports. Roberts in his later years (he died in 1871) was one of the few who were in a position to ensure that these trends did not go unchallenged. Pre-1880s labour history has been belittled. We are presented with early trade union leaders, Luddites, Tolpuddle Martyrs, the Factory and anti-Poor Law movements, Chartism and the New Model Unions. Rarely are the connections made between the earlier and later struggles, and Chartism in particular suffers from this, even though the latest biographer of the "moderate" Lovett has to concede that it can only be understood as part of a

movement for power, class power, and not merely for abstract rights. Even more damagingly absent from the massive accumulation of "labourist" detail has been the link between the demise of Chartism and the rise of New Model unionism. In Chapter Two, "The Rise of Physical Force Toryism", Challinor presents the idea, that far from the weakness of Chartism (not that it did not have weaknesses), the single main cause of its destruction was repression - repression of a nature and extent such that this, far more than increasing prosperity, provides the key to both the character of the subsequent New Model Unions and even to later reformist labourism itself.

Intimidation

That the massive extent of the repression and intimidation employed in breaking the Chartist and general union movements had the desired effect is made clear from the difficulties Roberts faced in trying to aid the immediate post-1848 unions. A grim scenario is painted of cowed militants and a nervous working class. Links with other areas, other trades, political groupings and sometimes even individual militants too well known for their past activities, were shunned for fear of



Bookshelf

drawing unwelcome attention from the authorities. In such an atmosphere are placed the emergence of a new type of labour leader - men like Alexander Macdonald, leader of the Miners Association in the early 1860s, who consciously and deliberately tried to drive Roberts, and those like him, from the movement. These were men who began constructing personal careers, an ideology and positions of "principle" and "virtue" out of the conditions of defeat.

Class Laws

From the straightforward application of bullying and intimidation, condoned and sometimes even organised by tyrannical magistrates, the authorities developed ever increasing sophistication in their legislative and judicial response to the workers' challenge. The flexibility of the legal system as a weapon of class warfare is seen sharpened and honed as events unfolded. Powers were given or taken away, prosecutions and penalties waived or enforced, legislation framed or altered according to whether they were effective or counter-productive as the situation changed. The one consistent criterion, as Roberts clearly grasped, was their efficacy as class weapons.

Roberts' understanding of the reality of the

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class struggle, and faith in the power of the working class in action provided the backdrop to his success as a lawyer acting on behalf of workers. Lawyer though he was, it enabled him to see that effective use of or challenging of the law could only be achieved in combination with mass struggle. Use of the courts could be an important adjunct to, not substitute for, the struggle for power. Speaking in court, but in reality to the masses outside, giving an over-confident and arrogant employer a "*drubbing*" with his "*own class made laws*" could be of real value to the workers' struggle. On other occasions, exposure of injustice and bias in the legal system could be a means of strengthening the resolve to carry on the struggle by other means.

Fierce Clashes

Small wonder then that Macdonald and Roberts clashed fiercely and fundamentally over strategies to deal with the invidious truck system, the Master and Servant Acts and trade union reform. Macdonald was the self-proclaimed champion of compromise, conciliation and class collaboration, "*the last to strike and the first to concede*" as he himself put it. Roberts wished only to raise the vision and aspiration to victory, and to "teach you how to fight". Challinor draws special attention to two particular issues which the clash raised. The first was Roberts' involvement in one of the first genuine rank and file revolts against a reformist and compromised trade union leadership in 1863-4. Here Challinor highlights another point, one worthy of further consideration. He challenges the long-held view that the 1871 Trade Union Act, giving a legal status to trade unions, was unquestionably a good thing. Roberts' opposed the Act on the grounds it would open the door to collective prosecutions, which would "*be entirely destructive of the real purposes of a trade union*".

The hated miners' bond was broken, not by conciliation or compromise but as a direct result of a new upsurge of rank and file militancy and determination

Challinor draws useful and genuinely illuminating parallels with both present events and, in particular, the Russia of 1905-17.

For the most part these analogies should add to our appreciation of the material, though some are occasionally a little trite, and there will certainly be those who question whether the pre-WW2 "anti-fascist" or the later anti-nuclear movements were really examples of "united" front activity.

Roberts' own greatest vindication was surely the achievement for which he is remembered on the Monkwearmouth lodge banner: the

breaking of the hated miners' bond. This was finally achieved in 1869, 25 years after the great but defeated strike of 1844, not by conciliation or compromise, but as a direct result of a new upsurge of rank and file militancy and determination.

By having followed Roberts through his perspective of class struggle through the falsely characterised "quiescent" 1850s and 60s, Challinor has not only helped transform our view of that period, but has done a great service to British labour history.

NUPE Conference

National Action Needed to Break Tory Pay Ceiling

(Continued from back page)

Low pay as always is a key issue. NHS ancillary workers are in the process of balloting on pay at the time of writing and local government APT&C workers are being balloted on "*acceptance of the government's 1.5% offer under protest and to continue to campaign against low pay,*" whatever that means or to ballot on industrial action.

Effectively, branches are being asked to ballot members to see if they want a ballot on the 1.5% pay offer!

This gives some indication of the leadership's real determination and commitment to end low pay.

Union-Labour Links

Resolution 20 from Prestwich Health, calling for a "*linking of all Unison members in the public services to break the government's pay limits*" should be supported and questions raised as to our leadership's commitment, both industrial and political, to end low pay.

Again, the EC statement rather than reaffirm what should be union policy, "*to campaign for its (minimum wage equivalent to two-thirds of average male earnings) immediate introduction by the next Labour government,*" puts forward, that initially a minimum wage should be half male average earnings, to be raised over time to two-thirds.

Significantly the biggest section on the agenda is that dealing with political affairs. Resolutions from Nottingham and Paddington calling for a strong retention of the Labour-union links should be firmly supported.

A further resolution from Paddington, rejecting any moves to "proportional representation" should also be fully supported.

Labour Government

The first past the post system will clearly give Labour a better chance of an overall majority at the next election.

A majority Labour government, committed to socialist policies, like the immediate introduction of a national minimum wage of two-thirds average male earnings, the abolition of the privatisation legislation, a programme of massive investment in health, social services and education would bring tremendous benefits for Nupe and Unison members and the working class as a whole.

However, you cannot control what you do not own and therefore an essential prerequisite for even these limited steps would be for a Labour government to take control of the major monopolies and financial institutions and institute a plan of production based on human need. Then Unison members could really begin to reap the benefits of their work.

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National Action Needed to Break Tory Pay Ceiling

In early June, the last conference of the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) takes place. Three weeks later the merger of Nalگو, Nupe and Cohse takes place and a new union, Unison, comes into existence.

Unison will be 1.4 million members strong, organising in local government, health, higher education, gas water and electricity. Potentially it will have enormous strength and could be a serious force in thwarting the government's plans to extend privatisation, cut services further and continue its assault on workers wages and conditions in the public sector.

Privatisation

However, this is entirely dependent on the new union's leadership's ability and determination to campaign amongst the members and organise a fight back - and to learn from the mistakes of the past. Manual workers, represented by Nupe bore the brunt of the Tory attacks through cuts and privatisation in the 80s. Unfortunately individual union branches and sections were forced to try and fight in isolation because of the failure of the leadership to mount an effective national campaign. Local union officers were put in an impossible position once the compulsory competitive tendering legislation was on the statute books without an effective national campaign. It was either negotiating away jobs, wages and conditions to try and get the best deal possible or risk the entire workforce being sacked or privatised as a result of contractors putting in a cheaper bid. Members did not get a chance to voice their opinion in relation to national action over

By Steve McKenzie, Nupe

job cuts and privatisation. Consequently, thousands of negotiators facing exactly the same battle against the same government and the same employers were left fighting in isolation.

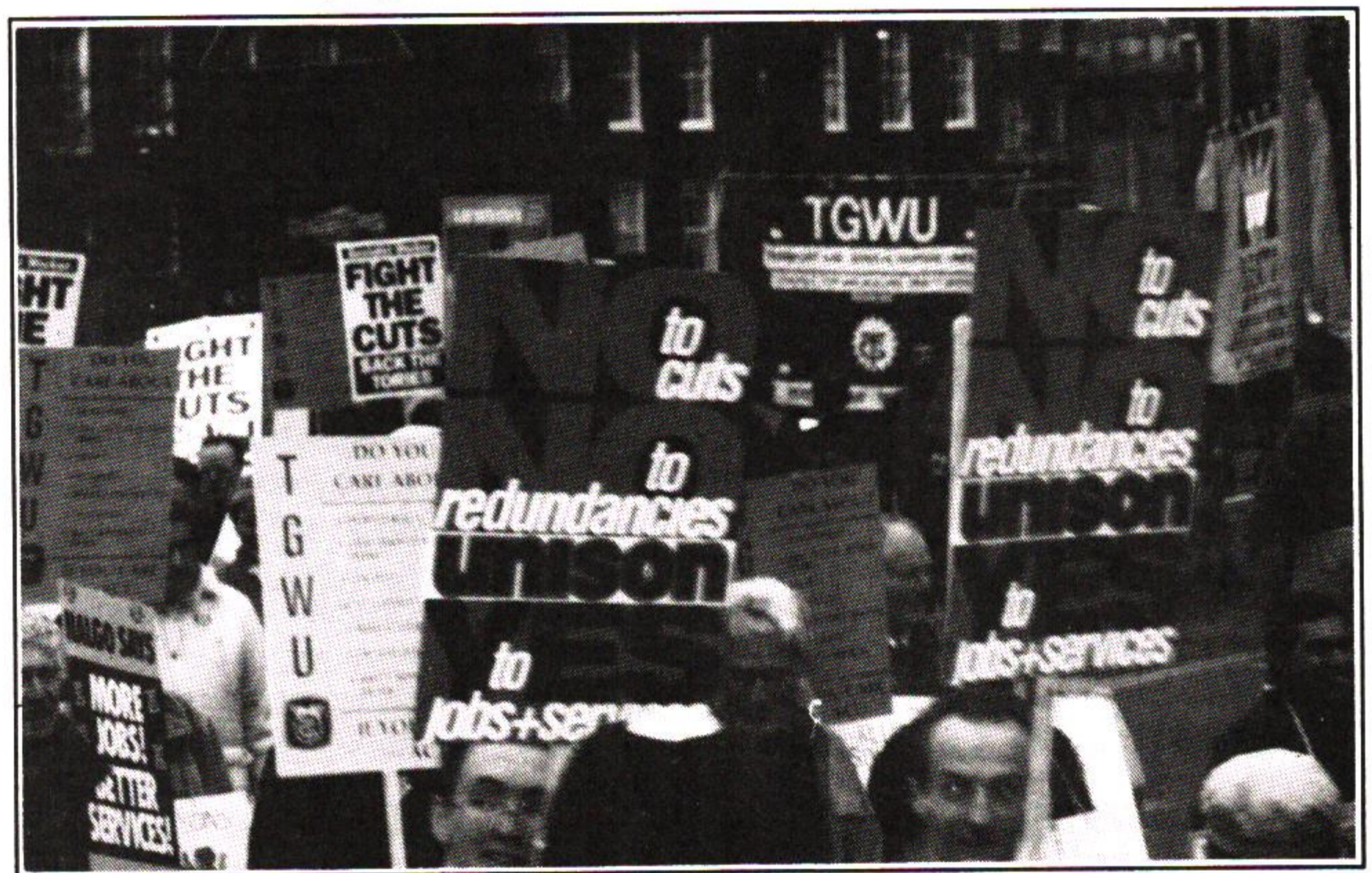
The executive, rather than admit past mistakes try to justify them by arguing in their *Aims and Values* statement, "the nature of privatisation and the outcome of the government approach made it difficult if not impossible for unions to mount effective national industrial opposition."

With the government's intention to extend privatisation into other services directly and through the back door with the so-called *Care in the Community* legislation (where

many social services will be hived off to the private sector) it will be gross negligence if the same errors are made again. This is especially so given the Tories' battering in the recent council elections and the apparent favourable situation that is developing in relation to the transfer of undertakings regulations. Conference should reject this section of the EC report.

The EC election results will be announced at the end of conference and the new EC, who will form part of the interim EC for the first two years of Unison's existence, should take a bold and campaigning approach into the new union, learning from past mistakes and pointing the way forward based on national action.

(Continued on page 31)



Unison has the potential to break the Tories pay ceiling

Reject the 1.5% - Get the Tories Out!