

SOCIALIST

APPEAL

£1

The Marxist voice of the labour movement

Issue No.22 June 1994

Solidarity Price £2

Europe:



Full Employment
**The Socialist
Answer**

**Euro-
Union:
End
of the
Road?**

.....

**South
Africa:
Where
now
for the
ANC?**

PLUS: • Spain • Science • World Cup • Unions

Labour needs a fighting, socialist leadership

The disastrous results for the Tories in the local elections in May have led to a further crisis in their ranks.

The predicted debacle at the Euro-elections on June 9th now seems a certainty and a challenge to Major's leadership more and more likely. The Tories are at an historic low in the polls. In Scotland, where in the fifties they got over 50% at one election, they were relegated to fourth place behind not only Labour, but the Liberal Democrats and the SNP as well. Now, Labour must go on the offensive. We need a campaign to ditch the Tories and elect a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

The untimely death of Labour Party leader, John Smith stunned party activists and supporters. However, the movement must now face the task of electing a new party leader.

Media Campaign

As we go to press it is still not certain how or when the election will take place or what candidates will emerge. But it looks increasingly likely that the election will be held in June and July with the campaign starting off after the Euro-elections on June 9th. The right wing NEC are undoubtedly hoping for a short, "media led" campaign rather than a campaign leading up to annual conference in October where all the issues can be aired with plenty of time for debate and the full participation of all sections of the party. The election itself will be the first to run under the new "one member, one vote" (OMOV) system. Although "one member, one vote" is not the most accurate of descriptions - MPs can have three votes, one as an MP, one as a party member and one as a trade union member. And of course given the three way split in

the 'electoral college', the single vote of the MP will be worth considerably more than the vote of an ordinary party or union member. One vote from an MP, in fact, is worth 150,000 votes from the trade union section! The election will be the biggest postal ballot in

in the article itself it quite clearly states, "Among most delegates John Prescott received vocal support..." They are prepared to go to any lengths to have "their" man elected! Naturally, activists must consider the whole direction the party has been taking in

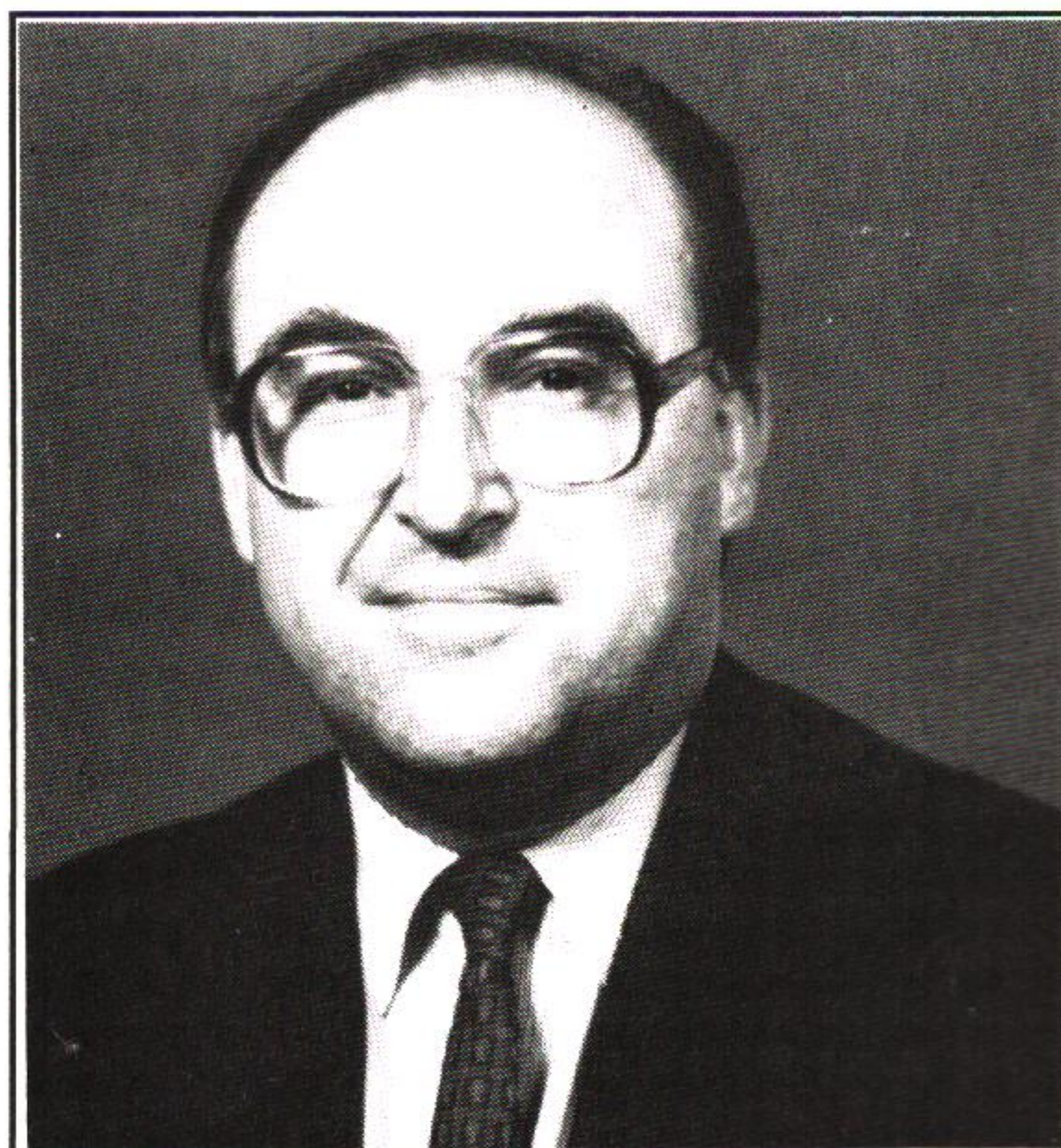
crossroads. The tensions last year in the debates around OMOV showed this up clearly. It is time to get rid of the legacies of the 1980's and the relentless rightward shift carried out under Neil Kinnock. The Tories are now in an utter mess - staring electoral catastrophe full in the face. Yet Labour's right, spearheaded by Blair and Brown, still cling to the outdated economic and social philosophies of 1980's Toryism. We must be clear - if the Tories cannot get their system to work then how can Labour?

Campaign Group

The campaign must be used to argue the case for a mass, trade union based, socialist, Labour Party. The Campaign Group is unlikely to stand a candidate and therefore it seems most likely that the contest will be between the right and a representative of the "soft left" like John Prescott. Under these conditions activists would support Prescott, while using every opportunity to argue for socialist policies and the strengthening of the links between party and trade unions.

We need a leadership, and a party, that can tackle the real problems facing working class people - unemployment and poverty, the rundown health and education services, the crumbling infrastructure - all the products of Tory misrule and the crisis of their economic system. But that needs a real change in direction for the party!

The leadership election campaign must be used to begin the fight for just such a change. We need a party that is prepared to go out and campaign for what we believe in and fight on a socialist programme - this is the best guarantee of a landslide victory in the general election. ●



John Smith - his untimely death stunned party activists and supporters

nistry - over 4.5 million people will be able to vote. Once the idea of the parliamentary Labour party electing the leader on their own had been discredited, this became the right's favoured system. And it's easy to see why. Voters can sit at home, they do not need to go to a meeting or even to a polling booth. The right will rely on their friends in the media to do much of the campaigning for them. Although the official campaign is not yet underway, the media really began its campaign on the day John Smith died. The nature of this campaign is quite clear and cynical. In the Guardian of May 16th we read an article headlined "Unison favours Tony Blair as next Labour leader." Yet

past years. The enthronement of a representative of the right in the form of Tony Blair or Gordon Brown would be a disaster for the party. John Smith rightly brought up the issues of full employment and a minimum wage but the programme of Blair and Brown will never achieve these aims. They are not even prepared to offer a programme of basic reforms, as in the past. They have gone over, lock, stock and barrel, to the economic dogmas of the Tories. We must have a leadership prepared to fight on the issues and who have a programme capable of implementing policies in the interests of working class people. The party really is at a

Contents

- Labour Movement News...4
- Jobs for all: socialism and full employment...6
- CPSA...9
- Unison/NCU...10
- AEEU/MSF...11
- Lessons of the local elections..12
- World Cup: A game of two classes..14
- South Africa...16
- European Union: Dream or Reality?...19
- Russia...22
- Spain.....24
- Rwanda...26
- Science....28
- History of the Trade Unions Part 14...29

Due to pressure on space *The Great British Tradition* does not appear this month. It will return next issue.

Front page pic: Davide Burner (NUJ)

Fight to Halt Post Office Privatisation

Widespread anger has greeted the announcement that the government is going to privatise the Post Office. UNISON conference immediately pledged their full support to Post Office workers and attacked the sell-off.

The proposals involve selling off 51% of the Royal Mail and Parcelforce, with the Counter Service remaining in public hands for now. The plan was being presented by Michael Heseltine as the first step in a proposed 'new wave' of privatisations.

Deregulation Panel

The Government's 'Deregulation Panel' has also started meeting (in advance of the parliamentary bill to actually create it being passed) and has over 400 proposals for privatisation and deregulation on the table for consideration.

The purpose of this body is openly to attack anything that 'inhibits wealth creation', in other words to remove workers rights and protections and to flog anything they can to create quick profits for the bosses and quick cash for the government at all costs.

The government hopes the cash raised will be able to help pay off their £50 billion pound debt and perhaps finance a pre-election tax cut (i.e. bribe). Needless to say this body is yet another government created, unelected quango full of Tory hangers-on and their like. Privatisation of postal services will mean the probable loss of second deliveries in towns and cities. In rural areas services will be

destroyed with mail delivery costs rising sharply and post offices closing. Over 27,000 post staff will now be facing the threat of redundancy following on from the attacks that are already taking place on jobs and working conditions. The workers pension fund could also be raided. Concern over this action is being expressed even by Tories - a recent MORI poll has shown a majority of Tory voters to be against privatisation. The mood of Post Office workers is one of anger. The press reported one worker at Mount Pleasant as saying: 'people have had it up to here'. Norman Candy, London UCW divisional rep, was quoted as saying that apathy in the workforce would soon be turned into action: "Once the activists get around, it will change" (Guardian 19/5/94).

There is clearly the basis here for a fighting campaign on the industrial and political front involving both the unions and the Labour Party. Unfortunately all the UCW leadership have come up with so far is a campaign to get people to put ticks on the bottom right-hand corners of envelopes if they oppose privatisation!

A full campaign needs to be organised which includes industrial action, and the Labour Party should make a clear statement that if privatisation goes ahead then the future Labour Government will promptly renationalise with compensation on the basis of need only.

Published by Socialist Appeal,

PO Box 2626,

London N1 6DU

Tel: 071-354-3164

Fax: 071-354-4381

Editor: Alan Woods

Business Manager: Steve Jones

Support the BBC strikers!

Workers at the BBC have started a series of strikes to defend their working conditions and wage bargaining rights. In a postal ballot 80 percent of National Union of Journalists' members backed the strike call - and there was a healthy majority among staff in the broadcasting and entertainment union BECTU.

As plans for action were drawn up in every TV studio and local radio station across the country hundreds of people flocked to join both unions and support the campaign.

The unions have given notice of two days of strike action each week until the dispute is resolved. European election coverage and key sports events have been specially targeted.

Morale at the BBC has been sapped over the past two years as staff fear bureaucracy is starting to take precedence over the quality of the programmes.

There have been redundancies among technical and support staff, while some services - like canteens - have been privatised.

With staff looking for an excuse to fight back the BBC bosses have blundered with a plan to neuter the unions, introduce individually negotiated wage structures and take away extra payments for working long hours. Twelve hour days could become the norm in some understaffed departments.

Pay Rises

The annual pay rise will only be given to those whose faces fit or those who "meet agreed personal targets." Journalists who may spend weeks researching a story which is ultimately vetoed by a lawyer wonder how they can be judged for productivity.

Viewers and listeners will suffer as quick and easy to cover stories inevitably replace investigative journalism.

BBC chief John Birt and his hand-picked team of yes men and women have no idea of the pressures faced by staff in, for example, local radio. An edict from on high says stations must be 80 percent speech despite cuts in budgets. Finding enough stories in some rural areas where hard news is in short supply is forcing workers into regular extended shifts with no overtime payments.

But Birt and co. are desperate to show their government bosses that the BBC can be run as a Thatcherite business. The move has backfired as staff refuse to allow their bosses to win their knighthoods through blatant exploitation. The union leaders are being forced to take a firm stand by the overwhelming

enthusiasm for a fight among members. Now they must go on the offensive ensuring guerrilla strikes hit at the most effective times and organising flying pickets to BBC sites where membership is low. NUJ and BECTU branches around the country must set up strike committees and run hardship funds, for any BBC support staff are on scandalously low wages and can ill afford to lose their pay.

Other trade unionists and socialists can support the action by joining picket lines at their local radio and TV station and by sending messages of support and donations to strikers or by inviting a speaker from the dispute.

Performance related pay and personal

contracts are being used to smash unions across industry. A victory for the BBC workers can help turn the tide. And a high profile national strike puts the concept of industrial action back on the agenda in every workplace. If the plugs are pulled on Eastenders everyone will notice - and every trade unionist will be given a glimpse of their collective power.

Miles Barter
BBC worker, NUJ

For up to date details of timing of strikes contact the NUJ on 071-278-7916

Hospital workers' win

Hospital workers in Glasgow have scored an important victory after a deal was struck to avert strike action by cleaners and porters at the city's Royal Infirmary Trust. The conflict arose when workers were informed two weeks before Executive Healthcare took over the contract that their pay and conditions would be cut. Rab Thomson, the GMB steward said Executive Healthcare were using underhand tactics. They undercut existing contractors by £314,000 by planning to reduce porters' pay from £3.60 to £3.20 an hour and their holiday entitlement. Some cleaners faced losing up to half their wages. The Trust backed down because of the threat of strike action and possible action under European Union legislation covering the Transfer of Undertakings

(Protection of Employment), better known as the TUPE law. Now Greater Glasgow Health Board and Trust directors face legal action from other contractors and a possible investigation by the Audit Commission. The top director of Executive Healthcare Services Ltd., earned £62,466 during 1992 and four directors in a linked company, Executive Cleaning Services Plc awarded themselves a total dividend of £500,000 in 1993. This company's attitude represents the clear distinction between the haves and have-nots in Tory Britain. Workers have now received an undertaking from management that when the new contractors take over in July, they will transfer with wages and conditions intact. The 380 workers were

ecstatic when they endorsed the settlement and there were cheers and standing ovations for their stewards and full-time officials. The GMB's chief health service negotiator Hugh Swan said: "This is a victory for the workers involved and for other staff and patients who have supported them throughout. It is also a victory for every worker in this country who faced the threat of their jobs and conditions going under the auctioneer's hammer to the lowest bidder." This victory should give encouragement to all NHS workers and public sector workers to oppose privatisation of public services through Compulsory Competitive Tendering in future struggles.

Andrew Wylie
Coatbridge Central
Labour Party

Union Organisation Under Attack

Aslef

The big issue for Aslef conference this year is franchising/privatisation. Already some of the possible private owners of BR have made it clear they will attack the union.

They have indicated their unwillingness to recognise EC or district secretaries if they don't work within their business sector which in effect means that, contrary to current practice if a member is elected to a union position they would be left with no job to go back to when they lost or

gave up that position. This year's annual delegate meeting needs to be clear in its commitment to defending the union, stewards and individual members against such attacks.

Five London Underground branches have moved similar motions calling for the reinstatement of our full annual leave which was cut as a result of the introduction of the Company Plan. The splitting up of BR, and the establishment of different companies has heightened calls, especially from head office, for a restructuring of the union. The EC's position is that "nothing is sacred and everything is being put in the

melting pot." Activists, however, believe they propose full-time officials for life and cuts in the annual conference (either in terms of number of delegates or days.) The conference was reduced a few years ago and we should fight any attempt to reduce it further and in fact should support an extension of member's democratic rights, power and involvement. One thing that must be sacred is the periodical democratic elections for officials and officers. No decisions on restructuring should be made until all members and branches have discussed and had an opportunity to contribute towards the debate on

the future structure of our union. Other issues which are on the conference agenda include over two ages of rule changes from the EC removing all references to gender in our rules which should be supported. It is important delegates oppose calls from one branch to remove our socialist clause and we stress the relevance of socialism to our union and members' lives and support the call from another branch to add in to the clause the renationalisation of the railways.

**Steve Tree
Aslef, Central
Line**

Another Tory disaster in Midlands

Local Elections

The Tories failed in their bid to make headway in the Midlands during the May local council elections.

Birmingham had been targeted by the Tories, with Ministers denigrating the City Council and the whole of an election broadcast being given over to lambasting Birmingham. The Tory press joined in attempting to resurrect the "loony Labour" smears of the 1980s, by starting a "barmy Birmingham" campaign. But it backfired. Not only did Labour successfully defend the gains it made in the anti poll tax backlash in 1990, but took two further seats in the former 'true blue' strongholds of Quinton and Edgbaston.

This swing to Labour was no accident. The election of Theresa Stewart as leader of the Labour group marked a slight shift to the left, with a commitment to switch finances to support Birmingham's crumbling education service and way from "prestige" projects such

as the International Convention Centre, which had been the hallmark of the old right wing leadership. The new Labour council needs to take things a stage further and make it clear it will be party to no more Tory cuts or redundancies and build a campaign and fight to win back the millions of pounds stolen from Birmingham and other local authorities.

We had a good result in Stockland Green where our candidate - Richard Evans, who as a councillor before had the whip withdrawn from him during the fight against the poll tax - achieved the highest ever majority for Labour in our ward.

Stockland Green is an active branch, where we have held regular campaigns in support of the miners, defending the NHS and against VAT on fuel. During the election, 100% of the ward was both canvassed and leafleted. Our record has not gone unnoticed by the labour movement's enemies. The Sunday Times (24.4.94) poked fun at another Stockland Green councillor who attended the Israeli/Palestinian peace accord

signing saying he had gained "...valuable experience for his assignment during several years of unrest between Labour and Militant in his Stockland Green ward."

Militant of course has long since abandoned the struggle for socialism in the Labour Party. But it is still used as a tag by the Tory press for those that stand for socialist policies and defend Marxist ideas in the Labour Party. Another important victory for the left in Birmingham was the result notched up by Guy Daly in Bourneville, who gained over 5,000 votes making this Labour marginal into a stronghold. Elsewhere in the Midlands there were major setbacks for the Tories, with Labour regaining control of Wolverhampton and increasing its majority in Sandwell. And in Walsall socialist Bob Dillon scored an excellent victory over , unseating the Tory Mayor!

**Maureen Wade
Chair, Stockland Green
Labour Party,
personal capacity.**

In the News

● Members of the TGWU and other unions staged a protest outside the AGM of Shell to protest at the company's role in derecognising the unions. The TGWU's campaign against Shell UK centres on plans for derecognition in the oil industry. The campaign so far has included leafletting, a consumer boycott, and lobbying at Parliament and the European Parliament. But many TGWU members are now calling on the union to step up its campaign and put industrial pressure on Shell to defend union rights.

● Demonstrators gathered outside Downing Street in mid-May to highlight the effects of local government reforms on libraries. Already many libraries have been forced to cut back on staff and opening hours due to cuts in grants to local authorities and now protesters fear many may be forced to close completely, with hundreds of job losses.

● Unions at Rosyth and Devonport shipyards claim that up to 5000 jobs will be lost with the selling off of the yards. The Ministry of Defence said it expected no more than 1000 job losses but Jack Dromey of the TGWU said the reality would be nearer five times that amount and worsening conditions for those still employed.

Jobs for all:

Socialism and full employment

Unemployment is a crime. Unemployment is the biggest indictment there could be of the chaos and inefficiency of the market economy.

Unemployment is a waste - not just of human talents and skills but also economic. According to Richard Layard of the London School of Economics the present cost of unemployment stands at £60bn a year in lost taxes, lost wages, lost profits and benefit payments. It costs £9,000 a year to keep every unemployed person idle against their will and each taxpayer is stumping up £1,000 a year to maintain this pool of human misery. And unemployment is not merely an economic problem. Joblessness, and the consequent poverty, alienation and despair, are the breeding grounds for a host of social ills from crime to domestic violence and from drug abuse to racism and fascism. For the past 15 years the Tories have presided over mass unemployment. Official figures acknowledge

that nearly three million are officially out of work and claiming benefits but the real scale of unemployment as John Prescott made clear in a speech recently is nearer five million when you take into account all those who are now denied the right to claim benefits and those who are on "training" courses who the Tories removed from the statistics in one of their 29 changes to date in the way the figures are calculated.

Organic Crisis

Both Labour and the TUC have recognised the tremendous waste unemployment represents and under pressure from below both adopted a commitment to full employment at last year's conferences. However, what is quite clear is that under the current direction and leadership neither possesses a clear policy to achieve it.

Unemployment is an organic problem of capitalism. Unemployment rates have risen or fallen in tandem with the cycle of booms and slumps - a

perennial feature of capitalist economic 'progress'. In the long economic upswing from 1945 to 1973 it appeared that unemployment had ceased to be a problem in the advanced capitalist countries. With the huge development of world trade, a massive expansion of the market took place. However, it is clear that capitalism has now reached its limits. No matter what

policy or programme tried, either by governments of the "left" or of the right, capitalism can no longer develop the market, and thus mass unemployment is here to stay on a capitalist basis. The recessions of 1974-5, 1980-82 and 1990-93 showed that the situation is actually getting worse. At the peak of each boom, 1980 and 1990, unemployment was higher than in 1973 and at the trough of each recession, 1982 and 1993, unemployment was higher than in the trough of the 1975 recession. In 1975 there were 15 million unemployed in the OECD countries compared to current estimates of around 35 million. The Tories try to blame workers for "pricing themselves out of jobs". This is a blatant lie. If it were true how can they explain the fact that prior to 1973 wages grew twice as fast as after 1973 and yet there was full employment in the 1960s and today there is mass unemployment? The Tories want to create a low-wage economy as a means of competing with Germany or Japan. But all history shows that an economy based on cheap labour can never compete with one based on mechanisation and technology. Unemployment is a feature of capitalism in crisis and decline. As the profit system stops working, people stop working. Only the abolition of the private property system of production for profit can end the scourge of unemployment. But precisely at the time the labour movement should be asserting such bold socialist ideas the leaderships are seeking to manage capitalism "better" than the Tories.

The architect of the current Labour policy is Gordon Brown. His pamphlet, *How We Can Conquer Unemployment* puts forward three assertions:

- Unemployment is due to Tory

policies not the capitalist system itself

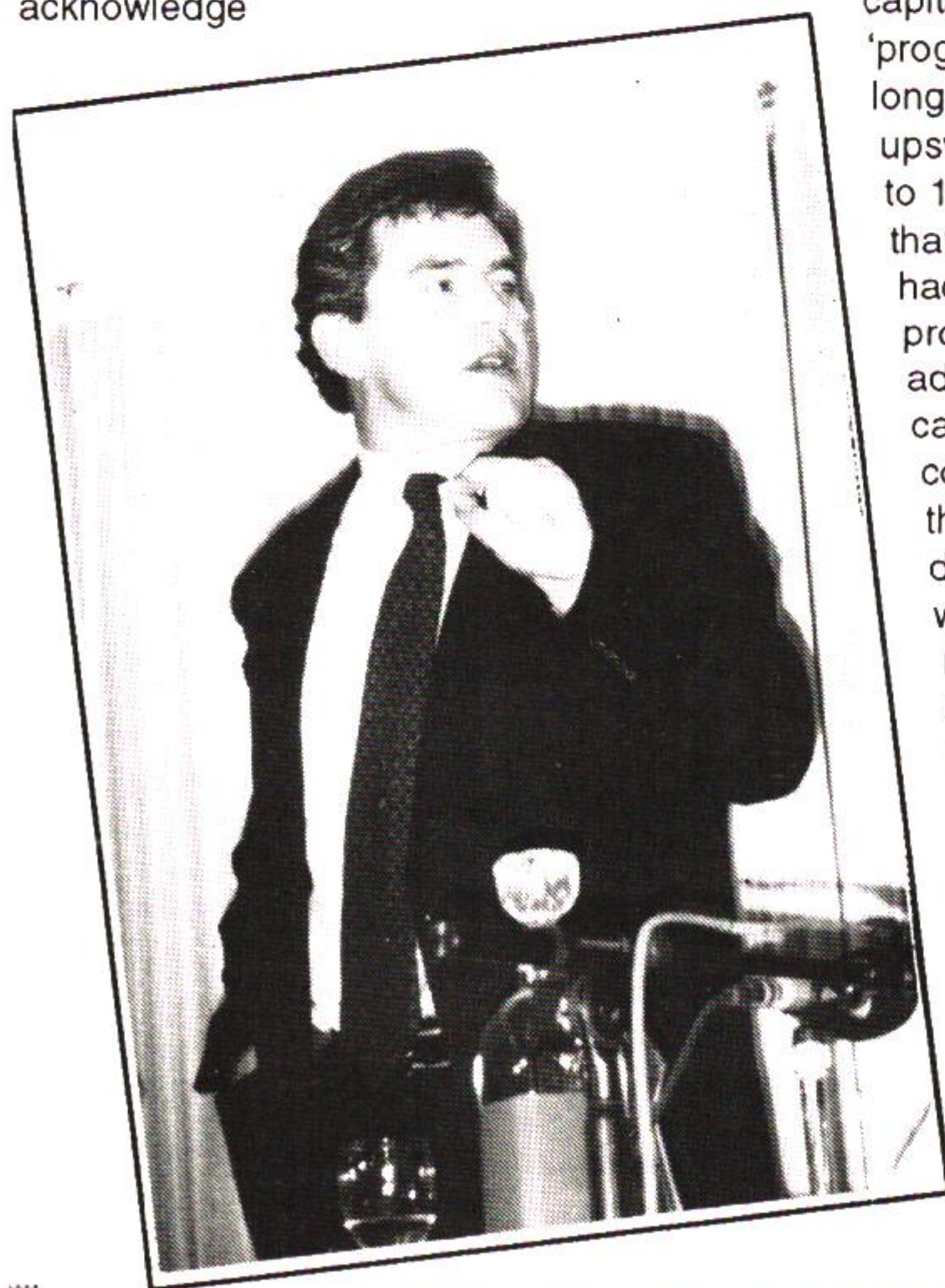
- That 'supply' side measures to improve competitiveness should be stressed over government borrowing and spending

- An orthodox monetary policy is needed of low inflation, stable real interest rates and a stable competitive exchange rate.

Brown stresses the use of measures to keep inflation low over any use of interest rates and public expenditure to cut unemployment. Moreover, to sustain a recovery he argues, monetary and fiscal policy and the exchange rate must be used not just for demand management but "to determine the composition of output, especially as between consumption and investment." That is economic jargon for redistributing wealth to the bosses.

Infrastructure

In effect the Labour leaders say all we can do within the UK is to support specific infrastructural and investment projects already launched by the private sector which would be financed from joint public and private ventures. For the leadership, because they believe the government must not spend money through borrowing and because it cannot raise taxes too much then there is little that the British government can do on its own to secure a job for all who need one. They have placed all their faith to achieve full employment on European co-ordination by the main capitalist governments to expand demand and raise capacity through a European Recovery Fund and Investment Fund. But Brown backed through thick and thin keeping sterling within the ERM right up to the moment Major and Lamont were forced to withdraw. That meant higher interest rates, a longer recession in Europe and Britain and longer dole queues. The Labour leaders want to place the hopes of four million unemployed Britons and



left: Gordon Brown, architect of Labour's current employment policy

20 million jobless Europeans in initiatives from the conservative governments of Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland and Holland and on the goodwill of the arch monetarist Bundesbank to reverse their policies of tight money to boost employment! No wonder John Smith was forced to admit on the Frost on Sunday programme that full employment was "an objective that would be nice to achieve, although it was unrealistic to expect to do so"! A crucial voice in the economic debate is virtually silent for the moment. The TUC is noticeable by its lack of action! Its only submission to the government on full employment argues that it is achievable on the basis of policies for growth, supply side measures and more equal income distribution. The TUC vainly appeals for a new industrial "partnership" to provide "confidence and stability". In the TUC Unified Budget Submission 1993 a wide range of policies along similar lines to Labour's are outlined but the TUC places much emphasis on training to cut unemployment.

Training

Of course, they are right to point out the Tories' scandalous record on training but it is no good simply appealing to the bosses. Investment in on-the-job training is like any other form of investment to them - it's the first thing to get the chop in a recession. We do need a trained and educated workforce but there is no point training workers if there are no jobs to go to. The problem of four million plus unemployed will not be solved by means of training alone. Both Brown and the TUC agree that "the real challenge is to increase the capacity of the economy for high levels of sustainable growth." Not a single person would disagree with this. The problem is how is it to be done while the commanding heights of the economy are in the hands of a handful of bankers and monopolists who operate purely on the basis of greed and short-term gain? In reality, the Labour and TUC leaders have no answer to the problem of unemployment, and cannot have, because they share the basic premise of the Tories and Liberals - the continuation of capitalism. So what of Labour's left? Both the Tribune group and the Socialist Campaign Group have

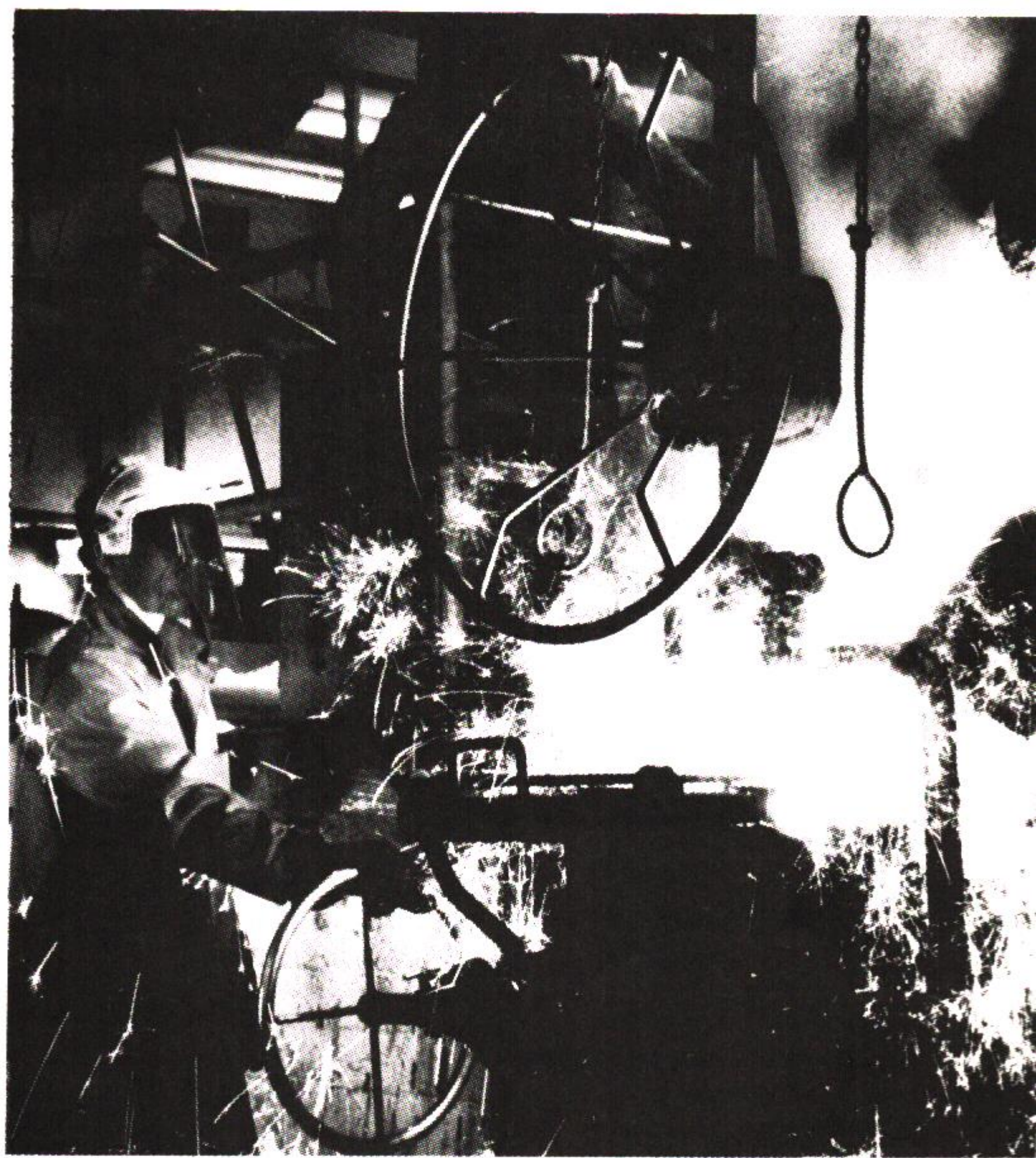
advanced programmes for full employment which have one common feature - they put forward the idea that unemployment is a result of the wrong policies instead of an inherent problem of capitalism itself.

Tribune

Peter Hain and Roger Berry in their pamphlet *Labour and the Economy* whilst appearing "radical" in comparison to the right wing leadership are in reality putting forward a programme which would have been accepted by Labour's monetarists in the 1970s. They talk of increased public expenditure financed by tax rises and public borrowing and "co-ordinated pay bargaining" to minimise the trade-off between rising unemployment and rising inflation. What is clear is that in order to increase investment and thus capacity money has to come from somewhere - so they advocate a switch of resources from consumption to investment. In other words they propose a programme of austerity and belt-tightening ("a short-term brake on rising living standards")! Labour's left have also advanced various schemes to get private firms to act in the public interest. Private industry acts for profit and any attempt to get them to undertake public works schemes inevitably would mean a Labour government subsidising capitalism. And in any case, if there was a profitable market there commercial banks would provide the money. The idea of a National Investment Bank has also been floated. But as in the past people will quite rightly ask where the money is to come from. Does socialism mean socialising subsidies and handouts to big business while the bosses line their pockets? Serious intervention to change the direction of the economy requires the public sector having the resources to turn things around and that means taking over the big profitable firms to generate the finance needed for investment. The left have also argued the state can influence private firms through regulation. We have a plethora of regulatory bodies now (Ofgas, Oftel, Ofwat etc.) and yet they have no power - they are cosmetic exercises. Peter Hain believes we need not renationalise BT. Instead he

believes we can appoint a sympathetic regulator who will harmonise the needs of the economy as a whole with the profit-making behaviour by BT. But Peter Hain fails to realise there is a fundamental contradiction between the profit-making activities and the interests of society as a whole. Where there is a conflict of interest between what the capitalists find profitable and the needs of the working class the capitalists will wriggle and squirm out of doing what we want. As long as they are the ruling class and control real economic power they will usually win. That means we need to expropriate the capitalist class

Board which was set up to take over controlling interests in profitable firms. Once again the idea was that selective nationalisation would "show the way" to private capitalists without the need to take them over. Once more the experiment showed that as long as private capital is dominant, it dictates to a Labour government not the other way round. The NEB ended up bailing out loss-making firms such as Leyland, Ferranti, Rolls Royce, ICL and so on. Invariably then, nationalisation was followed by restructuring and a haemorrhaging of jobs. Toady the Campaign Group offers a watered down version of what it previously represented.



Manufacturing industry has borne the brunt of Tory attacks

as the only way to run the firms in the interests of society. If a Labour government imposed tough regulatory controls on BT its shares would fall, it would have difficulty attracting investment finance and the company would suffer with no real benefit to society. All these ideas smack of the failed ideas of the 1970s, the AES and Planning Agreements and the National Enterprise

Tony Benn and Dennis Skinner put forward a programme at the NEC following the 1992 election defeat that in reality much of which would have been accepted by the right in the past. However, Marxists would welcome a programme of reforms which included: "full employment, a big house building programme, a free national health service, better care of the disabled, life-long

and equal education for everyone, higher pensions...better benefits and a fairer tax system...freedom for local authorities to provide essential services...the maintenance of the supremacy of the electors in choosing those who make the laws under which we live..." Marxists would support these demands. But what differentiates us from the current of left reformism is that we understand the nature of capitalism and the state. Marxists, whilst fighting for every reform, point out that these either cannot be achieved, or maintained, without the socialist transformation of society. Under modern conditions, the pressures of finance capital and the multinationals are overwhelming. Any Labour government with such a programme of reforms would immediately come into conflict with the banks and monopolies. Any challenge to the vested interests of the ruling class would be met with an exodus of capital, economic sabotage and depending on the nature of the threat the full force of the state. The events around George Brown's National Plan and the threatened planned coup against the Wilson government should teach us this.

Regulation

Some lefts respond by advocating credit controls and regulations on the movement of finance. But under capitalism real power does not lie in parliament and laws. Wealth and power, based on ownership and control of the means of production rests firmly in the boardrooms of a few firms. The Campaign group are correct in advocating extending nationalisation. Like the Alternative Economic Strategy of the 1970s the Campaign Group advocate nationalising the 'leading lights' (i.e. around 25 firms) But the CBI, the City and leading shareholders have made it clear they would refuse to sell to the government and despite advocating nationalising the major banks and financial institutions they would only intend to take control of around 30% of premium income. In reality, this type of selective nationalisation leaves the real levers of economic power in the hands of capitalists and if they

Under a democratic socialist plan of production a rate of growth of ten per cent a year would be a modest target to start with. This would mean doubling the wealth of society in ten years and would guarantee not only a job for all, but a real job with a decent living wage and a general reduction in the working day

felt their profits were at threat they would very quickly move to remove equipment, plant, machinery and so on and instead of creating jobs they would be lost.

You can take a capitalist to the bank but you cannot force them to borrow or invest if he cannot see a profitable use for the cash. How could we force the capitalists to create more jobs if their profits were at threat, how could we force a cheap house-building programme without having control of the construction industry, how would a fairer tax system, no matter how "fair" really redistribute income when real wealth and power lies in the ownership of shares, concentrated in foreign or off-shore investment funds? None of the left's proposals of regulation, devaluation, subsidy or public spending have worked before in permanently creating jobs because they accept that it is not capitalism that is the problem but just a question of policy.

Lessons

Labour must learn from its past. Attempts by past Labour governments to patch up capitalism have all ended in defeat and the re-election of the Tories. The Wilson/Callaghan government which came to power promising "a fundamental and irreversible shift in the distribution of power and wealth

in the interests of working people and their families" quickly moved to counter-reforms. Despite some initial benefits for workers by the time the government fell in May 1979 workers' average take-home pay was 3% less than at the end of 1974 and unemployment rose from half to more than 1.25 million. Under relentless pressure from the CBI and the City Labour were forced to abandon their reforms and demanded job cuts and wage controls to restore profitability.

Socialist Plan

So what is the socialist alternative? To achieve full employment it is necessary to create 4 - 5 million jobs over the next five years. The first step would be to reduce the working week with no loss of pay and to introduce a minimum wage. It would then be necessary to establish a mass programme of public works alongside a sustained expansion of the national health service, education system and welfare services and a mass council house-building programme to eliminate homelessness. Financing such a programme would be achieved by taking over high finance - the banks, insurance companies and finance houses alongside an end to massive arms spending and wasteful spending such as advertising, competitive

duplication ...and ending subsidies and tax breaks to private health and education. In short what is needed is a national plan - but not like the last one!

The 1964-70 Labour government had a National Plan which tried to draw together individual capitalists to work together in the national interest. It failed! By 1969 the Department of Economic Affairs stated bluntly that "what happens in industry is not under the control of the government." Precisely. You cannot plan what you do not own.

A Labour government must renationalise all the privatised industries and utilities with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need. However, this, in and of itself is not enough. In order to control and plan the economy democratically it is necessary to nationalise all the big banks, insurance companies and big monopolies which dominate the economy. A national plan should be drawn up at firm, industry and economy level by representatives of the workforce, the socialist government and the trade unions as a whole.

Nationalisation

Such a plan requires the abolition of the unplanned capitalist system - in other words nationalisation under democratic workers' control and management (i.e. real socialist nationalisation not the state capitalism of the past). Under a democratic socialist plan of production a rate of growth of ten per cent a year would be a modest target to start with. This would mean doubling the wealth of society in ten years and would guarantee not only a job for all but a real job with a decent living wage, and a general reduction in the working day. Such a perspective is no utopia. It is the only genuine answer to the problem of mass unemployment facing workers in Britain and internationally. The labour movement must arm itself with such a socialist programme to carry through the urgent tasks we face.

Jeremy Dear

Reject the pay deal!

CPSA

CPSA's 1994 Annual Conference took place in the week following Labour's humiliating defeat of the Tories in the local council elections.

The fighting spirit of delegates was bolstered by the knowledge that the Tory government had been badly shaken by the results, and the Conference passed a series of motions reflecting this combative mood. The most striking feature of the conference was the huge gulf which exists between the majority of the National Executive Committee and senior officials, and the unions activists.

Hostile

The Conference delegates are the representatives who run the union at grass roots level, working on a day-to-day basis amongst ordinary members, often under threat of victimisation by an increasingly hard-nosed, vindictive management and a hostile employer.

Drawing salaries of up to £44,000 a year, the union's senior officials are well insulated against the hardship suffered by the low-paid civil servants they are meant to represent and serve.

The Conference resolved to build on November's hugely successful one-day national strike against the government's Market Testing programme, working with other unions for further action to defeat the Tories' plans for privatising the bulk of the civil service by the back door. Also significant was the decision to reopen negotiations with NUCPS and IRSF (the two other main civil service unions), with the intention of merging into a single union early in 1995. This again reflects a growing acceptance that unity to defeat the government's attacks must now be given maximum priority.

Many of the motions setting out the basis of campaigns to defend and improve the job security and working conditions of ordinary members were carried in the face of obstruction and opposition from the NEC, of attempts at filibustering by the tiny handful of their supporters on the conference floor, disgracefully aided by the interference of the President, Marion Chambers. Important motions such as that on affiliation to the Labour Party were guillotined from the agenda as a result, and so could not be debated or voted upon.

Large amounts of conference time, which should have been available for discussing how to protect and promote the interests of members, had to be spent discussing motions to censure the NEC for refusing to implement past conference policy; clarifying election and balloting procedures; and tightening up the rule book to protect against interference by senior officials in the internal democracy of the union. Just two days before delegates arrived in Bournemouth for the start of section conferences on 7-8 May, the right-wing dominated NEC held an emergency meeting to consider the Treasury's initial response to their inadequate 3.6% pay claim. Amazingly the NEC is claiming that the offer of a self financing 1.8% one-off payment (not added to pay scales, not reckonable for pensions, and in exchange for agreement that future pay increases will be based solely on performance markings in annual staff reports) "represents a major success which will be welcomed by members." By rushing through this recommendation, and by setting in train the arrangements for a postal ballot, the NEC enabled the President to rule out of order all motions relating to the 1994 pay campaign on the grounds that they had been "overtaken by events." The timing of the NEC meeting and the release of details of the offer, were deliberately and cynically designed to prevent the

conference debating or voting on any aspects of the offer or the campaign, by not allowing sufficient time for branches to call constitutional members' meetings to pass emergency motions for conference before the closing date. The NEC was thus the only body in the union which could constitutionally have put an emergency motion to the conference, and it refused to do so.

This more than anything else exposes the so-called "Moderates" fear of a debate, their disregard for the members and activists, and their lack of confidence in the unions (read their own) ability to fight.

Unity Campaign

The Unity campaign of the Broad Left, Broad Left '84, and leading independents in the union came within less than an average of 1,500 votes of deposing the National Moderate Group from office in the NEC elections. Most significant in this postal ballot result is that over 100,000 (80%) of the unions members did not vote at all. The result of the election for President could not be announced, the nomination in the first round of a right-wing candidate who would have taken votes away from Chambers was wrongly declared invalid. After legal action by this other right-winger, the right-wing capitulated and were forced to accept that the election for President must now be re-run.

Although the loss of the position of Vice President - held last year by Broad Left member and Unity candidate, Chris Baugh - was a big disappointment for many activists, the close running in the ballot shows that the Presidential position is within reach for Unity candidate, Ann Jarvis. Undoubtedly, though, some activists had believed that



Ann Jarvis - Unity candidate for president

left unity around a single slate would be enough to secure a victory in the NEC elections, and the re-run election will be fought with redoubled determination.

Within hours of the announcement of the NEC results, hundreds of delegates helped to ensure that Unity leaflets calling for a vote for Ann Jarvis, and others calling for a "No" vote in the pay ballot, were packed into envelopes and posted out to every one of the thousands of civil service workplaces throughout the country. This is now being followed through with a nationally co-ordinated effort to encourage a bigger turnout and a vote for Unity and against the pay offer.

In spite of their success in the NEC elections, the Tories and their friends in the "Moderate" group have little to celebrate. The Unity campaign has been entirely vindicated, and will go from strength to strength in the coming months. The election of a left NEC and the return of the union to its members now seems a real prospect next year.

John Rubidge (CPSA Branch secretary, DE West Glam & Dyfed, personal capacity)

Resist 'savage' attacks on conditions

For a fighting, democratic union!

Unison

Unison's Conference, held in Bournemouth, was the first such conference for what is now the largest union in the TUC. It was the first opportunity for delegates to set policy on economic strategy, the health service and the pay freeze. It was also the opportunity to look at amendments to the rule book. Unfortunately, the resolution on economic strategy that was accepted by conference was not even as strong as present Labour Party policy. It merely looked at publicising UNISON policy and seeking support for a national march against unemployment. This set the agenda for the rest of the week with the leadership putting forward policy that fell short of calling for any national industrial action. Alan Jinkinson, General Secretary, merely said that the union had to wait for the next Labour Government. Rodney Bickerstaffe was better received by delegates with an agitational speech on the Health Service but did not go far enough in calling for effective industrial action. It was only the passing of a motion from Scarborough, Malton and Whitby and Walton Forest Health branches which took up these questions in a serious way. On the question of rules, many delegates were concerned to ensure full democracy and fairness in the rule book. A number of motions were carried but on card votes failed to make the necessary two-thirds majority to be implemented as changes. Next year all UNISON members will be balloted on continuing their political fund. Socialist Appeal supporters in UNISON believe that their should be one political fund. At present ex-NALGO members pay into a non-affiliated fund. If the vote is won in 95 then all members should go into the Affiliated Political Fund.

A head of what was a frustrating week for delegates, a meeting called by the London Campaign for a Fighting and Democratic Union pointed the way forward for left activists. 150 delegates and visitors were addressed by an NEC member and delegate from Leeds. The meeting also heard (about the internal dispute in Liverpool and from strikes in Birmingham and Nottingham. It was agreed to set up an organising meeting in July to discuss a conference in the autumn to set up a broad left organisation.

Socialist Appeal Readers' Meeting

On Monday evening, a very good Socialist Appeal readers meeting was held. Over 30 delegates and visitors heard Ted Grant speak on the way forward for Labour and Steve McKenzie on the fight to ensure a democratic and fighting union. The meeting in discussion raised questions about the question of the peaceful transformation of society, the Labour Party and the unions, affects of the capitalist crisis on students and mineworkers, and others questions. Richard Vivian, delegate from Bamsley and a benefit adviser, spoke of the despair of mineworkers on being made redundant and then finding out that their entitlement to benefit was pitiful. He also reported on a meeting he had attended earlier on full employment where the labour Party speaker had put forward the failed ideas of Keynesianism. Jimmy Corsie, Edinburgh delegate, spoke of the failure of the national leadership to organise a fightback. He said "The national officials have been on strike for two years!". The Press Fund collection raised over £450.

Sean Moody (UNISON delegate)

NCU

The last few years have seen incredible advances in technology which if used in the interest of society as a whole would tremendously advance the lives of working people.

On the basis of recent developments a working week of four days or less would be possible without loss of pay. The NCU Conference in June has propositions on the agenda calling for the re-nationalisation of BT. Far from being an outmoded concept as the modernisers would have us believe, it is absolutely essential that this industry is bought back into public ownership. Delegates should vote for these propositions.

BT shareholders have enjoyed record profits since privatisation. They have been able to reap the benefits of the massive investment of public money in new technology whilst the company was publicly owned. The communications industry is one of the few that is still expanding and yet it's workforce are facing some of the most savage attacks on working conditions ever attempted in one go. In the last four years we have seen over 80,000 jobs lost in BT and we are told that there are more to come. BT have announced that it intends to introduce compulsory redundancy for managers and they will inevitably try to introduce it for our grades too. The people left in BT, who are constantly being told that they are lucky to have work at all, are now faced with BT's proposals to fundamentally change their working patterns. These proposals are being offered on the basis of a four day week, which of itself would welcome to our members, but here involves:

- Ten hour daily attendance between 7.00am and 9.00pm.
- Monday to Saturday

attendance as part of the normal week without overtime.

- Flexible start and finish times with workers building up a debit or credit of up to 12 hours - to meet operational requirements not the individuals.

Proposals for the renationalisation of BT, far from being an outmoded concept as the 'modernisers' would have us believe, it is absolutely essential that this industry is brought back into public ownership

For engineers working in Payphones the proposals are even worse as they are being asked to provide seven day cover, Monday to Sunday, without any overtime payment. These new attendance patterns would have a devastating effect on peoples personal lives and are a classic example of the way that employers attempt to squeeze more and more profit out of an ever dwindling workforce. The NCU has repeatedly told BT that engineers are more than willing to work evenings and weekends as long as they get paid properly for it.

In the recent NEC elections, the Broad Left lost 5 seats to the right wing 'Members First' faction and whilst the left still have control of the Engineering Constituency, the right now have overall control of the executive. It is now vital that the conference in June gives a clear mandate to the incoming NEC that NCU members will not tolerate these vicious attacks on our working conditions.

Mary Hanson, NCU

Battle rages over amalgamation

AEEU

Two years on from the official formation of the AEEU out of the Amalgamation of the AEU and EETPU a battle is still raging over control of the union.

To be more precise, two battles are raging. One battle is between the members of the two executives for their share of the spoils of the new merged union's power and prestige and the other is between the bureaucracy and the activists over who should control the structures of the union.

Executive

At the AEEU Engineering Section National Committee in Llandudno this battle was brought out into the open. In his keynote speech Gavin Laird made it clear the problems there had been between the two executives. He told the conference that the differences had been so sharp that there had been no communication for six weeks over Xmas. It was even rumoured around the corridors of the conference centre that solicitors had been called in over the Xmas period to see if there was a way of breaking the merger agreement. Gavin Laird

claimed that there was a very real lack of progress and that the AEU were giving more than they were getting and he believed the spirit of compromise was one-sided. The lack of progress over the merger is costing members a fortune. There are still two head offices, two computer centres, two finance sections and so on. The heart of the problem lies in the different structures and traditions of the unions and especially the conferences. The AEU have a National Committee whose delegates are elected by Divisional Committees and the EETPU have a big jamboree. At the EETPU conferences activists allege full-time officers are used as stewards (or "the police" as some call them) and sit at the end of each row making sure the votes go the right way. If you vote the wrong way you are unlikely to be seen at the following year's conference.

The problem for the two executives and members is the structure of next year's conference. A compromise has been reached that there will be a conference every two years comprising 800 delegates - 400 from the electricians and 400 from engineering - (even though the electricians are only half the size) and that conference will be binding on policy issues. The AEU has also made it clear it

opposes the use of full-time officers as stewards. Another bone of contention is that the EETPU are insisting the Standing Orders Committee be made up of Executive Committee members whereas we are fighting to maintain our traditions of lay delegate control over SOC. All of these areas of contention have slowed the whole amalgamation process. So far less than 50% of the new union's rule book has been written and agreed on by the executives.

Betrayed

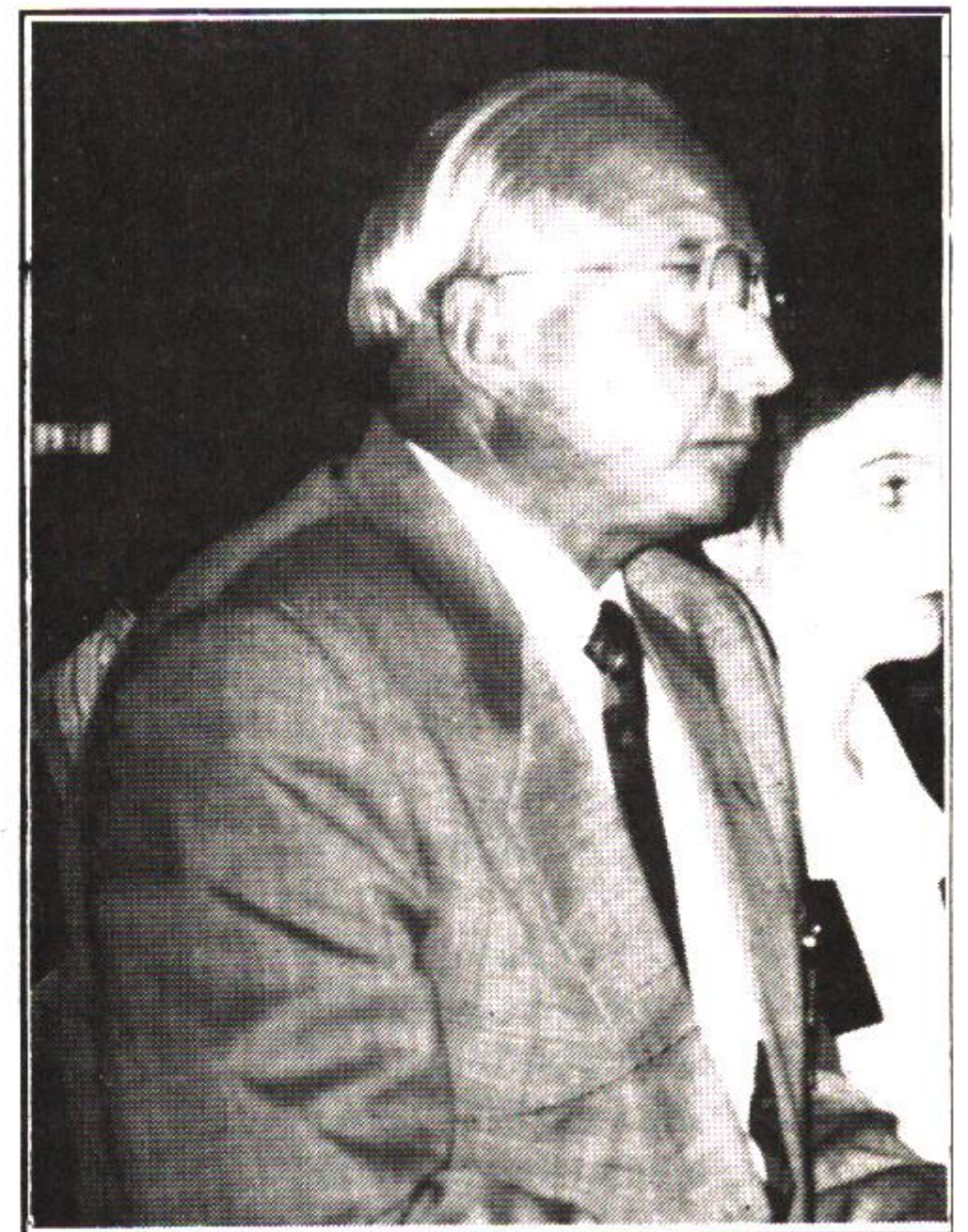
This situation has even caused consternation among some of the right wing delegates who feel betrayed. They had been virtually promised that District Committees would be maintained and the National Committee. But the left have been saying all along that you couldn't trust those at the top to deliver a democratic merger. That is why the left is maintaining its battle over who controls the union the full-time officers and bureaucracy or lay members. The left now has an opportunity at the policy making conference to make sure it is a member-led union. The left must use the time between

now and the conference to build its strength and position. On the key votes the left were defeated 51 - 38 but that can be reversed. Under pressure from members Gavin Laird made a fighting speech over the planned 35-hour week campaign and said that it would start sooner rather than later. And he warned the employers that if they had any sense they would concede the reduction in hours in advance of the action otherwise we would force them!

This is a sign of the strength and fighting spirit which could be harnessed by the new union and it is the unity in action on which we must build towards ensuring the democratic merger goes ahead full speed.

**by a National
Committee delegate**

Right: Gavin Laird at TUC conference



New 'new realism' proposals thrown out

MSF Conference

Delegates to this year's MSF conference in Brighton decisively voted down proposals to introduce 'new realism' into the union via the 'MSF Into the 21st Century' project.

When General Secretary Roger Lyons told conference that the proposals were similar to those being discussed by the TUC, delegates rose to attack the direction of the union and voted it down. In fact delegates got to vote the proposals down twice as they also voted to refer back that section of the NEC report that dealt with the proposed changes.

Delegates also voted to censure the union's delegation to last year's Labour Party conference over their conduct in abstaining on the vital resolution that allowed OMOV to be passed, despite last year's MSF conference coming out against it. Other victories for the left in the union included winning a vote to set up a committee to investigate complaints concerning interference in NEC elections. This vote was passed following complaints about union officials blocking support for left candidates in London.

However, the left did lose a number of votes in relation to organisational reforms (election of officials, new works councils etc.) and in relation to questions such as the renationalisation of industries that had been privatised by the Tories.

A number of resolutions were lost simply because they were not thought out well enough and the right wing were able to oppose them on technicalities (although they too lost some resolutions for the same reason!).

There was a strong feeling that a single broad left organisation needs to be established to unite all the left delegates and replace the current situation where two such groupings exist.

Delegates are clearly critical and do not trust the direction of the MSF leadership but there is a need for a clear socialist alternative to combat their arguments and take up the real problems in the workplace as raised by the delegates in relation to questions such as health and safety and union recognition. ●

As Labour assesses its showing in the May council elections, Alastair Wilson looks back at the key results and forward to the vital conclusions for the direction of the party.

The real lessons of the local elections

The May local elections represented a shattering defeat for the Tories. The loss of Tunbridge Wells, Woking, Basingstoke, Croydon and other safe Tory areas indicate an unprecedented swing against the government.

After fifteen years of this vicious anti-working class government, the working people of Britain are at the end of their tether. There is a growing feeling that the time is ripe to dump the Tories. Five million unemployed, tens of thousands of homeless people on the streets, hospital closures, the wholesale dismantling of the welfare state, anti-trade union laws—all this demands urgent action to organise the whole of the labour movement to inflict a crushing defeat on the Tories. **Workers understand that, in order to defeat the class enemy, it is necessary to unite in struggle. That is the lesson of the whole history of organised labour. These elections show that the big majority of workers realise that, in order to beat the Tories it is necessary to unite behind the Labour Party.** The right wing Labour leaders have completely failed to organise a serious opposition to

the Tories. Their policies are really a watered-down version of those of the Conservatives. In reality, they offer no alternative. Labour's success in the local elections was not thanks to them, but in spite of them. Understandably, many active trade unionists feel impatient and frustrated at the failure of the Labour leaders to give a lead. However, at the end of the

day, the only alternative for the mass of workers to the reactionary Major government is to fight for a Labour government. That is really an ABC proposition for any worker with half an ounce of class consciousness.

The fight against Toryism and for a Labour government must go hand in hand with the fight for genuine socialist policies both in the Trade Unions and the Labour Party. Our main criticism of the Labour leaders is that their so-called "realism" is not realism at all. Fifteen years of unbroken Tory rule is a damning criticism of the failure of Labour's right wing. But the only way to break the stranglehold of the Labour right is by fighting inside the Labour Party for socialist policies, to transform it from top to bottom.

Instinctively, the mass of workers understood the need to inflict a defeat on the Tories in the May elections. As a result, Labour scored a notable victory. This will be welcomed by all conscious workers. For the first time in 120 years, Labour took Croydon from the Tories in what the Financial Times referred to as "one of the most devastating results for the Tories in the local elections."

The advance of Labour is still more remarkable if we consider the big gains made by Labour in the last elections in 1990, when it won 43.8% of the vote.

Particularly satisfying was the result in Tower Hamlets, where the big Labour turn-out ensured the defeat, not only of the Nazi BNP, but also of the Liberals who had pandered to racism. **These elections will have had a shattering effect on the Tory Party, which was already split from top to bottom.**

Not only did they fail to win Birmingham, despite their dirty campaign, but they lost Enfield, the constituency of ultra-right winger Portillo, and came within one seat of losing Bromley. This will undoubtedly increase the contradictions in the Tory leadership, adding a few more nails in the coffin of the Major government.

Tory Splits

The open splits and crisis within the Tory Party, extending into the Cabinet itself, have deepened sharply. The local election seats were previously contested in 1990 when Thatcher was given a hammering. Within six months, she was forced out of office. The same prospect is staring Major in the face.

The Tories are at their lowest ever in opinion polls. Under Thatcher, the Tories never dropped below 29% in local elections. In Scotland they have been pushed into fourth place, behind both the SNP and Liberal Democrats. In these local elections, they got only 26% of the vote - the same as the Liberals.

As 'The Times' put it: "These figures are worse for the Conservatives than the pattern of recent polls and much worse than their performance in last year's county council elections." (6.5.94)

The Tory government is in a shambles, lurching from one crisis to another. They face another open split over the Euro-elections, as the Tory right flex their muscles. Calls have already been made by Tory MPs for Major to resign. He now

The Tories lost votes over issues such as VAT on fuel



faces a trouncing in the Euro Elections in June, which will seal his fate. All the ills of the Tories have been placed at his door. Tory MPs are terrified of the British Conservatives repeating the experience of its Canadian counter-party which was annihilated in the general election. They are now looking for a scapegoat, which is Major. Moves are being made to challenge his leadership in the Autumn. By his removal, they are desperately hoping to reverse their electoral fortunes. But they are grasping at straws. Can they hope to revive? The slump in Tory support is not some 'mid-term blues' from which they will automatically recover. It is of a more deep seated and profound character. No doubt, a layer of the votes picked up by the Liberal Democrats were protest votes that will return to the Tories in a general election. However there has been a fundamental change. While the removal of Thatcher allowed the Tories to partially refurbish their image in time for the 1992 election, it was not the main factor in their victory? It played a role, but the main reason for their success, apart from the failure of the Labour leadership to offer a socialist alternative, was the hope that the Tories would bring back the boom years of the 1980s.

Insecurity

The experience of the last two years has shattered these illusions, particularly amongst the middle class, as unemployment and insecurity continues to affect these layers. The 'growth recession' of the past few years will not change the Tories fortunes, on the contrary, it will mean continuing insecurity and unemployment. The "feel good" factor has evaporated, and with it the chances of the Tories. However, it would be fatal for Labour to be complacent. There is a warning in the Labour losses in Sheffield and Lambeth to the Liberal Democrats. **Where Labour councils have carried through big cuts in jobs and services, it has served to alienate traditional Labour supporters.** If the Tories are to be decisively defeated, Labour must reject policies of cutbacks and take up bold socialist

policies to deal with the crisis. Unfortunately, instead of presenting a socialist alternative to the Tories and Liberals, the Labour leaders have moved to the right in an attempt to make themselves more respectable. They have avoided making specific promises which the Tories could use to point to tax increases under Labour. **But rather than this approach winning support, it has sown confusion amongst potential Labour supporters.**

levy and vote Labour at election time. The Labour Party was created by the trade unions to represent the interests of working people. For too long, the Labour leaders have been permitted to become divorced from the interests and aspirations of workers. The only way to ensure that Labour stands for our interests is by actively participating in the fight for a genuinely democratic, socialist Labour Party. This is the policy advocated by *Socialist*



Labour Party cartoon exposing the Tories' cuts in local government services - but many Labour councillors have carried out the Tories' dirty work for them and attacked local authority workers

Despite this, after 15 years of Tory government, there is a widespread anti-Tory mood, as reflected in these local elections. It is extremely unlikely that the Tories will be able to recover before the next election. Given the opinion poll ratings of Labour over the past two years, which has reached a 20 point lead on occasions, the scene is set for a Labour government. Millions of workers, who have faced the brunt of Tory attacks on living standards, health and education, will look forward enthusiastically to the defeat of the Tory government. As the election approaches, there will be greater enthusiasm for Labour. Working people understand that the only alternative to the Tory government is a Labour government, despite the limitations of the leadership and their programme. All this shows the necessity for trade unionists to get active in the Labour Party. It is not enough just to pay the political

Appeal, the Marxist voice of the Labour Party. A new Labour government will be faced, however, with a drastic economic situation. Workers will be demanding action against mass unemployment, homelessness and poverty. Local authorities will be demanding the return of the billions from central government stolen from them over the past 15 years. At the same time big business will be demanding that the government carries out the dictates of Capital. As the Labour leaders have ruled out socialist measures and intend to operate on the basis of "the market", i.e... capitalism, they will attempt to run the system better or "more efficiently" than the Tories. **Under these circumstances, the Government will be caught between two pressures, and forced to do the bidding of big business.** As with the experiences of Labour Governments in 1964

and 1974, this can lead to bitter disillusionment and prepare the way for Tory reaction. This can only be avoided if the Labour movement takes up the struggle for genuine socialist policies. The road of capitalism means a life of unemployment, cuts and poverty wages. A Labour government that will act decisively in the interests of working people will need to take over the commanding heights of the economy: the major monopolies, banks, and insurance companies, in order to use and plan the resources of society for the benefit of all and not the profits of a few. A socialist planned economy, based upon democratic workers' control and management, could generate the resources needed to transform the lives of working people. Unemployment could be abolished; millions of houses built; a living wages for all; a 35 hour week introduced; social services dramatically expanded. **This is the real meaning of Clause Four of the Labour Party Constitution.**

Resources

Under capitalism, the shortage of resources and the drive for profits has meant a continual struggle to make ends meet for the mass of people, under a socialist planned economy a vista of superabundance opens up with the talents of all being used for the benefit of all. With such a vision, Labour could sweep away the Tories and their big business system forever. In order to carry through this perspective, trade union activists must take up the struggle for socialist policies not only in the trade unions, but in the political wing, the Labour Party. The Labour Party was created, built and financed by the trade unions as its political voice. It is time the Party was reclaimed by working people as a vehicle for the socialist transformation of society. It is only in this way that the historic and socialist aspirations of the Labour movement and working people in general can be fulfilled.

More local elections coverage on page 5.

A Game of Two...Classes

As millions of football fans gear up to watch the World Cup finals *Steve Jones* looks at who is really running the game and *Ruth Fallon* casts an eye over the state of the game in England.

From the 17th of June through to the 17th of July countless millions all over the world will gather around televisions and radio to follow the finals of the 1994 World cup being staged this year in football mad USA (of course the football they are actually mad about is of a different sort but more of that later).

Interest will be equally high in Britain even though no home based team has qualified. 24 national teams will complete in what is supposed to be the high point of world football. Indeed the World Cup finals must now be considered the biggest sporting event in the world passing even the Olympics. The reality is that they will be competing not for the good of sport or any such ideal but for the twin gods of television and sportswear manufacturers and the like. Firms such as

Adidas and Puma have millions of dollars worth of profits riding on these finals. So much that after the 1986 final an advert was brought out by a rival firm showing a fictitious Adidas representative watching in despair as Argentina beat the West Germans in the final - the Germans being widely seen as an 'Adidas' team!. These suppliers have much to gain or lose and they along with the other 'sponsors' (Coca Cola, MacDonaldis etc.) are relying on the

television companies who are effectively pulling the strings, to deliver the goods.

For several decades television has been gathering more and more control and power in the world of football as the wishes of the watching fans have been sidelined to an ever greater degree. In Mexico 1970 games were played in the midday heat to fit in with television schedules and avoid games having to be screened outside of primetime spots - so much for mad dogs and Englishmen... Subsequent finals have involved teams working hard to ingratiate themselves with sponsors and the structures of the finals being forever changed

to facilitate better television. More Arab and African teams have been brought in - not because of the fanatical interest in Football which exists in these regions or because their teams are now of a higher standard (e.g... the Camerons in 1990) but because of the need to promote new markets through television for the 'sponsors'. The choice of the USA to stage the 1994 finals reflects this. Although there is a strong amateur following and participation in football in the US- involving both men and women - mainly around the schools and colleges, the professional game has never really taken root. For the US sports fan the main sports remain Gridiron football, basketball and baseball. Of course these sports have been shaped by television with its endless opportunities for commercial breaks and high scoring (although cricket is actually very high scoring in comparison but the television companies

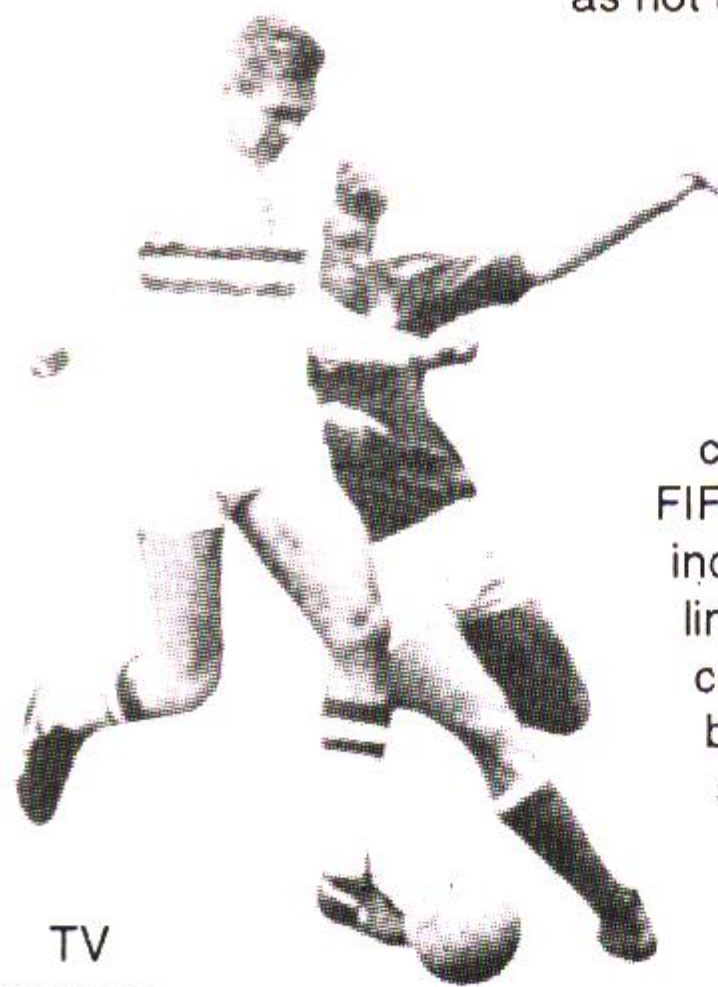


Advertising poster from the first World Cup in Uruguay, 1930

couldn't come to terms with a game that lasted five days). US television companies have never taken to football with its lack of such opportunities with the result that few football games were screened and interest remained low. It was hoped that by choosing the USA for the 1994 finals that this trend could be turned and a new interest in professional football ignited. In fact as it has turned out the US television companies are still luke warm over football (despite efforts to raise interest by talking about larger goals and more breaks in the game—neither of which came to anything fortunately) and the main interest is seen as coming from the large Mexican populations in the cities. However, the powers to be are still confident that there will still be a good enough 'show' to screen throughout the world and keep the likes of Coca Cola happy. Of course we have seen this control of sport by the sponsors and television companies in other areas - most notably the Olympic games. In Britain, Sports such as snooker have massive



Right: Acrobatic celebrations by the 1970 Brazilian World Cup team and facing page: Hungarian goalkeeper Gelei, watches Matrai tackling Russia's Banischevski during the same tournament



TV coverage and have therefore done well whereas Darts, for example, have seen their television profile decline and have drifted into crisis at the professional level. We have seen TV take an increasing control over how football is run in Britain. Games are regularly switched to Sunday or, even worse, Monday to suit SKY TV. The League Cup (now called the Coca Cola Cup!) was played at 17.00hrs on a Sunday. ITV even managed to get the whole of the last round of Endsleigh (formerly Barclays) league first division games switched from Saturday to Sunday so they could pick and choose which ones to screen at the last moment. The wishes of paying supporters (and probably many players and coaches) are ignored—indeed under the TV agreements signed with the various leagues, there is nothing the individual clubs even can do about the whims of the TV planners. Looking ahead, we can see the gradual development of a European league designed for mid-week purely for televisions benefit. Already the European Cup is becoming more and more of a league competition in structure and other European games are being increasingly forced to be played on a Tuesday or Thursday so

as not to 'hinder' television schedules for the so-called Champions League. World football's controlling body, FIFA, has increasingly sought links with television companies and big business interests such as Coca Cola, Seiko, Kodak and so on. When Havelange was elected

President of FIFA in 1974, the first thing he did was call in a man called Horst Dassler, president of Adidas, to look at increasing levels of finance. Companies were brought in as 'privileged' sponsors with the promise of huge profits to be made. Income from television has increased dramatically: in 1970 it was £4 million, by 1990 it was over £35 million. Some have noted that the links between FIFA officials and television

have become more than close. Allegations were made before the 1990 competition that Havelange had close financial links with Emelio Ascarraga, a Mexican owner of television stations. A FIFA vice-president, Canedo, was also accused of having done well out of the control of television rights with Ascarraga. Canedo is responsible for control of television rights for this years competition and Ascarraga has again gained partial television rights for the Spanish speaking market.

Pele, long considered one of the games great ambassadors, was frozen out of this years final draw celebrations after criticising the way in which Brazilian TV - whose owners include relatives of Havelange - has manipulated football. In Brazil, we have seen the scandal of games being played at all hours of the day, including eleven at night to fit in with the bizarre whims

of the local TV companies. As the tentacles of the FIFA bigwigs along with the rest of football's controlling elite is entwined more and more with big business internationally, the wishes of the players, coaches and, most of all, the supporters are being increasingly sidelined. Supporters are seen as simply sources of profit to be capitalised on and nothing more. The whole direction of football as we approach the 21st

century is seen as a drive towards more



money for the powers to be and their friends in television and the sponsors with the fans becoming incidental if not non-existent.

The talk is increasingly of normal fans simply not going to games anymore - even season tickets will be history in favour of debentures and so on. One thing must be clear, the life of football is reflected in its supporters. Take them away and the atmosphere of the game would be lost even on TV!

If football is to be saved then the whole direction of the game's administrators needs to be challenged.

Ownership must be taken up as an important question by those supporters who wish to fight to save the game as we have known it.

Either we fight to take control of football—just as socialists, we are fighting to take control of society—or the game will be lost to us, perhaps. We may not have time to take it to penalties!

Not Suffering in Silence

This football season has seen the reaction of supporters against chairmen and managers, particularly in the Premier League. The feeling of total powerlessness on the part of many fans can be seen in the way they have resorted to pitch invasions demanding the sacking of these chairmen and managers. Most notable have been the removal of Swales as chairman of Manchester City after numerous protests by fans and, at QPR, there have been highly publicised pitch invasions and occupations. This reveals supporters awareness of the power of mass action and an understanding of the real power and motivation behind those who run football; big business and profit. Recent years have seen gate prices increase manifold, which has been made worse by the

compulsory introduction of seating. From next season all First Division and Premier League clubs must have all-seater stadiums by law and this will mean the higher prices normally charged for seats as against standing, which will price out many supporters. Added to this, the rights to televise live Premier League are owned by Sky satellite television, with an agreement with the BBC to show just highlights, which means that many fans cannot see their teams on TV and are now unable to afford to go matches as well. Football is yet another leisure industry which is controlled for the production of greater profits, much of these profits coming from the pockets of supporters who have little or no say in the way in which their clubs are run. For many working class families

football is their only relaxation and the way in which it operates exploits their loyalty and genuine devotion to their clubs. Fans will fare no better whilst football is yet another business with the sole purpose of the production of profit. Only when we have control and management of the game by the players, supporters and local councils, with players and managers receiving the wage of an average worker - rather than a few on top and many on actually quite low wages compared to other workers - will football become accountable and of benefit to those who support it. Football should be for the enjoyment of its fans, not for those who own controlling shares in clubs and use them for their own advancement and glory.

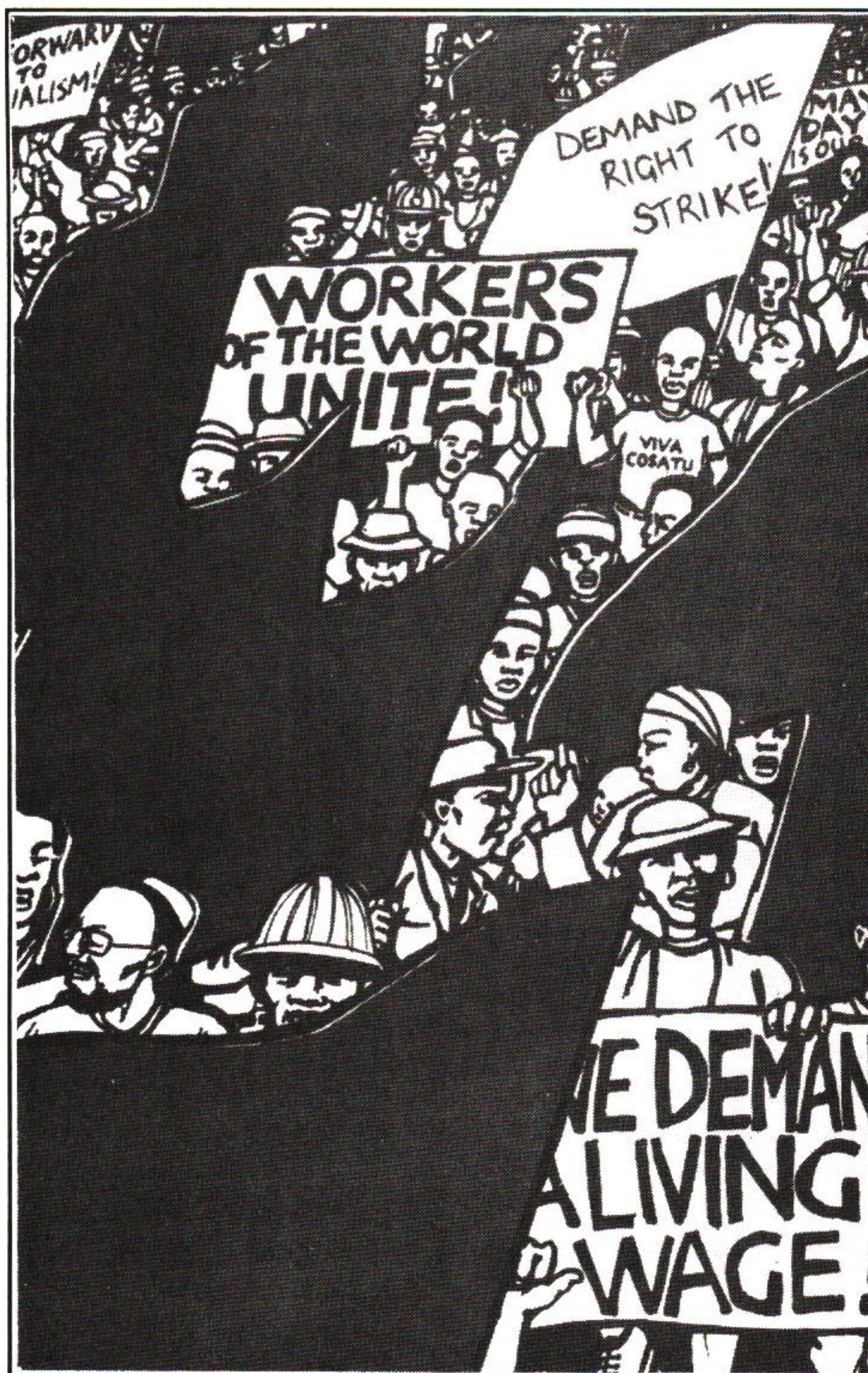
Workers send clear message to Mandela...

The South African election has led to a sweeping victory for the ANC. The results for the National Assembly give the ANC 63% of the total. Earlier figures gave 23% for the National Party, 5.9% for Inkatha (IFP), 2.8% for the right wing Freedom Front, a pathetic 1.8% for the liberal Democratic Party and 1.3% for the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC).

These elections, marking a transition from the former Apartheid regime to a government with an ANC majority, represent a step forward. The ending of Apartheid, however, was not the result of the negotiations of the ANC leaders and De Klerk. It was the product of the mass revolutionary movement of the black workers and youth, particularly over the last decade - the movement of the trade unions, the mass strikes and demonstrations, the revolt of the black youth in the townships, which threatened the white ruling class with revolution from below, if they did not move to reform from above.

Aspirations

The ANC's victory could have been even more massive if they had defended a clear socialist policy. The victory of the ANC was in spite of the moderate, "statesmanlike" speeches of Mandela, whose main interest in the election campaign was to prove to the white ruling class that he was "fit to rule," and to dampen the aspirations of his followers. During the campaign, he even assured the white farmers that they could keep their land and promised not to raise taxes! Given the promises of reforms, De Klerk characterised this as "Mickey Mouse economics." Nevertheless, the ANC promises of more jobs and houses were enough to generate colossal enthusiasm among the black masses and ensure a huge majority. The ANC got a big majority of the votes of blacks everywhere. Only in Natal, did Inkatha challenge the ANC supremacy. However, in addition to the massive intimidation utilised by these gangsters and



Time to deliver on promises of jobs and homes

their tribal stooges, it is clear that there was massive vote rigging in Natal, designed to prevent the ANC from getting a two thirds majority in the National Assembly.

Now, however, the black workers and youth will expect the ANC to carry out their promises and fulfil their aspirations. For the masses, as always, democracy is not an abstract question. The enthusiasm of the black masses for exercising the right to vote is merely an expression of their desire to solve their most pressing social and economic problems. Thus, the election is merely the prelude to a new and stormy period in South African history.

SACP

The only way to solve the terrible problems of the black workers is precisely through a socialist policy. But Mandela and the ANC leadership have completely abandoned all pretence of socialism. They did not even mention the word in the entire election campaign. A particularly despicable role was played by the leadership of the South African "Communist" Party. Joe Slovo has been rewarded with a plum job in the new government. He has openly embraced the "market economy", in common with his ex-Stalinist comrades internationally. In his first speech after the elections, he explained that "the next fifty years would be the most difficult period for South Africa"!

Unfortunately, there are colossal illusions among the black masses and supporters of the ANC generally who imagined that their problems can be solved in this way. However, without a break with capitalism, this is impossible. These illusions will be rapidly burnt out of the consciousness of the masses through the most traumatic and painful experience. This will not take fifty years, as Joe Slovo imagines. Probably within a year or two, the contradictions in South African society will produce new explosions.

At this stage, the overwhelming majority of black votes have gone to the ANC, and the big majority of white, and also coloured votes have gone to the

National Party. The radical black organisation the PAC got only 1.8%. The liberal white Democratic Party was virtually wiped out, despite having stood for some kind of equality for generations. The fact that the National Party was able to win a large part of the coloured population in the Western Cape, despite the fact that they were brutally expelled from Cape Town District 6 under the NP government itself reflects the failure of the ANC to put forward a real class alternative. Afraid of being undercut by a large influx of black unemployed, the coloured population could only be won over by a socialist class policy.

National Party

The National Party itself has undergone a change. Originally the party of the mainly Afrikaner white farmers, it has become the party of big business. It no longer stands for the interests of the white small farmers, but of the banks and monopolies, and, indirectly, of Anglo-US imperialism. In the past, when attempts were made to push the National Party to the "left," it always produced a movement to the right, which eventually managed to take over the party. In fact, there has been fierce resistance to change on the part of sections of the white middle class, small farmers and poor whites, but this was overruled by the big monopolies. This reflects a changed situation on a world scale. It should not be forgotten that, over the last decade the South African regime was prepared to put up a stubborn and brutal resistance to change. In the last ten years, and particularly the last three or

four years, 14,000 people have been killed in South Africa. We have seen the carnage in the townships, destabilised by the death squads, organised by the secret services and the security forces in cahoots with the government - including De Klerk. We have a bloody civil war in Natal, where the Inkatha thugs were armed and financed by the state. The South African government destabilised Angola and Mozambique in a desperate attempt to stem the tide. In the latter cases, what alarmed Pretoria was the fact that the revolt of the black masses brought about a change of social regime, with the overthrow of landlordism and capitalism and the installation of regimes of Proletariat Bonapartism. However, the downfall of Stalinism, and the palpable degeneration of the leaderships of the ANC and the SACP introduced a new element into the equation. The white ruling elite was under pressure from world imperialism to change course. The strategists of capital understood that to continue along the road of repression would inevitably mean a social revolution in South Africa. Hence the policy of sanctions and the implacable pressure of "world public opinion" (i.e. the opinion of the imperialists) on Pretoria. Faced with the danger of losing EVERYTHING, the ruling white elite was prepared, under the pressure of imperialism, to do a deal with the ANC, once they saw that the leaders were prepared to maintain South African capitalism intact. The example of the black "independent" regimes in the rest of Africa showed how, under a fig leaf of "democracy," the



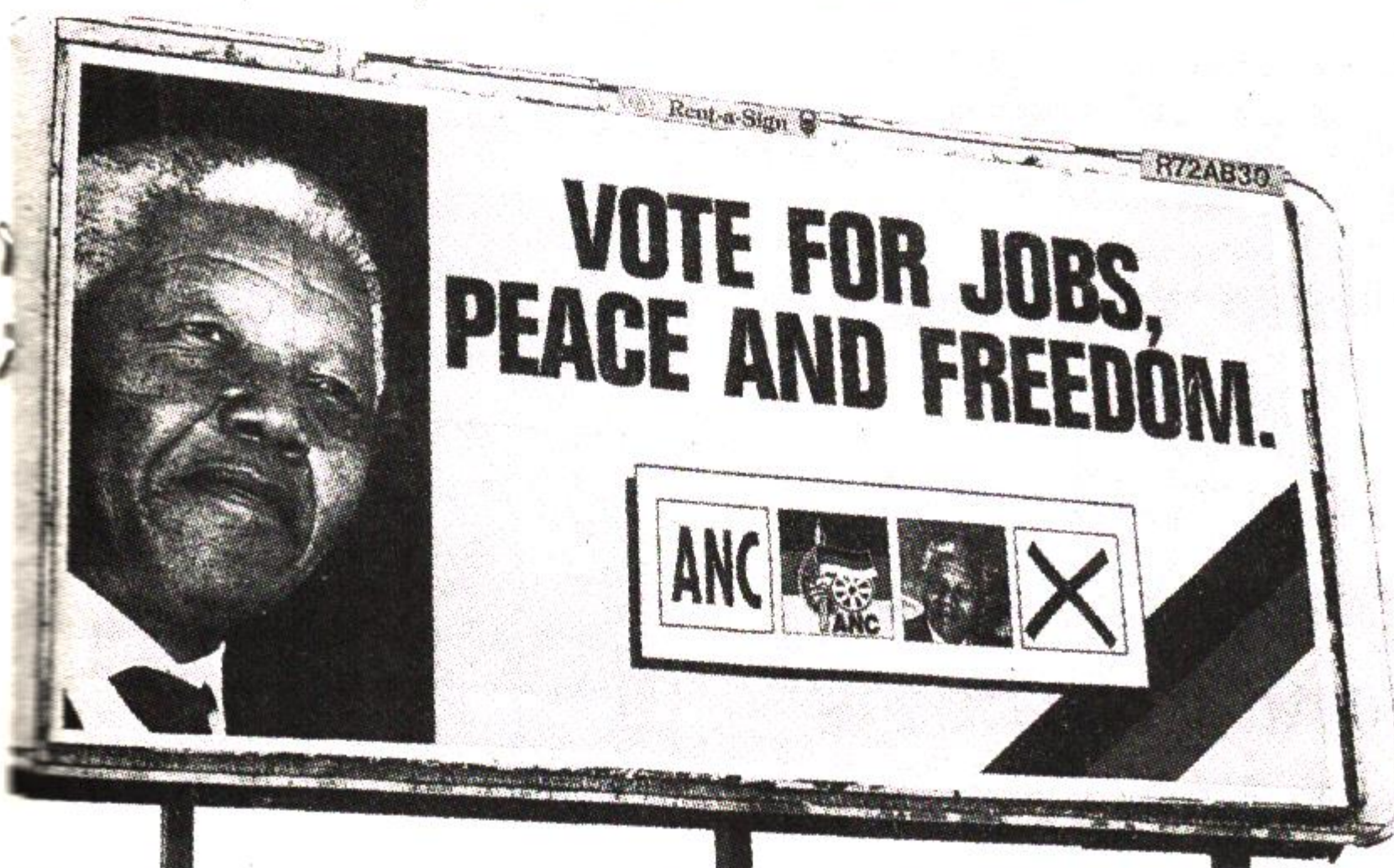
De Klerk on the campaign trail

interests of the capitalists and landowners could be preserved. The impotent rage of those sections of the white middle class and poor whites around Terreblanche's AWB was revealed by the farcical "invasion" of Bophutswana. The base for the neo-fascists is very narrow at the present time, although they can be involved in all kinds of terrorist provocations in the next period. The right wing Conservative Party of Andres Treumicht, which split away from the National Party to defend Apartheid, adopted the suicidal policy of boycotting the elections, so that most of its votes went to De Klerk. This means that it is now unlikely, in contrast to the past, that these right wing Afrikaner groups will displace the National Party. The overwhelming majority of whites have closed ranks around the National Party, and De Klerk is putting himself forward as the "saviour" of the whites and also the coloureds. Despite the euphoria, the present government of "National Unity" represents an unstable coalition, rent with contradictions. The ANC has not succeeded in obtaining the two thirds majority necessary to rewrite the constitution. De Klerk will be vice-president, but has indicated that he does not intend to play a passive role. He is the main representative of big business in the coalition. Thus, in his first speech after the election he warns that Mandela, "will soon assume the highest office of the land with all the awesome responsibility which it bears. He will have to exercise

this "great responsibility in a balanced manner which will assure South Africans from all our communities that he has all their interests at heart." Translated into plain English, this means that Mandela will have to act in the interest of the South African white ruling class. Within a measurable period of time, the black masses will contrast their expectations with reality.

Reforms

As always, the "government of National Unity" will be exposed as the government of the rich and powerful. The kind of "unity" referred to here is the "unity" of the rider and his horse. Real power will remain in the hands of a tiny group of white millionaire bankers, industrialists, big farmers and mineowners. While it is possible, in the first period, that certain reforms may be given - such as the supply of water and electricity to some of the townships - most of the promises of jobs and houses will never materialise. Even the land question will not be resolved. In other words, except for a handful of black careerists, for the big majority, nothing substantial will change. De Klerk will remain in the government as a guardian of the interests of big business. Already the crisis of capitalism in South Africa means that there are five million black unemployed (half of the black working class). If capitalism continues, as Mandela wants, there is no way of giving jobs to the big majority of the population. The abolition of Apartheid will



The ANC must deliver on its election promises

mean nominal equality between the races. But as Anatole France once wittily pointed out, this means that the law equally "forbids" rich people to sleep under bridges, beg, steal, etc. For example, education is still organised on an area basis. This means that, while a small elite of privileged blacks who have the money to live in wealthy areas will be able to send their children to decent schools, the vast majority of blacks will not. In other words, the same discrimination will exist as before, except that now it will not be exclusively on racial lines, but will be on a class basis.

Middle Class

Even at the present time, the middle class whites are entrenching themselves behind high walls, converting their homes into virtual fortresses, against the rising tide of crime and violence, with black security guards. The white unskilled workers will lose out under the new system, but the privileges of the middle class whites and skilled workers will be maintained.

The ruling class is prepared to accept the creation of a black elite as a bulwark against revolution. They will co-opt a small number of black careerists onto the boards of directors of the big monopolies. Quite a number of these ladies and gentlemen will be ANC activists. An example has been set by Mandela himself. He now lives in the millionaire suburb of Houghton, where he hobnobs with company directors on the most friendly terms. This is an eloquent symbol of how the ANC black elite will be rapidly absorbed. It is similar to the situation that exists in Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and other black capitalist states, where corruption is generalised, especially in the leading strata of former "freedom fighters." The prior condition for allowing the ANC leaders to

assume "power" was the renunciation of any idea of confiscating the property of the white ruling class. This means the inevitability of an open confrontation between the ANC leaders and the black masses at a certain stage.

In the aftermath of the elections, the white extreme right wingers have been cowed. Fearing the reaction of the black workers and youth, the state took action to arrest the bombers.

However, when a reaction sets in against the government, these gangsters will renew their provocations. The same will be the case with the thugs of Inkatha in Natal. In the absence of a revolutionary class alternative, a nightmare scenario opens up for South Africa.

After a period of wait-and-see, there will be big movements of struggle in the factories and townships. Under such circumstances, the ANC would enter into crisis, with the possibility of big splits. The road will be open for the development of a real Marxist wing, based on genuine revolutionary ideas. In the last analysis, this is the only hope for South Africa.

Democracy

Under conditions of capitalist crisis, democracy in South Africa is not likely to last for long. Sooner or later, Mandela and De Klerk will dispense with democratic rights, and rule through emergency laws. As one bourgeois journalist cynically put it: "This will be the first free election and the last." Whether or not this particular prediction proves correct, the general line of development is clear. The whole experience of the rest of Africa shows that, unless society is transformed on socialist lines, it inevitably ends up in a military police dictatorship, usually of a particularly ferocious character.

The elimination of blatant and direct racist rule in South Africa is something which must be welcomed by all progressive people everywhere. It is a further proof of the inexhaustible revolutionary potential of the South African proletariat.

However, it does not suffice to provide a real way out of the social impasse. The new elite of black petit bourgeois and nouveaux riches will merely join with the white elite in oppressing the majority. The perspective for South Africa remains as before: either the greatest of victories under the banner of socialist revolution, or the most terrible of defeats and a nightmare of reaction. No other road is possible.

Alan Woods

.....

● ANC executive member Ronnie Kasrils in an interview with *New Times* spoke of the nature of alleged ballot-rigging by Inkatha to prevent the ANC reaching the two-thirds majority it needed to rewrite the constitution on its own. The article says: "There was talk about Inkatha intimidation and ballot box stuffing, not to mention their 100 or more unofficial ballot stations. On this subject Ronnie waxed indignant. ..the boxes were visibly damaged and inside the ballot papers neatly stacked in columns - "all packed up like a birthday present" More serious concern was expressed over the activities of three officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs who were arrested for the theft of several million ballot papers."

Great Success for Marxists

Pakistan

On Sunday 8th May, the supporters of the Pakistan Marxist paper *The Struggle* staged a public launch of their new book on the coming socialist revolution in Pakistan. The meeting, which was held in Lahore, was attended by 1,000 people, mainly workers and trade unionists, including prominent trade union leaders and PPP activists. The speech of comrade Lal Khan - a regular contributor to *Socialist Appeal* was enthusiastically received by the audience, and the meeting was widely covered in the Pakistan media. *Socialist Appeal* congratulates the supporters of our sister paper in Pakistan on a notable success and wishes them success in their work for the socialist transformation of society in the Indian sub-continent.

Under conditions of capitalist crisis, democracy in South Africa is not likely to last for long. Sooner or later, Mandela and De Klerk will dispense with democratic rights, and rule through emergency laws. As one bourgeois journalist cynically put it: "This will be the first free election and the last."

Keep up with events in Pakistan and the Indian sub-continent - subscribe to *The Struggle*, the Marxist voice in the PPP and Pakistan labour movement. For details ring our London office on 071-354-3164

Over three days from 9 to 12 June millions of Europeans will be voting to elect a new set of members to the European parliament, supposedly to set the agenda for the further development of the European Union, as it is now called, and what used to be called the Common Market.

Of course, it is an illusion that those elected to the European parliament have any real say in deciding the future of the European Union. The parliament may talk away in Strasbourg, but the plans for policy, laws and regulations, subsidies and spending are proposed by hundreds of very highly paid and unelected bureaucrats working in the European Commission in Brussels. Even more important, despite the nice picture painted by the supporters of the European Union of a united pan-European institution, the real decisions are made by the Council of Ministers representing the national governments of the 12 member states. The European Union is just a papered-over compromise made between capitalist states in Western Europe battling for their own national interests.

Trade Barriers

The Common Market was formed in the late 1950s. It opened the way for a huge expansion of trade within Europe by steadily lowering trade barriers between the states. By the end of the 1980s a 'Single Market' was introduced which supposedly allows the free movement of capital, transport and labour within the European Union (although in reality it is not that easy for people to move to work and live within Europe - all sorts of restrictions remain on getting work, social security, and healthcare, and businesses still face different tax and other laws in each state). The force driving the states of Western Europe together was first the need to compete in world markets against much bigger economies with larger markets and resources, such as the US (250m people) and Japan (80m). The Common Market and European Union have provided the nation states of Europe with a similar trading force. Remember over 75% of trade in

European Union: Dream or Reality?

the European Union is with each other. This relative integration in the last 40 years has partially overcome the national limitations imposed on capitalism in Europe. But it was only possible because of the long post-war boom which raised profitable markets to unprecedented levels, and so enabled each competing capitalist economy to make compromises for the good of all ó when a cake is growing, it is much easier to agree on how to share it out.

But is further integration possible? Is the dream of some capitalist politicians and Labour leaders of one united federal Europe with one government, one economy and one set of state laws, a practical possibility or is it an illusion?

It is not difficult to reach an answer if you analyse the state of the European Union as we go to vote this June. Far from being in a sustained boom allowing the expansion of production and trade, for the last three years Europe has been in the worst recession or slump since the 1930s. There are now over 20 million people in the EU officially out of work (probably more like 30 million), and particularly hard hit are young people and those in manufacturing who produce the necessities of life. And most important of all, none of the political parties running candidates in the European elections, none of the 12 governments, and nobody in the European Commission, has any serious proposals for finding jobs for those already unemployed or

work for those soon to be looking for a job. The only refrain from the European Commission and the Council of Ministers, in report after report, is to rely on the workings of the 'market economy'. These reports argue that if workers accept lower wages, if they avoid trade union action, and if they accept deregulation of health and safety laws (all designed to make employers more profitable), then maybe, just maybe, the bosses will eventually employ some more people. And if the European Union cannot provide jobs for people, that alone will breed opposition to more 'unity' on a capitalist basis from those out of work or from those in dire poverty.

Maastricht

But the recession has also thrown the plans of big business and their governments for one huge market in Europe into disarray. The governments of the European Union, after much haggling and argument, at Maastricht in Holland, eventually agreed in 1992 to move by 1996 (now it is 1997, and some say 1998) to move to a single European currency and closer constitutional ties as the next inevitable stage after establishing the Single Market for goods and services in 1993. What did the Maastricht deal say? All the— governments would attempt to control their spending within certain limits, to reduce the public debt as a proportion of national output, to keep inflation levels broadly

similar within the 12 countries, and above all, to keep the value of each state national currency within a very narrow band of difference. When all this was achieved (in 1996, or 1997 or 1998) then they could move to a single currency and real union. But the recession has made sure that the Maastricht agreement is not working. Far from moving closer together on all these measures, the European economies have been moving apart. Not one country in June 1994 can claim to have met all the 'convergence criteria' for monetary union. Moreover, there is little possibility that many will by the due date. Why? Because capitalism is not a planned system of production, but an anarchic and wasteful method of social organisation. Instead of steady sustained growth in Europe, with the poorer economies and regions like Greece, Portugal and Spain being helped by the richer economies like Germany or Denmark to catch up through a planned transfer of resources, capitalist Europe has been racked by a massive recession in production and fierce competition as each national state has tried to look after itself at the others' expense. The richer states have not been prepared to help out the poorer.

Redistribution

It has been estimated that the European Union needs to levy about 10% of annual production of all the states for the next ten years to redistribute to the poorer regions in Europe to ensure that equalisation of incomes and jobs takes place. Up to 1992 the EU Commission got just 1%. When Commission President Jacques Delors proposed increasing this marginally over several years to 1.3%, it was thrown out by the combined opposition of France, Germany and the UK. And there is no need to remind ourselves of the huge expense to the ordinary working class taxpayer that goes into the Common Agricultural Policy to subsidise not primarily small French or German farmers, but large 'Eurocrop' farming estates in the UK, Ireland, Germany and France, and the growing of tobacco by Greek landlords. The result is that there has been no equalisation of resources within the European Union, so

when the recession struck it was impossible for the weaker capitalist members to maintain the terms of the Maastricht agreement. This culminated in an open break with monetary union during summer and autumn 1992 when one country after another devalued its currency within the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM), and the UK and Italy actually left. Devaluation was necessary for the weaker economies in order to make their goods cheaper on European and world markets at the expense of rivals.

Can we ever forget the £5 billion lost by the Tory government in September 1992 in trying to preserve monetary unity with the German mark. Major and Lamont have never recovered from that humiliation and the British taxpayer is now paying for it in the latest budget tax increases. This was money that could have kept all the deep mine pits in Britain open for another two years!

Far from unity being on the agenda for Europe in the next four years, there are a number of seething battles underneath that demonstrate continued national conflict within the Union.

Germany is refusing to buy British beef against EU laws; France is trying to stop British lamb and turn back British planes for landing at French airports, again against EU laws. Greece has declared sanctions against Macedonia, once more against EU rules, and so on. When serious national interests are threatened, EU agreements go out the window.

Conflict

But a much bigger conflict is ahead between the two key economies that hold the European Union together: France and Germany. German capitalism is paramount in Europe. It produces over 25% of all production and over one-third of manufacturing output in the EU. But because of its historical role in the last world war, the German capitalists have not tried to present an independent voice in international politics. They have followed the lead of the US in world matters, and heeded the advice of the French capitalists in Europe. The Franco-German alliance has been key to the development of post-war

Europe. The French bosses want the European union to move to a single currency and one federal state because in that way they hope to control the mighty economic power of Germany for their benefit. But increasingly the Germans are not prepared to play this role. They are seeking to take the dominant position in the European Union, first by establishing monetary union on their terms, namely based on the strong mark. In so doing they have imposed such stringent conditions through Maastricht that it is almost impossible for all but a few satellite economies like Holland, Switzerland, Austria and Denmark to achieve monetary union. The other economies, including probably France, are forced into an awful choice. Either they must try to maintain exchange rate parity with the German mark and so allow massive unemployment because their industries cannot compete with Germany's; or they must break with monetary union, devalue their currencies against the mark and put up barriers to German goods. Both threaten the very existence of the EU.

Germany

But German capitalism is not prepared to wait. They desperately need to lower their costs of production to compete in world markets with the US, Japan and the 'Tigers' of South-East Asia. To do this, they need a new cheap source of labour and eventually new markets. So Germany looks to the east in Europe. It wants to bring into its hegemony the former Stalinist states of central Europe, the Czech republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland and the Baltic states. It already promoted the break-up of Yugoslavia by recognising the independence of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia, and trying to bring these fledgling states under its orbit (in so doing it created the terrible war in Bosnia). Thus the next stage of the European union will be on German terms. That means bringing into the Union states like Austria and Switzerland which are economic satellites of German capital (these two plus Norway and Sweden are to vote on whether to join the EU this year), and eventually the rest of central and eastern Europe. German control of the EU is not

a prospect welcomed by France. So France is only in favour of widening the EU if there is a new constitution that ensures that everybody can have a say in German economic policy and can outvote the Germans if necessary.

The British capitalist class has been divided from the start on whether to support a 'closer Europe' through Maastricht and to allow new states into the EU with full voting powers. The big financiers and manufacturers are in favour because they see this building a huge new market, supplied by cheap labour from the East, and supported by a stable single currency and common tax and trading laws — the ultimate dream of the huge multinational monopolies to destroy smaller competitors and exploit millions of hungry and impoverished workers.

Tory Divisions

Throughout the 1980s the Tory government was divided between those like Thatcher who considered Britain was best served by being a dogsbody for US imperialism, playing down the needs of manufacturing in Europe and boosting the needs of global finance through the City of London. Others like Heseltine wanted to promote Europe as the market for British industry. Thus there was the bust-up over the Westland helicopter company, with Thatcher

supporting a US take-over and Heseltine a European one. Such are the ambitions of the current British ruling class!

This division is cloaked continually in talk by the Thatcherites, or the Eurosceptics as they are now called, about preserving 'British sovereignty' and laws of a British parliament. This is a sick joke, when you consider that daily the British parliament has no say in the big investment decisions made by the multinationals across Europe, that daily government ministers lie to parliament about their activities on arms to Iran, dams to Malaysia or laws on the disabled. The British parliament already has no real sovereignty. And remember also, that it was our current crop of Labour leaders who supported the ill-fated ERM, who backed Major in joining it at an exchange rates that could not be sustained, who made no criticism of debacle that Major and Lamont got into in September 1992, and who continue to support monetary union in Europe by backing the Maastricht agreement. The Labour leaders tell us that Maastricht would be okay if the Social Chapter which endorses basic labour rights on health and safety and working hours were included. But when challenged by the Tories for signing a Socialist pact to support a 48-hour week maximum and a minimum wage, John Smith appeared embarrassed, arguing

Jacques Delors



that it was only a 'guideline'. But the left in the Labour party have no attractive alternative for working people. They advocate 'preserving sovereignty', they want to stay out of the ERM, but because they offer no alternative to maintaining British capitalism, that means that Britain stays out of monetary union, and British industry will be isolated and weakened even further.

John Major sits on the fence in the Tory party, and it is getting painful.

On the one hand he supports Maastricht, but retains the right to opt out of monetary union. When Portillo attacks the idea of a single currency he is reprimanded, but on the other hand, Major also considers that a single currency is 'unlikely'. The Thatcherites were always

keen on extending the EU into central Europe, partly to break the grip of 'Communism' but also to weaken the hold of France and Germany on the EU. But now the Tories fear Germany's strength, so Major wants to ensure that these countries, if they join in the next five years, will have no vote on EU affairs! As it is, the agricultural economies of Poland and Hungary will not be allowed into the EU to destroy the farmers of France and Germany, and the Czech republic and the Baltic states will not be allowed to undercut French and British industry by selling goods with cheap labour and German finance. Britain and France have already stopped the import of a whole range of goods into the EU from these countries and

they are not keen to allow Germany to take full advantage within the EU.

Disunity

The European Union cannot become a real union designed to meet the needs of 350 million (excluding former Soviet Union) on the basis of a capitalist market economy. That is because the post-war boom of capitalism is now over and the limited integration of the economies of Europe will not continue.

As it is, resources have not been transferred to equalise incomes and wealth or raise employment, but only to boost the profits of the bigger multinationals and the most powerful economies.

The recession has exposed the

disunity that lies underneath, and that will block any real move to monetary or political union. European unity is something the labour movement should strive for, but only economies that are democratically run and publicly owned can plan to use the resources and technique of Europe to benefit all. That means bringing to power socialist governments throughout Europe pledged to such a programme and to uniting in a genuine democratic federation of socialist states, not through a European Union that stands for a 'free market' in its constitution, which means freedom for profit and exploitation.

Michael Roberts

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.

Socialist Appeal is indispensable reading for every worker wanting to understand and help prepare the workers movement for the battles that lie ahead. Subscribe today!

I want to subscribe to Socialist Appeal starting with issue no..... (UK rate £15/Europe £18/ Rest of World £20)

I want more information about Socialist Appeal's activities

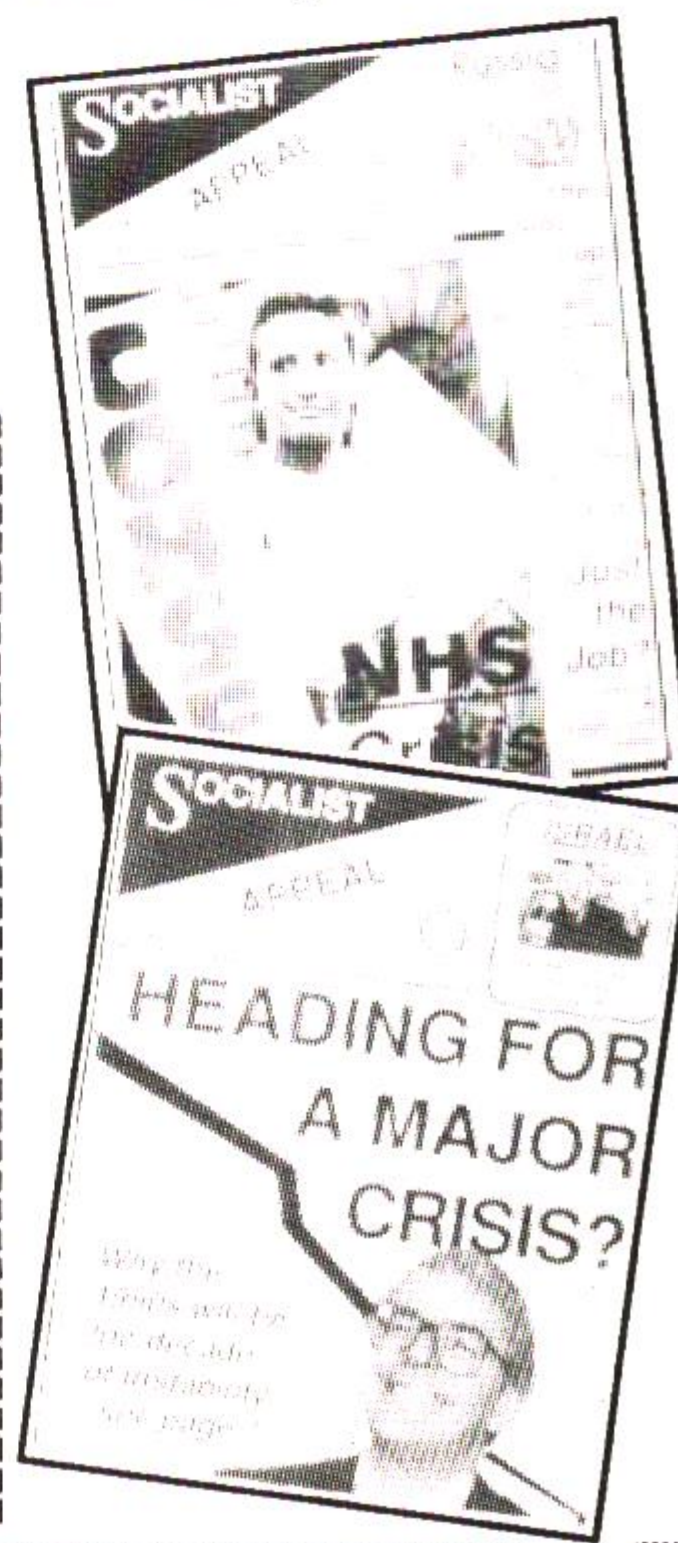
I enclose a donation of £..... to Socialist Appeal's Press Fund)

Total enclosed: £..... (cheques/POs to "Socialist Appeal")

Name..... Address.....

..... Tel.....

Return to: Socialist Appeal, PO Box 2626, London N1 6DU



Workers illusions turn to dust

Russia

"Moscow today, is a metropolis in the grip of gangsters, drug pushers and pimps. A society where the state once ruled by fear and commerce was a crime, has been replaced by a jungle in which commerce is ruled by fear and anyone who indicts crime is blown away by a shotgun-wielding hitman on his doorstep."
(Sunday Times 8/5/94)

Welcome to Russia 1994. Any illusion that a peaceful transition to a prosperous, capitalist, economy in Russia was possible has rapidly turned to dust. The counter revolution now taking place in Russia and Eastern Europe is producing an economic, and social nightmare for the working class. The scale of the collapse of the Russian economy could only be compared to defeat in a catastrophic war, and prepares the way as the Ministry of the Economy warns for a "social explosion". In 1993 output fell a massive 15%. In the first quarter of this year industrial production has collapsed by 25%. The production of sugar, shoes, and clothes has fallen by between one third and one half. At some leading car plants such as the AZKL factory in Moscow output has fallen by between one and two thirds. If Yeltsin continues with his programme for the restoration of capitalism then the Financial Times of May 9th warns "it could within months trigger a rise in unemployment to between 10m and 15m which would threaten Russia's fragile

social stability."

The promised aid from the west has not been forthcoming, as Yeltsin complained to the Sunday Times: "In Tokyo (at the G7 summit) they said \$44 billion. We received \$1.5 billion."

Credit

Even this barely dripping tap may be about to run dry. Economists from Germany's leading economic think-tanks are now warning against any further credits saying economic collapse is accelerating, and that "a complete collapse of industrial production in Russia is possible and mass unemployment is inevitable." The IMF's paltry loan of \$1.5bn was delayed by Yeltsin's failure to implement their economic programme of reducing the budget deficit by cutting subsidies to industry, rapid privatisation, and wholesale closures. Any

further assistance now looks doubtful. Foreign investment in the entire Russian economy in the first quarter of this year amounts to a puny \$180 million.

The plan has gone but in its place is nothing but corruption and chaos. The state therefore will be compelled to continue with subsidies, preparing a further slide into hyperinflation and collapse. In the past a considerable section of

the bureaucracy had illusions in capitalism, but experience of the market is giving even this layer a cold shower. A large layer would probably like to go back to the "good old days", particularly the military, who not only fear the danger of an explosion as a result of Yeltsin's too rapid, uncontrolled movement toward capitalism but are also humiliated by Yeltsin's toadying to US Imperialism. That these splits in the bureaucracy, which reflect the struggle of the new emerging gangster capitalists and the old nomenklatura, are not trivial matters, was shown by the crushing of Parliament last year.

This was a sign not of Yeltsin's strength but his weakness. The western media is full of "eye-witness accounts" of Yeltsin's despair. Had parliament's leaders Rutskoï and Khasbulatov put

forward a programme which could have inspired the workers, Yeltsin would have been finished. The fragility of Yeltsin's grip on power is demonstrated by the fact that he could not even count on the support of the military. The elections which followed were intended to produce a majority for Yeltsin's rapid transition to capitalism. In the event, they produced an even worse Parliament from Yeltsin's standpoint than before. The western media has made much of the support gained by Zhirinovskiy's ultra nationalism, but has been quiet about the overwhelming opposition to capitalism indicated by the poll, in particular the support gained by the old "communists".

Divisions

This was no accident but a phenomena repeated in the elections in Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine and Hungary. The growth in support for the old "communists" is a reflection of the first conclusions about capitalism being drawn by the working class. The view of Hungarian pensioner Julika Lukacs that "society was not divided under the Communists. There was no crime or poverty and we lived happily" may be that of an indulgent memory, but it is shared by many. A recent opinion poll in Russia found support for the "reform" programme had slipped from 40% five years ago to under 25% by the end of last year. No doubt the figure would be even lower today. The same poll found a majority believing privatisation to be "legalised theft undertaken for the benefit of the nomenklatura and criminals."

The new parliament is dominated by the old military-industrial complex. One of their first actions was to release not only Rutskoï and Khasbulatov, but even the coup leaders of 1991, in a humiliating blow to Yeltsin. That the old military bureaucracy feels itself more and more in the driving seat is shown by the recent increases in defence spending.

The first reaction of Russia's prime minister Viktor Chemomyrdin to the latest data on the collapse in

Begging has become increasingly common in Moscow



production, was to call for a halt to unnecessary production such as tanks. The military bureaucracy however had clearly not been consulted. Two days later Chernomyrdin and Yeltsin announced that defence spending was to rise by 66% this year from Rbs33 trillion to Rbs55 trillion. Subsidies to agriculture were massively increased last month. Privatisation has been concentrated in the small and medium sized enterprises, and although a significant amount of the economy is now in private hands, many key sectors remain state owned. The IMF is pressurising Yeltsin to step up the privatisation programme fearing that the whole process of capitalist restoration could go into reverse at any moment. The capitalist counter revolution is far from completed in, Russia and may yet not succeed. In the first place it is hard to imagine where the capital for capitalism could come from. Clearly neither foreign aid nor investment can meet the bill.

Privatisation

First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskoevets declared on May 6th "Russia is living through the toughest phase of its transition." Yet the programme of rapid mass privatisation has only just begun. Its implementation, according to its authors in the IMF and the World Bank, would create unemployment of up to 25 million. That would be a finished recipe for an explosion on the part of the working class. Already before the effects of this programme we have an almost unparalleled economic collapse. According to Joseph Condon "Russia is going through a profound transformation. That transformation does not come easily and in my view will not come quickly - it will probably take a generation." If a week is a long time in politics, then all kinds of transformations can occur in a generation! But it is clear that events will come to a head well before this.

In those sectors that have been privatised the vouchers dished out to the workers are immediately sold to buy food. Privatisation then is also unable to build up the required capital. In reality, state monopolies are being transformed into corrupt private monopolies. This is not capitalism but corruption masquerading as capitalism. Billions of roubles are secreted in foreign banks. Overall corporate

debt currently stands at an incredible Rbs69 trillion, a threefold rise in the last 6 months. As a result workers in many industries aren't paid for months at a time. This has already resulted in strikes by sections of miners and oil workers. Although still in their infancy these movements are significant, as some of these workers previously supported Yeltsin, but are now learning at first hand the joys of capitalism. However the relative quiescence of the working class has been the decisive element in the situation to date. The outlook of these workers is not difficult to understand, "communism" has failed and capitalism is even worse. The conditions facing the workers becomes ever more intolerable - but where is the alternative? In this situation the daily struggle for survival dominates the minds of the masses, politics becomes a dirty word. Corruption, lies and gangsterism temporarily reduce the workers to despair.

"Meanwhile", comments The Sunday Times, "the wages of sin are good enough for the new rich of Russia; on a late mid-week evening in the Teatro Grill...sharp young men in designer sports jackets brandishing mobile phones like the fly-whisks of oriental despots are ordering Canadian lobster and French champagne...they share their table with burly minders in leather jackets. The moll is there too."

This is gangster capitalism. The report continues "The cynical view is that not only has Russia's moral and social switchback ride made the mafia inevitable, but also in the medium term it may even be necessary. Its single minded dedication to the individual profit motive makes it an armed and lethal third force against those who would restore state collectivism. "So much for the land of milk and honey. The vision of a prosperous market economy has been replaced by a somewhat less appetising scenario, "A period of semi-anarchic lawlessness" continues The Sunday Times "like the American west of the 1880s or Chicago in the 1920s may be the purgatory that Russia will have to go through to emerge with any semblance of sanity. How long it will last is anyone's guess, but it will last longer than Yeltsin." That is one of the few certainties in the current situation, there cannot be a peaceful evolution to capitalism and a parliamentary democracy,

and Yeltsin cannot continue much longer. The West demands immediate steps to mass privatisation oblivious to the social consequences of mass unemployment and economic collapse that this would entail. The current situation cannot last indefinitely. If the workers do not move to take power, which is still very much a possibility, and the one the capitalists inside Russia and outside fear most, then the military will be forced to intervene. In other words in the absence of a decisive movement of the workers a new coup is inevitable, perhaps within a year. What direction such a regime would then take is impossible to predict in advance. It may continue down the road of capitalism perhaps in a slower more controlled way. A brutal military police dictatorship would appear to be the only way to raise capital, by driving down even further the desperate position of the workers, squeezing more and more profits from them. As time progresses this seems a less and less likely outcome. The prospects for the bureaucracy and for Russia under capitalism look ever less inviting. As the Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs commented after the recent elections "It looks as if its pretty far down the road towards the end for the reformers. The return of the Old Guard is not inevitable still, but it now seems the most likely outcome."

Restoration

If they were to succeed in restoring capitalism then clearly we would be talking about a vicious regime, and not only within its own borders. A new capitalist Russia would have Imperialist ambitions. Rather than the new stability the western capitalists dreamed of at the end of the cold war, such a regime would only add more instability to an already volatile international situation. As night follows day the completion of the capitalist counter revolution would prepare a new movement of the workers, with illusions in neither capitalism, nor Stalinism. The stage would be set for a new October which on the verge of the 21st century would transform the globe. Even if the leaders of a new coup wanted to continue down this path, it isn't necessarily their decision. The outcome of the situation is Russia will be determined by a struggle of living forces at home, and



Yeltsin

internationally. They may be forced to recentralise the economy and physically choke the mafia. At present it would seem that a new coup carried out by the military-industrial complex would be quite likely to move in this direction, with enormous consequences for all the regimes of Eastern Europe. A neo-Stalinist regime wouldn't have the tentacles stretching out through society that the old regimes had, it would be a much weaker military-police dictatorship, which could last a few years but could solve none of the problems facing the masses.

The workers have yet to have their first say on the situation, they could well have the last. A great deal depends on events in Eastern Europe and the West, and vice versa - that's why a study of developments in Russia is crucial to us.

The outlook of the capitalists is full of gloom and doom. Boris Nemtsov, "liberal" governor of Nizhny-Novgorod predicts the following "Unfortunately the next year in Russia will be a year of tremendous inflation, unemployment, strikes, factory closures and very acute political conflicts. I see nothing good in the future."

We can be confident that on the basis of events, the workers will learn from their experience of capitalism and Stalinism. If a Marxist party existed in Russia today, the workers could be on the verge of power. The events which are being prepared will provide many opportunities for the building of such a Marxist leadership.

Phil Mitchinson

Santana and Linares workers demand of leaders...

"It was worth it if we win the struggle." The words of this worker summed up the spirit of the workforce at the Santana motor plant in Jaen. The worker in question had lost an eye in a battle with the police.

As struggles go, the conflict at Santana is a tough one. In the boom years of the '80s, the Spanish economy developed more rapidly than the rest of Europe. But Spanish capitalism remains one of the weakest links of Europe. The collapse of the economy has been even more spectacular here than elsewhere. With 23% unemployed, Spain now heads the list of countries in the jobless stakes. The situation of Andalucia in the poor South is even worse, with a horrendous 32% out of work.

The big multinational companies which set up in Spain in the last decade are now rushing to get out. This is creating a dramatic situation, above all in places like the province of Jaen, where the town of Linares is wholly dependent on the big Suzuki factory in Santana.

Workforce Slashed

Already Suzuki have laid off a large number of workers. From 4,400 the plant has been reduced to only 2,400. Now Suzuki wants to decimate the workforce, with a massive reduction in jobs and a vicious attack on the wages and conditions of those left. At the same time, they are demanding huge extra subsidies from the Andalusian regional government, for just keeping the place open. If a private individual acted in this way, he could be accused of demanding money with menaces. But the crooks in suits who determine the lives and destinies of millions from the boardrooms are allowed to do this with impunity. In reality, Suzuki are looking for an excuse to close the plant. This means sentencing a whole community to death. There is no other work in the area. The rest of the province depends heavily on the cultivation of olives, which, apart from being extremely hard, difficult and low-paid work, provides only seasonal employment.

The closure of Santana would not only mean the loss of 2,400 jobs. It would destroy an additional 15,000 jobs in auxiliary industries.

No more empty gestures: Link up the struggles

There is no way this number could be absorbed. The province of Jaen is no stranger to the class struggle. At the end of the 1970s, the bourgeois UCD government closed the mines at Linares. The workers put up a fierce resistance, which was brutally put down by the police. Now the workers are relearning the old lessons. Before the latest conflict, the local population got on well with the police. But all that has changed. Linares has been changed into an armed camp, occupied by hundreds of police, including special anti-terrorist units brought from the Basque country. All cars approaching Santana from Jaen are stopped and searched.

The police are looking for arms. They are well aware of the revolutionary temper of the workers here. After the struggle over the mines, the miners carefully stored supplies of dynamite. The memory of the bloody battles of '77 are still vivid in the minds of the older workers, and they are determined not to be caught unprepared this time. Stocks of home-made weapons are being hoarded - from nuts and bolts to improvised rocket-launchers. Already there have been violent clashes with the police, in one of which this worker lost an eye. Linares has already staged a one-day general strike in support of the Santana workers. The leadership of the struggle is in the

hands of the factory committee, mainly composed of members of the principal trade unions - UGT and CCOO. There is also a Womens' Committee, and a Youth Co-ordinating Committee, which have played a key role in mobilising the women and youth. The main slogan of the workers is "2,400 - NOT ONE LESS!" For the time being, the factory committee decided not to call an indefinite strike, so as not to give Suzuki an excuse to close the plant immediately. But the workers have organised a 24-hour picket to inspect everything that goes in and out of the factory. In reality, there are already elements of workers' control in the situation. Management no longer decide what happens. Lorries drive in and out of the factory with their doors open so the workers' representatives can see what is inside. In this way, the workers ensure that nothing leaves the plant without their permission. Suzuki has replied with a provocation, denying the plant supplies needed to do the work. In response, the workers are preventing them from removing for sale the vehicles which are inside. Things are clearly coming to a head.

Occupation

The only way to win this fight would be on the basis of an all-out strike and occupation, extending the struggle to the rest of Andalucia. The basis for this already exists, with the threat to close other factories, such as the Gillette plant in Seville, and the Santa Barbara in Granada. The menace of factory closures is not confined to the South. Pulveda, Ebro, SEAT, Barcelona, John Deere, Rank Xerox, Ebro Kyota, HUNOSA and Duro Filguera in Asturias, are only the most striking examples of this trend. The magnificent struggle of the workers of Duro Filguera is an example of how workers in Spain are willing to fight for their jobs. However, the success of the struggle depends on it not being isolated. Unfortunately, the Spanish trade union leaders, like their British counterparts show not the slightest understanding of this fact. True, the UGT and CCOO unions did call two one-day general strikes in the recent period. The workers responded massively to the call to action on both occasions.



The marxist led Sindicato de Estudiantes has put forward a clear programme for victory.

A one-day strike is a big step forward, but it is not a panacea. It allows the workers to feel their strength as a class. It serves as a warning to the bosses and the government, but, in and of itself, it solves nothing. It is really a demonstration, although a particularly powerful one.

Pit Closures

In Britain, under the pressure of the class, the TUC called a mass demonstration against pit closures. That was a big step forward, and British workers also responded marvellously. But what happened afterwards? The TUC did nothing else, and the Tories, once they realised this, stuck the boot in, closing down more pits than previously envisaged! In Spain the union leaders acted in the same way. As a result, the mood of the class is confused. Participation on the May Day demos, while still very good by British standards (about 50,000 in Madrid) was less than in the one-day general strike on 28th of January, or 25th of November. The more active layers loyally turned out, but the new layers who participated actively in the general strikes, were absent. This comes as no surprise to Marxists. The working class is not

a tap that can be turned on and off according to the whims of the leaders. No doubt the union chiefs in Spain - as in Britain - will hasten to blame the workers for their alleged "apathy", without seeing that precisely their policies and conduct is the problem. The present situation is serious, and therefore calls for serious action. The workers are tired of parades and empty gestures, which they understand solve nothing. The crisis of Spanish capitalism is stoking up colossal bitterness and anger in the population. Beneath the surface, a social explosion is being prepared. It can occur at any time, at any point. It can be delayed for a time by the power of the trade union apparatus and the disastrous policies of the union leaders who, as Leon Trotsky once put it, have become the most conservative force on the planet. But not even the most powerful apparatus can hold back the class forever. An infallible symptom of a profound process of social radicalisation is the movement of the women. The women's committee, made up overwhelmingly of working class women, has been extremely radical. On one occasion, they marched to the factory,

demanding an immediate occupation. The pickets - all men - were nonplussed. They had no instructions to occupy! There was a bit of pushing and shoving, as the angry women tried to get past the pickets. The men issued an embarrassed apology the next day, but the women of Santana had served notice that they intended to play a full role in this fight - a fight for the future of their children.

Students' Union

When the Marxist-led Students Union telephoned the local students' co-ordinating committee in Santana, the initial reaction was negative. But once a comrade came from Madrid and explained the policy of the SE the whole attitude changed, and the committee leaders joined the SE. The comrades from Madrid were astonished at the degree of solidarity, even of the middle class. The factory committee received them well, offering to pay for the SE's leaflets, posters, and travelling expenses, and also sent them to a local hotel. However, the hotel owner, whose husband had been a landowner, refused to accept any money, once she heard they had been sent by the factory committee.

Subsequently, the SE has held two public meetings in the town - one of 3,000 and another, outside the factory, of 1,000. The position advocated by the Marxist tendency represented in Spain by the paper EL MILITANTE, is for the extension of the struggle, linking up with the other factories in conflict, starting on the level of Andalusia. This idea was put forward by the speakers at the two mass meetings and got a very good response. There is no lack of willingness on the part of the workers to fight. Unfortunately, yet again, the union leaders have failed to give a lead. At the time of writing, the Santana struggle has reached a kind of impasse. There are all kinds of rumours of possible foreign buyers, sell-outs and the rest. But, for its part, Suzuki is adamant in maintaining the sackings; the workers are equally determined to resist. In a long struggle of this type, all kinds of ups and downs are possible. But the present situation cannot last for long. The fate of Santana must be resolved, one way or another. With a real fighting policy, victory is possible. That is the most important lesson - and not only for the workers of Spain.

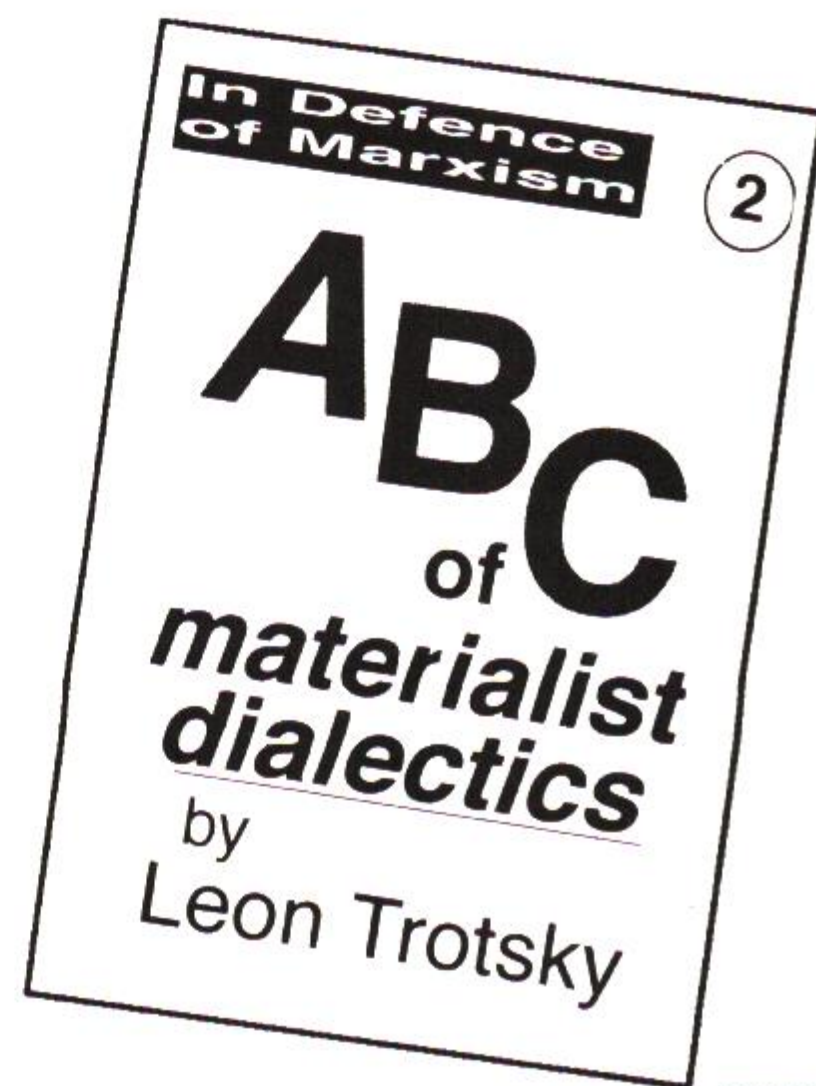
New Socialist Appeal pamphlets!



The first title in our *In Defence of Marxism* series, *Marxism in Our Time* answers those "experts" who after the collapse of Stalinism pronounced Marxism dead. With a major new introduction by Alan Woods and Ted Grant the pamphlet represents a brief but brilliant exposition of Marxism and its burning relevance to the struggles of workers today.

The second title in the series is available now! *The ABC of Materialist Dialectics* contains Trotsky's classic article which is a clear and vital explanation of Marxist philosophy as well as a new introduction by Socialist Appeal editorial board member Rob Sewell and an appendix by John Pickard.

The ABC of Materialist Dialectics
To order your copy simply send a cheque/PO for £1.30 made payable to Socialist Appeal and send it to: PO Box 2626, London N1 6DU



Marxism in our Time by Leon Trotsky
To order your copy simply send a cheque/PO for £2.50 made payable to Socialist Appeal and send it to: Socialist Appeal, PO Box 2626, London N1 6DU

Imperialism offers no solution to carnage

Rwanda

Many people will have been shocked at the TV pictures of the unfolding tragedy in Rwanda. We have witnessed men, women and children brutally slaughtered, the capital Kigali under siege and the evacuation of all foreigners, including most of the United Nations troops. Now the UN decision to send 5000 new troops threatens to make the situation worse.

Rwanda is a former Belgian colony. During the colonial period it was coupled with Burundi in a single country, Ruanda-Urundi. It is the most densely populated country in Africa. Only 7.7% of the population live in cities and most of the socio-economic indicators are below the already very low African average - life expectancy is only 50, infant mortality is 117 per thousand.

As a colonial power Belgium was infamous for spending even less on education and cultural development than other imperialist powers. The results are there to be seen in Rwanda: illiteracy is 50%, only 33.5% of children between 12 and 17 are at school and there are just 3 doctors per 100,000 people.

Rwanda's economy is very fragile. Imports vastly exceed exports. More than 50% of all export earnings come from one product: coffee. And with the plummeting price of coffee in recent years the conditions for a social crisis are ripe.

Belgium has always sought to divide and rule and perpetuate the power of the Tutsis in a sort of feudal system. Since independence this has led to many violent clashes with hundreds of thousands being killed. In neighbouring Burundi 100,000 died in violent ethnic clashes six months before Rwanda exploded. But there is a difference in the positions of the ethnic groups in Rwanda and Burundi. Until recently Tutsis still held power in Burundi. They still hold all the key army posts. This is not the case in Rwanda.

At the end of colonisation in 1959 the Hutu majority waged an insurrection, following which Belgium unceremoniously dumped their former Tutsi partners. Since independence Rwanda has been governed by the Hutu majority. Habyarimana has been president since 1973 when he took power following a bloodless coup. His regime is famed for its corruption and nepotism and oppression of the Tutsi minority.

Although they gave up direct rule, the capitalist powers continued their domination of Africa. They use economic means if possible, force if necessary. This is called imperialism.

Traditionally the Belgians are by far the most important group in Rwanda both numerically and in influence. But as part of the on-going competition for influence between Belgium and France in French-speaking Africa, French involvement increased in 1990 when a guerilla army composed mainly of Tutsis crossed the border from Uganda in an attempt to overthrow Habyarimana. The Rwandan army numbered only 5000 and the insurgents threatened to take Kigali. They were stopped by a coalition of French paras and Zairean elite troops. Belgium did send troops but they withdrew from the battle after protests by the Belgian socialist coalition partner. For this Belgium was blamed by the ruling Hutu.

Re-arming

The FPR insurgents withdrew to the north of the country and into Uganda. In the following years the Habyarimana regime re-armed itself building an army of 36,000. French soldiers took control of new recruits and arms were secured from Egypt, South Africa and France. It is said it is easier to buy a gun than an aspirin in Kigali.

The Belgians pursued "diplomatic" fields. Partly because of their efforts the Habyarimana government and FPR signed an agreement in mid-1993 which included power-sharing between the government and insurgents. An interim government was installed composed of both Hutus and Tutsis. The implementation of the agreement was controlled by UN troops, mainly Belgian paras. The fact that France refused troops for the UN suggests they were angry at the deal which said all their troops had to leave the country by January 1994.

In Rwanda many had a simple explanation for this: "France supported the Hutus but had to give in to Belgium which together with the UN, supports the Tutsis". This way of thinking was notably promoted by a "free radio", which had close links with the army.

However, the agreement broke down when a rocket-missile killed Habyarimana and the Burundese president. Carnage ensued. The regime blamed the Belgians but it is more probable that hardliners within the government killed him. Within minutes of the assault the feared presidential guard began murdering people including the entire provisional government. 10 Belgian UN troops were killed trying to protect the Tutsi prime minister.

It appears that the FPR will score a military victory. They have a disciplined army of 20,000. The large majority of them are Tutsi, but the leader is Hutu. On TV we've seen pictures of them singing revolutionary songs, however, information about the movement is scarce. They have strong links with Uganda (former leaders of the movement were officials in the Ugandan secret services). The Ugandan regime is generally described as "populist" or even revolutionary populist. However, it is a one-party military dictatorship brought to power with the military support of Tanzania after the terrible period of Amin. But this is only one side of the coin. Without doubt this regime tries to achieve popular support in a way uncommon in Africa. "Councils of Resistance" enjoy wide powers on a local level and elect a national council of resistance composed of 270 members.

Budget Cuts

The most important fact though is that Uganda remains tied to western imperialism. Until 1990 imperialism succeeded in winning support in Uganda by showing its "pretty" face: debts were rescheduled, the IMF and the "Club of Paris" agreed to loan of 500 million dollars. This allowed the Ugandese economy to grow for some time at 6% a year. But then came the collapse of coffee prices which account for 95% of Uganda's export earnings. This time imperialism showed its ugly face: the IMF forced the regime to cut the budget 30% and sack 35% of public service workers.

The FPR will be confronted with all the same problems and contradictions if it is victorious in the civil war. The FPR have taken the whole of the north of Rwanda and surrounded Kigali. This fact alone shows that this civil war is more than an ethnic conflict. Otherwise it would be impossible for the Tutsis who make up only 10-15% of the population and have fewer arms to win. The FPR Tutsi army has only succeeded by trying to reconcile both ethnic groups. Even in the case of an FPR victory things will remain difficult for Rwanda. The country remains subjected to imperialism. The only real future for the whole region is to break with imperialism and the establishment of a socialist federation of eastern Africa. On the basis of nationalisation of the land and distribution among the peasants, the imposition of a monopoly over foreign trade, and a strict respect for the rights of all minorities such a federation could serve as an example for the rest of Africa.

Andre Gonzales

Excellent Coverage Boosts Sales

As the trade union conference season kicks off in earnest sellers should be looking to use Socialist Appeal's unrivalled coverage and analysis of the issues affecting the unions at every labour movement event.

At the time of going to press reports from the first few conferences show that our ideas are gaining a real echo throughout the movement. At the CPSA conference sellers notched 23. More importantly, before the first day was over one reader had agreed to

become a seller thus boosting our sales in that union. A number of other delegates and visitors to the conferences have also expressed an interest in helping spread the ideas of genuine socialism by becoming sellers. At the Unison conference as well as excellent journal sales over £450 was raised for the Press Fund. At the NUJ conference in London 17 copies were sold.

If you are attending your union conference this year and would like extra copies of Socialist Appeal to sell simply ring our office on 071-354-3164 and we will arrange the rest. And sellers should not forget to take along copies of our two new pamphlets, the ABC of Materialist Dialectics and Marxism in Our Time. *They are selling like hotcakes!*

As well as the trade union conference sales sellers should be taking advantage of the improving weather to organise a number of public sales around local or national questions. The fight for full employment and the material in this journal and the forthcoming pamphlet will form an excellent arsenal around which to organise activities at local labour movement events or on the streets. As well as the public and conference sales a bedrock of our journal is the sales by subscription, which continue on the up and up.

Over the past few weeks new subscriptions have come in from

Bradford, Cambridgeshire, St Helens, London (north, south, east and west!), Liverpool, Bristol, Leicester and Blackpool.

At the bargain rate of £15 a subscription to Socialist Appeal represents excellent value for money and ensures readers do not inadvertently miss an issue. Why not ask those you sell to at work, at union or Labour Party meetings to take out a subscription. And while you are asking why not ask them to take a few extra copies to sell themselves?

Steve Jones

Im-PRESS-ive

As we go to press negotiations are underway to move to our new premises - the first vital step in our campaign to establish our own printshop.

The new office, which will be more suited to the production requirements of Socialist Appeal, is the first concrete sign of the results of our £15,000 Press Fund Appeal.

Much hard cash has come in and much more has been pledged. Now is the time to make good those pledges so we can take the next step and purchase the platemaking and pre-press equipment necessary to bring our production entirely in-house. Make sure you approach all regular readers for a donation to help finance the building of Marxist Ideas in the labour movement.

Thanks to those who donated from the following areas: Woolwich, south London, Essex, north London, Manchester, West Yorkshire, Humberside, and those who donated at the trade union conferences, including Unison £450.

I enclose a donation to the £15,000 Special Press Fund Appeal of:

£5 £10 £20 £50
£100 Other £.....

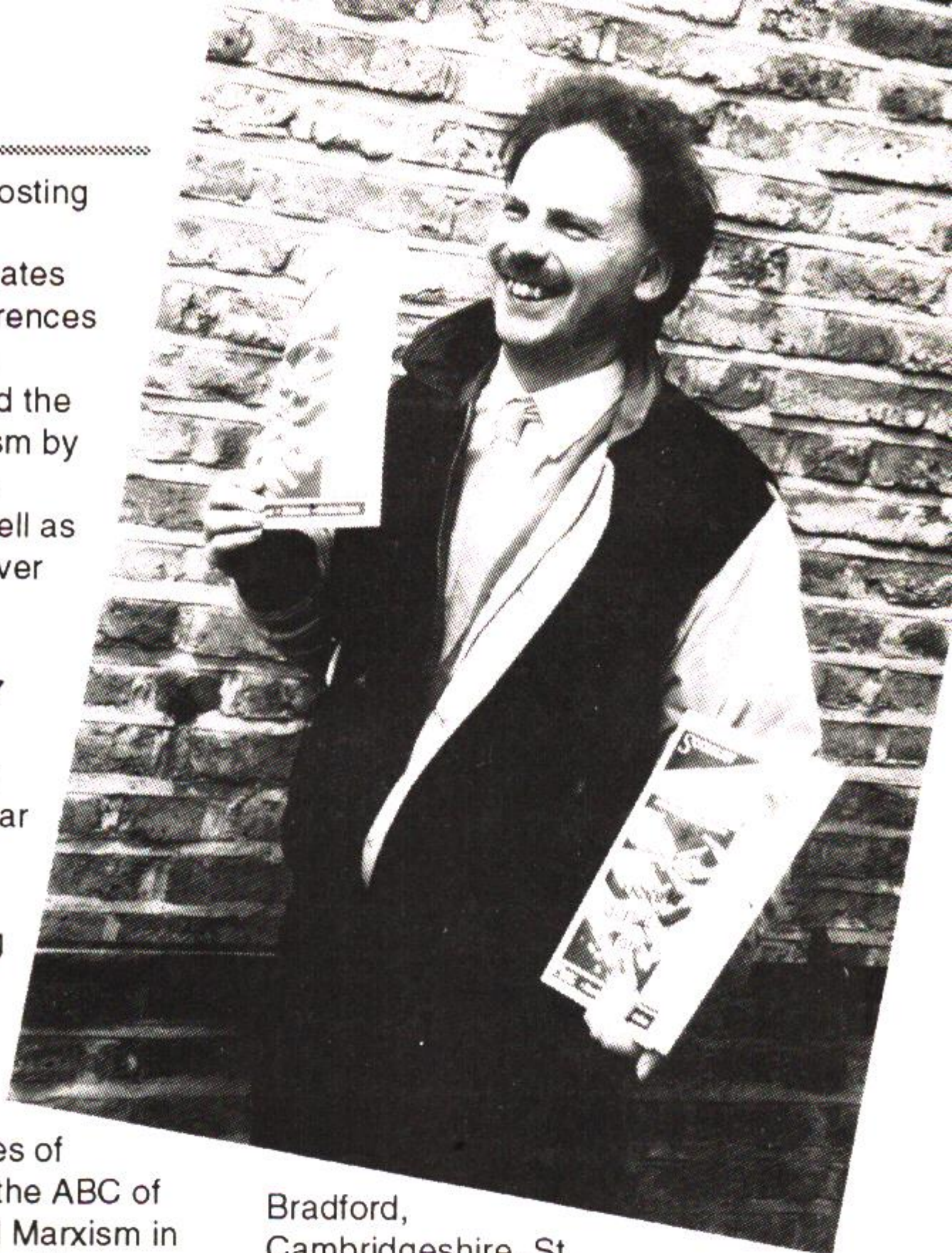
Name.....

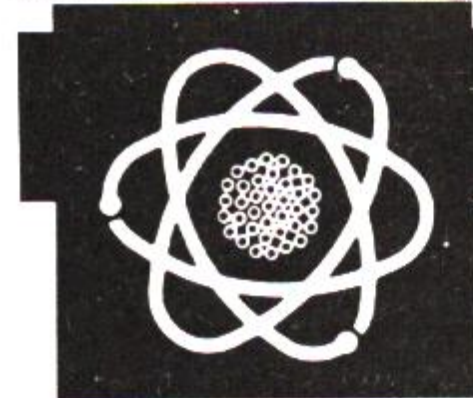
Address.....

.....Tel.....

Return to: Socialist Appeal, PO
Box 2626, London N1 6DU

For sales enquiries ring
071-354-3164





Your Food...Safe in Tory Hands?

The recent row between Germany and Britain over the export of British beef has been put down by the Tories and the media to hysteria and 'electioneering' on the part of the Germans.

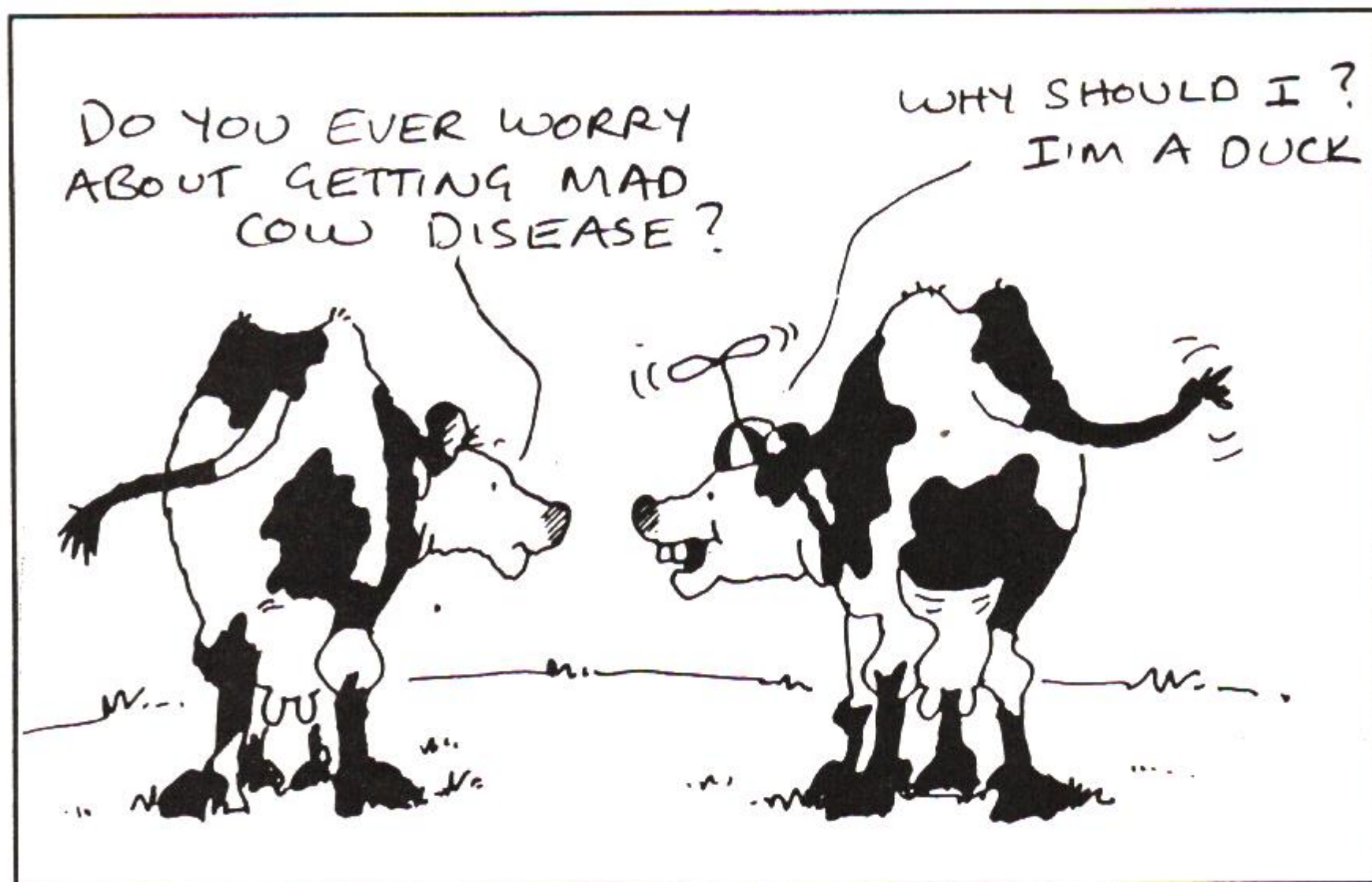
While there may well be an element of 'electioneering' on the part of the German minister involved, the question is still being posed as to whether British beef is safe to actually eat. Vegetarians would argue that no meat should be eaten and after looking at the facts many readers may feel that they have a point when they next order a burger (which is the main way people get to eat beef nowadays in view of the cost of a joint of beef). The debate centres on the question of BSE - bovine spongiform encephalopathy or Mad Cows Disease as it is generally called - and whether humans can catch it from 'infected' meat. BSE was first identified in cases that started occurring in 1985 and was confirmed as such in 1986. It was realised that this disease had 'leapt the species barrier' - probably from sheep- and had therefore mutated. The immediate fear raised was that it could mutate again and attack other mammals such as humans. Many human diseases have come from animals including cholera, syphilis and the common cold. Ministers from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) have constantly played down these fears saying that BSE would die out at 20,000 cases - it has now passed 100,000 - and would not

go past cows - cases of cats, zoo animals and monkeys have now been recorded.

Versions of Mad Cows disease are already known to science of course. Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) is very rare but always fatal and can incubate in a person for up to 30 years before showing itself. A variation called Kuru was also noted in African tribes who eat the brains of their dead. Both diseases are transmitted through contact with living or dead tissue. The spongiform encephalopathy (SE) agent is extremely difficult to destroy. Confirmation of the disease can only be made through an autopsy which is generally a bit late!

Over-Milking

Experts have debated as to why BSE has struck cows in such large numbers. Some have felt that it has much to do with the way dairy cattle are handled. Cows are overmilked which results in them eating a lot more than is natural for them. They become susceptible to diseases such as mastitis and have a much shorter life span. They were also being fed the brains and offal of dead cows instead of a normal vegetarian diet. As one expert was quoted recently as saying: 'MAFF hates anyone to say it, but BSE is just another production disease'. A Government appointed committee, the Southwood Committee, reported back in April 1988 that all BSE cows should be destroyed and that research into the danger of BSE to humans should be undertaken. Action was taken in July of that year to stop cattle



being fed cow brains and offal but none taken in relation to the human consumption of the same. The most dangerous part of a cow - the part of the spinal column not stripped out - is reprocessed along with the other 'cheap' parts of the cow into beefburgers. The spinal cord is split open and allowed to splash over the meat. The disease takes time to show itself. A test in 1991 seemed to show that monkeys were not susceptible to BSE but in 1992 they died of the disease. So have mice and pigs. A version of the disease called FSE has been noted in cats and in zoo animals. More recently a farmer with a BSE infected herd died of CJD and Channel 4 reported on a girl of 16 who had CJD claiming that she had caught it from eating burgers. Although no trend has emerged it is clear that with a possible 30 year incubation period it is still far too early to judge. We

may have to wait for five years before we can see what damage has already been done. The responsible minister at the time, Gummer, gave his daughter a burger to eat, in order to prove how safe they were, without really knowing if indeed it was safe. He had a £2 billion pound a year industry to protect.

Infected

Many now argue that the time has come to take this question seriously and control the use of potentially infected meat. More to the point we need to look at the way over-production is used to manufacture cheap meat and dairy produce to obtain easy profits. Controlling what cattle eat has not stopped the progress of BSE, arguments that it is only transmitted by the feed have been replaced with concern over mother-to-calf transmission. 650 cattle a week are now destroyed as infected stock. Others are looking

at the question of BSE being encouraged by poisoning from pesticides. It is a fact of life under capitalism that action to protect peoples well-being and safety tends to be taken only after a problem has unavoidable shown itself (for example after a major accident or disaster) rather than before hand. MAFF seems quite happy to suppress fears about BSE and hope for the best. We just don't know if humans can catch these diseases from eating beef but the signs are not that good that we can be complacent. Socialists should be demanding that our health comes first rather than the profits of the big food chains who rely on cheap and shoddy food at whatever the price to those brave enough to eat it. You wonder if Mr. Gummer's daughter will regret not having a choice over the eating of that burger.

Jane Sherwood

Under an illusion

The victory of the Tories in 1951 was to mark thirteen years of uninterrupted rule. One of the main reasons for this was the world economic upswing that was underway, which enormously benefited British capitalism, served to strengthen the illusions in capitalism, and within the labour movement, it bolstered the ideas of right wing reformism.

The eradication of mass unemployment, and rising living standards, stood in marked contrast to the inter-war period. On the other hand, the boom served to heal the wounds of past defeats and strengthened the organisations of the working class in terms of numbers and cohesion.

As soon as Churchill took office, the General Council of the TUC issued a statement concerning its relations with the government:

"Since the Conservative administrations of pre-war days the range of consultation between Ministers and both sides of industry has considerably increased, and the machinery of joint consultation has enormously improved. We expect of this government that they will maintain to the full this practice of consultation." (my emphasis)

Given the disappearance of mass unemployment, the expansion of production, and the increased strength of organised labour, it was in the interests of the ruling class to pursue this collaboration. They leaned on the trade union leaders to keep their members in check, hold wages down and boost productivity. Despite minor reservations, it was a role that the TUC was to embrace whole-heartedly.

The TUC, as well as the Labour Party, was now firmly in the grip of the right wing. The triumvirate of Arthur Deakin (TGWU), Tom Williamson (GMWU) and Will Lawther (NUM), ruled the movement with an iron hand using their bloc vote to the maximum effect

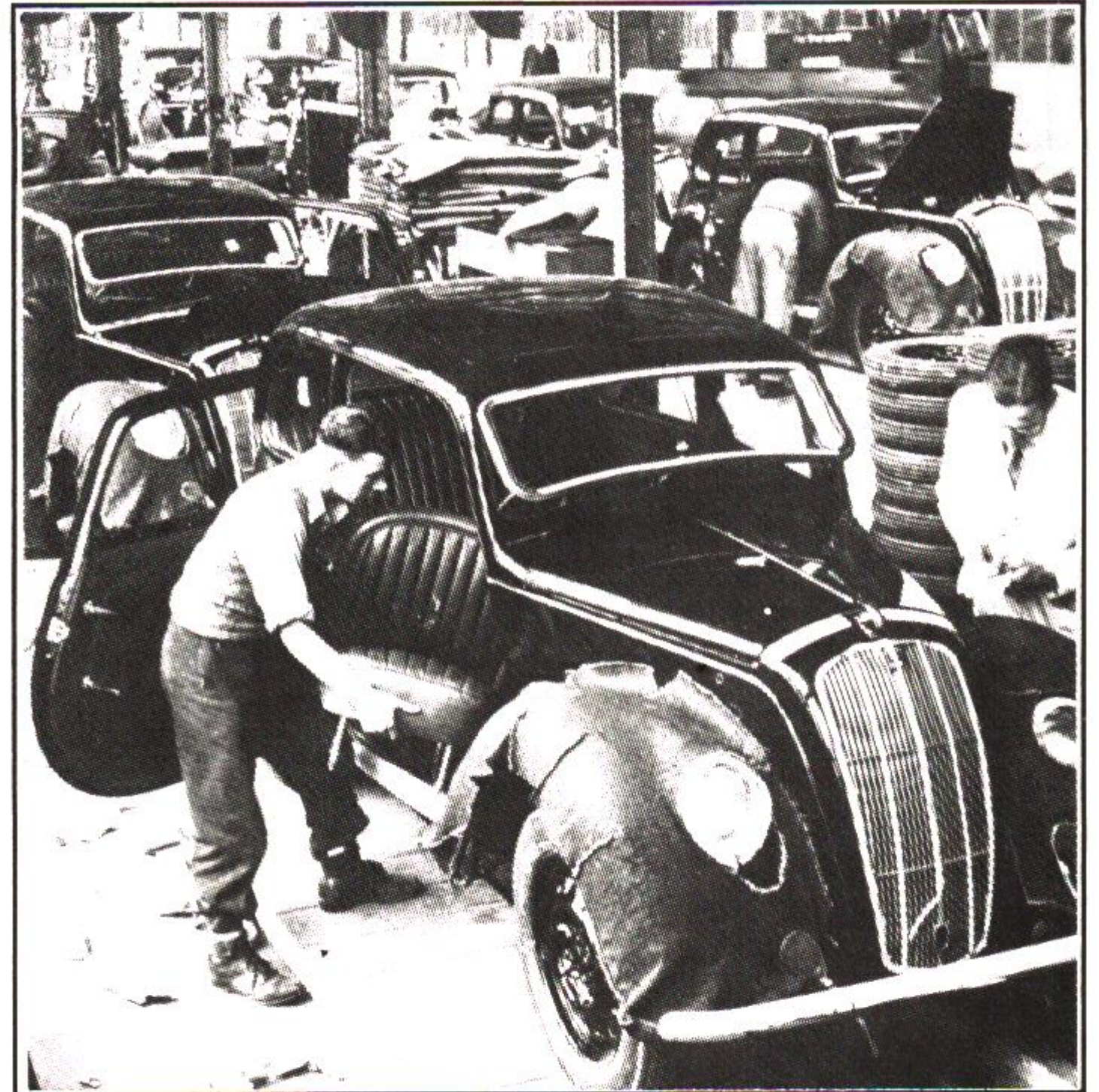
both in the TUC and the Labour Party. As a result, the early 1950s were relatively strike free. In comparison to the immediate post war period, the 1950s as a whole can be considered a period of relative industrial peace. The boom saw profits rise consistently, which were partially used by employers to buy social peace. Given the shortage of labour, employers preferred to negotiate agreements and were prepared to accede wage increases. The unofficial strike by oil tanker drivers in London in October 1953, where troops were used to break the strike, was the exception to the rule.

The TGWU under Deakin was the standard bearer for the right wing. He ruled the union in an extremely authoritarian manner. He was the 'boss'. Internal union democracy was kept to a bare minimum.

Business Unionism

The nearest parallels were with the CIO/AFL in America, which existed in this period on the borders of business unionism. The American labour movement had moved sharply to the right after the war, with its AFL-CIO president, George Meany, proudly proclaiming: *"I never went on strike in my life, never ran a strike in my life, never ordered anyone else to run a strike in my life, never had anything to do with a picket line."*

Jack Jones, in his autobiography, describes the fears of Deakin and the leadership's close collaboration with the bosses, illustrated by an agreement with the Ford Motor Company in the early 1950s: "Because of their (the Deakin leadership) deep hostility towards left wing shop stewards, they had designed an agreement which put all power at the centre and virtually ruled out membership participation. A limited number of shop stewards were allowed, but their activities were tightly controlled and shop-floor bargaining was virtually outlawed. The



management could exercise a veto on the nomination of shop stewards and altogether trade union activity was effectively circumscribed." (Union Man, page 136).

In this climate the Tories repeatedly attempted to persuade the trade union leaders to agree to some form of permanent machinery for the settlement of disputes. But the TUC opposed the idea, preferring to treat industrial relations 'their way'. By the middle of the 1950s, however, strike figure took a jump upwards, with days lost being half as much again as in any other year since the war. One of the reasons for this was continuing discontent on the docks.

The dockers always had a militant tradition which frequently came into conflict with the national bureaucracy of the T&G. Due to the heavy hand of the national leadership unofficial action became widespread on the docks. Between 1945 and 1955 there were 37 unofficial strikes in the industry. As no shop steward system was permitted, an unofficial Port Workers Committee was established.

During the witch-hunt against the Stalinists, 77 dockers had been disciplined and three expelled from the union. Under these circumstances, the policing role of the full time officials was detested. More often than not, Deakin vehemently attacked unofficial strikes as 'communist inspired'.

Blue Union

The TGWU dominated the docks with its 83,000 members. A much smaller union, the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers Union (NASD), known as the 'Blue Union' by the colour of its membership card, had only 7,000 members confined to London docks. However, given the growing dissatisfaction amongst union members with the TGWU leadership, an unofficial local strike in Hull in August 1954 began a move amongst T&G members to leave the transport union and join the 'Blue Union'. This movement quickly spread to Birkenhead, Liverpool, and Manchester. By the end of the year an estimated 10,000 dockers had left the T&G for the 'Blue'.

As expected, the TGWU

bureaucracy used the authority of the TUC and the Bridlington Agreement, which banned poaching of members between affiliated unions, to attack the NASD. The 'Blue Union' was subsequently suspended and eventually expelled from the TUC in 1959 for refusing to hand T&G members back. In 1955 the 'Blue' was compelled to wage a successful strike on Merseyside to prevent NASD members losing their jobs. However, a later strike for union recognition was defeated. As with all similar attempts to split unions in the past (a similar attempt took place involving the T&G in 1938, when busworkers set up the National Passenger Workers' Union, but this later collapsed), they have proved disastrous.

At the time, the dockers were urged by ultra-left groups (as well as Tribune) to leave the TGWU as "it could not be reformed". They advised the dockers to join the 'Blue Union' as it was more progressive. Such arguments did enormous damage in reinforcing and misdirecting the frustrations of trade unionists. The split served to temporarily strengthen the right wing in the T&G (particularly its Docks Section), and introduce non-unionism on to the docks. The NASD ended up moving to the right, eventually accepting in its entirety the 1965 Devlin Report, which included large scale redundancies, as it offered the NASD limited union recognition. The TGWU, which opposed Devlin, on the other hand, eventually moved to the left. The transport union was changed by the activists who remain behind to continue the fight for a democratic fighting union.

However, the damage had been done: the main beneficiary of the split was the bosses, with 30% of dockers in Liverpool and Hull not in any union. In 1984, the 'Blue Union' amalgamated with the TGWU, putting an end to the disunity which had arisen from the false tactics of union breakaways.

The 1950s witnessed a sharp struggle in the Labour Party between left and right over German rearmament and unilateral disarmament. The party leadership was overwhelmingly dominated by the right wing, presided over by the triumvirate of Deakin,

Williamson and Lawther, which controlled the largest union block votes. They had little time for internal debate and democracy and attempted to drive out the Bevanite left from the party. In 1952, as the fraternal delegate from the TUC, Deakin demanded the banning of the Bevanites. When faced with a hostile response from the constituency delegates, he relied bluntly: "You know you would listen if you wanted to get money from the trade unions." But with Deakin's death in 1955 and the accession of Frank Cousins in the TGWU the following year, the right wing monolith began to falter. "Looking back at that period", recalls Jack Jones, "the change at the top of the TGWU was a watershed in the history of the Labour movement." By 1959, the TGWU policy had changed to support unilateral nuclear disarmament, which was carried by the Labour Conference a year later.

Labour Defeat

With the Labour defeat in the General Election of 1955 (the Tory majority had risen to 100 seats), Attlee retired and Hugh Gaitskell was elected leader of the party. This represented the high point of right wing ascendancy. Moves were now taken to distance the party from 'old style' nationalisation and appeal directly to the middle classes. Right wing theoreticians, such as Anthony Crosland, explained that capitalism had changed, that by Keynesian methods the economy could be managed, and the class struggle had become outdated. So close were the policies of both Tory and Labour Parties that the consensus became known as 'Butskellism' (R.A. Butler was a prominent Tory leader). After the national ASLEF rail strike in 1955 (the NUR were still working), the industrial scene became more unsettled. Strike figures began to mount up. In 1957 action took place in engineering and in shipbuilding. The following year saw a six and half week strike of London busworkers over pay. However, given the other forms of transport, the strike needed to be extended to other sectors. The TUC intervened not to support the strike but to mediate. According to Ken



Bevan

Fuller, "a Delegate Conference heard Frank Cousins argue against spreading the strike, even though the Central Bus Committee had voted, by a majority of one, for this to happen. In fact, the chances of solidarity action were looking increasingly remote, given the attitude of the TUC. Local NUR leaders had voted to strike every Monday in support of the busworkers, but their General Secretary Sidney (later Sir Sidney) Greene had instructed them to work; some railwaymen who stood by their original decision were sacked. Nevertheless, the Conference voted to continue the strike. A week later Conference acknowledged defeat and voted to return to work." (Radical Aristocrats, p228). It was a defeat of major proportions. By the late 1950s the motor industry became the cock-pit of industrial strife, where the loss of days through strikes was seven or eight times the national average. Between 1960 and 1964 over 480,000 working days were lost each year in the car industry - far higher than in the traditional coal industry. This arose out of the conditions in the car plants. "Management in the motor industry were notoriously bloody minded," states Jack Jones, "not only in their relations with employees but among themselves. It was not unusual for top men to be fired in that rough, tough industry. In turn managers tried to reduce the labour force, intensify production, drive hard bargains. Resistance was bound to come as our efforts

intensified." (Union Man, p147). Between 1955 and 1966, the average number of strikes per year was 2,458, an increase of almost 40% on the 1945-54 figure. The mining industry, until 1962, accounted for over half the strikes in each year since the war. With a sustained closure of pits under Lord Robens, involving large scale redundancies, disputes fell sharply. From being 77% of the total of all strikes in 1958, coal strikes fell to 31% of the total in 1965 (and less than 1% in 1970). Between 1960 and 1964, unofficial strikes accounted for nearly 60% of days lost, though if the 'unusual' national one-day token strikes are excluded the proportion is over 75%. Yet despite this upturn in industrial struggle, its reflection in the official structures were limited. "At the 1957 (TUC) Congress", states Pelling, "there were no card votes whatsoever; and the 1958 Congress was also much less controversial than usual." Events in 1956, however, were to have an effect. The Hungarian Uprising against Stalinism and its bloody suppression by Russian troops, created a widespread crisis throughout the 'Communist' Parties internationally. In Britain, up to a half of the CP's membership resigned or left, including two leading members in the ETU, Les Cannon and Frank Chapple.

ETU Reforms

The ETU, with its quarter million membership, had been under the control of the Stalinists since the war. With Cannon and Chapple moving into opposition, they linked up with John Byrne (who was backed by Catholic Action), on a programme of 'union reform'. Subsequently, the ETU became a highly publicised political battle ground. Although the CP had a strong industrial base and drew towards it many excellent class fighters, it had abandoned any revolutionary perspective for an accommodation with the union bureaucracy, particularly at the higher levels. In reality, the CP had lost confidence in the working class, and substituted back-room deals, manipulation, and intrigue for the class struggle. This lack of faith in the class, which breeds cynicism

and contempt for worker's ability to struggle, is the psychological basis for Stalinism and reformism. "The workers will never fight", etc., becomes the prevailing view. This short-sighted perspective becomes the starting point of all kinds of mistakes. A layer of the top officials of the ETU, members of the CP, were determined to hold on to their positions ("for the good of the members") by any means: election fraud, forgery, arbitrary disqualification of branches, and falsification of returns.

Allegations of corruption made by Woodrow Wyatt, then right wing Labour MP, made in the magazine 'Illustrated', opened up the public struggle. He then prepared and took part in two of four BBC Panorama programmes on the ETU. This was followed up by material in the right wing New Statesman.

Communist Clique

According to John Freeman, the New Statesman's later editor: "Ever since 1957, the New Statesman has consistently exposed the operations of the Communist clique and urged both the rank and file of the ETU, and the TUC, to take action to remove a scandal which, allowed to go unchecked, would bring grave discredit on the whole trade union movement." (All Those in Favour? The ETU Trial, page 10). The allegations were grist to the mill of the trade union bureaucracy. These practices played into the hands of the right wing, who were never adverse to such practices themselves. A hue and cry was

launched. No class conscious worker could condone the actions of the Stalinists, but neither could they support this right wing witch-hunt orchestrated by capitalist press. The right wing, involved up to their necks in corruption and undemocratic dealings, have been consistently defended by big business and their kept press.

Very quickly the TUC bureaucracy were drawn in, which demanded an explanation from the ETU leaders. An internal ETU enquiry, as expected, exonerated the union officers. But in 1960, John Byrne and Chapple, who had now moved to the right, issued writs against the union and its officers for alleged fraud in the 1959 general secretary election. In June 1961, the Court found that a group of ETU leaders, including Frank Foulkes, its President since 1945, and Frank Haxell, its secretary, acted to prevent Byrne's election by "fraudulent and unlawful" means. The judge declared Byrne general secretary of the ETU forthwith.

In the Autumn, the ETU was expelled from the TUC and then the Labour Party. Most of the CP members and supporters were shortly removed from the leadership in the union executive elections, conducted under new procedures, allowing Byrne's supporters to control the leadership. The following year, the ETU was readmitted to both the TUC and Labour Party. The rules were changed banning CP members from office. The left in the union, especially the Stalinists, suffered from the backlash from what had gone

on. Later, Cannon and Chapple used their extensive experience when they were Stalinists, to manipulate the union this time in the interests of the right wing, which has lasted up until the present time.

At the 1959 TUC Congress George Woodcock took over from Sir Vincent Tewson as general secretary. In that year, the Conservative Party won a new term of office under MacMillan's slogan 'You've never had it so good'.

Clause Four

The Labour Party defeat for the third consecutive time, despite its moderate image, prompted the party's right wing, led by Gaitskell, to propose dropping nationalisation, changing the party's name, and breaking the links with the trade unions. They believed the Labour Party had become too identified with the working class, and needed to follow the recent example of the German SPD which had earlier jettisoned its "out-dated Marxist baggage".

The attack on Clause Four of the Labour Party Constitution was, however, defeated by a revolt of the rank and file, and the other plans were temporarily dropped.

In 1960, a bitter unofficial strike by Merchant Navy crews broke out over Victorian working conditions, lack of basic rights, low pay, and dissatisfaction with their right wing union leaders. The National Seamen's Reform Movement attempted to prolong the stoppage but failed. It nevertheless signaled changes in the NUS, which had been a company union and under Havelock Wilson scabbed in the

General Strike of 1926. Despite this "wild cat" disruption, the national union leaders were determined to maintain their collaboration with the government. In 1962, in spite of bitterness over a nine month pay 'pause' imposed by the Tory Government, the TUC General Council accepted an invitation from the Tory Chancellor to join a new National Economic Development Council, to cooperate in the long term development of the economy. Yet on the economic front the Tories had unleashed a savage attack upon the nationalised industries, particularly coal and railways, which witnessed the closure of a fifth of the rail network under Beeching's axe. However, within twelve months, the Profumo scandal plunged the government into crisis, resulting in Sir Alec Douglas Home taking over from MacMillan as Tory Prime Minister.

The death of Gaitskell also saw a leadership contest within the Labour Party, resulting in the election of Harold Wilson as party leader. A general election in October 1964 witnessed the defeat of the Tories after 13 years of rule and the coming to power of a majority Labour Government. Wilson promised to harness "the white heat of the scientific and technological revolution" and develop an economic National Plan. Once again, the working class looked to the political front to solve its problems.

Rob Sewell



Lenin: On the Labour Aristocracy

Out of such enormous superprofits it is possible to bribe the labour leaders and the upper stratum of the labour aristocracy. And the capitalists of the "advanced" countries are bribing them; they bribe them in a thousand different ways, direct and indirect, overt and covert. This stratum of bourgeoisified workers, or the "labour aristocracy", who are quite philistine in their mode of life, in the size of their earnings and in their entire outlook, is the principal prop of the Second International and, in our days, the principal social prop of the bourgeoisie. For they are the real agents of the bourgeoisie in the working class

movement, the labour lieutenants of the capitalist class, real channels of reformism and chauvinism. In the civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie they inevitably, and in no small numbers, take the side of the bourgeoisie... Unless the economic roots of this phenomenon are understood and its political and social significance is appreciated, not a step can be taken toward the solution of the practical problems of the Communist movement and of the impending social revolution.

(Lenin, Preface to Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism.)

SOCIALIST

APPEAL

£1

The Marxist voice of the labour movement

This month:
• *Trade Union Reports: Unison, CPSA, AEEU and more...*
• *South Africa*
• *Spain*

Which way forward for Labour



Fight for Socialist Policies