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“To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service.”



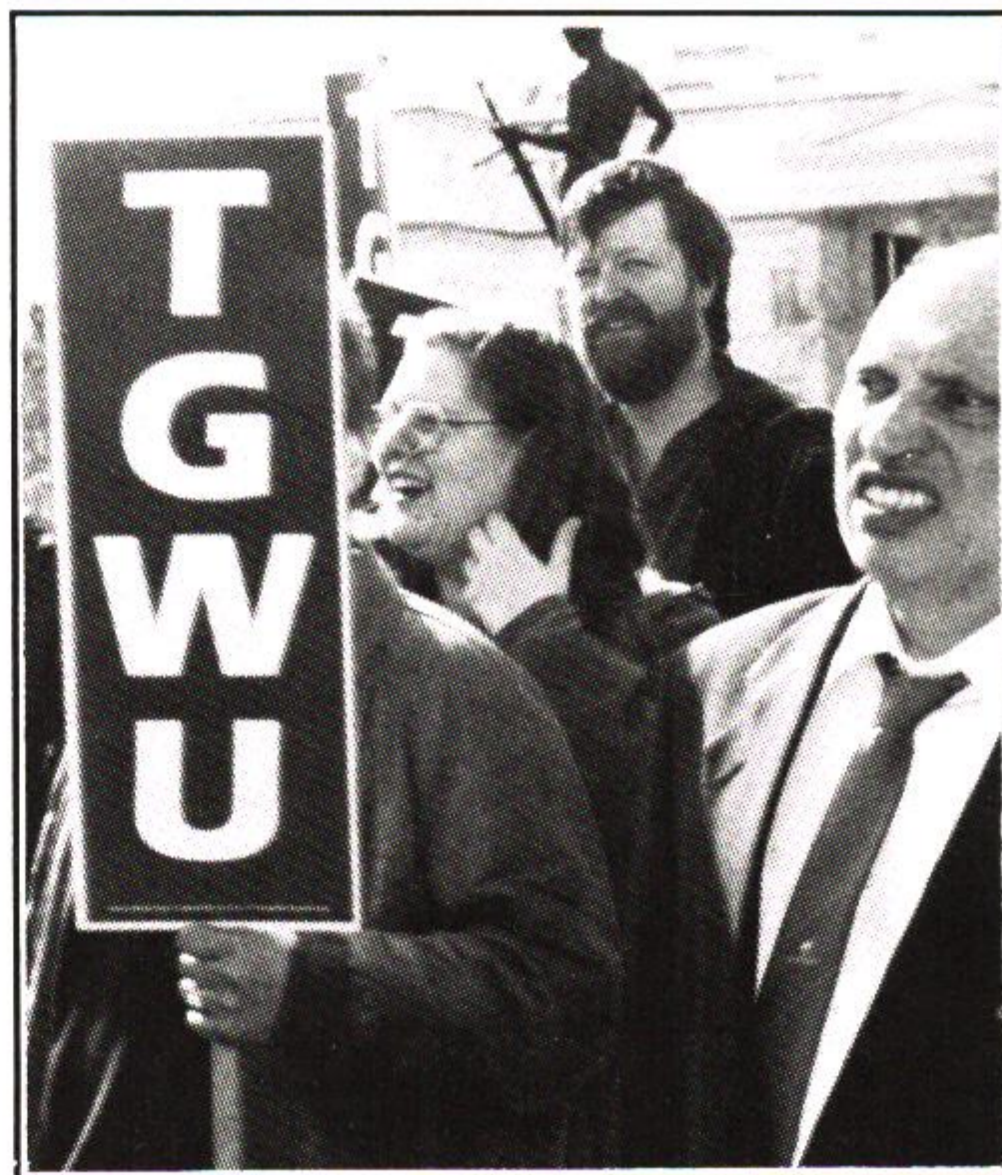
Defend Clause Four

Contents

- ◆ Editorial: Clause Four...3
- ◆ Labour Movement News...6
- ◆ UNISON....8
- ◆ Tory Conference...10
- ◆ Labour Conference Review...11
- ◆ Origins of Clause Four...14
- ◆ Russia in Crisis...18
- ◆ World News....21
- ◆ General strike in Italy...22
- ◆ Ireland...23
- ◆ Science...24
- ◆ Book Review...26
- ◆ Sales Drive...27
- ◆ British Trade union history...28
- ◆ The Great British Tradition...31

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Clause Four and the Trade Unions



The attempt by Tony Blair to throw out Clause Four, Labour's commitment to the socialist transformation of society, is a challenge to the aims and objects of the Labour Movement as a whole.

Every major industrial trade union affiliated to the Labour Party has within its own 'aims and objectives' specific references to common ownership and control of industry. This is a fundamental question, linked to the socialist traditions of the working class movement.

Although John Edmonds at the Labour Party Conference preferred to "wait and see" what the Labour leadership would come forward with, the Constitution of his own union clearly include: "To secure the return of members to Parliament and public authorities, who will support the policies of the Union and further the interests of members through political means, providing the candidates are pledged to collective ownership, under democratic control, of the means of production, distribution and exchange." [GMB Constitution, Rule 2 (10)].

Eleanor Marx

Although Blair dismisses Marxism, Marxist trade unionists played a leading role in building the unions which influenced their outlook and objectives. The above GMB Constitution was originally drafted by Eleanor Marx, who was elected ("not only unanimously but by acclaim" according to Yvonne Kapp) an Executive member of the union.

The RMT (formally the NUR) objectives (Rule 4, Clause B) state that the union shall "work for the supersession of the capitalist system by a Socialist Order of society." The ASLEF rule book states its objective is "to assist in the furtherance of the Labour Movement generally towards a Socialist Society". The TGWU

Constitution states that its objective is to "endeavour by all means in their power to control the industry in which the members are engaged." (Rule 2, 2, part 2a). The AEEU rule book is similar. The NUM is

also committed to public ownership, with its constitution specifically containing the words of Clause 4, part 4. NUPE, which has merged with COHSE and NALGO to form UNISON, had a rule 2(m) aiming "to secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible on the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service including appropriate forms of industrial democracy." This year's conference of the NCU passed a motion giving full support to Clause Four.

These aims are not some sentimental decorations, but represent the desires of working people for a better life and a new society where the exploitation of capitalism is ended once and for all. They are born out of the experience of the working class, which faces continual hardship and endless toil. Despite increased living standards, the real position of the working class, as a class, has not altered. With a deepening crisis of capitalism, even these standards are under threat. As the Policy Studies Institute explained, the changing conditions of work can be seen "as a reversion towards the type of economy that gave rise to the birth of trade unionism in the last century."

New Realism

Unfortunately, the conclusions drawn by the TUC has been to move towards 'New Realism' and class collaboration. Such a path can only lead to disaster. It has already meant John Monks hawking himself around the conferences of the Liberal Democrats and the Tories, giving advice on how they can build their support at Labour's expense! As someone with no roots or traditions in the Labour Movement, he epitomises the 'modernisers' in the trade union field, as Blair does in the Labour Party. These 'modernisers' want to destroy our socialist tradition. We should remind them of the ideas that built and inspired the Labour Movement.

Trade unionists have a particular responsibility in defending these basic socialist concepts as expressed in Clause Four. The Labour Party is the political expression of the trade unions. The rank and file must fight against any attempts to throw out or water down the clear socialist objectives of the movement. Full strength to the point of attack:

Defend Clause Four! Defend Socialism!

**Rob Sewell
(Dagenham CLP)**

In Defence of Socialism!

The battle to keep Clause Four



Tony Blair has thrown down the gauntlet in his attempt to eradicate Clause Four of Labour's constitution, its commitment to socialism. The announcement was correctly described by Arthur Scargill as "a declaration of war". Without doubt, building on their efforts to break the links between the Labour Party and the trade unions, the so-called modernisers, with the election of Blair as leader, are hoping to seize the initiative and sweep away the party's socialist aspirations. Despite the vote at this year's and last year's Labour conference endorsing Clause Four, Blair dismissed it as "insignificant", while Gordon Brown rushed to the TV to announce: "The Labour Party will get rid of Clause 4 by this time next year." So much for internal democracy and their so-called consultation with the party. For them the decision has been taken! To justify their actions, they said this year's vote was very close. But so was the vote on OMOV last year, but that did not stop them implementing it.

It is essential that all labour movement activists wanting to retain our commitment to the socialist reconstruction of society, take up this challenge with the greatest urgency. Let no one be under any illusion that this is some kind of 'reasonable' request to bring Clause Four up to date. Although it could be better expressed, it is clear enough: "To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry, and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular

administration and control of each industry or service."

The Blair leadership wants to throw out any commitment to wholesale public ownership, the very basis of a socialist economy.

Attack

The attack on Clause Four, together with the breaking of the union links, has been at the heart of the right wing's strategy to turn the Party into a version of the American capitalist Democratic Party or the SDP Mark Two. It is no accident that Blair has called on those who formed the SDP and stabbed the party in the

Tories in power, to the detriment of our people. It shows how far right the leadership has gone. They have ditched every left wing policy - from nuclear disarmament to public ownership. They have ditched mandatory reselection of MPs and attempted to break the links with the trade unions. However, this move to ditch Clause 4 will open up a big battle in the party. Blair's announcement could not have come at a better time for the Tories!

The so-called modernisers are being egged on by big business, the capitalist media,

intention." (5th October). Give the Tories an inch and they will take a mile. Was it not Keir Hardie who remarked that if the Tory press praise you, then you must have done something wrong. According to Thatcherite Teresa Gorman MP: "If you had had your eyes shut, you would have thought that chunks of this had been spoken by a Tory Secretary of State. We had law and order. We had sack the bad teachers. He's like a Tory plant in the Labour Party." The Labour leaders, in their lurch to the right, have adopted the policies of "Me-too". They mimic the Tories at every turn. The capitalists and their shadows in the party are hell bent on carrying through a counter-revolution in the party. The present Labour leaders have completely abandoned any vision of real socialism - if they ever had any - and embraced wholeheartedly the market economy, ie. capitalism. True, they make a few criticisms of the warts of capitalism here and there. But they embrace the capitalist system lock, stock and barrel. They have thrown over board 'outdated' baggage, like socialism, in order to appease their fairweather friends in the boardrooms and the City. Their attempt to create a 'New' Labour Party, is an attempt to reject the real socialist traditions of the Labour Party.

Big business

At the same time as announcing the death of Clause Four, they wined and dined with representatives of big business. Nearly 30 industrialists paid £350 to have breakfast at the Imperial Hotel with Gordon Brown. They included Jacques Lapoint of Glaxo, the pharmaceutical giant; David Webster of Argyll, owners of Safeways; Michael Alderson of Motorola; Peter Rixon of

"This is a modern party living in an age of change. It requires a modern constitution that says what we are in terms the public cannot misunderstand and the Tories cannot misrepresent."
Tony Blair speaking at party conference 1994.

"I do think that we should... express these fundamental issues in the most simple and comprehensive fashion, what we stand for in the world today. The only official document which embodies such an attempt is the party constitution written over 40 years ago. It seems to me that this needs to be brought up to date... standing on its own, this cannot possibly be regarded as adequate. It lays us open to continual misrepresentation."
Hugh Gaitskell speaking at party conference 1959.

back ("which was understandable" said Blair on Channel Four news) to be welcomed back with open arms. These traitors sabotaged Labour's election chances in 1983 and were responsible for keeping the

and the Tories. All the editorials in the Tory press are full of praise. "Blair the Bold", declares 'The Times'. But, it goes on to state: "The Tories can still claim that Labour needs more reform. Mr. Blair will reply that this is his

Chevron; Roger Close of MD Foods; Maev Sullivan of Mercury Communications; John Moores and Colin Thwaites of Littlewoods Pools; and Richard Faulkner of Westminster Communications. Tesco and other food conglomerates donated the food and drink. This class collaboration is to reassure big business that their interests will not be threatened by a Blair government. At the conference, Tony Blair stated that "we should stop apologising for the word *Socialism*". This is absolutely true. But he should direct these criticisms not to the rank and file of the party. It is the leaders of the movement who abandoned even socialism in words. But he added: "It is not the Socialism of Marx or state control. It is rooted in a straight-forward view of society. It is understanding that the individual does best in a strong and decent community of people with principles and standards and common aims and values. We are the party of the individual because we are the party of the community."

Communities

What does all this mean? What is the "party of individual and the community"? There are many individuals with opposing interests. Is there a "common value or aim" between a millionaire tycoon living in a mansion and a cleaner living on a council estate? They live in two different "communities", even different worlds! Society and its communities are divided into classes. Blair rejects the scientific socialism of Marx in favour of an abstract liberal conception of life: "individuals" do best in "decent communities". But it is precisely capitalism and the beloved 'market economy' that destroys our "communities" and ruins the lives of ordinary working people, through poverty, exploitation, unemployment, bad housing and poor health. These ills are bound up and result from class society, not "principles and standards". Where the whole of society is run in the interests of rent, interest and profit, there cannot be "common aims and values". The aims and values of the working class are fundamentally opposed to the class aims and values of big business. There can be no genuine 'partnership' between Labour and Capital. It is the relationship between horse and rider.

He goes on: "Community is not some piece of nostalgia. It means that we share. It means working

together. It is about how we treat each other." What a sound philosophy to tell the millions that have lost their jobs, those who face intensified exploitation in work, the homeless, and the millions in poverty! Blair's conception of "social-ism" is the outlook of the Liberal Democrats or the Tory Wets. Our problems can only be overcome, according to Blair, "by a dynamic market economy based on partnership between government and industry, employer and employee and between public and private sector." These ideas are nothing new. They are the old ideas of class collaboration and subordination to capitalism. They have nothing to do with the socialism of Marx or even Keir Hardie, and everything to do with Liberalism.

But what is socialism? To the leadership 'socialism' means 'community values' and 'individual values', what ever these terms mean in reality. Such vague terms have been used by Liberals and Tories alike, for they have no real class content. Of course, in general, everyone sees the importance of a 'community' and 'individual', but under capitalism they contribute little in solving the terrible problems that face working people: unemployment, poverty, slum housing, exploitation, and all the other ills that are associated with capitalism.

Exploited

For hundreds of years our people - the working class - have been impoverished and exploited by the ruling class. This situation arises from the very system of exploitation itself, capitalism. The rejection of class by Tony Blair does not mean that classes cease to exist! On official figures, the bottom 10% of workers are relatively worse off than their counterparts in 1886. Millions live below the poverty line, especially those who are unemployed. There is the creation of an underclass. On the other hand, the richest 10% of the population have never been richer. There are more millionaires than ever before. This is not a question of 'community' or 'individuals' but of the class character of society. It was precisely due to this terrible situation faced by the working class and the belief in a better society that the idea of socialism was born. At first, the exploitation of the workers forced them to combine into trade unions. Then, seeing the limits of trade union activity, they formed a party of

Labour. For a period the Labour Party was tied to the coat-tails of the Liberals. However, under the impact of the Russian Revolution, the party adopted a new Constitution in 1918, with its commitment to the socialist transformation of society as enshrined in Clause Four. Capitalism as an economic system is based on the private ownership of industry, banks and finance houses. The key sector is what Bevan called "the commanding heights of the economy". These are concentrated in the hands of a tiny handful of multi-millionaires who live on the labour of others; the mass of the population (or 'community') are forced to work to earn a living. The system is based upon the profit motive, where profits come from the unpaid labour of the working class. As the slave or the serf in earlier times, the worker is exploited by the owners of capital. Socialist society is the opposite of capitalism. Socialism is based upon common ownership of the means of production. Here, the profit motive and the market economy are replaced by planning and production for need. This also requires the participation of the working class in the running of industry and the state. It is the basis of a workers democracy as opposed to the rule of capital.

In fact the idea of a society based on common ownership was dreamed about over the centuries: the decay of feudalism gave rise to the revolutionary ideas of Wycliffe and the Lollards,

through to Winstanley and the Diggers, and through to Robert Owen and the great Chartist movement of the last century. The first recorded use of the word "socialist" appeared in the radical press of 1827. As the Chartist Bronterre O'Brien explained: "All the crimes and superstitions of human nature have their origin in this cannibal warfare of riches against poverty. The desire of one man to live on the fruits of another's labour is the original sin of the world." Through figures such as Ernest Jones, Eleanor Marx, Robert Blatchford, William Morris, and Keir Hardie, the ideas of a new socialist society were carried into the Labour Movement.

Reconstruct

At the beginning of the last century, the great pioneer socialists of Robert Owen, Saint-Simon and Fourier put forward plans to reconstruct society on socialist lines. Given the primitive nature of the worker's movement at that time, these utopian socialists, as they were described by Marx, put forward fantastic schemes to rebuild society on the basis of cooperation. Owen went so far as to establish new model communities, where exploitation was banished. But they were doomed as they were but islands in a sea of capitalism. Eventually the laws of capitalism would prevail. Also, given the immaturity of the workers' movement, Owen appealed directly to the ruling class to adopt socialism as the way forward for society. Nevertheless, these socialist



thinkers were giants compared to today's Labour leaders. At least they fought for socialist reconstruction; today's leaders merely wish to tinker with capitalism.

However, it was the great contribution of Marx and Engels that they understood socialism not as some wonderful idea, but as rooted in the very development of history, as a necessary step in the evolution of human society. Unlike the great utopian socialists, Marx saw socialist society being built on the productive forces bequeathed by capitalism. Capitalism had emerged from the ashes of feudalism, and played a vital role in building up the material basis for a new classless society. The period of capitalist decline has been marked by world wars, world slump, fascism, and starvation. The experience of this propelled the workers movement to adopt socialism internationally. The Second International, to which the Labour Party is affiliated, was originally committed to Marxism and the class struggle. The horrors of the inter-war period increased workers revulsion against capitalism. However, the post war upswing gave a temporary reprieve to capitalism with the expansion of world trade. This prolonged economic upswing from 1947 to 1974, created illusions in capitalism. The right-wing in the British Labour movement rejected socialism in favour of the mixed economy (ie. capitalism).

It was the boom of the 1950s that reinforced the ideas of right wing reformism. In Germany, the leaders of the SPD abandoned the aim of Socialism as being 'out dated' in 1957. In Britain, Gaitskell, using the same arguments as Blair, attempted to do the same thing two years later, by scrapping Clause Four. He failed due to the opposition of the rank and file.

Nationalisation

The programme of nationalisation introduced by the 1945 Labour government amounted to about 20% of the economy. Unfortunately, these industries were largely bankrupt and the former owners were given massive over compensation. Rather than workers' control and management, these industries were run on capitalist lines, with Boards composed of bureaucrats and ex-managers. In reality, rather than threatening capitalism, these state capitalist

industries were used as a milch cow by private industry. With 80% of the economy in private hands and only 20% in the hands of the state, the private sector will inevitably dictate to the state sector.

Nationalisation

This 'Morrisonian' nationalisation, because of its bureaucratic character, became discredited in the eyes of large layers of the population.

It was not the genuine public ownership envisaged by the pioneers of the movement, who envisaged workers' control as a key aspect. Rather than bailing out bankrupt industries, nationalisation could only work when the profitable 'commanding heights' of the economy were taken over and a plan of production instituted. The discredited 'Morrisonian' forms of state ownership opened the door for Thatcher's privatisation onslaught. Now, after more than 10 years of privatisation, particularly of the essential services, there is a general revulsion against privatisation. Alan Johnson, general secretary of the UCW, spoke against Clause 4 at the conference and said, pointing to Russia and Eastern Europe, that the 'command' economies were dead and buried. They were no longer an alternative to capitalism. To begin with these Stalinist regimes, although based upon state ownership, were nothing to do with socialism. They were monstrous bureaucratic

Yet, despite the bureaucratic dictatorship, the nationalised planned economy produced startling results up until the 1970s. It did not experience the economic slump of the 1930s or the capitalist boom and slump cycle where millions are thrown out of work. The proof of the viability of planning is demonstrated by the experience of Russia, where production grew six and half times between 1913 and 1965 - despite the terrible mismanagement of the bureaucratic elite. On the basis of genuine workers' democracy, the economy would have developed with seven league boots and linked to continual increase in living standards. The bureaucracy grew out of the backwardness of Russia. A socialist planned economy in Britain, with its high level of culture and a strong working class, would see a flowering of workers' democracy and the elimination of bureaucracy. The cutting of the working week to a six hour day and four day week would give the working class time to participate effectively in the running of industry and the state.

Capitalist society

Has the development of capitalist society over the last 76 years rendered Clause Four obsolete? Having experienced two World Wars, the horror of fascism, and the slump and Depression of the 1930s, and now the return of mass unemployment, Clause Four has never been so relevant. Working people are sick of

“The battle that opens up, for it will be a battle royal, will stir up the ranks of the party as never before in the recent period. If the right-wing believe that the acquiescence of a few trade union leaders means that their victory is assured, then they are in for a shock.”

dictatorships where the working class had no say. While the Webbs praised the Stalin regime in the 1930s, Leon Trotsky fought against the bureaucratic degeneration of the revolution. It was precisely the lack of workers' democracy that led to a crisis of these regimes. A planned economy, as Trotsky explained, requires workers' democracy like the human body requires oxygen. Without it they will perish.

privatisation and the super profits being made; they are sick of the 'market economy'. In a recent opinion poll, 52% said they favoured a socialist economy. The party that defends the 'market economy', the Tories, have never been so unpopular! As usual, the Labour leaders only see the backside of history, and are incapable of seeing the present day realities. In attacking Clause 4 Blair is

taking an enormous gamble - it is far from certain he will succeed. All other attempts have failed. When the idea was raised with John Smith, he rejected it as a diversion. Blair held the same view in public at least throughout the leadership contest. Prescott originally supported Clause 4, but to his shame, has now thrown in his lot with the right wing. As 'The Guardian' commented: "Mr. Prescott, for his part, now knows he is being used as a left cover for a right-wing leadership." (6th October). Acting on the advice of his right-wing cabal, Blair decided to press ahead. Fearful of an adverse reaction at the conference, the decision was kept a closely guarded secret until the last moment. It was then dressed up in the vaguest terms possible. Only later did his intentions become clear.

Battle

The battle that opens up, for it will be a battle royal, will stir up the ranks of the party as never before in the recent period. If the right-wing believe that the acquiescence of a few trade union leaders means that their victory is assured, then they are in for a shock. Sensing the storm that is brewing, there are already reports of divisions in the Shadow Cabinet. Michael Meacher has openly said it is a diversion. Even Larry Whitty, the former general secretary, warned Blair not to ride roughshod over the party's traditions. Resolutions endorsing Clause 4 were passed at both 1993 and 1994 Conferences. Gaitskell's attempt to remove clause 4 was defeated not by the actions of the trade union leaders but by the revolt of the rank and file of the party. Once they realise what is at stake - our very commitment to socialism - they will react accordingly. Every activist must play a full roll in raising the cause of socialism in every ward branch, union branch, CLP, shop stewards committee, women's section, youth branch, at all levels of the Labour movement. A hue and cry must go out in defence of Clause Four! On the basis of deepening capitalist crisis, especially under a Labour Government, workers will come to recognise the need not only to preserve socialism in the party's constitution, but to fight for its implementation. It is this that terrifies big business and their shadows in the Labour movement.

Steve Jones reports from the Tories recent conference...

A visit to Planet Portillo

To say the Tories came to their national conference in Bournemouth having had a bad year would be the mother of all understatements! Election disasters in both the local and Euro elections along with a series of by-elections fiascoes would not have helped. Having a poll deficit of nearly 30% against Labour was certainly not going to aid morale. To add to this there had also been a series of blunders involving various ministers. To top it all we have also had a rash of scandals enveloping the Tory Party to the extent that various individuals such as Archer had to 'lie low' for the duration of conference. A poll revealed that the Tories were now perceived as the party of sleaze by the electorate. Surely, said the party managers, things could only get better? No such luck!

On the Sunday before conference the scandal broke of Mark Thatcher's mysterious financial history involving allegations that he received a 'commission' of £12 million on a defence contract with Saudi Arabia signed by his mother during her period in office. He is already facing litigation under US anti-racketeering laws involving dealings in a Texas fuel company. No wonder Mrs. Thatcher looked like an extra from a Zombie film when she turned up on the first day of conference. People started joking about the Tories having a week at the sleaze-side! Could things get any worse? You bet!. Nearly half the members of the local Associations are over 66 with an average age of 62 according to a new study of the Tory Party called *True Blues* (Seyd & Richardson—OUP). They esti-

mate that membership has dropped by half since 1981 to a figure of 750,000. Hardly a bill of good health, still maybe the conference could repair the damage.

Splits

Splits in the ranks over Europe begun straight away with Norman Lamont (one of the many ex-ministers wandering around Bournemouth) weighing in with a call to consider withdrawal from the EC. Hurd tried to reply with a call against a lurch to the right but it became increasing clear that the delegates were not interested. From then on it was a case of the various contenders to replace Major when he gets the boot making various speeches in code ("clear blue water etc.) to gain support from the party faithful. And what of the conference itself? Who knows! No one bothered to report on what resolutions were moved and passed. The only interest shown was if a delegate got up to have a good rant. Indeed the conference was, so far as the

media was concerned, a complete non event. Since no one cared what was said or passed you can hardly blame them. Only when ministers began to speak did eyes light up—and then only to time the length of the applause they got. The rest of the time was spent hanging around fringe meetings waiting to see if anyone would say anything embarrassing. Such has been the fall in the standing of the Tories, even amongst their own erstwhile supporters, that cameramen were sent in to the Young Tories (ie members under 65) ball to see if the upper class twits would do anything 'entertaining'. One defender of family values duly took the opportunity to lift his kilt (kilt?) and expose himself in front of the mass ranks of the press.

Scandal

Scandal made a triumphant return by the end of the week with allegations that Mrs. Thatcher knew all about the Westminster council 'homes for votes' scandal. Oh dear—how

the mighty have fallen. One disappointing event of the week was John Monks speaking at a fringe meeting. Trade unionists will feel that surely he should have better things to do with his time and our money than to waste air speaking to the enemy.

By Friday all hopes rested on what Major could say in his speech to close conference. Would he jump to the right to appease the crowd or do something different?. In the end the Grey Man presented a world in which living standards would double—over the next twenty five years! Having spent the last 15 reducing the living standards of all but the most wealthy this is somewhat rich coming from him. 'Back to basics' disappeared to be replaced by a wet blanket of a speech with cheery stories about his life and statements of staggering wit and wisdom such as "running a country isn't like walking down a road"!

Trollope

You are in big trouble when you are reduced to saying lines such as; "*I did a lot of my own schooling while off for a year with a shattered leg and the company of Trollope and Jane Austen and Adam Smith and a lot of dull but useful books on banking. Better companions one never had. But I was lucky—not everyone is.*" If you say so, John, if you say so. Of course we should reflect that all this is not simply bad luck but rather shows the deep crisis the Tories and their system are in.

Malaise

The malaise the Tories are in cannot be put down to 'mid term blues' but rather the results of the effect on the economy of the last recession and the sluggish recovery and the impact that has had on people's moral. The middle classes in the Tory heartlands have felt particularly betrayed by the government and some of the most spectacular swings to Labour in elections have been seen in these areas. The sooner there is a general election to clear these characters out the better.



Signalworkers score significant victory

RMT

Now that the full details of the agreement have emerged, it is clear that the signalworkers, through their solid action, have scored a significant victory. On pay, modest advances have been won. But on restructuring, which the media tried to claim the signalworkers opposed in principle when in reality they had been demanding restructuring for sometime, the deal is nothing like what Railtrack were hoping for, but comes very close to the workers demands. In fact, the union's claim has

almost been met.

The original amount Railtrack were willing to spend on restructuring has been doubled. 4 days additional leave has been won. Including consolidation of other payments, Railtrack were prepared to offer a 20% basic rate increase, the signalworkers have won 25%. As a result of these gains, and the solid nature of the strike, the union is now held in very high regard by railworkers. During the course of the dispute, for example, 400 signalworkers have joined the union. An important marker, a bottom line, has now been laid down for other railway grades currently seeking restructuring, in terms of the

agreements details and how they were won. In addition this is a major victory for the unions on the political front. The Tories were prepared to pour millions into defeating this strike as a forerunner to further attacks on the trade union movement and on workers living standards. British Rail lost £100 million; Railtrack a further £100 million and £300 million is estimated to have been lost in connected industries. It was, from the very beginning, an overtly political strike, and therefore this settlement is an important defeat for the government. Now, of course, they are trying to recoup their losses from our pockets. 1,500

white collar workers are facing redundancy nationally. In the South West of England alone, the Swindon and Taunton depots are to close. the Ashton Gate depot, in Bristol, which employed 110 workers at the beginning of 1993, will now be left with just 11. Obviously 11 can't do the work of 110, so a lot of the work is being put out to contract. as a result large sections of routine maintenance work is just being left undone. The Bath Road diesel depot is under threat, putting a further 100 jobs at risk—and all this just in the Bristol area. Clearly Railtrack and the government want to get back not just what they lost in the course of the strike but also what has been taken from them by the union. The fundamental attack on our industry continues and we must continue to fight as the signalworkers did—but this round went to us.

A Bristol RMT activist

London Underground - prepare for the future

The strike by members of RMT on London Underground on the 6/7 October was not the catastrophe that the media would have you believe. After an excellent rally on the 6th at Unity House, activists went out to the stations and depots to man picket lines and talk to staff about the action and the reasons for it. The night shift and early shifts showed their support for the strike by staying away with only a handful of TSSA and non-union members coming to work. Stations were left unmanned, section 12 fire regulations were broken and managers ran signal cabins and stations to try and keep the system going.

If you watched the news you would have thought that 90% of the staff were working. This was not the case but a lot of late turn staff saw the news and started to drift back to work. A number of lessons have been learnt from this action and they will stand us in good stead next time. The management had a central body to plan their response to the strike. They looked at our weak spots and exploited them. We must have a central strike committee to break the Underground up into sections and co-ordinate action in those areas; with up to date communications and access to printing facilities that can produce leaflets etc. at a moments notice. An advice line should operate throughout strike situations which members can

ring if they are worried about management threats, debts, strike updates and so on. The workers on London Underground are facing job cuts and lowering standards of living. Part time work and short term contracts are being used to try and break the unions. We will never be broken. We have regrouped and are ready to fight again when the call comes.

Dick Crossey
RMT London Transport District
Council
(In personal capacity)

Fighting union needed

UNISON, the UK's largest Union, formed on the 1st July 1993 by the merger of NALGO, NUPE and COHSE, is entering it's second year.

While it would be unreasonable to expect a well-oiled machine to have suddenly sprung into existence members have good reason to be disappointed with progress so far. Immediate problems were caused by the bringing together of three distinct and separate bureaucracies. UNISON is now top heavy with too many full time staff and too many buildings for the subscription base. Yet the Leaderships' first actions were to lease additional office space at Centre Point for the General Secretary's department and to propose additional cash for NALGO's old skyscraper HQ off Euston Road. Staff of the union have faced a period of great uncertainty while the leading bureaucrats jockeyed for position. Many were left without job descriptions or defined duties, a situation UNISON members would not tolerate if imposed on them by their employers. Many older full time staff are seeking early retirement or voluntary severance. The ongoing cost of running three organisations has meant a financial crisis. UNISON could not afford the cost of the severance packages that staff were entitled to!

Sign Up

The problem is compounded by the fact that so far 90% of the membership have returned their *Sign Up* mandates allowing subs to be deducted from their wages. This will mean a 10% cut in the Union's income. It is no coincidence that the NEC will be pressing for a 10% subscriptions increase at conference in 1995. Branches should be ready for attempts to seize balances,

held for use locally, in order to finance the HQ deficits. While the *Sign Up Campaign* was a great success in some areas, the results have been patchy. Members in branches which have been under attack have proved reluctant to sign up their dues for the machine that is attacking their branches. Liverpool City Branch has been frozen since early in 1993 and prevented from holding it's AGM. Leeds Council has apparently been told to bypass the local UNISON branch and deal directly with full time staff in the Regional Office. Worst case of all, Sefton, where two lay officials have been hung out to dry by the leadership after a failure by the Regional Office to arrange a ballot for industrial action. UNISON's rulebook states that the union is member lead but the rank and file is clearly going to have to fight every inch of the way in order to assert their role.

Pay

With the *Sign Up Campaign* now over bar the final round up, members will turn their full attention to the various pay campaigns. The trouble is that in local government it looks as though the battle is over before it got properly started! Following a dubious "consultation exercise" the local government sector committee have declared that as only 15% of those covered by the negotiations had said NO to the Employers' offer there will be no national ballot on industrial action. Instead the negotiators will politely ask the Employers to think again! So members could be stuck with a 19 month deal worth 1.7% plus £75 for the next 12 months, followed by 1.4% plus £75 for the remaining 9 months. And if the gentlemen of the AMA refuse to budge? Why then "all other

options, including arbitration" will be considered. It is not too late to turn the situation round as branches are reported demanding the calling of a special conference to decide the matter. The situation in the Health Services seems to be a bit better but where was the linking of both struggles into a common front to challenge the Tory pay policy?

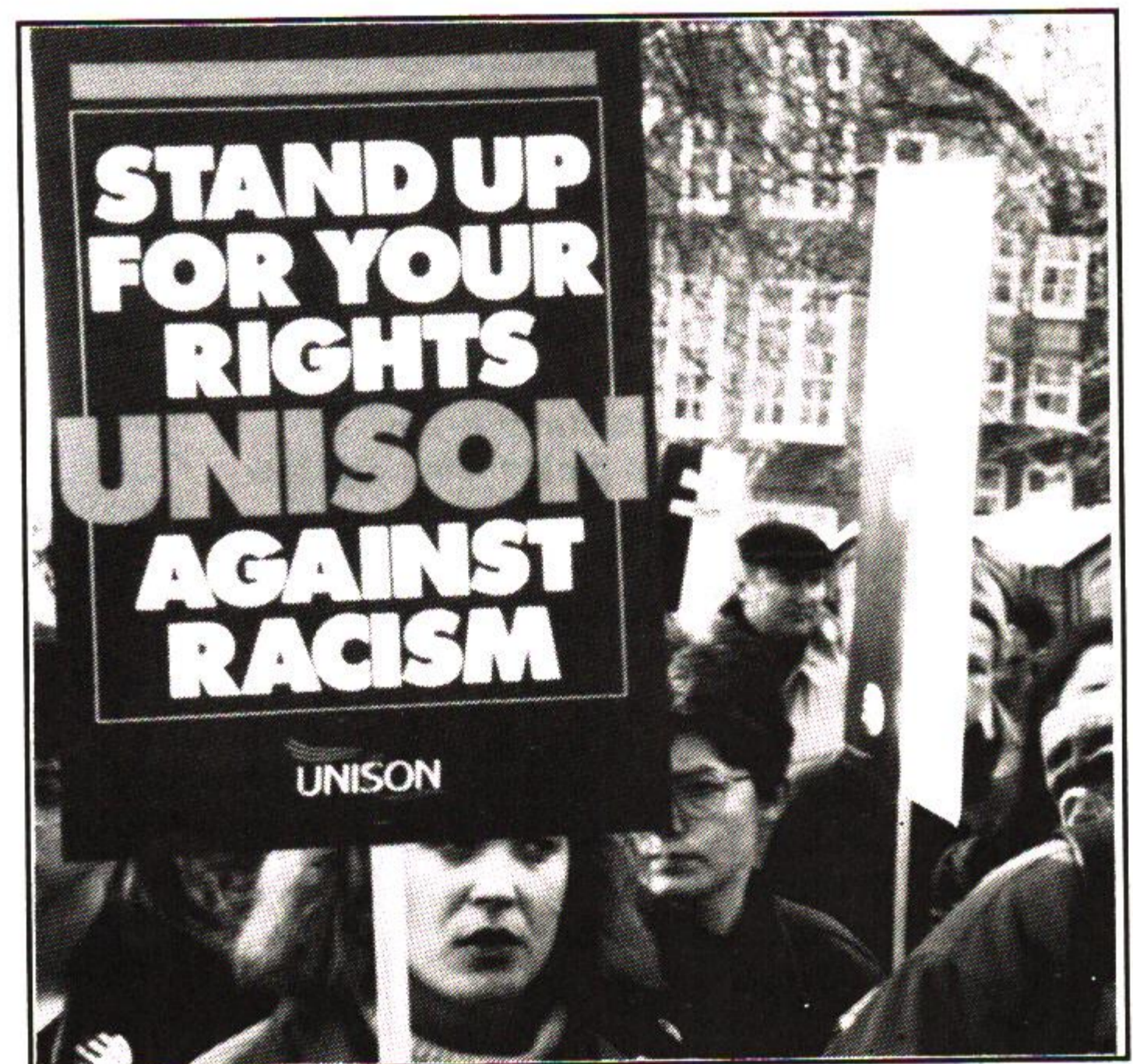
Political Fund

The union could still be embroiled in the pay arguments when UNISON launches it's political fund campaign culminating in a ballot of the entire membership in February 1995. The ballot will be on the continuation of the existing two fund set up, the Affiliated Political Fund (APF) and the General Fund. "*Socialist Appeal*" supporters in UNISON would have preferred the ballot to be on the setting up of one Affiliated Fund. Despite that, we will argue that all members should opt for the Affiliated Political Fund once the ballot is won.

Then a job of work has to be done to ensure that the APF is democratically controlled and carries the view of UNISON into the Labour Party. At the first conference the APF issue exposed tensions between NUPE and COHSE members affiliated to the Labour Party and ex NALGO members who had not been affiliates. There was widespread dissatisfaction with the first conference of the new union but this must not be allowed to permit the bureaucracy to cut the number of delegates or curtail the free debate during conference week. Since the 1st July 1993 progress towards branch mergers has been slow with many obstacles both real and imaginary. One of the most fundamental problems has been the reluctance of existing lay officials to give up their power and influence (and perhaps in some cases the secretary's commission) Uncertainty over the boundaries of the new councils has led to some calls to postpone mergers.

United

But strong, united branches are needed specially at this time. When branches do merge members of the old partner unions find that they are greatly strengthened having, as they do, much in common, While UNISON is faced with all the above problems it also has



enormous potential. The genuine desire for unity has forged a union 1.4 million members strong. Now those members look to the new UNISON to lead the fight in defence of jobs and services. That can only be done if contacts are established, at branch level, and links are built between the various sectors: health, local government, transport, gas, further education etc. While pay in industry generally has risen faster than inflation, pay in the public sector has only increased by 0.8% in real terms.

To add insult to injury the forced introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) and market testing has often led to pay reductions by loss of shifts and premium rates, as well as redundancies.

Reorganisation

Now UNISON members face morale sapping uncertainty due to local government reorganisation and the introduction of the NHS Trusts. This uncertainty will cause tens of thousands of members to demand action from the lead-

ership on their behalf. Faced with a bureaucracy that see the union in terms of bank balances and property rather than members they will look for a focus for their opposition. Starting in London, Lefts in the union have established the Campaign for a Fighting and Democratic UNISON, the CFDU. In time CFDU will form the nucleus of a new Broad Left for UNISON. A Broad Left that is determined not to become the property of any factional grouping. A Broad Left, that learning from past errors, welcomes all left mem-

bers of the Union on a non sectarian basis. The founding conference of the national CFDU will be held in Leeds on the 3rd December. All comrades wanting to see a UNISON we can all be proud of will want to attend.

**Gray Allan, Secretary,
Falkirk District UNISON
(personal capacity)**

.....
UNISON Health workers conference...

Start the fightback now!

The main issues at this year's conference, held in Bournemouth at the end of September, were over pay, as expected.

Composite B, moved by Blackpool, and including motions from Southampton and Clwyd, was passed by conference despite opposition from the Service Group Executive. Its contents called for:-

- The reversal of moves towards local pay bargaining and imposition of Trust employment contracts.
- The reversal of the internal market in health care and damaging competition between Trusts for services.
- An end to competitive tendering of support services.
- An end to arbitrary performance related pay and a decent consolidated rate of pay for the post.
- A reversal of government policy of refusing to fund pay awards.

Conference, as part of this composite, also noted that UNISON's profile on behalf of low paid health workers was "so low-key as to be invisible" and called upon the senior officers of the union to activate a campaign, nationally, aimed at highlighting the scandalous plight of its members in health care."

Conference also recognised the need to carry the campaign up and including industrial action to force the Tories to effect these reversals.

In another rare defeat for the platform, motion 27 on privatisation was passed overwhelmingly, calling for "the next Labour government to return all privatised services to NHS with no compensation for contractors and all members who have been victims of privatisation to be compensated by those contractors." The fact that this radical motion was passed despite the beseeching intervention of a National Officer calling for dele-

gates to reject owing to the "legal mine field that such a policy would create for a Labour government", demonstrated that UNISON members are prepared to be bold to defeat the Tories and wish their leaders to be less supine and start the fight back now.

**Steve Holmes
UNISON Delegate
(In personal capacity)**

Campaign for a Fighting, Democratic Unison

**Launch Conference
Saturday 3 December
10am - 4pm**

**Swathmore Centre, 4 Woodhouse Square,
Leeds 3**

**Details: CFDU c/o G. Kelly, Bromley Unison, Civic Centre, Stockwell
Close, Bromley, BR1 3UH
081 464 3333 ext 3273**

BT CUSTOMER IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME...

LONDON SAYS NO TO CSIP SELL-OUT

Words cannot adequately express the utter confusion, sense of betrayal and anger felt by union members on hearing about the 'provisional agreement' between the NCU and BT on CSIP. On learning about the Union Executives' fundamental shift in position from one of opposing BT's CSIP proposals to one of voting to recommend them to the members effected in another consultative ballot, disbelief—followed by "we've been sold-out"—was the most common retort.

•Confusion: because the exact terms of the agreement are still unknown 3 weeks after the deal was confirmed by the Unions' Executive.

•Betrayal: because the agreement will allow BT to make changes to members' conditions of employment thrown out less than a month ago by UKCFS engineers registering an 85% vote against the CSIP plan in a consultative ballot. Additionally, NCU Annual Conference policies have been contravened and the Union's absolute 'bottom line', established at a special CSIP forum held at the TUC in London on September 3rd, was disregarded by our negotiators—and some Executive members—in the face of pressure to do a deal.

•Anger: because the deal will severely worsen the working, family and social lives of the members involved and set a

precedent for management to quickly introduce similar adverse working conditions in other divisions. Our leaders have allowed BT to fatally wound and divide the Union and its members, leaving the way clear for BT to rule their entire workforce by decree. Our leadership should have had more confidence in the membership and less in BT. After all, a sizable majority of members demonstrated their willingness to fight CSIP by refusing to sign 'options' and 'variations of contract' in the face of extreme pressure from management.

Rejection

BT were also clearly implementing CSIP without union agreement following the members 6 to 1 rejection of BT's proposals. At this juncture (7/9/94) the Branch wrote to Tony Young, NCU General Secretary, and all Executive members asking that: "In view of the following developments on CSIP, ie: —BT proceeding to introduce CSIP attendance patterns and associated conditions without NCU agreement; —further coercion of members by BT management to declare and agree to one of the proposed CSIP attendance options; The TIC acts in accordance with proposition E59 carried at 1994 Annual Conference and conducts an immediate industrial action ballot of the membership."

It is a fact that at this stage the Executive did not carry out their responsibilities as defined by the Unions rule book.

This states that the "National Executive council shall carry out all instructions arising out of propositions effecting pay and conditions carried at main Annual Conference" (Rule 9 para x). This gives the COLE Branch the right to assert that the membership were most definitely, without any doubt whatsoever, sold short, let down and sold out! COLE Branch members also find the result of the second CSIP consultative ballot incredible, and they have a right to! Why was it that an 82% turnout in the first ballot dropped to 53% in the second? Was it because a different process was used? Was it that members, feeling sold out, could not be bothered to participate? Without a satisfactory explanation on this point members will no longer have faith in the Union as a democratic organisation. The future well-being of the union demands that a satisfactory answer be forthcoming from the NCU leadership on this question.

Voluntary

The basis of the agreement is that movement onto CSIP attendance patterns will be voluntary with members having the right to remain on their normal contracts of employment. But, like all dealings with BT these days, its not quite that simple. The problem is that

although the union has sacrificed many of our original requirements to get a deal, BT still refuses to allow staff to continue working their existing Scheduled Day Off (SDO) attendance patterns. The 10 Executive members who voted to undermine 27,000 UKCFS engineers conditions of employment by agreeing to BT's CSIP proposals cannot argue that they did so to safeguard members' existing contracts and attendance patterns. They had in front of them a letter from management in which Peter Archer, BT's Director for Employee Relations, stated: "I have to reiterate the company declaration that, at the conclusion of the voluntary option phases, the company will critically review the position with regard to existing 'scheduled day off' arrangements in this work area...in our current view there will be no need for 'scheduled off days' on Monday to Friday attendance patterns in the work area covered by CSIP."

Acceptance

Overlooking clear messages like the above from management is bad enough but when you combine this with the Executive's acceptance in a letter to Mr. Archer from Tony Young dated 21 September that: "If agreement is concluded the NCU will fully support the change (CSIP) to enable BT to meet customer service commitments and in doing so recognises the need for members to meet those needs." then the NEC could have been in no doubt about BT's intentions. This is totally inexcusable. Members will ask are those 10 NEC members who delivered 27,000 members into the jaws of ruthless exploitation by their employers prepared to accept the same treatment and working conditions for themselves? To date none have volunteered or declared an 'option'.! Given the situation, branches of the NCU in London decided that they could not recommend the provisional agreement and therefore advised members to vote against it in the latest ballot. Management have made it quite clear that in a very short space of time they will move to

take away SDO's and encourage staff to move from normal 5 day week working onto CSIP Options. Make no mistake, this will result in lost days-off and premium overtime rates of pay on both weekdays and at weekends.

The deal will mean:

- No absolute right for members to remain on their existing attendance patterns.
- No long term pay protection for displaced ST's and TI's.
- No permanent premium payments for rostered Saturday attendance.
- No premium payments for rostered out of normal conditioned hours weekday attendance.
- No reduction in the working week.

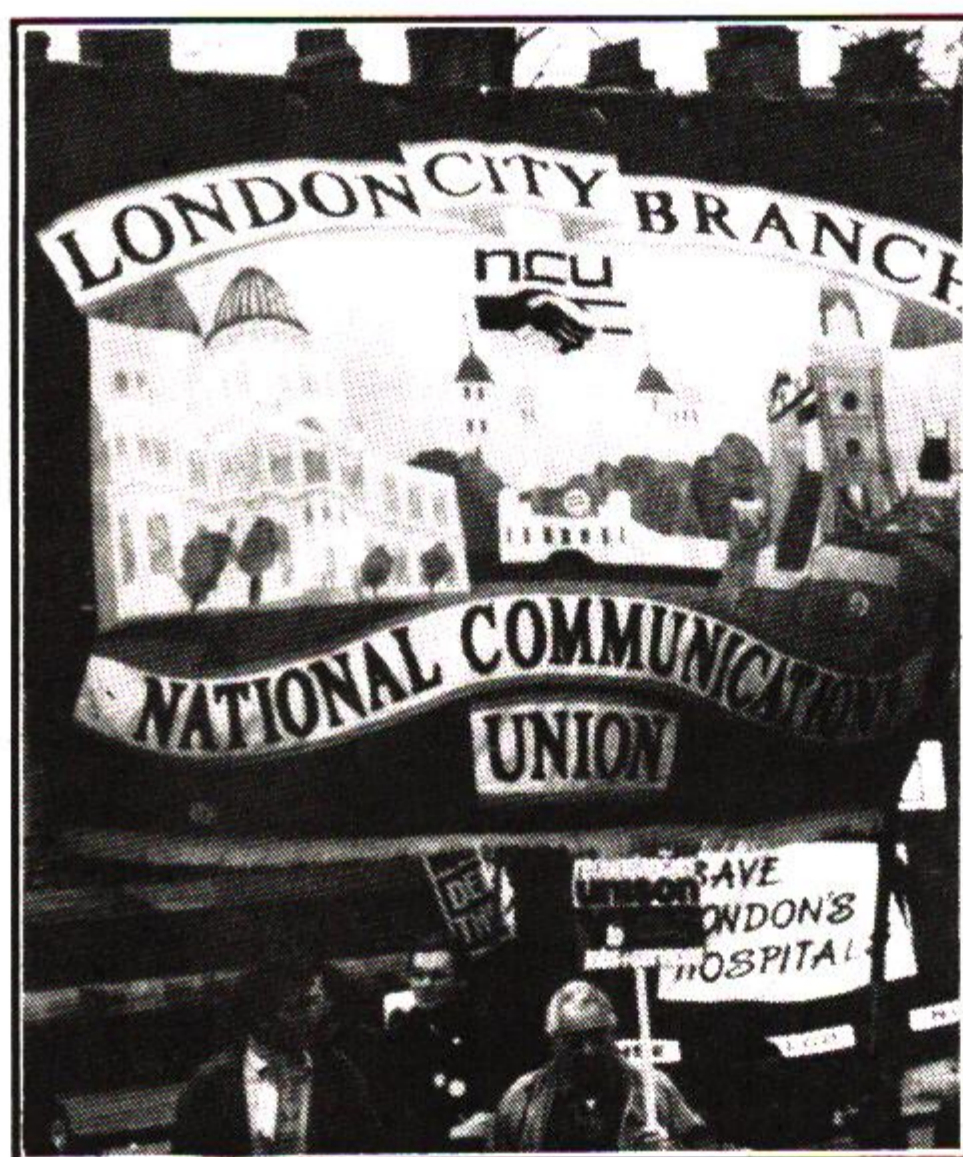
No doubt the deal done will lead to many other regressive conditions of employment. When Tony Young finally makes copies of the collective agreement' available to branches and members we will at least then—albeit far too late—be in a position to judge objectively for ourselves exactly how detrimental CSIP will be for BT workers.

Two vitally important questions Tony Young must ultimately answer are:

- Firstly, why the full terms of the collective agreement were not made known to members effected when they were asked to vote in the second consultative ballot for the deal done?
- Secondly, why are the members still being asked to sign individual 'variation of contract' forms if the union has secured a collective agreement to cover and protect 27,000 members?

In the interests of the union there must be no further delay here—members are demanding an answer to these questions now!

Gary Heather
NCU (In Personal Capacity)



Leadership must stand up to BT Management

The Broad Left has a majority on the Engineering Executive and a major part of their election campaign centred around opposition to BT's plans on attendance patterns (CSIP) unless we got a substantial cut in working hours and a guarantee on overtime payments in return.

From the start it was clear that there was absolutely nothing in the proposals that would benefit NCU members. The new patterns basically mean that unless engineers are prepared to move onto an attendance pattern that includes weekend working as part of their normal week they will lose their long held right to either a 9 day fortnight or 14 day three week. The question that activists and members are asking is why did four of the Broad Left Executive members suddenly decide that they could recommend the deal when it was obvious that the membership was in total opposition to it. This was clear not only from the ballot result which had an 80% turnout (a phenomenal amount for a postal ballot) with 85% voting to reject the proposals, but also from the mass meetings held across London and in other parts of the country. The membership understood that they would have

to fight to defend their working conditions and many branches were calling on the Executive to ballot immediately for industrial action as BT were insisting that they were going ahead with the new patterns anyway. BT set a deadline for Friday 16 September to get everyone signed up for the new attendance pattern and local managers put a tremendous amount of pressure on people to do this. Despite this the vast majority of members stood firm and refused to sign an option. Activists and members were stunned to hear on the morning of Monday 19 September that there was talk of a deal being struck. Several activists from London went to NCU HQ on the morning of the next day to make their views clear to the Engineering Executive. The Executive meeting lasted until 3.30 am Wednesday and consisted mainly of the General Secretary making hurried phone calls to BT's management and claiming to the Executive that the new patterns were now 'voluntary'. Without having seen anything in writing the Engineering Executive voted by 10 to 8 to recommend the deal to the membership. The actions of the four Broad Left members who went along with the deal were decisive; without their vote the

Executive would have not been in a position to recommend the deal. You cannot help but wonder if this showed a lack of confidence in the membership and a fear of the repercussions of industrial action. Members elect a leadership to give a direction in defence of working conditions, not to appear to capitulate to management as soon as the crunch comes. We have seen such things time and time again in the movement. It is vital that all leaders in the trade union movement receive the same salary as the workers they seek to represent, and that they are constantly accountable to those workers, in order to prevent them from becoming removed from the lifestyle of their members and more interested in defending their own positions than fighting on behalf of workers. For NCU members the priority now is to defend those members who do not wish to change their patterns and fight to ensure that our leaders will in the future stand up to a management who will undoubtedly have seen this disgraceful sell-out as a green light for yet further attacks.

Mary Hanson
NCU (In personal capacity)

At the Labour Party's Blackpool conference... Media hype can't hide underlying tensions

This years Labour Party conference was overshadowed by Tony Blair's announcement that the Labour leadership was to propose the "modernisation" of Labour's constitution. This attempt to abolish "Clause Four" will undoubtedly dominate Labour and union politics for the next 12 months. However, despite all the media "hype" of Blair's speech, we saw the existence of underlying tensions on a whole number of issues throughout the week. Ironically, it may well be on these issues, under a Blair led Labour government, that a movement of opposition will build up within the unions and party.

On a minimum wage and on full employment, the leadership preferred to equivocate, refusing to come up with any concrete policies and implicitly signalling that they would not rock the capitalist boat. In fact most of the speeches from the leadership were not directed at the party at all, but to big business, interpreted for them by Blair's "spin doctors" and media entourage. Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown stated that a minimum wage "sensibly introduced" will work, but "if it isn't, it will cause problems." Problems for who, Gordon? What he really means is that the leadership are not prepared to agree to the £4 per hour minimum proposed by the TGWU - they prefer something more "realistic" like £3. Yes, £3 per hour! Let's see Tony Blair live on that!

Guilty

Bill Morris summed up most ordinary delegates feelings, "If its a crime to stand up for the low paid, I am guilty." Unfortunately, the leadership were too busy wining and dining with the "captains of industry" to stand up for anyone. Brown even introduced some new terminology in his attempt to get away from "old style Labour-talk." He talked about the "undeserving rich," - what he really

wants to say is that it is OK to be rich, as long as you are of the "deserving" variety. Presumably the "deserving rich" include Mercury Communications, Motorola, Safeway, Glaxo, the British Airports Authority and Littlewoods Pools - all represented at a £350 a head "power breakfast" with Gordon during the conference week! On full employment too, the leadership has refused to come forward with any concrete policies. In reality their commitment will last as long as the day after the next general election. In the words of GMB leader, John Edmonds, "Pretty soon people will want to know where the new jobs will come from, and how many, and how quickly." He urged the leadership to "mix some concrete in with the rhetoric."

Socialist policy

Arthur Scargill, speaking at a packed National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign meeting really showed the way forward on the issue when he argued, "a socialist policy to defeat unemployment would be the immediate introduction of a four day week without loss of pay, a ban on compulsory overtime and retirement at 55 on full pay."

It was clear that on these two issues alone tensions are already present. Tensions which will explode if a Labour government fails to deliver on low pay and unemployment.

And then, on Tuesday afternoon, came Blair's speech. His first as leader, he had the opportunity to explain what Labour will do when it gets into office. How will it tackle the problems of poverty, unemployment, homelessness, crumbling schools and hospitals, and all the other problems created by 15 years of "free market" Toryism?

But activists would have to listen long and hard. The "sound-bites" were aimed at the media not the movement.

What little policy there was we could well do without. Voluntary community service for the young unemployed, only a day after the leadership had opposed the restoration of benefits to 16 and 17 year olds, must seem like a sick joke!

"Law and order"

And then there were all those glib statements - Labour the "party of law and order?" Contracts for new prisons given out to "the Savoy." "If teachers can't teach then they shouldn't be teaching." Statements which clearly expose Blair not as "new Labour", but more "old copy of the Daily Telegraph."

There was nothing on economic policy, on how we can get full employment or how we will finance a real regeneration of the countries economy and manufacturing base. He attacked the dogma of the free market and then advocated it in the same breath!

And then his attack on Clause Four. Left deliberately ambiguous in his speech in order to save his standing ovation - it was fleshed out by the "spin doctors" who worked hard explaining to the media what

Tony really meant. His speech and attack on socialism was hailed as a victory in the papers and on TV. But two days later conference voted to reaffirm the party's support for Clause Four - a vote the leadership, true democrats, declared to be unimportant. That vote, and the election of Campaign Group members

Dennis Skinner and Diane Abbott, shows that the right wing are not going to have a clear run. The attempt to "sanitize" the Labour Party and ditch its commitment to socialism will be fought all the way. A new Labour government will face enormous problems. Unless it is prepared to break with capitalism then it will be a government of crisis, unable to tackle any of the problems faced by millions of working class people. Blair is signalling that rather than break with capitalism he will follow it's dictates. This will mean a collision course with union and party activists. No amount of media hype can prevent it.

The tensions that exist, sometimes hidden, at other times explicit, will explode. It is on the basis of that explosion that the left can really emerge to challenge for the leadership of the Labour Party once again and commit it to a genuine socialist programme capable of dealing with unemployment, low pay and all the other horrors of 1990's capitalism.

Alastair Wilson



A conference delegate gives his view on this year's conference...

Labour leaders missed opportunity

"I thought I was a bit of a moderate, but they've turned me into a left winger," this was the response of Nicola, a young delegate at Labour Party conference.

With the Tories at a record low in the opinion polls and riven by internal dissent, Labour's new leadership had a perfect opportunity to outline a clear socialist programme, which could drive the Tories out of office and bring Labour to power with a landslide majority. However, Blair and Brown seem more than content to simply water down Labour's existing policy commitments. Instead of public ownership, we were offered public "control." Instead of an analysis of the crisis of British capitalism, merely a "new partnership" of capital and labour. Throughout conference there were constant attempts by the leadership to avoid committing themselves to any specific spending plans.

Universal benefits

Composite 8 which called for "opposition to all moves towards testing, whether of child benefit or the tying of unemployment benefit to workfare schemes" and reaffirmed "universal benefits as the lynch pins of the welfare state and the fight against poverty," was remitted following a concerted campaign by the NEC. The justification for this was opposition to "piecemeal policy making." Conference must remain the highest policy making body of the Labour Party, instead policy making has been gradually usurped by the NEC and the shadow cabinet.

Activists in many trade unions would be angered by the party leadership's lightminded view of the decisions of the membership. What did composite 8 call for? "The restoration of rights to benefit for 16 and 17 year olds... abolish the charges for initial eye tests, dental examinations and

prescription charges for sufferers of asthma." These are minimal advances which would receive overwhelming support from workers.

Commitment

Equally the leadership refused to make a firm commitment to scrap all the Tory trade union laws as contained in composite 13 which asked conference to "declare its determination to continue to campaign for the repeal of all anti trade union legislation introduced by the Tory government since 1979 and urges the movement to refuse to cooperate with laws which are designed to render ineffective the rule books and constitution of trade unions together with the democratic rights of members." Despite being heavily defeated on a card vote this composite

programme is an essential step towards the elimination of nuclear weapons worldwide."

Socialist Appeal has explained consistently that the end of the 1980's boom and the following world recession mark a fundamental change in society. General strikes and big movements of workers have taken place throughout Europe. The same process has affected Britain, but as yet has been reflected more on the political front with the collapse of Tory support. The election of Dennis Skinner and Diane Abbott to the NEC marks the first gain for the left at this level for some years. Both Tony Benn and Skinner alluded during the week to the changed political situation. Benn pointed out that "for the first time, the leadership of the Labour Party are lagging behind the understanding of ordinary

There will be an increasing pressure on the leadership to introduce significant reforms under the next Labour government.

Potentially this vote represents the shortest honeymoon period for any Labour leader in history. Blair and Prescott together with their advisers have a clear choice, fight the Tories or plunge the party into a year of internal dispute.

generated the greatest level of spontaneous applause of the whole week reflecting the support of activists for the fighting spirit expressed by the mover Arthur Scargill.

Once again the leadership were defeated on the nuclear issue. Composite 49 which called for Labour's front bench to "stand by the condemnation of Britain's Trident programme as expressed at the 1993 Labour Party conference... (the) scrapping of the Trident weapons pro-

working people." Skinner pointed out to the big turnouts at public meetings he attended including 500 at one university. Yet, Tony Blair chose this conference to launch his attack on clause four. As one journalist explained "the loudest sound at the end of Blair's speech was the sound of pennies dropping." Within 45 hours of finishing his speech however, Blair was narrowly but significantly defeated on composite 57 which while reaffirming clause four went on to note "with concern that the electoral strate-

gy currently being pursued by the shadow cabinet places little emphasis on this constitutional aim... accordingly conference resolves to reinstate into Labour's manifesto the commitment to bring about a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of wealth and power in favour of working people and instructs that the popular objective of public ownership be fully incorporated into the party's policies." There will be an increasing pressure on the leadership to introduce significant reforms under the next Labour government. Potentially this vote represents the shortest honeymoon period for any Labour leader in history. Blair and Prescott together with their advisers have a clear choice, fight the Tories or plunge the party into a year of internal dispute. The attack on clause four must be met by a concerted campaign in all the CLPs, ward meetings, trade union branches and Young Labour groups.

Limits

The election of Blair marked a further shift to the right in the Labour Party leadership, but there are limits under present day conditions to how far this movement can go or how protracted it will be. This year's conference was marked by a certain mood of struggle, reflecting the RMT strike and the struggle to oppose Post Office privatisation etc. Together with the response to the attack on clause four, these are the first signs of a process which will lead to the transformation of the Labour Party over the next few years, particularly under the next Labour government.

A conference delegate

Defend Clause Four, Defend Socialism!

The campaign to defend Clause 4 has got off to a flying start! The mood in the rank and file of the party has been very critical of the right-wing's attempts to ditch socialism. All over the country, ward and union branches, CLPs and other bodies have begun to pass resolutions in defence of Clause Four.

Arthur Scargill, Dennis Skinner, and other Labour leaders have joined forces in a Campaign called "Defend Clause 4, Defend Socialism". A well attended meeting was held at Labour Party Conference to launch the initiative. In a statement signed by Scargill, Skinner and the secretaries of the Socialist Campaign Group of MPs, the Network, and the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, it explained "we joined the Labour Party because of its commitment to public ownership, trade union rights, progressive taxation and a welfare state. We believe that any diminishing of these principles will deprive an incoming Labour Government of the force needed to reverse the Tory attacks of the last 15 years."

Sponsor forms for the campaign, petitions, plus model resolutions are being dispatched to all areas. It is vital that they are taken to every section of the Labour movement.

A Labour movement rally and conference is being held on Saturday, 12th November in London to galvanise support. This will also be a key opportunity to put the threads together and plan out the detailed interventions in each trade union and Labour Party. There must be a maximum turn-out from all areas!

Further information from:

Clause Four Campaign,
NUM Offices
2 Huddersfield Road,
Barnsley,
South Yorkshire,
S70 2IS

telephone: 0226 284006

Bexley Unison

The following resolution was passed at the October branch meeting of the Unison A Branch in Bexley for consideration by the London Affiliated Political Fund Forum:

"The London Affiliated Political Forum expresses its deep concern at the divisive and totally unnecessary rift that will open up in the the Labour Party as a result of Tony Blair's unexpected attack on clause 4 part 4 of the constitution at the 1994 conference.

At a time when the Conservative government is deeply unpopular amongst the electorate the key task for Labour is a landslide victory at the next election.

The perception of a divided party squabbling over constitutional issues will be played up by the Tory media and is the last thing that the party needs at this moment in time.

We would, therefore, urge Unison representatives at all levels of the party to exert maximum pressure within the party in an attempt to persuade the Labour leadership to reconsider the wisdom of pursuing this course of action.

Failing this the London Affiliated Political Forum should draft a motion to the 1995 APF national conference urging the Unison APF nationally to reaffirm its commitment to clause 4 part 4 of the constitution."

If you have any news, reports, resolutions, etc. for the *campaign to defend Clause Four* then send them to; Socialist Appeal, PO Box 2626, London, N1 6DU or fax to 071 251 1095.

National Rally and Conference, London, Sat 12 Nov., 1pm

Defend Clause Four! Defend Socialism!

Speakers: Arthur Scargill, Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner, and other Labour Movement speakers.

**St. Aloysius Social Club,
20 Phoenix Road, London, NW1 1TA**

“Tough on capitalism.. tough on the causes of capitalism”

Within 48 hours of Tony Blair's statement calling for the rewriting of the constitution and the 'modernisation' of clause four, the leadership lost the vote on composite 57, which reaffirmed support for clause four, showing support for Labour's old ideas.

The leadership played down this vote by saying that it was passed because delegates were mandated by their local parties and unions. Although if these mandates were given, there must be considerable support for the clause and for socialist ideas within the party.

Glasgow Maryhill delegate, Jim Mearns, in his speech to conference moving the composite said that he was "proud of socialism, proud of the Labour Party, proud of clause four... socialism is very much alive and well, striding forward with victory in sight." Paraphrasing Blair he went on to say "let's be tough on capitalism and tough on the causes of capitalism."

Radical

Even Jane Carroll, who opposed the motion said that the electorate had more radical views than the Labour leadership.

David Winnick, MP for Walsall combatted the right wing's claim that the clause will block a Labour victory in 1997, "In 1959-60 we were told that unless we deleted clause four we would never win another election and we won in 1964, 1966 and twice in 1974, with clause four intact." Even the Guardian suggested (7.10.94) that "the vote provides lessons which the Labour leadership cannot ignore... contrary to Blair's claim of it being a mere blip to be ironed out next year." The policy of nationalisation cannot be abandoned, Labour must offer a real alternative to

the Tories, not only by blocking the privatisation of the railways and post office, but fight to renationalise the vital industries privatised by the Tories.

Debate

Labour leaders have said the decision will depend upon a year of discussion and debate. We call upon

the Campaign Group MPs Dennis Skinner and Diane Abbott newly elected to the NEC to lead a mass campaign to defend clause four, the party's historic commitment to socialism. The argument was summed up by Jim Mearns: "Let's continue to state firmly and clearly what the Labour Party is, about - socialism. Do more than sing about it, let's do it. Raise the scarlet standard high and keep the Red Flag flying here."

Jonny Scott

Socialist Appeal's new 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 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

The third in the *In Defence of Marxism* series, looks at the situation in Ireland after the IRA ceasefire. Essential reading for every activist!

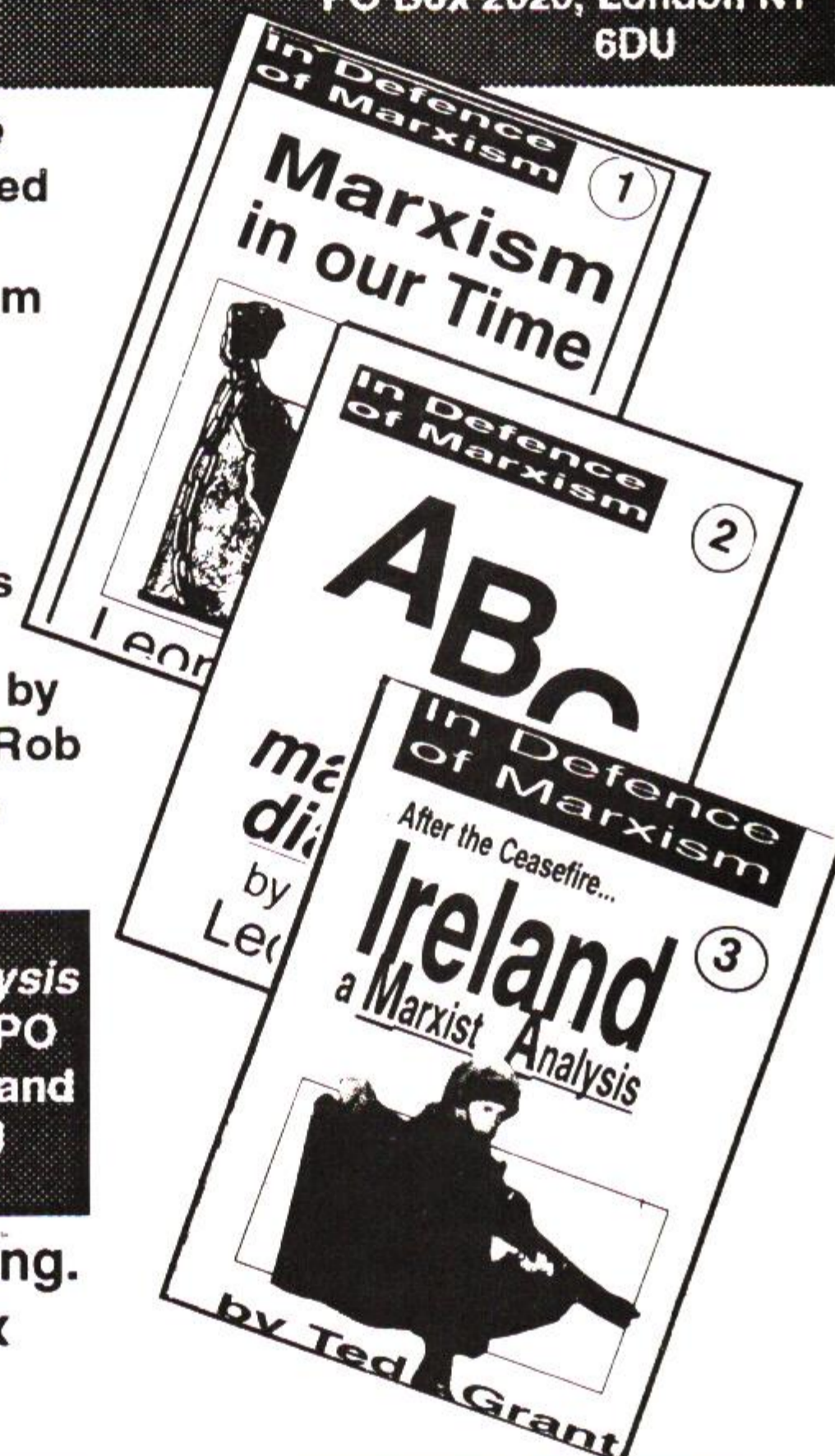
The second title in the series is available now! *The ABC of Materialist Dialectics* contains Trotsky's classic article which is a clear and vital explanation of Marxist philosophy as well as a new introduction by Socialist Appeal editorial board member Rob Sewell and an appendix by John Pickard.

After the Ceasefire - Ireland: a Marxist Analysis
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

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The Origins of Clause 4

THE HERALD
THE NATIONAL LABOUR WEEKLY

LABOUR KEEPS THE RED FLAG FLYING

Clause 4, Part 4 of Labour's constitution was adopted by the Labour Party conference in 1918 against a background of workers struggles and revolutionary movements which swept across Europe after the end of the First World War. It was also a landmark in the achievement by the working class in Britain of a political party based on the labour movement which could challenge the parties of the establishment—the Tories and Liberals for government. In fact, in the elections following the end of the War, Labour was to replace the Liberals as the main opposition and by 1924 was in a position to form a minority government. However, the Labour Party constitution was not written by revolutionaries. It was written by Sydney and Beatrice Webb who had come into the Labour Party from a Liberal background and were committed to social reform,

state planning and a welfare state but they did not favour workers control of industry or indeed even industrial action for political aims. Their views were acceptable to the more farsighted representatives of British capitalism, who not only feared revolution from below but also wanted to jettison 19th century laissez-faire capitalism which they believed was wrecking British industry and condemning large sections of the population to poverty and insecurity leading to dangerous levels of social instability.

Modernisers

Hence the modernisers of the 1920s and 1930s favoured more state intervention and even public ownership! This is the background to the adoption of Clause 4, Part 4 by the Labour Party. The first decade of the 20th Century had seen an enormous growth in the strength and mili-

tancy of the labour movement. This had been reflected in the growth of the trade unions, the Labour Party and the number of Labour MPs in Parliament. Between 1911 and 1914 all the major sections of the working class; the Transport Workers' Federation, the railwaymen and the miners came out on strike. Many of these strikes began unofficially—the leaders were forced to declare them official in order to maintain their hold over the unions and to try to prevent the initiative from passing to the rank and file militants. There were moves to amalgamate the 3 main unions (railwaymen, transport, miners) into one 'Triple Alliance'.

In contrast to these spectacular years of class struggle came the treacherous decision announced by the Labour leaders on August 4th 1914. This goes down in history as a black day for the labour movement—the day when the representatives of the German Social Democratic Party in the Reichstag voted to support the First World War. In Britain, similarly, the majority of Labour MPs and trade union leaders supported the government of British Imperialism. These decisions destroyed the Socialist International. It meant that the workers of the world were divided between two imperialist powers, neither of which represented their interests. As Rosa Luxemburg said: "The slogan of the International has become 'workers of the world unite but slit each other's throat in wartime'."

The labour movement was to find out that failure to oppose the ruling class in wartime, a time of acute economic crisis for capitalism, meant in effect to support every measure taken by the ruling class to inflict defeat

on the workers. Capitalism and its representatives in Parliament demanded in the name of the 'national interest', not only that the Labour leaders sacrifice the interests of the working class to those of big business, but that the Labour leaders themselves should be responsible for carrying out these attacks on trade union rights and living standards.

The ruling class will again cynically use a Labour government to carry out cuts caused by the crisis of capitalism at a time when the Tories have become discredited with the voters. That is why there is so much pressure on the Labour leadership now to abandon the socialist aims of the Party. They realise that it is highly unlikely that the Tories will win the next election.

The result was that the Labour leaders became part of the capitalist state. Within months they were supporting measures such as the Munitions Act, which made all strikes illegal and forbade wage increases without government approval, and came to accept compulsory conscription and the government's war aims. It was no accident, however, that the Labour leaders betrayed the working class in this way. Eight years in

Radical

Parliament had shown that many of them saw the Labour Party as a radical appendage of the Liberal Party and thought that there was no fundamental conflict between them and the representatives of capitalism. The outbreak of war had brought the crisis to a head for the ruling class, it meant that they were no longer able to make concessions to the workforce. The Labour leadership had two alternatives: one was to mobilise the labour movement, to appeal to the conscripted soldiers against their officers, in order to defeat the government and replace it with a socialist one. The other alternative was to accept the continuation of imperialist rule and the horrors of the war. They chose the latter and preferred to see the workers of Britain and Germany fight each other rather than lead a struggle against their own ruling class.

Nevertheless the traditions of socialism were kept alive within the ranks of the labour movement, despite constant intimidations.

tion from the police, the Independent Labour Party and smaller groups such as the Socialist Labour Party campaigned against the war. In areas like Clydeside trade union membership increased by 300%. The Miners Federation did not accept the Treasury Agreement limiting strikes, nor did the Amalgamated Society of Engineers and by 1915 the number of strikes had begun to increase. The Miners' Federation, disgruntled at the demands of the mineowners for shorter holidays and suspension of the 8 Hours Act, struck for a 20% increase in wages and, despite opposition from the state, they won.

Traditions

The fight against the policies of the Labour leaders and to defend the traditions of socialism was taken up by the rank and file of the movement. This began as a struggle to transform the Labour Party and the trade unions. Within the unions a lead in defending workers' living standards was given by the shop stewards movement. The formation of the Clyde Workers' Committee and the organising of engineers in the North and Midlands by the ASE shop stewards were examples of the developing movement. In May 1917 a national conference of shop stewards was organised. By this time the state and the Labour leaders were incapable of holding back the working class. Alongside industrial unrest there were mutinies in the army; at Dover, Folkestone and in Egypt 'Soldiers' Councils' were set up. Even the police attempted to strike. But it was not just the discontent with worsening conditions that led to a potentially revolutionary situation in Britain after the war, but also the events in Russia. The overthrow of the Czar's regime in February 1917 and the setting up of the Soviets by the workers and peasants had provided the inspiration, the hope and the leadership which the world working class had been waiting for in their fight against exploitation. Support for the Russian Revolution in the British labour movement was shown by the Leeds Conference of the 3rd June 1917 called by the United Socialist Council and attended by 1150 delegates. The main resolution carried reflected the influence of events in Russia. It

called upon the constituent bodies of the labour movement 'to establish in every town...councils of workmen and soldiers' delegates for initiating and coordinating working class activity...and to work strenuously for a peace made by the peoples' of the various countries and for the 'complete political and economic emancipation of international labour.'

In October, the national conference of the Metal Engineering and Shipbuilding Committees met. It announced its support for the Bolshevik revolution and called on the government to accept their peace terms. Despite the appeal of the Bolshevik revolution and the resulting revolutionary strikes which swept Europe in the years 1917-20, none of the groups such as the British Socialist Party, or the Socialist Labour Party, were strong enough to take advantage of the situation in order to lead the working class to power. Instead, despite the call for Workers' Councils,

movement in that it did not mention the demand for 'workers control' which had enormous support within the labour movement at the time.

New Order

The same was true of 'Labour and the New Order' adopted by Labour Party conference in 1918. It expressed the socialist aspirations of the rank and file, but without explaining how they could be implemented. It called for a minimum wage, a 48 hour week, a million houses to be built within 2 years, with capital supplied free of interest from the government, a publicly owned and integrated transport system, a wealth tax and vast increases in public services. It also called for full employment which the Webbs said could be achieved by "nothing more revolutionary" than a programme of public works. The right wing Labour leaders, however, did not take into account the vested interests of the capitalist class which

Labour movement had to put this into practice. In April 1920, the London dockers refused to load the 'Jolly George' with ammunition and other supplies to Poland intended to be used against Russia. Eventually the pressure of the organised labour movement with over 350 councils of action mobilised by the TUC and the Labour Party forced the government to retreat on its policy of aggression against Soviet Russia. The British labour movement had shown that it was potentially the most powerful force in society. The events which took place between 1917-20 are an inspiration to the labour movement today. They completely give the lie to the myth that the working class in this country is not prepared to take action to change society.

Opposition

Attempts to remove Clause Four, Part Four from the Labour Party constitution will be met with opposition from the rank and file of the Party. It is ironic that at a time when the ideological baggage of the 1980s is becoming discredited that the Labour leadership should feel the need to remove the commitment to public ownership from Labour's programme. The policies of privatisation, monetarism, deregulation and the 'free market economy' have led to the enrichment of a few causing the majority of the population to face the threat of poverty and increasing insecurity just as they did in the 19th Century. Havoc has been caused in the countries of Western Europe, but the damage done in Third World countries and Eastern Europe has been even more severe. Now is the ideal time for the Labour Party to put socialism back on the agenda. After all it did not lead to defeat in the 1920s. Having been set up as a new political party organised on a national basis in 1918 Labour went on to form a government in 1924 and came to challenge the parties representing the establishment in Britain. This was a remarkable achievement for a party whose roots went back less than 20 years to the setting up in 1906 of the Labour Representation Committee.

Barbara Humphries

This is the significance of Clause 4 for socialists in the Labour Party today; that it was forced onto the leadership of the party by the pressure of the rank and file. Today it is the rank and file of the Party who will fight to keep Clause 4 and struggle for its implementation by the next Labour government.

the majority of the working class turned to its traditional organisations, the Labour Party and the trade unions. These organisations were pushed far to the left, by the pressure and mood of the working class.

Struggle

This is when the Labour Party adopted Clause 4. This is the significance of Clause 4 for socialists in the Labour Party today; that it was forced onto the leadership of the party by the pressure of the rank and file. Today it is the rank and file of the Party who will fight to keep Clause 4 and struggle for its implementation by the next Labour government. At the same time however, Clause 4 was a compromise with the rank and file of the

would have to be overcome. Although the document spoke of the 'socialisation of industry', the bulk of industry was to remain in private hands. To be nationalised were the railways, mines and electricity only—to be followed later on by canals, roads, shipping, insurance, breweries and armaments. Nevertheless 'Labour and the New Social Order' was a radical programme compared to Labour's manifesto at the last election. It reflected the desire of the working class to rebuild society on a socialist basis. That conference also supported, against the leadership, direct action by the movement to achieve its aims, in particular the ending of military action by the government against Soviet Russia. Within a year, the

In Defence of Clause Four

'Pragmatists' and 'Fundamentalists'



Nye Bevan...

"The present controversy in the Labour Party has been described as a division between the pragmatists and the fundamentalists. This is a false description. Those described as fundamentalists are people who believe that there are certain principles that have held good and are likely to hold good as long as British society is based in the main on the institutions of private ownership. They take the view that if the Labour Party was to abandon its main thesis of public ownership it would not differ in any important respect from the Tory Party. The only conflict would be about nuances, about semi-tones and half-tints... If the Labour Party decided to adjust its policy in accordance with these ideas, it would be practically certain to wreck itself. The Party has been nurtured in the belief that its *raison d'être* is a transformation of society... The controversy is between those who want the mainspring of economic power transferred to the community and those who believe that private enterprise should still remain supreme but its worst characteristics should be modified by liberal ideas of justice and equality.... What is quite certain is that the overwhelming majority of the Labour Party will not acquiesce in jettisoning of the concept of progressive public ownership."

(*Tribune*, October 1959)

According to Michael Foot, "in private, he was even fiercer and more aggressive... 'We are living in the presence of a conspiracy'.... He saw Gaitskell and Gaitskellism as more of a threat than ever to the kind of Socialism he had dreamed of and fought for all his life, and he said that great upheavals would have to be faced if the Party was not to be twisted into a caricature of what a Socialist Party should be."

(*Aneurin Bevan*, p 648)

and Clement Attlee...

"I find that the proposition often reduces itself to this - that if the Labour Party would drop its Socialism and adopt a Liberal platform, many Liberals would be pleased to support it. I have heard it said more than once that if Labour would only drop its policy of nationalisation everyone would be pleased, and it would soon obtain a majority. (shades of Tony Blair!)"

"I have stated above that Socialists cannot make Capitalism work. The 1929 experiment demonstrated this. No really effective steps could be taken to deal with the economic crisis, because any attempt to deal with fundamentals brought opposition from the Liberals. Labour men who saw clearly the need for dealing with causes had to try to deal with results. The amount they could extract for the workers from a Capitalist system was limited. When this limit had been reached, failure was bound to ensue. I admit the experiment was not made under fair conditions. The Party was handicapped by the conditions of the time, which demanded drastic measures, and by its leading personnel, who had surrendered their minds to Capitalism long before they sold their bodies..."

"Henceforward the issue that confronts the electors of this country is Socialism versus Capitalism." (*The Labour Party in Perspective*)

● According to Tony Blair, "the socialism of Marx is dead".
● Ironically, Marxism is declared officially 'dead' on a regular basis.
● Marxism has always played a key role in the development of the British Labour movement, despite the attempt by Blair and the "modernisers" to eradicate this tradition from the Labour Party. In fact the Communist Manifesto by Marx and Engels was published by the Labour Party in 1948 and reprinted in 1951. We reprint an extract from the Labour Party's forward to this book:

● "In presenting this centenary volume of the Communist Manifesto, with the valuable Historical Introduction by Professor Laski, the Labour Party acknowledges its indebtedness to Marx and Engels as two of the men who have been the inspiration of the whole working-class movement.
● "The British Labour Party has its roots in the history of Britain. The Levellers, Chartists, Christian Socialists, the Fabians and many other bodies, all made their contributions, and the Trade Unions made it possible to carry theory into practice. John Ball, Robert Owen, William Morris, Keir Hardie, John Burns, Sidney Webb, and many more British men and women have played outstanding parts in the development of socialist thought and organisation. But British socialists have never isolated themselves from their fellows on the continent of Europe. Our own ideas have been different from those of continental socialism which stemmed more directly from Marx, but we, too, have been influenced in a hundred ways by European



● thinkers and fighters, and, above all, by the authors of the Manifesto.
● "Britain played a large part in the lives and work of both Marx and Engels. Marx spent most of his adult life here and is buried in Highgate cemetery. Engels was a child of Manchester, the very symbol of capitalist industrialism. When they wrote of bourgeois exploitation they were drawing on English experience."

Clause 4 under Threat - Help Us Fight Back!

The fight is on! *Socialist Appeal*, as the Marxist voice of the Labour movement, is putting its full weight behind the fight to defend Clause Four and the principles of Socialism. This issue you are holding in your hands—a 'Clause Four' special—is just the opening salvo in that campaign. Already, within days of Tony Blair's announcement, via the 'spin doctors' to the national media, that the aims of the Labour Party were to be 'modernised' (i.e. Clause Four removed!), our offices were busy producing model resolutions and leaflets for despatch. Petitions calling for the NEC not to proceed with this attack but rather to get on with the job of fighting the Tories have also been produced and distributed and these are available now from our national office.

Ringing round *Socialist Appeal* sellers up and down the country it was clear that the mood of local activists in both the Labour Party and the affiliated trade unions was to fight this attack on Socialism. Already resolutions are being moved and meetings planned.

▲ We call on all readers and supporters to play a full roll in this campaign. Start organising now not just to defend Clause Four but also to stand up for the principles of public ownership and the socialist plan of production.

▲ The campaign should be raised in every ward and GC of the party and in branches of affiliated unions. It is vital that the arguments for Socialism are taken to every corner of the Labour movement. Use the model resolution and the petitions.

▲ Sellers should use *Socialist Appeal* to assist in defending these ideas; take copies to sell at all Labour movement meetings and events and to all left activists. Ring our office straight away to discuss getting bulk orders to sell.

▲ You should certainly ring us if you want to get involved in the campaign in what ever way you can! Phone now on 071-251-1094.

Socialist Appeal will be carrying regular material on this campaign. We will be reporting on the struggle as it occurs around the country and reports of resolutions passed, meetings held, and other successes should be sent or phoned into us. We will also be taking up the political questions that are behind the desire of Blair and his advisers to remove Clause Four—the issues of what Socialism really is, why we support public ownership and what direction the Party should be going in.

However such a campaign needs cash. We need to produce more leaflets, pamphlets and so on as the campaign develops. Phone and post bills have to be met as well. Paper prices have gone up and will be going up again in November with further increases being threatened on a monthly basis (so much for low inflation!). The need for our own press is now critical! Producing our journal in-house, along with the other material required, will save money and, more importantly, time. There is currently a ten day delay between *Socialist Appeal* being finished ready for the printers and the finished publication reaching our sellers: this is not good enough. Our own press will cut this delay and enable us to produce quality material as events dictate—not just on the Clause Four issue but on other developments in the class struggle as they occur. Blair spent £80,000 officially on his election campaign—we need another £5,000 at least before we can move for the press and the other equipment which we need. Blair has the backing of every capitalist newspaper, TV and radio station in attacking the very basis of Socialism. We can only rely on the backing of ordinary men and women to raise this cash.

▲ Every supporter should consider giving a donation and all our readers should be approached.

▲ Donations from local LPs and unions are also welcome.

▲ Fund raising events should also be organised (socials, raffles etc.).

Over £150 was raised at our meeting at Labour Party conference with more being pledged. Good collections were also had at public meetings in Liverpool and Bristol and from readers in Glasgow—keep it up. Some readers have given donations when renewing subscriptions. Every penny and pound counts so rush your donation immediately. *Socialist Appeal* will not flinch from fighting as hard as we can to defend Clause Four and Socialism whatever the cost but we need your help!

Steve Jones
Journal Manager

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To mark the anniversary of the Russian Revolution of October 1917 *Ted Grant* and *Alan Woods* ask the question...

Will Russia Go Capitalist?

To commemorate the anniversary of the Russian revolution of 1917 we are producing an analysis of recent developments in Russia by *Ted Grant* and *Alan Woods* which deals with the question of the direction in which Russia is going and whether the capitalist counter-revolution can be completed.

The entire situation in Russia is determined by one factor: the temporary passivity of the proletariat, stunned by the depth of the crisis and disorientated by 60 years of Stalinism.

The Marxists believed that the ideals and traditions of October still lived on in the hearts and minds at least of the older generation of workers. Indeed, this is partly still the case. However, we did not fully appreciate the way in which decades of Stalinist lies and corruption had thrown back the consciousness of the masses.

The old traditions have largely died out. The spotless banner of Leninism has been splattered by the filth of decades of totalitarian and bureaucratic rule. However, the revolutionary tradition of the Russian proletariat can recover with lightning speed. The old ideas can be quickly re-learned on the basis of experience. As Lenin used to say "life teaches." At a given point, the accumulation of anger and bitterness can lead to an explosive movement of the workers. Once it starts, it will not be easily controlled, as we saw in Poland in 1980.

It is a paradox that, if a genuine Leninist party existed in Russia, we would be on the eve of a new revolution. In the absence of the subjective factor, all kinds

of aberrations can take place. However, even without a party, it is not theoretically ruled out that the working class can come to power in Russia. Such is the colossal weight of the Russian proletariat that a general strike and insurrection could succeed before the Marxist party has time to develop.

Soviets

On the basis of Soviets (workers' councils), we could see a new edition of the Paris Commune. After all, this was already the experience of the Hungarian workers in 1956. Such a development would transform the whole history of the world, even more so than the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. However, it is not the only possibility. Given the absence of revolutionary leadership, and the extreme confusion and disorientation of the workers, it is possible that the movement might end in defeat. In that case, the only

conceivable outcome would be a period of Bonapartist dictatorship of one sort or another.

On present information, it is difficult to judge the seriousness of the most recent alleged conspiracy. However, it clearly reveals the existence of an atmosphere in Moscow pregnant with the idea of a coup. It is only a matter of time before this idea assumes a national form.

The present unstable situation cannot last for long. No society can exist in such a state of tension indefinitely. In particular, the officer caste must be seething with discontent. It is not only a question of loss of income and career possibilities, but a burning sense of humiliation at the break-up of the USSR, the loss of Eastern Europe, Gorbachev's betrayal of Iraq and the connivance of Yeltsin with the imperialists' manoeuvres in the former Yugoslavia.

The next coup will almost certainly be the work of the military

caste. They will not hand over power to Zhirinovskiy, whose rabid nationalist demagoguery at times appear to be tinged with actual insanity. They will prefer a more sober-minded representative drawn from their own circle. Inevitably, the officers will lean upon Zhirinovskiy, whom they will keep in a subordinate position. But above all they will be in an alliance with the Stalinists and the 'Nomenklatura.'

It is true that some bureaucrats have done well out of privatisation. But many more have done badly. Even those managers who have manoeuvred to take over their own firms now find themselves faced with bankruptcy. As an article in *'Russian Labour Review'* correctly observed, "privatisation for these people is a much lesser priority than stabilisation."

The recent negotiations with the IMF which Chernomyrdin was compelled to break off with precipitate haste were anyway heading for breakdown. A senior Russian official commented later that "the talks have got nowhere because of the IMF's non-constructive attitude." And Mikhail Zadornov, chairman of the parliamentary budget committee, said that "no agreement on the second tranche of the IMF facility is likely to be signed in the near future."

This underlines the basic problem of capitalist restoration in Russia. If capital cannot be obtained from the West, how can it be raised? The only possibility would be to drive down the wages of the Russian workers to a semi-starvation level and re-invest the surplus in modernising industry.

Productive forces

This was the model used by Brazilian capitalism during the years of military rule. It actually succeeded for a time in developing the productive forces, before it finally broke down.

This would only be possible on the basis of a brutal military dictatorship, on the lines of Pinochet in Chile, or worse. The weak Bonapartist regime of Yeltsin would not be sufficient. Irrespective of their intentions, the generals would be compelled to re-centralise in order to get the economy moving. On pain of extinction, they would have to take drastic measures to clamp down on the black market and overcome the sabotage of the bureaucracy, in order to get food back on the shelves. This would mean a partial return to



the methods of the past: a combination of centralism and terror. Russian generals are not noted for their gentleness. They would not hesitate to arrest and execute thousands in order to re-establish 'order.'

This can have an effect for a time. A large part of the shortages is due to the theft, swindling and speculation, which prevent goods from reaching the shops. The combination of central planning and terror can stimulate production by holding in check the worst excesses of the bureaucracy, without in any way solving the fundamental problems of the system.

Clearly, such a regime would soon come into collision with the West. Even the miserable amounts of aid and investment which now reach Russia would be cut off. This, too, would have an effect.

Bonapartist

Forced on its own resources, a Bonapartist regime in Russia would be tempted to go back to a modified form of Stalinism—a bureaucratically run 'command economy,' as the bourgeois call it. Such a perspective is by no means as improbable as some people think. After all, the military caste did extremely well out of this kind of 'socialism.' And for the mass of the people, after the nightmare experience of 'market reform,' the period of Brezhnev must now look like a golden age. Precisely because it is a question of the struggle of living forces, and not a simple equation, it is not possible to give an unqualified answer to the question of which way Russia will go. Both outcomes are possible.

The answer will be provided by the evolution of the class struggle and the balance of forces in Russia and on a world scale. For example, if there is a serious recovery of the world capitalist economy, that would have the effect of strengthening the pro-capitalist wing. A world slump would have the opposite effect. Above all, a big movement of the workers in Eastern Europe, in Western Europe, or even in China, where there are already reports of strikes, can cut across the whole situation.

One thing must be understood. There is no question of going back to Stalinism in its classical form. The totalitarian regime of the past lasted for decades for two main reasons: firstly, the unprecedented growth of the economy made possible by nationalisation and a plan. In the

second place, the Stalinists succeeded in penetrating the working class to an unheard-of extent by means of an army of spies, stooges, informers and the like, through the 'Communist' party and the so-called 'unions,' which were really part of the bureaucratic state machine.

That is now impossible. The new Bonapartism would not have such a mass base. It would rest upon the army and the police. But, as Trotsky explains, that is

have passed through the experience of both Stalinism and capitalism. Slowly and painfully, the new generation will come to understand the need for a new system, based on the democratic rule of the workers themselves. At a certain point there will be a new explosion, but this time from the left, in the direction of a workers' democracy. We have argued consistently against the view that a return to Stalinism was ruled out. Does

We have argued consistently against the view that a return to Stalinism was ruled out. Does that mean that the movement towards capitalism is doomed to fail? That conclusion, also, would be false. We are dealing here with an unfinished process, the result of which will be determined, not by abstract formulae, but by the struggle of living forces.

too narrow a base to allow for any degree of stability. Such a regime might last a few years, on the basis of the temporary inertia of the workers. But sooner or later, the contradictions of the bureaucratic regime would re-assert themselves, provoking a new uprising of the working class.

It is entirely false and mechanical to argue that, in the event of a Stalinist dictatorship coming to power, it would not last long. The idea, defended by some self-styled 'Marxists' that the last coup would immediately have been overthrown by the workers, if it had succeeded, is the height of stupidity. The experience of Chile, Poland and many other countries shows precisely the opposite.

Overthrown

Jaruselski lasted for seven years. There is no reason why a Stalinist regime in Russia should not last for five or ten years, before being overthrown. But such a regime would be shot through with contradictions. The underlying malaise which undermined the Brezhnev regime would begin to reappear. Corruption, the inevitable companion of a totalitarian regime, would gnaw at the bowels of the economy.

The Russian working class will

that mean that the movement towards capitalism is doomed to fail? That conclusion, also, would be false. We are dealing here with an unfinished process, the result of which will be determined, not by abstract formulae, but by the struggle of living forces.

Convulsions

It is not at all ruled out that, after a period of terrible social convulsions, a bourgeois regime—that it, inevitably, a regime of bourgeois Bonapartism—could be installed over the bones of the proletariat. That would be the most unfavourable variant from a general historical point of view, but would not at all mean that revolution would be off the agenda. After an inevitable period of demoralisation and despair, the working class would recover, especially in the event of an economic recovery, and once again move into action, but this time without illusions in the blessings of a 'market economy.' If the bourgeois counter-revolution should triumph in Russia, it would be the first time in history that such a phenomenon occurred.

The Great French Revolution, it is true, went through all kinds of transformations—from Jacobinism to Thermidor, from the Directorate to Bonapartism,

and even to victory of outright restoration under the Bourbons in 1815.

Nevertheless, throughout all these changes of regime, the fundamental bourgeois property forms established by the Revolution remained, especially in the form of small peasant property. Even under the restored Bourbon monarchy, the reaction did not manage to uproot the new property relations and put the clock back to the beginning.

In Russia, we see the clear victory of bourgeois elements in the government. These elements are striving to introduce a capitalist market economy on the ruins of the nationalised property relations established by the Revolution.

That the process has begun is not open to discussion. It has, indeed, gone a fair distance already. But is it correct to affirm that the capitalist counter-revolution has scored a definitive victory?

Analysis

One of the most difficult tasks of Marxists analysis is to establish at precisely what point quantity becomes transformed into quality. For example, at what point exactly did the Stalinist political counter-revolution triumph? It took Trotsky a number of years, during which he changed his formulations more than once, to answer this question.

Ultimately, the victory of capitalism in Russia will be determined by the existing property relations. A serious attempt is being made to privatise key sections of the economy. Nevertheless, this is proving to be far more difficult than the imperialists imagined. Even now, it would not be correct to say that the decisive sectors of the economy have passed into private hands. In other words, the process of capitalist restoration has begun, but it not yet decisively resolved, and will not be resolved until the struggle between the antagonistic groups and classes has been fought to a finish—one way or another.

Is it correct to say that the movement towards capitalism is already irreversible? The strategists of capital do not think so. And neither do we. Not yet, at any rate.

It is true that big inroads have been made into the nationalised economy. For example, Lenin and Trotsky pointed out that the state monopoly of foreign trade was a fundamental pillar of the

planned economy, and that its abolition would be a decisive step in the direction of capitalism.

Now the state monopoly of foreign trade has been abolished. Yet the effect has been quite the opposite to what Lenin anticipated. Between 1990 and 1992, the volume of Russia's external trade actually fell by half—a staggering amount.

This was mainly because of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Trade later recovered because of a high level of oil and gas production. As a result of this, Russia even managed to get a trade surplus.

Flight of capital

However, as a result of a huge flight of capital—about \$10 – 12 billion each year—most of this money finds its way into foreign bank accounts. This, in turn, faithfully reflect the corrupt nature of Russian mafia-capitalism.

Moreover, as already indicated, Russia's oil production is now falling. The pessimistic outlook of the international bourgeois in relation to Russia was expressed by John Lloyd in the *Financial Times* on March 22nd 1994:

"As disheartening as any other fact for Russian ministers is the obvious truth that, after more than two years of official reformism there is little to show in the way of domestic success or foreign confidence. No western companies of size have made very large commitments to Russia. Trade has shrunk to levels where most countries can discount it as negligible: foreign bankers do not believe that Russia will pay back any real debt in the next five years; and the rouble is driving steadily down to the 2,000 to the dollar level."

That is the frank assessment of an intelligent Western commentator. It hardly expresses much confidence in the future prospect for capitalism in Russia.

The collapse of the rouble (which is fast approaching 4,000 to the dollar), and the imminent threat of hyperinflation completely disorganises foreign trade. Lenin thought that the opening of Russia to the penetration of cheap foreign imports and investment would act as a stimulus for the developing Russian capitalists. But, as Lenin liked to say, *"the truth is always concrete."* Under these specific conditions, the abolition

of the state monopoly of foreign trade has, paradoxically, led to a collapse of trade and a massive outflow of capital.

In any case, even if normal trading relations could be established with the West, Russia would immediately come up against the limitations of the market in the period of the organic crisis of capitalism. While paying lip service to the need to integrate the economies of Russia and Eastern Europe to the world economy, teaching then the blessings of 'free trade,' in practice the Western economies are busy erecting trade barriers to keep out cheap imports from the East.

The trade gap between the EU and Eastern Europe is huge and growing. In reality, the EU is exploiting Eastern Europe for its own benefit. *"This is breeding rancour in Warsaw, Prague, and Budapest over limited market access in Western Europe,"* commented *The Guardian* (1/1/94), *"and exposing as hollow, in their view, Western preaching about the virtues of market economies."*

Ever since 1989, in fact, the EU has had a surplus with Eastern Europe and Russia. For the first three years it averaged 2.5 billion. But in 1993 it shot up to 4 billion. Anti-dumping laws have been levelled on steel, textiles and farm products. Thus, 'free trade' is all one way. Austria, on the point of joining the EU, just introduced quotas for cement from Eastern Europe, despite having gained more than any other country from trade with the East.

Backlash

This will inevitably cause a backlash against the very idea of the 'free market.' We have seen this already in Poland. And it is quite likely that the reaction in Russia will be even more violent. There is no market inside Russia, and none outside, either. What, then, are the perspectives for Russian capitalism? All that they can offer is a future of unemployment, poverty, and suffering, or, to recall a celebrated phrase of Plekhanov, 'all-Russian ruin.' According to Western financial experts, two years ago, the amount of funding to give Yeltsin's reform programme a chance of succeeding would amount to between \$76 – 167 billion a year for about fifteen years. And this figure does not include either the money for supporting rouble convertibility or

the increased cost of cleaning up the environment, itself a pressing task.

This would amount to less than 1% of the combined gross domestic product of Europe, the USA and Japan for the next 5 – 10 years. That is proportionally less than the amount given to Western Europe by the USA under Marshall aid for a much longer period.

Reluctant

However, the West is reluctant to commit these huge sums of money. The capitalists have no confidence in the outcome of the attempt to re-impose a 'market economy' in Russia or Eastern Europe. The levels of private investment is insignificant, despite the fact that there is a highly skilled work force on very low wages. Because of the collapse of the rouble, the wage of a skilled worker in Russia is no more than \$7 a month, on the present rate of exchange. Yet despite this, Western investors are not prepared to risk their capital. They have understood, from their class point of view, what the Marxists have understood: that the restoration of capitalism is fraught with difficulties, that social upheavals are on the order of the day, and that the whole process can go into reverse.

A confidential report by a Western banker in December 1991 drew the following conclusion:

"The Soviet economy will collapse anyway in hyperinflation and the USSR is already in a

pre-revolutionary stage. At best, a Bonapartist solution in Russia might emerge. At worst it's anarchy for keeps."

When one thinks of it, how can the present set-up in Russia be maintained? Capitalism in the West maintains itself on the basis of a numerous layer of sub-exploiters and sub-sub-exploiters, who derive material benefits from the system. In the epoch of monopoly capitalism, the ownership of the means of production is concentrated in a tiny and ever diminishing number of industrial and financial magnates. But beneath them are a myriad of small proprietors, petit bourgeois and related social groups which give the system a broad social base and provides it with stability. In Russia, the situation is completely different. The re-establishment of capitalism would inevitably take the form of a corrupt and parasitic monopoly capitalism. The highly centralised state monopolies would become equally centralised private monopolies.

Deformed

In other words, Russian capitalism would be reborn as a monstrously deformed and corrupt system. It could not be a stable and long-lasting phenomenon, but inevitably would give rise to new convulsions, which, sooner or later, would place socialist revolution on the agenda.

**Ted Grant
and Alan Woods**



Italy

3 million workers demonstrate against right wing government

One of the biggest general strikes in the history of Italy took place on the 14th October. Over 3 million workers took part in demonstrations in 90 cities. In Milan alone 300,000 demonstrated.

The movement was provoked by the proposal of the right-wing Berlusconi government to carry out savage cuts in pensions. As soon as the idea of the cuts was raised workers, mainly in the industrial heartlands of the north, organised a series of spontaneous strikes at the beginning of September. The movement then began to spread to other areas.

After the initial wave of spontaneous strikes the official unions stepped in and began organising local strikes. As a result of this movement Berlusconi was forced to call the Trade union leaders for "consultation". He simply repeated the list of cuts and that put the trade union leadership in a tight spot. The trade union leaders had no other option but to call a general strike.

In the past few years there had been several general strikes, but because the leadership only saw them as token strikes organized more to "let off steam" than as a means of pressurizing the capitalists, they didn't really cause the capitalists much to worry about. This time the leaders of the three main official Trade union federations, CGIL, CISL and UIL, thought they would get away with it once again. As usual they only organized a 4-hour general strike. However in the build up to the 14th October the local leadership of the Trade unions were forced to organize a series of strikes on a district level. On some of the demonstrations there were 5 - 10,000 workers. In some areas, like Tuscany for

example, the regional leadership was forced to extend the general strike to 8 hours. This gives an idea of the tension that was building up.

On the day of the strike itself there was a mood of enormous enthusiasm. In Milan workers stuck up hand-written posters that said "The working class is back!" This was a reply to the capitalist mass media that for years had been bombarding the public with the idea that the class composition of society had changed and that "the working class doesn't exist anymore". An army of 3 million workers marching through the cities of

Weakness of the Cobas

In the afternoon of the 14th of October the various Cobas called their own strike and "national" demonstration in Rome.

They attracted about 40,000 while the official trade unions mobilized 3 million on the streets, with millions more on strike. If anyone had illusions in the idea of by-passing the traditional mass organisations this should be an important lesson.

all the main towns of Italy was an eloquent reply to this bourgeois rubbish.

Berlusconi

Meanwhile Berlusconi was in Moscow recovering from a bout of vodka drinking with Yeltsin. He appeared on TV saying that there was a problem of "communication": people hadn't understood the real nature of the proposed budget! He added that "only (only!) 3 million were on the demonstrations, while 20

million were at home". He also added that "not even 10 general strikes will change the budget." That approach from a tycoon prime minister has increased the determination of the Italian working class to keep up the pressure. One of the slogans on the demonstrations was "A Roma, a Roma!", which means "we want a national general strike with a massive demonstration in Rome".

Power

The workers have had a taste of their own potential power and want to go forward. That poses a dilemma for the leadership of CGIL, CISL and UIL. They had hoped that the 14th October would let off enough steam so that they could then get back to normal "negotiations". Because that has not been the case they are now planning to drag out the movement hoping to tire out the workers. They have called a national demonstration in over a month's time in Rome on the 19th of November, a Saturday! In the meantime local strikes of up to 8 hours will be organized. This means that the workers will lose a day's wages, but the power of the working class will not be as evident as it was on the 14th of October.

However a meeting of important shop stewards' committees met in Milan before the general strike where the idea of a one day general strike with a demonstration in Rome was called for. This idea will inevitably be taken up again in the coming days and weeks. "Negotiations" with this government are impossible. Berlusconi did not come to power to compromise with the labour movement, but to brutally attack all the reforms won through workers' struggles over the past 50 years. The aim of the movement

must be to bring down this government, a government that no longer represents those who elected it. The three right-wing parties that make up this government are beginning to have internal conflict. The Northern League is in decline and Berlusconi's Forza Italia lost a significant number of votes in a recent by-election. Now is the moment to strike and strike hard, otherwise there is the risk of dissipating the enormous energy that has built up in the working class.

That is clearly what the capitalists are counting on: "let them strike, let them let off steam, then we can get on with business as usual". However even if the leadership

Police demonstration

Two days before the general strike 20,000 policemen demonstrated in Rome. One of the slogans was "Maroni, Maroni (Minister of the Interior) arrest Berlusconi".

Another was "We will not be used against the workers". The capitalists must be seriously worried when even their own police are becoming so radicalized. Keep it up Berlusconi, you are doing a good job!

of the trade unions should let that happen things will not be the same as before.

Capitalist reality

The workers are being forced to go through the harsh school of capitalist reality. The period of relative harmony between the classe is at an end. A new generation of workers is coming to the fore and they will take up the traditions of the "Hot Autumn" of 1969. This time however the historical experience of the working class itself must serve as a tool in reshaping the organisations of the class. If the trade union leadership is not prepared to fight then the workers will have to develop a new leadership. The demand must be: 'New elections! No collaboration with the capitalist parties, for a government of the workers' parties with a socialist programme.'

Fernando D'Allessandro

Germany

labour movement can block new Kohl government

Germany's bosses managed to get the result that they had favoured as Helmut Kohl's bourgeois coalition was re-elected with a narrow majority on October 16th. After 12 years of attacks on workers living standards and democratic rights, the return to office of the Christian Democratic/Liberal coalition is a green light for another round of attacks on workers conditions and the welfare state.

Particularly during the last four years since the election victory that followed the capitalist reunification of Germany, the government has turned out to be a virtual world champion in the field of privatisation. They not only allowed the bulk of East German industry to be taken over and largely destroyed by Western monopolies but also started the process of privatisation of the railways, post office, telecoms and the Lufthansa airlines.

Instability

The fact that—in absolute terms—the coalition government only scored a majority of 142,682 votes (0.3%) over the combined number of votes cast for the parliamentary opposition (SPD, Greens and PDS) underlines the instability of domestic policy in the next period. The base of Kohl's rule has been undermined, many bourgeois commentators were fearing that the 'liberal' FDP might not have achieved the 5% vote required to get a proportion of the seats in the Bundestag. The bourgeois block lost 2.7 million votes (a fall of 6.4%) whereas the opposition gained more due to the increased turnout. Nevertheless the coalition of Kohl can count on a majority

of 10 seats.

Kohl's victory—the fourth consecutive one since 1983—was mainly due to the relative strength of the Christian Democrats particularly in the West and South. It mirrors the unexpected victory of the British Tories in 1992 with the strength of illusions in a return to the 'good old days'. In the East, the bourgeois block lost their majorities in all of the states except Saxony. Another element of the election campaign was the 'red scare' issue as the CD's consistently "accused" the SPD of "collaboration" with the "red socks" of the PDS (the predominantly East German based former Communist Party). In the end the ruling class failed to keep the PDS out of parliament as the PDS managed to take 4 seats directly (all in East Berlin, their stronghold) and with a national vote of 4.4% they got the respective proportional number of 30 seats. Whereas the PDS managed to absorb a lot of the discontented votes of those who lost out in German reunification, it was the Greens who successfully managed to present themselves as a "progressive, ecological" and "social" force to the left of the SPD especially in the west. Their overall vote increased by over 1.6 million.

Right wing

Although SPD leaders were pleased with the fact that they achieved an increase of 2.9%, gaining 36.4% of the votes cast, this result is far from being good or satisfactory. But given the fact that both the party programme and the party leader, Scharping, are right wing, some reluctant voters decided to stay with the original (Kohl) rather than

what they saw as just a copy. Still others did not bother to vote. When, towards the end of the campaign, Scharping finally presented a more vigorous and positive campaign containing some policies for the poor, this had an effect but was clearly too late to be decisive, particularly since these proposals were to be paid for by the workers themselves! A far cry from genuine socialism. Further attacks on the welfare state and tax increases will cause uneasiness and social discontent. It will be obvious that the coming 'boom' will not solve any of the major problems facing German society. Unemployment will continue to be high, council cutbacks will continue and this in turn will force unions to seek higher wage settlements as workers see the real effects of the boom.

Events

It cannot be excluded that the Kohl coalition under the pressure of events may not last the full 4 year term. However

the worst alternative would be for the SPD leaders to do what they did in 1966 and enter a new coalition with the CD's. The Party lefts must therefore demand that the SPD leaders give up their line of de-facto supporting the coalition.

Left

With the combined forces of the left in parliament, the SPD domination of the Bundesrat (second chamber), the SPD dominated cities and above all the strength of the unions, there is a clear basis for a campaign to be started to block the actions of the new Kohl government and force the dissolution of the Bundestag to bring about new elections and the victory of a left majority on the basis of a real socialist programme.

Hans-Gerd Öfinger
(Wiesbaden)



Book Review

Haiti's Revolution

The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo revolution
By CLR James (Allison & Busby) £7.99

The invasion of Haiti by the US to restore to power their stooge, Aristide, has once again brought to the world's attention this most wretched of imperialism's victims. Haiti's history as an independent state has been marked by poverty and chaos in which successive rulers have been shot, poisoned, blown up, dismembered or just fled from office.

From 1915 to 1934 Haiti was occupied by the US who left having achieved nothing except to allow a string of despots (including 'Papa Doc' Duvalier) to take their place as before. For over 150 years, under the 'protection' of the US through the Monroe doctrine which declared the region to be a zone of American influence, the standard of living of this once most prosperous of islands has declined to one where in 1992 (before US sanctions made things even worse) the average income per head was just \$370. Yet Haiti came out of one of the most inspiring struggles of



human history - the great slave revolt of 1791 in San Domingo. It is this struggle that is the subject of CLR James classic and justly famous work: *The Black Jacobins*.

First published in 1938 it was written when CLR James was still under the influence of Trotskyism and you can see how he sought to apply the Marxist method to an analysis of history. Unlike other history books of the time, written by bourgeois scholars, he wished to show how processes within society influence and direct the flow of events rather than the whims of great and wealthy men. His intention was to show a time when "Africans or people of African descent instead of constantly being the object of other peoples' exploitation and ferocity (had taken action) on a grand scale... shaping other people to their own needs." It was a message "written not with the Caribbean but with Africa in mind". Not for nothing was this book studied down the years by activists in South Africa.

Columbus

Haiti was 'discovered' by Columbus; a land rich in natural resources. The native Indians were decimated by forced labour, disease and famine being reduced "from an estimated half a million, perhaps a million, to 60,000 in 15 years." French, British and Spanish imperialism fought over the Island until it was split between the French and Spanish in 1695. Coffee, Cotton and Tobacco were the crops; black slavery brought by British ships from Africa provided the work force in their millions. The chapter describing the shipping and treatment of the slaves makes for sobering reading even to modern eyes all too aware of the horrors of that stain on human history. However by the time of the slave revolt the great wealth of San Domingo was creating the basis for its own doom:

"The slave-trade and slavery

were woven tight into the economics of the eighteenth century. Three forces, the proprietors of San Domingo, the French bourgeoisie and the British bourgeoisie, thrive on this devastation of a continent and on the brutal exploitation of millions. as long as these maintained an equilibrium the infernal traffic would go on, and for that matter would have gone on until the present day. but nothing, however profitable, goes on forever. From the very momentum of their own development, colonial planters, French and British bourgeois, were generating internal stresses and intensifying external rivalries, moving blindly to explosions and conflicts which would shatter the basis of their dominance and create the possibility of emancipation."

James shows how the French revolution affected the thinking of the slaves: "They had heard of the revolution and had construed it in their own image: the white slaves in France had risen, and killed their masters, and were now enjoying the fruits of the earth. It was gravely inaccurate in fact, but they had caught the spirit of the thing. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." Under the leadership of a semi-educated slave Toussaint Bréda, later known as Toussaint L'Ouverture, the slaves rose against their owners and would in turn defeat them and the successive invading armies of Britain and Spain. The nature of their work gave them a proletarian character of discipline and organisation which other movements had lacked.

Revolution

The French revolution was the trigger and it was to the new republic that the slaves gave their allegiance with slavery being formally abolished in 1794 with San Domingo being governed on paper by a representative from France. It is important to see how slavery was abolished not because of the morality of do-gooders but rather

under the pressure of social events. However with the victory of reaction under Bonaparte came the desire to destroy the power of the slaves and re-instate slavery once again. An invasion force was sent to achieve the task.

CLR James shows here not only Toussaint's strengths but also his failings. By remaining loyal to France he was led down the road of demoralising his forces, destroying those who understood what was happening and finally being betrayed, deported and dying thereafter in France.

War

It was left to his deputy, Dessalines, to defeat the French in a war of great brutality, massacre the whites (a tragedy borne of the nearsightedness of the old slave owners) and establish the black state of Haiti. James analysed it thus: "If he failed, it was for the same reason that the Russian socialist revolution failed, even after all its achievements—the defeat of the revolution in Europe. Had the Jacobins been able to consolidate the democratic republic in 1794, Haiti would have remained a French colony, but an attempt to restore slavery would have been most unlikely. It was in method, and not in principle, that Toussaint failed. The race question is subsidiary to the class question in politics, and to think of imperialism in terms of race is disastrous. But to neglect the racial factor as merely incidental is an error only less grave than to make it fundamental".

"The Black Jacobins" remains a most readable work which should be in every Socialist's library. By putting the revolt of the slaves in its world context and seeking to compare it with other revolutions both past and still to come, this book must be considered of great importance.

Steve Jones



The Ultimate Privatisation!

To show the ravenous greed of capitalism, it has often been said that if the capitalists could bottle fresh air and sell it at a profit, they would. Today, they are scrambling not for air, but for human genes. Arguments over human gene ownership have reached new heights as the private sector is about to dominate the race to discover the 100,000 genes which control human development. The Human Genome Project was established in the late 1980s, with £2 billion public funds, to decode all DNA and map the position of each gene on the 23 human chromosomes. This mapping is essential in understanding how the genes work. Already new genetic information has been discovered which can lead to the treatment of certain hereditary illnesses, such as Huntington's chorea or Duchenne muscular dystrophy. The major pharmaceutical

companies can smell juicy profits ahead. They are spending more on genetic research than traditional public bodies, and by taking scientific short cuts, are producing results more quickly. A bitter debate has opened up over whether genetic information should be freely available in society or the private property of companies which patent it first.

Discovery

Smith-Kline Beecham has linked its research to Human Genome Sciences, a leading biotech company specialising in gene discovery. They have established a data base using scientific short cuts, and have no intention of sharing the whole of their knowledge. This will, they

hope, give them competitive commercial advantages. They are claiming the first rights to exploit any discovery they can patent.

Already, the decision a few months ago by the University of Utah and Myriad Genetics, a US biotech company, to patent their discovery of a gene causing breast cancer is a sign of things to come. Under capitalism the drive for profits leads to cut throat competition, commercial and research secrecy. Other pharmaceutical companies that have fallen behind in the race, such as Merck and Glaxo, are desperate to get a slice of this profitable market by arguing that patents should not operate until there exists a gene-based product to protect. For them, it is

nothing to do with scientific advance, but a maximisation of their own profits. No doubt if they were in the lead they would be arguing the exact opposite.

Disputes

Disputes are now opening up between the public authorities and the biotech companies over the level of genetic information can be patented. Will it be a fragment of a gene, a whole gene, or a gene incorporated into a future product? Such questions are an illustration of the madness of capitalism's drive for profit and the health and well-being of society.

Pat Clarke

Capitalism's Final frontier?

In the past, space exploration was fuelled by military strategy and the great propaganda battle between capitalism and the Stalinist world. Massive schemes that promised to take mankind not only to the moon - but even further. Now, however, things haven't quite worked out the way they should have. With the collapse of Stalinism and the economic crisis in the capitalist world, major space programmes are decidedly few and far between.

But now big business may step into the breach with a series of "small scale" space ventures. "The commercial potential of space is ultimately the reason why we will go back (to space) in large numbers," says Lori Garver of the National Space Society in Washington DC.

Telecoms, mineral extraction, materials manufacture and even tourism, these are things which will propel investment in space "exploration."

The US Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers has proposed that new satellites be launched which could transmit power from one spot of the globe to another. Electricity would be generated cheaply in one spot, converted into microwaves and beamed to an orbiting microwave mirror which would reflect it to another part of the globe. Another plan they have considered is the dumping of nuclear waste in orbit around Earth. In theory the waste stays in orbit until it is no longer dangerous! Russian scientists are also working on such a plan. Of course space is going to get extremely busy - the US Teledisc Corporation alone plans to place 840 satellites in orbit 700 kilometres above the surface by the year 2001.

At present it costs around \$40,000 per kilogram to go into space but, according to Patrick Collins, economist at the Institute of Space and Aeronautical Science in Tokyo,

this could well drop to around £200 dollars per kilo meaning an increase in the potential for business exploitation.

While the US government is forking out \$17.8 billion for the space station Alpha, Collins reckons that a hotel could be built and put into orbit for as little as \$250 million. It is clear which way capitalism will want to go.

Another plan envisages the extraction of helium-3 from the moon. Helium-3 is common on the moon and could be used in a fusion process to create vast amounts of power. 25 tonnes - a space shuttle full - could power the whole of the US for one year. Very lucrative!

NASA, seeing the tide turn, has launched a programme known as Discovery. The programmes aim is to build simple space craft from lightweight components. They will be cheap and there will be plenty of them. Its first mission is planned for 1998, a visit to a near-Earth asteroid, a will cost only \$150 million. Future missions will explore the solar system looking for exploitable resources and minerals. So, space exploration is not so much man "boldly going where no man has gone before," but "corporate man" boldly searching for the big buck.

Iain Miller

Stop Press

Since the article on "The Ultimate Privatisation" was written, Human Genome Services have just announced that they are now prepared to share their database of DNA sequences from 35,000 human genes. Any researcher will be able to browse free of charge. Any catch? Well, all you have to do is sign over to HGS all rights on any commercial development arising from your research! We should have known - under capitalism there is no such thing as a free DNA sequence!

FEEDBACK

Dear comrades, I'd like to point out a difficulty that your article in Socialist Appeal (New Technology and Society, Issue 23) raises for me. The difficulty lies in your definition of wealth. For some years now, I've noticed in many people who think themselves as Marxists an unquestioning assumption that what will give the great mass of ordinary people better, deeper, and more worthwhile lives is a bigger and bigger pile

of manufactured goods. I would rather see a future in which our resources are used to give us clean air, pure water, peace and quiet without earplugs, the best medical treatment, and above all the realisation by everybody that what is worth having most is to be found between our ears. I want to spread education in the true sense of the word - to change people's values. I can't believe that Marx intended science and

technology, in his scheme of things, to go on indefinitely being used to give salesmen something to sell, lorry drivers something to deliver, shoppers something to carry home, and criminals something to steal. Surely we've been given life for a higher purpose than that? Why can't we close our ears to the persuasive tones of the advertiser and consider a completely different scale of aspirations? We'd do better to take

as much as we need from the earth and then stop. By all means let's get rid of capitalism, but having done that let's have true social objectives.

Are there specific points on which you take issue with the programme of the Green Party.

Fraternally,
J. Murphy
Manchester.

Send your views and comments to SA, PO Box 2626, London N1 6DU

Get the Marxist Voice of the Labour Movement

A Socialist Appeal to Workers

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

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

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

cuts, squalid working conditions, and so on.

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

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

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In the concluding part of the series *Rob Sewell* looks at...

Trade Unions

Under the Tories

The 1970s had witnessed an enormous growth in power and prestige of the trade union movement in Britain. In 1976, Tory MP Norman St John Stevas commented that "no government in Britain can hope to succeed today without the goodwill of the unions." Three years later, when Thatcher first came to power, membership stood at a record 13.3 million. However, within a decade and a half they experienced profound changes. Numbers declined to 9 million, with little more than 7 million affiliated to the TUC, the closed shop had been outlawed and the basic right to strike had been severely restricted.

The victory of Thatcher ushered in a period of sustained attack on organised labour. The Tory's pro-

gramme was one of all-out class war. It also coincided with a new world recession that drove up unemployment to record levels. This new harsh environment, characterised by an avalanche of redundancies across the board, stunned the working class. The fear of unemployment proved a key weapon in the hands of the bosses and government. Thatcher's strategy was to restore the power of British capitalism by a persistent attack on the long established gains of the working class. Tory economic policy was based upon deflation or Monetarism, which served to exacerbate the economic crisis, leading to the destruction of 20% of manufacturing industry between 1979 and 1981. In the context of a world slump, where output in the OECD countries fell by 19%, the impact of these poli-

cies was catastrophic. Industry after industry went to the wall. However, the government proclaimed that British industry was "slimmer and fitter"!

Power

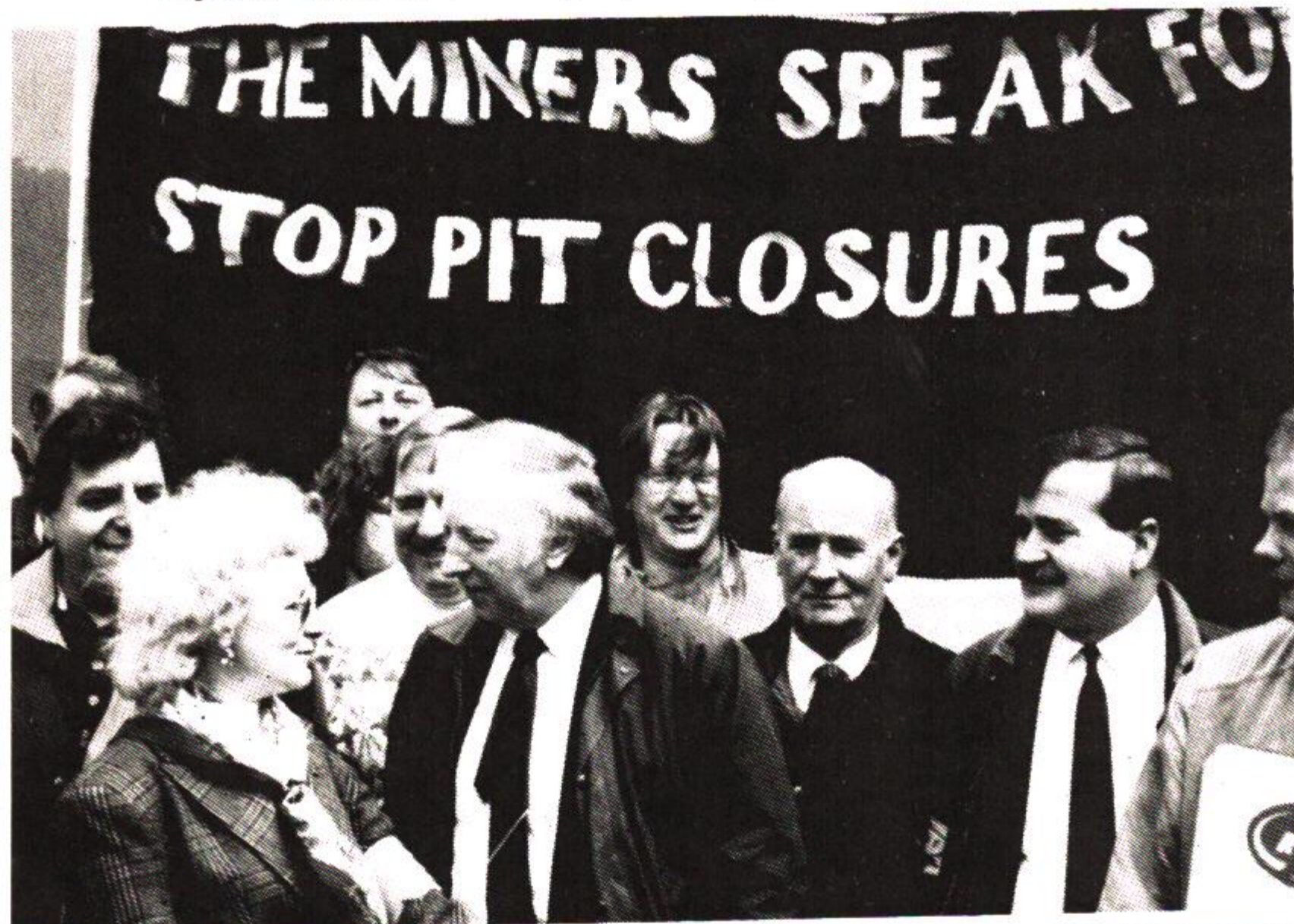
Despite this tough medicine, the ruling class put their full weight behind the Tories in their attempt to break the power of the trade unions. The bosses were in retreat during the 1970s; it was now time to strike back. A strategy was worked out in advance to deal with the trade unions, under Lord Carrington. Its conclusion, however, was pessimistic: "Strong unions and advanced technology operated by their members, particularly in fuel and power, mean that no government these days can 'win' in the way Mr. Baldwin's Cabinet triumphed during the General Strike of 1926 by maintaining supplies and services. "The group examined the possibility of using the Armed Forces to break strikes and concluded that such a practice could not be adopted on a large scale for two reasons: first that Britain no longer had enough troops and second that it would permanently damage the fabric and practice of the country's politics." (The Times, 18th April 1978).

Ridley

Nevertheless, six weeks after the Carrington report, another internal Tory document drafted by Nicholas Ridley MP, was leaked. This document categorised three sectors vulnerable to strikes: "(a) sewerage, water, electricity, gas

and the health service is the most vulnerable group; (b) railways, docks, coal and dustmen in an intermediate group; and (c) other public transport, education, the postal service and telephones, air transport and steel in the least vulnerable group." It concluded that in the most vulnerable sector strikes could not be fought effectively. It was essential each group was isolated and picked off one at a time. It was important to concentrate on the weakest sections, and even rigging profits figures in the nationalised industries. "There should be a large and mobile squad of police equipped and prepared to uphold the law against violent picketing. Good non-union drivers should be recruited to cross picket-lines with police protection." This union-busting strategy was to be systematically applied over the coming years.

New hard faced managers were brought in to deal with the unions in the nationalised industries. In the steel industry Ian MacGregor, an American boss with a record of fighting the US unions, was brought in as chairman. In 1980, he provoked a 13 week steel strike which ended in defeat for the steel union, the ISTC. In British Leyland, the chairman, Sir Michael Edwards introduced mass redundancies. In April 1980 he imposed a wage rise and changed working practises over the heads of the union. The resulting strike was broken by threats of dismissals. In November, a strike over pay at Leyland was sabotaged by Duffy the right wing leader of the AEUW. Again Edwards threatened to close Cowley if the workers went on strike over pay. The TGWU reluctantly accepted the deal. These actions represented the new hard-faced methods being introduced into industry. In this period, the Labour Party moved dramatically to the left, reflecting a shift to the left in the unions, after the bitter experience of the Callaghan government. In May 1980 the TUC called a successful mass Day of Action against the Tories. In November, the Labour Party held a mass demo of 150,000 against unemployment. Demands for greater controls over the leadership and the contents of the election manifesto grew sharply within Labour's ranks. This culminated in a special Labour conference at Wembley in January 1981. After



a bitter struggle, the old system of allowing the PLP to elect the leadership was thrown out, and a new Electoral College, giving the unions 40% of the votes, was established. It also agreed on the mandatory reselection of MPs. This was a massive advance for internal Labour Party democracy. Before the new rules were put in place, Callaghan resigned, leaving the PLP, yet again, to choose the leader of the party. Unexpectedly, Michael Foot was chosen as leader. In the later election for deputy leader, the left decided to put up Tony Benn against the right's candidate, Dennis Healey. Under the new procedures, Benn was very nar-

rowly defeated by 50.426% to 49.574. He had won over 80% support in the CLPs and 2/5th of the union votes. As a pointer to his future role, Neil Kinnock, elected on a left ticket to the NEC, abstained with a number of Tribunites, which robbed Benn of victory. Another factor in Healey's favour, was the votes of the 'Gang of Four' who split from the party shortly afterwards to form the SDP.

Tory Government

1981 was a low point for the fortunes of the Tory government. Thatcher, it was recalled later, was even on the verge of resigning. The attacks carried out by the Tories on the welfare state, local government, and the working class generally, provoked enormous discontent. Added to this was the avalanche of redundancies being carried through across the face of British industry. The Tories sunk to new lows in the opinion polls. Early in this year, the NCB announced the threat of pit closures on "uneconomic" grounds for the first time. Miners in South Wales immediately went on strike and called on the rest of the areas to follow suit. Kent came

out followed by Scotland, Derbyshire and Yorkshire. Totally unprepared for a miners' strike, the Tories rapidly retreated. It was similar to 'Red Friday' 1925, when the miners were granted a subsidy until May 1926, by which time Baldwin was ready to face a General Strike. In December 1981, with the retirement of Joe Gornley, Arthur Scargill was elected by a big majority as President of the NUM. It was a major victory for the left. As expected, the Tories had introduced anti-trade union legislation to curb the power of the unions. The Trade Union Act of 1980 outlawed secondary picketing and

removed the immunity for secondary actions. The 1982 Act exposed the union funds to damages from unlawful acts and removed immunity from political strikes. Both pieces of legislation placed restrictions on the closed shop. The TUC Congresses of 1982 and 1983 passed motions of opposition to these laws and promised to mobilise the movement in the event of any legal attacks. By 1982, the left's advance came to a halt. The growth of mass unemployment stunned the working class. Industrial militancy began to ebb, although a number of serious strikes had occurred in these years. These involved civil servants, oil tanker drivers (1979), water workers, Leyland car workers, print workers, teachers, bank workers, prison officers, bakers (1980), civil servants, ambulance workers, seafarers, miners, rail workers, water workers, oil tanker drivers (1981), rail workers, ambulance crew (1982), and water workers, car workers, steelworkers, printers, seafarers (1983). But the number of days lost through strikes in 1983 was the lowest since the war. Unemployment was well over 3 million, three times the figure of

1979. A witch-hunt broke out in the Labour Party against supporters of Militant, resulting in the expulsion of the editorial board from the party. The 'soft' left had begun to shift to the right.

Falklands War

The key to the revival in the fortunes of the Tories, however, was the outbreak of the Falklands war. In December 1981, the Tories were trailing at 23% in the polls; a month after the war, they were on 46%, Labour on 27% and the SDP-Liberal Alliance on 24%. By the time of the General Election, the Tories scored a major victory with 43.5% of the vote to Labour's 28.3% and the Alliance on 26%. The Tory landslide was a terrible blow for the Labour Party. Foot resigned and Kinnock was elected leader. It marked a decisive shift in the situation, reflected in a move to the right in the party and the unions. At the TUC Congress in September, Len Murray announced the policy of 'New Realism'.

What caused this shift? It is a social law that the mass organisations reflect the pressures of society. The ruling class puts enormous pressure on the leaders of the movement through its press, media, and 'public opinion' to moderate its image. Due to the privileged position of the leadership it tends to get divorced from its base. When the workers participate in their organisations they put counter pressure on the tops. With the growth of mass unemployment, the increased pressure of work, the fall in strikes and

In December 1983, after the Tory victory, came the test case. A dispute in Warrington between the print union NGA and the Stockport Messenger, owned by Tory Eddie Shah, came to a head, involving the law. For engaging in illegal secondary action the NGA was fined and had £175,000 of its funds seized. It was a key dispute for the printing industry. If the union could be defeated, then the employers across the industry would introduce new technology, drastically altering working practises. Shah was backed up by the print bosses and the Tories. The print workers looked to the TUC for solidarity, but the TUC refused to confront the law, despite Congress motions to the contrary. The NGA went down to defeat.

Miners

With Thatcher's second victory, plans were well advanced to take on the miners. Coal stocks were built up, totalling nearly 49 million tons by March 1984. The police force had been beefed-up. Non-unionism had been encouraged in the road haulage firms. The scene was set for confrontation. The Tories now believed, looking at the attitude of the Labour and trade union leaders, that the NUM could be isolated and quickly defeated. It was to be an "industrial Falklands", ending in a rapid victory for the Tory government. Ian MacGregor had been brought in as Coal Board chairman to carry through the assault. He soon announced plans to reduce the size of the industry. In

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despondency with the leaders, participation in the mass organisations can fall away. This increases the pressure of the bourgeois and pushes the leadership to the right. The economic boom of the 1980s, which began in 1982, reinforced these tendencies. Although the rate of exploitation increased, the bosses were prepared, given their increased profits, to grant wage rises above inflation.

Yorkshire it was announced that a pit, Cortonwood, was to close on 1st March 1984. It would be the first pit closure without NUM consent since 1981. It was a clear provocation, but the NUM had no alternative but to act. The miners strike was to last 12 months. Details of the strike were printed in the March issue of 'Socialist Appeal' which commemorated the strike's 10th anniversary. It represented a



watershed. The Tories tried everything to break the miners. The strikers and their families were considered by the ruling class as "the enemies within" who had to be defeated. But the Tories had miscalculated. The support, resilience, stamina and courage of the miners and their communities were second to none. The Tories threw everything at them: the police, the laws, mass media, etc. Unfortunately, tactical mistakes were made which divided the miners, leading to the formation of the scab UDM. But the tragedy was the failure of the TUC and Labour leaders to organise effective solidarity action in defence of the miners. As a consequence, the end result was a defeat. Not like the humiliation of 1926, but a defeat nevertheless. Over 100 pits were closed and more than 100,000 subsequently left the industry. The pit closure programme was carried through, no expense spared.

Defeat

The miners' defeat had a profound effect on the working class. If the miners couldn't win, and they were considered the advanced guard of the British working class, what chance would anyone else have? This reinforced the shift to the right in the trade unions with their ideology of 'New Realism' or class collaboration to give it its correct term. Scargill was vilified in the capitalist press. Kinnock attacked him as "the Labour Movement's nearest equivalent to a First World War general."

The attacks on local government by the Tories had resulted in Labour Councils agreeing in 1984 to a policy of "non compliance" with the Tory's rate capping legislation. But by 1985, only two councils remained true to the policy: Liverpool and Lambeth. Kinnock came forward with a policy of capitulation: the so-called 'dented shield' policy. At the 1985 party conference, under the pressure of the media, Kinnock scandalously attacked Liverpool council and Militant. It marked a further shift to the right and the abandonment of previous left policies.

The 1987 General Election saw a further victory for the Tories, who took 43% of the vote compared to Labour's 32%. The shift to the right of the Labour leadership, adopting the policy of "Me-too", and the effects of the economic boom of the 1980s, resulted in defeat. Pundits pontificated over whether Labour could ever win

another general election. The conclusion drawn by the trade union and Labour leaders was to move even further to the right and embrace the 'market economy'. The TUC had shifted so far to the right that Scargill lost his seat on the General Council of the TUC. For the first time, the miners had no representative since its affiliation to the TUC.

Seafarers

The protracted strikes of seafarers on the P&O, and printers at Wapping ended in defeat. This was due not to the lack of determination and courage of the members, but the weakness of the leadership. In all 6,000 print workers were sacked by Murdoch, with the active collaboration of the leadership of the EETPU. Many seafarers also lost their jobs. These defeats added to the lack of confidence, and were grist to the mill of the trade union bureaucracy.

In industry, the boom of the 1980s enabled the bosses to buy industrial peace by granting wage rises higher than inflation. Strikes, as a consequence, fell to an all-time low. Yet, there was deep seated anger and frustration in the workplaces at the intensified pressure for greater productivity. The employers, tak-

They were terrified of losing their trade union funds through sequestration, and with them their life styles. This they could not afford to jeopardise! The resignation of Thatcher in face of mounting opposition to her policies, especially the poll tax, brought John Major to power. The strategy of the Tories was to refurbish and renew the image of the party in time for the general election. Once again, despite a new economic recession, the Tories were victorious in May 1992, although on a reduced majority. Kinnock was forced to give up. The shift to the right under his leadership had got nowhere. Illusions still persisted that the Tories could bring back the boom years. The Labour leadership were incapable of answering this fallacy. In place of Kinnock was elected right-winger John Smith.

A few months after the Tories were elected, Heseltine announced a massive pit closure programme. The response was instantaneous. The TUC's switchboards were jammed with workers demanding action. In October the TUC were forced to call a demonstration in support of the NUM. Something like 250,000 attended. Unfortunately, the TUC deliberately let the mood slip, and despite one day strikes with the

RMT, was narrowly passed after intense pressure on delegates and the scandalous breaking of their mandate by the MSF leadership. At the TUC conference Smith, under pressure from the trade union leaders (who in turn were under pressure from the ranks), had promised that a Labour government would treat full employment and a minimum wage as a priority.

The 1993 TUC saw the retirement of Norman Willis and the emergence of the arch 'modemiser', John Monks. He immediately attempted to 'modernise' the TUC, by distancing it from the Labour Party and inviting Tories and CBI leaders to address its conference. It represents the pinnacle of 'New Realism', at a time when the workers are desperately looking for a way out.

The death of John Smith saw the election of Tony Blair as leader of the Labour Party. With strike action of low paid signal workers, the front bench refused to give unequivocal support. They were determined to maintain their statesman like image. Now Blair has turned to attack Clause Four, in an attempt to turn the Labour Party into an SDP Mark Two, which will open up a big struggle in the party.

Frustration

The colossal ground swell of frustration in the working class, which is below the surface, can rise up in an explosion. The bitterness of increased exploitation and overwork, will sooner or later produce a reaction. These feelings will be reflected in the trade unions, in the traditional organisations of the class. A new Labour government will give rise to great illusions and expectations. Given the outlook of the leadership, the scene is being set for mass upheavals. In this context, the worker activists will seek once again the road of struggle which their forefathers have trodden. It is for the new generation to learn the lessons of the past, to examine its rich history, and prepare itself to conquer the mass organisations. To transform them into instruments that will put an end, once and for all, to the degradation of human labour and bring about "the emancipation of the downtrodden millions" (Marx). That can only mean the overthrow of capitalism and the creation of a new socialist society. In this mission, the British trade unions, transformed and renewed, will play a decisive role.

Rob Sewell

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ing advantage of mass unemployment and the weakness of the union leaders, pushed through changes in working practices. Compulsory Competitive Tendering was introduced into local authorities. Personal contracts, part-time working and short term contracts were also introduced across the board. The Tories introduced further anti-union legislation in 1984, 1988, 1989 and 1990. The TUC refused to break the law, preferring prostration before the Tories.

RMT in the new year, the miners were once again left to fight alone.

Under pressure from big business, Smith attempted to break the party's links with the unions. A number of union leaders, fearing marginalisation, resisted. Edmunds and Morris led the battle to preserve the union bond. At the Party conference, the original OMOV proposal was clearly defeated. A compromise version, sponsored by NUPE and thr

The Great British Tradition

By Beatrice Windsor

The Good Old Cause

By 1646 the new bourgeois had succeeded in their bid for power following the defeat of the absolutist monarchy in the English Civil War.

It was not a clear cut victory for the embryonic capitalist class, but was - as Engels put it in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* - a "compromise between the rising middle class and the ex-feudal landowners." The legacy of which is with us to this day in the shape of Queen Elizabeth II.

Why was there no final conclusion? On the one hand, the old feudal class based around the monarchy were too weak to challenge the new order and, unlike their fellow European despots, recognised the financial opportunities in the offing. Again, Engels explains: "... there had always been a section of the great landowners willing, for economic and political reasons, to co-operate with the leading men of the financial and industrial bourgeois."

The bourgeois revolutionaries around Cromwell on the other hand, were weak. They had wrested power on the basis of a 'left wing' force - the New Model Army.

This unique army had been developed by Cromwell after the initial defeats suffered by the Parliamentarians. The New Model Army won the day through its use of new military tactics; using co-ordinated manoeuvres of heavy calvary and disciplined volleys of musket fire against the disorganised though heroic 'cut and thrust' of the Cavaliers.

But the jell that lubricated this revolutionary army was the political ideas of the Independents (see last month's *Socialist Appeal*). Their opponents dubbed them the Levellers, because they feared they wanted a 'level' or classless society.

The Levellers readily accepted this tag. Their leaders were **John Lilburne**, an aggressive orator who cared little for the pretensions of the new bourgeoisie; **William Walwyn**, a thoughtful theoretician; and **Richard Overton**, a jovial popular leader who was developing the ideas of atheism - a remarkable achievement for someone at the head of a 'religious' movement.

With the Royalists defeated, the Levellers came into conflict with the ruling Presbyterians who visualised a property and wealth based 'democracy'. The Levellers wanted power to transfer to the 'sovereign people'.

A revolutionary programme was devised, known to its supporters as the 'Good Old Cause', which pre-empted many of the demands of the Chartists 200 years later.

This programme - outlined in the Levellers' pamphlet *An Agreement of the People* - demanded:

- ☛ England should be rid of the 'Norman Yoke', which was 17th century short-hand for declaring a Republic.
- ☛ Universal male suffrage, with Parliaments of limited duration
- ☛ Relief for the poor, sick and widowed, that is an early Welfare State
- ☛ Religious freedom for all, including Catholics.

The latter demand was extraordinary, given that they had just fought a war against the Catholic backers of Charles I. It illustrated the New Model Army's opposition to Parliament's attempts to dispatch them to Ireland to help carve out England's first colony.

There was another major factor that boosted their influence - the printing press had arrived. They were the first force in history to understand the strength of printed propaganda, using slogans and 'transitional demands' to win the hearts and minds of the masses.

And so, armed with theory, a revolutionary programme and bundles of papers under their arm they set out to win the peace.

Unfortunately, Cromwell had other ideas.

Next issue: *the Levellers march on London*



The Upper Crust

Poll-axed

The latest ICM 'State Of The Nation' poll makes interesting reading for some. Only 13% of those polled think the NHS is 'safe' in Major's hands. Only 20% have the same feelings of confidence in the Tories over state schools. 66% are opposed to profitable state industries being sold off and run as private companies—and for Tory voters that percentage is as high as 53%. 74% of those polled think that there is one law for the rich and one for the poor with only 13% actually disagreeing. Most interesting of all is that only 26% disagree with the statement that 'more socialist planning would be the best way to solve Britain's economic problems', with 38% declaring a clear preference for this. Actually this statement has got the support of over at least 32% of those polled each time it has been asked since 1988 with those actively disagreeing only ever reaching a high of 36% (in 1988). 'No preferences/Don't knows' make up 36%. This shows that a) socialism is not as unpopular as some people would have us believe and b) there are a sizable number out there ready to be convinced if only the Labour leaders were prepared to do so. After all even 18% of Tory voters agree with Socialism!

King and I

It's amazing how scarcely a week seems to pass without some new revelation involving BT fan and Mills & Boon star Diana and nude model and alleged painter Charles. What no one seems to have asked is what exactly do these state employees (for it is us who pays for them) do for a living? They spend their lives (when they are out of bed) either coming or going out of health clubs (Diana) or wandering around hills shooting things (Charles).

No wonder so many half wits and habitual layabouts are declaring an interest in becoming members of the Russian royal family—it looks just down their street.

SOCIALIST

APPEAL

The Marxist voice of the labour movement

Defend Clause Four!

Fight for Jobs!

The call was clear from delegates at both the TUC and Labour Party conferences—we want a policy of full employment to form the backbone of the programme of the next Labour government. However there is now concern from activists that this might be left as just an 'aim' or a 'vision' rather than as a definite commitment. The 'spin doctors' at Blackpool were talking about being unable to 'afford' it—along with every other concrete act people wanted the Party to be committed to—due to the 'state of the economy'. In other words we are being given the clear impression from the right wing that the requirements of the market economy i.e. capitalism, will have to take priority. Certainly the representatives of big business have lost no time in 'advising' Blair & company to ditch such 'unrealistic' (as they see it) demands as full employment, the minimum wage and renationalisation of industries such as rail, water and the Post Office—assuming the Tories get away with selling this off. They are, needless to say, quite happy to see Clause Four ditched; that is the basis of their praise for "New Labour" as some would wish the Party to be now called.

The optimists of the right wing believe (in public anyway) that full employment can be achieved with the assistance of these wonderful market forces in some sort of partnership. But the reality will be different; otherwise we would have already had full employment under the Tories. They would, no doubt, be quite happy to see everyone in a job and not complaining about the government but the laws of the system will

not—and will never—allow for it. The Tories are now reduced to banking on the belief that by lowering wages—and then lowering benefits—the British workforce can 'price themselves into a job' as they put it. In fact this will mean more profits not more jobs. Already the UK has the highest level of dividend payouts of any capitalist system in Europe. Partnership for the bosses means in reality, 'take the money and run'. They will simply spend the grants as they see fit and to



hell with any government wishes or 'plans of partnership'.

To rely on the growth of the economy to bring home the goods will not pass muster. As the authors of "A Job For All" (the new Socialist Appeal pamphlet—£1) explain: "...how much growth do we need to get full employment? The trend rate of growth of the British

economy has been around 2.5% a year since the first industrial revolution. If growth were to continue at the present general rate of 2.1%, unemployment will remain at 3 million (on official figures) for the next ten years...In order to drag the figures down to 1 million in ten years time, 4 million have to be created in the meantime, because more workers are joining the labour force. This would require consistent growth of about 3.5% a year. There is no prospect whatsoever of that happening on current trends and under this system."

Only under a socialist plan of production can the necessary resources be created to make full employment a reality. Proposals such as a 32 hour working week with no loss of pay could then play an important role in the creation of jobs. To simply talk about vague ideas such as 'training' and 'a European strategy' will not even begin to solve anything. Even raising ideas such as 'regulation of industry', as some on the left have done, will not tackle the root of the problem—the movement should remember the old saying "you can't control what you don't own": as true now as it ever was. Nationalisation of the monopolies, banks, finance houses along with the pension schemes is essential. Under the profit system where greed takes priority over need we will never see full employment being 'allowed'. Unemployment has become a permanent fixture of capitalism. All labour and trade union activists must fight to ensure that the demand for full employment is not relegated by the Labour leaders and that a definite commitment to this central issue is made.

Fight for Socialist Policies