



# socialist appeal

The marxist voice of the labour movement

## Back to the future

**Britain 1995:** Ted Grant analyses likely perspectives for the labour movement in the coming period.

**Chechnya:** why did Yeltsin invade and what are the likely prospects for his survival?

**Engels:** to mark the anniversary of Engels' death, Rob Sewell looks at his work "Socialism: utopian and scientific."

**The Enemy Within:** Steve Jones, on the track of MI5, reviews Seamus Milne's new book.

**Beaten Generation?:** whats happening to British youth.

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# Fight to defend Clause IV

The fight is on to save Labour's commitment to public ownership enshrined in Clause Four of the constitution. Already virtually every LP branch or GC which has had a discussion on Clause Four has voted to maintain it.

The initial confidence of the right wing and the 'spin doctors' that Clause Four could be removed with little fuss has been replaced by growing concern over the movement from the rank and file to defend Labour's traditional commitments. This has been shown by the petulant anger that greeted the advertisement placed in the 'Guardian' of January 10th by a majority of the Labour MEPs calling for Clause Four and public ownership to be defended. One Blair adviser was reported as calling the MEPs "not serious people" and Robin Cook told Channel Four News: "I think it's very unfortunate that some people are willing to suggest that there should not be a debate on what replaces Clause Four". Even if you ignore Cook's assumption that Clause Four will be replaced, this statement is still strange. Strange because the position of the so-called modernisers has been to rush this debate through as quickly as possible. The decision at the NEC of December 14th to have a 'special' conference on April 29th of this year rather than decide the question at the normal annual conference in October means that the vote will be taken before any of the union conferences. This reflects their fear that, just as with OMOV, the unions will vote solidly for the retention of

Clause Four. Many unions have a version of Clause Four as part of their own constitutions. They clearly have not forgotten that OMOV was only voted through when the MSF delegation switched their vote in contradiction to their own conference—a fact which was confirmed in the vote of censure passed at the following MSF conference in 1994. In fact, very little time for debate has now been left. Most LP and affiliated union branches are only now getting the official material and booklet ('Labour's objects'), with a special issue of LP News to follow. The closing date for the consultation period is only March 3rd leaving very little time for any discussion whatsoever.

## Loaded

The consultation form enclosed with the document is somewhat loaded against Clause Four with the questions leaning towards a rejection of Clause Four and also of public ownership. Like the booklet itself, they tend to concentrate on vague statements about social justice, freedom, opportunity and so on rather than clear socialist principles. Based on this 'consultation'—which sounds rather like the 'consultation' favoured by some employers we could name—a new version of Clause Four will be sent out on March 20th. This will leave only a month for anyone to amend it—plenty of time as it happens, since no amendments will be allowed anyway! It is a case of take it or leave it, so much for the 'great debate'. The desire, in reality, of the right wing to get rid of Labour's commitment to public ownership is seen by

the proposals being sent out by the 'New Clause Four Campaign' (which reflects the intentions of the 'modernisers') which raises the following 'suggestion' as to what they think should replace the existing wording. They suggest a wording which calls for "both a socially responsible properly regulated private sector and for public ownership where it is justified on grounds of efficiency and equity". In other words public ownership as an unwelcome last resort if all else fails rather than being central to Labour's aims. This is what they wish to put in place of Clause Four. We should make it clear. There is nothing wrong with Clause Four—indeed it has never been more relevant. As the millions who are suffering as a result of privatisation can confirm, the so-called 'market economy' (a phrase coined by those too frightened to use the word capitalism) offers no way forward.

## Attack

Workers hate the Tories and will vote them out of office at the first opportunity they get. Labour should be concentrating its attacks on getting the Tories out of office as soon as possible rather than wasting its time on this divergence which may please the City and the newspaper barons such as Murdoch but will bring no benefits to the movement or the class. All activists in the local parties and in the affiliated unions should be moving now to commit their delegates to the special conference to vote for the retention of Clause Four as it presently stands.

Steve Jones, Romford CLP  
(personal cap)

# Back to the future

**Startling statistics have recently brought home the true horror of life for millions of working class people in Britain today. In the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, the poorest local authority area in the country, deprivation is so deep that we are witnessing a return not to the conditions of the twenties and thirties but to the worst poverty of the Victorian age.**

More than one third of its residents live in households with a combined income of less than £90 per week, sixty six per cent of council tenants have to receive housing benefit, seventy per cent of secondary school pupils receive free school meals and overcrowding in housing is five times worse than the national average. People in the borough are now an average of 16% worse off than they were 10 years ago.

## Poverty

Dr. Bobbie Jacobson, director of public health for the East London and The City Health Authority, declared "The new census points to an unequivocal picture of worsening levels of poverty in East London... high levels of ill health are one of its many consequences." Her analysis concludes by predicting massive increases in suicides, cancers, TB and accident rates by the year 2000. Welcome back to the future! Last year the National Children's Home charity estimated that for 1.5 million families on Income Support, the diet of an 1876 workhouse was beyond their means. Income Support levels mean a mere £4.15 per week to feed a child under 11 years old - 30% below the level of 119 years ago. Nationally, it is estimated that two in every five workers -

40%, have now experienced periods of unemployment. Per person income for Britons now rank twentieth in the world at £11,600 per year and it is going down! This means that workers in Britain now earn significantly less than workers in countries like Germany, France or Italy. Three million of the seven million male workers in Europe who work more than 48 hours per week are British. From the workshop of the world, Britain has become the sweatshop of Europe! For over fifteen years the Tories have led a systematic onslaught against the rights, conditions and living standards of the working class. The employers have taken this offensive into every workplace.

## Remorseless

Even some Tories have been shocked by the remorselessness of the attacks. Sir Ralph Howell, Tory MP for Norfolk North, described Michael Portillo's stringent plans for the new "job seekers allowance" as "something awful," with people being forced to go on writing application letters when there was no work available. Portillo, espousing the most reactionary Tory philosophy, replied that nobody has a "Godgiven right to be idle and live off others."

John Major, in his new year message to his party talked of his government's "successes", and indeed the economy grew by 4% last year although this had little to do with Tory policies and a lot to do with the forced exit from the ERM and a 12% devaluation of the pound, but this has not been translated into real benefit for the working class or even the middle class. Last year real disposable income for every person in Britain fell by 0.4%.

Unemployment is officially 2.5 million, in reality 4 million and there is still the massive personal debt burden accrued in the late 80's.

One of the traditional powerhouses of economic recovery is the construction industry. Yet with a mass of empty office space throughout every town and city in the country and with building societies warning of a collapse in the housing market, particularly with the Tories abolition of assistance for mortgage holders who subsequently become unemployed and the predicted interest rate increases, this "recovery" can be seen to be anything but healthy. It will not solve one of the problems we face. For these reasons, despite economic growth, the Tories are not capable of reproducing the "feelgood factor" that existed in the late 80's and which saw them to their fourth election victory in 1992. Even the promise of a cut in the rate of personal income tax cannot offset all the other factors. The latest opinion polls show the dire position they now face. A Gallup poll published in the Telegraph (13.1.95) put the Tories on only 18.5%, the first time in history that a governing party has sunk below 20%, with Labour an historic 43.5% ahead on 62%!

## Wipeout

The Tories now fear an electoral wipeout on the scale of their Canadian counterparts. Ironically, just as workers and the middle class have begun to see through the mirage of "the market," Tony Blair and the Labour leadership have rushed headlong into its embrace. Their attempts to "modernise" the Labour Party and throw out Clause IV represent nothing more than their adoption of the outdated philosophies of 1980's

Toryism.

Labour's massive lead in the opinion polls is despite the leadership not because of them. Blair seems to spend more time playing down people's expectations than attacking the Tories at present. Just imagine what could happen if a real campaign was launched by the Labour Party and the trade unions to expose the Tories and lay down real policies that will begin to tackle all the problems that have built up over the sixteen years of Tory government.

## Socialist programme

This programme would need to tackle the scourge of mass unemployment, poverty and low pay, homelessness and housing chaos, the chronic underfunding of the health service and the rest of the welfare state, and give back workers all their rights and conditions they have lost in the last period.

If Labour campaigned on a genuine socialist programme then a landslide victory in the general election would be guaranteed.

Socialist Appeal advocates such a programme.

**A 32 hour, four day week without loss of pay**

**A national minimum wage of at least £200 per week**

**Renationalise all the privatised industries**

**Repeal all the Tory trade union legislation - and full rights from day one of employment**

**Restore all the cuts in public sector spending**

**Launch a programme of quality house building to tackle the chronic housing crisis**

**A socialist plan of production - nationalise the banks, financial institutions and the big monopolies that dominate the economy, under workers control and management.**

# Support Sacked Bus Drivers

Eastern National Bus Company, now owned by Badgerline, has sacked 105 drivers at its Chelmsford depot, and suspended several others after taking strike action in protest at excessive hours. The Company operated a service with 40 scab drivers, who were moved into local hotels on the eve of the strike. A new workforce has now been taken on. So far there have been reports of accidents, as well as drivers getting lost and charging incorrect fares!

The Company wanted to increase working hours to save 2% of the wage bill. This followed two years of successive attacks including a reduction of overtime rates from double time at weekends and time and half mid-week to a flat rate plus 30p an hour overtime rate, as well as enforced pay rises linked to these reductions.

When Badgerline was launched they announced big profits as a result of buying up formerly nationalised bus companies and asset stripping them - selling off prime town centre bus depots, cutting non-profitable routes and reducing wages. Now Thamesway Bus Company, also owned by Badgerline, have given 90 days notice to terminate our contracts and introduce pay cuts of £25 a week and cut holidays by two days a year, despite making a £250,000 profit last year.

The depots at Basildon and Brentwood will be voting to take action, but unfortunately the union officials are failing to give a lead. Bill Lumb, TGWU official said the "union had to accept the word of Thamesway that the business could be placed in severe difficulties if the new contracts were not accepted" and that "he will not recommend strike action as nobody can afford to lose their job nowadays."

The 105 drivers at Chelmsford who made a stand have lost their jobs. If they are to regain them and defeat the Company's plan, then the only option is to escalate the action to include all depots.

Only united action will force Badgerline to retreat with attacks on conditions of all busworkers taking place around the country. The need for a Labour Government to renationalise the bus companies under workers' control is absolute in order to provide both safe and decent services and conditions of work.

**Mark O'Kearney**  
TGWU shop steward  
Thamesway, Hadleigh Bus Depot.

# Cuts Crisis Deepens

**As councils up and down the country set their budgets a new language emerges. Councillors speak of 'downsizing', 'savings' and 'negative growth'. In reality they mean cuts.**

And after what has been described as the "toughest budget settlement for a decade" councils are preparing to slash services and make thousands of redundancies. On top of that council tax bills are set to rise by more than twice the rate of inflation. All this on the back of 15 years of government cuts.

Unfortunately most Labour councillors, faced with the lack of any credible strategy for opposing the cuts from the Labour and trade union leadership have opted to carry out the Tories diktats and implement cuts.

Birmingham's Labour council is facing similar problems to hundreds of others up and down the country. The city council is facing a cut in the level of Revenue Support Grant and in its SSA Reduction 'damping' Grant. To meet the gap between what the city council needs to spend to simply stand still and the level of finance it will receive in RSG and the National Non-Domestic Rate the council tax will have to be raised by 5-6% and £45 million worth of cuts made.

And that is already after assuming no price inflation, 1% 'efficiency' savings in

all departments, the use of £14 million of reserves and the 'postponement' of £5 million worth of capital starts. There are also discussions on the Leisure Services Committee to close 3 libraries this year and a further 7 next year and imple-

ment a 20% cut in hours at the Central Library. Other Leisure Services cuts include the closing of two swimming pools, the introduction of charges for the city's museums in 1996, the axing of two adult education centres and the shortening of the summer term as well as plans to shut down 1 major community centre and two dual-use sites this year and a further four next year.

The Social Services Committee plans to close three children's homes and three adult residential homes.

The Labour group leadership have offered councillors a number of choices during the course of the budget discussions. They are:

- To protect the Education and Social Services budget and implement 11% cuts in all other services
- To protect Education and implement 8% cuts in all other services
- To protect just the "schools expenditure" in the Education budget and implement 6% cuts in all other services
- Have no exemptions and implement 4% cuts in all departments.

As a result the Labour leadership are planning 250 redundancies in the DSO/DLO and a further 600 in other areas and that does not include job losses at the National Exhibition Centre. As if this was not bad enough council

# Solidarity with Chelmsford drivers

Over 500 attended a March and Rally organised by the TGWU in Chelmsford on Sat 17 December in support of 105 bus drivers sacked by Eastern National, a subsidiary of Badgerline Holdings. The march was seen as a big success with support coming from the labour movement in the Essex area, drivers from other Badgerline garages and from the London Bus Section. £10,000 has already been raised in support of the dispute.

At the rally, TGWU General Secretary Bill Morris, spoke in support of the sacked drivers. He revealed that the Badgerline management had threat-

ened the union with legal action over the contents of a leaflet produced by the sacked drivers. He said that the union would produce half a million of the leaflet and stated that he would "see them in court".

Since privatisation bus drivers have seen their pay levels fall whereas owners of the bus companies have joined the millionaire set. It is time for the leadership of the TGWU to give a clear call for solidarity action to defend the sacked Chelmsford drivers.

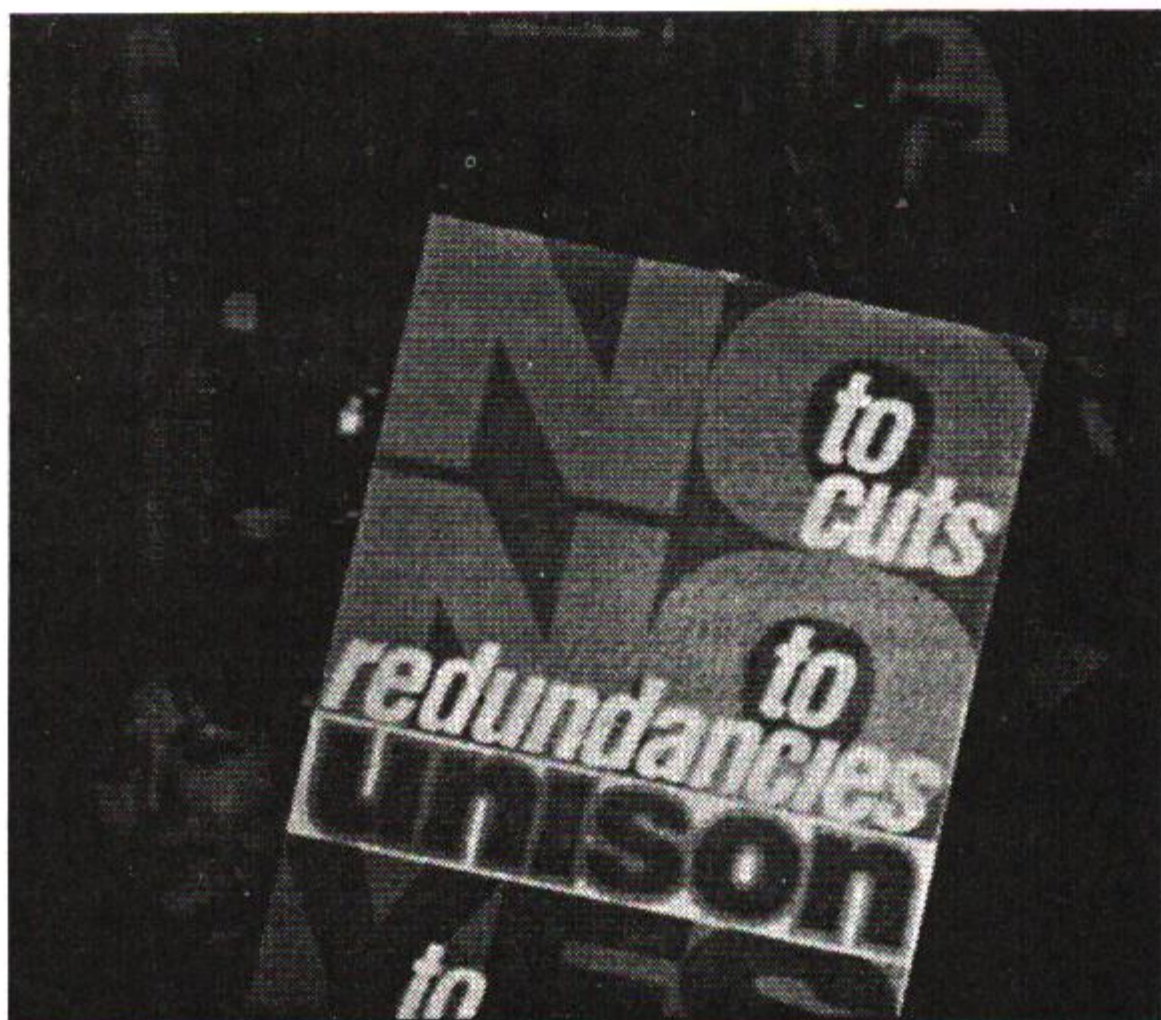
**Mark Langabeer**  
TGWU 1/366 Branch

leader Theresa Stewart, in a document to all Labour councillors, states that budget groups should be meeting to "identify the 6% savings for next year and the 12% savings for the year after."

Birmingham City Council Labour Group and other Labour groups up and down the country have another choice - to say enough is enough and reject the cuts. Labour councillors were elected to protect jobs and services not carry out the Tories' dirty work. In Birmingham three councillors are set to vote against the budget and Cllr. Richard Evans has spoken up in favour of promoting a "needs budget". Around the country other individual councillors will also make a stand. But they recognise that they cannot solve the problems on the basis of one city or town hall alone - there is a need for an emergency conference of all Labour councils and the local authority trade unions to draw up a strategy to defy the

government and co-ordinate opposition to the Tories' cuts and to unite those fighting the cuts. Such a strategy should include the organising of a one-day national strike by the local authority trade unions and the call for the TUC to organise a 24-hour general strike, linked to a national campaign of meetings and demonstrations, as a first step to bring down the Tories and end their ruthless policies of cutbacks and mass unemployment. If every Labour council set an 'illegal' deficit or needs budget - refusing to cut jobs and services, or to offload the financial burden onto working people through huge Council Tax rises - the Tories would be powerless to intervene and would be forced to back down. Such defiance and the adoption of radical socialist policies would generate enormous enthusiasm for Labour and stop the Tories in their tracks.

**Jeremy Dear,**  
Birmingham Trades Council



New data released by the Labour Party has shone some light on why the bosses in industries down for privatisation are so keen for it to go ahead. You may have thought that it was just because they wanted to keep their jobs but here you can see exactly why. The bosses of the 10 privatised water boards have shared an incredible £20 million in pay rises, pension packages, share option deals and so on, over the last five years. 25 senior water company directors have become at least £500,000 each better off and the chairmen have done best of all. A comparison of how much they are paid now as against how much they were paid before privatisation in 1989/90 gives a clear

idea of what the 'benefits' of privatisation really are. Sir Frederick Holliday of Northumbrian Water has the worst deal—his salary has only gone up by 108% from £40,000 to £83,000. However others have enjoyed increases of between 115% and, in the case of Sir Desmond Pitcher of North West Water, 571% (representing an increase from £47,000 to £315,000). One former chairman, John Elfed Jones, benefited from a total package worth £1.7 million. Workers fighting to stop their pay being cut let alone get even a minimal pay increase may wonder how this is all going to be paid for, as the bosses are always saying when the question of wage increases comes

## British claimants get least

Anyone who is tempted to be taken in by those Ministerial rants at Tory conference about "welfare scroungers" and so on may like to take note of the latest EC figures. British claimants get the lowest levels of benefit in Europe—averaging 23% of previous earnings as against a European average of 61%. The EC survey also reports that Britain is the only

country to reduce expenditure on Unemployment Benefit since 1980; a reduction of 23% as against increases elsewhere of between 33% (Belgium) and 375% (Portugal). Since this reduction can hardly be explained by low unemployment, we must look to cut-backs to explain this one. The arrival of the jobseekers allowance will make things even worse. The EC estimate in their report that during the first year of the new benefit 90,000 will lose entitlement to any sort of benefit and another 150,000 will have to go over to means-tested alternatives. No wonder the report refers to the UK as "the leader in imposing stricter conditions on entitlement to unemployment benefit". With job security becoming more a thing of the past, many workers may now wish to decide to summit the Tories to the same experience and put them on the dole.

## Gas pay scandal

The announcement (just before Christmas of course) that British Gas showroom staff were to enjoy the benefits of free enterprise by having their wages and conditions cut whilst their chief executive, Cedric Brown, enjoys a 75% salary rise of £205,000 (with other BG directors getting rises of up to 50% as well), raises the question of how many other bosses are doing well at the expense of their workforce. According to figures compiled by LRD quite a few by all accounts. Michael Mellor of Julius A Mellor had a 141% pay rise last year. One director of James Capel did well enough to get a 116% rise. Others have benefited by increases of between 12% and 40%. A few bosses, it must be said, had to suffer drops in pay—for example Robert Edminston of the IM Group had a pay cut of 40% last year. However he still earns over £12,000 a week so no great hardship there. The national trend remains for firms to pay directors and bosses increases far above the national average (currently under 4%) and certainly far above that of the workers who actually produce the wealth. Signal workers, for example, might like to take note of this. Incidentally, dividend payments to shareholders also remain high with payouts as a percentage of profits standing at 25% in 1993 (as against 10% in 1985). The attitude of what the bosses do with the profits their firms generate is further shown by the fact that although profits rose by 6% in November, investments levels in plant and machinery actually went down, according to CSO data.

## Privatised pay rip off

around. The answer, as has been the case in all the privatised industries, is through staff cuts and reduction in conditions for those who remain on the one hand, and increases in charges to the public for a poorer service on the other. We can already see the same thing happening with the proposals for railway privatisation. The next Labour government should not waste its time, and our money, with talk about 'regulation' to solve the abuses of privatisation but should promptly renationalise all these industries without delay.

**An ex-privatised worker** (London)

# Scottish party supports Clause IV

Labour's Scottish conference, due to be held in Inverness in March, looks set to deal a blow to Tony Blair and the leadership's attempts to get rid of Clause IV. Twenty or so constituencies, including the parties in Gordon Brown's Dunfermline East and Donald Dewar's Glasgow Garscadden seats, have so far discussed the issues and are backing the status quo. The Scottish committees of MSF, FBU and UCATT are also committed to retaining Clause IV.

So in the run up to the special conference in April the

Scottish Party could throw a spanner in the proverbial works.

It's clear that the leadership called the special conference in April to avoid a democratic debate at the trade union conferences. But there's no way they can avoid this one. Or is there? In the list of key events in the new 1995 party diary the Scottish conference is mysteriously not listed. So much for John Prescott's promise of a year of healthy debate and discussion!

Dave Cartwright  
Dumbarton CLP

## Socialism wins votes!

On December 16th, due to boundary reorganisation, the newly formed Oldham West and Royton CLP held a packed members selection conference. Over 200 party members heard Bryan Davies (currently MP for Oldham Central and Royton) and Michael Meacher (MP for Oldham East) put forward their cases as to why they should be selected for the new safe Labour seat.

Although both candidates sought to appear on the left, it was Meacher who chose to identify himself as a "Clause Four Socialist". The decisive question was on the issue of Clause Four. Bryan Davies supported the 'modernisation' of the constitution and so on, but Michael Meacher stated that he would defend Clause Four as fundamental to the Party and socialism. This clearly had an effect on the result of the vote. Davies was expected to benefit via the OMOV (One Member One Vote) system from his perceived better record of activity at a local level but despite this Meacher won by 249 to 220. It was clear from the meeting that the membership still feel strongly about Clause Four and are prepared to show this through their voting patterns. The right wing should not feel so confident that they can use devices such as OMOV to get things all their own way.

Bryan Beckingham (Oldham Central and Royton CLP)

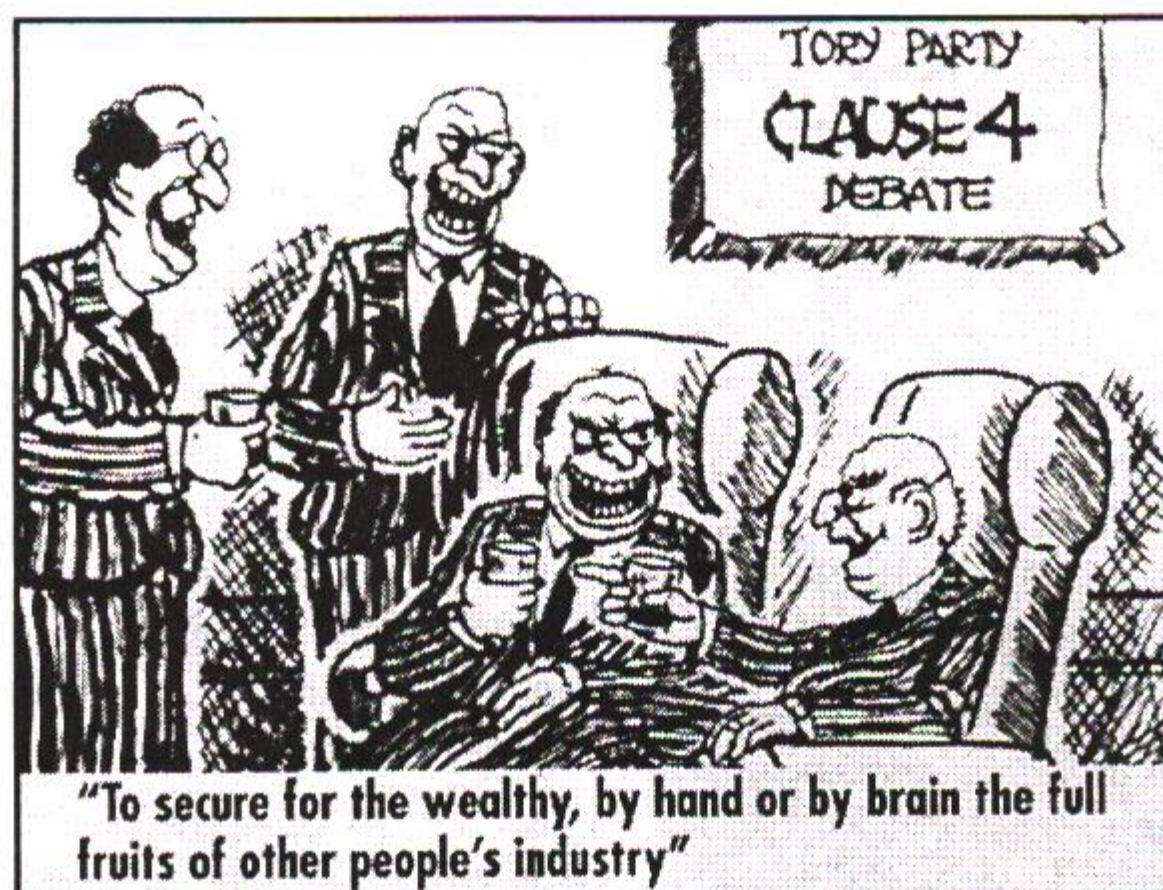
## Lessons of the RMT Strike: What Labour Must Do

A victory was achieved not just by the RMT but by the whole Labour movement. It proved that this government can be defeated when working class people unite as one body to defend one another. The spirit that prevailed throughout the dispute must not be lost, nor must we go back to 'bashing each other, whatever political party/trade union we belong to. As a member of the Labour Party, I was disgusted at the total lack of support from the front bench—with the exception of Dawn Primarolo who showed solidarity with the strikers on the picket line and look what happened to her! (off the front bench and the NEC). When elected, a Labour government must:

- Sack the bosses of Railtrack from top to bottom.
- Re-instate the sacked 'Manchester 4' guards.
- Greater workers control of their industry.

Phil Boston

RMT NEC Member (In Personal Capacity)



## What is Socialism?



## In Defence of Clause 4

Order your copy now, by sending cheque/PO for £1.30 made payable to 'Socialist Appeal' to 'Socialist Appeal', POBox 2626, London N1 6DU

# Defend Clause 4, Defend Socialism

## A model reply to the NEC

A questionnaire is being circulated to all party members, CLPs and affiliated organisations as part of the "consultation" process. The questions are designed to create answers that give an illusion that there is support amongst the membership to re-write Clause 4. We urge all readers to return the questionnaire with these model answers reprinted from material sent out by the 'Defend Clause 4' Campaign.

### 1) Labour's objects

1 (a) No. Clause 4 as it stands does this clearly and concisely and should be retained as it stands.

1 (b) Clause 4 is comprehensive statement of our Objects and should be retained as it stands.

### 2) Values

2 (a) It should be emphasised that Social Justice will only be achieved by securing for the workers the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof,

and that this can only be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange.

2 (b) We should emphasis Clause IV (5) and retain it as it stands, ie. Generally to promote the political, social and economic emancipation of the people, and more particularly of those who depend directly on their own exertions by hand or by brain for the means of life.

2 (c) The themes that should be added and emphasised are that there can be no real Opportunity without common ownership. This is best expressed in the existing Clause 4 (pt 4 and 5) which should be retained.

2 (d) The themes that should be added and emphasised is that there can be no real equality without common ownership. This is best expressed in the existing Clause 4 part (4) and (5) which should be retained.

2 (e) The themes that should be added and emphasised are best expressed by the phrase "the best obtainable system of popular administration" in the existing Clause 4 which should be retained.

2 (f) The themes that should be added and emphasised are expressed in the existing Clause 4, especially (6) and (7) which should be retained as they stand

### 3) The Economy

3 (a) Labour should express it's commitment to common ownership rather than private industry. This should be retained as it stands.

### 4) Labour and the people

4 (a) Labour should campaign on policies that are based on the strategic vision of the existing Clause IV which should be retained.  
4 (b) By being seen as a Party that sticks to its convictions and principles of common ownership and the redistribution of wealth so that workers receive the full fruits of their industry as enshrined in the existing Clause IV which should be retained.

### ADDITIONAL RESPONSES

"This questionnaire should have honestly asked the question: Do you wish to retain Clause IV as it stands. If it had been asked my/our answer would have been Yes".

# In Defence of Marxism

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.

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# The Beaten Generation?

Linda is 21. She works as a care assistant in a Merseyside nursing home where she earns £2.50 an hour, for a straight 12 hour night shift. She gets no paid breaks, no paid holidays, and the temporary contract she signed is worth little more than the paper it is written on.

Last year one of Linda's colleagues contracted TB, after being infected by a patient. Twelve months later neither patients nor staff have been screened for the disease, as the owner regards this as an unnecessary expense.

Linda herself has been threatened by schizophrenic patients, including one incident involving a knife. Despite this the home was understaffed over the Christmas holiday period as the owner refused to pay more than three members of staff overtime rates. Linda's story, and tens of thousands like it, are the horrific legacy of 15 years of Tory government, a government which has destroyed one of Britain's most precious natural resources—it's young people. On the exploited backs of the youth, the Tories have built a sweat-shop economy based on low wages, and fear of the dole queue. Job training schemes are little more than a convenient way of massaging the unemployment statistics, while at the same time providing a source of cheap labour for the Tories' friends in big business. Higher education, again cynically used to keep young people out of the unemployment statistics, is more concerned with quantity of students than quality of education—with those who graduate often finding themselves on the dole queue, or in low paid, temporary jobs, which bear no relation to the skills they have spent years acquiring.

Scapegoated and marginalised by Tory politicians and the popular press, young people—from teenage

mums to new age travellers—have been held responsible for the breakdown of British society; that twee utopia of village greens and cricket on Sunday which John Major holds so dear. Even Labour has jumped on the bandwagon, by promising that a future Labour government would provide more secure places for young offenders—an unenlightened and shameful attempt by Blair to hijack the 'law and order' moral high ground.

## Tory Britain

Such is the reality of Tory Britain for millions of British youth: a vicious circle of unemployment, dependence and deprivation, which offers no comfort in the present, and little hope for the future. Yet, despite this multitude of problems, at the last General Election 2.5 million young people did not bother to vote—a depressing statistic for which the Labour Party must take a large share of the blame. Instead of the predicted Labour victory, John Major snuck back into

office—thanks to a Labour Party which offered the people of Britain, young and old alike, nothing in the way of a genuine alternative to the Tories. On every question, and every issue, Labour equivocated; cautious to the point of absurdity. Labour failed to win the votes of Britain's young people, because they failed to offer anything other than 'more of the same'.

## Explanation

Of course, such an explanation was an anathema to the Labour leadership who tried to place the blame on 'apathy' and 'disinterest' and filled columns in the so called serious press bemoaning 'Thatcher's Children' and their 'politics of greed', while implying that the only way Labour could hope to win power again was in a Lib-Lab pact mark two. Such justifications were little more than red herrings, designed to conceal the inadequacy of Kinnock's 'modernised' Labour Party—which was suffering from a then dwindling membership

and political stagnation. Now in 1995, Tony Blair seems intent on repeating the mistakes of 1992, jeopardising a landslide Labour victory at the next General Election. Without a doubt one of Labour's most popular policies is the proposal to introduce a minimum wage—a measure which would improve the standard of living for thousands of working class people at a single stroke. Yet, during Labour Party conference, the Financial Times ran an article in which Blair made it clear that young people would be excluded from the minimum wage. Such a move is hardly likely to inspire young people to go and vote Labour at the next election—in fact it will undermine the whole credibility of the proposals for a minimum wage, and would be a cruel betrayal of those looking to Labour to lift them out of the poverty trap. The minimum wage is an essential part of Labour's programme and working class people must be able to expect Labour to deliver on its promises in full and without reservations or exclusions. Likewise, the NEC also told the 1994 Party Conference that a future Labour government could not promise to restore benefits for 16 & 17 year olds. At present 72% of those young people who use Centrepoin's Soho hostels for the homeless are aged 16 or 17—simply because without benefits thousands of young people have no alternative but to sleep on the streets; leaving themselves vulnerable to crime, drug abuse and prostitution.

## Wallow

Could we as Party members just sit back and allow the youth to wallow in the same misery which the Tories bequeathed to them? Restoring benefits to 16 and 17 year olds would be relatively inexpensive and, in addition, would send a clear message to the electorate that Labour intends to maintain and defend the welfare state—rather than leave it to rot as the Tories have done. Similarly, Blair's plans for a 'Voluntary Service Commission' for unemployed youth are an invitation to





electoral disaster. The idea that unemployed young people should undertake "voluntary" work to gain experience is one which even the Tories have shied away from. For years the labour movement have been demanding real jobs for young people rather than worthless training schemes and the like—the 'Voluntary Service Commission' would make a sick joke of these demands.

### Students

Students, too, are in danger of being worse off under a Labour government than they are now.

The Borrie Commissions' proposals to extend the student loan system to cover tutorial fees would mean education becoming the preserve of the few rather than the right of all—a charge which Labour has rightly always levelled against the Tories!

Labour cannot afford to lose the next election—and victory will only be possible if we win the support of Britain's young people. We have to offer them a radical, socialist alternative to the Tories; something we have failed to do for far too long. That means abandoning proposals such as the 'Voluntary

Service Commission' and the reactionary conclusions of the Borrie report. It also means ensuring that Labour keeps its commitment to public ownership, as embodied in Clause 4 of the Labour Party constitution.

### Public ownership

Only through public ownership and a socialist plan of production can Labour build an economy which can provide full employment and the minimum wage rather than running to the tune of profit and greed for the few.

Young people need and want a

Labour government that can provide them with a future. Equally, Labour needs the support of youth if they are to win. To gain that Labour needs to argue for Socialism, public ownership and clear demands such as the minimum wage. The freeing of society from the confines of capitalist exploitation is the task of the Labour movement and should be the banner of Young Labour.

by Paul Ferguson,  
Merseyside Labour youth

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# Youth struggle for socialism!

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According to the latest report by the OECD "economic prospects are better than they have been for several years" and that "the worlds 25 richest nations can look forward to a buoyant and prosperous 1995 with economic growth improving from 2.8% this year to a solid 3% next year". This rosy picture was echoed in the Financial Times editorial on New Years Eve which declared that "1995 should be a happy new year followed by many more to come". This picture of the state of the world will not however ring much of a bell with young people living under the realities of capitalism.

The recently published annual report of UNICEF presents a horrific picture of life today for young people worldwide. Diarrhoea kills 3 million children a year, pneumonia—which is the biggest single killer of children—cannot be defeated simply because of a lack of antibiotics in the third world. It is estimated that in 1995 1 million

children will die of measles despite the fact that a simple vaccination can immunise against it. There are 100 million children aged between 6 and 11 who do not attend school. Throughout the third world millions of children exist in virtual slavery, forced to work up to 60 hours a week in often appalling conditions. For these children of the ex-colonial world, and the estimated 100 million who

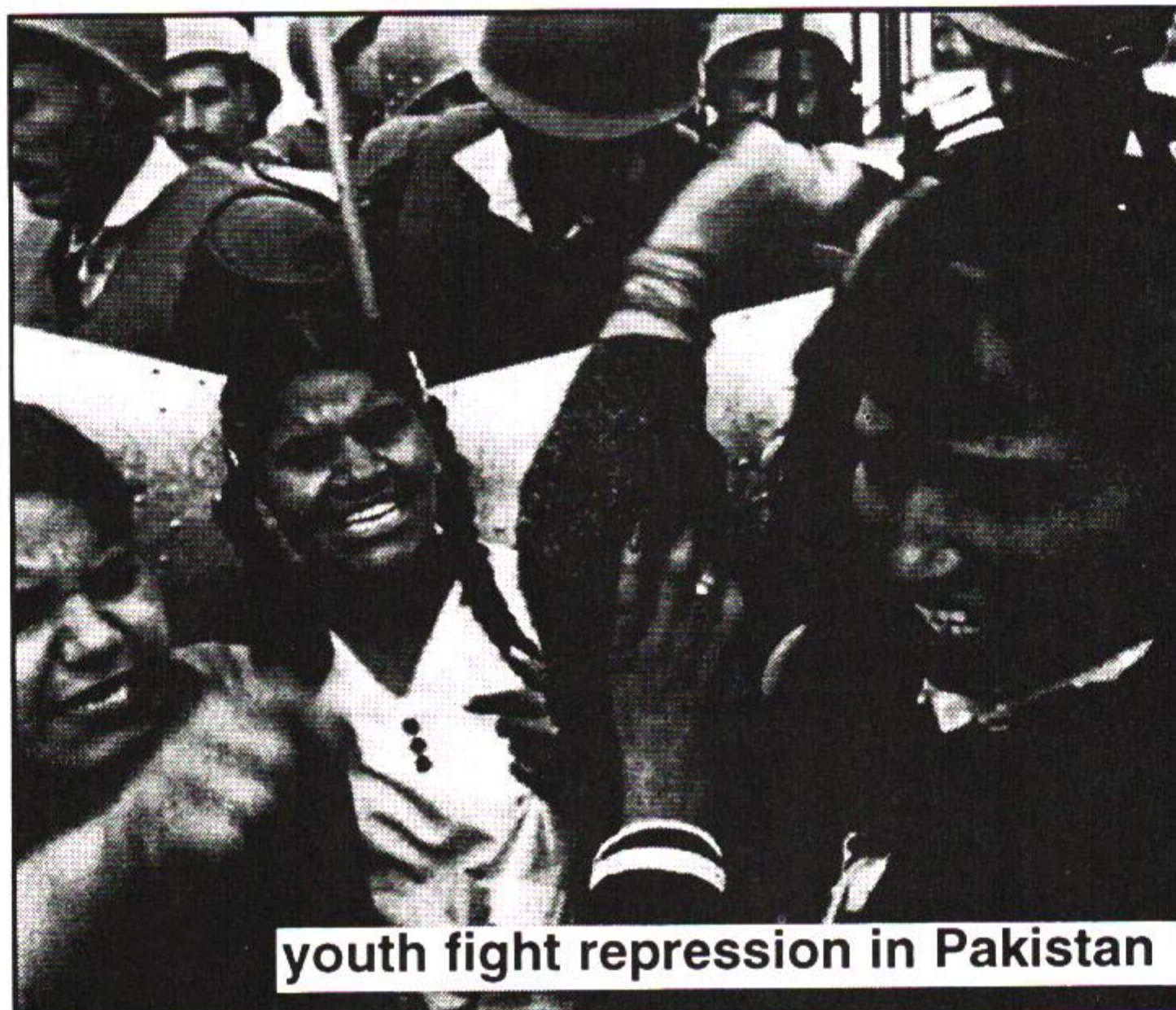
live 'on the streets', the "happy new year" of the Financial Times must ring somewhat hollow.

The position in the 'advanced' capitalist countries, the 25 richest nations, is not much better. According to the UNICEF figures, in the US 20% of youth live below the poverty line. Joyceline Eldes, former US Surgeon General, said that "our streets and jails are teeming

with young people nobody wants". So much for the land of opportunity! The situation is little different in Europe. An article in the Economist of last July warned that "in Europe too, there are millions in danger of slipping beyond the point of no return". Over a hundred years ago, Gladstone's budget speech of 1864 was described in Marx's Capital (pg. 806 Penguin edition): 'He speaks of masses "on the border of pauperism", of branches of trade in which "wages have not increased", and finally sums up the happiness of the working class in the words; "human life is but, in nine cases out of ten, a struggle for existence"'. How little has changed in 1995. For young people this seems doubly true.

### Homeless

The plight of the homeless is one of the most noticeable examples of this. No one could have failed to notice the sharp increase in numbers of young people who are homeless. A walk down the main streets of any major city in Britain will confirm that fact as you will soon come across young person after young person sleeping or begging outside shop fronts or in alleyways. Even in places such as Dover and Hastings, such sights are becoming common with local charities having to run nightly soup kitchens. Shanty-town



youth fight repression in Pakistan

communities of people living in cardboard boxes and the like have sprung up in areas around the Embankment and Waterloo in London. 150,000 young people at least become homeless in Britain every year—thousands sleep in the streets every night, whatever the weather, without even the protection of a hostel place. No wonder a charity for the homeless has recently run a series of adverts parodying photographic studies of the conditions of the homeless in Victorian England but using modern examples to show that nothing has changed. Why has the numbers of young people on the streets increased? In 1987, a survey of homeless youth showed that 52% had moved or left home to find work or establish their independence and only 44% said they were forced to leave home.

### Vicious circle

In 1994, 86% reported that they had been forced to leave home, victims of the benefit systems cutbacks. Unable to find a job without a permanent address and unable to afford such accommodation without a job and references they have become trapped in a vicious circle. They are forced into a desperate existence of crime, drugs, prostitution and begging—something that many

had believed they would never see again on the streets of our cities. What is the response of the Tories? Major talks about beggars being 'eyesores' who 'frighten' tourists and shoppers. Rather than point the blame where it belongs on mass unemployment and the benefit system, they seem content to blame the homeless themselves for not being more considerate about the needs of tourism and making the streets less attractive for visitors! Mass unemployment is now a permanent feature of capitalism and even right wing economists are now forced to admit that it is 'structural' unemployment. In Britain youth unemployment stands at 25%. The story is no different in Europe. "Many of Europe's young adults may never work, or work only occasionally" (Economist 30/7/94). In Rotterdam, for example, there are now 50,000 unemployed with 32,000 having been out of work for more than a year. In the poor parts of the city crime and drug abuse are on the increase. This story can be repeated throughout Europe. The effect on the mood of youth is all too obvious. A recent study by Manchester City Council found that many of the children interviewed considered the world to be a 'frightening and threatening place'. As the Observer of

25/9/94 stated: "The findings have shocked officials. They discovered a generation of young people terrified of growing up without a job or home. Time and time again children expressed fear about violence at school and on the streets". This fear is not baseless—the state of things in the big cities of the USA show how things could end up. In Chicago South Side last April there was a particularly violent outbreak of gang warfare.

### Chicago

It is estimated that Chicago has at least 40 big gangs with the four main gangs (Gangster Disciples, Vicelords, The Latin Kings and the Latin Disciples) accounting for half the cities 50,000 active gang members, most armed to the teeth with modern weaponry. During the violence which took place on the Robert Taylor Homes housing estate, over a period of three days, the police received over 300 reports of gunshots and 13 people were killed. It is estimated that 80% of boys aged 13 to 15 in Chicago South Side belong to gangs. One gang member, Curtis, stated that he has taken part in a dozen 'drive by' shootings since the age of 13. A gang like the Gangster Disciples will make an estimated \$300 million a year from drug sales. For these gang members the norms of society have ceased to have any meaning—the old 'pillars' of society such as the family, church etc. have become irrelevant. Capitalism can no longer offer them anything so they longer seek to ask. Only the gangs seem to offer a 'home' for them. They exist in a world without any future except the new reality of death or jail. This story can be repeated in any major US city. Is this the music of the future for us in Britain? Michael Parkinson of the European Institute for Urban Affairs at John Moores University in Liverpool said recently about the situation in Europe: "Crime, drugs, poverty, unemployment, social exclusion, segregation... people are beginning to raise the spectre of the ghetto in the (American) sense". An official involved in the Manchester report talked of a "lost generation of youth... life is tough for

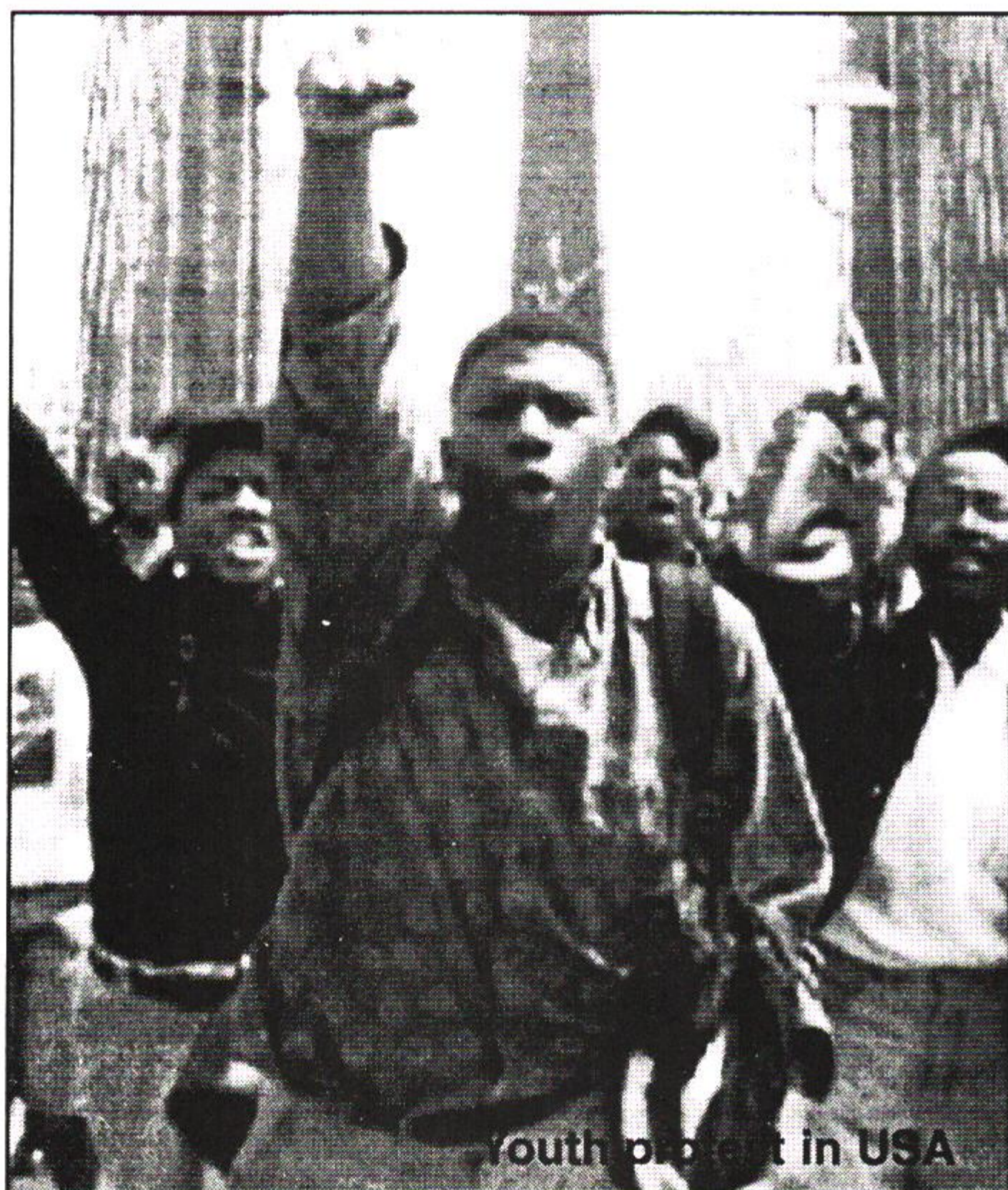
them and it is getting tougher". Already the sort of drug related events common to the US are starting to become more and more a factor in places such as Manchester and South London.

The solution for the Tories is to rant on about 'job culture', increase sentences for young offenders and talk about making things 'tougher' for them. This is the classic response of the ruling class to the results of capitalism's failure to solve the problems of youth. It may appear to frightened middle class types in leafy suburbs but in places such as the inner cities it will solve nothing. They push thousands of young people down these blind alleys of crime, violence and drugs and then punish them for having done so. No wonder the Tories have fought for years to avoid any linkage between crime and unemployment levels. They always seek to blame someone else for the failure of their system. It is capitalism that is the real problem not youth or any other section of society.

### Gang crisis

As the Economist said in relation to the situation in America: "The undesirable truth is that the gang crisis is deeply entwined with America's most intractable social failure, the entrenchment of its underclass". The only real solution to rising crime and so on is to create a society which offers a real future for young people. People can live without many things but without hope they are lost. We need to fight for a society which can offer youth real jobs, rather than the dead end jobs which are what on offer at present, and that can only be achieved by fighting for socialism. Young people, if given a way forward, are prepared to fight for a better society. In South Africa, for example, it was the youth who took the lead in fighting against the apartheid regime. We can be confident that armed with a socialist programme, the youth will once again, through the Labour and trade movement, seek to remove the rotten system of capitalism which has given them so very little.

**Steve Forrest**  
Kent Young Labour



Youth protest in USA

# Maintain SATs boycott!

**At the Easter 1994 conference, the NUT (National Union of Teachers) voted unanimously to maintain the boycott of the SATs (Standard Assessment Tests).**

**The union leadership, with the EC voting 20 to 13, are recommending in a ballot to members to lift the boycott.**

**Teachers need to resist this and vote for a continuation of the action. SATs remain a tool for the reintroduction of selection at age 11 into the Grant Maintained sectors and the production of league tables of schools. The call to all teachers should be to vote NO in the ballot.**

After consulting its members in a survey it is clear that the majority were opposed to the tests because of the workload and the dubious educational value of the tests.

It is clear that the memberships of all the teaching unions are opposed to seeing a return of some version of 11 plus in any form. The proposed tests at 7, 11 and 14 exist for one purpose only—to reinforce very divisive educational systems for our children.

### League tables

Teachers are not opposed to testing as such. We spend time on testing already. In my own subject, Mathematics, we administer tests after each subject taught in order to assess the students level of understanding and carry out corrective work where gaps have been shown. However, we are opposed to the creation of these new tests as we are also opposed to the crazy idea of league tables for schools.

League tables are a totally meaningless idea where schools are concerned since we are dealing with children from a variety of backgrounds and experi-

ences so that any one school will always have an entirely different starting point to another school.

Whilst the government starves classrooms of much needed resources through cuts in public expenditure it is quite happy to spend millions on propaganda for its parents charter and £3 million on a new expensive headquarters for the Department of Education and the new headquarters of SEAC. As the editorial in "The Teacher" (July/August) stated: "The £3 million could have paid for 150 extra teachers or bought 20,000 books".

### Cuts

As the government implements further cuts in local authority spending, the education service will be further squeezed. Already class sizes are increasing—71% of primary classes and 45% of secondary classes are above the union target of 26 pupils per class. One million primary school children are already taught in classes of more than 30—and this figure is rising.

The new National Curriculum, which Sir Ron Dearing has brought in, shows some movement over previous versions but the fundamental principled objections remain. This government refuses to tackle or even recognise the real issues in education of resources, class size, teacher's pay and conditions and so on. Sir Ron Dearing has been rewarded for his 'work' on the National Curriculum by taking charge of the Camelot consortium who have the lucrative franchise for the National Lottery. No doubt it was felt that handling Tory education policies was good experience in preparing him for a national gambling scheme!

The education service is being removed step by step from the relatively democratic control of

local authorities and being put under the control of the Funding Agency quango. The chairman of this agency is Sir Christopher Benson who is paid £33,000 a year for a 2 day week. He is also chair of Sun Alliance who just happened to give £288,000 to the Tories before the last election. It is worth comparing this to the fate which has befallen teachers. In 1992-93 a total of 4897 teachers in England and Wales under the age of 60 retired on grounds of ill-health compared to just 2551 in 1087-88—the last year before the introduction of the National Curriculum.

This year we need a serious fight to be conducted by our unions for a substantial pay rise for all the members. Most in the teaching profession now see the need to remove the Tories from office in order to save education but unfortunately Labours policy statement "Opening doors to a learning society" falls short of providing a clear alternative and does not address the key issues.

### Little content

There is plenty about 'vision' but very little content as such. Even the question of returning opted-out schools to local government control is not clearly outlined. Tony Blair's decision to send his son across London to attend one such school does little to bolster confidence in any commitment that the Party may have on this question although it does at least demonstrate the advantages of privilege that currently exist under the Tories system of so-called free choice. To this we can add the shifts in policy over the taxing of public school fees and the removal of their charity tax status—still more signs of the lack of a socialist education policy. Teachers will welcome the commitment towards nursery provision but in addition to this

we need a clear policy of a maximum class size of 20, the ending of testing for league tables in schools (as against Blunkett's recent about face on this issue), abolition of religious indoctrination in schools, for a secular fully comprehensive education system, a massive increase in funding of education to provide the resources and pay for teachers and other workers in education. This is what should be the corner stone of Labours education policy rather than miserable attempts to echo Tory prejudices.

### Poverty

Education is important but of course it has to be seen as part of the overall society we live in. Under the Tories poverty has massively increased and the abolition of this poverty is linked to achieving the best for our children. One in four people in the UK were living below the poverty line in 1991-92 compared to a level of one in ten in 1979. Children are even more likely to be living in poverty—nearly one in three in 1991-92 (a total of 4.1 million)—with six out of ten single parents also included. One out of ten of all children go hungry each month. (Figures compiled by the Child Poverty Action Group).

Teachers are at the sharp end of society's problems and face the continual pressure from the end results of this governments policies. We need more than ever a strong trade union. It is urgent that we have one single TUC affiliated union for all teachers rather than the intolerable situation which we have at present of several unions which serves only to divide the staff amongst themselves rather than presenting a united front against the employers. In the NUT we are seeing a change in consciousness amongst the members. Union activists must work towards achieving a left controlled NUT leadership as central in achieving the required changes in the union. Activists need to urgently raise this question amongst all union members as part of a campaign to give teachers the union they deserve—a fighting union with a fighting programme.

**Bryan Beckingham  
President Oldham NUT (In  
Personal Capacity)**

UK economy: two fat years, then...

# Feelgood factor fails to materialise

In his New Year message to his Tory troops, John Major waxed lyrical about the 'the successes' of the government. At least the economy is doing well, he whinged. It is only a matter of time before people realise it and the 'feel-good' factor begins to restore Tory fortunes in the opinion polls. What are these successes, and can the Tories really claim them? More to the point, will they last?

In his message John Major said that the British people had suffered much over the last four years in getting the economy right and he was determined to ensure that this hardwork led to sustained growth and no return of inflation. None of the BBC or ITV heavyweight interviewers asked him what might seem the obvious first question: why after nearly 16 years of Tory rule did the economy need to be put right at all? How was it possible for the Tory government and its much heralded 'market economy' to get in such a mess in the first place? That question was never asked because it exposes one stark fact. A system based on private property where production and investment for growth takes place only if there is a profit cannot sustain economic growth. Since 1973 world capitalism has seen three major recessions or slumps in production, investment and income, and along with them sharp rises in unemployment and poverty. Capitalism is a system where productive forces cannot develop systematically or be sustained, and where what growth there is based on inequality and

injustice.

From the summer of 1990 to the summer of 1992, the UK experienced a deep recession. From the peak of production to the trough, national output fell 3.6%. At the time the Tory government denied it would happen, then they denied it was happening, then every month it lasted they proclaimed that it was over. After the summer of 1992, British production stopped falling and began very, very slowly to recover. The economy really began to pick up pace after the end of 1992, mainly because of one big event. In September 1992, the pound was forced out of the European Exchange Rate mechanism where its value was artificially held up with the German mark. John Major and the Tory cabinet had made staying in the ERM the cornerstone of their economic policy.

## Inflation

There was no way they would leave, Major said. It would mean runaway inflation, higher interest rates and disaster. But on Black Wednesday, on a day in which the Major government spent and lost forever £5bn of taxpayers money (enough to fund the coal industry for two years or to revitalise Britain's transport system) to try and hold up the pound, the government was finally forced to give way. The pound has slumped in value by over 12% since then.

But what a boost it has given to production and particularly exports. Luckily just as British manufacturing goods became suddenly cheaper, world trade began to expand at a faster rate (up over 7% in 1994).

Exports boomed. It's a sick irony to hear Tory ministers claim success for economic policies they had pigheadedly opposed (along with all the great and good at the Bank of England, the City of London, and unfortunately, the current Labour leadership).

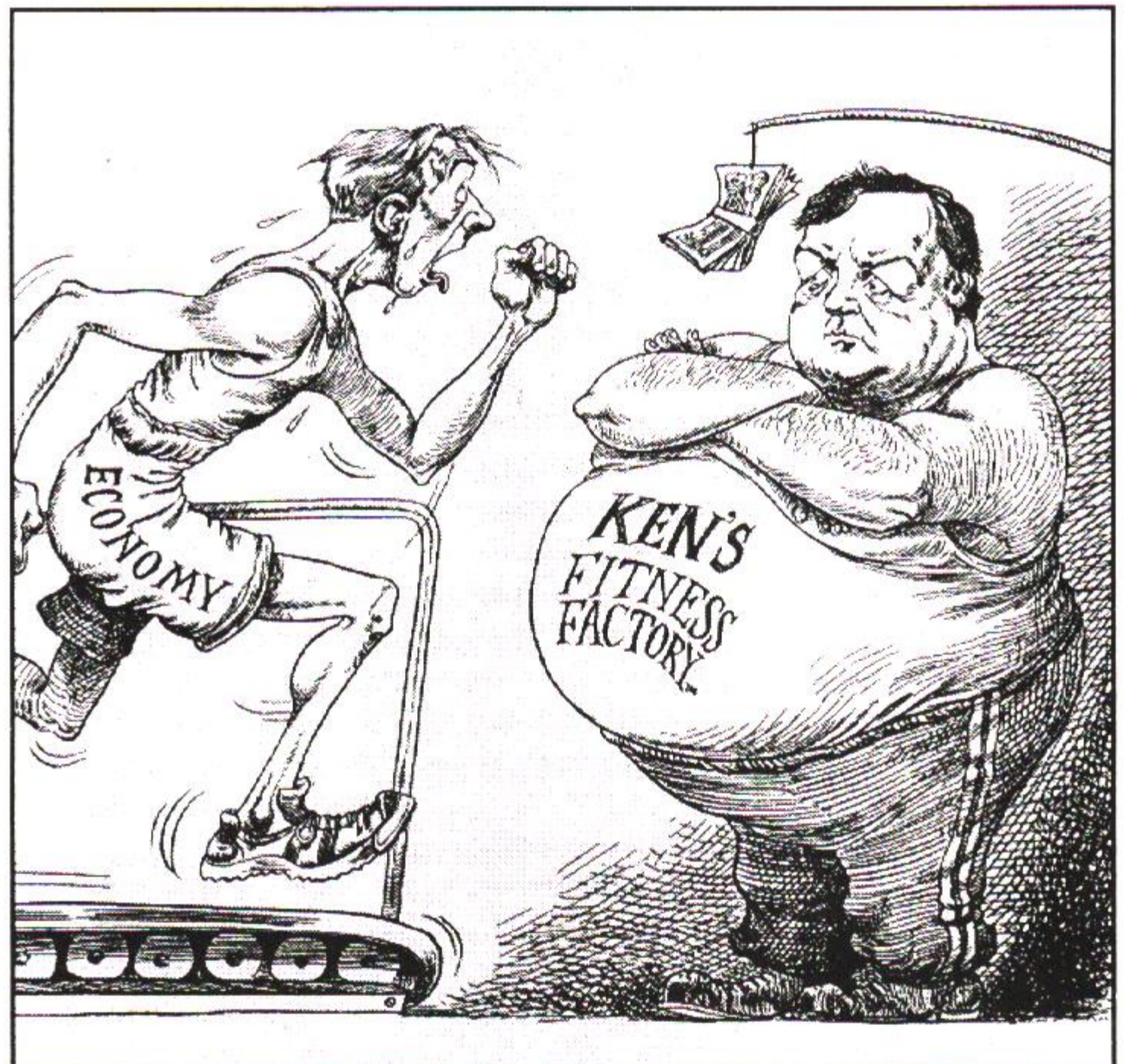
## Success

But economic success has not brought the Tories popularity. The feel-good factor remains significantly absent in the hearts and minds of British working people, and middle class people. Nobody feels good, except perhaps the top people in the privatised utilities with their fat salaries and bonuses or the Tory hangers-on in the health service trusts and quangos. Why does the 'man or woman' in the street still feel bad nearly two and half years after the end of the recession?

Well, the recovery was at first very slow. Only last year did national output and investment return to the levels of 1990, and manufacturing production is still below its peak. More important, the average British household has seen little of the benefits of growth. Unemployment is still over 2.5m on official figures. There are probably more like 4m in Britain who would like or need a job and cannot get one, or at least one that pays more than living on benefit, off family and friends, or working in the 'black economy'. About one-quarter of those aged between 25-54 years who have no qualifications cannot get a job. Now the Tory government is further reducing their rights to unemployment benefit through the 'job seekers allowance' and by introducing penalties for refusing to take any job whatever the conditions.

## Mortgages

Those who took out mortgages in the late 1980s cannot sell to relieve the burden of interest payments (now on their way up again). And above all, thanks to huge tax increases imposed by the Tory Chancellors Lamont and Clarke, 2% inflation and rising interest rates, last year the real income available to spend for every person in Britain fell on average by 0.4% despite 4% growth in the economy. Under the Tories, the average tax burden has risen from 34% of a worker's income to 38%. The reality of Tory Britain is that since 1979 one-third of British households have seen no



increase in living standards at all. No wonder that much of workers spending over the last four years has been only possible by using up precious savings (savings as a proportion of income have fallen from 13.5% to 8.5% now). While living standards have fallen, debt payments have risen and jobs remain scarce, necessary public services that make life bearable for so many have been cut to the bone: schools, hospitals, trains, community care. And the government plans to make it worse. While national output is expected to rise another 9% by 1998, public spending on services is being held to just a 2% increase for the next four years in Tory proposals.

### Lottery

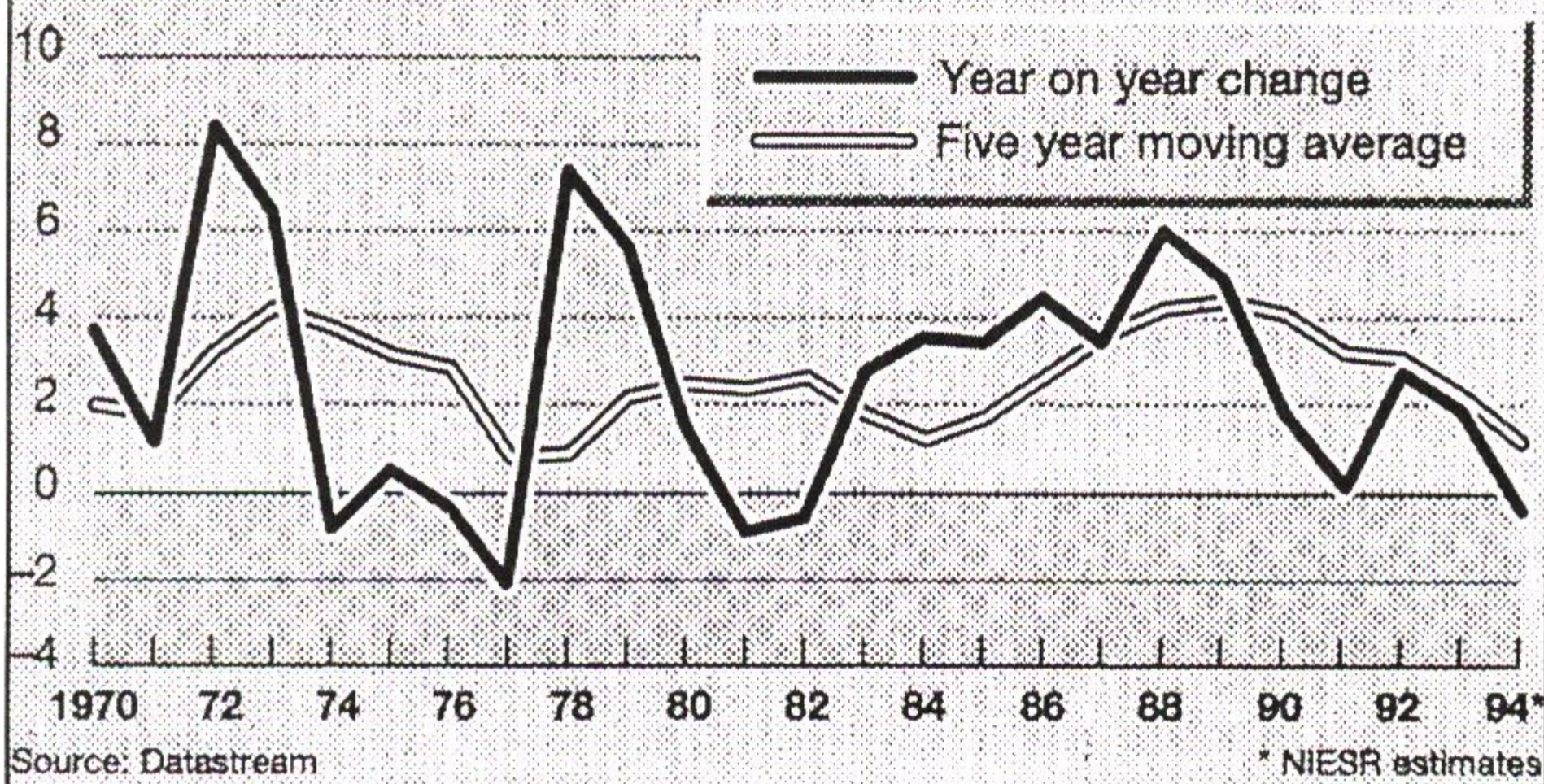
No wonder everybody, both the punter and the government, looks to the Saturday night national lottery draw to deliver them from evil! The feel-bad factor will remain as long as working people's living standards remain depressed and public services are obliterated. But is deliverance nigh? It seems clear that British capitalism, along with the rest of the advanced capitalist world, is entering perhaps two fat years of growth after the lean years of the early 1990s. This year the economy should expand nearly 3%, while prices will rise perhaps only 3%. Official unemployment will continue to fall as it did in 1994 and perhaps

reach just over 2m by the end of the year. Investment in plant and technology will rise 4%. Can it last? Well, the history of the last two hundred years of capitalism tells you it cannot. Capitalism has never proceeded in a straight and steady line to

develop productive forces. Perhaps more specifically, British capitalism is now a weak animal that cannot run far before getting seriously out of breath. British capitalism's decline has been well documented. But just one feature demonstrates it. Production will slow unless the production from each worker continues to grow. Up to now in Britain that has been achieved by cutting workforces throughout industry and making the remaining workers work harder, longer and without regard for safety and welfare. But productivity growth cannot be sustained unless new technology is introduced and skills are raised to make workers more productive and skilful in

## The squeeze on personal income

UK real personal disposable income (% change)



order to keep costs down and compete in world markets. But German workers have 30% more technology spent on them than British workers and there are twice as many skilled and trained workers in German factories, offices and laboratories than in Britain. Money spent on research and development per worker in Germany is much higher than that spent on a British worker.

### Deficit

These advantages are decisive. Eventually they will show when British export growth slows and Britain starts importing better and cheaper goods from abroad. Britain's deficit on trade with the rest of the world will grow, and that will force Britain either to borrow to pay for it, driving up interest rates and stifling investment, or alternatively to cut back on spending, which will also end the boom, or both.

But that crisis is perhaps two years away. In the meantime, the Tories talk ecstatic about how Britain's trade deficit is shrinking fast. At the end of the year, the current account (which is the balance of exports and imports of goods and services) was actually in surplus. Cheap British goods and fast world trade was clearly working. But only temporarily, next year the current account will be at least £6bn in the red, much less than expected, but still not in balance.

But most important; what is happening to all the profits that British capitalists are making from exporting? Is the money being ploughed back into

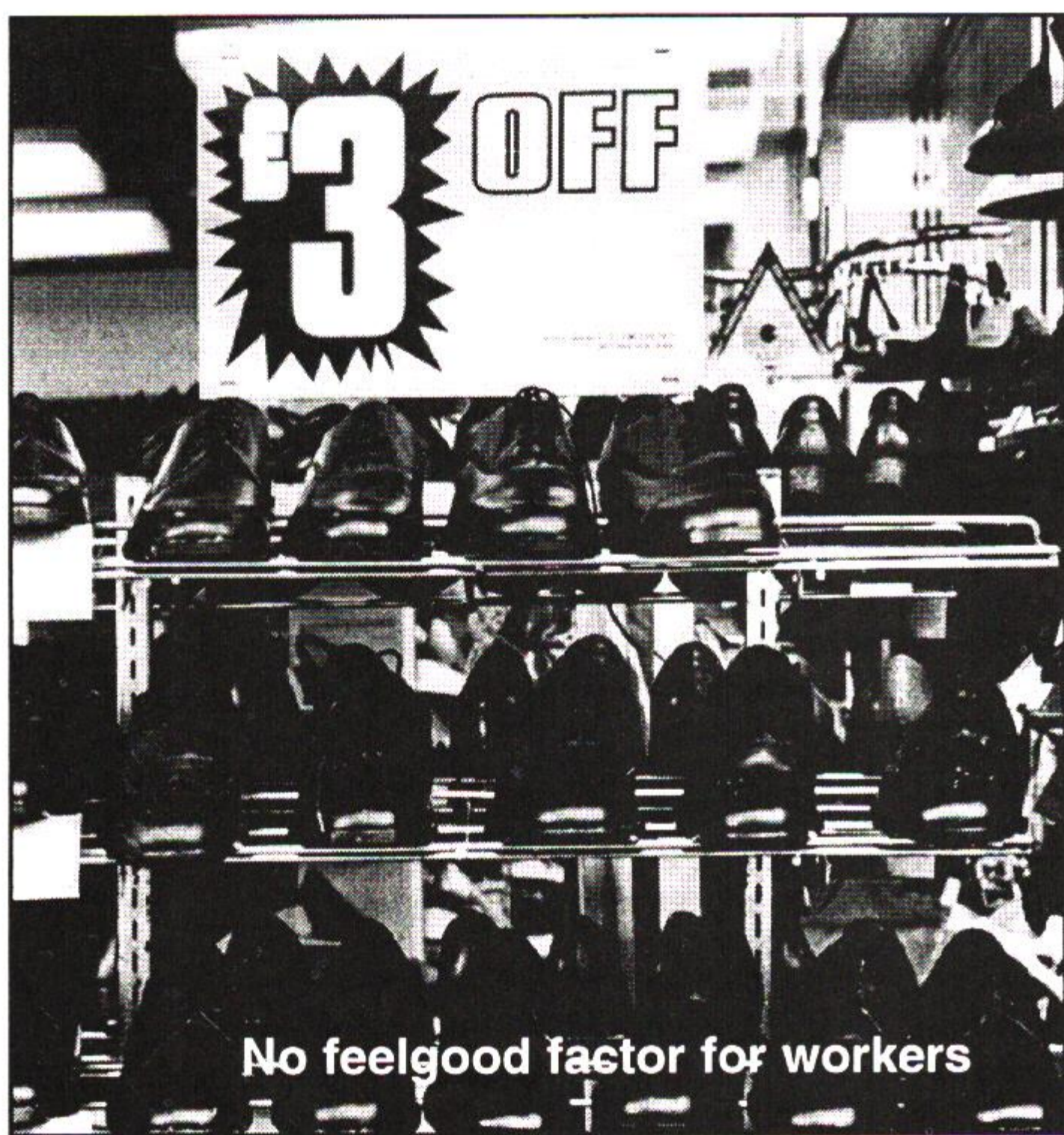
investment in new technology and skills training, better transport and services to make industry more efficient? No. Much of current profits are being handed over huge in dividends to rich shareholders to spend on luxuries. And most of the rest is going overseas to invest not in British industry but in stocks and shares in the US, Japan and Asia. Investment in Britain is now as low as 15% of national output, well below competitors.

Last year, Britain had a net surplus of capital, after exports and imports, and investment abroad and into Britain, was added up.

### Outflow

This year there will be a net outflow of around £60bn, a figure likely to be repeated for the next two years. This huge outflow can only be financed by attracting foreign companies to keep their money in sterling deposits. That means raising interest rates sufficiently, or the money will be withdrawn and the pound will crash. High interest rates will choke off what little investment there might be. And if investment slows or stops, the British capitalist animal will get out of breath and have to pull up.

So it's all going to peter out or come to a screeching halt by the end of 1996 or perhaps by the summer of 1997. Then a new government (the government of comrade Blair?) will have to try and clear up the mess again. Who will they expect to pay for this next failure of Tory Britain?



No feelgood factor for workers

Ted Grant & Phil Mitchinson look at the likely perspectives for 1995

# End of History for Tories

The splits in the Tory Party delivered us an unexpected Xmas present in their defeat over increasing VAT on fuel, although, no doubt, we will still be made to foot the bill under another name. Still it's nice to see them lose. In fact, it's becoming quite a habit, the signalworkers, VAT on fuel, the Dudley West by-election. With the remarkable expulsion of 8 MPs, they no longer have a majority in Parliament. After 16 years we are finally witnessing the beginning of the end of this hated government.

Indeed, Major only remains because of the lack of enthusiasm of his opponents to lead the party to almost inevitable rout at the next election. Nonetheless, he will be lucky to survive the year. It's hard to believe now that only 2 or 3 years ago he was the best thing since sliced bread. How can such dramatic changes be explained? Every day new sleaze, scandal and corruption is unearthed. Nor is this crisis confined to the Tory Party, there are splits in the church, divisions in the monarchy - in fact a crisis throughout the "establishment." There is truth in the argument that power corrupts, after 16 years we can certainly see the extent of corruption in the Tory party. Amongst big businessmen and Tory politicians in particular there is a long tradition of corruption, why does it float to the surface now, and not just in Britain, but in the US, France, Japan, and above all, Italy? The Economist recently rewrote their analysis of the New World Order as "not the one we'd hoped for but one more akin to the period between the wars", the 20's and 30's, the era of trade war, mass unemployment and social explosion. In 1989 with the fall of the Berlin wall, and the boom in the west, capitalist commentators

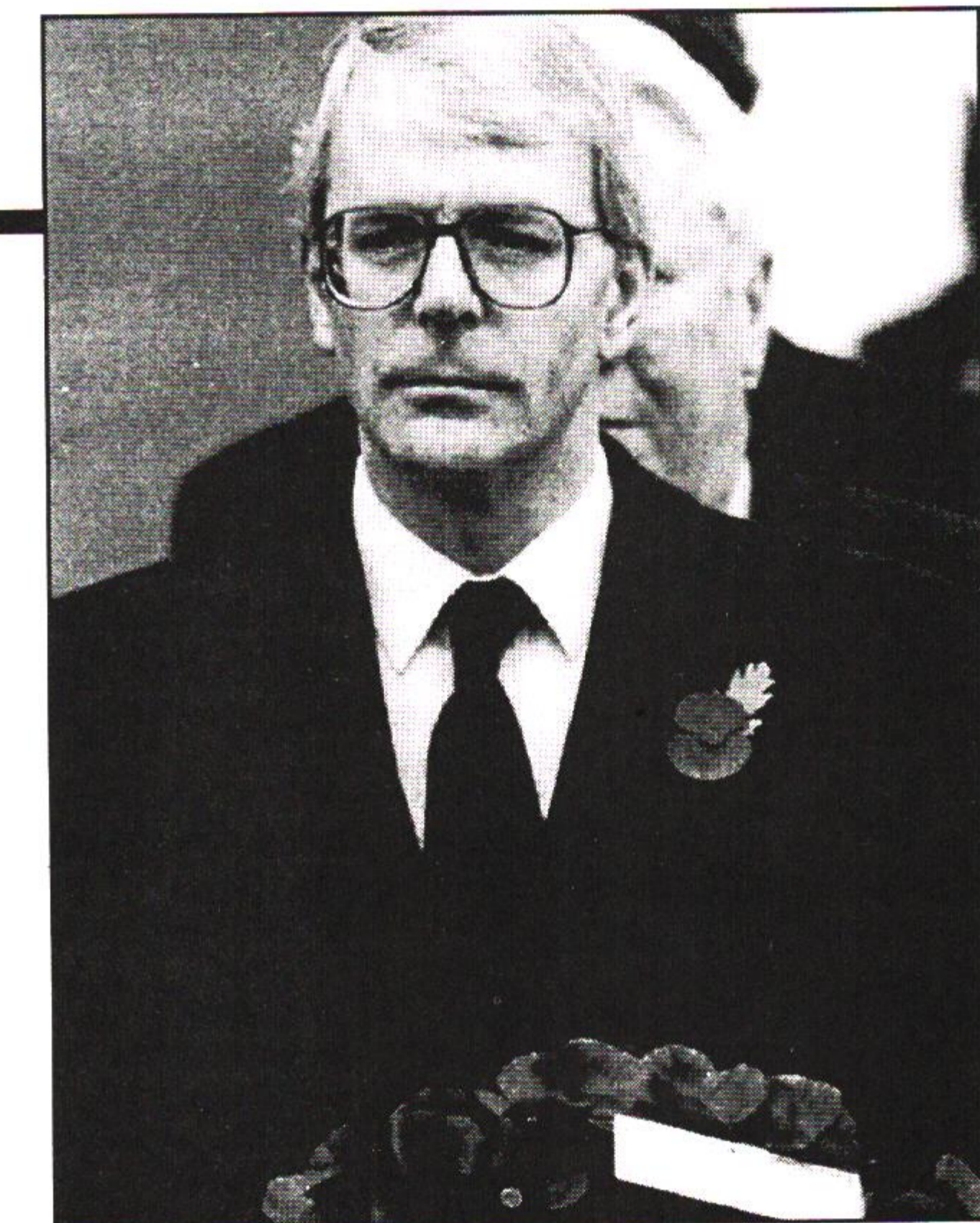
declared the "end of history", capitalism was the best possible system in the best of worlds. But the recession of 1990-92 hit them with the shock of a cold shower. In Europe the dream of a single currency and union was knocked off course. The EC has reverted to its role as a fortress in a developing trade war. The Tory splits over Europe reflect the "left" - "right" split over how best to drive down our wages and conditions to defend their own position. In reality, Britain, too, is dependent on the European market, exporting ten times as much to Belgium as to China, and three times as much to the Netherlands as to Japan.

## World trade

The role of world trade in forcing down barriers, and integrating a world market is being transformed into its opposite with the world breaking up into three gigantic trade blocs, the US, Europe and Japan, preparing a new round of protectionism. Faced with this impasse the ruling class has begun to lose confidence in its ability to rule in the old way. Herein lies the root of their unprecedented splits. Today more than at any other time in history, our lives are dominated by this world market,

**"Major only remains because of the lack of enthusiasm of his opponents to lead the party to almost inevitable rout at the next election."**

the world economy, world politics. Therefore, events in Britain cannot be seen in isolation from developments internationally. The extent to which British capitalism's power has been reduced, for example, is illustrated by the fact that its share of world trade has slumped to only 5.3%. The stated aim of the Tories is to boost Britain's share to 6.2% by the year 2000 (adding 10 billion to the value of



exports at 1993 prices). Yet sixty years ago, British capitalism had 20% of world trade. Britain has been reduced to a second rate power within the OECD, and is in danger of being relegated to a third rate position in the coming period. Manufacturing industry, where the real wealth of the country is produced, has suffered a massive decline over the last 16 years.. The number of workers employed in manufacturing has

fallen from 7 million in 1979, to 4.2 million at present. (Although this erroneously excludes transport and shipping). Contrast this with the growth of the parasitic service sector in the same period, and it becomes clear that British capitalism, with its massive overseas investments, is developing partially as a rentier economy. From the workshop of the world to its fund manager. The 1990-92 recession had a

## Investment

devastating effect on the British economy. This year, investment in machinery will be 30% lower than in 1990. Business investment is only 12% of GDP, lower than the 1960s or 1970s. In fact, manufacturing investment under the Tories has only twice risen to its 1979 level. According to a recent Financial Times: "it will take some years for manufacturing output to return to the levels reached in the last cycle."

There is a lower investment in buildings, factories and offices, compared to previous recoveries. Output in the construction industry - which is a barometer of the economy - has still not completely recovered. Howard Davies, secretary general of the CBI, explained that industry was not prepared to invest unless it gets a projected profits return of 17-20%, much higher than the US, Germany and other countries. While in Japan companies pay out 1 in every 14 earned in dividends, in Britain the ratio is 1 in every 3. British capitalists prefer the quick buck from a gamble on the stock market than the risky business of producing real wealth.

Since BMW took over Rover, there has been no significant British owned car industry. With the Japanese take-over of ICL, there is no longer any real British owned computer manufacturing industry. An IBM Consultative Group study of 202 UK manufacturing sites came to the conclusion that only 2% were "world class". Such is the parlous state of present day British capitalism.

The 1980-82 and the 1990-92 recessions were the biggest since the depression of the 1930s. Unemployment has ceased to be a "reserve army" as explained by Marx. It has become an organic ulcer eating at the vitals of the economies of nearly all the major capitalist powers and this represents a fundamental change economically.

The Tory government has, in a futile fashion, pinned its hopes on reestablishing the power of British capitalism through the creation of a low wage economy. This has meant the rejection of the European Social Charter, abolition of the wages councils, abolition of health and safety regulations, and the introduction of draconian anti-trade union legislation. It has embarked upon a systematic drive to push down the standards of the employed workers, introducing a three year wage freeze in the public sector.

### Privatisation

On top of this, it has attacked the public sector workers through privatisation, Compulsory Competitive Tendering, and cutbacks as an example to employers in the private sector. But the whole of history proves that a low wage economy will never defeat productive machinery. Otherwise India would be one of the world's richest countries. Britain became a world power by exactly the opposite means: by investing and developing its manufacturing and industrial base. It is precisely British capitalism's failure to invest in machinery that is forcing her further behind her rivals. The "counter-revolution" on the shop floor, with the intensification of the exploitation of labour, the ferocious attacks on conditions and wages, have shattered the illusions of the 1980s. According to the Low Pay Unit, average labour costs in manufacturing are lower in Britain than even Southern Italy. Higher productiv-

ity has been gained not through investment but through speed-ups, lengthening of the working day, and wage cuts.

The attempt to gain a competitive edge through low wages will not last with bosses internationally taking measures to cut down standards, particularly in the form of the social wage, ie. the welfare state. An article in *The Economist* (1/10/94) argued that to compete with developing economies "workers in rich countries will be forced to settle for third world wages and labour standards." Already these attacks have provoked big movements in Belgium, Spain, France, Portugal, and elsewhere.

The sluggish boom has not

a political strike which directly challenged the government. For that reason, it was decisive for workers too. The settlement, which can be seen as a partial victory, winning significant concessions in pay, working hours and holidays, will show other workers that militant action can deliver results.

Under John Monks, the TUC is continuing its policy of class collaboration, although, it has clearly broken down already. The RMT strike, far from making the unions "unpopular", has further undermined the Tories. They got the odium for the impasse. A campaign by the TUC over full employment and a national minimum wage, together with the repeal of the anti

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## A campaign by the TUC over full employment and a national minimum wage, together with the repeal of the anti trade union laws would get an enormous response throughout the working class.

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reduced unemployment significantly as sackings have continued, and thousands more redundancies are planned in the privatised industries.

In the 1980s, for big sections, living standards rose in absolute terms. In relative terms, there was greater exploitation of labour. For the lowest 10% of the population, however, there was an absolute fall in living standards.

In the recent period, private sector earnings (which includes overtime, bonuses, etc) have increased by twice the level of inflation; whereas public sector earnings have grown by 0.8% less than inflation. The government is now determined to hold wages down at all costs.

The government decisively intervened behind the scenes in the recent RMT dispute to prevent concessions. It deliberately provoked the strike by ordering Railtrack to withdraw their initial 5.7% offer. Therefore, the strike was against the undeclared incomes policy of the Tory government. It developed into a bitter dispute with the rail union leaders under tremendous pressure to deliver a victory. The government wanted to break this strike as an example to other workers. They were determined to maintain their unofficial incomes policy. It was

trade union laws would get an enormous response throughout the working class.

In fact, one of the key reasons for the low number of strikes at present is precisely the union leaders capitulation to the government, whose anti-union legislation has had a paralysing effect. Marxists have always explained that the only way to deal with the anti-union laws is to confront them with class action. That was the lesson of the Pentonville Five. Even if trade union funds were sequestered, the union is the membership, not the assets. Mass action could sweep these laws away.

### Unofficial action

However, the unofficial action in the post office is symptomatic of the feelings under the surface. On the railways the actions of Knapp in calling official action, reflected the enormous pressure of the membership. This is a process which will intensify across the unions.

The sluggish boom is responsible for this change of mood amongst the workers. It is, as yet, only partially reflected in the "left" trade union leaders, Morris and Edmonds. But the way is being prepared for a big movement in the coming months and years. Where the trade union

leaders constitute an obstacle, there will be moves towards unofficial action and the formation of broad lefts in the unions to change them and put them on a more militant footing. The task for Marxists is to be alive to the enormous potential in industry and the youth. As events like the rail strike demonstrate, we must be careful not to lag behind, and be prepared to give a lead.

The movement on the industrial front will also have echoes in the Labour Party. Many militants that participate in strikes will, through affiliation or individual membership, participate in the struggle to change the party. It will even have some effect on the selection of parliamentary candidates in the future. Many militants will not be prepared to accept extreme right wingers, who block the movement and attempt to hold it back. A movement to the left would make certain a Labour victory.

Under the pressure of events, the present Labour leadership may make gestures towards increasing employment. This would cause a greater swing towards Labour and guarantee a landslide victory, perhaps on the scale of 1945. Nevertheless, it would not alter the composition or character of the next Labour government. It will be events under such a crisis government which will have a decisive effect in transforming the Labour Party and preparing a swing to the left.

The last 15 years has seen a marked deterioration in the structure of society, and the emergence of an "underclass" in the cities. The increase in beggars on the streets, crime, violence, drug addiction and alcohol addiction, have all reached unprecedented levels. Britain has slipped from 12th to 17th in world life expectancy ratings, because of the growing gap between rich and poor. Death rates amongst the poor have increased and the unemployed are twice as likely to die prematurely than those in work. "There is a special link", says the *British Medical Journal*, "between illness and social deprivation". You learn something new everyday. These social ills are a consequence of the growth of unemployment. Their spread across the country has put an end to the illusion that the "soft" South was immune. It has served to undermine the Tories completely. In

Scotland, the Tories have been reduced to 13% in the opinion polls, below the Liberal Democrats (14%). Labour, nationally, has been getting its highest poll ratings ever. In London, a recent poll put Labour 37 points in front of the Tories. The Dudley West by-election saw a record swing to Labour. On Newsnight, Peter Snow explained that repeated in a general election, this would give Labour 607 MPs, a majority of well over 500, with not one Tory being elected. This is a little far-fetched, but no doubt it haunts the dreams of Tory backbenchers alongside the spectre of the Canadian elections where the Tories were reduced to 6% and just 2 MPs. Although they will recover to some extent, they are in danger of being reduced to a rump in the south-east of England. This represents a sea change in British politics. The Tories had originally hoped that as the recession ended it would produce a swing back in their direction. They believed the "feel good" factor would return. However, the effects of the recession, with mass unemployment and insecurity, have had a profound effect upon the outlook of the working class and middle class. It has changed the attitude of the mass of the population as a whole. As Marxists have long explained, it is not simply the case that slumps cause movements and booms social peace, but rather the change from one to the other and back again, the uncertainty and insecurity of changing conditions which alters consciousness.

### Attacked

Every section has been attacked by the Tories, even their traditional base, the doctors, dentists, lawyers, top civil servants, police and other professional layers. This has had a profound effect on the outlook of previously Tory sections of the middle class. The tax rises - the highest in the post war period - have further discredited them. At the last General Election there was a mood of nostalgia for the "good years" of the 1980s, and unfortunately the Labour leaders offered no alternative. Had they campaigned on a minimum wage and full employment, Labour could have won. Now the illusions of the past have been largely destroyed by the realities of life

in the 1990s.

To what extent can the Tories recover? As the election draws nearer, they will, of course, recover a certain amount of ground, but it is unlikely that they will reach the levels of the past.

They are a scandal-ridden Government making one blunder after another, the most unpopular for 100 years, with Major the most unpopular prime minister this century.

### Massive defeat

The local elections and the Euro-elections were a massive defeat for the Conservatives. A similar picture was seen in the by-elections, most recently in Dudley. This process will probably continue to unfold until the general election. The only thing that could cut across this process is the actions of the Labour leaders. They could still snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. Reluctantly, Smith, and now Blair, accepted the objective of a minimum wage and full employment. This is due to the pressure of the trade union leaders, who in turn, are under pressure from the rank and file, who are alarmed by the levels of unemployment. On these issues alone they could win the election. The current "boom" will not significantly reduce unemployment. This in turn will intensify the hatred of the Tories. It appears most likely that they are doomed to defeat. Yet instead of launching a campaign to drive them out, the Labour leaders are determined to turn inwards, and threaten the current mood of unity with their attempt to abolish Clause Four. The Labour leaders always manage to support the policies of yesteryear, under the false impression that they represent the outlook of the working class. They believe there is no support for nationalisation just when opposition to privatisation is at its height. A Mori poll published in *The Economist* placed renationalising the privatised utilities as the third most important issue with 68% support. Blair is the most right wing leader the Labour Party has ever had. His attempt to abolish Clause IV is a means of demonstrating to big business how reliable the Labour leadership are. It is a considerable gamble as the outcome is not entirely certain. From the point of view of the party, these new internal debates just before the next

election are a total distraction, but they will provide the Marxists with a major opportunity to explain the ideas of scientific socialism within the labour movement.

If Blair succeeds in throwing out Clause IV, the new version will have to carry some reference to public ownership. A special conference has been called for April 29th to rush the changes through. Clearly the party leadership are disturbed by the growing opposition developing in the rank and file of the party and the unions. This special conference is clearly an attempt to present the union conferences with a *fait accompli*, and will undoubtedly provoke anger amongst union activists. Despite the intentions of Blair, the links between the unions and the party will not be broken. The trade unions will remain a dominant force in the Labour Party.

Although the right wing have changed the rules to dissolve the activists into the mass, it will not prevent the processes in society developing in the party. Even if Blair succeeds in scrapping Clause Four it would be a setback, but would not be decisive. It would not alter the class nature of the Party, nor prevent its radicalisation under a right wing Labour government. In his latest document, Blair extols the virtues of a mixed economy. This used to refer to the utopian idea of public and private ownership co-existing. Now, it seems, it means taking the -ism from socialism and adding it to the capital in capitalism. He has mentioned "socialism", but it has nothing in common with even Keir Hardie's socialism. Blair's ideas harken

back to pre-utopian socialism. They represents the "ethics" of Lady Bountiful to "help the poor". It is no accident that the CBI and the City have endorsed him. They regard him as a safe alternative to a Tory government, and are prepared to tolerate a Labour Government under his leadership. They will have a rude awakening. The Labour Government will be a government of crisis.

The real programme of the Labour leaders - an attempt to make capitalism work with a human face - is utopian, particularly under present conditions. They have donned the clothes of the Tories - in effect, stinking rags that have already been rejected. They will be pressed by big business to carry out Tory policies. But it will be virtually impossible to carry out the same Tory policies as at present, the Tories themselves are forced into one u-turn after another, because of the world situation and the resistance of the working class. It will provoke an enormous reaction within the movement.

### Crisis

It will be a government of social crisis, buffeted by the pressures of the capitalists and the counter-pressures of the working class. In the first period of a Labour government, there may be some reforms, but unless they break with capitalism, this will inevitably give way to counter-reforms. In the coming year, meanwhile, there will be a massive swing towards Labour, as the working class look towards the election of Labour to solve their problems. Enormous illusions will be created in a Labour government



Labour Party Conference



after something like 17 years of Tory rule. The election will generate colossal hope amongst the most oppressed layers desperately looking for a way out. Despite, and even because of, the vagueness of the promises of the Labour leaders, the working class will read into the programme everything they want. Its very vagueness will defeat its purpose: not to promise any reforms they can't carry out. The national minimum wage and full employment, which they have been compelled to promise, will be issues of enormous consequence in the Labour movement and working class generally. The right wing will get an initial honeymoon period, maybe a year or so, as they are "given a chance." However, the working class will demand action from the word go. Such pressure will reach unprecedented levels, resulting in the beginning of an opposition in the trade unions and Labour Party to measures of the right wing reformists.

### Rhetoric

The swing to Labour has taken place across England, Wales and Scotland. Despite their rhetoric, the SNP have failed to cut across the support for Labour with their nationalist programme. However, there are danger signals. The SNP had their best ever vote in the 1994 Euro elections and came close to Labour in the Monklands East parliamentary by-election. In both cases this was a protest vote against Labour's past failures to transform society. With Scotland having no Tory Euro MPs at all, some layers see the Labour Euro MPs as representing the "establishment". In Monklands East, the Labour Council was also considered to be corrupt and the SNP shamefully used Orange sectarianism to boost its position against Labour.

The perspective for Scotland, as for England and Wales, nonetheless remains a swing towards Labour as the election approaches. However, if a right-wing Labour government fails to deliver the goods then we could see the SNP growing as a result of dissatisfaction with Labour. The danger of nationalism will ultimately be cut across by the movement of the working class across Britain, and the rearming of the Labour movement on socialist lines.

In the run up to the election the

Tories will offer more of the same. What else can they do? This can only further undermine their support. There will be a complete revulsion against the attacks on the welfare state and the conditions of the workers in the factories and offices. This experience will leave an indelible impression on the working class. Even the attempts of the Tories to reduce taxes are unlikely to win much support, and will not compensate for the previous tax increases.

### Tax cuts

Therefore the gimmick of tax cuts, which seems their only pre-election strategy, won't have the desired effect. Even then, given the massive budget deficit, it is not certain that they will be able to carry out such plans.

In the next two years, if they last that long, they will stagger from one crisis to another, from one mistake to another.

Far from Major's "classless society", we are witnessing a deepening class polarisation. Under these conditions, the Liberal Democrats will not play the role they hoped for: to secure the balance of power in a hung parliament. They will be squeezed between Labour and the Tories. If the bourgeois attempt to play them up, it will simply eat into the Tory vote and produce a bigger Labour majority.

The Labour leaders inability to

whole, desperate for a Labour government, will put their full weight in this direction. The present crisis in the Tories and Labour's advance has given rise to greater confidence and expectation.

The unions are pressing hard for full employment and a minimum wage, as can be seen throughout the trade union conferences and at last years TUC. Although there is a certain critical stand, echoed by Morris and Edmonds, which will develop in the future, there will be many illusions in the Labour leaders. These illusions will only be dispelled by the experience of a Labour government itself. Support for the ideas of Marxism can make modest gains in the next period, in the struggle to defend Clause Four, among the youth and on the industrial front, preparing the way for great strides forward under a Labour government, especially after it's honeymoon period. Reformist governments in France, Spain, Australia and Sweden, which came to power during the boom, nevertheless were unable to do anything but carry through Tory policies. This situation was largely tolerated, as earnings rose through overtime, bonuses, and increased workload.

The increased class struggle internationally will be the backdrop to events in Britain.

Already, the employers have

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**The developing recovery will have the opposite effect to the Tories hopes. They hope it will lead to a revival in their fortunes. However, the employers' offensive in industry will increase the stress, anger, frustration and bitterness across the board.**

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mobilise a campaign to drive the Tories out of office means that they could even last their term out, hoping to turn the situation around.

There is already a trickle of workers into the party in all areas, and this can increase as we move towards a general election. A section of youth, looking for a Tory defeat, are also being drawn towards Young Labour. An important layer of trade unionists will be attracted to the party as the prospect of a Tory rout draws nearer. The trade unions as a

launched an offensive to drive down wages. There will be no return to the 1980s.

Under a Labour government, there will be remorseless pressure exerted by the ranks to carry through policies in the interests of the working class. This will result in inevitable opposition currents in the trade unions and Labour party. The developing recovery will have the opposite effect to the Tories hopes. They hope it will lead to a revival in their fortunes. However, the employers' offensive in industry will

increase the stress, anger, frustration and bitterness across the board. The workers have not been prepared to take action because of mass unemployment and the role of the trade union leaders. However, the official strike of the signal workers over pay is symptomatic. The Tories are determined to hold the wage policy in the public sector, but, if the "boom" continues, it will provoke further movements of the working class on the industrial field as workers demand a share of the profits.

The recovery will fuel a determination to get back what the workers have lost in the previous period. All the discontent that is simmering below the surface can break through at any point. We must be prepared for big movements. Such action can begin as unofficial action, as with the postal workers; forcing the leadership to put themselves at the head of the movement, as with the rail workers. It is possible, nevertheless, that important sections of the class will wait for a Labour government. This will depend upon the pressures exerted upon them. The Tories and the employers can push workers over the edge and provoke a reaction. Such an explosive mix exists, that it can trigger off an industrial movement.

### New chapter

The epoch which opens up is not a continuation of the last ten years or even the past decades, but an entirely new chapter of history. It is characterised by the determination of the employers refusing to make concessions due to the pressures of the world market, and the working class not prepared to stomach the attacks of the government and the bosses. When two forces, of a powerful character, clash in this way, it opens up a period of social explosions, a period of heightened class struggle, which in turn, means a complete change in the consciousness of workers. In the unions, in the Labour Party, and amongst the youth Marxism has to give answers to the day to day and future needs of the working class. In this way we will prepare the ground for the emergence of Marxism as a mass force in the British Labour movement in readiness for the struggle for a socialist future across the planet.

In the second part of their article dealing with issues facing the ex-colonial world *Alan Woods* and *Ted Grant* analyse why capitalism offers no solution.

# Permanent Revolution

In the first part of this article the authors dealt with the background to the crisis facing the masses of the colonial world. "The period since the Second World War has been one of uninterrupted turmoil in the underdeveloped capitalist countries. The people of Africa, Asia and Latin America.. derived little benefit from the fireworks display of economic growth in the industrialised West. They remained hungry spectators at the feast of world capitalism". The article explained that there is no way forward under capitalism except to continue down the road of exploitation under the yoke of imperialism. The authors outlined the political repercussions of this with particular reference to the question of the proletarian bonapartist regimes which were formed under the pressure of the movement of the colonial revolution and the crises which they faced as a result of the lack of a correct leadership

Decades ago, the Marxists of the day explained that the emergence of regimes of proletarian Bonapartism in the ex-colonial countries represented a peculiar variant of the permanent revolution.

Trotsky explained that the weak colonial bourgeoisie was incapable of leading society out of the impasse. The belated development of the so-called 'national bourgeoisie' meant that it was tied hand and foot to the interests of imperialism. On the other hand, the colonial bourgeois, because of its links with the landowners, was incapable of solving one of the most funda-

mental tasks of the colonial revolution—land reform.

It goes without saying that Marxists supported enthusiastically the struggle of the colonial masses for independence. The colonial revolution, particularly in the period after 1945, struck blows against imperialism and mobilised millions of former colonial slaves in a progressive struggle against their oppressors. However, decades later, the colonial bourgeoisie stands revealed as completely impotent to solve the tasks posed by history.

## Deregulation

The latest policy of 'opening up India,' for example, deregulation and market economics, is merely an admission that Indian capitalism is utterly at the mercy of foreign imperialism. A similar picture emerges throughout the Third World. Such partial exceptions that exist are mainly due to the peculiar balance of forces which emerged following World War Two, in particular the cen-

tral contradictions between US imperialism and Russian and Chinese Stalinism.

For all its backwardness, Japan was one of the main imperialist nations even prior to the Second World War. Following 1945, feudalism was destroyed in Japan as a result of the land reform carried out by the American army of occupation.

The same was true in South Korea and Taiwan. In general, the advances of the so-called 'tiger' economies of Asia were a by-product of the Chinese revolution, and the efforts of US imperialism to halt the advance of Russian and Chinese Stalinism in the East.

In particular, the rise of a mighty Stalinist power in China compelled the USA to underwrite the bourgeois regimes in the region. The Korean War and the Vietnamese revolution gave a further impetus to the military and economic involvement of America in Asia, which, even before the Second World War, was the natural area for the expansion of US imperialism.

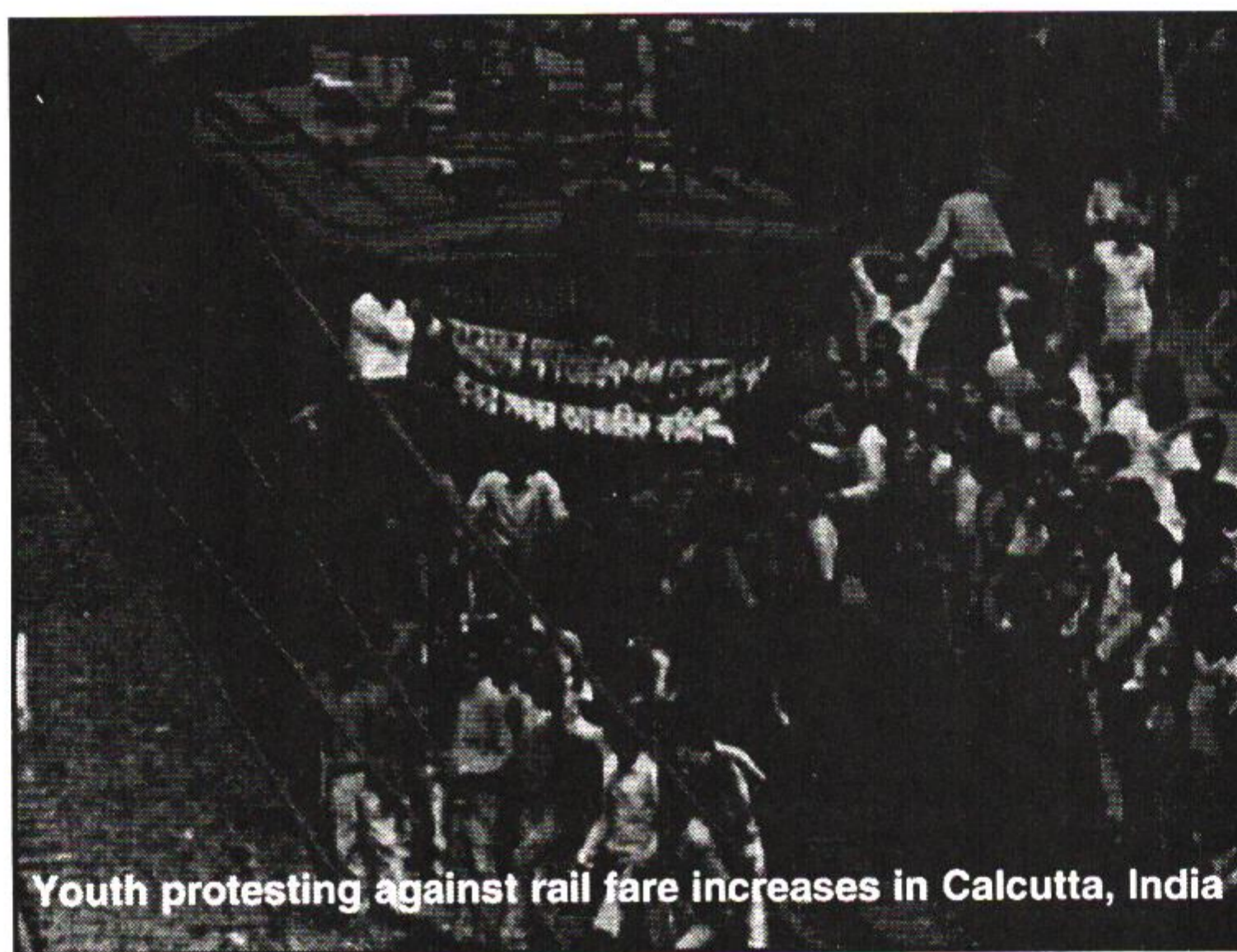
On the basis of a massive military presence, huge amounts of aid and investment, the capitalist regimes, first of Japan, then of South Korea and Taiwan experienced a major development of the productive forces. More recently, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia have partially entered the same road, while Hong Kong and Singapore remain special cases, being small protected markets with heavy inflows of speculative capital not only from international money markets, but from the overseas Chinese.

Potentially dwarfing all these developments, we have the movement in the direction of capitalism in China. (The perspectives for China are dealt with in more detail in the pamphlet "Where is China going?" now available). As with Russia, it is not certain that the movement towards capitalism in China will be completed. If it were possible to carry through the development of capitalism in China to its fullest extent, China would be the most powerful capitalist nation on earth, outstripping the USA. However, far from being a motive for congratulation, it would vastly increase the contradictions of world capitalism, preparing the ground for terrible conflicts and explosions, particularly in Asia.

In practice, the economic projections of the bourgeois 'experts' bear little relation to the real processes. They do not sufficiently take into consideration the social and economic contradictions implicit in the movement of China in the direction of capitalism.

## Intelligent

The Chinese regime has proceeded in a much more intelligent way to establish the basis for capitalism than in Russia. The rapid development of the Chinese economy, which is currently growing at about 13% a year, is possible precisely because the whole process has been directed and controlled by the state. This demonstrates the complete unsoundness of the advice given by the bourgeois 'experts' to Russia, where the attempt to push through a rapid move towards a market economy has caused a social and economic catastrophe. In China, the Bureaucracy remains firmly in the saddle, and is attempting to move towards



Youth protesting against rail fare increases in Calcutta, India

capitalism, but in a controlled way. The development of industry is being carried out at the expense of the working class and peasantry. This has led to a rapid increase of inequality, with huge and growing disparities between town and country, and between a minority of nascent bourgeois and the mass of the population. Despite the triumphant tone of bourgeois editorials, they are well aware that these contradictions can lead to a social explosion in China at any time. This can cut across the whole process. However, if the Bureaucracy can avoid this, if they succeed in making the movement towards capitalism irreversible, then the potential of the Chinese market would be truly immense.

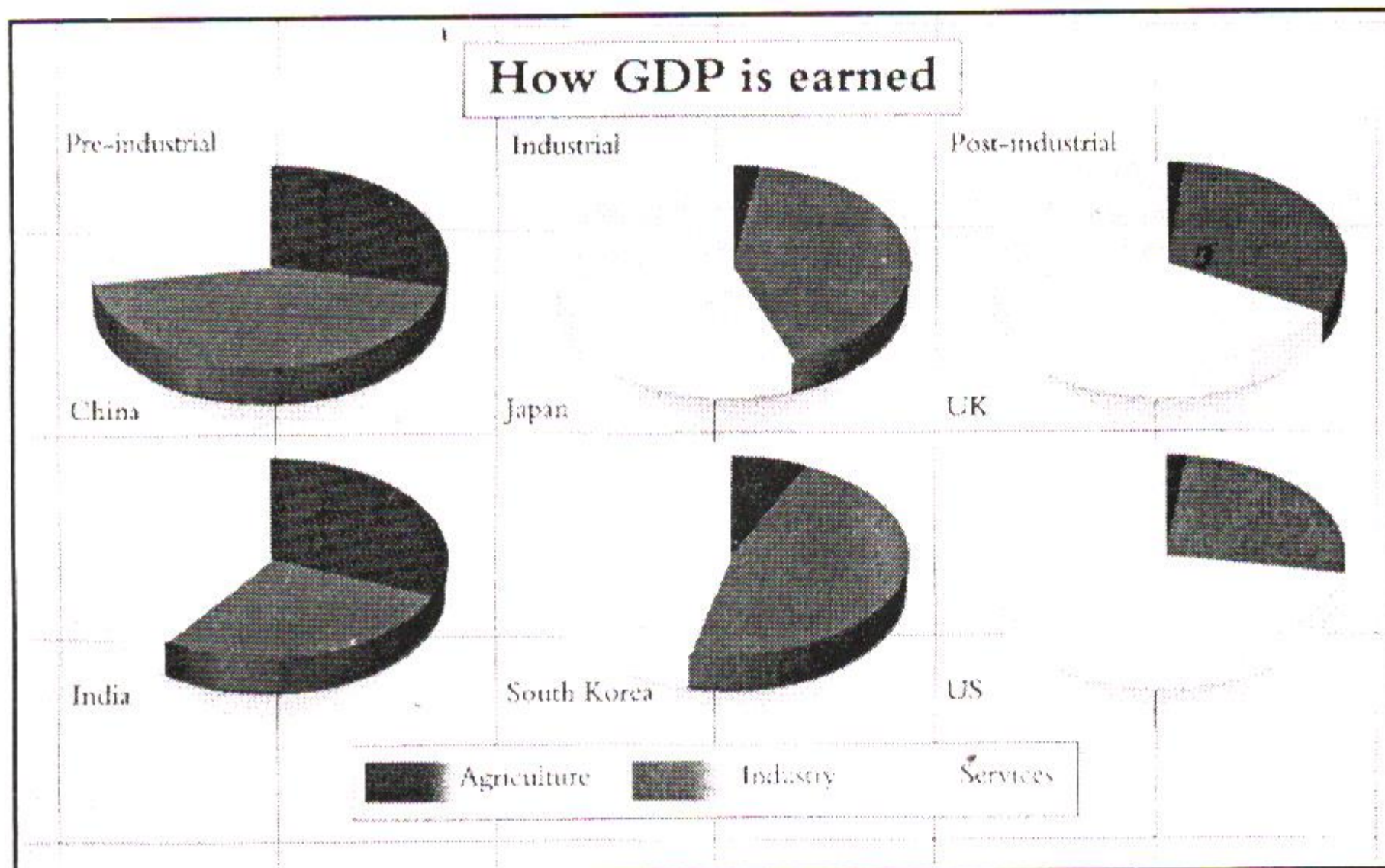
### Counter-revolution

The movement towards capitalist counter-revolution in China is a graphic expression of the limitations of proletarian Bonapartism. Even where the struggle against imperialism, as in China, leads to the expropriation of the landlords and capitalists, while this undoubtedly represents a colossal advance, it is not, in and of itself, sufficient to solve all the problems. Trotsky explains that, in a backward colonial country, only the working class, by putting itself at the head of the entire nation, can show the way forward. The corrupt and reactionary colonial bourgeoisie can-not even begin to solve the tasks of society. By expropriating, not only the foreign imperialists, but also the national capitalists and landowners, the proletariat can tackle the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution

(land reform, national independence, modernisation) and begin the socialist transformation of society. The great achievements of the Chinese revolution, in spite of the fact that it took place in a deformed way (as a peasant war), and established a regime of proletarian Bonapartism on the lines of Stalinist Russia, demonstrate the advantages of a regime of nationalisation and central planning. The experience of China, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, equally show the limits and contradictions of proletarian Bonapartism. The theory of the permanent revolution points out that, in order to solve the historical tasks of the bourgeois-democratic (or, to use Lenin's more scientific term, national-democratic) revolution, it is necessary for the working class to come to power. The revolution, if it is to succeed, cannot come to a halt when the bourgeois-democratic tasks are completed, but must proceed to expropriate the landlords and capitalists. Nevertheless, that is only one side of the permanent revolution. The second part, which is frequently forgotten, is that the socialist revolution cannot succeed as an isolated, national act. Even in a huge sub-continent such as Russia or China,

'socialism in one country' remains a reactionary utopia. After decades of Stalinist 'autarchy' (with ruinous consequences), the Russian and Chinese Bureaucracies have been compelled to return to

future. As always, the bourgeois are extremely short-sighted. They proceed in an empirical fashion, basing themselves on the immediate phenomena. In reality, it is by no means certain that



participation on the world market. In and of itself, this would be a progressive development. However, the final bankruptcy of Stalinism is shown by the attempt of the ex-'Communist' bureaucrats to restore capitalism. This will have the most terrible consequences for the working people of Russia, China, and the other ex-Stalinist regimes.

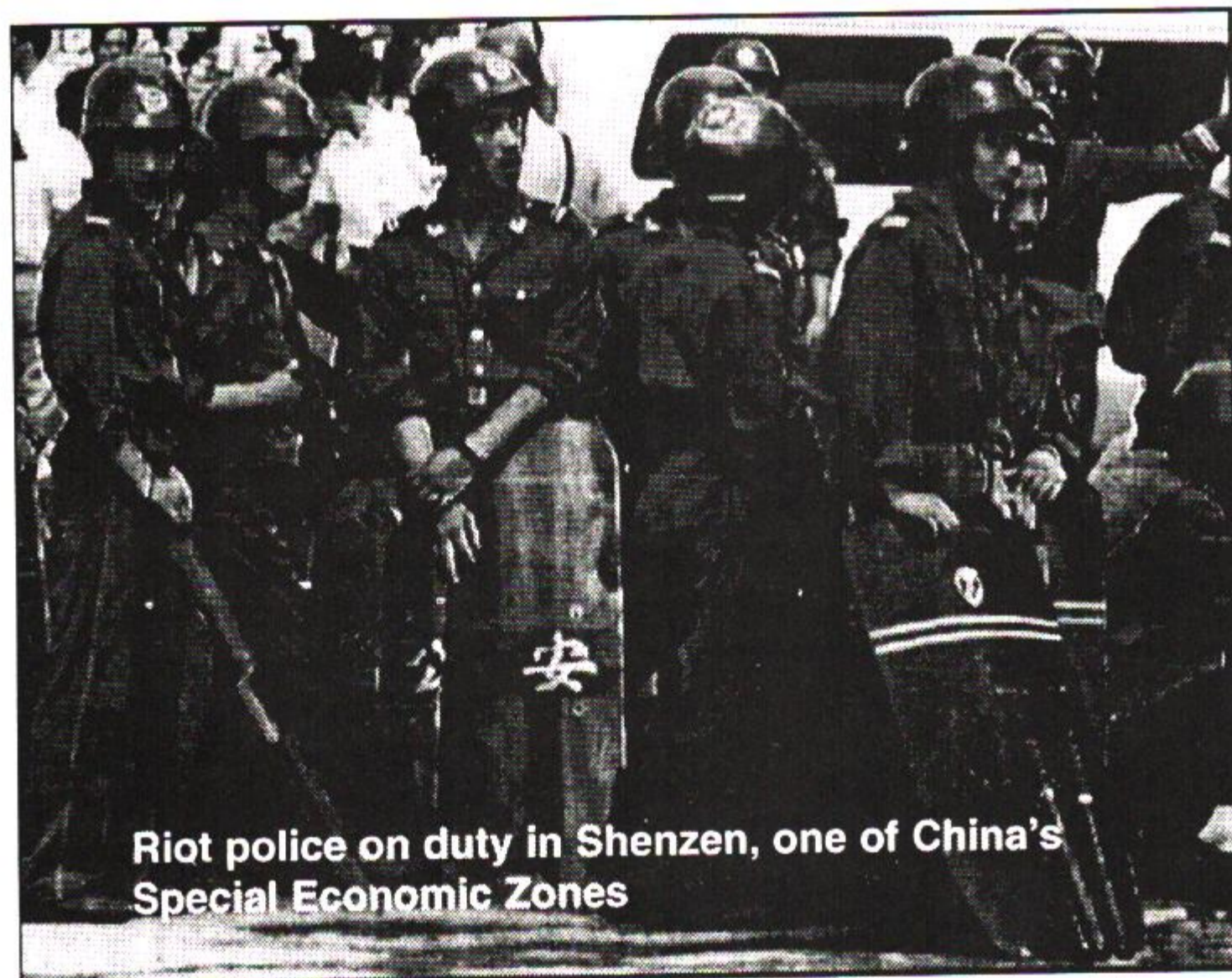
### General crisis

The general crisis of world capitalism is revealed by the fact that they are no longer developing new industries as in the past. On the contrary, there is an actual decline of industrial capacity, the closure of factories, the destruction of jobs, even in Japan. In the period of the post-war economic upswing, the Japanese capitalists, relieved of the necessity of big arms expenditure by the presence of US imperialism, ploughed back their profits in investment in new industry. Now, as we have seen, the 'Japanese model' has reached its limits. Under conditions of surplus capacity, overproduction, growing protectionism and increased competition for markets, we will inevitably see an explosion of imperialism. Already we see the clash of European, American and Japanese capitalism in Asia, where they all see the opening up of the Chinese market as a glittering prize for the

China will develop in the way they anticipate. But that does not prevent them from scrambling to establish a base ahead of their rivals. Furthermore, China itself is arming to the teeth, in preparation for the inevitable conflicts in the future. The next period will see a sharpening of the antagonisms between US imperialism, Japan and the EU. The immediate field of conflict is Asia, the fastest growing area of trade and investment. Already 'pacifist' Japan has built up one of the world's biggest and best equipped armed forces. Under the cover of the United Nation, Japanese soldiers have been sent as 'peacekeepers' to Cambodia.

### Arms-race

An arms-race has already begun in Asia. China alone is to raise its defence-spending by 20% in local currency terms in the current year (1994). In the four years to 1992, China increased its military expenditure in real terms by 32%, Japan by 46%, Indonesia by 30%, Malaysia by 22%, South Korea by 48%, Taiwan by 33%, Philippines by 29% and Thailand by 53%. There is no shortage of potential for wars in this area. The Spratley Islands in the South China Sea, which have considerable potential supplies of oil and gas, are claimed by no fewer than six countries in the



Riot police on duty in Shenzhen, one of China's Special Economic Zones

area, including China and Vietnam, which already came to blows on two occasions over them.

The fact that the Chinese have purchased an estimated \$1.8 billion worth of Russian military hard-ware, including modern combat aircraft, submarines and possibly even an aircraft carrier, indicates that the Beijing's ambitions weapons modernisation programme is not intended purely for defensive purposes.

### Contradictions

The underlying contradictions and instability was shown by the recent conflict between America and North Korea. The collapse of Stalinism in Russia and Eastern Europe has exacerbated the difficulties of the North Korean regime, which increased its military spending in the four years to 1992, from 16% to a staggering 26% of GDP.

The North Korean regime is undoubtedly an unstable and corrupt Stalinist dictatorship. But it is doubtful that the conflict would have led to war, despite the fiery rhetoric of Pyongyang. Compared to the

military might of the USA, North Korea's armoury, including its nuclear potential, is a mere popgun. In all likelihood, the intention of Pyongyang was to put pressure on the USA to recognise it and get some kind of financial assistance to prevent total economic collapse.

As Socialist Appeal has explained many times, under modern conditions, an all-out war between the major capitalist powers is virtually ruled out. However, in the coming period, all kinds of 'small wars' are inevitable. In a climate of general economic crisis, the struggle for markets and protectionism, the antagonism will become sharper, especially between the weaker capitalist regimes of the Third World.

### Wars

As the contradictions intensify, wars will inevitably break out between different bourgeois regimes in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In some cases, they will be acting as surrogates for their imperialist backers. In others, unstable Bonapartist regimes will engage in military adventures against their rivals and neigh-

bours. With the terrifying firepower of modern weapons, the results will be a nightmare for the peoples of the Third World. Theoretically, it cannot be excluded that nuclear weapons might be used, despite the pressures of the main imperialist powers.

### Solutions

On the capitalist road there can be no lasting solutions to the problems of the third world. In the last few years of the 20th century, despite all the wonders of modern science, two thirds of humanity live on the border line of barbarism. This year more than 500,000 women will die due to "complications" during pregnancy, another 200,000 will die attempting to have an abortion. 100 million children aged between 6 and 11 will receive no education whatsoever. Another 100 million children live on the streets. In the last ten years one million children have been killed, 4 million seriously injured and 5 million have become refugees or orphaned as a result of wars. The main reason for the grinding poverty of the third world is

the two-fold looting of the resources through the terms of trade, and the trillion dollars debt owed to the big western banks. Just to pay the interest on the debt these countries have to export food needed by their own people! According to UNICEF debt repayments have caused third world incomes to fall by 25%, health expenditure by 50% and education spending by 25%. In the words of UNICEF, "hundreds of thousands of the world's children have given their lives to pay their countries' debts, and many millions more are still paying the interest with their malnourished minds and bodies."

### Battles

The next period will see big battles between the classes that will put the struggles of the past in the shade. Sooner or later, they will take power in one country or another, as they did in Russia in 1917. When that happens, it will transform the world far more quickly than it in 1917-21. The basis will be laid for the victory of socialism on a world scale.

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Ted Grant analyses the crisis in Chechnya

# Yeltsin's bloodbath in Grozny

**The Chechen crisis enters a new phase after Russian troops have largely seized or destroyed the Chechen capital of Grozny. Despite the initial set backs and humiliation for the Russian army, largely due to high ranking incompetence and lack of conviction of the conscript troops, new reinforcements of crack troops are poised to take Grozny. The Russians are now facing the prospect of a protracted guerrilla war, which could bog down Russia in resources and expense, and open a new period of instability.**

The consequences of this adventure are far reaching. It reflects the crisis throughout Russia generally. Despite Russia's colossal military machine, its initial inability to take Grozny reflects a crisis of morale amongst the troops and even the officer caste. The army is deeply divided and suffers from demoralisation after the break up of the Soviet Union. The fact that half a dozen senior generals, and probably many more, refused to fight in Chechnya reflects a mutinous mood amongst the top brass. The incompetence of the Defence Minister General Grachev has seen open challenges to his authority, particularly by General Lebed, commander of the 14th army in the Trans Dnestr Republic. Lebed, who in a recent poll is seen as the most popular commander amongst his peers, stated "From a military point of view, the Russian army

should never have entered Chechnya." Feeling the mood of opposition to the war, he is attempting to strategically place himself for a future bonapartist role. Meanwhile, Yeltsin has presided over a 50% fall in industrial production in the space of three years, collapsing living standards and a nightmare existence for the working class. Resting on the new breed of gangster capitalists, speculators and Mafia interests to introduce capitalism into Russia, the Yeltsin clique has brought society to the edge of collapse. Crime has reached staggering levels, worse than in the West.

## Bonapartism

More and more Yeltsin has to rest upon his presidential administration and the 'power ministries' of defence, interior and counter-intelligence. This bonapartism reflects the impasse of society. There is a possible threat of the break up of Russia. Yegor Gaidar, head of the pro-capitalist Russia's Choice grouping and former prime minister, has warned of the immediate danger of authoritarianism and a military take-over. Although Yeltsin has played the role of a stooge of imperialism, he has been forced, given the support for the nationalists, to get tough with Russia's 21 internal republics which have moved towards independence since

the collapse of the Soviet Union. This explains the decision to move on the Chechen Republic. It is also a warning to other ethnic republics to fall back into line or face the consequences. He has also forecast greater friction with the USA, remarking (in marked contrast to last year's rhetoric about Russia having no enemies any longer) that the "international situation is quite unstable".

Using the pretext of a threat to the unity of Russia following the proclamation of independence in 1991 (which was never put to a referendum), Yeltsin sent in the troops to take over the Chechen republic. He said that no region of Russia had the right to secede. Dudayev, Chechen's president, seized power by force in 1991 and in June 1994 suppressed a referendum on his presidency. Without doubt, the gang-

ster regime of Dudayev was heavily involved in drug trafficking and illegal arms deals, and had links with the crime rackets in Russia. "Their banditry seems to have been practised as much outside their territory as within it," comments *The Economist*. But that has never affected Yeltsin's outlook in the past. The article continues: "In reality, Mr. Yeltsin has sent in the tanks to Chechnya not to protect ethnic Russians, or those of his generals, are more to do with the security of the state." (17th December). They could not allow Chechnya to secede, as other parts of the federation, made up of 21 republics and 68 provinces, might try to follow suit. Although the ethnic minorities make up barely 20% of the population of the Russian Federation, they control over 50% of the territory. "Conceivably, the disintegration of Russia could lead to a succession of Bosnias. More likely, it would upset Russia's generals - some at least of whom have said that, in their eyes, upholding the integrity of the country is their main duty." (*The Economist*).

## Hypocrisy

The hypocrisy of the West in criticising the bombing of Grozny is nauseating, given the fact when it suited their interests they bombed hell out of Iraq. Now, the imperialist powers are growing increasingly alarmed at developments in Russia, the lack of progress towards capitalism, the growing politi-



cal instability, and the unreliability of Yeltsin himself. After putting all their eggs in one basket in backing Yeltsin, their strategists are now urging new points of support. Given his actions in Chechnya, they have threatened to withhold economic support.

This could not have come at a worse time for Yeltsin. The Russian budget depends upon a series of loans from the IMF and World Bank. The stabilisation of the rouble - the main aim of the loans - depends on making the budget even tougher than that proposed by the state дума. However, the demands of the military-industrial complex for more subsidies has forced Yeltsin, despite earlier intentions, to print more money to cover the debts, serving to undermine the 'reform' programme (ie. the move to capitalism). This resulted in "Black Tuesday" last October, when the rouble lost a quarter of its value.

### Chaos

The move towards capitalism, and the chaos introduced into the plan, has provoked economic dislocation and crisis. According to the 'Financial Times', "Like the sorcerer's apprentice, thousands of Russian enterprises have been furiously churning out goods they are unable to sell and taking delivery of goods they cannot pay for." It has been estimated that the inter-enterprise debt amounts to Rbs30 thousand billion. These firms continue to operate without paying wages or simply relying on credit, which sooner or later has to be financed by the government's budget. Otherwise the whole industrial system would collapse through bankruptcy, putting millions out of work. The imperialists, the mafia business interests, and their 'reformist' allies want to travel down this road of economic "shock therapy" or "big Bang" stabilisation. The Chernomyrdin government has tried, under the pressure of opposing interests of the managerial bureaucracy and the mafia, to steer a middle way. However, when it came to the crunch, Yeltsin agreed to state credits.

The future is very bleak. Gerashchenko, chairman of the Central Bank has forecast that industrial output would fall by 15% in 1995 and the gross

domestic product by nearly 5%. He told bankers in St Petersburg that this year would see a "stabilisation, at a crisis level". But even this now looks over optimistic with the economic costs of the Chechen intervention threatening to wreck economic plans. The IMF loans of £8.3 billion (the biggest ever financial package) are conditional on tightening the budget, which has now become impossible. As one western economist in Moscow commented: "Clearly no one knows how much the final bill for Chechnya will be, but whatever it is it will be big and will rip a hole in the 1995 budget." The Economics Minister, Yasin, estimates that the cost of restoring the Chechen economy alone will be around £545 million, which does not include the costs of the military operation or the demands of the army for increased resources. One source suggests the real cost to be five times the Yasin estimate.

Apart from rebuilding a city of 400,000 inhabitants, it will cost Rbs720 billion to rebuild Chechnya's oil industry. Under these circumstances the government will have to rewrite the budget, putting in jeopardy the IMF loans (which was to plug one third of the budget) and forcing the government to borrow heavily from the Central Bank. This will certainly fuel inflation, which is already surging upwards. In December 1994



as privatisation minister now threatens to unravel, since his replacement in that job seems bent on renationalising some of Russia's most competitive industries." (7th January). The West were hoping that Yeltsin would continue the 'reforms', while keeping the Stalinists and nationalists at bay. However, his performance of late has put this into question. His unreliability, his drinking bouts, his volatility and incompetence have all added to his unsuitability in marshalling through the capitalist restoration demanded by the West. The Economist concluded: "Once a reforming strongman, Mr. Yeltsin is now the wrong man to lead a reforming Russia." The latest actions in Chechnya have added to this conclusion. The pro-capitalist 'reformists' have

The initial set-backs for the Russian troops were due to incompetence and lack of morale. This was in contrast to the Chechen fighters who saw their struggle as primarily a defence of their homeland, despite Dudayev. Chechnya is the first of a series of uprisings that will affect the national minorities of Russia. As the nascent bourgeois accumulate more weight in Russia, there will be greater tendencies in the direction of imperialist domination. Marxists are in favour of the right of the Chechens to self determination, with autonomy within a socialist united Russia.

### Support

That means support for the Chechen people, but not the Dudayev clique. The national question in Russia can only be solved by guaranteeing equal rights to all the peoples of Russia. But this is impossible under Stalinism or capitalism. Only if the working class regains its strength and re-opts a Leninist/Trotskyist outlook, can the impasse be broken and the situation be changed fundamentally. Only the return to workers' democracy offers a way out for the working class and the oppressed nationalities of Russia. Such a regime would return to Lenin's policy of national emancipation and fraternal relations between the peoples, with all rights for the national minorities. It was this policy that prevented the break up of Russia after the October Revolution, but cynically betrayed by Stalin. It is the task of the workers of Russia to reestablish the genuine ideas of socialist internationalism as the only solution to their problems.

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**The future is very bleak. Gerashchenko, chairman of the Central Bank has forecast that industrial output would fall by 15% in 1995 and the gross domestic product by nearly 5%. He told bankers in St Petersburg that this year would see a "stabilisation, at a crisis level". But even this now looks over optimistic...**

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inflation rose by 16.4% (up from 4% in August). There are also fears about who is really responsible for economic policy in the Kremlin. Polevanov, the head of the privatisation agency, has talked openly of the need to renationalise strategic assets! According to The Economist, "Much of Mr. Chubais's previous good work

come out against him publicly. Even the capitalists realise the path towards capitalist restoration has been made more difficult, although not impossible. However, at this moment they are stuck with him.

The West would have liked to see Russia weakened in the Caucasus so as to permit them a foothold into the rich oil and mineral resources of the region.

# Cambodia 1995...

## Return of the Killing Fields?

**The killing of hostages, including Britons, held by the Khmer Rouge and the row between Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans and the Thai military has brought Cambodia back into the public eye. Driving these events is the growing strength of the Khmer Rouge and the possible collapse of the present corruption riddled regime. We reprint below an article from the Australian Marxist journal 'Socialist Appeal' No. 3 which asks— Twenty years after 'year zero' and the 'killing fields', is history about to repeat itself with a return to power by Pol Pot?**

Gareth Evans' accusation against the Thai military of collaboration with the Khmer Rouge has seriously damaged relations between the Australian and Thai governments and placed in jeopardy a \$4 billion arms deal with Thailand. The shelter given to the Khmer Rouge by the Thai army is nothing new, nor is it a secret. Without a secure rear, the Khmer Rouge would have been unable to survive the 1979 invasion by Vietnam and continue the civil war for 15 years. The Khmer Rouge is largely financed by timber and gem trade across the Thai border that is worth around \$500 million to corrupt sections of the Thai army alone. Australian governments, in line with US foreign policy, have been content to tolerate this because the Khmer Rouge were in effect carrying on a 'proxy war' on behalf of the US and China against Vietnam. Up to 1991, the Khmer Rouge retained their seat in the UN. The 'peace deal' brokered by

Gareth Evans in 1992 really involved the US and China's desire to see the Khmer Rouge included in a coalition regime as a counterweight to Vietnamese influence. However following the 1993 elections, the government reneged on the deal. This led to a reopening of the civil war. The Khmer Rouge has no political base inside the cities. Even in the countryside it operates largely through intimidation. However this does not exclude the possibility of a Khmer Rouge victory. For despite its lack of popular support the Khmer Rouge has been able to win important gains on the battlefield. In April the government army was routed at the town of Pailin, causing panic in Cambodia's second city, Battambang.

### Control

It is estimated that the Khmer Rouge now controls four times the area it did in 1992. The monster that was nurtured for 15 years has grown out of control. It is the fear of a Khmer Rouge victory that sparked Evans' row with the Thai army. The reason for its success lies in the mire of corruption gripping the regime and the army. In a country with a per capita GDP of \$130, MPs have awarded themselves salaries of \$1,500. The army has 2,000 generals and consists mainly of officers drawing pay for non-existent units. The whole army is sliding into anarchy as army units join with the Khmer Rouge in acts of banditry, and soldiers sell their weapons after not being paid for months. At Pailin half the supplies sent to government units never reached the battlefield.

In Phnom Penh the regime is deeply divided. In July one faction attempted a coup. Sihanouk is seen as the nation's only hope, but the king is old and ill and has no magic wand to save the situation. Underlying the collapse is the state of the economy. After centuries of colonial rule and civil war, infrastructure is minimal. Foreign investment is needed everywhere, but the only sector to receive it has been tourism, with a resort built at Sihanoukville. But with its beach in rifle range of Khmer Rouge units, the flood of tourist dollars has yet to arrive. To save the regime from total collapse may require outside intervention. But with arms constantly 'leaking' to the other side, Australia and the US have halted military supplies, leaving only the option of sending troops. But any such operation would have to be on the scale of the Vietnam war in order to

succeed.

Up to now the Khmer Rouge have only sought a share of power and to keep their control over much of Cambodia, but a collapse of central rule could change this.

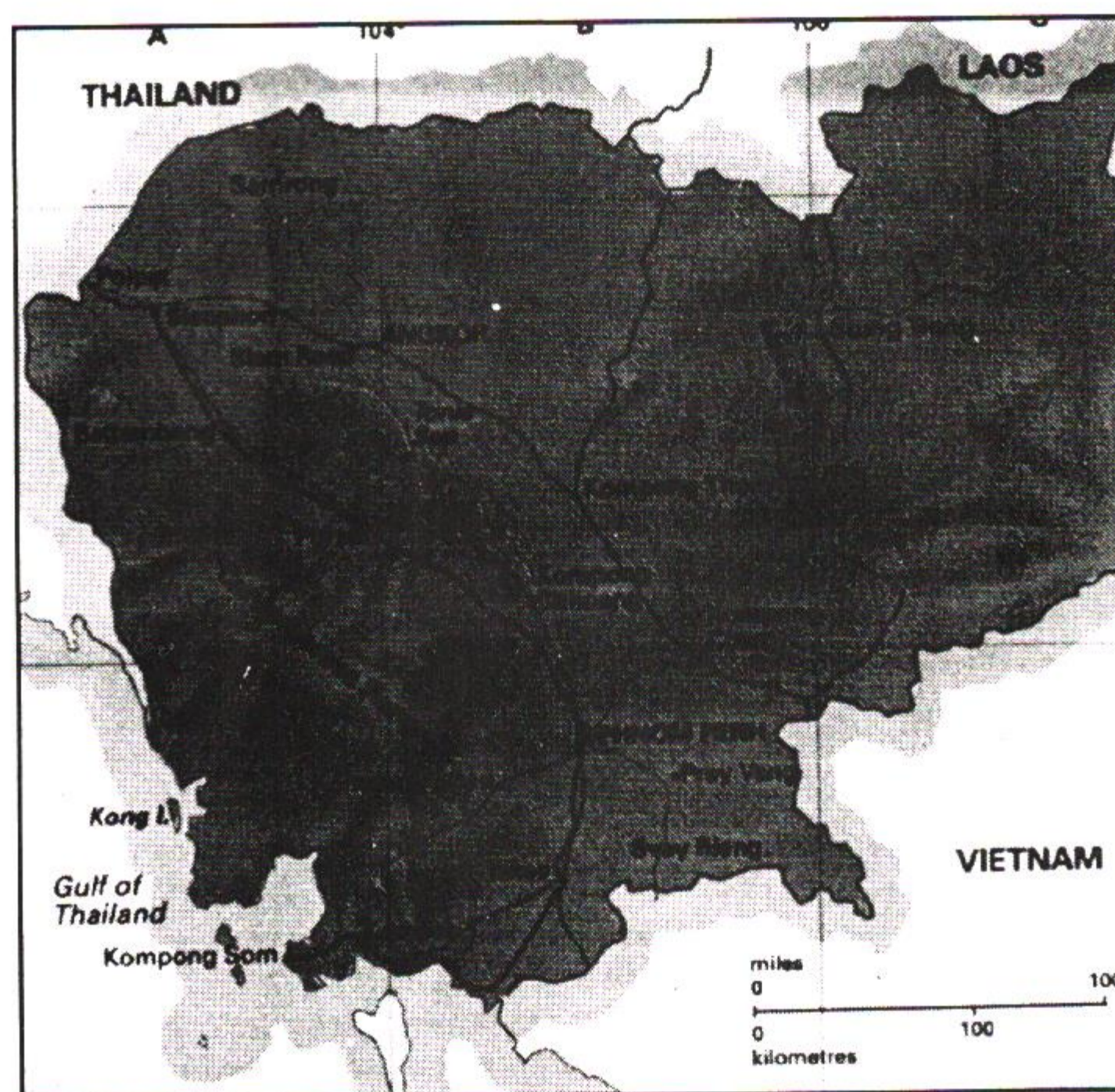
In order to tackle the present morass, on coming to power, a Khmer Rouge regime would have to move to eliminate capitalism and install a planned economy. This could succeed in taking society out of its current impasse and developing the economy to some extent. For this reason such a move would have to be welcomed.

### Terrible price

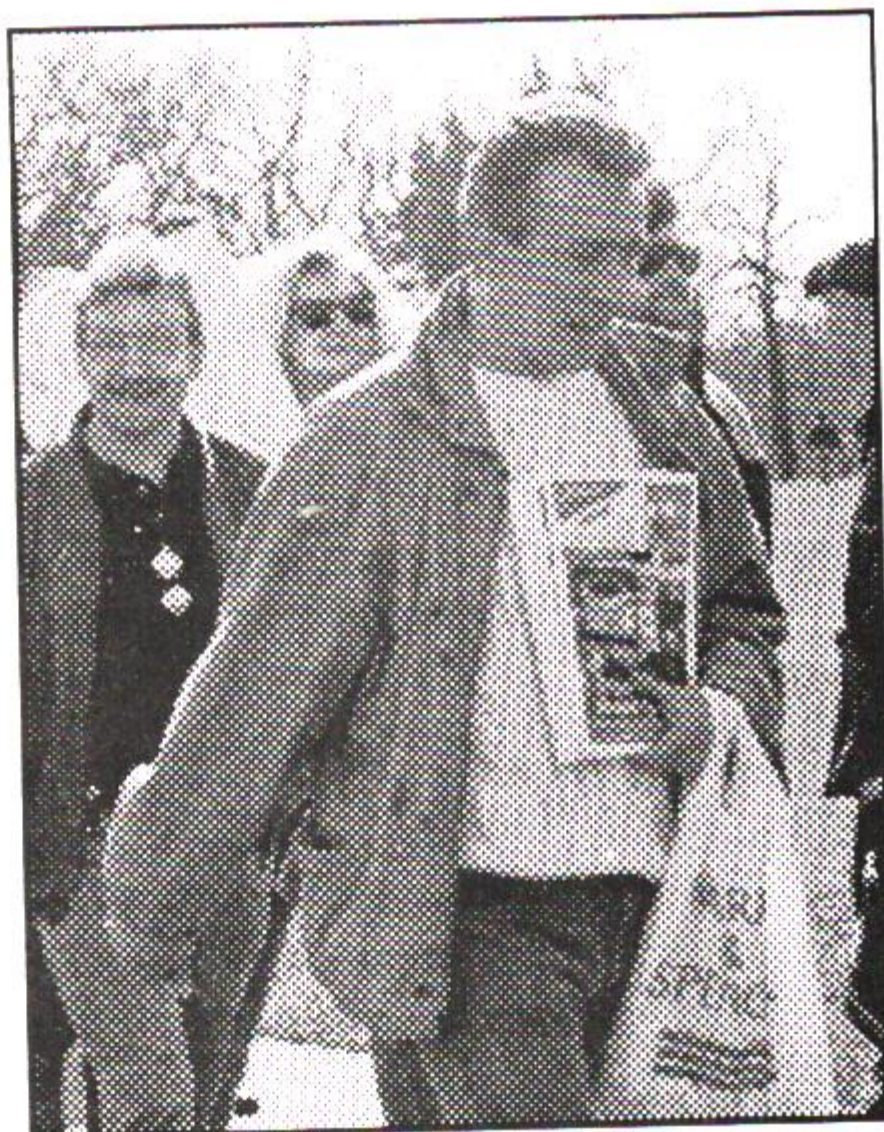
However progress of this kind would come at a terrible price. The opposition to the Khmer Rouge in the cities would be dealt with by savage repression just as in 1975 in evacuation of Phnom Penh was carried out to consolidate power by scattering the urban population across the countryside at enormous human cost.

But whatever mileage the Western media will try and obtain from the horror of a 'communist' Khmer Rouge regime, the truth remains that it has been the manoeuvring of the 'Great Powers' and the failure of capitalism to develop society that is the real cause of the suffering of the Cambodian people, and that has created the conditions for a Khmer Rouge victory.

Only a socialist transformation of the region can allow the economic growth to take Cambodia out of its present morass.



# Press Fund success brings new technology



A marvellous collection made by supporters nationally which together with pledges came to several thousand pounds and some splendid individual donations which we have received separately including £100 (Tam Burke) and £250 (Miles) together with monies raised at various fund raising events—with more due—has meant we have been able to follow on from the purchase of the scanner reported in the last issue with the purchase of a new laser printer and computer upgrades. This means we are now producing Socialist Appeal using the latest technology. We are also one step nearer the purchase of our printing press which will give us total control over the production of our journal so keep that money coming in! Supporters should be regularly organising fund raising events and ensuring that all readers and supporters are approached for donations. You can also make a regular donation via your bank account through a standing order. Contact us for details.

These new purchases will also be of

use in the production of our other material including our new Clause Four pamphlet. With the debate on the retention of Clause Four having widened to take in the whole relevance of socialism and the planned economy there has never been a greater need for a publication of the labour movement able to defend those ideas. The editorial board will be undertaking a special push on the sales of Socialist Appeal during the build up to the special LP conference at the end of April. We should take copies along to sell at every LP and union meeting so that members can read for themselves the arguments for socialism. Try and get your LP or union branch to take out a subscription to Socialist Appeal for one or more copies. Up and down the country meetings are being held on Clause Four and Socialist Appeal should be sold at these. Why not start selling Socialist Appeal yourselves—ring me on 0171-251-1094 to make arrangements. Remember, Socialist Appeal does not sell itself but requires the activity of ordinary Labour and trade union members willing to stand up for socialism. Let's see how many new readers we can get over the next three months. A sellers log card and sales pack including material on how to sell and why, introduction letters, paying-in forms and more will be available from the beginning of February. Again ring if you want this stuff.

**Steve Jones**  
Journal Manager

Sales/Press Fund

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## Steve Jones reviews Seumas Milne's new book about MI5 and the miners strike...

# THE ENEMY WITHIN

**This book seeks to bring to public attention the full facts concerning the campaign by the state against Arthur Scargill and the NUM both during the miners strike and after. Those who still believe that the state machine is 'neutral' where industrial disputes are concerned should read this book which represents just the latest in a series of exposures of the role of the security services over the years.**

Throughout 1990 a concerted campaign was waged by the media (now conveniently forgotten) over accusations that the leadership of the NUM, meaning Arthur Scargill and Peter Heathfield, had embezzled money from the funds intended to support striking miners during the struggle of 1984/5. Talk was of money from Libya and Russia being used to pay off personal mortgages rather than going to striking miners and some pundits were talking with glee about Scargill being 'in jail by Christmas'. In fact all the accusations made by the media were shown to be totally false and could have been easily revealed as such had the right questions even been asked. In the end, after a long and painful struggle, every allegation was disproved and shown to be baseless. But, as the book says: "Facts were never allowed to get seriously in the way of a campaign that commanded such powerful support and offered the chance to destroy once and for all the symbol of militant class trade unionism that Scargill obstinately remained". The campaign was spearheaded by Granada TV's 'Cook report' and by Maxwell's 'Daily Mirror' newspaper. Maxwell hated the leadership of the NUM and campaigned against it both during the 1984/5 strike and afterwards. Ironically, everything he accused Scargill of doing he was subsequently found to have done him-

self. Relying on the confusing nature of the complex financial arrangements which existed after the State sought to use the anti-trade union laws to seize the unions assets during the strike, they hoped to crush Scargill under a mass of allegations and slander. They also gained encouragement from the hostility of the right wing Labour leadership, of which more later.

### State machinery

The question of who was ultimately behind this campaign is at the core of this book. Here we see how leaks to the Guardian during 1991 showed how the Tories used the state machinery in a secret campaign against the miners: "Margaret Thatcher personally authorised a 'Get Scargill' campaign both during and after the 1984-5 strike, the GCHQ whistleblowers alleged, which was coordinated and run by MI5. She had also, they said, bent her government's own rules and ordered an unprecedented mobilisation of British and American electronic surveillance networks to underpin the anti-NUM operations... The GCHQ also confirmed ... that there had been a direct intelligence input into the 1990 Maxwell-funded media campaign against the miners' leadership."

Miner and union activists who were involved in the strike of 1984/85 will need little confirmation of the truth of these statements. Up and down the country the involvement of *agents provocateurs*, secretly funded 'back to work' campaigns and the like could be seen. Phone tapping and bugging reached such a level during the strike that even the Fish and Chip shop near the old NUM offices in London was bugged. "Every single NUM branch and lodge secretary had his phone tapped. So did the entire national and area union leaderships, as well as sympathetic trade unionists and sup-

port-group activists all over the country". The book also looks at the question of whether Roger Windsor, the NUM's leading non-elected officer during the strike and a chief source of the 1990 accusations against Scargill, was in fact 'involved' with MI5 as was alleged in Parliament by Tam Dalyell who had his own Whitehall sources.

Increasingly we can see that agencies such as MI5 are now working more and more in the field of anti-labour movement activities. The MI5 officer who mounted the campaign during the strike is now the head of that organisation - Stella Rimington. Phone tapping, forged documents and bank statements, infiltrators—nothing was beyond the scope of these people. Bugging, surveillance, smear campaigns and the use of recruited informers remain the order of the day.

### Campaign

The campaign against the NUM reflects a "twenty year vendetta" by the Tories against the miners who were seen as responsible for bringing down the 1970-74 Conservative government. The battle against the miners in 1984/85 was prepared over many years and as this book reminds us: "As one set of ministerial memoirs from the Thatcher era

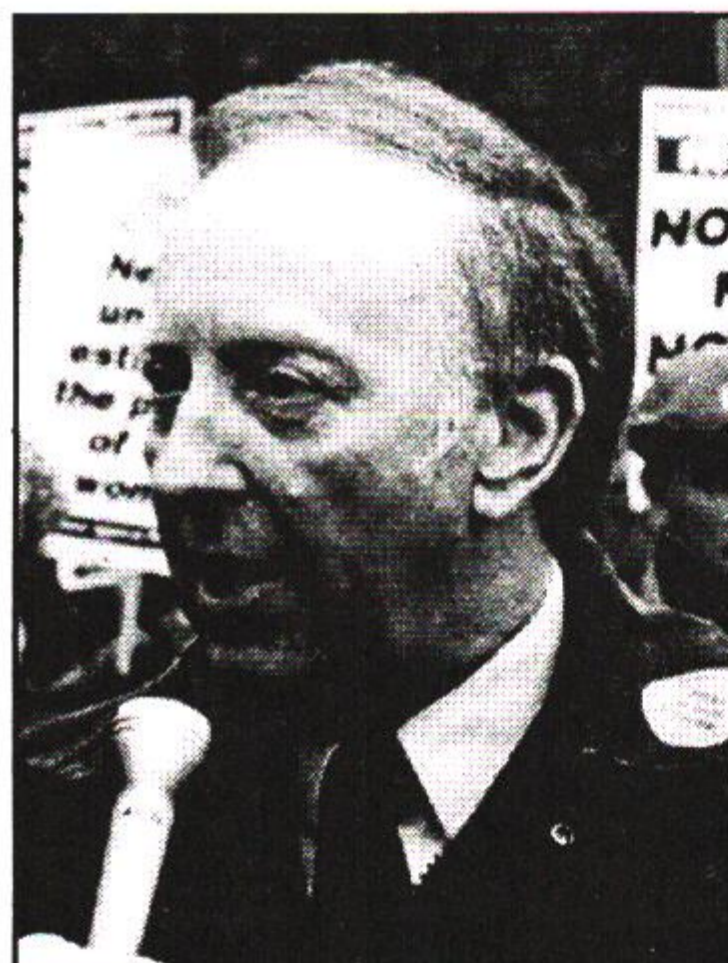
after another has made indisputably clear, the overriding aim of the British government's entire energy policy from 1979 onwards was to destroy forever the power base of the National Union of Mineworkers". Events subsequent to the strike have shown the truth of this as the government has systematically wrecked the British mining industry. The privatisation of Gas and electricity in a way designed to rig the market against coal was just a part of this. They feared the NUM "not for their weaknesses but for their strengths" as the book concludes. One other question dealt with by the book should be noted here—the role of the Labour leadership.

### Support

Just as they failed to give full support to the miners during the strike, so during the events of 1990 they followed the line of Maxwell and Co without question and seemed quite happy to fuel the flames with calls for 'enquiries' and the like. The book reports on how two of Kinnock's "parliamentary lieutenants with mining connections—Labour Coal Spokesman, Kevin Barron and...Kim Howells" appeared on the Cook report and praised the Mirror campaign. They, and others such as David Blunkett, piled on the mud. "...Kinnock formally kept his distance but made absolutely clear that this was a settling of accounts that had his blessing." The then editor of the Mirror is quoted as saying: "Alastair Campbell told me Neil Kinnock was already fully informed and was neutral on the subject—in other words, he wanted to see it in print. He wasn't neutral in reality. The Labour hierarchy enjoyed Arthur's discomfiture. It seemed to justify their hostility to the strike." Interestingly both Barron and Howells supported Blair's election campaign and Barron is now a leading 'coordinator' of the extremely well financed Anti-Clause Four Campaign. The attempts by the state to frame the NUM leadership shows the reality of the role the state machine has and will again play in defence of the interests of the ruling class. Labour activists would do well to study this book to help gain an insight into the workings of those who would seek to destroy the Labour movement.

**THE ENEMY WITHIN  
MI5, Maxwell and the Scargill  
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# ENGELS CENTENARY

## SOCIALISM, UTOPIAN & SCIENTIFIC

In the second of a series of articles to mark 100 years since the death of the great Marxist, Frederick Engels, *Rob Sewell* looks at one of his classic works, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*.

*“Modern socialism is, in its essence, the direct product of the recognition, on the one hand, of the class antagonisms existing in the society of today between proprietors and non-proprietors, between capitalists and wage-workers; on the other hand, of the anarchy existing in production.”* Thus Frederick Engels opened his explanation between scientific and utopian socialism, in his book of the same title.

Before giving a fuller explanation of scientific socialism, he delved into the origins and roots of socialism. The idea of a better form of human society beyond capitalism is as old as exploitation itself. Even before this, social movements against private property and for the equality of man appeared as early as the fourteenth century with Wycliffe and the Lollards. John Ball, leader of the Peasant's Revolt (1381), declared: “Ah, ye good people, the matters goeth not well to pass in England, nor shall it do till everything be common, and that there be no villeins (serfs) nor gentlemen, but that we may be equal, and that the lords be no greater masters than we be.” In the early sixteenth century, Sir Thomas More argued for the abolition of all private ownership in his book *Utopia* (1516). It was, according to him, the root of all social evil. More's Utopian society is organised on the basis of “to each according to his needs, from each according to his ability.” But these ideas, given the low level of production and technique, could be no

more than mere dreams. The future, based on the destruction of feudal society, belonged to the rise of capitalism. Even then, during the English bourgeois Revolution between 1642 and 1649, the Digger movement of Gerrard Winstanley moved to rid England of private property and establish common ownership. As with the Lollards, this centred on the common ownership of land - the means of life in an agrarian society.

### Impulse

Engels in his book *‘Socialism: Utopian and Scientific’*, refers to the gigantic impulse to human thought given by the struggle against feudalism in France. “In its theoretical thought, modern socialism originally appears ostensibly as a more logical extension of the principles laid down by the great French philosophers of the eighteenth century... The great men, who in France prepared men's minds for the coming revolution, were themselves extreme revolutionists. They recognised no external authority of any kind whatever. Religion, natural science, society, political institutions - everything was subject to the most unsparring criticism: everything must justify its existence before the judgement-seat of reason or give up existence. Reason became the sole measure of everything.” These revolutionary ideas were used to defeat the vestiges of Feudal society. But the triumph of the French capitalist revolution of 1789-93, saw their realisation in the capitalist republic

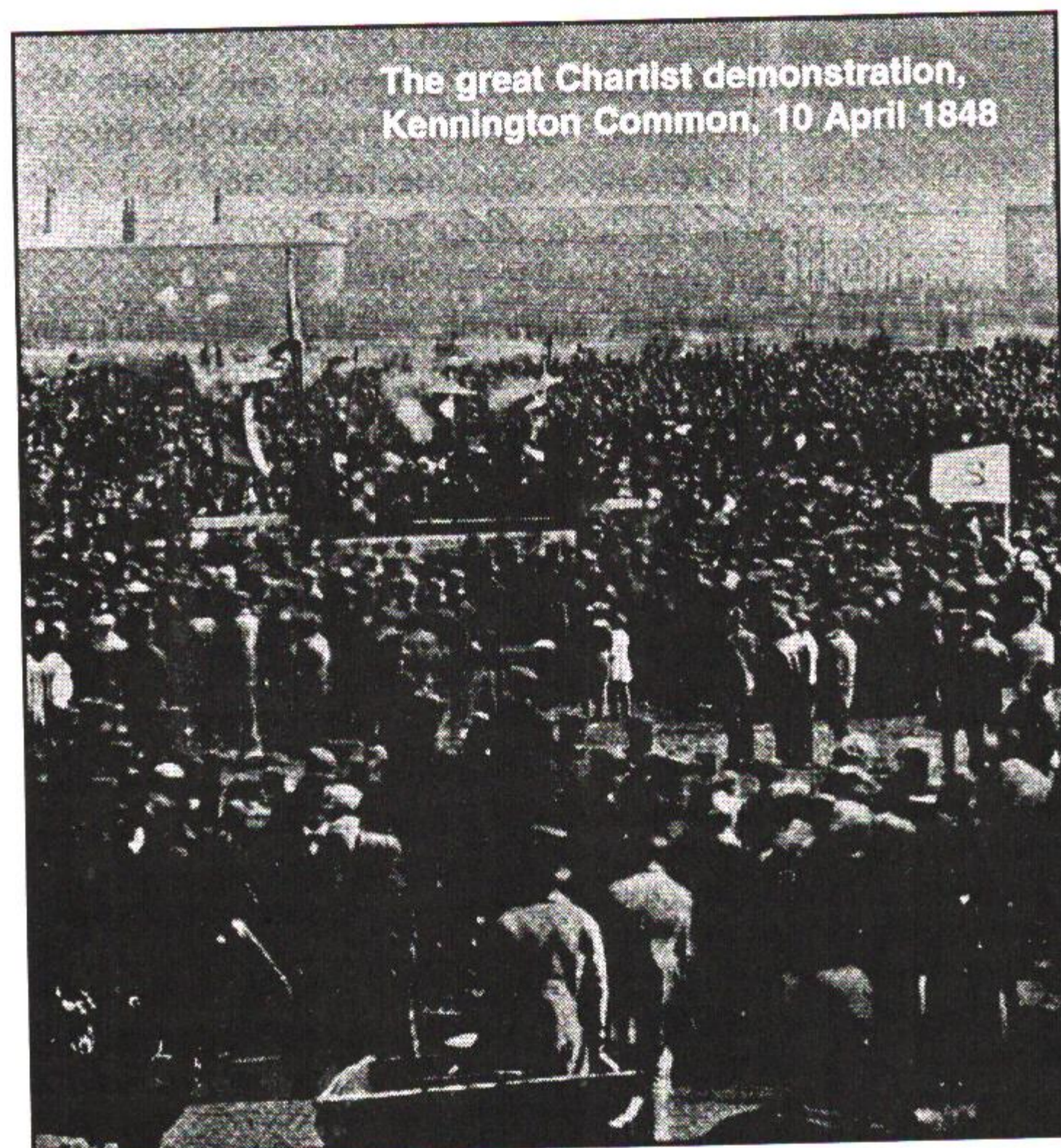
and its laws and rights. As Engels explained: “The great thinkers of the eighteenth century could, no more than their predecessors, go beyond the limits imposed upon them by their epoch.” However, the emergence of capitalism with its horrific exploitation and terrible social conditions, saw the emergence of new socialist thinkers. Like the French philosophers, “they wish to bring in the kingdom of reason and eternal justice”, but, they claimed, their predecessors were failures. “Society presented nothing but wrongs; to remove these was the task of reason. It was necessary, then, to discover a new and more perfect system of social order and to impose this upon

society from without by propaganda, and, wherever it was possible, by the example of model experiments.” (Engels). The leading representatives of this early socialist movement were Saint-Simon, Fourier and Robert Owen.

They came forward with fantastic detailed plans to reorganise society. “The more completely they were worked out in detail, the more they could not avoid drifting off into pure fantasies.” (Engels). For them, it was the power of their arguments that was decisive.

### Converted

Once the ruling class understood them, they would be converted to socialist reconstruction. There was no role for the working class in their own emancipation other than as onlookers. On the contrary, Owen appealed to the government of Lords Liverpool and Castlereagh, as well as Queen Victoria! It was this conception of socialism that gave them the title of utopian socialists. Although they were criticised by Marx and Engels for their errors, they were, nevertheless, regarded with great respect for their contribution to socialist thought. Engels, for instance, described Robert Owen's contribution in the following terms: “At this juncture there came forward as a reformer a manufacturer 29 years old - a man of almost



sublime, childlike simplicity of character, and at the same time one of the few born leaders of men. Robert Owen has adopted the teaching of the materialistic philosophers: that man's character is the product, on the one hand, of heredity; on the other, of the environment of the individual during his lifetime, and especially during his period of development. In the industrial revolution most of his class saw only chaos and confusion, and the opportunity of fishing in these troubled waters and making large fortunes quickly. He saw in it the opportunity of putting into practice his favourite theory, and so of bringing order out of chaos." (*Socialism: Utopian and Scientific, Selected Works, page 402*).

### New Lanark

From 1800 to 1829 Owen managed the great cotton mill at New Lanark in Lanarkshire. It was here that he first tried out his theories. As Engels explains: "A population, originally consisting of the most diverse and, for the most part, very demoralised elements, a population that gradually grew to 2,500, he turned into a model colony, in which drunkenness, police, magistrates, lawsuits, poor laws, charity, were unknown. And all this simply by placing the people in conditions worthy of human beings, and especially by carefully bringing up the rising generation. He was the founder of infant schools, and introduced

them first at New Lanark. At the age of two the children came to school, where they enjoyed themselves so much that they could scarcely be got home again. Whilst his competitors worked their people thirteen or fourteen hours a day, in New Lanark the working day was only ten and a half hours. When a crisis in cotton stopped work for four months, his workers received their full wages all the time." (*ibid, page 402*) And yet Owen was not satisfied. "The people were slaves at my mercy", he said. "The working part of this population of 2,500 persons was daily producing as much real wealth for society as less than half a century before, it would have required the working part of a population of 600,000 to create. I asked myself, what became of the difference between the wealth consumed by 2,500 persons and that which would have been consumed by 600,000?"

It went, of course, to the owners in profits. "And yet", said Owen, "this new power was the creation of the working class." The Owenites concluded people ought now to be some two hundred times better off than they were fifty years previously.

### Communist

This went to the heart of Owen's socialism. He suggested that society be reorganised on the lines of communist colonies, which he detailed and planned out. But as Engels observed: "As long as he was

simply a philanthropist, he was rewarded with nothing but wealth, applause, honour, and glory. He was the most popular man in Europe. Not only men of his own class, but statesmen and princes listened to him approvingly. But when he came out with his communist theories that was quite another thing."

### Obstacles

For Owen, three great obstacles stood in the way of social reform: private property, religion, and the present form of marriage. As soon as he raised this, he was ostracised and excommunicated from official society, which propelled him towards the workers' movement, establishing the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union in 1833. According to Engels, "every social movement, every real advance in England on behalf of the workers links itself on to the name of Robert Owen."

The utopian socialists made an enormous contribution to socialist thinking. They had the most encyclopedic minds of their times. They were giants compared to today's Labour leaders. Tony Blair's "original" "modern" socialism, predates the utopian socialists, and is even more backward than the ideas of the Lollards and Levellers. However, the confusion of the utopian socialists arose from the conditions of early modern capitalism itself. Large scale industry was only emerging in England, and even here, the working class was in

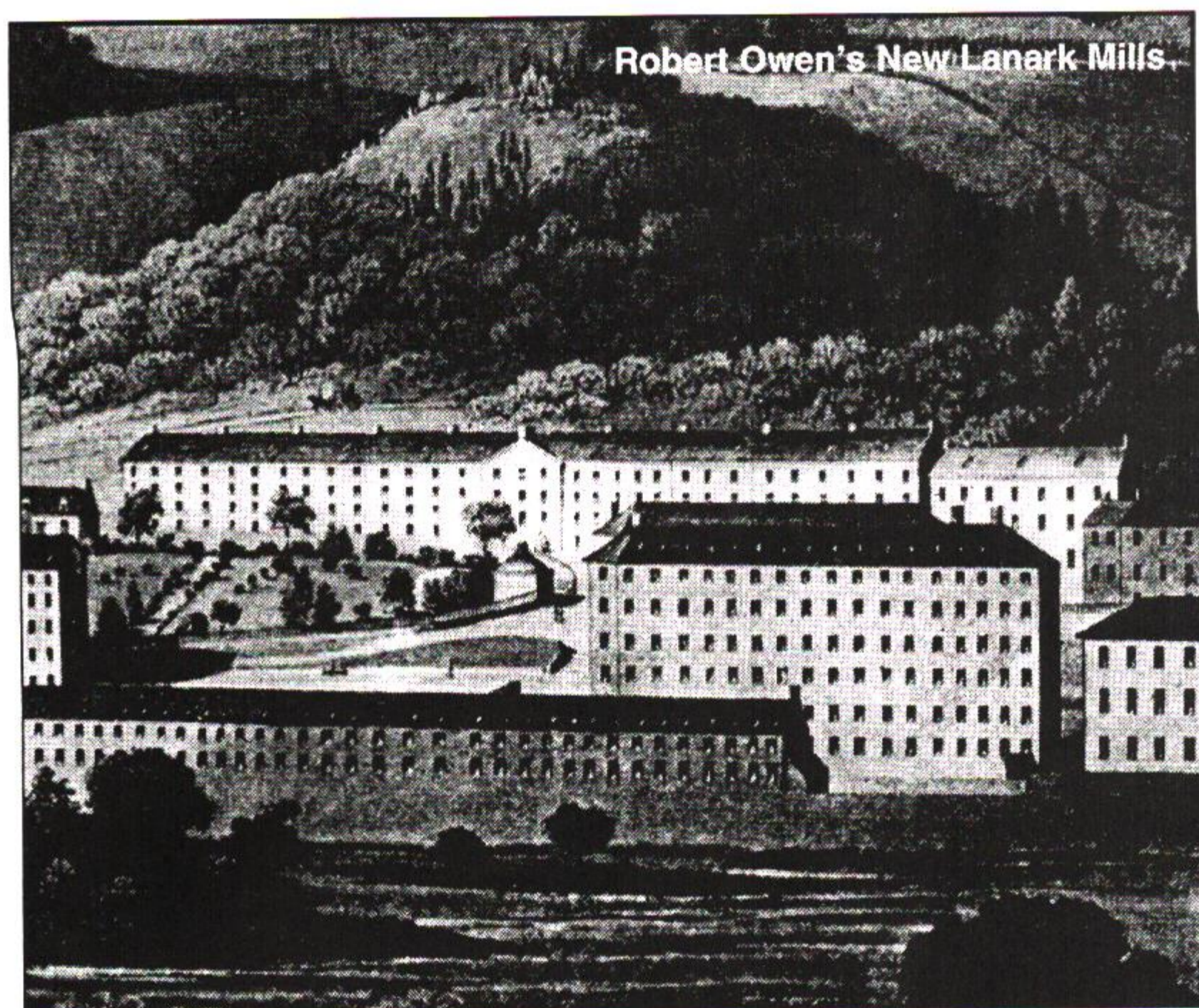
the process of formation. The class struggle was still relatively underdeveloped. Thus, the working class was not seen by the utopian socialists as the key force for change. Socialism was not regarded as part of the development of human society, but as simply a good idea, an expression of 'absolute truth', which could be introduced at any point in history. It is not the occasion to examine the failure of Owen's communities, but simply to say, it proved impossible to establish islands of socialism in the ocean

of capitalism. Economically and politically they were doomed. The capitalist class could never tolerate such a challenge to their system. Capitalism could not be gradually eroded away, it had to be overthrown. "To make a science of socialism," said Engels, "it had first to be placed upon a real basis." That was the great achievement of Marx and Engels.

Early socialist thought certainly criticised the limitations of capitalist society. But it could not explain them. The utopian socialists could only reject them as bad. The contribution of Marx and Engels was to show that history was a history of class struggles (except for its primitive stages), and that these hostile classes are products of the economic conditions of the time. The economic structure is always the basis of society on which is established a 'superstructure' of political institutions, the state and the ideology of society. Capitalism is seen as a stage in the development of human society, which had created its own grave digger in the form of the modern working class. The next historical stage in society, given the impasse of capitalism, is Socialism. The final causes of social and political change are to be sought, not in man's brain, but in the changes of production and exchange.

### Materialist

This basic concept is the materialist conception of history. For Marxists, the exploitation of the working class was not simply a moral injustice, but was understood as the appropriation of unpaid labour by the capitalist class. They provided the key to the mystery. "Even if the capitalist buys the labour power of his worker at its full value as a commodity on the market," explains Engels, "he yet extracts more value from it than he paid for; and that in the ultimate analysis this surplus value forms those sums of value from which are heaped up the constantly increasing masses of capital in the hands of the possessing classes." "These two great discoveries, the materialistic conception of history and the revelation of the secret of capitalistic production through surplus value, we owe to Marx", says Engels. "With these discoveries Socialism



became a science.” The key to the development of society is the productive forces: industry, agriculture, technique, and science. Each successive form of society (slavery, feudalism, capitalism), served to develop society’s productive capacity. However, there came a point when the further development of the productive forces came into collision with the mode of production. The rising capitalist class, in order to take society forward, were forced to break up the old feudal system in the great bourgeois revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries. The new ruling class systematically undermined the system of petty industry of the Middle Ages, and concentrated these scattered means of production into large scale industry. Eventually, everything was geared to the production of commodities for the world market that capitalism had created. The old small scale handicraft industry was largely destroyed; and the propertyless masses were turned into wage labourers.

### Boom and slump

The industrial revolution saw the rise of capitalism, and with it the boom and slump cycle, which resulted in overproduction, periodic mass unemployment, in the form of the

‘reserve army’ of unemployed. “It became apparent that the production of society at large was ruled by absence of plan, by accident, by anarchy; and this anarchy grew to greater and greater height.” (Engels). The introduction of the market economy brought with it intensified exploitation of the working class, as machinery was introduced by the capitalists to displace labour. “Thus it comes about that the overwork of some becomes the preliminary condition for the idleness of others..” This crisis of overproduction was a new feature of human society. In the past, there were many crises. But these were natural disasters and calamities, which served to produce natural scarcities. But now, under capitalism, too much is produced for the market! It is what Fourier described as “crise plethorique”, a crisis from plenty. “Abundance becomes the source of distress and want.” Under capitalism, everything is turned on its head. It is the economics of the madhouse.

The development of joint stock companies, and then of trusts, has meant that capitalist competition turns into its very opposite - into monopoly. Eventually, as Engels explains, “the capitalist has no further

social function than that of pocketing dividends, tearing off coupons, and gambling on the Stock Exchange.”

### Nationalisation

In a clear identification of 20th century state monopoly capitalism, Engels in 1877, explains the role of the state as a prop of capitalism. He predicts the nationalisation of bankrupt industries by the state, but explains “the workers remain wage workers - proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with.” This type of state ownership (‘state capitalism’) “does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces.” However, within state ownership lies the key to socialism. Capitalism gives rise to its own grave digger in the form of the modern proletariat. The very conditions of life forces the working class to organise and struggle. The formation of trade unions, and then political parties emerge as the workers become conscious of their position. The foundation and development of the great Chartist movement - the first independent working class party - between 1838 and 1842, was a harbinger of the future. Through their own experience, the working class groped from petitions to the methods of general strikes and insurrection. They instinctively moved in the direction of a new society, of socialism. The task of the working class is to obtain political power and turn “the means of production into state property.” This abolishes the anarchy of capitalist production and allows the planning of production according to the needs of the community. This act has revolutionary consequences different from any previous overturn. “In doing this, it abolishes itself as proletariat, abolishes also the state as state...As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection; as soon as class rule, and the individual struggle for existence based upon our present anarchy in production, with the collisions and excesses arising from these, are removed, nothing more remains to be repressed, and a special repressive force, a state, is no longer necessary.” Engels goes on to explain that

state interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies out of itself. “The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The state is not ‘abolished’. It dies out.” Class society can only be justified so long as society is unable to produce enough above the level of the bare necessity for existence.

### Progressive

Class society, despite its horrors, is progressive from an economic view point, in that it allows a privileged minority to take charge of society and allows the necessary time to develop art, science, law and culture. This serves to take society forward and further promotes the development of the productive forces. Capitalism, however, the highest stage of class society, has developed the forces of production to such an extent that it has laid the material basis for a new classless society. This was its revolutionary contribution. Only now is the basis prepared for socialism. That is why the yearnings of a classless society in the distant past could not be realised. Society only poses before itself questions that can be resolved. Socialism is not a utopian dream, but arises from the needs of production itself, which are hemmed in and stultified by private property and the nation state. Capitalism is now a fetter on the development of society as witnessed by the endemic mass unemployment, the starvation, and ills of society. The international planning of the productive forces under socialism is an economic necessity, to take society out of the present blind alley. “Anarchy in social production is replaced by systematic, definite organisation”, says Engels. “The struggle for individual existence disappears. Then for the first time man, in a certain sense, is finally marked off from mere animal conditions of existence into really human ones.” Mankind truly becomes master of its own social organisation. It masters the blind economic and social forces that dominates life. “It is the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom.”

## Further reading by Frederick Engels

- Socialism, Utopian and Scientific** £0.50  
**Anti-Duhring** £2.00  
**The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State** £1.20  
**The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man** £0.30  
**Letters on Historical Materialism** £0.50  
**Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany** £1.20  
**Principles of Communism** £0.45  
**On Marx** £0.50  
**Marx/Engels Selected Letters** £0.75

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# Charles Darwin & the 'Selfish Gene' by Rob Sewell

**Charles Darwin's theory of evolution revolutionised our outlook of the natural world. For the first time, primarily through a process of natural selection - though not the sole means - Darwinism explained how species have evolved over millions of years, from the simplest forms of unicellular organisms to the highest forms of animal life - primates and man in particular. As opposed to the idealist conception of life, epitomised by the Creationists, which saw all life forms as creations of God, Darwin scientifically explained how life evolved on the planet. It was a natural process, unlike religious miracles, which can be explained by the laws of biology, and the interaction of organisms with their environment.**

For Darwin, the evolution of life, with its rich and varied forms, was an inevitable consequence of the reproduction of life itself. Firstly, like breeds like, with minor variations. But secondly, all organisms tend to produce more offspring than survive and breed. Those offspring which have the greatest chance of survival are those more equipped to adapt to their surroundings, and, in turn, their offspring will tend to be more like them. The characteristics of these populations will, over time, increasingly adapt to their environment. In

other words, the fittest survive and spread their favoured characteristics through populations. In nature, Darwinian evolution is a response to changing environments. Nature 'selects' organisms with characteristics best able to adapt to its surroundings. This, in a nutshell, is the theory of natural selection.

## Origin of Species

However, despite the appearance of *Origin of Species* in 1859 and *The Descent of Man* in 1871, it was not until the 1930s that Darwin's mechanism for evolution - natural selection - obtained widespread acceptance. At this time, leading scientific figures like Fisher, Haldane, and Wright became the founding fathers of neo-Darwinism, which fused natural selection with Mendelian genetics. The theory of heredity was essential for the connection between the theory of evolution and cell theory. In the 19th century, biologists Schleiden, Schwann, and Virchow explained that cells were the basic unit of all living things. In 1944, Oswald Avery identified DNA in the cell nucleus as the material forming the basis of heredity. The discovery of Crick, Watson and Franklin of the double helix of DNA further revealed the mechanism of evolution. Darwin's variations in offspring were due to changes in DNA, arising from random mutations, on which natural selection would act.

There is no conscious plan to nature. There is no Creator. There is no special 'purpose' of life. However, there are

laws that dominate the natural world. New species arise and others become extinct, not by conscious design, but through the working out of complex interactions of environment and organism. Through this mechanism, primitive bacteria, some 3 billion plus years old, evolved into homo sapiens composed of thousands of billions of cells, including the most complex of structures, the human brain. This amazing development - from lower to higher - is an established fact. What remains a contentious debate is the mechanism for this evolution, and how it expresses itself. Molecular biologists and geneticists have identified the importance of DNA, with its double-helix structure, in replicating copies of DNA molecules. This is the basis of heredity. They possess coded instructions which produce the building blocks of life, amino acids. These make up proteins which shape cells and organs.

## Selection

Because of this, some molecular biologists and also sociobiologists have argued that all natural selection acts ultimately at the level of the DNA. This has led a number of scientists to have become so obsessed with the wondrous nature of the gene and its DNA, that not a few are unable see the wood for the trees, so to speak. Some have given genes certain mystical qualities from which reactionary ideas are drawn. "Does evolutionary theory imply that certain aspects of human social organisation -

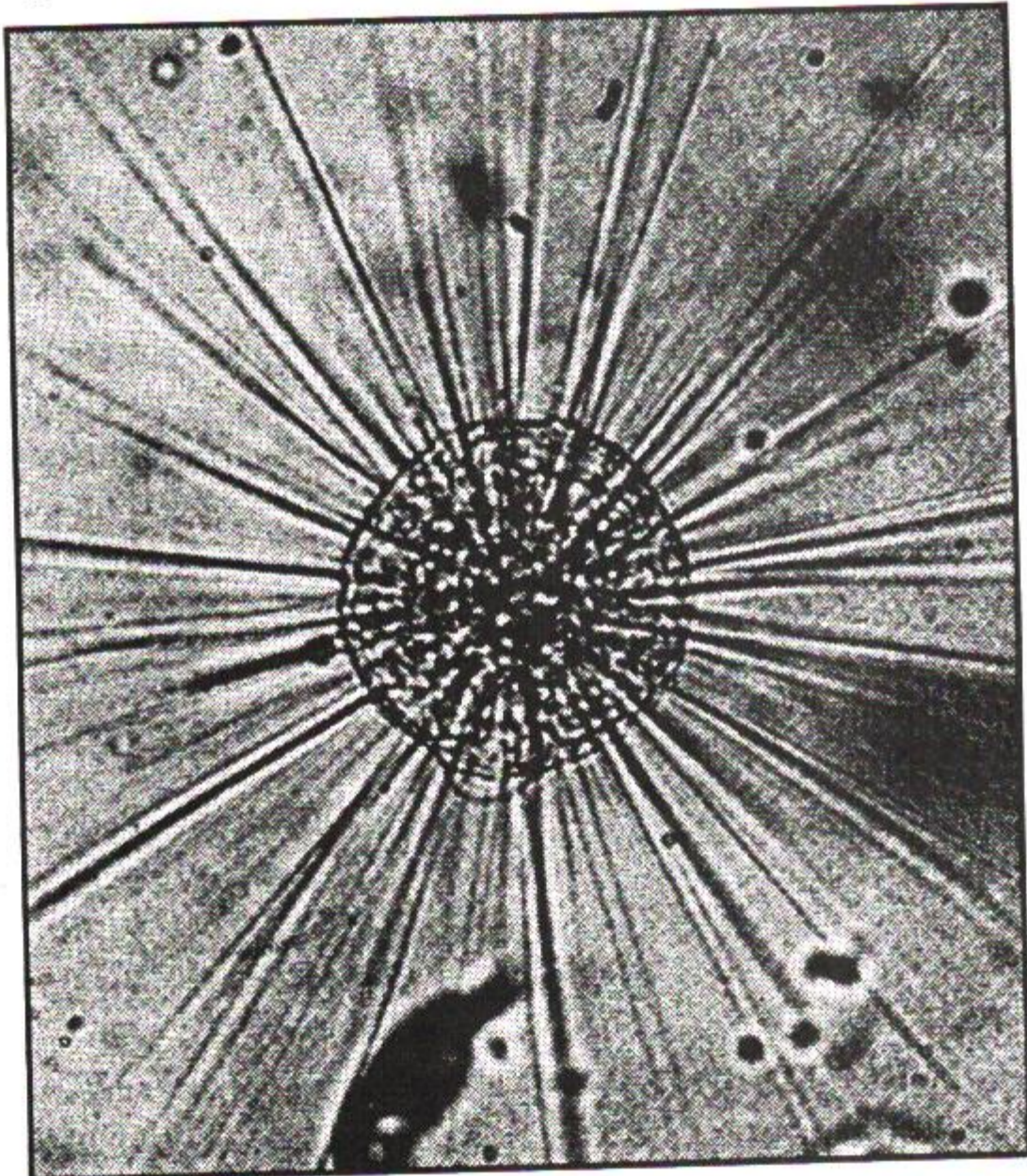
capitalism, nationalism, the patriarchy, xenophobia, aggression, competition - are 'fixed' in our 'selfish gene'?", asks Steven Rose (*Science and Beyond*, page 6). "Some biologists have claimed to answer this question in the affirmative..." The only conclusion from this is that capitalism and all its ills are 'natural', being derived from our biology.

Richard Dawkins, in his book *The Selfish Gene*, raises the gene to shattering heights, with seemingly supernatural qualities: "Certainly in principle, and also in fact, the gene reaches out through the individual body wall and manipulates objects in the world outside, some of them inanimate, some of them other living beings, some of them a long way away. With only a little imagination we can see the gene as sitting at the centre of a radiating web of extended phenotypic power. And an object in the world is the centre of a converging web of influences from many genes sitting in many organisms. The long reach of the gene knows no obvious boundaries." (pages 265-66). For him, the replicator of life is the gene; thus the organism or body is simply the vehicle for the genes ("they swarm in huge colonies, safe inside gigantic lumbering robots"). "A body," he writes, "is the genes' way of preserving the genes unaltered." It is a recasting of Butler's famous aphorism that a hen is simply the egg's way of making another egg. An animal, for Dawkins, is only DNA's way of making more DNA. He sees evolution not as the outcome of a struggle of organisms, but as a struggle between genes seeking to copy themselves. The bodies they inhabit are secondary. He discards the Darwinian principle that individuals are the units of selection. Instead, in a purely idealistic fashion, he imbues genes with a consciousness with a 'selfish' identity! They strive to replicate themselves, as if they are consciously planning how best this can be achieved. This a fundamentally false idea. Natural selection deals with organisms, with bodies. It favours some bodies because they are better suited to their environment. The gene is a

piece of DNA enclosed within the cell nucleus, hundreds of which contribute to the development of most body parts. Selection does not work directly on parts. As Stephen Jay Gould explained: "It (natural selection) accepts or rejects entire organisms because suites of parts, interacting in complex ways, confer advantages.... Organisms are much more than amalgamations of genes. They have a history that matters; their parts interact in complex ways. Organisms are built by genes acting in concert, influenced by environments, translated into parts that selection sees and parts invisible to selection. Molecules that determine the properties of water are poor analogues for genes and bodies. (*The Panda's Thumb*, pages 77-78).

### Reductionist

Dawkins' approach is essentially reductionist. That is, all organisms can be explained by reducing them to their component parts, and these parts are more important than the whole. In reality, the converse is true. Dawkins believes, alongside other sociobiologists, that natural selection acts only at the level of the gene. Societies are broken down to organisms, organisms to cells, cells to molecules, and molecules to atoms. For Dawkins human nature and motivation is to be understood by analysing human DNA; for James D. Watson "What else is there but atoms?" They never allow the existence of either multiple levels of analysis or complex modes of determination. They ignore the essential relations between cells and the organism as a whole.



This empirical method, which emerged with the scientific revolution at the birth of capitalism, was progressive in its day, but has now become a fetter on the advancement of science and the understanding of nature. Darwin regarded the pace of evolution as a gradual process of graduated orderly steps. It proceeded at a constant rate. He adhered to the Swedish naturalist, Linnaeus' motto: "nature does not make leaps." He was so committed to gradualism, that he built his whole theory on it. "The geological record is extremely imperfect", stated Darwin, "and this fact will to a large extent explain why we do not find interminable varieties, connecting together all the extinct and existing forms of life by the finest graduated steps. He who rejects these views on the nature of the geological record, will rightly reject my whole theory."

However, these views have given rise to a heated controversy. The present fossil record is full of many gaps. It reveals long term trends, but they are also very jerky. Darwin believed that these jerks were due to the gaps in the record. Once the missing pieces were discovered, it would reveal a gradual smooth evolution of the natural world. But so far it hasn't.

Against the gradualist approach, American paleontologists Niles Eldredge and Stephen Jay Gould have put forward a theory of evolution called 'punctuated equilibria', suggesting that the fossil record is not as incomplete as thought. The gaps could reflect what really occurred. That evolution proceeds with leaps and jumps, punctuated with long periods of steady, gradual development.

"The history of life is not a continuum of development, but a record punctuated by brief, sometimes geologically instantaneous, episodes of mass extinction and subsequent diversification", says Gould (*Wonderful Life*, page 54). Rather than a gradual transition, "modern multicellular animals make their

first uncontested appearance in the fossil record some 570 million years ago - and with a bang, not a protracted crescendo. This 'Cambrian explosion' marks the advent (at least into direct evidence) of virtually all major groups of modern animals - and all within the minuscule span, geologically speaking, of a few million years." (page 24).

This conception of evolution comes very close to the Marxist view. Evolution is not some smooth, gradual movement from lower to higher. Evolution takes place through accumulated changes which burst through in a qualitative change, through revolutions and transformations. In reality, 'evolution' and 'revolution' are part and parcel of the same process. In rejecting gradualism, Gould and Eldredge have sought an alternative explanation of evolution, and have been influenced by dialectical materialism. "If gradualism is more a product of Western thought than a fact of nature, then we should consider alternative philosophies of change to enlarge our realm of constraining prejudices", states Gould. "In the Soviet Union, for example, scientists are trained with a very different philosophy of change - the so-called dialectical laws, reformulated by Engels from Hegel's philosophy. The dialectical laws are explicitly punctuational. They speak, for example, of the 'transformation of quantity into quality'."

### Punctuated Equilibria

Gould continues: "This may sound like mumbo jumbo, but it suggests that change occurs in large leaps following a slow accumulation of stresses that a system resists until it reaches the breaking point. Heat water and it eventually boils. Oppress the workers more and more and bring on the revolution. Eldredge and I were fascinated to learn that many Russian paleontologists support a model similar to our punctuated equilibria." (*The Panda's Thumb*, page 153). Although Gould rejects the general 'truth' of dialectical materialism or his "philosophy of punctuational change" (he apparently falls back on 'reliable' common sense), he sees it as the only plausible explanation of evolution. Empirically, he accepts dialectical materialism. Given the evidence of paleontology, evolutionary change is emphatically not slow, steady, gradual and continuous. It cannot be

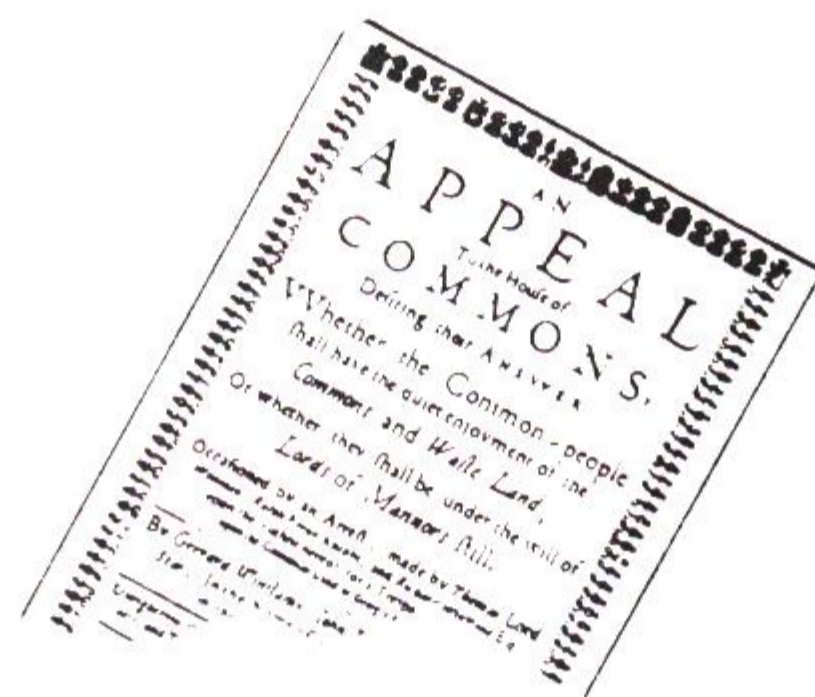
explained by orthodox gradualism. The fossil record with its sharp changes and transformations offers no support for gradual change. It is not the stuff of nature. As opposed to Creationism, Darwin's gradualism was a revolutionary step, but insufficient to fully explain the realities of evolution.

### Blind Watchmaker

Gould correctly says that 'punctuated equilibria' is not in contradiction to the main tenet of Darwinism - natural selection - but on the contrary, enriches and strengthens Darwinism. Richard Dawkins in his book, *The Blind Watchmaker*, attempts to down grade Gould and Eldredge's recognition of dialectical change in nature. Although Dawkins correctly discards the misinterpretation of 'punctuated equilibria' as 'saltation' (the mystical theory that change comes through a mutation in a single generation), he nevertheless sees little difference between 'real' gradualism and dialectics. He concludes: "the theory of punctuated equilibrium is a gradualist theory, albeit it emphasizes long periods of stasis intervening between relatively short bursts of gradualistic evolution. Gould has misled himself by his own rhetorical emphasis..." (page 244). He concludes, "in reality, all are 'gradualists'". Dawkins criticises the punctuationalists for attacking and misrepresenting Darwin. He says we need to see Darwin's gradualism in its context - as an attack on creationism. "Punctuationalists, then, are really just as gradualist as Darwin or any other Darwinian; they just insert long periods of stasis between spurts of gradual evolution." (ibid, page 248). Yet this is not a secondary difference, but is the essence of the matter. To criticise this weakness of Darwinism is not to undermine his unique contribution, but to synthesise it with an understanding of real change. Only then can Darwin's historic contribution be fully rounded out as an explanation of natural evolution. As Gould concluded, "The modern theory of evolution does not require gradual change. In fact, the operation of Darwinian processes should yield what we see in the fossil record. It is gradualism that we must reject, not Darwinism." □

# The Great British Tradition

By Beatrice Windsor



## Mutiny at Ware: the Levellers suppressed

**B**onapartism is the method of dictatorial rule where the incumbent despot leans at one time on the bourgeois and at another time on the masses, to maintain their rule.

It is named after Napoleon Bonaparte, which is a bit unfair because this method was used 150 years before Old Bonie started causing trouble, and was actually another great first for Britain.

Cromwell, at the head of the English bourgeois revolution, used Bonapartism to consolidate power, using his left wing New Model Army to terrify the new ruling class out of any compromise with the *Ancien Regime*, and then using the new bourgeois state to subdue his rank and file followers.

The New Model Army, heavily influenced by the Levellers, had marched upon and occupied London in 1646 (*see last issue*) following growing resentment at the betrayal of the ideals of the revolution.

Cromwell had not resisted the NMA's occupation of London, as it broke the power of the 'Silken Independents' - the rich and landowning 'revolutionaries' - and the Parliamentary Grandees, who were trying to accommodate Charles I.

Now Cromwell realised he must wrestle back power from the NMA, who in effect had total control of London and therefore the new state itself.

The class antagonisms between Parliament and the Levellers would be resolved at a full Council of the Army, held at Putney Church in 1647 with Cromwell in the chair. The crux of the debate was over universal male suffrage, one of the key elements of the Levellers' political programme, called the *Agreement of the People*.

The Grandees haughtily denounced such radical measures. Why, they said sounding like some early day *Daily Mail* editorial, the masses who were without property could vote to confiscate the property of the few!

Speaking for the Army, Colonel Rainsborough retorted: "...I do think that the poorest man in England is not bound in a strict sense to that government that he hath not a voice to put himself under."

The arguments came to no conclusion, so Rainsborough called for a full mass meeting of the NMA at Ware to decide the future of the revolution. Cromwell was beginning to feel his grip on the NMA loosen, with the Levellers prizing off his fingers one by one. He had to act swiftly.

His opportunity came at Ware. One regiment broke the NMA's tight discipline and held an impromptu demonstration. With the Levellers' *Agreement* stuck in their hats they marched past Cromwell chanting "Justice! Soldiers' Rights! Freedom!"

Cromwell subdued the revolt, sword in hand, and had one demonstrator executed on the spot. It was a gamble for Cromwell, but was a decisive move which paid off. The mass of the NMA, though sympathetic to the ideas of the Levellers, knew that their own survival depended on unity, the revolution had yet to be secured. They did not break ranks.

As a timely reminder of this, King Charles escaped imprisonment, which was the catalyst for a new Royalist uprising and the start of the second English Civil War.

Charles was defeated, and the new bourgeois were pushed into accepting a Republic. Buoyed up by this, the Levellers seized the opportunity to attempt to get other demands in the *Agreement* implemented. But with the Monarchy deposed, and the authority of the Levellers broken at Ware, Cromwell moved in for the kill.

Now Lord Protector of England - effectively a military dictator - he ordered the most militant Leveller regiments to Ireland. This provoked an angry demonstration in Bishopsgate in London. Immediately its organisers were arrested and one executed. Thousands attended his funeral and once again the streets of London were awash with sea green ribbons, the colours of the Levellers.

But Cromwell now had the upper hand. Leveller mutinies flared up in Banbury and Salisbury; Cromwell marched his force between the two camps and - divided - they were roundly beaten.

A purge began of the NMA, and all those who refused the Irish Service were imprisoned or executed. To the end though, the Levellers stood firm to the 'Good Old Cause' - ideas that would again be championed 200 years later by the Chartists.

Awaiting execution at the scaffold, the veteran agitator Richard Rumbold called out to the crowd: "I am sure there was no man born marked of God above another; for no man comes into the world with a saddle on his back, neither any booted and spurred to ride him."

Next month: the Diggers

## Bourgeois of the Month: the Duke of Devonshire

THE 100th anniversary of the National Trust and the recent art theft from Longleat serve to remind us of the wonderful scam our old bourgeois have pulled off.

Under the magnanimous guise of 'opening up their estates' to us plebs to dribble over, they live literally in the lap of luxury scot free. Pleading poverty, they get voluntary trusts to pick up the tab for the expensive business of the upkeep of Stately Homes, Palaces etc. - putting up with some limited public access, they still get to live there.

The Duke of Devonshire is a case in point.

The family pile is Chatsworth and is stuffed to the gunnels with art treasures galore, worth well over £100 million; as the *Sunday Times* explained last year - "Though the fortune is controlled by the trustees of the Chatsworth settlement or has already been passed over to Devonshire's heir, Lord Hartington, the family continues to 'enjoy' the many treasures."

Still, it's fortunate that the Chatsworth trust has taken the worry out of looking after all these treasures. The Duke has enough on his plate looking after the vast tracts of

Devon he owns. This is not so open to the public - Devon is amongst the most beautiful counties of England, yet there is little access to it. True, the National Trust controls 80 miles of coastline and around 4,500 acres. This may sound very impressive, but it pails into insignificance compared to the 70,000 acres owned by the Duke of Devonshire. And as its valued at £88 million, you can bet the Duke will be keeping his paws on it.

# socialist appeal

The marxist voice of the labour movement

## Defend Clause IV

**"I don't think anyone actually wants the abolition of Clause Four to be the priority of the Labour Party at the moment. I don't think that anyone is saying now, looking ahead to the next two years in the run up to an election, that this is what we should focus on."**  
Tony Blair ( 'Breakfast with Frost 12/6/94)

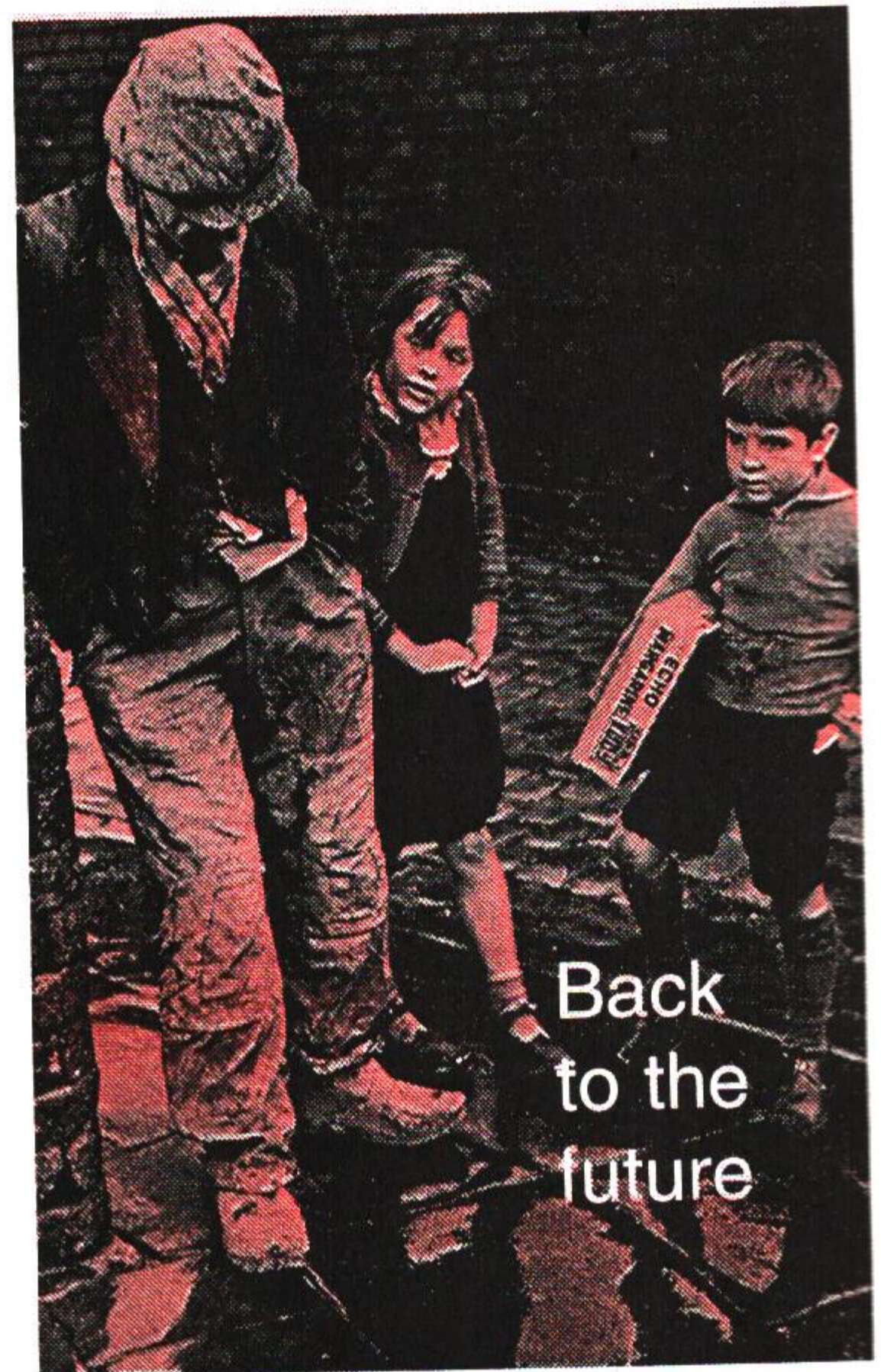
The vast majority of Labour Party members would agree with these sentiments. The main task facing the party is to force a general election, and to force the Tories out! Everything else is a diversion.

Unfortunately, six months later, the abolition of Clause Four and what it stands for is exactly what Tony Blair is concentrating on. His speech in Brussels has made clear where he sees Labour going by talking about the need for a "dynamic modern market economy" and referring to only "keeping" some services in public hands. In his remarks he openly rejected what he refers to as "wholesale nationalisation of industry" and described those who would defend Clause Four as "not learning from our history but merely living in it". But who is learning from history? Blair talks about not dumping or ditching fundamental values and beliefs but surely this is precisely the intention of getting rid of clause Four. Labour should look at the record of those who abandoned socialist principles for per-

ceived electoral favour from the ruling class. They refer with favour, in their documents, to the actions of the German, French, Italian and Swedish equivalents of the Labour Party in 'updating' their constitutions to devalue or remove the commitment to the socialist transformation of society. What they forget to mention is that all these parties have suffered electoral defeats and failures on the basis of the disillusionment of the electorate either with their weak programmes and/or their record of surrender to

**We must ensure that the maximum pressure be exerted to keep Clause Four, and that Labour must adopt bold socialist policies to solve the problems facing working people.**

the whims of capital. The Germans have consistently failed to get back into office over the last period, the French paid for their lack of a socialist programme at the last election with a massive defeat and the Swedes (who were considered impregnable at one point and a model of Social Democracy) and the Greeks have both had periods out of office in recent times and are



Back to the future

not without their problems at present. Hardly a great record to be raised in front of party activists seeking a reason to drop Clause Four. The most damaging fact is not mentioned however. The British Labour Party has fought the last four elections—and particularly the last two—on the programme and methods of the 'spin doctors' and the 'modernisers' and lost the lot. Football managers usually get the sack with records like that but these characters continue as if nothing was wrong. The last

Labour government was defeated because of its desire to capitulate to the whims of big business and the IMF rather than carrying out socialist policies. These people also quote the example of the US Democrats, and have been very keen to invite them over to tell us how to win, but since the November elections have been rather quiet on that one!

The disillusionment and anger of the voters with the Tories should ensure that Labour wins the next election, although the margin of that

victory will depend on whether Blair and co. come up with a clear programme or not. We must ensure that the maximum pressure be exerted to keep Clause Four, and that Labour must adopt bold socialist policies to solve the problems facing working people. This will guarantee Labour a landslide victory which could relegate the Tories to the dustbin of history.

# Fight for Socialism