

SOCIALIST

APPEAL

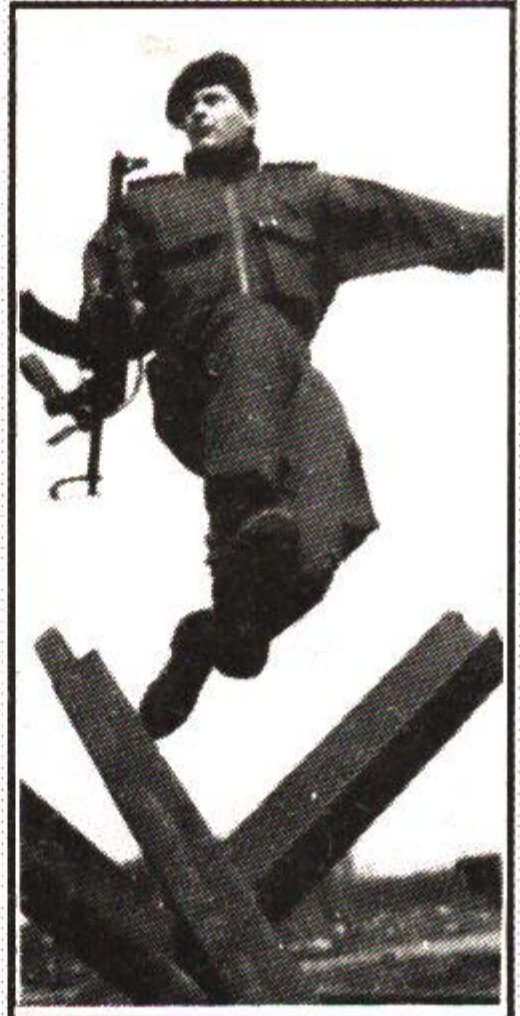
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The Marxist voice of the labour movement

Issue No.20

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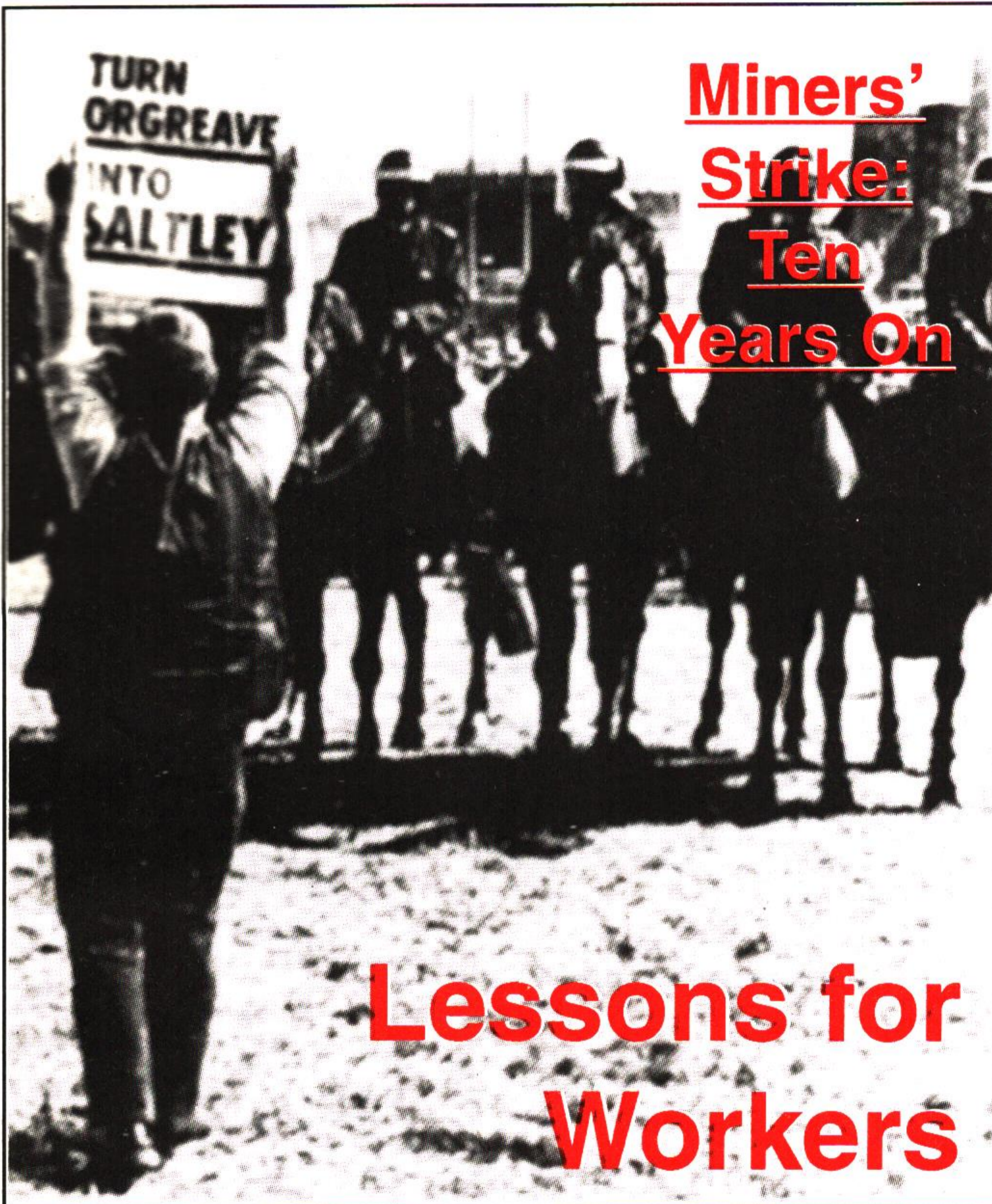


**War
...And
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*Conference
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Hungary
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The Lion and the Lamb

The employers are sticking the boot in. Using the stick of mass unemployment, British bosses are attempting to reduce wage 'costs' and squeeze workers by increased "flexibility".

This is backed up by the Tory Government's wages policy: a three year wage freeze for millions of public sector workers. They have introduced "market forces" into schools, hospitals, old peoples homes, civil service departments, and elsewhere, as a means of grinding down the workforce and dishing out profitable pickings to the private sector.

The Tories have been "caring" enough to allow a few sections to get a small pay rise as long as it is self-financing. In other words, no extra money will be provided to cover the increase. Extra resources can only be found by local "economies". So wage rises will only be financed by redundancies and increased work loads. It is a double edged sword. Responsibility is thrown onto local representatives to come up with local deals to pay for the wage rise. The whole pay bargaining structure is atomised to the benefit of employers and the government. Workers have seen the inadequacy of local and sectional action in the past. Only a national claim, linked to national action to secure the necessary resources from the government can offer a way forward.

Co-ordinated Action

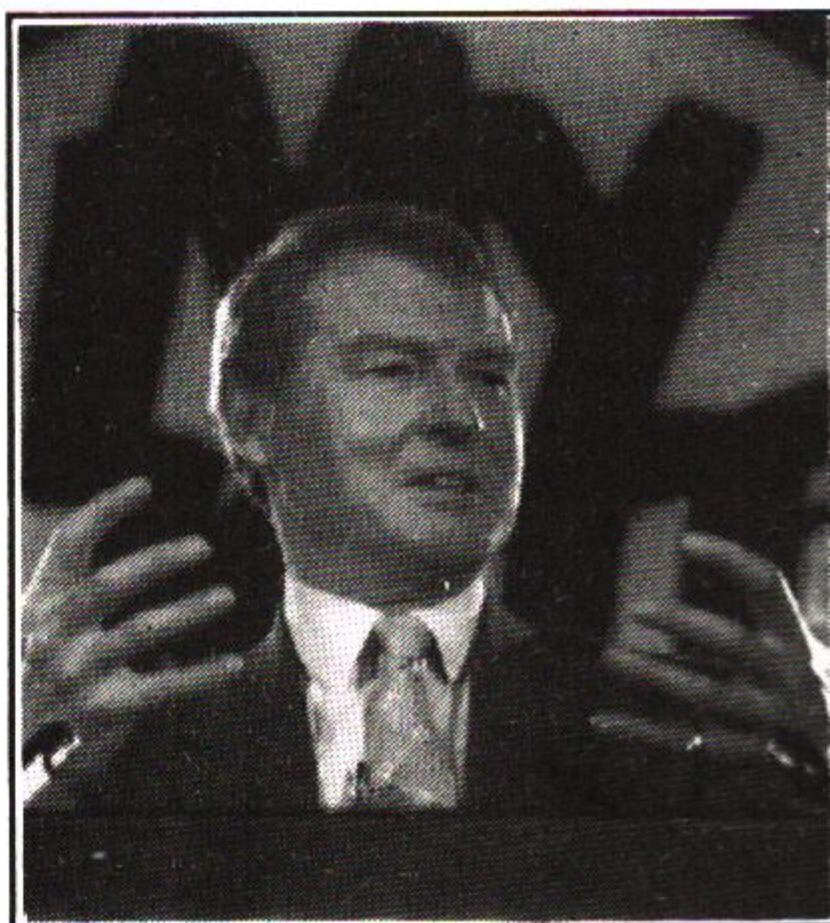
Furthermore, there should be co-ordinated action across the public sector, through the public sector unions. The government and employers will try all kinds of threats to impose their plans. The recent use of anti-trade union legislation by employers against Natfhe, the college lecturers' union, over the introduction of "flexible" contracts, is a indication of how far the bosses are prepared to go. The Employers' Forum has used the misnamed 1993 Trade Union Reform Act to demand names of all those being asked to strike and to declare strike action illegal. This was upheld in the Court of Appeal.

Although the strike was called off by the Natfhe leadership to prevent sequestration of its funds, unofficial action still took place. As a result, hard-faced management at Southwark and Tower Hamlets Colleges in London and Handsworth in Birmingham, are considering disciplinary action against strikers including bills for damages and final written warnings. This takes the legal positions of trade unions back to 1900 and the Taff Vale Dispute. As one striker put it: "it now seems virtually

impossible for workers to strike in this country." This legal action follows on from the law being used by the Western Union bus company bosses against its workforce when it secured a successful ballot result twice for strike action, but was declare illegal by the courts on both occasions. These bus workers, members of the RMT, have now secured a majority for strike action for the third time!

The lecturers' union has now called on the TUC to join its campaign against the Tory legislation. If the TUC was worth its salt, it would be leading a mass campaign now to break the anti-union laws. Such a policy has had growing support amongst TUC affiliated unions. It is time the TUC made a stand.

Unfortunately, the TUC is looking the other way. It announced that its new approach was to invite two Tory Ministers, David Hunt, Employment Secretary and Stephen Dorrell, Treasury Financial Secretary as guests at future TUC meetings and conferences. These 'guests' have played their full role in introducing anti-union legislation and cutting back on



Paddy Ashdown

finances to local authorities and public services - putting hundreds of thousands out of work. Added to these luminaries will be Paddy Ashdown (who kept the Tories in power in a vote over Maastricht, backed anti-union laws, and favours wages restraint), and Howard Davies, director-general of the bosses Confederation of British Industry. Hunt would be the first senior minister to address the TUC conference since the early 1970s. No doubt these proposals will be treated with disdain by the activists in the labour movement. There will be protests raised in affiliated unions. The prospects of a cosy relationship were welcomed by the employment spokesman for the Liberal Democratic

shadows, who said the party would be establishing close links with the TUC, which would become a "strong and independent body" if "freed from the grip of the Labour Party."

Clearly trying to balance between all interests, and shunning independent class politics, the TUC general secretary, John Monks, dressed the proposals up as not a question of "severing links with Labour but broadening out links and exerting our influence within the other mainstream parties." However, the other "mainstream parties" are opposed to the interests of organised labour. They represent the interests of big business and capitalism generally. In other words, they represent opposing class interests. Whereas the working class, through its organisations, fight for better wages, shorter hours and improved conditions, the capitalists want to increase their profits which arise from the unpaid labour of the working class. John Monks wants the capitalist lion and the TUC lamb to lie down together.

Mond-Turner

This disastrous approach is nothing new. It has its roots in the craft unionism of the mid nineteenth century, through to the Mond/Turner talks of the late 1920s. At each stage, such class collaboration has served to bind the labour movement hand and foot to the primary "national interests" of Capital. Hoping to secure some crumbs from the bosses' table, the workers are asked to shoulder the burden of "national" sacrifices. The only reason why the Tories have not pursued an accommodation with the TUC tops over the past 14 years is that they have got what they wanted without such a deal. The TUC was treated with contempt by the Tories, despite their policies of so-called "New Realism".

The Tories are now engaged in a small division of labour; while Major will remain aloof from the trade union leaders, Mr. Hunt will string them along to ensnare them all the more. Such cosy relationships will, however, not last. As soon as the working class begins to move, the trade union leaders will be forced to reflect this pressure. As always, they try to have one foot in the working class and another in the enemy camp. But under the development of events, the TUC will be pushed into outright opposition to the Tories and the employers. However, only when the movement is transformed from top to bottom, through the struggle of rank and file trade unionists, will the TUC become the real General Staff of the labour movement.

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See page 11 for details of change in publication date*

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Important pamphlet out now as...

New Marxist publishing venture launched

Socialist Appeal announces the publication of the first in an initial set of four important pamphlets to be published quarterly under the series title of 'In defence of Marxism'.

The first pamphlet, available this month, is a reprint of Trotsky's article 'Marxism in our time'.

Out of print and difficult to find for some years now this article, written as an introduction to a summary of Marx's Capital, was a strong defence of Marxism against the attacks of those who would consign these ideas to the history books. As such Trotsky's arguments are as relevant now as they were in 1939. Using facts and figures from the United States of the 1920s and 30s, Trotsky takes up the arguments of those writers of the day who believed that capitalism had solved its problems.

To accompany this article is a major new introduction written by Ted Grant and Alan Woods which relates these questions to the situation today.

As the introduction states: "Trotsky's introduction ... represents a classic re-statement of the basic positions of Marxism. In all its essentials, it has been

brilliantly confirmed by the present evolution of capitalism on a world scale." Published in A5 format this pamphlet costs £2 plus 50p postage and packing per copy.

With Marxism under attack from a new breed of 'experts' this pamphlet represents an important weapon in the arsenal of all socialists and a useful basis for discussion and political education.

Future pamphlets will be published on the subjects of Russia, Marxist economics and the fundamentals of Marxism. Notes for use in preparing discussion groups around these pamphlets will also be available from us on request.

We welcome your support of this project — the aim of which is to produce quality material of substance which is intended to reflect the importance of Marxist theory and present those ideas in a clear fashion which tackles a clear void that exists in the labour movement at present. Please complete and return the form below as soon as possible. If you do not wish to damage your copy a letter or photocopy will be fine.

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Strike to Save Health Jobs

Health workers in Birmingham are preparing for strike action following the announcement that South Birmingham Health Authority is to slash 1200 jobs as part of £15 million worth of cuts from April 1st. The Joint Consultative Committee of unions covering the Queen Elizabeth, Selly Oak and Birmingham General hospitals has a resolution "on the table" calling for industrial action if compulsory redundancies are announced. Already some workers have been told by management they will "no longer be required" after March 31. At the JCC's last meeting, there was dismay at the announcement. It must be

Stewards said these jobs could not be sold, that such widescale job losses would have a catastrophic effect on the service and on conditions

said that many sections of the workforce are demoralised after the continual 'drip, drip' of cutbacks and reorganisation, added to which is the widespread use of non-union agency nurses, particularly at the QE. This blow to union confidence was reflected by some voices at the JCC

calling for any alternative other than strike action - such as everyone taking leave at the same time (management would probably have something to say about this proposal!) But other stewards and the JCC secretary said that these were not jobs that could be sold, that such widescale job losses would have a catastrophic effect on the service as well as on the conditions of those who remained. The time has come to fight - the JCC agreed to campaign with lobbies, petitions and demonstrations in preparation for a ballot on industrial action.

By a Birmingham Unison steward.

UCW - NCU merger on course as delegates say 'yes'

The UCW and the NCU special merger conferences both voted overwhelmingly to accept the terms of the proposed amalgamation and to recommend merger to their respective conferences in the summer. That means the path to a single union for the communications industry is now clear. A joint Broad Left meeting agreed, despite some reservations about certain clauses in the final report from the two executives, to fight for the merger. One delegate said; "nothing must be done to jeopardise the merger. Those of us who want to see a more democratic merger and a more fighting union should set our sights on the Rules Revision Conference to achieve our goal. Our members want this merger."

Fuse of Discontent

Our union executive have been told that any pay rise this year on London Underground has to be self financing!

This means no track renewals unless it is completely necessary (I never knew that we replaced track unnecessary), Hundreds more job losses and even more flexible working for those that are left.

I suppose in the future I will be expected to set the signals, walk the platform to sell tickets and then drive the train! I am already doing the work that four people used to do. There may be more work to be wrung out of me so that it will kill be before I become a parasite drawing my pension!

Our council executive members have been visiting branches to get support for a ballot for strike action. We have had enough. Our negotiation machinery is not working, we are getting more and more short term contract staff, we are facing compulsory redundancies for the



Guards on the Central Line and for engineering support staff. In general we are being treated with contempt. With feelings running as are on the job we should get a good yes vote in any ballot. This must be used this time to reverse the trend of Job cuts and attacks on our working conditions. We should put the following demands and not return until they are met:

- 1) Full time jobs for all — no short term contracts.
- 2) No more job losses — compulsory or otherwise.
- 3) Pay rise without strings to compensate for extra work already

being done and the extra tax increases. 4) Review of grievance and negotiating machinery at all levels.

If short term contract staff knew that they had a secure to look forward to, they would join the union more readily and feel more secure about striking with us. We must do more to give these workers the security they deserve. We must hold mass meetings of all public service unions to co-ordinate action and to set up a shop stewards committee from each of the unions to form a council of action that will agitate in the workplace and co-ordinate a planned fightback against the governments attack on public sector pay and conditions. With all the public sector unions working together we could light the fuse of discontent in other layers of industry.

London Underground RMT activist.

We can win Eastleigh with socialist policies

Following the bizarre death of Stephen Milligan, the Eastleigh by-election offers Labour the opportunity to prove that we can win in the south. The constituency, which borders Southampton, includes the rail town of Eastleigh with its massive railway maintenance works which still

employs over one thousand workers and Woolston which includes the Vosper Thornycroft shipbuilders. If Eastleigh was in the North or the Midlands Labour would be set on course for victory. Indeed, prior to the local government review in the 1970's Eastleigh town was a Labour

fortress in the south regularly electing Labour councils. Particularly important in the by-election will be Labour's attitude to rail privatisation and the fate of the rail maintenance works. These works have been run down over the years and another round of redundancies is in the pipeline. Many fear closure with the valuable site in Eastleigh town centre being sold off. At a meeting of rail workers and supporters on 24 February Jimmy Knapp hinted that a ballot was likely in the near future if management pressed ahead with a further rundown of the works. Labour has promised a high profile campaign - but "personalities" and "campaign organisers" will not be enough to win this seat. Labour needs to campaign on socialist policies, including the renationalisation of British Rail. Labour could take a leaf out of Southampton Labour Party's book who, prior to Milligan's death, had unanimously agreed to launch a campaign on full employment, including a demo and rally during the local government elections in May. Such a campaign in Eastleigh, linked to other demands for a national minimum wage and proper employment rights, would give hope to the thousands of workers and unemployed in the constituency and ensure a famous victory for Labour.

Steve Fricker,
Southampton Labour Party

Some Reward!

As we go to press UNISON members at Sheffield City Council are balloting on a one day strike against the councils proposed cuts in services and reduction in the wage bill. Two departments are voting on all-out action.

The council is attempting to cut services by £18 million and reduce its wage bill by £9 million in an attempt to deal with its projected budget deficit of £38 million - this could mean the loss of 1,500 jobs and a permanent 2.75% across the board wage cut.

Remember last year city hall unions agreed a 3.25% wage reduction in return for seven days unpaid extra leave to help balance the books - this is their reward! Clearly there can be no compromise with Tory government cutbacks. Labour councils like Sheffield should be supporting workers not attacking them. A campaign involving the unions, Labour councils and the Labour Party, involving industrial action like that advocated by Sheffield UNISON, should be launched to restore all the money stolen from local authorities by the Tories since 1979. This is the only way jobs, services and decent wages can be guaranteed.

Guys workers march to stop jobs slaughter

Workers at Guy's Hospital and their supporters demonstrated on Wednesday March 1 against the hospitals proposed closure and loss of 2,000 jobs.

Guy's bosses led the way in setting up a trust under the new Tory legislation. Now the proposal is to merge Guy's with nearby St. Thomas's. A new wing of the

hospital, the Philip Harris House, ironically named after the Tory supporting boss of Allied Carpets, costing £140 million, will not be opened.

A poll by UNISON found that 76% of its members at Guy's supported industrial action - this is the only way the management and the Tories will listen.

● The Tories NHS reforms continue to cause chaos throughout the health service. Royal Liverpool University hospital cancelled all orthopaedic outpatients appointments with some patients having "little chance of being seen in the near future".

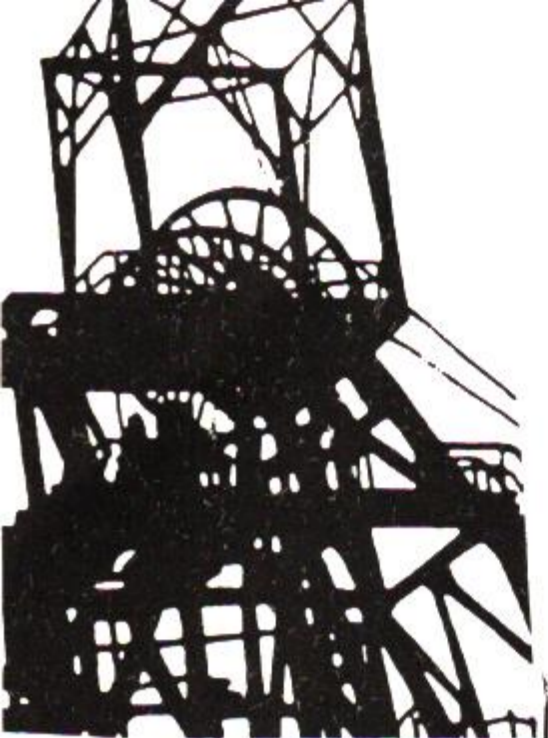
A recent report from the Low Pay Unit dramatically shows the effects of the Tories abolition of the Wages Councils. The Councils had covered around 2.5 million low paid workers. The survey found that 27% of hairdressing jobs advertised in Job Centres now pay below the old Wages Council rate of £2.88 an hour. 12% of hotel and catering jobs and 14% of jobs in the clothing trade are also paying below the old rates. Overall wages have been reduced in the clothing industry by 9% and in hairdressing by 23%. And the government claimed abolition would not mean lower wages. Another Tory lie!

In the
News

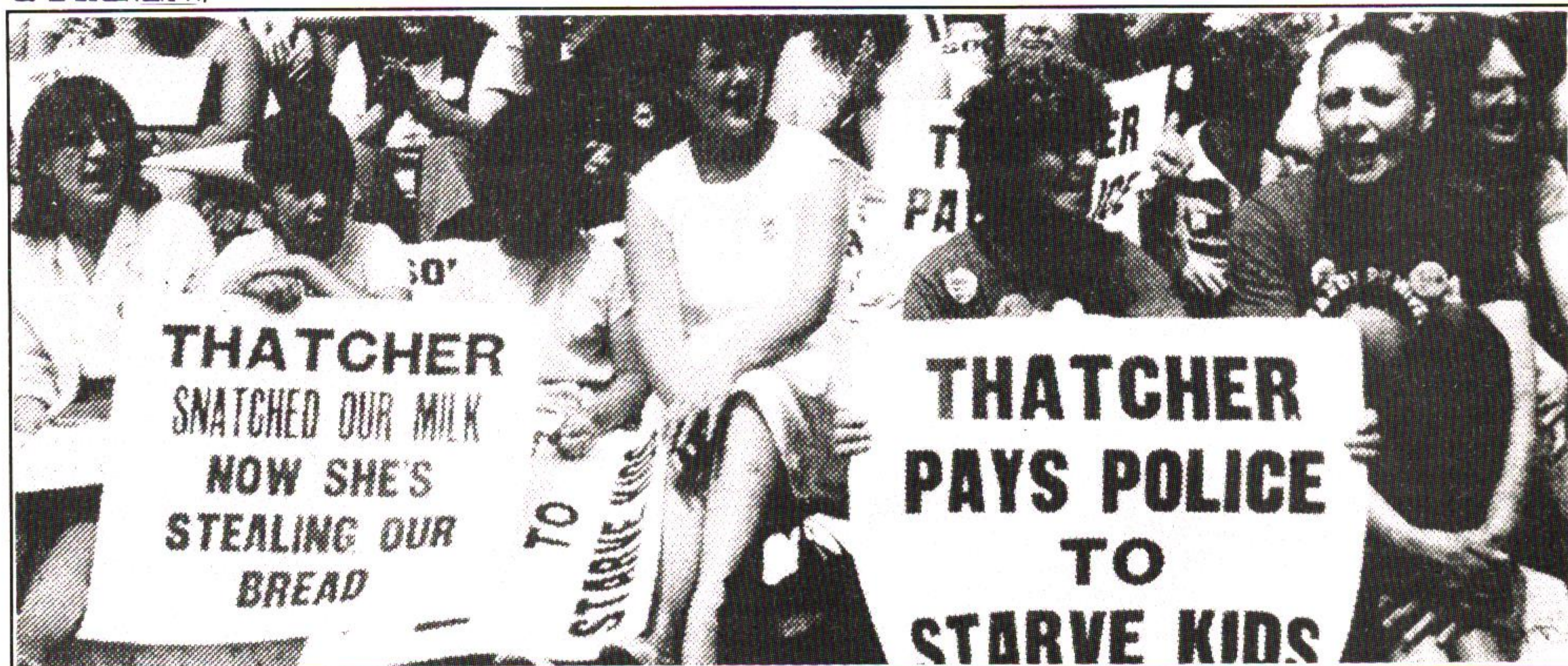
● Miners sacked during the 1984-85 strike staged a protest outside the Labour Party HQ in Walworth Road last month to highlight the failure of the Labour leadership to support the miners fight against pit closures. The NUM members accused Labour's leaders of being "invisible" during the recent battle against the closure of mines.

● The NCU City of London Engineering Branch has launched a "Campaign for Jobs" under the slogan "fight for the right to work." The branch's campaign material makes it clear there is no need for BT to cut jobs and demands a 32-hour, four-day week with no loss of pay to help save jobs and "as a reward for our part in the achievement of record profits". The campaign also demands an end to the use of contractors who have helped bring about the 80,000 job losses over the past three years and calls for an end to a "management obsessed by a desire to 'feed the greed' of the fat cats in the City of London."

● The National Union of Civil and Public Servants increased its membership by around 1,000 last year according to a new report from the union. Its membership is now 113,000.



The Miners' Strike: Ten Years On Lessons for Workers



March marks the tenth anniversary of the beginning of the national miners strike of 1984/85. The strike represented one of the great landmarks in the history of the British working class and a watershed in the post-war development of the labour and trade union movement.

It was the most sustained industrial dispute in Britain since 1926. Over one hundred thousand miners and their families took part in a terrible exhausting strike for the best part of a year. In its essence it showed all that is good in the struggle of the working class - the courage and heroism, the willingness to struggle against all odds, the solidarity of the class alongside the development of a political consciousness. At the end of the day a whole generation of miners had any illusions in the capitalist system burnt from their consciousness. The strike threw into stark relief what the capitalist system really represented - the media, the Tories and, of course, the state itself, the "armed bodies of men", this time represented by the massed ranks of the riot police. Those images of the struggle - the cavalry charges, the shields and batons, the Battle of Orgreave, will forever

Ten years on from the great miners' strike of 1984-5 Alastair Wilson looks back at the events leading up to the year-long struggle, the main events of the dispute and the key lessons for the labour movement today.

be etched on the minds of activists.

And, of course, we saw exposed the role of the labour and trade union bureaucracy who moved might and main not to give the strike full and unreserved backing. It was, in the final analysis, their backtracking and in some cases outright betrayal that would finally leave the miners defeated. The conscious betrayal of the right wing and the inability to organise a struggle by the left - these played a crucial role in the final outcome of the dispute.

To understand the strike you must understand the background to it. Not just the immediate background of the Tories military style preparations in the run up to the strike, or even what happened during the great wave of industrial militancy of the early 1970s which reached its crescendo in the

1974 miners strike which toppled the Tory government of Edward Heath. For the battle of the miners goes back much further to 1926 and before. The miners were in the vanguard of organised labour and its 'heavy battalions' and it was for these reasons that Margaret Thatcher had to organise a confrontation and ensure a victory.

If one thing and one thing alone was indelibly stamped on the minds of the Tories it was the mass industrial battle of the early seventies, and in particular the shattering defeat they received at the hands of the miners in 1974.

The election of Ted Heath in 1970 and his attempt to push through a policy of what we can now see as "immature Thatcherism" ended in disaster. His attempt to push through the 'Industrial Relations Act' led

directly to an enormous confrontation with the unions. The jailing of the 'Pentonville Five' led the TUC to call a 24 hour general strike. Of course Heath had to backtrack and to backtrack rapidly so in was wheeled the 'official solicitor' to get the Tories of the hook. The five dockers were released from prison and the strike called off. Under the Heath administration a 'state of emergency' was declared on five different occasions - it was truly a government of crisis.

Saltley Gate

The famous picket of Saltley Gate (Birmingham) in February 1972 where up to 15,000 miners, engineers and their allies battled with the police and finally closed the coke depot represented the strength of industrial militancy. Trade unionism seemed invincible, an almost syndicalist mood was to develop amongst the shop stewards and union activists. This sent shivers down the spines of the ruling class. Of course the culmination of this period was the miners strike of 1974. Ted Heath was forced to call a general election on 'who runs the country' - he lost! Of course in the ensuing period of Labour Government and even in the early years of the

Thatcher regime, the miners were not involved in any significant national action. But the Tories were never to forget those years at the beginning of the seventies. The recession of 1979-81 was to devastate a whole swath of manufacturing industry. The nationalised industries, too, came under attack - British Leyland and steel for example, where the workforce in both enterprises was slashed in half. But the Tories did not tackle the miners.

Ridley Plan

Back in the years of opposition, however, the Tories had worked out their strategy - the famous Ridley Plan, devised by Thatcher's sidekick Nicholas Ridley. This strategy was clear - only fight on ground chosen by the Tories. Every precaution had to be taken against a challenge in electricity and gas by building up coal stocks, developing imports, encouraging the recruitment of non-union lorry drivers by haulage companies and introducing dual coal/oil firing in power stations as rapidly as possible. Hit the strikers and the union financially. And last, but not least, a large mobile squad of police 'equipped and prepared' to 'uphold the law' needed to be established. Needless to say this strategy was carried out almost to the letter.

In 1981 the National Coal Board announced a dramatic pit closure programme. As the list of condemned pits was confirmed the South Wales miners came out on strike, followed by spontaneous walkouts at threatened pits in Durham and other areas. The Tory Cabinet immediately retreated. In the words of Tory John Biffen at the time "I did not come into politics in order to be a Kamikaze pilot." The Tories clearly saw that the ground was not favourable at that time - more time was needed to make all the preparations. Of course all the preparations in the world could not secure a speedy victory. The strike was to be long and bitter, and the Tories would have to rethink their strategy more than once before it was finished.

In 1981 Arthur Scargill was elected President of the NUM with the biggest ever vote in its history, 70%. The following year

at the union conference in Inverness the left swept the board. The union seemed to be in a very strong position if any attempt was to be made to bring forward a new closure package. But in two successive ballots the call for strike action was defeated. The November 1982 ballot on the issues of pay and jobs was defeated. Again, in

March 1983 after the South Wales miners came out in support of miners in the Lewis Merthyr colliery facing closure, the ballot resulted in a vote of only 39% in favour of strike action. This had a shattering effect on many of the left, especially those allied to the old Communist Party in Scotland and Wales. In Nottinghamshire

only 19% voted for strike action, in South Derbyshire only 12%. Many union activists in Scotland, South Wales and the North East increasingly believed they had been marginalised and put forward the view that the Welsh region should have continued alone using Rule 41 of the constitution and built support in the other coalfields. There was now a feeling that a ballot on jobs and closures could never be won and that some of the younger miners in Nottinghamshire and, ironically, Yorkshire would never come out again.

The left had wanted to fight in 1982 but it was not to be. By 1984 the Tories plans were in place and they were out for a conflict. Tory confidence was as high as the coal stocks that had been built up. They were also buoyed up by the ballot results and the recent election for NUM general secretary where Peter Heathfield, the left's candidate, only scraped through. As far as the preparations of the police were concerned, Warrington showed that they were willing and capable of anything.

Police Tactics

In November of 1983 police employed many of the methods that were to be later applied in the miners strike during the Warrington print dispute. At one point police even closed exits on the M6 motorway to try and stop trade unionists getting to Eddie Shah's newspaper plant. On the picket line itself riot police were used in the most ferocious manner, at one point they even destroyed an NGA communications van. Clearly there was an attempt to perfect new policing methods in order to prevent any possibility of a re-enactment of a 'Saltley Gate.' In February 1984 the NCB announced the closure of Polmaise colliery in the Scottish coalfield. The men there immediately walked out and began to lobby for all out action. The Scottish leadership, fearful of a repeat of the 1983 ballot attempted to stifle the dispute. And they might have succeeded but for the Coal Board's further announcements to close Cortonwood in Yorkshire and a 4 million tonne cutback in national production meaning a loss of 20,000 jobs. Arthur Scargill produced a Coal Board hitlist of pits targeted for closure.

Chronology of the Great Strike

February 1984: Polmaise Colliery closure announced - 4000 miners go on strike.

March: Closure of Cortonwood announced. Coal Board also announces 4 million tonne cutback in total production meaning a loss of 20,000 jobs.

March 9: Miners Strike begins.

March 15: David Jones killed while picketing at Ollerton, Yorkshire.

Police stop Kent miners at Dartford tunnel.

Lancashire joins strike.

NUM Executive split on whether to hold a national ballot.

April 1984: NUM executive changes rules so that only 50% vote needed to decide on strike action. Special delegate conference endorses NEC decision and ratifies the strike action.

May 1984: Mounted police break up picket line at Ravenscraig steel works in Lanarkshire. 3 men injured.

40,000 march in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire in support of the strike.

Mass picketing at Orgreave begins - 3,200 police from 13 different forces drafted in.

June 7: Police attack Miners lobby of parliament. 100 arrested.

June 15: Joe Green killed by lorry while picketing at Ferrybridge.

June 18: 10,000 picket Orgreave, 93 arrested, Arthur Scargill injured.

July 1984: Home secretary endorses use of criminal rather than civil law against miners.

Government withholds £6.8 million in tax refunds to striking miners.

July 9-21: First National Dock Strike

August 1984: Drift back to work begins.

September 18: Three week old second National Dock Strike called off.

September 26: NCB offers NACODS a compromise package to avoid strike.

October 1984: Threatened NACODS strike called off by their executive.

NCB offers miners a "back-to-work-bonus."

October 25: Court attempts to seize NUM funds.

November 1984: Dublin Court freezes £2.7 million NUM funds.

December 1984: Ian MacGregor advocates privatisation of pits.

January 1985: Mass picketing continues at Yorkshire Main, Grimethorpe and Kiverton Park.

February 1985: Joint appeal from NUM and NACODS for NCB to reopen negotiations.

March 3 1985: NUM votes at a special delegate conference in London by 98 - 91 to return to work.

March 5 1985: Miners march back to work behind their bands and banners.

The fight was on. Much has been spoken and written on the question of the lack of a national ballot. There were many reasons why many on the left argued against it, urging a national strike through Rule 41, that is a sort of rolling programme of bringing out all the regions until there is a national strike. In hindsight this was an error, and it was used as a stick to beat the back of the NUM not only by the Tories but also by sections of the labour and trade union bureaucracy. But compared to the atrocious role of that self same bureaucracy it was not a fundamental issue. Success depended on spreading the strike throughout the coalfields and on the ability of the NUM to bring out real support from its 'triple alliance' partners in the steel and transport unions and from the wider movement. At the end of the day none of this was achieved. In Nottinghamshire and other smaller areas the strike was divided. As far as the 'triple alliance' was concerned the steel industry had already been decimated and the power of the union broken by none other than Ian MacGregor, now Chairman of the Coal Board. The still powerful transport workers in the TGWU, NUR and ASLEF, however, under 'left' leadership

could have played a decisive role. But while they were giving full support for the strike in Yorkshire and other areas where the strike was solid, in the Midlands coal was continuing to be moved around. The Tories had hoped for a quick victory, an 'industrial Falklands.' They preached 'non-intervention' and hoped they could sit out the storm assured of victory. But as time wore on they began to get a little desperate. They knew nothing of the enormous will power, imagination and organising abilities of the miners, their families and supporters. But their strategy was beginning to run aground. Three factors forced them to change tack.

Confrontation

They were the hardening of miners attitudes, particularly after violent picket line confrontations with the police, roadblocks and virtual state of siege on mining communities. The fact that Ian MacGregor's personal letter to all miners had had no effect and, most importantly, the National Dock Strike of 9 to 21 July. All the ingredients were there for an escalation of the situation that they had planned and hoped to avoid. In an editorial in the Times (16 July) they argued for an end to the Tories policy of

'non-intervention' and advocated the calling of a 'state of emergency.' Thatcher saw that it was now impossible to just sit it out and she decided to go on the 'ideological' offensive. The plan was to isolate the miners and to pressurise Kinnock and the rest of the labour and trade union leadership to condemn the strike. The Tories now played up the increasing politicisation of the strike. Tory MP Geoffrey Dickens talked of Scargill as a "confessed Marxist surrounded by Communist aides and Advisors... much more serious support for him is coming from the Kremlin." Cranley Onslow suggested that unidentified figures were "controlling and directing riotous mobs," and Tony Marlow advocated that Scargill be "arrested for organising a private army." But it was not just the backbenchers making these attacks. As the strike went on into the summer the full weight of the Cabinet was brought in until, finally, at the end of July, Thatcher climaxed the campaign with her now infamous "enemy within" speech. "Scargillism" was portrayed as a phenomenon dedicated to the wholesale destruction of the British society the Tories knew and loved. In Thatcher's address at the Guildhall in November she

declared, "We are drawing to the end of a year in which our people have seen violence and intimidation in our midst: the cruelty of the terrorist; the violence of the picket-line; the deliberate flouting of the law of the land."

Along with the 'ideological' attack from the Tories and the media the miners were subjected, throughout the strike, to unparalleled attacks from the police and judiciary. During the dispute 10,000 striking miners were arrested, two were killed on picket duty and thousands were injured. The judiciary was used like a hammer against the men - this can be seen in the use of bail conditions. For example in May 1984 three Doncaster miners were granted bail (on charges that, if found guilty, would entail little more than a fine) on condition they have no contact whatsoever with each other, that they observe an 8pm to 8am curfew, that they report to the police station twice a day and that they do not enter Nottinghamshire! Most of the miners arrested were charged with minor offences or with offences that had not been heard in British courts for a long time: 500 were charged with "unlawful assembly," 200 were charged, unbelievably, with "watching and besetting" (a little known charge brought under the 1875 Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act).

Miners and supporters march for jobs again in 1992. The TUC's lack of action again left miners to face the Tories alone.



Criminalisation

What happened in courts up and down the country throughout 1984 was an attempt to bring about the virtual criminalisation of picketing, the bulldozing of all workers right and particularly the rights of workers to fight back against unjust attacks. But of course the main attack from the state came from the police. In 1984 mass military style policing was introduced. Right at the beginning of the strike the police were used to carry out the Tories dirty work: they stopped the Kent miners from leaving Kent (at the Dartford tunnel) on the basis that they may have been going to commit a crime somewhere hundreds of miles away. From then on miners were subjected to continual harassment, their coaches and cars being stopped, searched and turned back - the police were trying to stop miners travelling anywhere

at anytime in order to control the situation. The chief constable of Nottinghamshire estimated that 164,508 individuals were stopped from entering the county in the first twenty seven weeks of the strike.

But worse was to come. The Tories were adamant that a massive, military style policing was necessary to subdue the strikers and keep pits, particularly in the Midlands, open. Already by the end of the first week of the Notts picketing there were over twenty thousand police from 43 different forces available to police picket lines and patrol the mining communities. Co-ordinated by the NRC (National Recording Centre), all the technology and new policing methods developed over the recent period were at their disposal. Saltley Gate may have been a distant memory - but for the Tories it burned deep in their consciousness. In reality, it was this huge police presence that enabled the Coal Board to keep most of the Nottinghamshire coalfield working.

The police were determined to match and even outnumber the pickets. When one miner at Cortonwood decided to return to work in the autumn 1500 police stood by to escort him to work. The first police tactic was to stop pickets getting near their target. On the picket line itself it was one of containment, rapidly followed by assault. Police would attempt to cordon-off the pickets well away from any scabs. Arbitrary and indiscriminate arrests would take place then snatch squads would build up pressure on the pickets.

Intimidation

Where large numbers of pickets converged they were faced with charges by police on foot, wielding truncheons and short shields, the use of dogs and specially armoured police vans. If this was not enough to break the picket the police cordon would part to let through the lightly armed PSUs with their round perspex shields and truncheons, followed by a cavalry charge by mounted police.

To break the will of the pickets and undermine the strike special squads were established to 'patrol' the mining communities. By May, three of these squads were operating in Notts. Police attacked and intimidated strikers, their families and sympathisers. They would break into houses in 'pursuit' of pickets. Horses would be charged through villages. The police tactic was not only to prevent any meaningful picketing taking place, but to break the resolve of the strikers and their supporters.

Over the winter a slow drift back to work developed. Any hope of widening the action to other sections of the movement had all but evaporated. But the strike continued until March. On March 3 the special delegate conference of the NUM held in London voted 98 to 91 to go back without a deal: no reprieve for the threatened pits and no amnesty for the miners sacked. The strike could have been won. The Tories clearly realised this in the Spring and early summer of 1984. Despite all their

planning, despite the coal stocked high at the power stations and despite the massive 'army' of police sent into the mining communities, Margaret Thatcher would spend many a sleepless night.

But the leadership of the movement, both the Labour Party and the unions, were either unwilling or incapable of broadening out the struggle. And that was what was required. Neil Kinnock's comments about Gallipoli summed up the position. When the Labour Party should have been raising the issues of the fight against unemployment, about the madness of the Tories policies, about the police and the law, and about the need for a socialist programme, Kinnock merely limited himself to echoing the Tories criticisms of the strike.

Strategy Lacking

With the two national dock strikes in the summer a great opportunity was thrown away to unite their struggles. A lead from the top, with the TUC calling a 24 hour general strike, could have transformed the whole situation. The miners and their families showed enough courage and ability to win a thousand strikes - that is what shocked the Tories. What was lacking was a clear strategy to broaden the fight and take the struggle on to victory.

The defeat of the miners had an enormous impact on the whole movement. Along with the extension of the economic boom, it accelerated the shift to the right amongst the leadership of the movement. 'New realism' became the widespread philosophy of the labour and trade union bureaucracy - the impact of this philosophy we still suffer from today.

In 1926 there were over one million miners, even at the end of the 1984-85 strike there were over 170,000. But now the mining industry has been almost totally destroyed, vindicating the position of Scargill and the miners in 1984.

Ten years after the strike, the best way to commemorate that mighty and tumultuous battle is to learn all its lessons and to organise for a strategy and programme within the trade unions and the Labour Party capable of leading the working class to victory. ●

Skills and coal going to waste as last north-east pit closes

Ellington colliery, the last pit in the North East, closed on 18th February, ending a 700 year history of coal mining in the area. Terry McPartlan spoke to Ken Maughan, lodge delegate for Ellington NUM and former president of the Northumberland area NUM.

"The men originally voted in line with union policy to fight to keep the pit open. We recognise the importance of the industry as a major national asset. However there was great financial pressure, we stood to lose up to £10,000 redundancy if we took the pit to the colliery review. British Coal came up with another £7,000 plus £3,000 in other benefits and the deal was accepted reluctantly.

"The closure means the end of the coal field, Ellington was the jewel in the crown making £16 million last year. We feel as if we've been sabotaged, we've been manoeuvred into low seams. They were expecting us to cut coal in a 3 foot seam using a 4 foot high cutter, then they're surprised when there is rock in the coal. British Coal started a subsidy for pits moving into new markets. Ellington is the only pit in the country to get one. We'd just finished discussing a new five year plan with British Coal and the government when they

announced the closure. We've been fed lies from top to bottom. We are only weeks away from a 90 million tonne reserve of high quality coal with seams up to 11 feet thick. It's taken 10 years of investment and labour to reach this position. There is every possibility that the coal will be flooded out and sterilised so that it's unusable. When you make a mistake building a house you can pull it down and start again but the coal could be ruined forever.

"The pit is now on care and maintenance only. There is a possibility that it will open again with a reduced work force and worse wages and conditions, possibly even a 6 day week. It is possible that the men will accept the cuts and rely on the union to fight to get back the conditions. It's sickening that just a few years after the taxpayers have finished paying off the coal owners for the nationalisation of the pits, the capitalists will be getting the coal back at a knockdown price. "Ashington is an artificial town that only exists for the pits, now there is a 20% unemployment rate, which will go up to 30% with the closure of the pit. There are currently 41 people chasing every job in the town."

SATs: maintain the boycott

The outstanding success of the SATs boycott in 1993 by the NUT, NAS/UWT and ATL members is a theme in many resolutions to the conference.

The boycott forced the Tory Government to retreat and we were relieved of the totally unnecessary work to allow the government to produce the erroneous league tables of results. The NUT held a second ballot of members during November 1993 which resulted in 69,732 YES votes to 3,477 NO votes to maintain the boycott. Following this we had a survey of members opinions carried out in January, after the publication of the Dearing report. This survey resulted in a 31.2% return with 9 out of 10 in favour of continuing the boycott. On February 8th the executive gave the welcome instruction to continue the total testing boycott. The NAS/UWT has agreed with the NUT that its members will not do any of our work, however NAS/UWT members must seek at their conference to reinstate their full boycott so we inflict a further blow against the disruptive Government testing proposals.

Lessons

Many lessons arise from the last year. One is the need for a change in our rules — motion 68 must be supported. This would change the rules so we only need to get two-thirds of the votes cast in any ballot in order to get action rather than two-thirds of the total membership as at present. The current rule is aimed at stopping any action. More importantly the lesson has to be for one democratic TUC affiliated union — professional unity — most teachers have understood how essential it is to have just one union. It is an urgent need to move now towards one union for all teachers and no bureaucratic self interest or historical division should stand in the way of achieving this.

The pay award of 2.9% is, as the union executive has pointed out, a pay cut in real terms. We need 6.25% to stand still and this after last years real decline. However many teachers are reluctant to take action on pay without a perspective of possible victory.

We can achieve this by joining in action with all the public sector unions. The proposed one day strike in April has apparently been called off by the TUC Public sector unions. It is in all our interests to go on the offensive. The Government has been severely weakened over the last year and we could deliver a further defeat on them with a unified public sector campaign, as motion 76 puts forward. We also need to clarify a longer term pay strategy and it is our belief that we should work for claims that are on the basic across-the-board flat rate pay claims, working towards the elimination of the differentials that governments and others use to divide us.

Performance Pay

Motion 82 needs to be supported. We have to defeat any moves to PRP as all members understand that it is merely another way to try and divide and weaken teachers. Nationally we should ballot for a boycott of appraisals if there is any attempt to link it with pay. Also at school level we need to advise members to act to get a school pay policy that rejects any use of the excellence points or retention points. If there is surplus money then we should, for example, employ more staff to ease the work load or pay a one-off bonus to all staff equally. A major attack on all our conditions and on the education of all children has been the reduction in Section 11 funding by the Government. This has reduced the funding from 75% of costs to 54% in 1994/95 down to 50% in 1995/96. In Oldham, for example, this will mean about 75 jobs lost — a halving of the service, with a Government cut of £900,000. Whilst supporting motion 49 it is not sufficient to call on LEA's to make up the shortfall in funding. This is a national battle against the Tory Government and we need united national action to force the Government to restore this funding in full.

The motion 53 against racism is excellent and correctly links the growth of racism and fascism to the economic plight of working people. However it is essential

that anti-racist action is not seen to be hived off to the communities mainly effected or to anti-racist groups. The struggle against racism is intertwined with class unity of white and black and Asian workers, this can only be achieved through our class organisations — the labour and trade union movement. It is through class unity in the struggle for a socialist society that racism will be driven out. NUT conference, meeting in Scarborough at Easter, has an opportunity to build on the success of last year's action.

This will continue the work of restoring the confidence of teachers in our ability to defend our education service as what should be a truly comprehensive, state funded and democratically controlled system and at the same time defend the pay and conditions of all our members.

Bryan Beckinham
President Oldham
NUT and conference
delegate (personal
capacity)

More Efficient Education?

So we have been told that our miserable pay imposition is not to be funded by the government. It is to be paid for by efficiency savings in the service. How can we teachers achieve such savings?

Knowing that our members are already so busy that they can't turn around, Leeds NUT have taken the advice of independent consultants Ed-U-Pay plc and we present their suggestions for the benefit of all:—

- (1) P.E./Games. Don't have pupils changing into games kit. These lessons could be shortened by some 20/25 minutes which is about right for the collective act of worship.**
 - (2) The past is another country so history and geography lessons can be combined.**
 - (3) Introduce the Whole School Mural Art Project Curriculum. Each art group just takes up where the last left off — no washing palettes, no tidying paints away — saves huge amounts on decorating the school, and high school pupils can combine GCSE with City and Guilds.**
 - (4) Primary pupils listen to music while doing silent reading.**
 - (5) Register pupils once a week rather than twice a day.**
 - (6) Modern Foreign Languages. Offer a core of the most important modern languages — American and Australian. Ed-U-Pay is also conducting a study of the comparative cost savings of three schemes:—**
 - (a) Centres of Excellence. Schools concentrate on just one subject. Huge savings — no cover problems.**
 - (b) Centres of Nearness. All teachers to work at their nearest schools. Reduce travel time — lengthen school day — release car parking space for profitable development.**
 - (c) Time Share Centres. 'Clusters' of schools to have staggered holidays. Share staff — Mega savings.**
- This is by no means an exhaustive list of the savings that can be made. If any of our readers have the time and energy to think up more ideas so we can effect savings, put teachers out of work etc. we would be glad to have them. Perhaps we can pass them on to the secretary of State for Education!**

Tim Hales
Leeds NUT General Secretary
(Personal Capacity)

Readers urged to make a donation as... **£15,000 Appeal Launched**

New Sellers are Key to Sales Success

The merger conferences of the NCU and UCW marked a major step forward in sales in the two unions. Over 30 copies were sold at both conferences over the two days and £100 donated to the Press Fund.

But more importantly one NCU member agreed to become a new seller and started off in fine form by outselling everyone else at the conference.

In addition to that a number of other people agreed to take out a subscription or to take a regular copy of Socialist Appeal.

As Socialist Appeal sinks its roots deeper into the labour movement more and more people are asking to become sellers. Three new sellers have been reported from the Newcastle area and two in north London.

Experience shows the more sellers the more sales we achieve. That means every current seller should be asking people they sell to become a seller. Ask readers to take a few extra copies to sell at work or in their local labour movement. It's amazing how many readers know of other people who would like a regular copy. And don't forget to let us know of

how your sales are going or any interesting sales stories. Just ring the office on 071-354-3164 - And keep up the excellent work!

Publication Date Change

This issue of Socialist Appeal has been published for mid-March distribution as per our normal printing cycle.

However, with effect from our next issue (21) we will have changed our publication schedule so that from that issue onwards we will not be publishing and distributing Socialist Appeal until towards the end of the month.

Therefore the next issue will not be dated April but May and we will be continuing on that basis so that each issue will bear the date of the month following rather than the current one in which the journal is printed as has been the case up to now. We trust this will not prove too confusing!

Last autumn we launched a campaign to raise £5,000 in order to purchase pamphlet making equipment. The first fruit of the success of that appeal can be seen elsewhere in this month's journal with the launch of the In Defence of Marxism series of pamphlets.

Our previous press fund campaigns have helped us to establish Socialist Appeal in order to raise the ideas of Marxism in the labour and trade union movement. Now the Editorial Board takes great pride in announcing a campaign to finance the next step in our development. We require £15,000 by the autumn of this year in order to purchase our own press capable of printing this journal.

With this we will be able to print our journal quickly in-house thereby reducing the time between the journal being written and the copies 'hitting' the streets. But as well as having a more up to date journal there are many other reasons why we need our own quality printing facilities. We can be more reactive to events — producing broadsheets and specials whenever necessary. Remember the 'miner's special' — it took nearly a week to get out and cost nearly £500. With our own facility we could produce something similar overnight at a fraction of the cost. We could also enhance our pamphlet and booklet production — including photos, better quality covers etc. Last but not least we can move to a more regular production of Socialist Appeal when we are ready without fearing a big hike in our costs. *What do we need the £15,000 for?* This money would enable us to obtain a small off-set press together with platemaking equipment. We would also purchase a scanner to enable us to process the photos and graphics. Finally, we would be able to finance the move to a larger premises where we could print and store the journal. So you can see that we are talking about the biggest step we have yet taken with our journal since it was established in April 1992. However, we are confident that given the importance of the ideas of Marxism represented by Socialist Appeal that this campaign will be as successful as our previous ones. Help us get the campaign off to a flying start — please fill in the form opposite and donate as much as you can.

Thank you in advance.

Steve Jones
Journal
Manager

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Yet another deal has been signed in the former Yugoslavia.
What are the prospects for...

War...And Peace?

The former Yugoslavia presents a grim picture of the 'peace' which the imperialist powers have tried to establish after the so-called end of the cold war.

Over 100,000 have been killed, tens of thousands maimed and crippled, one half of the population of Bosnia-Herzegovina are refugees. The economy of Serbia has been devastated by the sanctions of the 'United Nations' Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina are in ruins.

The terrible suffering of the Muslims is used as propaganda in the West. The war has had a devastating effect. However, the recent bombing in Sarajevo of civilians in a market which killed 70 and wounded many more gave a pretext for the NATO forces, under the prodding of the US, to threaten once again to bomb the Serb guns encircling Sarajevo. There has been much more intense bombing by the Bosnian Croat army of the Muslims in Mostar but this has been ignored and given much less publicity. No ultimatum was issued to Croatia which had been intended to be under Germany's sphere of influence.

Empty Threats

NATO has been shown to have issued empty threats of bombing in the past. They were terrified of being drawn into the war against the Serbs and an endless guerrilla war, which after the experiences of the Nazis in World War Two in Yugoslavia and the experience of the Americans in Vietnam, they had cause to be wary about.

But now the 'prestige' and 'credibility' of NATO was at stake. By concentrating on the tactic of aerial control they have sought to avoid getting involved in ground conflict. The Russian Government pressurised the Bosnian Serb Government and told them that this time, despite the consequences, the NATO allies would carry out their threat. Under pressure from the Russians the Serbs reluctantly withdrew their heavy guns and the threatened bombing was not carried out. Although the 'no-fly' zone is regularly breached without any action being taken, US airplanes shot down four Serbian planes to make sure that they got the message.

The working class must have its own independent class approach to these ghastly events. As experience demonstrates over and over again during the last hundred years, modern

imperialism's main concerns are direct power, privilege, income, profit, prestige and spheres of influence. The old direct military domination of colonies has been abandoned because it was too costly and because of the ex-colonial peoples struggle for freedom and independence. But indirect economic domination continues. This applies also to the small 'independent' countries in Europe, although not so crudely. But in the Balkans the struggle for strategic and economic points of support has resumed as it did before the Second World War. The interests and well-being of the Serbs, Croats and Muslims is the last consideration of the great powers who are motivated by the above mentioned concerns. That is why the advanced workers can have no hope in the ruling class to solve their problems abroad anymore than they can at home. This is shown clearly by the events in former Yugoslavia. After the collapse of the Stalinist-Titoist Yugoslavia, the imperialists moved in with their machinations and diplomatic manoeuvring. Germany in its "drive to the east" for more markets and spheres of influence forced the European Community (EC) to unilaterally recognise the 'independence' of Croatia and Slovenia. Franco Tudjman in his Presidential election campaign had attacked Jews and Serbs seeking to turn them into second-class citizens. This recognition of Croatia and Slovenia

Right wing reformists and unfortunately left reformists too, give credence to the foreign policy of the ruling class by supporting the United Nations. But the role of the UN is clear. They act at the whim of the "great powers" .. and in the interests of big business and the ruling class

precipitated the war between Croatia and Serbia. The treatment of the Serb minority providing the pretext. The imperialist powers have a direct responsibility for this mess.

The recognition of Bosnia-Herzegovina as an independent country by the European Community precipitated reprisals by Bosnian Serbs and Croatia. Cynically in a secret agreement the Presidents of Serbia and Croatia, Slobodan Milosevic and Franco Tudjman, decided to divide Bosnia-Herzegovina between them. Thus the diplomatic manoeuvres of the great powers resulted in disaster for the Muslims.

The role of the UN has been clear. They act at the whims of the great powers. They represent especially the United States after the grovelling acceptance by Gorbachev and then Yeltsin of American domination of the Security Council where France, Britain, China, Russia and the United States have a veto over decisions. Just as the French, British or American workers interests are not represented by their governments so even less are their interests represented by these diplomatic representatives who represent their governments and the 'national interest' — a formula to conceal the interests of big business and the ruling class. Right wing reformists, and unfortunately left wing reformists as well, give credence to the foreign policy of the ruling class by supporting the United Nations. So too do the former "Communists!"

Class Question

A Marxist attitude always begins with the class criterion. So you could have rubbed your eyes with disbelief at the position of the 'Morning Star' as stated on the 24th February 1994 - this the journal supported by the "Communist" Party of Britain which claims to be Marxist. The editorial is headed ; 'New factor gives hope' and continues: "The anti-Serb nature of the European Union's involvement fitted in with Germany's long standing policy in the region, going back to before the First World War. At that time, Germany backed Croatia to counter Serbia, where Russia had influence. On the other hand, Britain cultivated relations with Serbia as a counter to German influence in the region. These relations and conflicting interests can be seen even today in the present crisis. It was Germany which pushed for the

European Union to recognise first Slovenia and then Croatia, painting Serbia as the villain of the piece.

Britain has persistently dragged its feet, though giving in in the end. The US has also held back, until finally deciding to come down in favour of the Bosnian government. Russia was also aloof, until it felt compelled to avert any bombing by using its influence with the Serbs.

The important point now is that all these powers are directly involved A negotiated settlement is increasingly becoming the only way out. It is to be hoped that the summit proposed by Russia will take place. Now that the US, Russia and the other major powers are involved, it is urgent that they meet.."

So that the representatives of the Imperialist Yeltsin and the Imperialist Clinton plus Major, Mitterand, Kohl and the rest can do horse deals to decide the fate of former Yugoslavia! As if the interests of the Muslim people and working classes of Croatia and the Serbian workers could be reflected or represented by these gangster representatives of capitalism. They will be interested in gaining advantages for their own capitalist interests. They are afraid of a general war in the Balkans which could involve Turkey, Greece, Macedonia and Albania which would suck them in.

Muslims Abandoned

The great powers in the EC must accept responsibility for this mess. The recognition of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina provoked the wars. They thought that recognition of Bosnia would be enough to frighten of the Serbs but in fact it provoked them. Now, from demanding the maintenance of Bosnia-Herzegovina intact they have abandoned the Muslims. The proposed plan of Lord Owen and UN envoy Stoltenberg involved, in the words of the Guardian, the "creation of a broken, Muslim majority statelet squeezed between Greater Croatia and Greater Serbia". It was the interests of the Imperialist powers which decided this cynical betrayal. So much so that they leaned on the Muslims to capitulate. The Guardian (20/2/94) wryly comments in relation to Owen that "In explaining the reasons for the failure of the talks, he highlighted the Muslim rejection of the Serbian counter-proposals while failing to mention the earlier Serbian rejection." Thus Lord Owen has done a somersault over his earlier stand. It would require force or the threat of force to change the map and the military hold of the Bosnian Serbs. So the NATO powers were prepared to swallow "ethnic cleansing" and the driving out of populations from the Serbian held areas of Bosnia. Cynical responses of the NATO powers are the driving force of their diplomacy in the area.

Over the last period the relationship of forces has changed somewhat. Many weapons are possessed by the Serbs and Croats but very few by the Muslims. The UN at the insistence of the NATO powers had imposed a ban on the sale of arms to the area which had hindered the Muslims. But now the infantry of the Muslims, a claimed 200,000 has obtained light weapons — partly home made, partly captured and partly smuggled into the

country. They are well trained and now probably the best infantry in the area. With this they have been having successes in the war in Eastern Bosnia against the Croats. The Croats were allied with the Muslims in the first period of the war. Then they turned on them and made a secret agreement with the Serbs, despite the war between Serbia and Croatia in which the Serb minority in Croatia, with the help of Serbia, seized from a quarter to a third of Croatia. Now with the Muslims achieving successes by force of arms and the possibility of defeat for the Bosnian Croats, they have done a new somersault. This is reflected in the signing of the deal for a federation of Bosnian Croats and Muslims and a confederation of Croatia and Bosnia.

"It might be in the interests of the Muslims to sign up to a confederation" said a Belgrade diplomat "If not they will be left with an unstable state. If they are to have any hope of survival, the Muslims must make a deal with either the Serbs or the Croats". The Russian



A Serbian volunteer on the Croatia front

Deputy Foreign Minister V. Churkin and Mr. Redman, US special envoy, had talks with Lord Owen and Mr. Stoltenberg — the international 'peace' negotiators — and according to the FT of 24 February 1994: "The talks centred on Croatia and the Bosnian government agreeing to an eventual "confederation" for Bosnia following a cease-fire in central Bosnia and lifting of the siege of Mostar."

The agreement of March 1 was signed under extreme pressure from the US, reflecting the position of the Croatian and Bosnian governments as puppets of the western powers. The US is pinning its hopes on the Russians being able to continue to pressurise the Serbs, but the whole agreement is really dependent on acceptance 'on the ground.' Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia are so much small change in the hands of the great powers. The welfare of these peoples is the last consideration of these bandits. Spheres of influence, strategic interests — markers and

routes to Eastern Europe weigh larger in their calculations.

The advanced workers have to patiently explain that the interests of the workers of not a single country will be favourably advanced, what ever they decide. Muslim, Croats and Serb workers have the same interests in common. As the fumes of national hatreds dissipate, as after every war, the genuine inter-relationships which existed within the working class before will gain fresh life Everywhere in the West the ideas of Marxism and international solidarity will gain a greater echo. The idea will gain support that at home and abroad the working class internationally can only rely on their own power, their own solidarity and forces, to serve their needs and interests. Those are incompatible with those of the capitalist governments and institutions like the IMF, the World Bank and the United Nations.

The only real solution to the problems of the nations of former Yugoslavia lies in a democratic socialist federation. This would be

the beginning of a solution. But socialism in one country is impossible as the experience of Stalinist Russia and Stalinist Yugoslavia testify. No country, large or small, can solve their problems on their own. That is why a democratic socialist federation of Eastern and Western Europe leading to a socialist federation of the world is the only means of solving the problems of poverty, ending the nightmare of massive arms production, of 'small' wars, of slumps and all the "horror without end" that capitalism brings in the new epoch of crisis. Reliance on the big imperialist powers to solve the problems of Yugoslavia or any other part of the world would be fatal. Only the working class whose interests are common internationally can, by taking power into its own hand offer a solution nationally and internationally to the problems facing the peoples of the World.

Ted Grant

Australia is now experiencing an economic recovery. But as the following article from the first issue of the Australian Marxist publication *Socialist Appeal* explains, the weak boom threatens to provoke a new explosion in the class struggle...

Luck Runs Out for the 'Lucky Country'

For 150 years, Australian capitalism appeared able to defy the laws of economics and enjoy a "first world" lifestyle on the basis of an economy dependent on the export of wool and grain.

During the 1960s, Australia's ability to avoid the fate of other commodity exporting nations who were sinking deeper into poverty earned it the ironic nickname, the Lucky Country.

But the failure to develop a viable manufacturing base has inevitably led the laws of capitalism to reassert themselves with a vengeance. The declining value of commodity exports on the world market has thrown the economy into deep structural crisis.

Foreign Debt

Despite explosive growth in mineral production during the 1980s, Australian capitalism has built up the highest level of foreign debt in the industrialised world, extending the recession of the early 1990s into the longest for six decades and pushing unemployment over one million. After four years, the recession is finally giving way to a weak recovery. But the upturn will bring no relief for capitalism - instead it will aggravate the structural crisis of the economy and generate a new movement of the working class in defence of living standards, ending the relatively peaceful relations between the classes that have marked Australian society since 1945. After four years of the longest and deepest recession in six decades, the beginnings of a weak recovery in the economy is at long last making its presence felt. In January, Federal Treasurer Ralph Willis announced a reduction of \$1.25 billion in the 1993-4 budget deficit due to the improving economic situation. The same week saw official unemployment drop to 10.6% and the Stock Exchange All-Ordinaries Index overtake the

point it reached before the October 1987 crash to set a new record, reflecting a jump of 145% in corporate profits and confidence within business circles that the US economic upturn would lead to higher prices for Australian commodity exports.

But while the US upswing and continuing boom in south east Asia is fuelling this growing optimism, the condition of the world economy is still far from healthy from the standpoint of Australian capitalism. The rise in trade tensions between Japan and the US is forming a black cloud over the future. Australian capitalism is unable to line up on one side or the other as it depends on the US for capital and on Japan for its export market.

The drift to "managed trade" across the Pacific will tend to exclude Australian manufactured goods from the Asian market and

even squeeze out agricultural exports, as the region's nations seek to reduce their trade surpluses with the US and avoid trade sanctions.

The recession in Japan, will have a serious impact on Australia's economic prospects. Japan is the destination for 25% of Australian exports and the downturn in the Japanese car industry with its knock-on effect on steel production has resulted in Australian iron ore and coal exporters accepting price and output cuts that will reduce export earnings by almost \$1 billion in 1994 alone.

In fact, the rise in the stock market has been the result not of economic improvement but of speculation generated by a massive movement of capital out of US bank accounts and into gold and the world's share markets. Of all Australia's commodities only gold has increased its price substantially in

the last year.

As the US recovery gathers pace, the very real likelihood of interest rate rises bursting this bubble has panicked speculators. But for Australian capital, the question of interest rates has a special importance because of the enormous foreign debt owed by the private sector which has continued to grow throughout the recession to \$240 billion, or 42% of annual GNP. The cost of servicing this debt has only fallen from its 1989 peak, where it absorbed 23% of all export revenue, because of the low interest rates that have come with the recession. Even so, in 1993, debt servicing absorbed 17% of Australia's export income.

Investment Falls

The amount of debt has already reduced investment levels to a 40-year low. Now, not even the cost of wear and tear on machinery is being covered. Interest rate rises will cut across any increase in investment in new plant and machinery that alone can develop a modern manufacturing base and so resolve the structural crisis of Australian capitalism. The lack of investment means the recovery will lead to a flood of imports, as the manufacturing sector lacks the capacity to cope with the extra demand, and a blow out in the current account deficit driving it up to \$24 billion by 1995. This will force the government to raise interest rates in order to attract the currency needed to sustain a further deficit, and so further stifle investment.

The economy will get no relief from a rise in commodity prices. Instead this will tend to force the \$A higher, making exports less competitive and imports cheaper. The improvement in competitiveness of Australian manufacturing of recent years has largely been due to the sharp fall of the \$A, thus reducing the cost of exports. (But for capitalists this something only

Demonstration against changes in labour law in Victoria



permissible during a recession when demand is so slack to prevent the higher costs of imports being passed on to the consumer in the shape of higher prices.) Even at this stage in the recovery the \$A has climbed 16% above its low point of September 1993, causing panic among manufacturers.

The crisis of Australian capitalism therefore expresses itself in an inability to sustain any serious upswing without aggravating the fundamental contradiction within the economy - the lack of a viable manufacturing base.

The government has also been forced to aim to drastically reduce the federal budget deficit, which absorbs the entire savings of the nation and means business has to finance investment from abroad, increasing the foreign debt at every point. The reduction of the deficit if carried through, will involve a 19% increase in taxes by 1997, the highest in Australian history, on top of spending cuts which will reduce growth further. As a result, the recovery will make no real impact on jobless totals. With the working population expanding by 150,000 a year, growth rates of 3.5 - 4% forecast for 1994 and 1995 will see official unemployment levels stay around 10%. The number of long term unemployed is likely to top 450,000. In reality unemployment stands closer to 17%. The growth of employment of the last five months has been almost entirely in part-time work and during the same period the number of full-time jobs fell. At best then, the upturn will replace unemployment with underemployment.

Employers' Assault

The recovery will see no let up in the employers' assault on wages and conditions. The rise in the \$A will squeeze competitiveness, while recent gains in productivity, achieved not by investment but by job-shedding and "restructuring", will no longer be sustained as these measures have largely exhausted their limits. In order to maintain profitability, employers will have to reduce labour costs. However, a new offensive on the part of employers will provoke a response from workers. After years of the Accord between the ACTU and the Labour government, which saw average earnings fall, and the experience of a recession which

cost 400,000 jobs, workers see in the recovery an opportunity to claw back some of what has been lost. The inability of Australian capitalism to meet workers aspirations will produce an explosion in the class struggle on a scale unseen since the 1930s.

In the recent period the level of industrial and political activity has fallen away to historic lows.

Although wages declined during the Accord years, the worldwide upswing of the 1980s saw unemployment fall below 6%. The large numbers of women who entered the workforce and the growth in two income families compensated workers for the decline in wages and allowed living standards generally to increase.

As the level of industrial disputes fell, those struggles which did take place were effectively isolated by an ACTU leadership committed to the Accord process and went down in defeat, further depressing the mood. Under these conditions the right wing Labor government was able to play an openly strikebreaking role during the pilots strike and in the deregistration of the Builders Labourers Federation.

The ferocity of the recession and spread of mass unemployment further dampened the level of disputes, which hit a low point in January 1992 when the whole of Australia was effectively strike free.

The massive levels of job-shedding - in Victoria, 38% of all manufacturing jobs were lost between 1989 and 1992 - allowed employers to pass on some of the productivity gains as sweeteners in the transition from national to enterprise level bargaining. As a result, despite the recession, the share of wages in the national income actually increased by a small amount over the past four years. In the metal industry, which sets the benchmark across manufacturing, workers won two increases of 4.5% and 6% on top of wage rises flowing on from job reclassification.

However, the honeymoon period of enterprise bargaining is drawing to a close. With profitability under threat, employers will be forced to attempt their first serious reductions in wages as the recovery forces the \$A up and persisting mass unemployment makes workers less willing to take "voluntary departure packages".

On the other hand, among skilled workers where labour shortages are already appearing, the recovery will offer a good opportunity to press for wage increases and will mean the employers' assault on wages will meet severe resistance. The seeds are being sown for a sharp increase in industrial disputes. Already the monthly figure for working days lost through strikes has doubled since July 1993. Far from a softening of relations between the classes, the recovery will lead to a sharp polarisation. This in turn will undermine the position of the right wing Federal Labor government which will find itself increasingly unable to satisfy either the demands of capital or the aspirations of workers.

Budget Deficit

More than any other single issue, the changed prospects of the Federal Labor government will be demonstrated in its dilemma over the budget deficit. The government will attempt, in the interests of capital, to maintain its course towards reducing the federal deficit to 1.2% of output by 1996-7. But this will meet a storm of protest from the ACTU reflecting a widespread feeling among workers that the increased tax revenue during the recovery should go to tackling unemployment through job creation programmes.

Already the crisis over the 1993-4 budget cost the Treasurer his job and created the most serious breach in the Accord in a decade. In 1994 and '95 this break will widen unless the government changes course.

However, big business will also bring pressure to bear on the government. As in September 1993, when the \$A fell sharply in response to the budget crisis, capital will express its disapproval to any bending to

union pressure by triggering a crisis of confidence in the economy.

Even at this early stage of the 1994-5 budget process, rumours are circulating that the government may threaten a snap election in order to frighten the ACTU and the Green and Democrat senators who hold the balance of power in the Upper House. But such a tactic would only cause the issue to return with a vengeance the following year.

It is clear that a new period has opened up - one that will throw Labor's right into crisis and mark a new ascendancy of the left within the labour movement. Already a growing assertiveness on the part of the Australian Labour Party (ALP) Left has found expression in the call for a "Jobs Levy" in the 1994 budget to cut unemployment.

But it is from within the unions that the impetus for the rise of the Left will find its source. The union movement and the ALP are inextricably linked at every level. As the rising tide of industrial militancy generates a growing involvement in the unions and an increase in the level of class consciousness, and as the union movement finds itself in growing conflict with the Labor right, this will produce a movement into the ALP aimed at reversing the pro-big business course of the federal government.

This movement into political activity on the part of the working class will be given further momentum by international developments which will contribute to the growth of an internationalist and socialist consciousness among Australian workers. For the first time in living memory, the conditions will develop for the growth of Marxism into the decisive force within the labour movement. ●

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How serious is the fascist threat? Can the fascists create a mass basis as in the 1930s? What are the lessons for today? With the rise of racist and neo-fascist parties in Europe, Rob Sewell looks at the prospects for fascist movements today.

The Rise of Fascism in Europe: Real or Exaggerated?

World relations have entered a very stormy period. The fall of the Berlin Wall put an end to the "frozen" relations between Stalinism and the Western capitalist Powers, and brought about a very unstable 'New World Order', more akin to the period between the wars. This has resulted in war on the European mainland, in former Yugoslavia, for the first time since 1945. There is a danger that this conflagration can engulf the whole of the Balkans, raising the conflict to a new barbarous level.

The euphoria of the strategists of Capitalism at the collapse of Stalinism and the prospects of new markets, raw materials and profits, has now turned to dust. Given the victory of the Stalinists and nationalists in the Russian parliamentary elections, the

ousting of the pro-capitalist ('reformist') ministers, and the humiliating decision to grant amnesty to the organisers of last October's failed coup, the whole situation has been thrown into reverse. The organ of British finance-capital, the 'Financial Times' lamented: "The West can no longer base its policies on the assumption that Russia will manage market-oriented reform (i.e., capitalist restoration)." (25th February). The economic catastrophe in Russia is preparing a further coup. The political, industrial and economic turmoil affecting Europe has given rise to a big change in the objective situation. Still languishing in the deepest recession since the war, Europe has seen a surge in industrial battles, with general strikes taking place in Italy, Belgium, Spain and Portugal. Added to this has been the

collapse in support for the traditional capitalist parties in Italy, Germany, Sweden, Britain and elsewhere. This crisis has introduced widespread political volatility, reflecting mainly the disillusionment of the middle class but also layers of workers in the established parties. It is the symptom of deep anxiety and lack of confidence in the capitalist system itself. As Trotsky once explained, in a social crisis, the middle layers begin frantically to look for a way out, first to the left then the right. This political turmoil has been reflected in Japan with the collapse of the Liberal Democratic Party, and in America with a growing disillusionment with the Republican and Democratic parties and the support for the "independent" Presidential candidature of Ross Perot.

Zhirinovsky

This new period of convulsions has also brought into prominence neo-fascist and racist parties throughout Europe. In Russia, the extreme nationalist demagogue, Zhirinovsky, got over 20% of the vote. Although these parties and groups bear no comparison in size with the mass fascist movements of Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco, their virulent attacks against immigrants have brought them certain support and notoriety. They have made gains on the electoral front in Belgium, France, Germany and Italy in particular. This, however, remains very fragile, as the recent fall in support for Le Pen's National Front indicates. The growth of these movements, nevertheless, has alarmed many workers and youth. In Britain, the election of a BNP councillor in Tower Hamlets, as well as the increase in racially motivated attacks on Blacks and Asians, has stirred the TUC into calling a

mass demonstration in London's East End.

What is the perspective for fascism? Is there a danger in the next period?

Fascism, in its classical form, emerged in Europe in the stormy period of the inter-war years. The mass fascist movements of Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco represented a peculiar form of capitalist reaction. Although the ruling class, in general, prefers to govern through a form of parliamentary democracy, being the cheapest and most stable means, in times of acute crisis it is forced to adopt more repressive methods to safeguard its interests.

The weapon of repression is the state. The state machine can be reduced, in the words of Engels, to "armed bodies of men" in defence of private property (armed forces, police, bureaucracy, jails, etc). The state is a necessary expense to big business to safe-guard the status quo, and therefore their power, privileges and income. Under capitalism, there has been a wide variety of regimes catering for the needs of the ruling class: parliamentary democracy, constitutional monarchy, republic, military-police dictatorship, and fascism. Yet the capitalist class cannot simply switch from one form to another like moving from one railway carriage to another. Certain social forces and circumstances are required. As with the laws of revolution, there are the laws that determine counter-revolution.

With the development of capitalist society, the working class, subjected to increasing exploitation, was forced to develop its own class organisations and democratic rights. Without exception, trade unions, political parties, the right to strike, to free assembly, to free speech, to vote, etc, were all won



Italian neo-Nazis

after bitter struggle with the ruling class. These gains represented the embryo of the new society within the womb of the old. These democratic rights were not guaranteed, but were concessions the capitalists were forced to grant.

By the time of the First World War, capitalism had entered a period of organic decay. The development of giant monopolies, and the division of the globe amongst the dominant capitalist powers opened a period of intense rivalry. The resulting World War indicated that the productive forces had outgrown the confines of the nation state and private ownership itself. The economic impasse and depression of the 1920s and 1930s, meant that capitalism could no longer afford the concessions and reforms of the past period. The worker's defence organisations (the trade unions) and the democratic rights the workers had won, had become an obstacle to the continuation of the system.

Social Crisis

Capitalism under these crisis conditions, was forced to reduce the conditions of the working class to the bare minimum. It also led to the ruination of the middle class - those involved in small businesses, professional people, traders, and so on.

These conditions gave rise to a social crisis that forced the working class to seek a way out. The whole of the inter-war period can be characterised as a period of revolution and counter-revolution. The workers turned towards their mass organisations in Italy, Germany, Spain and elsewhere. The German workers could have taken power into their hands a number of times between 1918 and 1929. The revolutionary Italian workers had seized and occupied the factories in 1920. In Spain, the proletariat engaged in an heroic protracted revolutionary struggle between 1931 and 1937 in which they could have carried out ten revolutions.

The middle class, due to their intermediate position in society, is unable to play an independent role and sways between the capitalists and the workers. It first looks to the working class as an ally if the labour movement attempts to give a revolutionary lead out of the crisis. If this is not forthcoming, out of blind despair, this middle layer desperately

looks to the fascist demagogues. Whereas the fascist movement is financed by big business as a human battering ram against the workers, its mass basis consists of bankrupt frenzied petit bourgeois. It represents a special form of capitalist reaction that seeks the destruction of the workers organisations, all democratic rights, including the trappings of parliamentary democracy.

As Trotsky explained: "*After fascism is victorious, finance capital gathers into its hands, as in a vice of steel, directly and immediately, all the organs and institutions of sovereignty, the executive, administrative and educational powers of the state: the entire state apparatus together with the army, the municipalities, the universities, the schools, the press, the trade unions and the co-operatives. When a state turns fascist it does not only mean that the forms and methods of government are changed in accordance with the patterns set by Mussolini - the changes in this sphere ultimately play a minor role - but it means, first of all for the most part, that the workers' organisations are annihilated; that the proletariat is reduced to an amorphous state; and that a system of administration is created which penetrates deeply into the masses and which serves to frustrate the independent crystallisation of the proletariat. Therein precisely is the gist of fascism.*" (What Next? The Key Question for Germany. 1932). Once the fascists came to power, as in Germany, Italy and Spain, they brushed aside all opposition assumed complete control. Unable to satisfy the aspirations of the ruined middle class, fascism quickly loses its social base and degenerates into a military police dictatorship. However, the relatively independent character of the fascist regime can have disastrous consequences. Hitler's political monopoly led to an utter adventure, when, against the wishes and interests of the capitalist class, he decided to continue the war when it was clear all was lost. This resulted in the loss of half of Germany to Stalinism. In desperation the capitalists attempted to replace the fascist regimes with more reliable army generals. In Italy, the capitalists succeeded in replacing Mussolini with Marshal Badoglio in 1943, with a

instruction to capitulate to the Allies. It was sheer madness to continue. The 'Generals' Plot' against Hitler was an attempt to do the same in Germany. Its failure had devastating consequences for German capitalism. The serious strategists of capitalism will never want to

Trotsky explained: "A government which raises itself above the nation is not, however, suspended in air. The true axis of the present government (the French Doumergue government of 1934) passes through the police, the bureaucracy, the military clique. It is a military-police dictatorship with which we



Nazi regalia seized in Dresden

repeat that catastrophic mistake. They too learn from History. In the future, the ruling class if faced with a threat from the workers' movement, rather than hand power to the fascists, will seek a more reliable form of reaction. Faced with a serious challenge to their system, without doubt, the capitalists would revert to the most ruthless measures. They would seek to rest upon the armed forces, bringing to power a military police dictatorship. They would prefer this course, as unlike the fascist mob, the generals have a multitude of links to the capitalists through family relations, common education, outlook, clubs, directorships, etc. They could be relied upon to a much greater extent. Such bonapartist regimes are products of social crisis. While these 'armed bodies of men' can act as independent arbiters, rising above and balancing between the classes in the name of 'Order', they ultimately defend the existing social order. As

are confronted, barely concealed with the decorations of parliamentarianism. But a government of the sabre as the judge-arbiter of the nation - that's just what bonapartism is. "*The sabre by itself has no independent programme. It is the instrument of 'order'. It is summoned to safeguard what exists... Bonapartism can be nothing else than the government of finance capital which directs, inspires, and corrupts the summits of the bureaucracy, the police, the officer' caste, and the press.*" (Bonapartism and Fascism, 1934). Capitalist military-police dictatorships are nevertheless unstable and usually quickly lose any support they may have. In the modern context they can be extremely ruthless, adopting the methods of fascism but lacking its mass basis. Such was the character of the Pinochet regime in Chile, which murdered 50,000 workers. The basis for reaction in Europe,

however, is far weaker now than in the inter-war period. As a result of the prolonged upswing, the peasantry, which traditionally provided support for reaction, has been reduced to a tiny number. The working class and its organisations have never been stronger, with over 40% now organised in unions. The attempts to establish or maintain military regimes over the past period have proved disastrous. The collapse of the Franco regime opened up a pre-revolutionary period in Spain. The same was true in Portugal with the collapse of Salazar/Caetano dictatorship, which threatened the very survival of capitalism. The fall of the Greek Junta in 1974 after seven years, far from solving capitalism's problems also opened up a turbulent pre-revolutionary period in Greece. It is clear that today, even if the capitalists succeeded in establishing a totalitarian military dictatorship, such a regime could not last very long.

Coup D'Etat

Despite this, the ruling classes have not abandoned such a perspective if the need arises. Throughout the 1960's and 1970s in particular, sections of the ruling class conspired with sections of the military and the secret services to plan coup d'etats. In Italy, such a

The turbulent period that now opens up will place the military option back on the agenda. The rise of mass unemployment, the collapse of Stalinism in Eastern Europe with its resulting emigration of pauperised sections to the West, and the failure of the workers' leaders to offer any way out of the crisis, has led to the rise of nationalist currents throughout Europe. The emergence of neo-fascist groupings and the violence against immigrant workers has high-lighted the opening of a new volatile period. This in turn has led to the undermining of the traditional capitalist parties. Whereas the Vlams Blok in Belgium, the Republicans in Germany and the National Front in France have made certain electoral gains, they have no prospects of independent power. The only case where the neo-fascists can pose a serious threat is in Italy where the MSI have changed their name to the National Alliance and entered a coalition with Berlusconi's Forza Italia. Even here, the former MSI have attempted to change their past openly fascist image and present themselves more like a traditional right-wing party. Rather than seek power for themselves, the neo-fasist groups have acted as a pace-maker for a military take-over. In the modern context, the role of the fascists have been to create the necessary conditions of

and prolonged dictatorship of General Pinochet (which benefited from the boom conditions of the 1980s) the Labour Movement, although under the heel of dictatorship, was not destroyed. Unfortunately, the Socialist Party leaders, instead of upholding an independent class position, have entered into a coalition with the Christian Democrats. In the new period of crisis that has opened up, the ruling class realises that the reforms of the past has become incompatible with the continuation of their system. The Welfare State, the pinnacle of reformism, is now under attack in all countries. To reduce their budget deficits, governments are savagely cutting back on 'unnecessary' expenditure. At the same time, industry is trying to cut its wage 'costs' by attacking living standards.

Democratic Rights

No doubt, sections of the ruling class and the military caste view the trade unions and democratic rights as an obstacle to their 'divine right to rule'.

Plots are being hatched to do away with these 'obstacles' in the future. This is particularly true of the weaker powers of Europe: Italy, Greece, Spain and Britain. The fascist gangs will act as jackals for the military. Through the use of assassination, bombings, and violence, this scum will attempt to create a climate of fear and ungovernability.

The Labour Movement will ignore this threat at its peril. Even if the capitalists succeed in establishing a military-police regime in any of the countries of Europe, such a dictatorship, given the strength of the working class, will be very unstable and not long lasting. As with the Greek Junta from 1967 to 1974, it was no solution for the Greek bourgeois, but on the contrary, opened up a pre-revolutionary period in Greece. As in the inter-war period, we are now in a period of revolution and counter-revolution, but with a far stronger working class.

The growing polarisation between the classes, the general strikes across Europe, the volatility of the middle class, the spread of racist poison, and the emergence of neo-fascist groups, is a symptom of the new period. The days of economic progress and upswing of the three

decades since the war, together with the boom of the 1980s, has turned into a curve of stagnation and downswing. In the next period, as the ruling class prepares behind the scenes for civil war, the working class will turn towards the mass organisations searching for a way out of the impasse. The Labour Movement must take the threat of reaction seriously. Only if the working class repeatedly fails to change society, demoralising the middle classes in the process, will the mass basis for reaction be created. Today's spectre of reaction is only a warning no bigger than a man's fist. Only through the overthrow of capitalism, which gave rise to the mass fascist movements of the past, will this threat be eliminated forever. Never-more-so has the fate of Mankind been linked to the reconstruction of society on socialist lines.

Only through the overthrow of capitalism which gave rise to the fascist movements of the past can the threat be eliminated forever

conspiracy involving NATO top brass, was termed the 'Gladio Conspiracy', which had plans for a military take-over not only in Italy, but in a number of European countries. In Britain, evidence has emerged concerning plots as far back as the 1960s to overthrow the Wilson Labour Government. In the 1970s, sections of the military in Britain around Brigadier Kitson, openly debated the military options arising from the miners strike and the defeat of the Heath Government. The 1980s boom cut across this process temporarily.

chaos and instability for the military to step in as the saviour of society. This was the case in Chile, where the fascist 'Patria y Libertad' sabotaged the economy and destabilised the regime of Allende. These measures, combined with the backing of the CIA, drove the middle class into a frenzy against the 'Left Unity' government. The failure of Allende to mobilise the working class to change society, and instead to base himself on the rigged Constitution in an attempt to appease the ruling class and the military, led to utter disaster. Even after the savage

Further Reading

The Menace of Fascism - Grant et al - £1.50

Fascism: What it is and How to Fight it - Trotsky - £2.50

The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany - Trotsky - £18.00

Fascism, Stalinism and the United Front - Trotsky - £5.50

Fascism and Big Business - Guerin - £14.50

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Winning the workers to the struggle against the fascists

Note: The extracts below from Leon Trotsky's article written in 1934 deals with the question of tactics arising from an incident where the Stalinist Communist Party overreacted to a small group of fascists entering Melinmontant, Paris and ended up clashing with police, with a worker shot dead by the police. Although some formulations and phrases apply to the situation then rather than now, the general thrust of Trotsky's arguments remain relevant today.

What is the objective, not just for the moment but for the entire coming period? It is to get the workers to take up the struggle against the fascists before these elements have become a dominant force in the state, to get the workers used to not being afraid of the fascists, to teach them how to deal blows to the fascists, to convince them that they are stronger in numbers, in audacity and in other ways. In this period it is very important to distinguish between the fascists and the state. The state is not yet ready to subordinate itself to the fascists; it wants to 'arbitrate'. we know what this means from the sociological point of view. However, this is not a matter of sociology but of giving blows and taking them. Politically it is part of the nature of the pre-

Bonarpartist, 'arbiter' state that the police hesitate, hold back, and on the whole are far from identifying with the fascist gangs. Our strategic task is to increase these hesitations and apprehension on the part of the 'arbiter', its army and its police. How? By showing that we are stronger than the fascists, that is, by giving them a good beating in full view of this arbiter without, as long as we are not absolutely forced to, directly taking on the

state itself. That is the point. In the case of Melinmontant, as far as I can tell from here, the operation was handled in the diametrically opposite way. L'Humanite reports that there were n/o more than 60 fascists in a thoroughly working class neighbourhood! The tactical, or if you will 'technical' task was quite simple - grab every fascist or every isolated group of fascists by their collars, acquaint them with the pavement a few times, strip them of fascist insignia and documents, and without carrying things any further, leave them with their fright and a few good black and blue marks.

The 'arbiter' defended freedom of assembly (for the moment the state is also defending workers' meetings from the fascists). This being the case, it was totally idiotic to want to provoke an armed conflict with the police. But this is precisely what they did. L'Humanite is exultant - they erected a barricade! But what for? The fascists weren't on the other side of the barricade, and it was the fascists they came to fight. Was this an armed insurrection, perhaps? To establish the dictatorship of the proletariat in Melinmontant? This makes no sense. As Marx said: "One does not play at insurrection". That means, "One does not play with barricades". Even when there is an insurrection, you don't erect barricades just anywhere, any

time.

They succeeded in a) letting the gilded youth return home in fine shape; b) provoking the police and getting a worker killed; c) giving the fascists an important argument - the Communists are starting to build barricades. The idiot bureaucrats will say: "So you want us to forget about building barricades out of fear of the fascists and the love of the police?" It is a betrayal to reject building barricades when the political situation demands it and when you are strong enough to defend them. But it is a disgusting provocation to build sham barricades for a little fascist meeting, to blow things up out of all political proportions, and to disorientate the proletariat. The task is to involve the workers in increasing numbers in the fight against fascism. The Melinmontant adventure can only isolate a small, militant minority. After such an experience, a hundred, a thousand workers who would have been ready to teach the young bullies a few lessons will say 'No thanks', I don't want to get my head broken for nothing'.

The upshot of the whole undertaking was just the opposite of what was intended.... What should the most active and perceptive elements have done on the spot? They should have improvised a small general staff, including a socialist and a Stalinist if possible... This improvised general staff, with a map of the district spread out in front of them, should have worked out the simplest plan in the world - divide up one or two hundred demonstrators into groups of three to five, with a leader for each group, and let them do their work. And after the battle the leaders should get together and draw the balance sheet and the necessary lessons for the future....

For the perceptive, revolutionary elements, the balance sheet offers the following lessons:

- You have to have your own general staff for such occasions.
- You have to anticipate the possibilities and eventualities in such conflicts.
- You have to establish a few general plans (several variants).
- You have to have the proper leaflets for the situation. ●



Leon Trotsky

Hungary's Bitter Experience

A visit to Budapest holds many promises: the chance to catch up with old friends, have the odd feast, not to mention a fulsome quantity of Hungarian wine. But for a visitor who has not been there for nearly 3 years a shock awaited.

The general feel of the place was different from anything experienced before. I caught the bus and Metro from the airport and, looking through the window, miles and miles of closed factories greeted me. This area of Budapest has never been particularly pretty but the sad dereliction visible told me this was a different place from the one I had known.

The contrast in downtown Budapest could not have been sharper. Unending traffic, with as many Mercedes limousines and BMW's as Wartburgs, Ladas and Trabants; the swish, but very expensive shops and well dressed shoppers made me feel I had risen out of the Metro into a different world.

Polarisation

As my visit unfolded, this impression was reinforced. The advent of capitalism has produced a polarisation of the population in terms of appearance, mood, wealth and lifestyle. A small, but significant section of people were living very well, but the vast majority, especially those in some country areas, where wholesale factory closures removed the sole employer, were sinking into poverty, unemployment and hopelessness.

This was definitely not the great dream many had at the fall of the Berlin Wall and after the last election, when a right-of-centre coalition of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) and the Smallholders Party was elected in Hungary. The mood then was against everything that bore the stamp of the Stalinist past. Red stars were removed from public buildings, all statues of the old regime were removed. People believed the free market would bring democratic rights, happiness and prosperity. In three years most Hungarians have learned by bitter experience that capitalism has no answers to Hungary's economic and political troubles.



Hungary's move towards capitalism has produced a new political, economic and social crisis. Juliana Grant reports...

Hungary was amongst the first of the Eastern European countries to encourage extensive participation on the world market. Kadar, Communist Party chief and Prime Minister, turned Hungary outwards from the end of the 1960's and achieved rising living standards as a consequence. However, the limitations of this started showing long before the Stalinist regime fell, and are having severe repercussions now. The Hungarian economy is in dire straits. It is being affected by the world recession, and while foreign investment figures are favourable in comparison with most other Eastern European countries the majority of this is not into manufacturing, or is mostly based on exploiting cheap labour. The investment of General Electric in the electrical giant Tungsram Rt. has recently risen to 99.6%, therefore the decisions taken at all levels will represent the interests of this multinational and not those of the Hungarian economy. According to World Economics Weekly (HVG) the main areas of Western investment are in property, banking, communications and

trade, the only manufacturing investment is in car production and the food industry.

The balance of payments deficit increased every month last year. During the first 9 months of 1993 it increased from 300 million dollars to 2.1 billion dollars, and in spite of 5 devaluations of the Forint it reached 2.7 billion dollars by October. This was why a further short term, emergency credit facility has been granted by the IMF. However, this was only after they had suspended substantial loans under an agreement made in 1991 aimed at stabilising and restructuring the Hungarian economy because they were displeased with the government's inability to reduce the budget deficit as agreed. That is not to say that they did not try. Runaway inflation reduces the value of real earnings, the social wage is under permanent attack, state subsidies to a wide variety of everyday items are being reduced or abolished, house building is non-existent, council flats are being sold for a song, wages are held down, etc. Only recently the lower levels of VAT rose from 6% to 10% and many zero rated goods and services

are now charged at 10%. To follow the recent rise of 40% on medicines from next January, they also intend to introduce 10% VAT on medicines. You cannot afford to be ill in Hungary today. The huge foreign debt is the second largest in Eastern Europe and continues to grow. At the last count it stood at \$23 billion. To service this debt the government has to do the IMF's bidding, but cannot always achieve the cuts the IMF demands. Drastic reductions in state subsidies, wages and the social wage have their limits, especially in a country, which until recently had a way of life dependent on state subsidies. It is difficult to make cuts anywhere near the degree that would make any difference to the deficit without risking a social explosion. Another drain on the government's resources is unemployment which is ever increasing, and even though the qualification criteria have been tightened up, there are nearly 400,000 unemployed receiving benefit, out of a registered total of almost 700,000 - this, in a country of barely 10 million. Some areas suffer from unemployment rates of over 30% where a large plant or mine, having been the sole employer has closed down. Crime, especially violent crime flourishes in this environment of hopelessness.

State Ownership

Another demand, much favoured by the IMF, is the reducing and eventual ending of state ownership of industry and subsidies to industry and banking. This has not been possible to achieve because of the fear of movements of workers, and in spite of closures and privatisation the vast majority of heavy industry remains in state ownership and the subsidies are still flowing. As recently as December the Finance Ministry provided an extra 120 billion Forints to shore up 8 commercial banks.

In the first 10 months of 1993 exports fell by 24% while imports grew by 4.7% over the same period. During a parliamentary debate in December it became clear that income from agricultural exports dropped from 2.8 billion dollars in 1992 to 1.8 billion in 1993 and that the main reason for this was an absolute drop in

production, partly blamed on drought, the uncertainty of credit facilities to farmers and the low price paid to producers. However, the cat was let out of the bag, when in the same debate, it was revealed that due to privatisation nearly 9% of productive land was now lying fallow. There has been a drop in the number of cattle, pigs, fruit production fell by 46% and vegetables by 29%. Even in favourable circumstances this spells disaster for a sector of the economy traditionally able to bring in foreign exchange.

Privatisation

Privatisation has spelt disaster in Hungary. Not only is agriculture reeling from its effects, but the large number of closed factories I saw on the outskirts of Budapest are only a small proportion to have suffered that way. The 'share owning democracy' aggressively promoted in 1990 turned into the misery of wholesale unemployment and a fertile ground for corruption as the previous nomenklatura turns itself into the capitalist class. 1993 was rife with scandal, some of which brought to the surface not only the rottenness of the whole governmental and commercial structure, but the lengths to which the authorities would go to stifle discussion and disclosure. Even under Stalinism, once the dark days of the 1950's were over, a certain amount of open criticism of the regime was not only allowed, but promoted by Kadar. He knew that as a safety valve, the odd political cabaret let people feel they were free and it forestalled real discontent from surfacing. Not in the new, free and democratic Hungary however! A popular news item, which looked critically at the previous week's events has disappeared from the television screens because its creators were not prepared to work under the direction of the new editor, appointed by the Government and known for his extreme right wing views. The Director Generals of both the Radio and Television service have been replaced by governmental appointees to facilitate close control of the media. Why all these moves to gag opposition? There has not been much in the way of movements of workers during 1993 but that is not to say nothing has been happening. While the general mood is still fairly depressed and inactive, the earliest signs of stirrings in the ranks of most

sections of society are visible. In June, 10,000 public sector workers, mostly teachers, demonstrated when it was announced their pay rise had been postponed for a year. Most public sector employees in Hungary are not even paid the minimum agreed according to their contracts and, even if they were, it would be totally insufficient to survive. All the trade unions organised in the public sector threatened to strike and an agreement was made, by which the pay rise will be jointly borne by the government and the local authorities.

There was also a 2 hour warning strike by the Hungarian Airline Pilots Association (HUNALPA), in which they called upon all pilots to join them and which resulted in a pay rise of 35-40%. This victory spurred aircraft technicians at Aeroplex Kft., jointly owned by Hungarian airlines (MALEV) and Lockheed, to down tools and, in spite of British scabs imported by management they won a pay rise in line with inflation.

The impasse of the Hungarian economy, the growing discontent in both city and country, coupled with the pressure on the government by the IMF has resulted in a political polarisation to both left and right. Istvan Csurka split from the ruling MDF and formed his own party last November. Certain parallels with Zhirinovskiy in Russia have been drawn, but Csurka is more subtle

and the MDF is still keeping him close. His "Party of Hungarian Truth and Life" (MIEP) has gathered all the extreme right-wing discontents of the MDF around him. His ultra nationalist, anti-liberal, anti-capitalist and anti-communist demagoguery is reminiscent of the early propaganda used by Hitler and Mussolini. Splits in the other party of the government coalition have gathered pace during 1993, and after earlier crises there is now at least four versions of the Smallholders Party. The Young Democrats (FIDESZ) have sharply shifted to the right as they saw the MDF losing ground and manoeuvred to fill the vacuum. The main gains in 1993 have been made by the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) which is the main successor to the previous Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (MSZMP), or Communist Party of the Stalinist regime. Opinion polls and some local elections have shown a steady rise in their fortunes, and point to the fact that most people learn by personal experience. A survey of voting intentions for the General Election in May reveals that since September the MSZP's support has increased 9% to 25% of those who definitely intend to vote. Whether you intend to vote is also an excellent indicator of the politicisation of people and the December poll revealed that since March those who definitely intend to vote

increased 10% and those who definitely will not vote declined 9%. The government coalition's popularity has declined from 23% in March 1993 to 18% last December. Being there I did not need to study opinion polls. Everybody from youth in the streets, in the Universities, in the working class areas to aged ladies who used to be my mother's old friends were adamant that the government is in for a trouncing. A defeat of Canadian proportions is entirely possible for the MDF and its coalition partners. However, almost everybody I talked to expressed their doubts that any of the others would do much better. The likelihood is that there will be a Socialist (MSZP) and Free Democrat (SZDSZ) coalition after the election. This would be quite a result, only four years after the word "socialist" could not be mentioned on the streets of Budapest without the serious fear of causing an incident.

Reformist Programme

However, the likely programme of a reformist social democratic/liberal green coalition will do nothing to solve the severe crisis of the nascent capitalist Hungarian regime. Some people I talked to have been groping towards some solutions that are neither "unbridled capitalism" as they call it, nor the totalitarian image of communism which they suffered from since the War. They do not believe that a system like that exists, but they would like to believe it. Some I discussed with have responded to the ideas of workers democracy, a nationalised economy, which is run by the workers not by bureaucrats, and an army of the people not professional soldiers. Many cherish the idea of looking after our planet and working in harmony with the people of the world. The 1990's problems need solutions that have been laid down in the classics of Marxism, by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. Their books are not on display in Hungary, although some of Trotsky's works have been translated and are available now. Their readership is still very small, limited to the intelligentsia and academics. The mighty struggles that are coming will restore all these classics to their rightful place and will arm the workers of Hungary, enabling them to finish what they started in 1956, take power and establish a new society free from war and want. ●

The Hungarian Prime Minister, right takes the wheel of the first Astra to be produced in Hungary. The car industry is one of the few to have attracted foreign investment.



Dialectical Materialism Today

We are living in a period of profound historical change. After a period of 40 years of unprecedented economic growth, the capitalist system is reaching its limits. In place of growth we now face economic stagnation, recession and a crisis of the productive forces. Even leaving aside the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, there are between thirty and forty million unemployed in the advanced capitalist countries.

On the eve of the twenty-first century, humanity finds itself at the crossroads. The crisis of capitalism pervades all levels of life. It is not merely an economic phenomenon. It is reflected in speculation and corruption, drug abuse, violence, all-pervasive egotism and indifference to the suffering of others, the breakdown of the bourgeois family, the crisis of bourgeois morality, culture and philosophy. How could it be otherwise? One of the symptoms of a social system in crisis is that the ruling class increasingly feels itself to be a fetter on the development of society.

Catholic Church

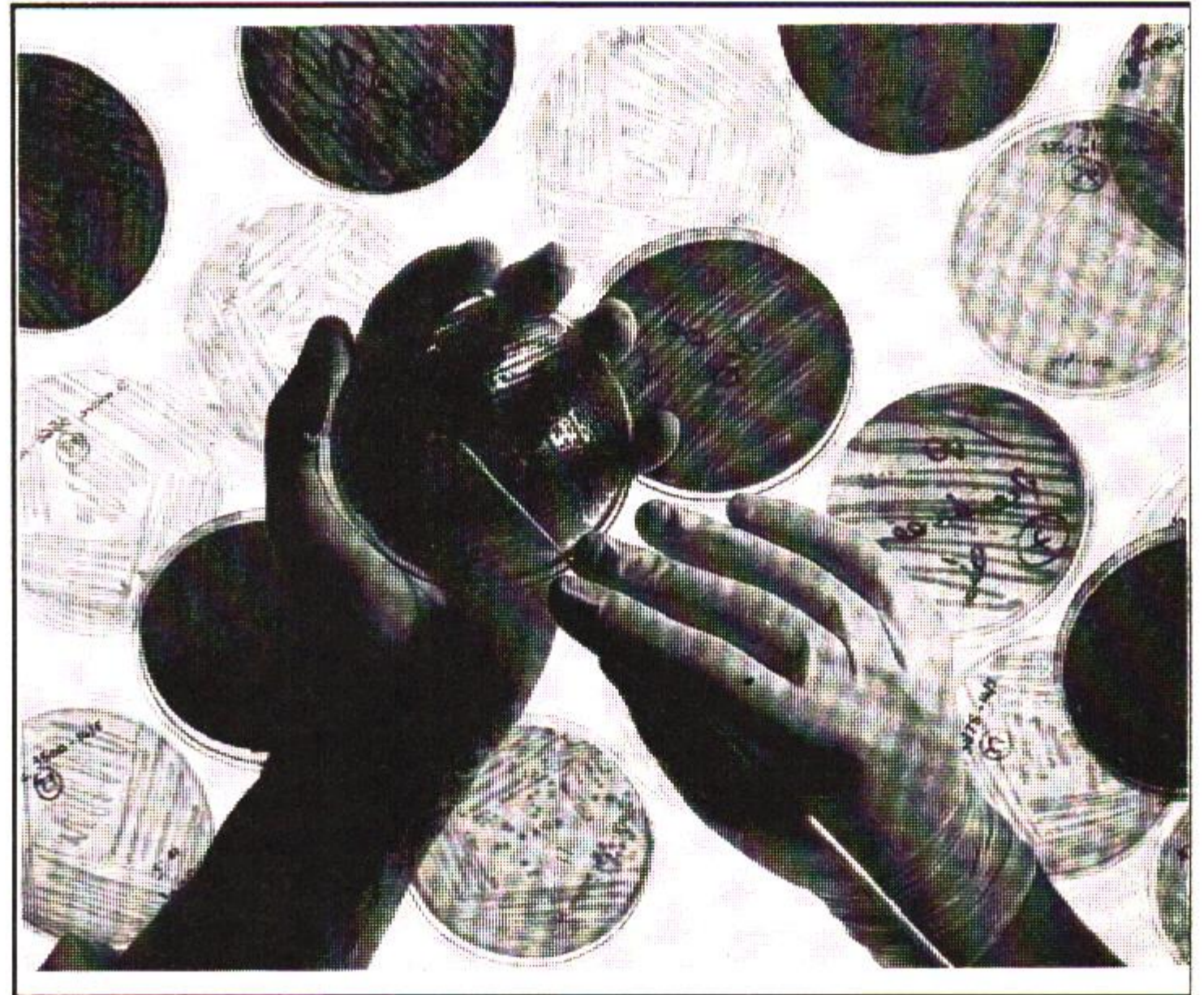
In its period of historical ascent, the bourgeois struggled against the old obscurantist outlook of the Catholic church - the highest expression of the ideology of feudalism.

Even before the bourgeois revolution in Holland and England, this struggle was anticipated by the titanic battle waged by science against the Inquisition. Copernicus, Giordano Bruno, Galileo and Kepler represent the struggle of a new world outlook against the stranglehold of the past.

The French revolution was anticipated by the ideas of the materialist philosophers of the Enlightenment. In its progressive phase, the French bourgeoisie was atheist and materialist. It fought under the banner of Reason. Only when the rise of the proletariat posed a threat to its rule, especially after the Paris

Commune, did the French bourgeois suddenly rediscover the charms of Mother Church. However, in the present epoch - the epoch of the senile decay of capitalism - all these processes have been thrown into reverse. In the words of Hegel: "Reason becomes Unreason." It is true that "official" religion is dying on its feet. The churches are empty and increasingly in crisis. Instead, we see the proliferation of all kinds of sects and an epidemic of religious fundamentalism - Christian, Islamic, Jewish and Hindu. This is a sign of the blind alley of society, which drives sections of the petit bourgeois insane. As the new century beckons, we observe the most horrific throwbacks to the Dark Ages. This phenomenon is not confined to Iran, India and Algeria. In the United States - the most developed and technologically advanced capitalist nation (along with Japan) - we recently saw the 'Waco massacre'. In other Western countries, we see the uncontrolled spread of religious sects, superstition, astrology and all kinds of irrational tendencies. All these phenomena bear a striking resemblance to what

occurred in the period of the decline of the Roman Empire. Let no one object that such things are confined to the fringes of society. Only ten years ago, the President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, made a famous speech about the 'Evil Empire' (Russia) which he used to justify a programme of production of the most terrifying means of destruction - enough to destroy the world many times over. In this speech he expressed himself thus: "In the world, Sin and Evil exist, and Holy Scripture and our Lord Jesus Christ command us to oppose them with all our might." The language and thought of the leader of the most developed capitalist country comes straight out of the Middle Ages. This is a dialectical contradiction of the first order. And it is not isolated. When the first US astronaut,



Marxism has always closely followed the development of science which confirms the dialectical evolution of nature and society. In the first of a two-part article Socialist Appeal editor Alan Woods explains...

circulating the earth, was asked to give a message to humanity he chose... the first sentence of Genesis: "In the beginning, God created Heaven and Earth." It is no accident that in a number of States in the USA, schools are obliged to teach the 'creation' theory as opposed to evolution. Nor that evangelical crooks make fortunes out of radio stations with a following of millions.

Irrationality

Where does this all-pervasive irrationality come from? It is not unconnected with a feeling of helplessness in a world where the destiny of humanity is controlled by terrifying and seemingly invisible forces. Just look at the sudden panic on the stock exchange, with 'respectable' men and women scurrying around like ants when

their nest is broken open. These periodic spasms, causing a herd-like panic, a graphic illustration of capitalist anarchy. And this is what determines the lives of the millions.

Marx pointed out that the ruling ideas of any society are the ideas of the ruling class. In its heyday, the bourgeoisie not only played a progressive role in pushing back the frontiers of civilisation, but was well aware of the fact. Now the strategists of capital are seized with pessimism. They are the representatives of an historically doomed system, but cannot reconcile themselves to the fact. This central contradiction is the decisive factor which sets its imprint upon the mode of thinking of the bourgeoisie today. Lenin once said that a man on the edge of a cliff does not reason. It is an incredible fact

that the boards of directors of giant multinational companies consult astrologers before taking big investment decisions. The only justification for this is that the results given to them by the professional economic witch doctors are not much better! The longer this decrepit system based on chaos, greed and parasitism is permitted to continue, the greater is the threat to the accumulated social, economic and cultural gains of humanity.

Science and Society

Until quite recently, it appeared that the world of science stood aloof from the general decay of capitalism. The marvels of modern science and technology gave colossal prestige to scientists, who appeared to have almost magical qualities. The respect enjoyed by the scientific community increased in the same proportion as their theories became increasingly incomprehensible to the majority of even educated people. However, scientists are ordinary mortals who live in the same world as the rest of us. As such, they can be influenced by prevailing ideas, philosophies, politics and prejudices, not to speak of sometimes very substantial material interests. Most scientists sincerely believe that they are entirely open-minded. They have "no philosophy," but merely dedicate themselves to the objective consideration of "the facts." Unfortunately, the facts do not select themselves. Heraclitus, that marvellously profound thinker of Antiquity, once said: "Eyes and ears are bad witnesses for men who have barbarian souls." The Greek word "barbarian" meant "someone who did not understand the language." Modern science furnishes an abundance of material which completely confirms Engels' assertion that "in the last analysis, nature works dialectically." And yet, at every step, scientists themselves draw entirely erroneous philosophical conclusions from their work. At this moment in time, the work of many fundamental particle physicists is based on the search for a "theory of everything" - a "grand universal theory" (or GUT) It is interesting to note that, one hundred years ago, scientists also believed that they had

discovered all the basic laws of the universe on the basis of Maxwell's laws of electromagnetism. Just as now, there were just a few questions to be cleared up, and we would really know all there was to know about the workings of the Universe. Of course, there were a few discrepancies which were troublesome, but they appeared to be small details which could safely be ignored. However, within a few decades, these "minor" discrepancies proved sufficient to overthrow the entire edifice and effect a veritable scientific revolution. For most of the present century, physics have been dominated by the theory of relativity and quantum mechanics which displaced the old classical mechanics. Nevertheless, in the beginning, the arguments of Max Planck and Albert Einstein did not have much of an echo among the scientific establishment, which clung tenaciously to the old views. There is an important lesson here. Any attempt to impose a "final solution" to our view of the universe is doomed to fail. Hegel once said: "Truth is infinite: its finiteness is its denial."

Anti-Duhring

Dialectical materialism sets out from the conception of an eternal, infinite, evolving, developing, ever-changing material universe. Therefore, nobody will ever possess a "theory of everything." To attempt this is to seek to place a limit on human cognition and development. However, all such limits are doomed to be overthrown. That is demonstrated by the whole history of science. As Engels explains in his masterpiece Anti-Duhring: "A system of natural and historical knowledge which is all-embracing and final for all time is in contradiction to the fundamental laws of dialectical thinking, which, however, far from excluding, on the contrary includes, the idea that the systematic knowledge of the external universe can make giant strides from generation to generation." The theories of quantum mechanics and relativity have had an important effect on the development of science and technology. However, they are

no more the last word than were Maxwell's laws of electromagnetics which they (partially) displaced. One provisional theory replaces another provisional theory, until it, in itself, is superseded.

The development of science, and human thought in general, consists of an endless series of approximations, which penetrate deeper and deeper into the secrets of the material universe. This is the only "Absolute" - the never-ending process of human cognition in pursuit of knowledge of an infinite and ever-changing material universe. From the standpoint of dialectical materialism matter and energy are the same. Engels described energy ("motion") as "the mode of existence, the inherent attribute, of matter." (Dialectics of Nature, p.92) Einstein showed that light, long



Engels: "Natural scientists believe that they free themselves from philosophy by ignoring or abusing it. They cannot, however, make any headway without thought, and for thought they need thought determinations"

thought to be a wave, behaved like a particle, and was subject to the law of gravity. This was brilliantly confirmed in 1919, during an eclipse of the sun. Later De Broglie showed that matter, hitherto thought to consist of particles, must be accompanied by waves and to partake of their nature.

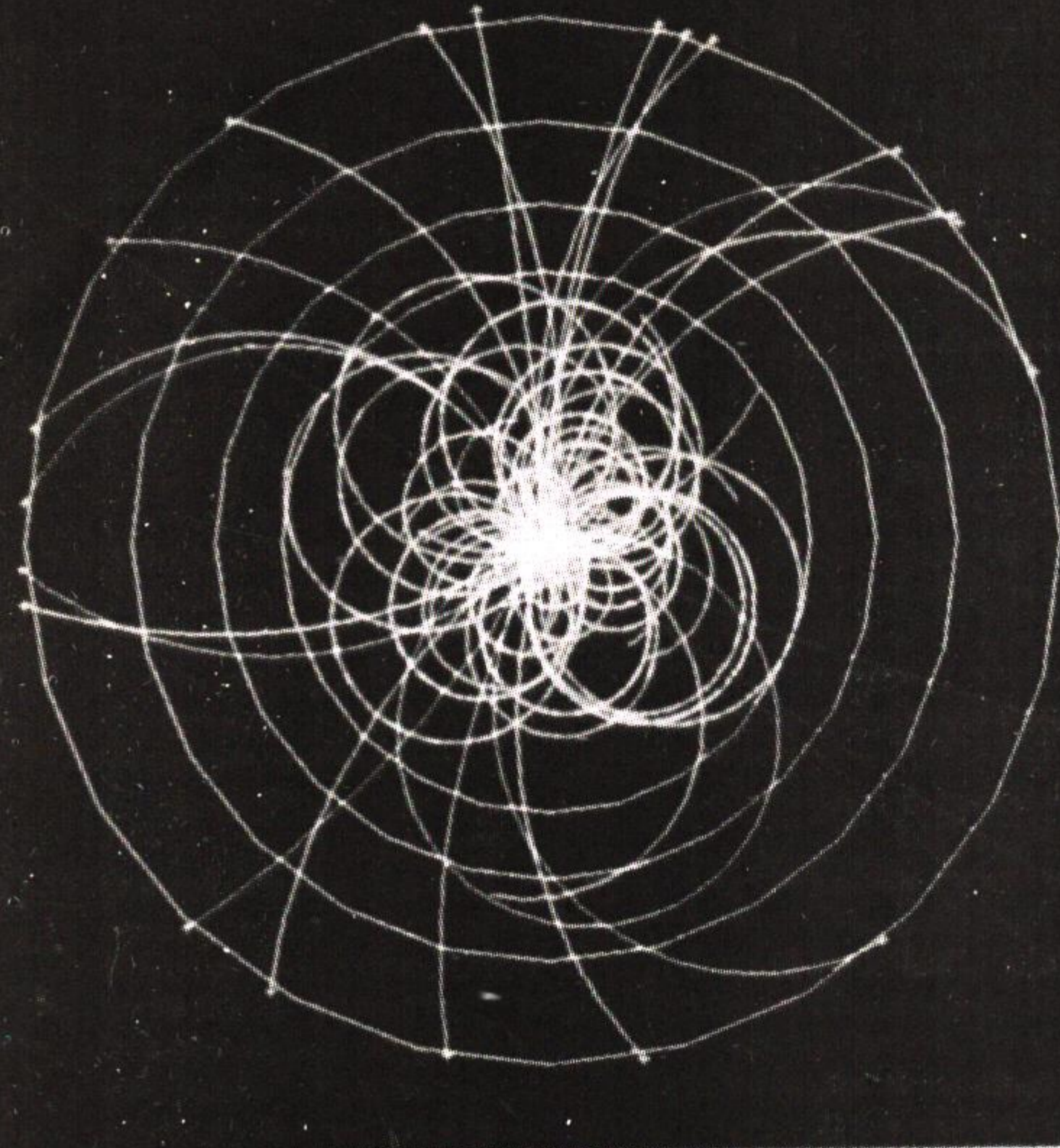
The argument which dominated particle physics for many years, whether sub-atomic particles like the electron were particles or waves was finally resolved by quantum mechanics which asserts that electrons can, and do, behave both like a particle and like a wave.

This assertion, in its day, caused a heated controversy. It went against the laws of formal logic, or, put another way, "common sense."

"But sound common sense," as Engels remarked, "respectable fellow as he is within the homely precincts of his own four walls, has most wonderful adventures as soon as he ventures out into the wide world of scientific research. Here the metaphysical mode of outlook, justifiable and even necessary as it is in domains whose extent varies according to the nature of the object under investigation, nevertheless sooner or later always reaches a limit beyond which it becomes one-sided, limited, abstract and loses its way in insoluble contradictions." (Anti-Duhring, p.28).

Formal Logic

How can "common sense" accept that an electron can be in two places at the same time? Or even move, at incredible speeds, simultaneously, in an infinite number of directions? For formal logic, based on the so-called Law of Identity and Law of Contradiction, such a proposition would indeed be monstrous. For everyday purposes, these laws hold good. But for more complicated calculations, involving, for example, huge distances, or extremely high speeds, or infinitely small particles, they prove incapable of explaining things. They simply break down. To deal with such phenomena, a dialectical approach is required. Let us again quote Engels: "But the position is quite different as soon as we consider things in their motion, their change, their life, their reciprocal influence on one another. Then we immediately become involved in contradictions. Motion itself is a contradiction: even simple mechanical change of place can only come about through a body at one and the same moment of time being both in one place and in another place, being in one and the same place and also not in it. And the continuous assertion and simultaneous



solution of this contradiction is precisely what motion is." (Anti-Duhring, p.135,).

The idea that an electron can be a wave and a particle which can be simultaneously in one place and somewhere else is a brilliant confirmation of dialectics as elaborated, not only by Marx and Engels, but by Hegel, and even by Heraclitus.

In 1927, Werner Heisenberg advanced his celebrated "uncertainty principle," according to which it is impossible to determine, with the desired accuracy, both the position and velocity of a particle simultaneously. The less uncertain a particle's position, the more uncertain its momentum, and vice versa. (This also applies to other specified pairs of properties). The difficulty is establishing precisely the position and velocity of a particle which is moving at 5,000 miles per second in different directions, is self-evident. However, to deduce from this that causality in general does not exist is an entirely false proposition.

The rejection of the old mechanical determinism of Laplace and others was correct and necessary. But to carry this to the point of denying causality altogether is a finished recipe for abandoning science and rational thinking altogether.

In his book "The Strange Story of the Quantum", Banesh Hoffmann does not hesitate to affirm that "strict causality is fundamentally and intrinsically undemonstrable. Therefore, strict causality is no

longer a legitimate scientific concept and must be cast out of the official domain of present-day science." (op.cit., p.150,).

No wonder the same author exclaims on the same page: "It is difficult to decide where science ends and mysticism begins." Indeed it is. For once we deny causality, the universe becomes

Once we deny causality, the universe becomes an entirely arbitrary and random affair. The whole basis for rational thought disappears and the door is opened for the most monstrous mysticism and irrationality

an entirely arbitrary and random affair. The whole basis for rational thought disappears and the door is opened for the most monstrous mysticism and irrationality.

It is interesting to note that many prominent scientists radically disagreed with Heisenberg's interpretation of the phenomena under consideration. Among them were not only Einstein, but the principal pioneers in the field of quantum mechanics, Max Planck and Louis de Broglie, and also Erwin Schroedinger whose celebrated equation was crucial to its development.

As an attempt to justify the rejection of causality, it is alleged

that "the observer creates the result of his observation by the act of observation." (B.Hoffmann, op.cit., p.155). Heisenberg and Niels Bohr claimed that a photon or an electron materialises in a given spot only when it is measured. By what precise mechanism this is supposed to occur remains a mystery. We are just supposed to accept the claim that observation itself has a decisive affect on objective processes as an article of faith. Dialectical materialism sets out from the objectivity of the material universe, which is given to us through sense perception. "I interpret the world through my senses." That is self-evident. But the world exists independently of my senses. That is also self-evident, one might think, but not for modern bourgeois philosophy!

One of the main strands of twentieth century philosophy is logical positivism, which precisely denies the objectivity of the material world. More correctly, it considers that the very question of whether the world exists or not to be irrelevant and "metaphysical." These arguments were brilliantly answered by Lenin in 1908-9 in

retina, outside man and independently of him. This is materialism: matter acting upon our sense organs produces sensation. Sensation depends on the brain, nerves, retina, etc., i.e. on matter organised in a definite way. The existence of matter does not depend on sensation. Matter is primary. Sensation, thought, consciousness are the supreme product of matter organised in a particular way. Such are the views of materialism in general, and of Marx and Engels in particular." (Lenin, Collected Works, Vol.14, p.55).

Conscious Idealism

And Heisenberg? Even as a student, Heisenberg was a conscious idealist, who admits being greatly impressed by Plato's *Timaeus* (where Plato's Idealism is expressed in the most consistent way), while fighting in the ranks of the reactionary Freikorps against the German workers in 1919. Subsequently he stated that he was "much more interested in the underlying philosophical ideas than in the rest," and that it was necessary "to get away from the idea of objective processes in time and space."

In other words, Heisenberg's philosophical interpretation of quantum physics was very far from being the objective result of scientific experiment. It was clearly linked to idealist philosophy, which he consciously applied to physics, and which determined his outlook.

The reactionary consequences of this subjective idealism which attempts to place a limit on human cognition, denies the objectivity of physical phenomena such as the movement of photons and electrons, and attempts to deny the existence of causality in general, was shown by Heisenberg's own evolution. He justified his active collaboration with the Nazis on the grounds that "There are no general guidelines to which we can cling. We have to decide for ourselves, and cannot tell in advance if we are doing right or wrong." Schroedinger ridiculed the assertion of Heisenberg and Bohr that, when an electron or photon is not being observed it has "no position" and only materialises at a given point as a result of the observation. Take a cat and put it in a box with a vial

his book *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*:

"If colour is a sensation only depending upon the retina (as natural science compels you to admit), then light rays, falling upon the retina, produce the sensation of colour. This means that outside us, independently of us and of our minds, there exists a movement of matter, let us say of ether waves of a definite length and of a definite velocity, which, acting upon the retina, produce the sensation of colour. This is precisely how natural science regards it. It explains the sensations of various colours by the various lengths of lightwaves existing outside the human

of cyanide, said Schroedinger. When a Geiger counter detects the decay of an atom, the vial is broken. According to Heisenberg, the atom does not 'know' it has decayed until someone measures it. In this case, therefore, until someone opens the box and looks in, the cat is neither dead nor alive! By this anecdote, Schroedinger meant to highlight the absurd contradictions caused by the acceptance of Heisenberg's subjective idealist interpretation of quantum physics. The processes of nature take place objectively, irrespective of whether human beings are around to observe them. The denial of causality, the idea that all actions are random and have no cause, is, likewise, entirely false. To accept this would be to deny all of science and, further, to make all meaningful predictions impossible. Yet this is clearly not the case.

Quantum Mechanics

Scientists continue to make predictions which are verified by observation and experiment. That includes the field of quantum mechanics, "uncertainty" notwithstanding. While it is not possible to predict with accuracy the behaviour of individual photons or electrons, it is possible to predict with great accuracy how enormous quantities of particles will behave.

There is nothing new in this. What are known as "mass random events" can be applied to a very wide field in physical, chemical, biological and social phenomena, from the sex of babies to the frequency of defects on a factory production line.

The laws of probability have a very long history. For example, the "law of great numbers" establishes the general principle that the combined effect of a large number of accidental factor produces, for a very large class of such factors, results that are almost independent of chance. This idea was expressed as early as 1713 by Bernoulli, whose theory was generalised by Poisson in 1837 and given its final form by Chebyshev in 1867. The assertion that we cannot know the precise causes, or predict the precise position and velocity of an individual electron is, in reality, a philosophical

commonplace, devoid of all content. To attempt to search for a precise account of all the co-ordinates and impulses of each individual particle would be to go back to the crude mechanical determination of Laplace. That is, in reality, a fatalistic concept which reduces necessity to the level of mere chance - i.e. if everything is governed by a kind of eternal decree, then everything is equally arbitrary, whether we call it necessary or not. As Engels puts it:

"There is no question of tracing the chain of causation in any of these cases: so we are just as wise in one as in another, the so-called necessity remains an empty phrase, and with it - chance also remains what it was before." (Dialectics of Nature, p.291).

As a matter of fact, if it were possible to establish all the causes of the movement of sub-atomic particles, the investigation of these in the case of just one election would be sufficient to keep all the scientists in the world busy for several lifetimes, and still they would not get to the end of it. Fortunately, that is not necessary. While we are unable to precisely "fix" the position and momentum of a given particle, which therefore may be said to have a "random" character, the situation changes radically when a large number of particles are considered. And here, we are dealing with truly vast numbers. When we toss a coin in the air,

the chance that it will land "heads or tails" may be put at 50:50. That is a truly random phenomenon, which cannot be predicted. However, the owners of casinos, which are supposedly based on a game of "chance" know that, in the long run, zero or double zero will come up as frequently as any other number, and therefore they can make a handsome and predictable profit.

Probabilities

The same is true of insurance companies which make a lot of money out of precise probabilities, which, in the last analysis, turn out to be practical certainties, even though the precise fate of individual clients cannot be predicted.

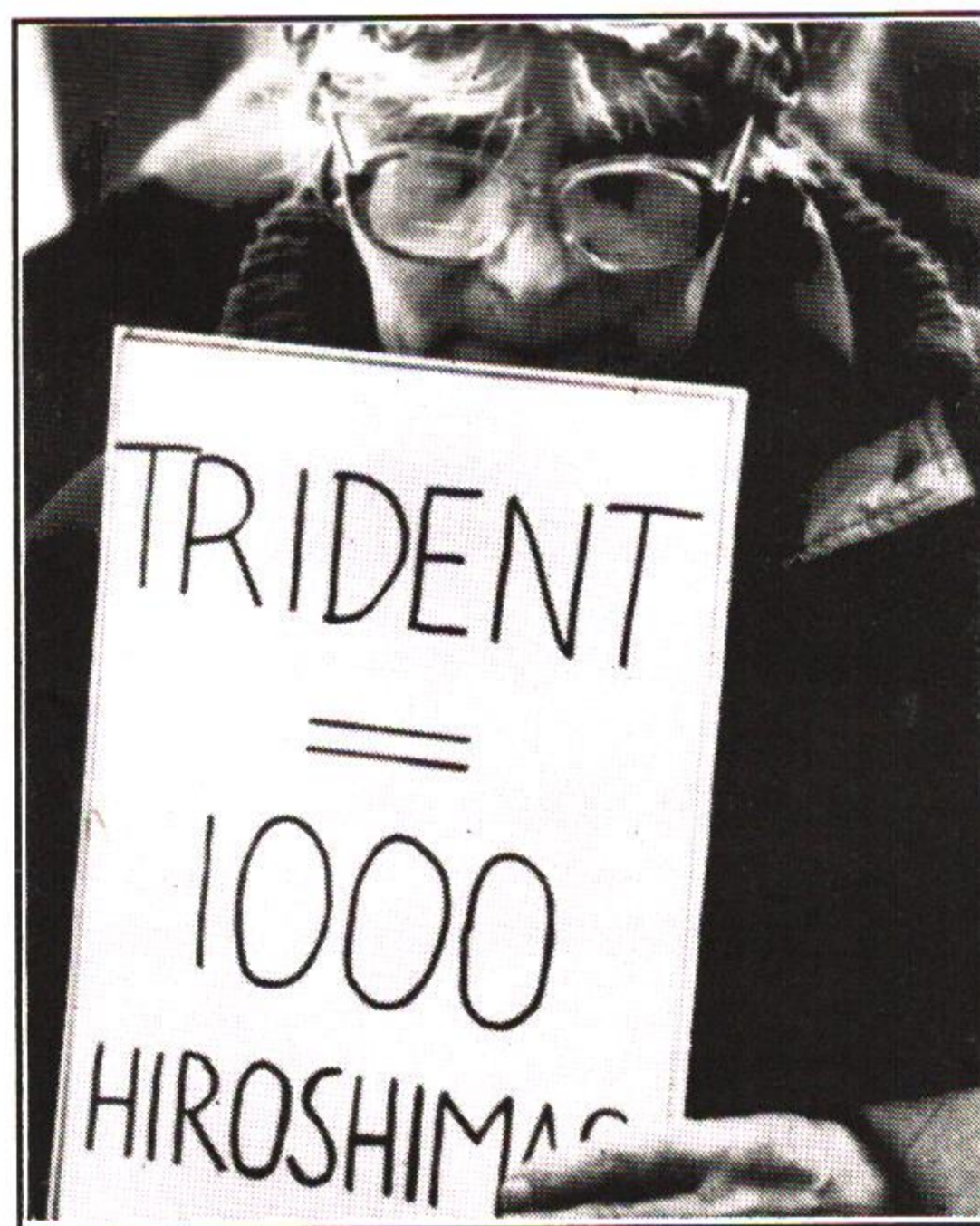
"Quantum mechanics having discovered precise and wonderful laws governing the probabilities, it is with numbers such as these that science overcomes its handicap of basic indeterminacy. It is by these means that science boldly predicts. Though now humbly confessing itself powerless to foretell the exact behaviour of individual electrons or photons or other fundamental entities, it can yet tell you with enormous confidence how such great multitudes of them must behave precisely." (B.Hoffmann, op.cit., p.152).

Incidentally, these instances, taken from the most different fields, are very good examples of the dialectical law of the

transformation of quantity into quality. The development of quantum physics represented a real revolution in science, a decisive break with the old stultifying mechanical determinism of "classical" physics. (The "metaphysical" method, as Engels would have called it). Instead, we have a much more flexible, dynamic - in a word dialectical - view of nature. Beginning with Max Planck's discovery of the infinitesimal existence of the quantum, which at first appeared to be a tiny detail, almost an anecdote, the face of physics was transformed. Here was a new science which could explain the phenomenon of radioactive transformation and analyse in great detail the complex data of spectroscopy. It directly led to the establishment of a new science - theoretical chemistry, capable of solving previously insoluble questions. In general, a whole series of theoretical difficulties were eliminated, once the new standpoint was accepted.

Nuclear Fusion

The new physics revealed the staggering forces locked up within the atomic nucleus. This led directly to the exploitation of nuclear energy - the path to the potential destruction of life on earth - or the vista of undreamed - of and limitless abundance and social progress through the peaceful use of nuclear fusion. Here was a mighty advance for science. Yet the human mind - contrary to the prejudices of idealism - is innately conservative. This revolution in science was by the most primitive and reactionary philosophical conclusions. "Natural scientists," wrote Engels, "believe that they free themselves from philosophy by ignoring or abusing it. They cannot, however, make any headway without thought, and for thought they need thought determinations. But they take these categories unreflectingly from the common consciousness of so-called educated persons, which is dominated by the relics of long obsolete philosophies, or from the little bit of philosophy compulsorily listened to at the University (which is not only fragmentary, but also a medley of views of people belonging to the most varied and usually the worst schools), or from the



The new physics revealed the forces locked up within the atomic nucleus and the resulting nuclear power has since been the focus of much controversy.

uncritical and unsystematic reading of philosophical writings of all kinds. Hence they are no less in bondage to philosophy, but unfortunately in most cases to the worst philosophy, and those who abuse philosophy most are slaves to precisely the worst vulgarised relics, of the worst philosophies." (Dialectics of Nature, p.279).

Thus, in his conclusion to a work dealing with the quantum revolution, Banesh Hoffmann is capable of writing:

"How much more, then, shall we marvel at the wondrous powers of God who created the heaven and the earth from a primal essence of such exquisite subtlety that with it he could fashion brains and minds afire with the divine gift of clairvoyance to penetrate his mysteries. If the mind of a mere Bohr or Einstein astound us with its power, how may we begin to extol the glory of God who

created them?" (B.Hoffmann, op.cit., p.194-5).

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated example. The whole of modern scientific literature is thoroughly impregnated with such mystical, religious or quasi-religious twaddle. This is a direct result of the idealist philosophy which a great many scientists, consciously or unconsciously, have adopted.

Geometry

The laws of quantum mechanics fly in the face of "common sense" (i.e. formal logic), but are in perfect consonance with dialectical materialism. Take, for example, the conception of a point. All traditional geometry is derived from a point, which subsequently becomes a line, a plane, a cube, etc. Yet close observation reveals that the point does not exist.

The point is conceived as the smallest expression of space,

something which has no dimension. In reality, such a point consists of atoms, - electrons, nuclei, photons, and even smaller particles.

Ultimately, it disappears in a restless flux of swirling quantum waves. And there is no end to this process. No fixed "point" at all. That is the final answer to the idealists who seek to find perfect "forms" which allegedly lie "beyond" observable material reality.

The only "ultimate reality" is the infinite, eternal, ever-changing material universe, which is far more wonderful in its endless variety of form and processes than the most fabulous adventures of science fiction. Instead of a fixed location - a "point" - we have a process, a never-ending flux. All attempts to impose a limit on this, in the form of a beginning or an end, will inevitably fail.

Thus, for centuries, scientists

have tried in vain to find the "bricks of matter" - the ultimate, smallest particle.

This article is an edited extract of a lecture given by Socialist Appeal editor Alan Woods at a recent meeting of Marxist scientists in London.

Next Issue!

Part two of Alan Woods' article dealing with chaos theory, the big bang and dialectical materialism

Get the Marxist Voice of the Labour Movement

A Socialist Appeal to Workers

Socialist Appeal was launched in April 1992 to provide trade unionists, labour activists and youth with a Marxist analysis of events. Given the complexity of the political situation in Britain and internationally there has never been a greater need.

The boast of the capitalists of a "new world order" after the collapse of Stalinism have turned to dust with the crisis in Russia, the bloody civil war in the former Yugoslavia and the continuing economic recession in Europe and Japan.

As the employers continue their offensive against wages and conditions, governments everywhere are attempting to push through austerity measures against the working class. In Europe these attacks have pushed workers into militant action. The ideas of class collaboration are more and more threadbare as the ills of capitalism re-emerge with a vengeance: mass unemployment, wage

cuts, squalid working conditions, and so on.

The task of Socialist Appeal is to arm the new generation of class-conscious workers and youth with a strategy and programme to put an end to this nightmare.

Marxism provides a scientific understanding of the problems and issues that face the working class. Socialist Appeal believes it is essential for the labour movement to adopt a class approach and a socialist programme to transform the lives of ordinary working people.

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Youth Fight Conscription

It was 1944. The war had dragged on for four and a half years. Four and a half hard, dreary years. Long working hours combined with rationing of all basic essentials was extracting its toll on the working class.

Nightly the dreaded wail of the sirens sent people scurrying to the "safety" of the shelters amid the howl of falling bombs and the tin-can rattle of shrapnel falling on the roofs.

It was a weary time and still more so for the miners, toiling in the black tunnels to extract the desperately needed coal to fire the engines of the war machine. All the younger and fitter miners had by now been conscripted into the armed forces. Those left in the pits were becoming increasingly exhausted and disgruntled.

General Strike

The mines were privately owned and the mine owners were making substantial profits. However, in the back of the workers' minds still burned the bitter memories of the long, heroic struggle of the 1926 General Strike, and in their hearts there was a longing for the nationalisation of the mines. Nationalisation was seen by the miners as the only solution to the fundamental crisis which now gripped the industry. The coalition government of the day, led by Tory Winston Churchill, contained the necessary Labour leaders, whose job it was to dragoon the working class into making whatever sacrifices were deemed necessary to maintain the war effort. In particular, the Minister of Labour, the ex-secretary of the TGWU was a certain Ernest Bevin. His solution was not, however, to nationalise the mines; nor to modernise



As the Second World War took an increasing toll on the working class one group of young workers stood up to the government's plans for economic conscription. One of those who took part in the strikes, William Landles remembers the struggle...

them nor to increase pay. His solution was simple and direct. Conscription in a military and disciplined fashion. To use the full authority of the law and force the young working class men to go down the mine and hew coal. But the young men were not the craven slaves of capitalism. And they were young. Most of them were from families whose fathers, brothers and cousins worked down the mines. They had witnessed the physical scars, the lost lives and the missing limbs, bearing testimony to the dangerous conditions endured on a daily basis to earn a mere pittance. Unwittingly, Ernest Bevin was to unleash a young tiger.

Beginning on Tyneside, a flame of indignation swept through the factories and workshops of all the industrial centres of England and Scotland. With the energy of youth, mass meetings were called to alert both apprentices and unskilled workers to the need for concerted action on a mass scale to oppose these measures. It quickly became apparent that strike action would result. A series of demands were formulated to focus the ideas of the youth, particularly on the theme of nationalisation. The response of the working youth to the call for strike action was phenomenal. The youth were going into battle with the government and it was war time!

Mass meetings needed to be held in the open air because of the huge numbers of young workers who took part. In particular, one meeting held in a sports field, attracted five thousand and was addressed by union officials who argued against strike action (Nothing changes!). It was a stormy meeting which resulted in increasing the determination of the apprentices to resist the Bevin measures.

An organisation was formed called The Tyne Apprentices Guild of which I was a leading member. On March 7, 1944, a letter was sent to the Ministry of Labour giving three weeks notice of strike action. There was no reply. On March 28, the strikes began. Initially the Tyne, Clyde and Huddersfield apprentices came out. As the action spread, older workers lent moral support with a "more power to your elbow" attitude. Against the strike, all sections of the capitalist press released the most vitriolic campaign. The strikers were accused of helping Hitler and of stabbing our soldiers in the back. The same accusations were trotted out every time workers were forced to defend their conditions and pay against attacks by employers. These same employers were amassing vast profits in every sphere of financial, commercial and industrial activity.

Showdown

In the House of Commons the Minister of Labour was asked repeatedly to meet the apprentices. He refused point-blank. When he was informed that the apprentices would continue to strike until their demands were met he replied, "let them strike. If they want a showdown we are ready for them."

The strike lasted two weeks and at the end no apprentices that we knew of were conscripted. The youth had shown that they are often the vanguard and the shock-troops of the working class.

I salute the youth of yester-year, and have total faith in the youth of today. When the time comes, today's young people will rise and carry on these traditions as we march confidently towards socialism. ●



War and the Class Struggle

The Second World War was a continuation of the 'Great War' of 1914-18. It represented the struggle by the imperialist powers for world domination, culminating in a new redivision of the globe.

Since the Versailles Treaty and the humiliation of Germany by the Allied Powers, the contradictions of world imperialism had grown more intensive. If German capitalism was to break loose from this strangle-hold and establish itself on the world market, then it needed once again to challenge the hegemony of the leading imperialist powers, especially Britain. The victory of Hitler fascism ("the distilled essence of imperialism") made this challenge inevitable. As in the First World War, the Labour and trade union leaders abandoned all pretence to 'internationalism' and immediately offered their assistance to their respective National Governments. "Rearmament cannot await the advent of a Labour Government," argued Sir Walter Citrine at the 1937 TUC. Two years later, they gave the

Chamberlain Government unqualified support. In the words of the historian Alan Hutt: "the integration of the central trade union apparatus with the State was to become complete." From the beginning the Chamberlain Government sought to place TUC representatives on a whole range of war-time governmental committees and inspectorates. This fusion of the trade union bureaucracy with the State was essential to the strategists of Capital. According to The Times: "the effectiveness of trade union leadership must be preserved lest dissatisfied members follow upstart leaders who ride on the crest of grievances." (25th January, 1940). Parallel with this was the trade union bureaucracy's collaboration with big business. In October 1939, a Joint Advisory Council was established, with equal representation from the Employers' Confederation and the TUC. The paraphernalia of the war economy had to be rapidly constructed. Already the Schedule of Reserve Occupations had been put into operation, and in the decisive

engineering industry, agreement had been reached by the AEU and the Engineering Employers to "relaxation of customs". This had gone hand in hand with an "electoral truce" on the political front for the duration of the war. From September 1939 conscription had been extended to all males between the age of 18 and 41. This gave rise to an immediate shortage of skilled labour, as in the First World War, leading to measures to 'dilute' the workforce through the use largely of unskilled labour.

Essential Work Order

The Essential Work Order Regulation 58A, which amounted to the militarisation of labour, allowed the transfer of workers to other jobs on lower pay. Compulsory arbitration was introduced. Order in Council no. 1305 made strikes and lock-outs illegal, while the 'Essential Work Order' (1941) required the registration of skilled workers for direction into 'essential' categories. The expansion of engineering saw the A.E.U. membership rise to 825,000 by 1943, to become the second largest union in the country. Of which, from 1942, 139,000 were

women members. The attitude of the bosses was to maximise their profits, taking advantage of the 'dilution' of labour and the compliance of the trade union tops. The coalowners mouthpiece argued for a national wages policy "imitating the Nazi system". According to Jack Jones in his autobiography, "Management continued to give no quarter, trade unions were still regarded as an 'alien force'". However the workers refused to take things lying down. "What we were doing was challenging the divine right of management, and they didn't like it. Shop stewards used their training to challenge unreasonable decisions, to question bad conditions. The 'divine right of management' we countered with the 'divine right of discontent'." (Union Man - an autobiography, p. 102). In vain, the trade union leaders approached Chamberlain concerning the repeal of the Trades Disputes Act. Churchill said it would be too "controversial", and the matter was dropped. By May 1940, the Chamberlain Government collapsed following the successful German offensive in Scandinavia. Churchill was asked to form a coalition government, which drew in representatives of organised labour. Attlee and Arthur Greenwood, Leader and Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, joined the War Cabinet. Several other Ministers were drawn from Labour's ranks. Churchill also brought in Ernest Bevin, General Secretary of the T&G, as Minister of Labour. This coalition of class interests was essential for the ruling class in the pursuit of its war aims. While Churchill ran the military side, Labour Ministers were charged with responsibility for the 'Home Front', mobilising man-power and supplies - and dealing with any unrest. In the words of Ernest Bevin: "We represent probably the most vital factor in the State: without our people this war cannot be won, nor can the life of the country be carried on." This showed the potential power of the working class, which was now harnessed to Churchill's war machine. Within 15 days of taking office, Bevin called a meeting of 2,000 leading trade union officials from the largest 150 unions to Central Hall. It was the biggest gathering since

the General Strike, but their purpose was entirely different. "Thereafter there was complete co-operation between Government, employers and trade unions at every level", states Francis Williams.

The only forces that opposed the war were the I.L.P., the Communist Party, and the Trotskyists. Although the war was a continuation of the imperialist conflagration of 1914-18, the British ruling class hid its real war aims under the cover of a war against fascism. Whereas Churchill and sections of the ruling class openly admired the Hitler regime in the 1930's, as soon as German imperialism came into conflict with their interests, they soon dressed themselves in the anti-fascist garb.

Popular Front

The ILP's opposition was based mainly on pacifism. The CP, however, at the very beginning of the war, supported it as a just war against fascism. It was a continuation of their 'popular front' line. The British Stalinists had slavishly followed the dictates of the Kremlin bureaucracy in the guise of 'defence of the Soviet Union'. Nevertheless, they had failed to recognise the attempt of Stalin to reach an accommodation with Hitler. They had been wrong footed by the Stalin-Hitler Pact of August 1939. Rumours of the Pact were described by the CP as "this lying insinuation", but when the truth came out, the 'Daily Worker' described it as "a dramatic peace move to halt aggressors". Stalin's accommodation with Hitler could not be put at risk, and so the CP was forced to do a 180 degree turn and oppose the war with Germany. For the next two years they campaigned for a policy of 'peace on Hitler's terms'. Stalin's military conquest of Eastern Poland was justified by the 'Daily Worker' as "Red Army Takes Bread to Starving Peasants".

The Trotskyist's opposition to the war was based upon the classical opposition to imperialism and its war aims. 'War is the continuation of politics by other means', stated Clausewitz. It was a war between two imperialist blocs for world domination. However, the working class saw the need to fight Hitler fascism, as a defence of their democratic rights and organisations. As a consequence, the Trotskyists grouped in the small 'Workers International League' (WIL)

developed a new revolutionary military policy. This included opposition to the Chamberlain/Churchill war, the need for Labour to break the Coalition, a workers' government that would nationalise the economy and pursue a revolutionary war against Hitler. Such a programme found an echo amongst advanced layers of the working class that were becoming disillusioned with the war effort and the erosion of living standards.

After June 1941 when Hitler attacked the Soviet Union, the Stalinists changed their position to support the war. The 'Communist' Party became the most ardent supporters of the war effort and the Churchill government. As a consequence, the WIL was able to out-flank the CP and develop an influence in industry. Pollitt, the new General Secretary of the CP (who was ousted in 1939 when the line changed), affirmed that "in supporting the Churchill government we do it wholeheartedly and without reservations". Yesterdays arch-enemy became today's bosom friend. He continued, "A fight for a united national front means support for Churchill's government and all measures for a common victory". What were these measures?

Daily Worker

The Stalinists demanded increased production; further dilution of labour; full support for Bevin's militarisation of labour; increased over-time; and opposition to all strikes. They became the most vociferous nationalists, even producing pamphlets in red, white and blue. The 'Daily Worker', which was previously banned, now described D-Day as "a People's Invasion". They held the German people as a whole responsible for the war. On the political front they now demanded complete support for Churchill. In a by-election in Cardiff East, the CP campaigned for the Tories against the ILP under the slogan "A vote for Brockway is a Vote for Hitler". A CP leaflet said "Sir James Grigg (the Tory candidate) might not be a socialist, but he does want to beat Hitler. Fenner Brockway pretends to be a socialist; but his policy means victory for Hitler." The advice of the CP was "far better vote for Sir James Grigg, the honest capitalist, than a false socialist." The ILP's demand, said Pollitt,

for "replacing the Churchill Government by a Socialist Government" was "black treachery". The Trotskyists were described as Hitler's agents and should be treated accordingly. Before June 1941, J. R. Campbell, a CP leader, wrote: "Class co-operation in Britain would imply co-operation with the National Government - the political expression of big business in Britain. It would imply the dampening down of the strike movements. The Communist Party is the most resolute opponent of both these policies." After mid 1941 the line had completely changed: "We oppose strikes at the present time", wrote Pollitt, "because they are against the present and future interests of the working class." Pollitt, in his report to the 1942 CP Conference stated: "I salute our comrade, a docker from Hull, who was on a job... when the rest of the dockers struck work, he fought against it... what courage, what a sacred spirit of real class consciousness, to walk on the ship's gangway and resume his job. This is not strike-breaking!" They even attempted to back up this class collaboration with quotes from the great Marxists. Alan Hutt, the Stalinist historian, described the Shop Stewards' National Council's to campaign for increased production as "enough, surely, to make the founding fathers of the old A.S.E. turn in graves: but something that Frederick Engels would have understood and approved - did he not urge the craft unions over fifty years ago to scrap the 'old lumber' of their even then outworn craft prejudices and exclusiveness?" Homer, the Stalinist leader of the South Wales miners, lambasted miners for absenteeism. The CP urged the full weight of the law to be used against strikes in the coalfields. They also called upon the Government to rigorously implement the Emergency Powers Act, which was described earlier as "powers of the most unlimited and dictatorial character" (Hutt). Despite this stance, industrial unrest grew considerably as workers became increasingly disillusioned with the war effort. In April 1942, the Royal Ordnance Factory in Nottingham

was occupied by the workforce when the Ministry of Labour attempted to transfer 400 skilled men to private enterprises at reduced rates of pay. Young Trotskyist militants led this movement, which secured the backing of the AEU Executive. Five months later a bitter strike broke out in the Tyneside shipyards over management attempts to implement changes in working practises without consulting the workforce. Incredibly, the Stalinists issued a leaflet calling each striker "a traitor to his country". The 'Daily Worker' howled; "Who gains if production is not kept at full level? Only Hitler." A year later, a strike broke out at the Vickers Armstrong works at Barrow over wages and conditions. Again the Stalinists issued a leaflet condemning the campaign for higher wages, which was "definitely playing HITLER'S GAME."

Strike-Breakers

The WIL's industrial organiser became the adviser to the strike committee, which was denounced by the 'Daily Worker' as "a cock-pit of Trotskyist agitation." The CP even sent its leading members to the area in an attempt to break the strike. "A factor in the dispute which cannot be disregarded", noted the 'Daily Telegraph', "is the attitude of the strikers to the Communist Party, several well-known members of which are visiting the town with the object of persuading the men to return to work".

Despite the antics of the Stalinists, the strike remained solid, with a layer of CP members resigning in disgust. After 18 days the bosses were

War-time production



forced to sue for terms. Compare to these struggles, the battles in the coalfield took on a heightened form. Given the terrible working conditions in the pits and the pressure of the coal-owners for greater productivity, the miners traditionally took a militant stand. By 1944, strikes had reached their highest level since 1932 - but two thirds of that were in the coal industry. In 1943, half the days lost through strikes were in the pits. The attempts of the Government to overcome coal shortages were through the use of compulsory labour in the mines. This was backed up by the Emergency Powers (Defence) Act and the Essential Work Order of 1940.

Emergency Powers

These powers were used against the miners at Betteshanger in Kent, where three of the branch officials were jailed. According to Bornstein and Richardson: "*Miners at Valleyfield in Fife, and Cortonwood and Hatfield Main near Doncaster were fined for illegal strikes, and at the Tareni colliery in South Wales strikers were imprisoned for a month. By March 1945 no less than 18,436 had been punished under the Essential Works Order for lateness or absenteeism, and 1,323 of them had been jailed. Miners accounted for a horrifying number of these. Yet not a single one of the 127 employers prosecuted for infraction of the labour laws in the whole of industry up to February 1944 had ever seen the inside of a prison.*" ('Two Steps Back', page 114). Between 1942 and 1943, a

Throughout the war the trade union bureaucracy acted as another arm of the state. The annual reports of the TUC General Council began to read like the records of some special government department.

whole series of strikes effected the Yorkshire coalfield. At Cortonwood, 1,500 miners struck against wage cuts. The 'Daily Worker' replied: "The Independent Labour Party and the Trotskyists in complete indifference to the fuel crisis, have been engaged in persuading the miners to remain on strike - against an agreement signed by their own officials!" A leaflet put out by the CP entitled 'Poison in the Coalfields', called upon miners not to "scab on the Red Army and the miners of France and Belgium by disorganising coal production without which no armed struggle against Hitler can take place".

Wage cuts were met with mass strikes in South Wales and South Yorkshire. The 'Daily Worker' urged miners "to heed Mr. Bevin's warning and return immediately..." In July 1943 Bevin announced a law to force youth into the mines. The apprentices which would be affected received support from the Trotskyists, which led to strike action in March 1944. 5,000 apprentices stopped work on Tyneside, which soon spread to Wear and the Tees. They in turn were joined by 20,000 on the Clyde and 1,000 in Huddersfield. The strike leader, Bill Davy, became a Trotskyist, as the WIL pioneered their cause. After a time, the Government intervened and arrested four Trotskyist leaders, whose release was taken up by Maxton and Nye Bevan. They were imprisoned under the anti-Labour Trades Dispute Act 1927.

Throughout the war the trade union bureaucracy acted as another arm of the state. "*The annual reports of the TUC General Council*", notes Henry Pelling, "*began to read like the records of some special government department responsible for coordinating policy in the social and industrial spheres.*" At every level, through different government committees, they were intertwined with the state apparatus. The Stalinists played second fiddle in this relationship. The war had brought about great changes. Membership of the unions, as in the First World War, grew impressively. Total numbers rose from 6,053,000 in 1938 (4,669,000 affiliated to the TUC) to 7,803,000 in 1945 (6,671,000 affiliated). The

Transport and General Workers grew to over a million, while the Miners Federation fell to fourth place with 602,000 members. The position of the trade union bureaucracy had been enhanced in these years. Bevin went from Minister of Labour in Churchill's Government to Foreign Secretary in the new post war Labour Government. The end of the war saw the pent up frustrations and anger at the system reflected in a revolutionary upsurge in Europe. In meetings of the superpowers at Teheran, Moscow and Yalta, Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt had carved up the world between them. The Stalinist parties were instructed to toe the line and undermine the revolutionary movement in Europe. In France and Italy, the CP entered the bourgeois governments in order to betray the mass movement. It represented a period of counter-revolution in a 'democratic form'.

Labour to Power

In Britain, the mass of workers turned towards their mass organisations, bringing the Labour Party to power in the biggest landslide ever. Ironically, the Stalinists opposed such a government, advocating instead a National Government composed of all parties, including "Progressive Tories" like Churchill and Eden! In the 1945 general election, Labour swept the board securing 393 MPs. The mass of workers looked enthusiastically to the Labour Government to solve its problems and fulfil their aspirations of a new socialist society.

Rob Sewell

Engels: On the unions and capital



The struggle of labourer against capital does exist whatever the apologists of capital may say to the contrary. It will exist so long as a reduction of wages remains the safest and readiest means of raising profits; nay, so long as the wages system itself shall exist.

The very existence of trade unions is proof sufficient of the fact; if they are not made to fight against the encroachments of capital what are they made for? There is no use in mincing matters. No milksop words can hide the ugly fact that present society is divided into two great antagonistic classes - into capitalists, the owners of all the means for the employment of labour, on one

side; and working people, the owners of nothing but their own working power, on the other. The produce of the labour of the latter class has to be divided between both classes and it is this division about which the struggle is constantly going on. Each class tries to get as large a share as possible; and it is the most curious aspect of this struggle that the working class, while fighting to obtain a share of its own produce, is often enough accused of actually robbing the capitalist!

Engels - extract from an article in Labour Standard, 1881

The Great British Tradition



By Beatrice Windsor

Revolution in Kent

As the printing press had yet to be invented, there are few records of how the mass of peasants organised in Medieval times. However, one reliable but grisly method of measuring the extent of support for the various uprisings during the Middle Ages is to look at how far and wide the remains of executed leaders were displayed by a vengeful ruling class!

Thus we can see there was widespread support for the Kentish Rising of 1450. When the revolt failed, its main leaders were hung, drawn and quartered for treason. The leader, **Jack Cade**, had his quarters put on display at Blackheath, Salisbury, Norwich and Gloucester. His 'lieutenants', Nicholas Jakes and John Ramsey, had their innards nailed up in Chichester, Rochester, Portsmouth, Colchester, Stamford, Newbury, Coventry and Winchester.

The Kentish Rising was sparked by the continued degeneration of the *Ancien Regime* - the weak monarchy of Henry VI surrounded by the strong, rival baronage led to corruption, intrigue and chaos, alongside failed military adventures in France. Both the King and the Barons replenished their squandered reserves by punitive taxes on the people. Kent in particular was hard hit as it also had to cope with continuous raids on its coastal towns by the French.

Jack Cade, an ex-soldier known to his supporters as **John Amend-All**, headed a new uprising, mustering up to 45,000 men under arms who marched on London. They carried with them a *Bill of Complaints and Requests of the Commons of Kent*. Amongst its demands were calls against excessive taxation, for an end to the common practice of Barons using the charge of 'treason' against those whose land they wished to pinch, and that the Statute of Labourers be repealed.

As they approached London, the King fled to Kenilworth. The gates of the city were opened and Cade's army marched in to the cheers of ordinary Londoners. This was no rabble - it organised with military discipline, it paid for all supplies and there was no wanton damage. Some notorious nobles were dealt with on the chopping block but even then, these executions followed 'peoples trials'. Except in the case of Lord Saye, Lord Treasurer of England. At his trial he pompously refused to recognise the court's legitimacy. The dispute dragged on all day until the crowd got fed up and dragged him off to Smithfield and chopped his head off anyway. Well, at least they *tried* to give him a fair trial.

Cade set up headquarters in the White Hart Inn in Borough High Street in Southwark (in the Middle Ages much plotting and scheming normally took place in the pub, so no change there then).

The day after Cade's triumphant march into London was Sunday and his peasant soldiers dutifully kept the Sabbath. Not so the city's Aldermen and merchants. They mobilised the King's garrison that had been holed up in the Tower of London, linking up with a company of archers who had just returned from France. At dusk they launched a ferocious attack, and a vicious battle took place on London bridge with Cade holding the Southwark end.

The battle also saw the first use of gunpowder in Britain - cannons were wheeled out of the Tower for their first ever use; significantly against their own rebellious people.

Stalemate ensued and Cade agreed to negotiations. The oily wheeler-dealers of the Church represented the King. It was agreed to present the Bill of Complaints, but Cade also wanted a pardon for all of his army. No can do, said the clergymen - it would need a Parliament to do this, and that could take weeks to summon. Instead Cade settled for a general Charter of Pardon, with Cade in turn supplying a muster roll of all those rebels who took part (bad move, Jack).

Needless to say the Pardon was not worth the paper it was written on, while the King now had a handy list of who to hunt down.

Sure enough, as the rebel army disbanded the King and the Clergy reneged on the deal; they announced it would pardon all gentry and landowners who had supported the uprising, but not the thousands of yeomen, peasants and artisans who had fought.

The leaders were hunted down and executed, in what became known as the 'Harvest of Heads'. However, the persecution did not mirror the mass killings that followed the Peasants' Revolt. Henry VI knew the crown was far from secure on his head. The country was about to be plunged into the War of the Roses.

The Upper Crust



Signing On

Lady Thatcher's book, the Downing Street Years has proved to be costly in more ways than one. Not only did it help fuel splits and divisions within the Tory party but whilst it was earning Thatcher and her publishers a pretty packet it was costing the rest of us a fortune in policing. Confused? Well Thatcher arranged a number of signing sessions in bookstores and Conservative clubs and so on. One such session in Cheshire cost the taxpayer £26,000 for helicopters, extra police allowances, overtime and mutual aid from the North Wales and Manchester police forces. How much did it cost the publishers? Nothing!

A Degree of Hypocrisy

Remember Michael Portillo's claim that "foreigners" weren't really as clever as they made out because they just bought their educational qualifications?

Well, Portillo's cabinet colleague Tony Newton has been sitting on a report for nine months about just such a case in another country. The other country is Wales and the allegations concern the Department of Philosophy at University College Swansea.

There has been a long-running battle at the university over a degree course in medical ethics. Allegedly degrees were handed out to anyone who paid the entrance fee without their work being properly checked. In more than one case theses were found to contain large sections copied directly out of textbooks. When three lecturers protested they were suspended. Well that puts paid to Major's "open government" campaign and Portillo's "it couldn't happen here" campaign. I suggest a new campaign, how about "back to basics". Yes, that's catchy, I think it might work...

Toodle pip, Lord Crusty

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The Marxist voice of the labour movement

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- **Bosnia - War or Peace?**
 - **NUT Conference**
 - **Miners Strike: Ten Years On**

Fight Racism



The rise in racist and fascist activity in the East End, particularly on the Isle of Dogs where a fascist BNP councillor was elected is directly linked to the bad housing, unemployment and poverty that blights the lives of thousands of working class people, black, white and Asian, in that area, and the lack of a fighting lead offered by the labour movement leadership nationally or locally.

The policies of the Tory government and the racist opportunism of Liberal controlled Tower Hamlets council with the full knowledge of the Liberals nationally have greatly exacerbated a problem that ultimately leads to the sort of brutal, racially motivated attacks that have become all too common throughout the country. The TUC is to be congratulated for calling the demonstration of 19 March. The TUC has a marvellous opportunity to use this event not

only for the organised working class to show the fascists that there is no place for them in London or anywhere else, but also to explain the class nature of the rise of racism and fascism, the divide and rule policies of the Tories, and the socialist policies necessary to eradicate the evils of life today that give rise to the problem in the first place.

It is to be hoped that this is the course of action the TUC will take as opposed to the sort of 'broad based' campaigns we have seen in the past, where Tories and Liberals, the very parties whose policies are responsible for the problems in the first place, are invited to get involved in (mis) leading the campaign. Only the forces of the working class can decisively defeat the fascist hooligans and the system which allows these sores to breed.

**A south London
Anti-Fascist**

Labour/TUC: Force the Tories Out!