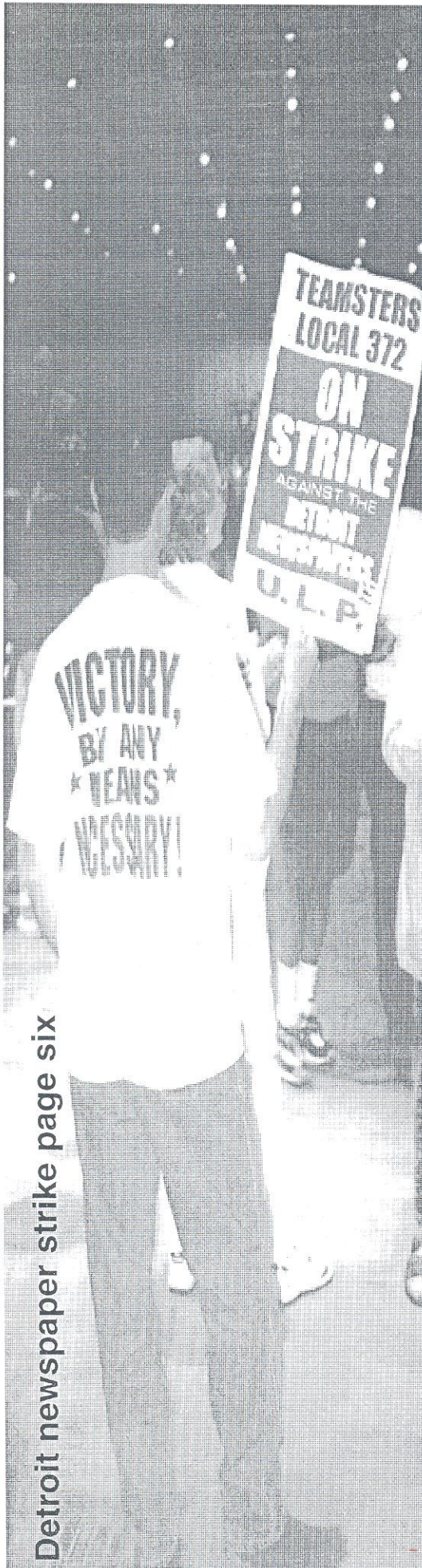


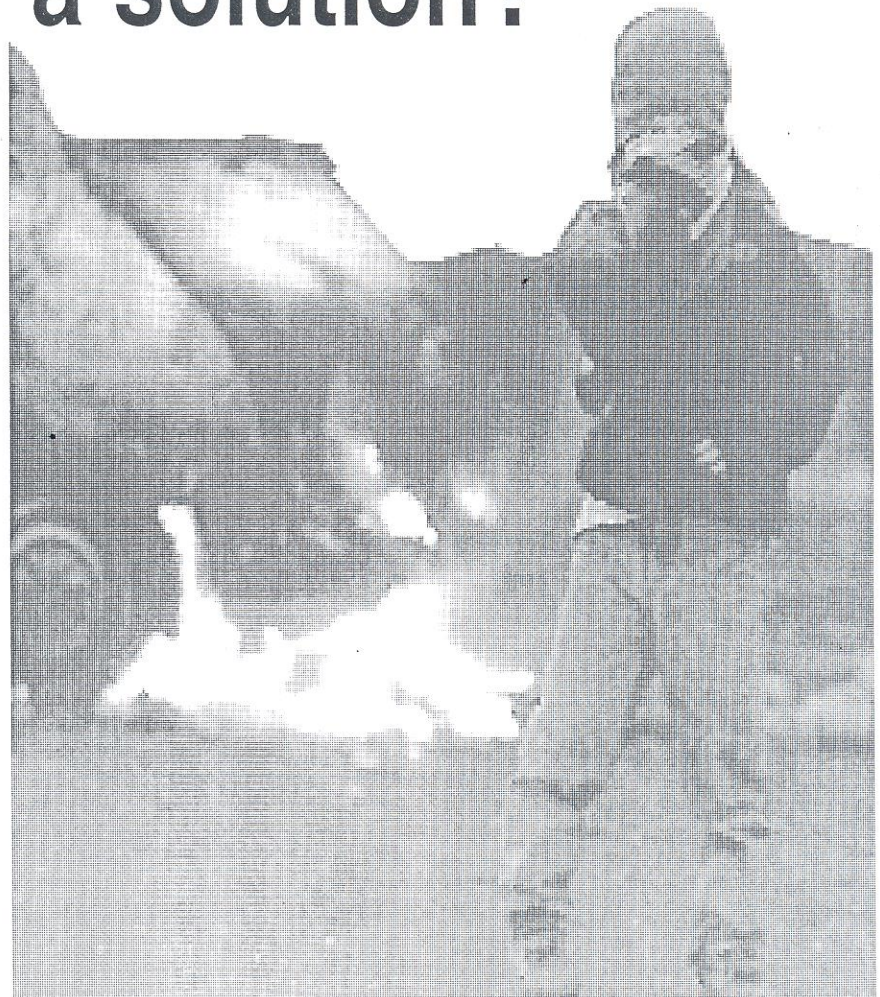
socialist appeal

The Marxist voice of the labour movement

Northern Ireland: can there ever be a solution?



Detroit newspaper strike page six



Issue 44 September 1996 price: one pound

The Clare Short episode: could Labour lose?

"I have thought for the first time over the past few weeks that we could throw away that victory." (Clare Short, New Statesman, 9th August 1996)

The interview with Clare Short in the *New Statesman* has once again put a big question mark over the direction of the Labour Party in the run up to the next election. She has posed the unthinkable for millions of workers and their families crushed by 17 years of Toryism: could the present Labour leadership under Tony Blair throw away victory? Delegates to this year's TUC and Labour Party Conferences in Blackpool will certainly consider this question long and hard. Such a nightmare scenario was brought into view by the Tories' August opinion poll recovery. Labour has led in the polls since the Autumn of 1992. In April this year, Labour led by 21 points. This has been reduced gradually over the succeeding months. Then in August, according to the ICM survey, it has been cut by three points, and the 21 has become 12 - the smallest gap for nearly two years. According to the survey of the Opinion Research Business in August, 58 percent of those surveyed predicted a Labour win, a drop of 9 percent from April. Thirty percent forecast a Tory success, a rise of 8 percent. Nevertheless, even this 12-point lead is massive compared to the past. The dramatic shift to the right in the policies of Blair, and the leadership's continual

appeal to the so-called middle ground of "Middle England", has served to alienate sections of Labour's traditional working class base. In the past period there has been a marked shift towards Tory policies on education, health, the Welfare State, economic policy, and so on. According to Blair there will not be a penny extra from a Labour government for the starved NHS. Much of the Tory's internal market within the NHS will remain, although under a different name. In fact the Tories are planning to go into the general election promising to spend more on the health service than Labour! This has led to little enthusiasm for what Labour stands for. The bulk of Labour's support has been built on the massive anti-Tory mood throughout society.

Ban strikes

In an interview in the Mail on Sunday, Blair said he had no policy to ban strikes in essential services "at the moment". Even the Tories have rejected the idea! His intervention over the strikes on London Underground was to call for the strikes be called off and the unions to go to compulsory arbitration. His anti-union attitude has resulted in considerable dissatisfaction within the rank and file of the Labour Party and in the unions. As Labour MP Tony Banks stated: "I think that it's very unfortunate that there was a strike, but why not look to London Transport and the management and say why did they not settle the per-

fectly legitimate claims of the transport workers?" Even John Monks was forced to say Blair's intervention was "not particularly helpful." The measures by Blair to distance the party from its roots in the trade unions is an assault on the whole ethos of the Labour Party. It was the trade unions that founded the party, financed it and sustained it. Now we have the spectacle of Michael Meacher, the employment spokesman, being told not to take up the plight of striking Turkish workers in North London, as it was a "private matter" between the workforce and the owner and that Labour must at all costs avoid being linked to the unions!

That does not mean to say that despite everything there is not enormous loyalty to the party. There is. Nevertheless, this unease and opposition at the direction of the party is reflected in the attacks of Short on Blair's advisers, the Campbells and the Mandelsons. "I sometimes call them the people who live in the dark", says Short. "Everything they do is in hiding. We go to the shadow cabinet, we go to the National Executive Committee. Everything we do is in the light. They live in the dark."

She continues: "They think that Labour is unelectable, so they want to get something else elected, even though really it's still the Labour Party.. It gets to the point where you are ashamed of your own past... My life opportunities were

brought to me by Labour, and what they are now doing is allowing the Tory propaganda version of Labour to be the reality." Although there are no fundamental political differences between her and Blair, her attacks are on the leadership, and she is beginning to reflect the discontent and pressures from below: "There should be less modifying everything we stand for, pruning it down and down and down to be acceptable to the Daily Mail, because I don't think the Mail will ever support us." She is simply stating in public what everybody else is thinking in the Labour movement, and amongst Labour supporters generally. Formally on the left of the party, over the years Clare Short has swallowed the shift to the right over policy. But now she has become a victim of the Blair machine, despite coming third in the shadow cabinet elections, she was demoted from Transport. Although these attacks can arise from here personal treatment, they reflect something far deeper. The fact that these comments are coming from a member of the shadow cabinet just months away from the general election are an indication of the groundswell in the ranks of the party that is being reflected at the top. The present splits and hair-line cracks will become a chasm under the class pressures on a Labour government.

Criticisms

Her criticisms have been strengthened by the intervention of two rightwingers, Roy Hattersley and Peter Shore, who are baulking at how far right the Blair leadership has gone. Attacking those who are terrified of "old" Labour's talk of redistribution of wealth, Shore stated bluntly: "It is no good pretending that we are a party which is no longer interested in redistributing income in favour of those who are less advantaged than us in our society." Hattersley said Clare Short should not have played down her remarks by saying there are no differences over policy with Blair.

On the political front there is a massive polarisation, not seen since the war. Although there is dissatisfaction in Labour's support over the way in which the Labour leadership is acting, it remains pretty solid. Labour's rating of 45 per cent remains unchanged since July and has scarcely altered since May.

Reduced

The reduced lead has to date been caused by Tory gains at the expense of the Liberal Democrats and the minor parties. As we said many times, the nearer we come to the election the greater will be the polarisation. The Liberal Democrats will be squeezed in the process. However, as long as the Labour leadership fails to put forward a bold socialist programme that could solve the problems facing the working class, then inevitably Labour's lead will be subject to ebbs and flows. The only ultimate guarantee of defeating the Tories is to generate positive enthusiasm in the mass of the population for a Labour victory. Even the Independent on Sunday has more of an idea than the Blair leadership. "Mr Blair believes, with reason, that the Tories' performance over the past four years is enough to lose them the next election. He therefore concludes that Labour should do as little as possible, that it need only avoid threatening and

upsetting people and Downing Street will be his. But he could equally reach the opposite conclusion: that the British are so fed up with the Tories that they would vote for Saddam Hussein himself if that were the only alternative to another five years of John Major and Michael Howard, that Labour has a golden opportunity to campaign for a truly radical alternative."

For us, that "radical alternative" means offering them a change from the cuts, stress, insecurity and poverty of the capitalist system. But that cannot be offered while resting on big business and the market. The Blair leadership is busy appeasing big business and the bankers. But there have been 8.7 million people who have lost their jobs since 1992. What does Labour offer them? Apparently, according to a recent document, more "efficiency", more "flexibility" and "fairness at work". But it is precisely big business's drive for "efficiency" and "flexibility" that has forced these workers out of work. Labour needs to campaign for a radical alternative to the Tories and their system: full employment, a decent minimum wage, restore the Tory cuts in spending, more resources for health and education, a 32 hour week, decent pensions, a future for young people. But the resources for this socialist

programme cannot be generated by the present capitalist economy, that crawls along at a growth rate of around 2 per cent a year. Only with a socialist planned economy, where the major monopolies, banks and insurance companies are in public ownership, can the economy leap forward and generate the necessary wealth. Such a system, under democratic workers control and management, can offer a real alternative to the misery of the dole queues, cuts, speed-ups, and austerity of capitalism.

Recovered

No government has ever recovered from such unpopularity as the Tories suffer from. According to the Guardian's editorial (7th August): "Logically, there is absolutely nothing for Tony Blair to worry about in a 12-point Labour lead in the opinion polls. Clement Attlee won in 1945 by an 8-point margin. Harold Wilson took the 1966 election by one of six." Therefore, in all likelihood, despite the leadership, Labour will romp home at the next election. We must ensure it does. At the same time we must fight for socialist policies as the only answer to the problems faced by millions of workers. In the battles that lie ahead, such ideas will be supported by millions.

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Postal strike: step up the action

After an overwhelming ballot for industrial action in early June, postal workers have been engaged in a series of 24 hour strikes in defence of their conditions.

Royal Mail management threw down the gauntlet by announcing the introduction of team working and other measures of "labour flexibility", which amount to a whole catalogue of attacks on our terms and conditions. The dispute has become increasingly bitter as the management have dug in their heels, refusing to reopen negotiations, and the Tory

government has suspended the Post Office's monopoly on letter delivery. Behind all this is the attempt by the Tories to prepare the way for the privatisation of the postal service, which they were forced to abandon earlier in face of mass opposition.

The management are trying to put the boot in. Whereas they have allowed new machinery to operate with up to 80 per cent efficiency, allowing for breakdowns, they expect the workers to work to 100 percent efficiency! To this end they want to introduce team working, whereby if one of the team

is unavailable for work, the rest will need to work harder to cover the lost work. In return we'll get a quarterly bonus of \$30. But if one letter is left unsorted or the mail is not sorted on time you lose this paltry bonus. It also means increased part-time working. Postal workers have faced the brunt of attacks recently and we are saying enough is enough! It is no accident that out of all days lost in strikes last year nearly a third were in the Post Office. We will not tolerate any further increased workloads. We can all see through the lies of the bosses.

Team working is just a case of trying to get something for nothing. It is increasing the workloads and stress levels, not in the interests of the industry, but in the interests of profit and future privatisation. If the management cannot see sense, then we must escalate the action. We have no room for manoeuvre. We have no alternative but to force the management to back down now. Our union leadership must stand firm with the rest of the membership. The morale of the rank and file is absolutely solid and we are determined to win - whatever it takes. The Communication Workers Union is the ninth biggest trade union in Britain and holds a powerful strategic position. We must use this strength to make this industrial action a success. The union is organising a national rally. But above all we must prepare for all-out strike action to bring the fight to a conclusion.

Charlie Balch, Secretary,
Royal Mail Letters,
S.E.Wales Amalgamated,
CWU (pers cap)

New Bosses' survey reveals....

A Winter of Discontent?

British capitalism is learning fast from the recent wave of public sector strikes and general unrest *'which could be about to spread to the rest of industry as the economic recovery passes bargaining power back to workers'*. (Independent 19/8/96)

Such a gloomy perspective by British bosses underlines the growing resentment that exists on the shopfloor. In a recent industrial relations survey produced by the employment law firm Dibb Lupton Broomhead, it is revealed that over the past twelve months, 39% of unionised companies experienced some form of industrial unrest although only 5.5% actually suffered a strike. The survey was based on responses from 130 of the UK's largest private-sector companies, 50 employers in the public-sector and 50 trade unions (or rather trade union leaders.)

Unlawful Action

This is all the more revealing when you consider that bosses appear to be willing to take tough action to combat any industrial conflict. According to the survey 89.5% of British employers are ready to consider legal proceedings if 'unlawful' industrial action is taken against them. Nearly half said they would consider dismissing all their employees who went on strike and a further 31.5% said they would consider dismissing only the "trouble-makers". This shows how far bosses are prepared to go in defence of their profits.

The survey reveals however that employers are only expecting action which fall short of outright strikes, such as work-to-rules and ballots used by unions as bargaining tools.

It's interesting that they have decided to survey the trade unions as well. Capitalism always wants to see how under their thumb the union leaders are. But even amongst the union leadership, more than two thirds say that they foresee an increase in industrial action over the next twelve months. While 16.5 % predict action other than a strike, such as overtime bans and work-to-rules, 22.5% believe there will be an increase in the use of dispute ballots or the threat of calling them. Only 15 % of union leaders believe that this will result in full strike action. Bearing in mind the difficulty of strike action under Tory law, the fact that people are still waiting to see what a Blair government will mean to them and also the weakness of union leadership, it says a lot that the bosses are now so pessimistic.

Firmness

Although the number of days lost through strikes remain low, figures show the highest level of strike activity for six years. Another point made by the *Financial Times* last year was: *"The government measures days lost through strikes, but not the incidence of industrial unrest short of a strike. The law firm said a comparison of days lost was not necessarily an accurate way of assessing the state of industrial relations."*

The firmness of the strikers in the Post Office and on the London Underground shows that it is no longer possible to explain strikes away by saying that it is the leaders forcing the membership out on strike. On the contrary, it is the pressure from below, which reflects the discontent in the workplaces after years of cuts, speed-ups and other attacks on wages and conditions. This explosive mixture will sooner or later lead to a massive movement on the industrial front. The results of employers' surveys reveal only the tip of the iceberg.

TUC congress

For £4.26 an hour national minimum wage

At this year's TUC one of the key issues will be that of low pay and the national minimum wage.

Unison, Britain's biggest trade union is submitting a motion calling for support for the minimum wage to be introduced at a level of £4.26 an hour, which for a 40 hour week would mean a gross pay of £170.40 a week.

Whilst this would be a big step forward for many workers, par-

ticularly amongst women and young workers, working for the likes of private contract cleaners or fast food outlets on £3 an hour, it isn't as if we are asking for the earth! However, big business and their industrial and political representatives in organisations like the CBI and the Conservative Party will scream "blue murder" that such extremism will make British industry unprofitable, boosting unemployment and so on.

This is pure hypocrisy from a class of people many of whom earn more in one hour than many low paid workers earn in a week. It is big business and the successive Tory governments over the last seventeen years that have presided over record levels of unemployment as part of a deliberate policy of cuts, closures and privatisations designed to drive down wages and boost profits. It is regrettable that some Labour and trade union leaders

have had a somewhat lukewarm approach to the question of a Labour government introducing a minimum wage set initially at half the male median earnings (£4.26 an hour). The TUC this year has the opportunity to turn this situation around. Delegates should vote to support this motion and ensure that a massive trade union campaign is launched including marches, rallies, etc. in support of a minimum wage. This way, not only would a minimum wage set at a half decent level initially be a step closer to being a reality but millions of young workers, women workers and workers in general who have never seen the need for a trade union, will begin to see the relevance of joining a union and help in the struggle to commit the labour and trade union movement to socialist policies.

Steve McKenzie
Secretary, Unison A,
Bexley (personal cap)

Socialist Appeal Campaign Fund

As things stand we are likely to be about two-thirds of the way towards our £6,000 campaign fund target by the time you are reading this. So it doesn't require an Einstein to work out that we will need to raise about £2,000 if we are to meet the target deadline of the end of September. With a big push from all our supporters we can do it. Readers in West Yorkshire led the way with £150 raised at a barbecue. All readers should consider making a donation and collections should be held at all meetings and discussion groups.

Now we've all heard of the three tenors... but what about the fifty fivers! We are launching a drive to build the campaign fund by seeking to get fifty of our readers to consider taking out a standing order for a small (or not so small?) amount each month—say £2 or £5—to last for at least a year. The person who sold you this journal will have all the details and should have mentioned this to you already. If not ring or write to us at the usual address and we will send you the details.

Business Manager

CPSA Benefits agency dispute

CPSA members took industrial action on the 1st and 2nd of August over the hated Job Seekers' Allowance. Cristina, a rep from North London BA spoke to *Socialist Appeal* on the picket line at 7.00am: "the union's done nothing to prepare for this—we got little and late literature—so the ballot result was close and the turnout low, so it's been left to activists yet again to organise the strike and picketing." The picket lines were lively with many PTC members showing reluctance to cross lines and raising the case for a single union and unity of action. Claimants were leafleted and expressed support.

Cristina said that the major issue was staff safety now that many of the screens have been removed. Given the anger that will be generated by a system that will force every signing on to be a 'restart' ("what have you applied for?", "where's the evidence?", "here's 3 low paid jobs—take one or lose benefit") and with up to 60% of benefits removable, the question of staff safety is not a joke.

In the run up to the strike Peter Lilley announced proposals for the wholesale auction of Social Security and Job Centre offices to his chums in the City. Lilley's announcement was marked by thousands of 'illegal' spontaneous walk-outs in places such as Truro, Penzance, St Austell, Launceston, Bristol, Kirkby and across London. Three areas (East London/Anglia, West Country and Yorkshire) have been targeted by the government to be 'guinea pigs' in the privatisation process and union activists in the East London/Anglia area have already reacted by setting up a joint union campaign involving both CPSA and PTC. Activists will need to ensure that the proper campaign is carried out by the unions and that the Labour Party is clearly committed to reversing these attacks and the Tory market system in the public sector.

NUJ launches solidarity campaign with Detroit strikers

As the 2,500 workers at the Detroit Free Press, Detroit News and Detroit Newspaper Agency marked one year on strike with a major rally, the National Union of Journalists in Britain was preparing to step up the campaign for international solidarity for the strikers.

On the one year anniversary we unanimously adopted a resolution at the Executive which backed the international boycott at Knight-Ryder and Genet Co publications (including USA Today) and called on the TUC, STUC, ICTU and other labour movement organisations to back the strikers demands and circulate all affiliated organisations with information. On top of that the NUJ is to push the European Federation of Journalists to actively campaign on the strikers behalf. The 2,500 workers were forced out on strike in July 1995 after their bosses unilaterally

imposed new conditions. Instead of negotiating with the unions the employers tore up agreements, terminated contracts and hired scab labour to keep the papers running. But strikers have inflicted heavy losses on the company. Bosses have continually refused to submit circulation figures to be audited because so many sales have been lost. A number of major advertisers have also withdrawn as part of the AFL-CIO Do Not Buy, Do Not Advertise campaign. Some reports say sales and revenue are down around 35%. The company has responded by using the full force of the law and the state. Private security forces have gagged, drugged and terrorised striking workers. At least one striker has had his house bombed. It is essential the labour movement in Britain backs the dispute. Our union has invited representative of the strikers to

address our annual conference in October in the hope of building wider solidarity. We have also urged the TUC to invite them to address Congress in September. We hope to be able to arrange other meetings for the strikers to speak at and to collect as much money as possible for the strike and encourage union branches to adopt-a-striker.

Now we need to consider organising pickets and lobbies of the company's offices in Britain and build the Don't Buy campaign. British workers have an interest in helping their American sisters and brothers. The derecognition and management tactics used against American workers are copied by the media and other multinationals the world over. It may be Detroit today but tomorrow, who knows?

Jeremy Dear, Vice President, NUJ.

Anyone interested in inviting the strikers to speak or wanting more information about the strike can contact Jeremy Dear on 0121-486-1809.



Plumstead comes out in force and Tony speaks in Eltham

Another burning hot July Saturday, another Greenwich Anti-racist festival, another year gone by. The festival has more or less become an institution, this being the sixth, and the population of Plumstead, Woolwich and the surrounding areas come out in numbers to give it the support it deserves.

With the by line this year, "All different, all equal," the Greenwich Council sponsored day was another success. Charlton Athletic get full credit for the enthusiasm with which they promote the "Kick Racism Out of Football" campaign. Amongst the 'festgoers' could be seen many local councillors, various local trade unionists, the Eltham PPC Clive Eford and the Woolwich MP John Austin-Walker. Malkih Singh, the bhangra artist easily stole the show and the African drum orchestra stole the show for cheek with its 45 minute drum session. Unfortunately, council policy prevented the

South East London Young Labour group from having a stall, but the YL did successfully leaflet the festival on several occasions (between beer breaks) handing out around 800 leaflets. I may be wrong, but as far as I could see it was the only political leaflet of the day.

The leaflet itself had actually been the subject of some controversy a day earlier when it was banned by Walworth Road from being given out at a Tony Blair meeting held in Crown Woods School in Eltham. Presumably this was for being far too political or perhaps just for mentioning the word socialism on more than one occasion - who can tell!

With no leaflet to hand out, myself and Tom Hunt were almost barred from the meeting for selling Socialist Appeal beforehand. Only the intervention of the party agent and the Eltham PPC acting on our behalf, was a path cleared for us between about five Walworth Road 'bouncers,' one of whom was a regional

organiser. apparently we should have asked politely beforehand, either way our remaining papers were confiscated till the end of the meeting.

Tony Blair and Gordon Brown 'entertained' us with a question and answer session which was chaired by Radio One's Simon Mayo (round of applause for Simon). Surprisingly, there was little evidence of stage management during the meeting and both Blair and Brown spoke well, although the phrase "a lot of froth, very little lager" came to mind.

We didn't manage to get into the discussion but an excellent contribution was made by one YL member, the only one to raise the question of the minimum wage and a programme of full employment, which coincidentally is the subject of the Eltham Labour Party's resolution to this years party conference.

**Dave Sullivan
Eltham CLP**

“man has no greater enemy than disease..... disease has no greater enemy than Glaxo-Wellcome”

You've seen the ads, but is it really true, are the multinational drug and biotechnology companies really the saviours of humanity? Should we really bow down in gratitude to Smithline Beecham for making our lives that much more bearable?

The important thing to remember is that these companies aren't run for any higher moral purpose, they are run for profit, pure and simple. In the last few years, after the decline of the computers market and under the impetus of scientific advances, biotechnology has been one of the few boom areas for capitalism. The less cynical representatives of these firms point to revolutionary advances in the genetic management of disease - even biological computers have been talked of. Surprisingly enough most of these things are possible, but to actually be produced, no matter how beneficial they may be, a healthy return on investment must be forthcoming within a short period of time for the multinationals to be interested. Disease may well be mankind's greatest enemy, worldwide in

1991 4.3 million cases of Tuberculosis were reported and 1.2 million people contracted measles. The World Health Organisation estimates that 17 million adults were living with HIV at the end of 1994, 84% of which live in sub-Saharan Africa, South and South-east Asia. In 15 African countries more than 1 person in 20 has HIV, this rate increases to 1 in 6 in Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe. But unfortunately the purchasing power of those in these 3rd world countries isn't nearly enough to make these markets "attractive". Even in the advanced capitalist countries things aren't much better for the poor, as long term palliative care is eroded under the dictates of the market. Over 40% of homeless people in London have TB to some extent, and yet the cure is relatively cheap, as long as the sufferer has a roof over their head and three square meals a day. In the last months the stocks of Glaxo-Wellcome have been boosted by the possibility of them developing a new cure for AIDS. In the past we have had AZT and protease inhibitors which have had mixed success, all these

drugs have concentrated on post infection management of the disease and are sold at an artificially high price, because the supply of these drugs is literally a matter of life and death. This is where the majority of the research money is being channelled, and it is likely that within a few years HIV will be able to be "managed" so that the sufferers will be able to live for 20 or 30 years with a moderate quality of life, as long as they keep on taking a cocktail of drugs supplied at no small cost from our friends in the pharmaceuticals industry. Repeatedly every independent group has pointed out that the only way to defeat HIV is for a cheap vaccine to be produced to immunise the 3rd world population which can't afford today's drugs, and yet comparatively little money has gone into this area. Some scientists have been justifiably horrified by this. An Australian scientist who had developed an improved vaccine for polio, didn't sell it to one of the pharmaceuticals giants for millions, but instead he gave it away to the WHO so that it would be cheap enough to actually save lives.

But we hear them cry "competition between private interests fuels scientific invention and pushes down prices" despite the erroneous notion that scientists will only work if they are in competition with someone else, the so-called competition is non-existent, the world market is dominated by a small handful of multinationals and that number is getting smaller all the time. These inspirers of creativity are the same people who copyright vast stretches of DNA code, and lock them up in a vault until they get round to looking at them. In the mean time any independent researcher has to pay a prohibitive fee if they want to do any sort of work in that area.

Private greed is killing science, imagine the vast step forward it would be if instead of 20 groups studying the same thing, doing the same experiments on 20 sets of animals and not telling each other anything, instead you have cooperation between all the scientists involved, and where animal experimentation is necessary, it is done once with the minimum suffering and the results openly published. All of human progress is built on the basis of cooperation, even private companies and universities recognise this, encouraging research groups and teamwork as long as it stays within the bounds of the organisation.

In the modern epoch the barrier in the way of eradicating disease, and the poverty it feeds on, is not the lack of human knowledge but the continued existence of private property and the profit motive - ie. Glaxo and all the private companies that set themselves up as humanity's saviours.

**Alex Grant
Lancaster University**

Sanctions bustin' in Andover

Last July saw 13 directors and engineers from one of the biggest employers in Andover, GBE Legg Ltd, in court over charges of breaching UN sanctions. The charges relate to accusations brought by Customs and Excise that UN sanctions issued between 1992 and 1995 over trading with Serbia and Montenegro were breached or conspired to be breached and involve the sale of tobacco processing machinery and factories. The defendants are due back in court on 17 September.

Given the publicity surrounding such recent cases as Matrix Churchill and the propaganda campaigns of the West against the Serbs, this case says much about the attitude of capitalism towards war. Never mind the desire of governments to arbitrarily take sides to protect their interests, the only thing which finally counts is profit. On the one hand they shout on about ethnic cleansing and genocide and on the other hand they are busy looking for 'business opportunities'. A number of questions need to be asked:

How long were these breaches actually known about before the Customs and Excise took action? Could any of the machinery sold been used for a military purpose? Just how much profit was gained from all this?

We can have little confidence in these token prosecutions getting to the bottom of how much sanction busting (a great British tradition) was done. The government has shown itself more than keen to shape policy to aid trade and those in the dock must wonder why they have been penalised when they were just 'playing the game'. The labour movement needs to conduct its own investigation into the trading habits of our so called reputable firms.

**Stuart Knox
Andover**

Labour and a Scottish parliament

Once again Labour Party activists in Scotland wake up to find out that another policy has been changed overnight. This time Tony Blair has decided that before a Scottish parliament is set up there needs to be a referendum.

Labour Party members that I spoke to were staggered that the policy had changed and angry that no consultation had taken place with the Party membership in Scotland. John McCallion MP resigned from the front bench in disgust. And Tony Blair had a rough ride when he came to Scotland to justify the proposal. He hoped to spend one hour with the Scottish Labour Party Executive and in the end he was with them for about five hours.

The Clydebank and Milngavie constituency called a special meeting to

debate the issue and overwhelmingly passed a resolution opposing the referendum policy and criticising the way that the membership had not been consulted.

Policy

What is the reason for changing the policy after all this time? Certainly it can't be put down to any mass pressure in Scotland. As recently as March this year there was a poll that showed 51% in favour of devolution, 25% in favour of independence and 21% in favour of the status quo. A more likely reason is the pressure from Scottish Tories and big business who are worried about the extra tax-raising powers that were envisaged for the new Scottish parliament. But why should Labour react to pressure from the bosses? The Tories act resolutely when their class

interests are at stake so Labour should do the same. Just look at the postal workers strike where the Tories have suspended the Royal Mail monopoly for a month in a vain attempt to break the strike. They didn't put that decision to a referendum! Socialists support the setting up of a Scottish Assembly (or "Parliament") as a democratic right. However, we must point out the limitations of such an Assembly within the scope of a crisis-ridden capitalist economy. The real solution to the problems of unemployment, bad housing etc. lies in the socialist transformation of Britain by the united action of the workers in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

The Assembly will have some powers over education and health which could have been used under a Tory government to reduce the worst impact of the Tory "reforms" such as the Hospital Trusts etc. This explains the Tory hostility to the idea of an Assembly. The Scottish Parliament should be introduced without the delay of a referendum. Labour made a commitment to legislate for a Scottish Parliament within the first year of office and a referendum would delay its introduction. Blair has proposed that there be two questions in the referendum - 1. "Do you support the setting up of a Scottish Parliament?" and 2. "Should a Scottish parliament have tax-raising powers?" STUC and Scottish

Labour leaders seem to have conceded the idea of a referendum but are campaigning for the removal of question 2. A campaign has been set up around this issue led by Maria Fyfe MP and Willie McKelvie MP which is supported by unions such as UNISON. This would return us to the original position where the Parliament could add up to an extra 3% taxation to fund public spending projects.

Tax raising

A poll by the *Herald* on 7th August showed 60% in favour of a Scottish parliament and 51% in favour of the tax-raising powers. The Labour soundbite machine went into overdrive: "This is an excellent result for Labour which confirms that it is absolutely right to seek specific endorsement of a Scottish parliament in a referendum without fear of the outcome" (Brian Wilson MP) "... it makes the case of establishing Scottish opinion by means of a referendum beyond argument" (Donald Dewar MP) "This poll ... shows we have everything to gain from the democratic endorsement of our plans for a Scottish parliament" (Tommy Sheppard, Scottish LP Assistant General Secretary). Surely despite all these fancy words the poll proves that the referendum is totally unnecessary after all! The separation of the tax question has given ammunition to the Tories who have been describing it as

U.C.S

OUR FIGHT IS YOUR FIGHT!



a "tartan tax".

The *Herald* poll indicated the beginnings of uncertainty in peoples minds because there were 27% in favour of the status quo and 14% don't know. Both figures are higher than any poll in the last ten years. The Scottish National Party have used this debate to push their argument for complete independence. They have said that any referendum should include a question on independence. Socialists must take up the arguments of the SNP in order to fight the danger of nationalism. On a capitalist basis the working class would gain nothing from an independent Scotland but the separation of the Labour movement would be an enormous setback.

Oil revenues

The SNP claim that the economy would be strong especially taking into account the oil revenues. This is complete pie in the sky. In the first place the English capitalists would make sure that Scotland took a fair share of the national debt and would establish guarantees for a sizeable share of oil tax

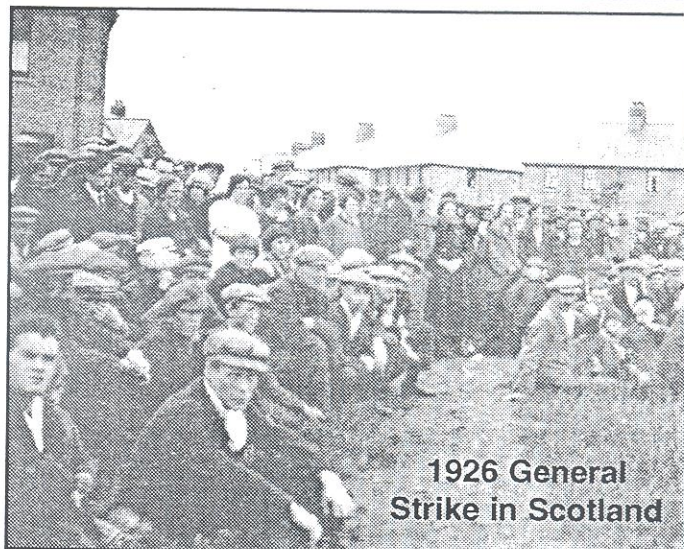
income.

Secondly the economy would be dominated from outside Scotland. The oil industry is controlled by American and Anglo/Dutch companies. Many industries would be controlled by English-based firms. The high-technology industries are controlled by American and South East Asian companies. Even the Clydesdale Bank is part of the National Australia Group!

On this basis there would be no relief from the problems of unemployment and poverty conditions.

In Scotland there is clearly a distinct history and culture. Added to this the conditions of life historically have been worse in Scotland than in many parts of England. This has fuelled nationalism especially under Labour Governments that have failed to deliver. Ironically the economy of the South has suffered so much in the past five years that unemployment is now worse in London than in Scotland.

Socialists will stress that workers of Scotland and England have more in common with



each other than with the bosses in their respective countries and will fight for a Socialist Britain. Nevertheless if the majority in Scotland wish to separate from England then Socialists recognise their right to do so.

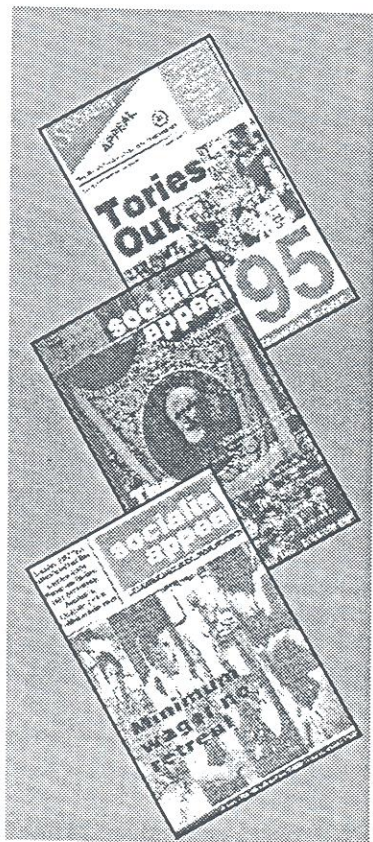
Scottish Parliament is a democratic reform that we support but it will be limited in its powers. The Labour Movement must put forward a bold socialist program based on the nationalisation of the banks and monopoly industries. Only then can we plan the economy to meet peoples needs rather than suffer the anarchy created by the profit system.

Future

The task for socialists is to show that capitalism offers no future for the working class regardless of the colour of the flag that it is wrapped in. A

David Cartwright
Glasgow

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Michael Roberts, Socialist Appeal's economics correspondent, looks at economic outlook

After the summer, more heat to come

Even if the summer was not that hot, it looks like being a hot autumn. In Europe, the politicians of the status quo are gearing themselves up for the big battle - forcing through European monetary union (EMU) on a number of disparate and unequal capitalist states and a sceptical, if not hostile, working class. This is to be done by screwing down, yet again, the cost of public services and the welfare state until the 'pips squeak' (as former Labour finance minister, Denis Healey once said he would do to the rich - some chance!).

In Britain, the government reads itself for the final battle to preserve what will be 18 years of Tory rule next May by coming up with some goodies for people's pockets in tax and interest rate cuts, by stealing it from those very taxpayers by cutting public services, benefits and necessary infrastructure.

And in the USA, the Clinton administration, fresh from its adulatory Chicago Democratic

convention, will prepare to defeat the Republican Robert Dole and loony Ross Perot in the coming November election by trying to prove that the Democrats are even bigger welfare cutters and tax hand-outers than the rednecks and racists who provide the activists in the Republican party.

In Japan, the corrupt and undemocratic Liberal Democrats, thrown out of office in the early 1990s, are preparing under new leader Hashimoto to win outright in a new election, probably by the end of the year, thanks to the policies of the even more unprincipled leaders of the Japanese socialist party (renamed social-democrats) and the even more corrupt opposition New Frontier, formed originally to get rid of corruption!

Yeltsin's problems

Russia has had its election. But winning the election has been just the start of Boris Yeltsin's problems. The economy remains in deep stagnation. Production is still

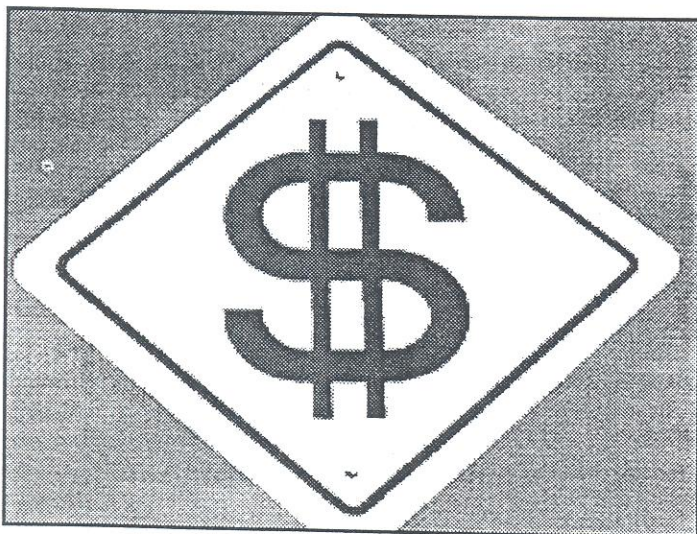
falling, while the central bank, controlled by monetarist 'reformers', continues to strangle the economy in order to get inflation down (the continual 'holy grail' of all bankers). As a result, large sections of industry remain in rust-ridden silence along with their trapped workforces. The government cannot get any taxes out of them in order to send the money back to pay them their pay arrears. At the same time huge amounts of money and many lives are squandered in a pitiful attempt to suppress the national aspirations of Chechnyans, while ex-General Lebed prowls round the country like an irascible Russian bear waiting to make his move for power. Only capitalism's guardian angel (or is it avenging angel?), the International Monetary Fund, ready to hand out morsels of sustenance, keeps the whole ship floating. It could be a tough autumn for capitalism. Sure, world economic growth is moving along, at about 2.5-3% a year in the US, similar in Japan (after four years of hell), and 6-7% in East Asia. But growth is much weaker in this economic cycle than it was in the last boom of 1982-90 at this same point. Even in Asia, growth is slowing down from the 7-8% seen last year to under 7% this year, and lower in many countries. In continental Europe that has been an absence of anything that could be called 'expansion' so far this year. Scandinavia, Spain and Italy benefited greatly in the early 1990s from devaluing their currencies against the French franc and German mark and leaving the European Monetary System that supposedly tied their kroners and lira to Germany. By

devaluing, their exports became cheaper and they took market share off the French, Germans and Dutch. But that burst of growth came to an end last year. This year unemployment remains high, ordinary people aren't spending much and growth has rapidly slowed. At the same time, France has remained locked into a vicious trap of high interest rates (to keep the franc as strong as the German mark) and huge tax increases (to try and get French public finances into line with the targets for monetary union set by the Maastricht Treaty at the beginning of the decade).

Last winter Alain Juppe, France's prime minister, committed his right-wing government to achieving the key EMU target (set by the German bankers) of getting the public sector deficit (meaning the excess of government spending over revenues collected) to 3% of national output by the end of 1997. That was the objective promised by all governments wanting to achieve EMU by 1999. In 1995, France's public sector deficit was weaselled and wangled around, but officially came in at 5% of GDP. The target Juppe set in his 1996 budget was 4%. To do it he introduced new taxes across the board, and planned a whole series of cuts in social services, health and pensions. The French workers' reaction was immediate and devastating and Juppe was thrown back on his heels. He made concessions, but his taxes remained in place.

Stagnant

So all is well for M Juppe and the Chirac gang? No. The trouble is that there has been little or no economic growth in France. It's stagnant. So not enough tax revenues are coming in. Also, lack of growth is driving up an already huge unemployment level - it's now 12.5% and heading for 13% by the end of the year. As a result, half way through the year M Juppe's deficit is as large as it was this time last year. He's made no dent at all. So when he presents his plans this month to the French parliament, the French trade unions know what to expect: extra taxes and cuts to meet the 1996 targets and an even bigger assault on the welfare state



to meet Maastricht by the end of next year. It will be a massive blow to French workers' living standards. They won't be welcoming it with kind words and gentle actions, if last year is anything to go by.

The task of Italy's new "Olive Tree" coalition government, a so-called centre left administration including the former Communists (now renamed Democratic Left) and led by a 'technocrat' former Christian Democrat and state industry boss, Romano Prodi, is even bigger than that for the French Tories.

Chirac

Despite being "lefts", they have exactly the same aim as Chirac and Juppe, to cut the welfare state back in order to meet the 3% target for EMU so that Italian capitalism can join as 'equals' with Germany and France in 1999. But their government deficit stood at 7% in 1995. The first act of the new government was not to improve the lot of the working people, who voted them to keep out the right-wing billionaire Berlusconi and the fascist alliance. No, the first thing they did was introduce an extra budget to raise taxes and cut services to try and meet the 1996 budget deficit target of 5.8%.

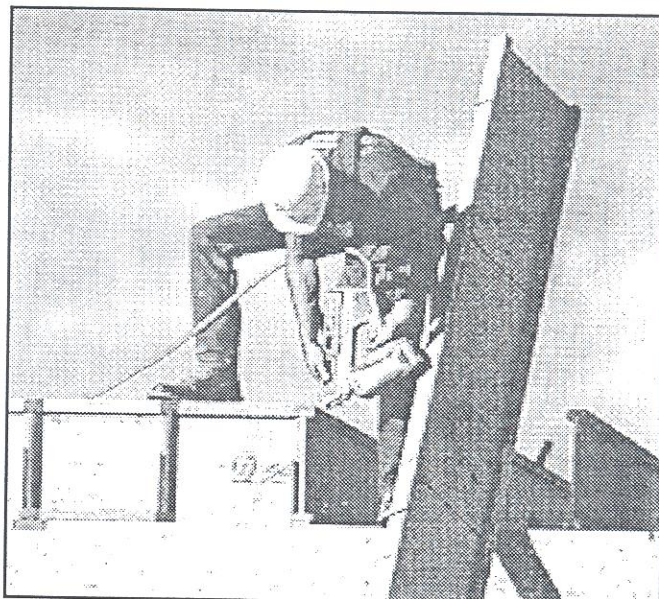
But alas, even that turn of the screw is not working. Growth has slumped in Italy and again revenues are not coming in, while unemployment starts rising. And inflation, although falling, stays near 4%. So the left split-off of the old Communists, called the Refounded Communists, have declared war. They hold the balance of power in the upper house of the Italian parliament and under pressure of their supporters, their leader Bertinotti, is talking tough. He will oppose any measures hitting wages and conditions of public sector workers in the budget for 1997 that Prodi will present to parliament this month. If Bertinotti does block it, the government may be forced to do a deal with the right-wingers and form a new coalition excluding the left. If such a new coalition should then push through huge cuts to try and meet EMU targets, there could be a big movement outside parliament led by the trade unions. A hot autumn here too?

In Spain too, the 100-day rule of the minority Conservative government of Jose Aznar has the same unenviable task as the Italian leaders, and the same problem - no majority in parliament and a socialist and communist trade union movement waiting outside. Again Aznar wants Spanish capitalism to join EMU. If Italy does, so must Spain. But again with the government budget deficit at 6% in 1995, he has a long way to go, and a whole range of "reforms" to put past the Spanish people to get the deficit down to 3%. And with economic growth slowing too and unemployment over 20%, and having to keep the Basque and Catalan nationalists happy with big handouts to their regions, it won't be easy.

One of the ironies of the British economy is that despite the manifest failure of British capitalists to invest in home industry in this current economic cycle, and despite the outright incompetence and corruption of a Tory government past its 'sell-by' date, the British economy has been doing marginally better than those in most of Europe (not everywhere as John Major is apt to lie when on TV - Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Finland and Portugal are all growing faster). But Britain's 2% growth rate just shows how bad the others are doing.

Unemployment

Nevertheless, as a result, official unemployment has been falling towards 2m. We know there are million or two others looking for work but not recorded by the government's mendacious statistics. And we know that most of the new jobs are low-paid unskilled, temporary or part-time and taken up by highly exploited women workers. But it is producing just a slight change in the mood of those in the workplace. Strikes and disputes are now at the highest level for six years. That may not be saying too much compared with the fighting figures of previous decades. But it's a change. In addition to the steadfast battles of the last bastions of successful public sector industries, the post and the London tube, there are a spread of small and often brief battles taking place in the private sector. The Major government could find a



small winter of discontent on its hands before it gets to lose the election.

And it's not been all plain sailing in the great new emergent capitalisms of so-called Third World either. The autumn could be heating up even more than the scorching summer for King Hussein in Jordan after his government doubled the price of bread in order to meet the demands of the IMF, to do what? Yes, cut the budget deficit again. Next door Yassir Arafat also faces increasing criticism of his failure to deliver any prosperity with his peace deal with Israel. Only vicious repression keeps the lid on things there. In Asia, ageing dictator General Suharto of Indonesia struggles to hand the succession of his teeming

country of 190m people over to his sons without the intervention or the opinions of his people in the deal. Could be more trouble this autumn.

It's not autumn in Argentina, but early last month at the end of winter, millions of Argentines struck and demonstrated against the measures of so-called left Peronist government of President Menem for imposing a strict programme of cuts and tax increases. President Menem acted. He sacked his finance minister and put in the governor of the central bank instead. This banker wasted no time in introducing an even tougher budget to meet the demand of guess who? the IMF. Expect another response from the Argentines this spring (autumn).

Labour Party NEC ELECTIONS 1996 Campaign Group Slate

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Angela Cornforth

National Constitutional Cttee
Teresa Pearce

Northern Ireland

Is there a solution?

The return of sectarian violence, bombings and all the old antagonisms, mark the beginning of the end of the so-called 'peace process' in Northern Ireland. *Cain O'Mahoney* looks at why socialism is the only permanent solution that can bring peace:

Responsibility for the collapse of the Northern Ireland peace process lies squarely with the Major government. Their actions have ensured it was doomed - whenever 'progress' appeared to be made, they blundered into a new crisis.

When Major - attempting to bolster his flagging Parliamentary majority - bought off the Unionists with the elected Forum, it was clear that, as *Socialist Appeal* warned, the peace

process would "collapse around his ears". This has now been compounded by the Orangemen being allowed to hold their provocative marches through Catholic areas, which has already led to the death of one protester, while a Catholic taxi driver has been the victim of a sectarian assassination. Meanwhile, British and Irish workers have been the victims as Republican groups return to the dead-end tactics of individual terrorism, blasting Protestant and Catholic workers back into the sectarian camps. But it would be wrong to believe that if the British Government hadn't pursued this or that tactic, or if the Republicans hadn't set off this or that bomb, that the peace process would still be on track.

The current crisis is a direct result of the vacuum that has been left unfilled - neither British, Irish or US capitalism, nor the Republicans or Loyalists are capable of providing a political solution. A continuation of the Union, an Ireland united on a capitalist basis albeit gradually, nor the abstract idea of an 'independent Ulster' can provide anyway forward. None of these can rid Northern Ireland of the material conditions that have driven Protestant and Catholic workers towards sectarian violence.

Continuation of the Union

The Marxists have been alone in understanding that British capitalism has wanted to withdraw from Northern Ireland since the end of World War II. When British Imperialism partitioned Ireland in 1921 it was, from their point of view, with good reason. Beside the fact that they wanted to retain the 'loot' of the North - the heavy and textile industries - and also its strategic military position, protecting Britain's western flanks from its European enemies, more importantly the new Northern Ireland state was to provide sectarian brake on the revolutionary upheavals taking place in Ireland during the period. All this changed after World War II. Britain's new Cold War enemies were

firmly in the East. Meanwhile, De Valera had established the Irish Free State as a safe capitalist satellite, ripe for exploitation by Britain, as of old. The abandonment of economic protectionism in the South was later crowned by the linking of the London and Dublin Stock Exchanges in 1963, followed by the signing of the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement in 1964. By the early 1970s, two thirds of companies in Southern Ireland were British owned.

The British ruling class sat back and anticipated a new era of cordial relations in which they could continue their super exploitation without interference. But history - and Irish history especially - has an unpleasant habit of catching up with the present. In 1969 the sectarian monster created by British Imperialism in the North - a semi-apartheid state that rested on rigged election process ensuring Unionist domination - exploded out of control. Britain intervened, not only to stop its financial interests going up in flames, but more importantly to stop the conflagration spreading to Britain, particularly its cities with their huge Irish populations.

And they have been stuck in the quagmire ever since, with Northern Ireland being an enormous drain on Britain's ailing resources.

Despite a 0.4% cut this year, the cost of maintaining a presence in Northern Ireland will still cost Britain over £8 billion each year. This is why Britain has attempted to find 'solutions', from Sunningdale in the 1970s, through to Thatcher's Anglo-Irish Agreement in the 1980s. Major's Framework Document and the elected Forum are the latest in this long line of failures. For years the British ruling class have argued that all would be well in Northern Ireland if the 'Troubles' ceased. But the past two



years have shown that even with 'peace', on a capitalist basis there has been no relief for Northern Ireland's workers. There has been a small 'boomlet' in Northern Ireland over the past two years. Its economy grew by 3.5% in 1995, compared to the rest of Britain's 2.7%. House prices - the barometer of the 'feelgood' factor - have soared. The tourist industry has grown by 20%. Job vacancies are at record levels.

Mountains have been moved to achieve this - yet a recent report by the Northern Ireland Economic Council shows that even this huge growth has made no dent in the calamitous situation facing ordinary workers.

Northern Ireland still has the highest levels of unemployment in the UK. Household incomes are the lowest in the UK, and it has the highest concentration of one parent families. There is a much greater dependency on benefits by Northern Ireland households - 48.2% compared to 41.9% in the rest of the UK. All the ingredients of grinding poverty remain - the 'peace dividend' of the past two years has not been passed onto the workers.

It is these depressing factors that have been the recruiting sergeant of the paramilitaries, stoking the fires of sectarianism. The maintenance of the Union - even at 'peace' - inevitably means more of the same.

A united capitalist Ireland

But an Ireland united on a capitalist basis would provide no solution. The stark fact is that the Southern Irish capitalist economy could not sustain the North.

The Southern Irish economy is growing faster than any other European country, outstripping Britain, at 5.5%. But even with this 'abundance', the best the Southern Irish capitalists are planning to achieve is to reduce unemployment (currently running at 11.5%) by a mere 5,000! And even this meagre measure, announced in this year's budget, has brought howls of indignation from big business, who bemoan that public expendi-

ture is set to rise to £15 billion. As the Fianna Fail opposition finance spokesperson groaned: "All the fruits of economic growth have gone onto extra spending."

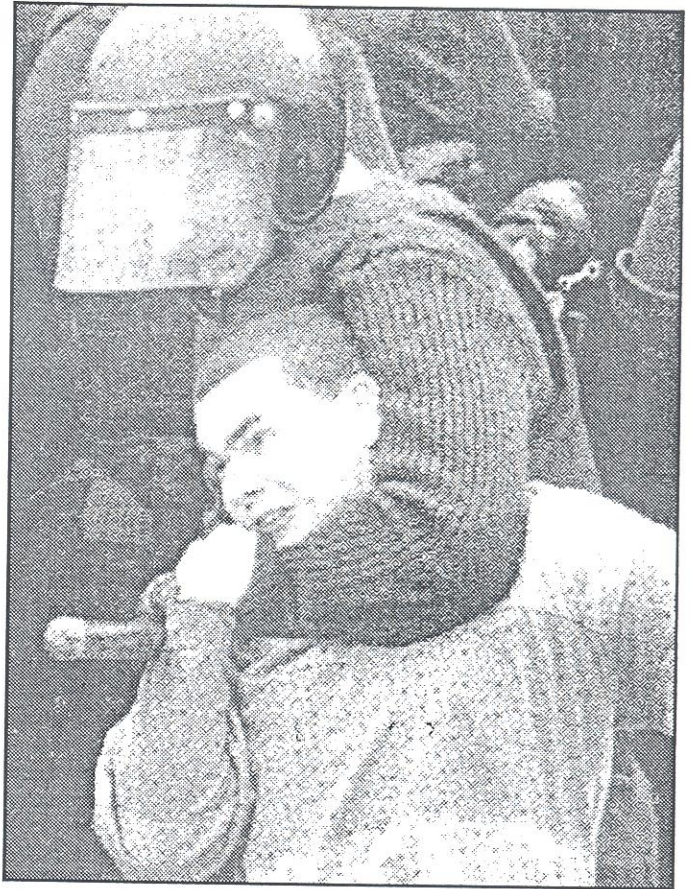
This is precisely why Protestant workers - and indeed many northern Catholic workers too - fear unification. For all the 'new wealth' of the developing Southern economy, trying to find another £8 billion - more than half of the South's current public expenditure - just to maintain the current levels of poverty in the North, would plunge the Irish economy into ruin.

Despite 17 years of Tory government, there is still the framework of 'welfare' services in the North - the NHS, Benefits, housing etc - that still do not exist in the South. They also fear that the Catholic 'theocracy' that dominates the South will threaten basic rights such as abortion and divorce. But more importantly, the Northern workers know that the weak Southern economy could not sustain them, and subsequently they could become the discriminated, oppressed minority facing even greater levels of unemployment and low pay. This is why there has always been huge opposition to unification on a capitalist basis. When Thatcher tried to push through the Anglo Irish Agreement in 1986 for example, 180,000 took to the streets.

An independent Ulster

Driven to despair by the apparent conundrum of the question of Ireland some over the years have raised the question of an independent Ulster. There is a vague notion that a state without allegiance to either London or Dublin could exist.

This utopian idea is shattered by economic facts alone. What little remains of the Northern Ireland industry could not finance the status quo, never mind herald a new miracle economy that solved all of society's problems, and sustain an independent state. Over the past two years, manufacturing output in Northern Ireland has increased by 6.2%, twice the UK average. Yet Northern Ireland still has



the highest levels of unemployment in the UK and the greatest dependency on Benefits.

Some argue that - similar to the SNP who vaguely hint that an independent Scotland could be sustained within a 'European framework' - that an independent Ulster could exist within Europe.

Any hopes that the European Union will bail them out is an illusion. The EU is not some independent arbiter of European affairs but a rag bag of squabbling capitalist states where the strongest economies prevail.

As the *Financial Times* pointed out (27th January) "...disputes over funding EU foreign policy - whether it should come out of national budgets or the EU budget - have delayed urgent action in areas such as the former Yugoslavia."

In July alone, the EU was rocked by three crises - France led the criticism of Germany for giving state funding, contrary to EU rules, to Volkswagen; Germany retaliated by criticising EU funding to French motor companies; and all were embarrassed by the scandal which broke in that month when it was exposed that £16 billion of EU funding

is lying in banks unused, because none of the European nations will stump up the matching funding. Add to this the ability of the EU to turn the question of a few mad cows into a crisis. Indeed, look at the trouble the EU had in Mostar in August, trying to get the political balance between Croats and Bosnians agreed for a mere City Council - what hope would they have of solving Northern Ireland!

An independent Ulster is a non-starter. But it is not just an abstract economic question. An independent Ulster would in reality mean repartition, with all the bloody consequences that would entail.

Precisely because its economy could not sustain the whole population, so the 'new state' would collapse into reaction, with moves to drive out the Catholics.

The Loyalist paramilitary group, the UDA, have drawn up their proposals for a 'doomsday scenario', if Britain withdrew from Northern Ireland, which was exposed in the *Guardian* (January 17th, 1994).

The UDA visualize an independent state based on the eastern three counties, accepting they would lose part

of Armagh and Fermanagh, but they would aim to retain Tyrone and Londonderry. How? By driving Catholics out of these two counties.

The Guardian explains what would happen to the Catholic workers caught behind the new re-drawn border: "Under the heading 'What To Do With These People', are discussed three options for the many Catholics living behind the redrawn Border.

'Expulsion' would reduce demands upon food supplies but give the enemy forces extra men. 'Internment' would be a drain on resources but provide a 'useful bargaining chip in any negotiations'. 'Nullification' is chillingly described as 'difficult again but reduces demands on food supplies and if all could be rounded up the process could be finished within 1 - 2 weeks.'

Clearly the reactionaries of the UDA have been learning the lessons of ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia. This is the grim reality of an 'independent Ulster' - bloody repartition, a new Bosnia in Britain and Ireland's backyard.

Socialist United Ireland

The only solution to Northern Ireland is the creation of a United Socialist Ireland, within a socialist Federation of Britain, Ireland and Europe. The forces that are capable of raising and gaining support for such a policy already exist in Northern Ireland - the organised labour movement. While for the past 25 years the world's attention has been focused on the small bands of paramilitaries wreaking havoc throughout the North and Britain, there has been a virtual conspiracy of silence over the movements of rank and file trade unionists, whose class action has never in the main been broken by sectarianism. Despite what appear insurmountable odds, the trade unions in Northern Ireland have again and again taken independent class action, uniting Catholic and Protestant workers around class demands.

Throughout Northern Ireland's troubled history, there has been a common thread of workers unity, since the 1919

Belfast General Strike. When the Troubles broke out in 1969, the instinctive reaction of many workers was to form Defence Committees to protect all workers in their area, as happened in the Ardoyne district. A mass meeting of 9,000 trade unionists at the mainly Protestant Harland and Wolff shipyard - scene of the 1920s pogroms - declared their opposition to sectarian attacks on the Catholic community. Had there been a decisive intervention by the leaderships of the Irish and British labour movements such initiatives would have spread like wild-fire.

In 1977, trade unionists broke Paisley's attempts to enforce a reactionary Loyalist strike, with thousands of workers braving intimidation.

In 1979, Northern Ireland was one of the first regions of the UK to react to Thatcher's rule, with 30,000 taking strike action on a TUC Day of Action. In 1982, Northern Ireland was the most militant area during national action by health workers, while throughout the 1980s there were numerous strike movements by busworkers, seafarers, Fords workers, shop workers and Post Office workers. But the trade unions have taken action against sectarian violence in the current period. In 1992, 20,000 joined a protest organised by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions outside Belfast City Hall against sectarian murders. In the same year, hundreds participated in strikes and protests initiated by Mid Ulster Trades Councils, following a wave of sectarian killings. Earlier, workers at the Hyster fork lift plant in Lurgan closed the factory down after three workers were shot dead by Loyalists. There were also two large demonstrations in the Ormeau area of Belfast following sectarian killings.

In 1994, 5,000 Catholic and Protestant civil service trade unionists took strike action following Loyalist paramilitary threats against their members in Ballymena. There was also a strike by workers at the almost exclusively Protestant Harland and Wolfe shipyard, after the UVF murdered a

Catholic worker. Indeed it was the mass movement of trade unionists of the early 1990s that drove the Paramilitaries to the conference table and concentrated the minds of the British and Irish governments. With 225,000 members - not to mention their families and supporters amongst the unemployed - the trade unions are the most powerful force in Northern Ireland.

If it was harnessed to a leadership which fought for socialist policies, it would be unstoppable. Industrial action is not enough - while the mass protests of the early 1990s put a brake on the sectarian killings, unless conditions are changed a return to violence is inevitable, as followed the Drumcree confrontations this year.

Labour Party

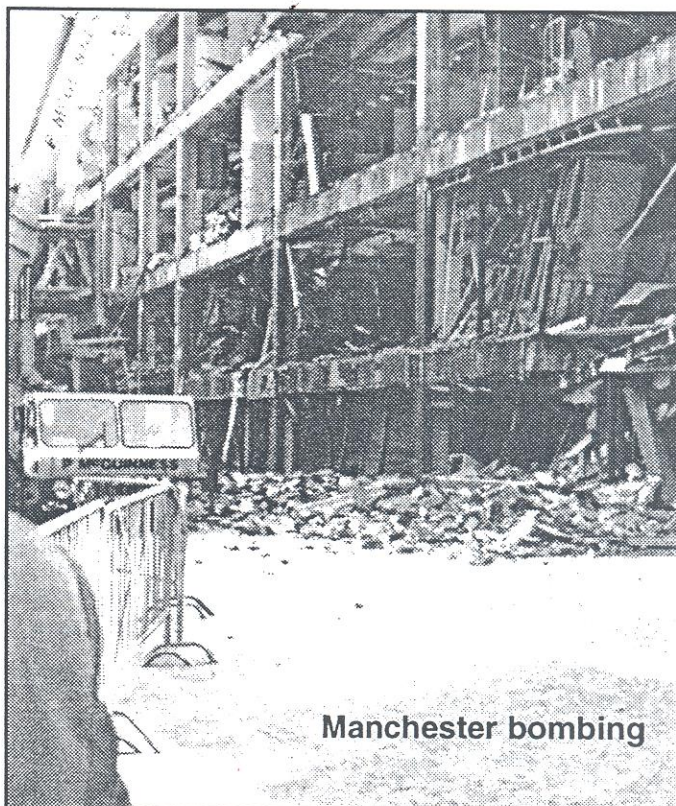
The workers must move onto the political plane, with the formation of a Labour Party, based on the trade unions. If such an independent, class based party then campaigned for a socialist programme, of full employment, a minimum wage, decent housing for all, and a real 'welfare state', it could cut across the animosities between the two communities overnight. It could also explain how the creation of a Socialist United

Ireland, linking up in a Federation of socialist states with Britain and Europe was the only future for Irish society.

The Irish economy was mercilessly exploited by Britain for centuries, and then broken in two by Partition. Linking the two artificially separated Northern and Southern economies, and more importantly nationalising under workers control the multinational that currently siphon off and send overseas the wealth of both Southern and Northern Ireland, would create the basis for a planned economy that provided decent conditions for all.

Such a movement inspire all workers in Britain and Ireland, creating an international force for change. When the workers moved to change society, they would remove the 'Border' in the process - indeed that has been the lesson of workers' internationalism throughout history.

By holding up the vision of a new society based on the equitable distribution of wealth created by a planned socialist economy, the antagonisms of the 'Border' would evaporate, and the appeal of the quasi-religious reactionaries be confined to the fringes of society.



Manchester bombing

Throughout history the Orange Order has acted as an auxiliary to the interests of British Imperialism.

The Orange Order was one of several quasi-religious defence organisations set up in the 18th century by the 'Planters' - the Scottish Presbyterian farmers forcibly moved to Ulster in the 'Plantation' of the north of Ireland. They formed defence organisations to protect themselves against their Catholic counterparts in the inevitable communal battles that wracked the region over land rights.

While the British ruling class had tolerated these feuding semi-secret societies, their attitudes hardened with the development of the United Irishmen movement around Wolff Tone, which - inspired by the American and French revolutions - was successfully united Protestant and Catholic peasants and farmers in the struggle to free themselves of the British yoke.

The British ruling class cynically began to manipulate the Orange Order, with promises of 'Ascendancy' over the Catholics to ensure they stayed loyal to British rule.

They were to act as a bulwark against the homogeneous Catholic population - it was the first time the British ruling class perfected their divide and rule tactics, which were later to wreak havoc around the rest of the Empire.

The comments of an aide to the Commander of British forces in Northern Ireland in 1795 summed up what was to be the attitude of British imperialism throughout its colonial rule: "I have arranged...to increase the animosity between the Orangemen and the United Irishmen. Upon that animosity depends the safety of the centre counties of the North."

Ever since the Orange Order has been on the side of reaction, used to drive a wedge between Protestant and Catholic workers. It has also been a battering ram to be used against the labour movement. In the early 1800s it provided a network of spies to be used against the Luddites. But with the establishment of the labour and trade union movement, it went on the offensive against socialists, belaying the claim that the Order represented the interests of the 'Protestant working man'.

Northern Ireland's first prominent socialist, Alexander Bowman, had to run the gauntlet of Orange Order intimidation when he stood (on a Liberal ticket) in the 1885 general election. Both he and his home were repeatedly attacked by Orange mobs.

In 1895 the TUC came to Belfast for its annual Congress. This was followed by a demonstration through East Belfast organised by the ILP - the Orange Order, whipped up by fears of Home Rule, attacked the march and broke it up.

The most infamous incident came in 1920. The failure of the labour leaders to take the initiative during 1919 General Strike and fight for a socialist society, linking up with the workers struggles internationally, from Moscow to Dublin, allowed the way for reaction and eventually partition. Partition was sealed by the blood of Catholic shipyard workers, who were driven from Belfast in an

Who are the Orange Order?

Orange Order instigated pogrom of that year. The Orange Order were again called upon to defend the interests of the ruling class after they had been shocked by the events in Belfast of 1932. Here, instead of tearing at each others throats, Protestant and Catholic workers joined together to riot and protest against unemployment. Stormont reacted by banning all marches and parades - but they lifted the ban for the July 12th marching season in 1933 and unleashed a sectarian maelstrom: 11 were killed, 200 injured and the British Army had to take to the streets to restore order. But it had achieved its aim - the workers had been driven back into their sectarian camps.

We see echoes of this cynical use of the Orange Order today. The interests of British imperialism have changed. They want a return to stability in Northern Ireland, at whatever cost. But the Unionist leaders, like the imperialists before them, still see the Orange Order as their auxiliary to be used to protect their class interests, as their fears mount that Britain is set to abandon them. With the 'peace process' stagnating so the Unionist leadership have used the annual march at Drumcree to marshal the forces of reaction and to reassert their 'ascendancy'. The Orange Order claim that their marches are part of tradition and culture, and demonstrate the freedom of an Ulsterman to walk anywhere unhindered in the Province. In reality of course, they are provocative parades, usually followed by widespread sectarian attacks, designed to intimidate Catholic workers and reinforce the wedge between the two communities.

As the great Irish socialist James Connolly explained: "Let us remember that the Orange Order was not founded to safeguard religious freedom, but to deny religious freedom, and that it raised the religious question, not for the sake of any religion, but in order to use religious zeal in the interests of oppressive property rights of rack-renting landlords and sweating capitalists."

But the Orange Order is not some monolithic mass that can never be broken. With the upsurge of socialist thought at the turn of the century, and with Larkin and Connolly at the head of the labour movement, the Orange Order began to crack. In 1903, the Independent Orange Order was formed by working class elements amongst the Loyalists, who were beginning to question

how blind allegiance to the Union with Britain was improving their lot.

The Independent Orange Order supported the drive by Larkin to unionise the docks and transport in 1907, and took part in the massive 1919 May Day parade in Belfast, with their bands playing the popular music hall ditty of the day, 'Yes, We Have No Bananas!' rather than their usual repartee of sectarian marching tunes that would alienate their Catholic counterparts marching by their side. So today, the development of the political wings of the main Loyalist paramilitaries - the Ulster Democratic Party (from the UDA) and the Progressive Unionist Party (from the UVF), is a continuation of this process. They are not, as some ultra left groups believe, socialist parties, regardless of whatever 'socialist' policies they may adopt. Rather, their taking up of populist demands reflects the growing strains on the Protestant working class, who are looking for a way out of the Unionist cul-de-sac they find themselves in. If the labour movement leaders gave a clear class lead, pointing out the socialist alternative, the grip of the Orange Order and Loyalism could be broken once and for all.



"Tories to outlaw strikes", "Post office privatisation threat", "New assault on state benefits." It is headlines such as these which serve to remind workers of the desperate need to get the Tories out once and for all. People are literally counting the days until Major is finally forced to call an election.

The publication by the Labour leadership of their 'draft' manifesto "New Labour New Life For Britain" should have provided a basis for a thorough discussion around the demands and programme on which the movement could best stand to decisively defeat this government.

Unfortunately it is instead being presented in effect as a *fait accompli* to be supported without possibility of amendment, except by the leadership themselves, of course! The document will go first to conference and then, for support by ballot, to the whole membership. But this is not democracy but simply an exercise in invited rubber stamping. You will have no choices, no alternatives: it's take it or leave it! You can't help but feel that what we are being asked to accept is the sort of democracy they had in ancient Rome under the Emperors where all proposals from the top were wildly accepted without criticism. Not surprisingly the leader-

ship are not even considering the question of what happens should the document be rejected, which is strange since if there is a Yes vote then there should also be a No vote option on the ballot! Perhaps they are not taking this ballot as seriously as they would like us to believe. We should be insisting on the right of Party conference to be able to discuss and amend the programme and for that programme to reflect the decisions of conference rather than the whims of assorted spin doctors.

So what is it that we are being asked to so enthusiastically support? The document is the usual glossy affair (which somewhat bizarrely carries a cover price of £10!) full of pictures of happy smiling policemen, men in suits, the army, navy, more soldiers and so on together with lots of pictures of smiling middle class people and even more pictures of a, yes you guessed it, smiling Tony Blair. In fact everybody is so busy smiling that you would think that we lived in some sort of permanent holiday camp. This is odd when you consider that the document does in part outline some of the truth about life in capitalist Britain. For example:

"...there is a wide variance in the ways risks and opportunities are distributed. For those at the top, it is a world in which opportunity is virtually limitless. But for the majority, the sense of insecurity is pervasive. For the first time in a generation people worry whether their children will do better than they did." And again: *"People are having to work harder to stand still... Nine million people have lost their jobs since the last election."*

But what are we being offered as the solution to this and the other problems which face us? The document is at pains, to put it mildly, to present itself as having some sort of "new" politics to show us. Right from the very beginning the document is pushing this line: *"New Labour is neither old left nor new right, for a very good reason... we offer*

Blair's Manifesto...

Patching Capitalism

a new way ahead, that leads from the centre, but is profoundly radical in the changes it promises." But how new is this really? The truth is that this is in essence the same tired strategy of the old Labour right wing from times past.

Capitalism †

Despite all the talk of a "new" way forward, a "new" approach and so on, this programme mirrors the ideas of those who down the ages have sought to convince us of the benefits of the "acceptable" face of capitalism. The only difference between this programme and those of past Labour leaders is that the faceless spin doctors who wrote this version have tried to include as few real commitments as possible. They are trying to win the election on the basis of "if you promise nothing then you will have no promises to break". Unfortunately for them it doesn't work like that. It is worth noting that over the last few months Labour has remained static in the polls. This would suggest that the presentation of the programme has had vir-

tually no effect on winning over new voters. It is only the fact that large numbers of people are determined to get the Tories out come what may, and see voting Labour as the only way to do that, which is keeping Labour so far ahead in the polls. If anything this programme will cost votes as people ask, as they already are, Is Blair any different from the Tories? Do the Labour leaders stand for anything? There is clearly a certain lack of enthusiasm for the programme which reflects a growing perception of its limitations by the voting masses. Some activists are even raising a fear that the shifts to the right and the abandonment of commitments may conceivably cost Labour the next election. This may well be rather unlikely given the dismal state of the Tories but these concerns do have a basis to them. Rather than warming up the old fantasies of a one-nation Britain under a benevolent capitalism committed to social harmony, Labour should be standing on a clear socialist programme that offers a way forward for





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the working class. That would be new politics indeed! The document states that *"The Labour Party exists to further the interests not of the few, but of the many, the broad majority of British people. That is its purpose. when it does that, it is fulfilling its purpose. When it fails to do that, it defeats its purpose."* Few would argue with that but is that what this programme will achieve? The general thrust of the document certainly contains no surprises. It talks of a *"medium-term growth strategy"* which will *"encourage long-term investment and increase sustainable growth". This will apparently force capitalism to give us "low inflation, rising living standards and high and stable levels of employment."* They argue that if only the Tories knew what they were doing then all the problems of the last period could have been avoided. Certainly much damage has been done by the strategies of the Tories in putting their trust in finance rather than industry and in overheating the economy during the boom of the Eighties. The short sightedness of the Tories under both Thatcher and Major has had a devastating effect. However the essential direction of capitalism

would have remained the same come what may. If it is a choice say between profits and jobs then so far as they are concerned profits come first. The next Labour government will be forced under pressure to either bend to the will of capital or break from it. That would require a fundamentally different approach to that being advocated by the document. Many activists will be expressing concern that a large number of long standing commitments have either been dropped or posed in terms that suggest that nothing will come of them. When the document says *"The infrastructure of Britain is in poor state: parts of our road network are neglected, our railway and bus systems are in danger of collapsing into fragmentation and decline"* then the demand for a public transport policy would seem to be relevant here. Instead what we get is a call for *"the best combination of public and private finance to renew infrastructure"* and *"a partnership of public and private finance to improve rail transport on the basis not of dogma but of what is best for the customer, the country and the environment."* What the document's authors do not seem to

realise is that such partnerships are based on private capital using public money to boost its profits on the cheap. Private investors will always be answerable first and foremost to their shareholders and will always act in their interests rather than the "country at large." Of even more concern is the sentence which states: *"We will create a publicly owned, publicly accountable railway system as economic circumstances and the priorities of transport policy allow"*. In effect this is a pretty clear message that the demand for renationalisation of the railways, a demand passed at every party conference, will not in truth happen if the leadership have their way.

Trade union laws

Many party members will also note with anger the statement that the Tory anti trade union laws will stay. The best we are allowed to hope for is that *"there should be proper minimum rights for the individual at work"* and that firms are to be encouraged to have *"partnerships"* with employees in the workplace. This fantasy of social partnership on the shop floor has been touted around by some on the right of the movement for sometime. Countries such as Sweden, Germany and more recently Austria have been raised as shining examples of where this has been done. However it is precisely in these countries that the old social collaboration policies are being ripped up with a vengeance as bosses realise that they have to start squeezing the workers whatever the cost. The recent movements of workers in countries such as these shows that the dreams of the bosses that there is a peaceful road where all disputes are resolved without recourse to action are well and truly over. The bosses can no longer "afford" to buy the workers off and will certain not oblige a Labour government on this. The call for a national minimum wage is now well hidden away in the document with no information given as to how high or low it will actually be. There is little for the unemployed either. Young unemployed people are promised *"a new deal"* with *"every young person unemployed for more than six months to be in a job*

or in training." But what sort of job and what sort of training? All the long term unemployed are offered is talk of incentives for employers to take them on. This just mirrors the Tories believe that if you make labour costs cheap then bosses will hire them. The reality is that whatever the incentives firms just take on the minimum staff needed to do the job. You also can't help but wonder if the somewhat limited windfall tax will ever come to anything, especially given the ability of the bosses to avoid taxation to a degree that dwarves any "benefit fraud" carried out by the poor.

The document offers little for those on low incomes or trapped in poverty. By aiming the programme at the middle classes and big business the poor have been virtually ignored with only a few platitudes for comfort. The document talks about poverty in Britain by correctly drawing attention to the "rich get richer, poor get poorer" process which has occurred under the Tories: *"...the number of children living in households with income less than half the average has grown from one in ten in 1979 to one in three; one in five families has no-one in employment and the number of people dependent on benefits has doubled from one in 12 to one in six."* No one can argue with this and it presents a compelling case for getting rid of the Tories. But what do we get as a solution? Unfortunately the document is riddled with middle class platitudes about *"moral purpose"* and so on. The elderly are fobbed off with a Royal Commission on their provision and the demand passed by conference after conference for a decent level of state pension is replaced by vague and inconclusive talk of *"a new framework for funded second-tier pension provision."* Even more worrying the whole welfare state is dealt with by the sentence: *"We see reform of our welfare system to make it fairer, offer new opportunity and reduce its costs..."* The key word here is "reduce". Worldwide under the pressure of the crisis of capitalism, governments are busy reducing state expenditure and the provisions of the welfare state in order to reduce budget deficits they can no longer handle. The docu-

ment seems to imply, especially when taken with other statements such as Blair's call to "think the unthinkable", that the leadership are preparing the ground for a policy of cuts. The scandal of the decline of the NHS is side-stepped with talk of "modernising" and a total lack of a clear commitment to get rid of the internal market and return the NHS to proper public control. Even more disturbing is the emphasis on dealing with crime which dominates the section on the welfare of the nation. Rather than clearly emphasising the need to tackle crime by tackling the poverty and social deprivation which allows crime to breed, the document decides that, instead of being "tough on the causes of crime", they will mete out tougher punishments for those caught at it. In particular they have it in for young people in a way which would please any editorial writer of the 'Daily Mail' or 'Express'. One of the documents key five pledges refers to this with a call for "a fast-track punishment programme for persistent young offenders." What this means is not made clear and you can't help but wonder about the civil liberty implication of all this. Simply locking up young offenders solves nothing since the crimes have already been committed and merely serves to push more people towards the only career path left for them—a life of crime and prison. Going down such a reactionary path as this document suggests will solve nothing.

Cutbacks

Activists in the public sector who have seen cutbacks in public expenditure for decade after decade now will find little comfort in the section of the document which deals with the state. The call is made to get rid of council tax capping but "we will retain reserve powers in extreme cases" we are told. We are also informed that the next Labour government will provide "additional powers for the Audit Commission to promote council efficiency and to take steps to remedy inefficiency." Sounds like a recipe for further cutbacks on council expenditure rather than the required restoration of levels lost over the years and years of cutbacks in council services etc. There is little here to suggest a determination to deal with the crisis in state educa-

tion. One of the 'famous five' pledges emphasised in the document is to "cut class sizes to 30 or under for 5, 6 and 7 years olds by using money saved from the assisted places scheme."

And that's about it! Abolition of private schools, removal of the Tory testing and opting-out schemes etc. has been replaced by a variation on what already exists. For people in higher education all they are promised in a "fairer" system of administering the hated student loans system and the establishment of a 'University for Industry' project. There is a lot of fine words about new technology and the information super highway but unless you are prepared to tackle the question of cuts in education spending, crumbling schools, sold off or closed facilities and low moral and pay for those teachers who have not already been sacked by cash starved authorities, then all this is just meaningless.

The document finishes with a hearty call to keep "our" military forces up to scratch and play "our" full role in Europe i.e. the EU. No socialist internationalism rears its head here!

And so the document ends. The Tories are way behind in the opinion polls because of a general loss of faith in the measures they have carried out over their time in office. Yet just at a time when more and more people are rejecting Tory ideas, the Labour leaders are seeking to pick them up again. The programme presented in this document offers no real way forward. All we are getting is more of the same with a dash of regulation and a "firm but fair" approach promised. Under conditions of economic crisis all that would soon disappear. Rather than giving us warmed up Tory leftovers Labour should be standing by the demands made at past conferences of the movement for a real national minimum wage, decent housing and education, a proper state pension, reversal of the cuts, abolition of private education and private healthcare, and so on. Linked to a socialist plan of production and the nationalisation of the monopolies and finance houses this could provide a real "new" fighting programme that could propel Labour to a famous victory.

Steve Jones

ten points for a Labour victory

•For full employment. No redundancies. The right to a job or decent benefits - abolish the JSA. An immediate introduction of a 32 hour week without loss of pay. No compulsory overtime. Reduction of the age of retirement to 55 with a decent full pension for all.

•A national minimum wage of at least two-thirds of the average wage. Support for £4.26 per hour as an immediate step toward this goal.

•Repeal all the Tories anti-union legislation. Full rights for all workers from day one of their employment. For the right to strike and the right to union representation and collective bargaining.

•For real job security. Stop casualisation. Part time work only for those who want it. End the zero-hours contract scandal.

•Reverse the Tories privatisation strategy. Renationalise all the privatised industries and utilities with minimum compensation according to need - not on the market price of shares.

•Reverse all the cuts in the health service. End the trusts and the internal market. Abolish private health care. A properly funded health service must be available to all. Nationalisation of the big drug companies that squeeze their profits out of the health of working people.

•Return education to real democratic control through the local authorities. For a fully funded and resourced, fully comprehensive education system. Scrap Grant Maintained Schools. Abolish private education. End SATS. No to streaming or selection. No to voucher schemes. A guaranteed nursery place for all 3 and 4 year olds.

•Restore proper democratic local government. Restore local authority budgets to pre-1979 levels in real terms. Scrap CCT.

•Abolish the Monarchy and the House of Lords. Establish parliaments in Scotland and Wales, with real powers to tackle their chronic social and economic problems.

•Labour must immediately take over the "commanding heights of the economy." Nationalise the big monopolies, the banks and financial institutions that dominate our lives. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of need. All nationalised enterprises to be run under workers control and management and integrated through a democratic socialist plan of production.

Russia after the elections

Alan Woods looks at the realities behind Yeltsin's victory

The July elections represent another turn in the situation in Russia. On the surface, the result was a massive victory for Russian capitalism. Despite the frightful collapse in living standards, crime, corruption and mafia capitalism, Yeltsin won. This was a heavy defeat for Stalinism, not socialism or genuine communism, but it will usher in a new period of convulsions for Russia.

The underlying processes remain as contradictory and explosive as before. The result has resolved nothing. Despite everything, the CP still made a strong showing. Zyuganov defeated Yeltsin in the "Red Belt" area stretching from Tambov and Voronezh, south of Moscow, to Siberian regions such as Novosibirsk, Omsk and the coal mining area of Kemerovo. We can assume that the CP main-

tained its support in the other mining areas, and in the workers in heavy industry in general. 40% is a considerable base in society, and this would undoubtedly include the decisive layers of the industrial workers, as well as the rural areas.

The response of the bourgeois to the result was euphoric. Russian financial markets soared, but then fell back as it became clear that Western investors were not participating in the buying spree. The western capitalists, while breathing a sigh of relief that Zyuganov was not elected, are still worried about the future.

Were the elections rigged? Can these results be the result of fraud? Since the elections, there has been more than sufficient evidence pointing to the existence of widespread ballot rigging. The CSCE observers found

evidence of widespread electoral fraud. Even before the first round, the then Defence Minister Pavel Grachev announced that sailors in the fleet outside Russia had voted "unanimously" for Yeltsin. Even more incredibly, Yeltsin's highest vote was supposed to have come from Chechnya—64.1%—a remarkable result for a man who had ordered the bloody war resulting in the mass slaughter of the Chechen people and the reduction of their homeland to ashes!

Andrei Kolganov and Alexander Buzgalin, two left wing economists at Moscow State University, state that "an element of fraud cannot be excluded (though in the view of experts, this could hardly have exceeded 3-5%)." If we assume that ballot rigging amounted to 5% of the votes, Yeltsin's majority would be cut to a bare minimum. However, since it is notoriously difficult to obtain precise figures in cases of electoral fraud, the estimates of the "experts" may understate the real position. Socialist Boris Kagarlitsky implies that fraud was more widespread than this. He writes:

"The second round Russian election began inauspiciously for the authorities.

"Throughout the morning the population of St. Petersburg, a city considered a major stronghold of the present regime, simply failed to turn up at the polling stations. People were clearly sick of elections. By 3 p.m. only about 4% of electors had

voted. A low turnout was also evident in other regions where Boris Yeltsin had come out ahead in the first round. Something close to panic broke out in the president's campaign team. A state television announcer let slip the news that 'catastrophic moods' had seized hold of the campaign staff.

"After 4 p.m., however, something happened. As if someone had waved a magic wand, the low turnout was everywhere replaced by a high one, in some places exceeding the results of the first round. If we are able to believe official reports, the citizens of Russia turned up as a body at the polling stations, and in no less united fashion, voted for Yeltsin.

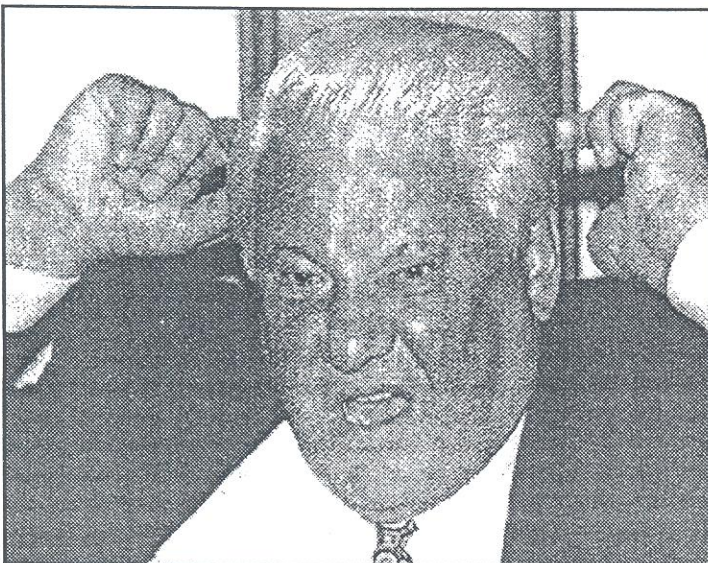
"The more remote and inaccessible the region, the greater the support for the president. The people of the Chukotka peninsula in the far north-east showed particular enthusiasm for Yeltsin, giving him 75% of the vote—a remarkable result, especially if we consider that in the heat of the election campaign the authorities had forgotten to ship foodstuffs to Chukotka, and the danger of starvation hung over the region."

Anomalies

The Guardian (5/7/96) makes out a similar case: "There were some startling pro-Yeltsin anomalies in the Red Belt, suggesting either the powerful personal influence of local bosses in ethnically-based regions or fraud. "The most suspicious result was in the North Caucasian republic of Daghestan, long a bastion of Communist support. In June, Mr. Zyuganov won 66 per cent of the vote, against 26 per cent for Mr. Yeltsin, with Lebed barely registering. This week, Mr. Yeltsin's vote shot up to 51 per cent, with Mr. Zyuganov down to 46.

"Almost as dubious was the result in the oil-rich Volga republic of Bashkortostan, where a largely Muslim population traditionally backs the Communists. How a Zyuganov lead of 42 to 35 per cent in June turned into a Yeltsin triumph of 52 to 42 per cent this week is a mystery."

Before the election, Zyuganov





Russia that need to be resolved. The Western idea that the problems will all disappear with the reelection of Yeltsin is simply wrong."

The "free" press

During the campaign, the so-called "free press" and television behaved in a manner so depraved that it made the Western gutter press look quite demure by comparison. Even the Western pro-Yeltsin commentators were forced to express their discontent at the way the media favoured the President. *The Economist* referred to "a slavishly pro-Yeltsin bias in the Russian media." These facts show the hollowness and hypocrisy of the Western claims that Yeltsin stands for "democracy." On the role of the media, even the main international observer team, organised by the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) was obliged to state: "Not only was there a significant imbalance in candidate Yeltsin's favour in the amount of coverage but also his campaign was generally shown in positive terms, compared to other candidates, in particular candidate Zyuganov, who tended to be shown in negative terms."

Gleb Pavlovsky, a former journalist and now general director of the Foundation for Effective politics was himself involved in distributing pro-Yeltsin articles to the Russian press, estimated that 1,000 journalists in Moscow alone were on the take, "including an elite group of perhaps 50 big name reporters who received \$3,000 to \$5,000 per month on top of their other income for writing articles favourable to Yeltsin or other candidates". After the first round the CSCE observers demanded an improvement in the second round. "It is important that the shortcomings mentioned above in the behaviour of the media, the conduct of the election campaign and the polling day procedures be addressed as a matter of urgency." In reality, the reverse was the case. All the abuses of the first round were deepened in the second. The *Daily Telegraph* reported, for example: "The selection of news items is even more flagrant. Yesterday Victor

Ilyukhin, a senior Communist who heads the security committee of the lower house of Parliament, summoned reporters to see a tape of police questioning a banker who admitted taking \$500,000 from the Finance Ministry and giving it to two members of the Yeltsin campaign team. The tape failed to find a place on the early evening news on the Russian Public Television, the most popular channel". So distorted was the TV coverage, that even news of Yeltsin's illness was suppressed to a large extent. As Tony Barber commented in the *Independent*: "Clearly, the inability of one of the two presidential candidates to perform his duties would be likely to have a decisive influence on the outcome. So the Russian media simply hushed it up". Constanze Krehl, head of the European parliament delegation observing the second round said: "It is really clear that Mr Yeltsin has more than 400 points of positive coverage... and Mr Zyuganov has minus 300". Yet despite all this, the "democratic" observers from the West were quite prepared to give the Russian elections a clean bill of health!

Why the CP lost?

The main reason why the CP was defeated was because they did not put forward a democratic socialist alternative for the workers and the people of Russia. After decades of totalitarian rule, there is no enthusiasm for a return to Stalinism. The masses are repelled by the chaos, corruption and general rottenness of the Russian gangster bourgeoisie, whose plunder of state assets even the *Financial Times* described as "the theft of the century." But they have no desire to hand power back to the old Stalinist bureaucracy. They want socialism, but with a democratic regime. In the absence of a democratic socialist alternative, Yeltsin was able to organise a scare campaign. In the circumstances, it is surprising that the CP's vote was as high as it was. In spite of Zyuganov, the bulk of the industrial workers voted for him. But elections are not decided by the industrial working class alone. As in the

had warned of the danger of fraud. After the result of the second round was declared, he pointed out that "In Daghestan we got 60% last time, and now they say we've lost there. I want to figure out how that could have happened in the last ten days."

The Italian paper *La Stampa*, which is generally considered to be in close contact with the reality of Russian political life, and evidently has excellent sources, published an article on July 6th entitled "Fraud—here is the proof". Analysing the results of the first round, it concludes that: "in any other country, these figures would have caused a scandal of international proportions, whereas in Russia they circulate in 'samizdat'". The figures referred to are taken from the Autonomous Republic of Tatarstan. They prove conclusively the existence of massive fraud.

La Stampa's correspondent had access to the voting figures given at different levels. At the lowest level, the Local Electoral Commission represents 60 polling stations. These results are then submitted to the Regional Electoral Commission (in this case, Tatarstan), which finally sends them to the Electoral Commission of the Russian Federation. The *La Stampa* article shows that the results do not add up. Votes were systematically subtracted from all other candidates, and transferred to Yeltsin's list. For example, in one area of Tatarstan, the discrepancy was as follows:

Yeltsin real vote	71,000
Yeltsin official vote	207,000
Zyuganov real vote	68,000
Zyuganov official vote	59,000
Lebed real vote	35,000
Lebed official vote	25,000

Other areas showed similar discrepancies. *La Stampa* concludes that, if this was the case in Tatarstan, there is no reason to suppose that it was any different elsewhere. It further concludes that such fraud could only be carried out with the participation of a large number of functionaries right up to the top government level, where no checks were carried out. It is unthinkable that the Central Commission was not aware of this. In other words, the ballot rigging was organised at the highest level. The article ends with the following question: "Does this mean that the Communists, in reality, won the first round?"

There is no doubt that Yeltsin rigged the vote in the referendum on the Constitution. Even bourgeois commentators accept that. So, if it looked as if Zyuganov was going to win, there can be no doubt that Yeltsin supporters would have resorted to massive ballot-rigging to fix the result. The Russian bourgeoisie and the West could not permit Zyuganov to win. In the words of *Time's* Moscow correspondent Bruce Nelan, "It would have been a disaster for all concerned had the Russians elected Zyuganov....In the end they voted for the lesser evil." However, the same correspondent warns against drawing too optimistic conclusions: "There are still serious problems in

West, there are intermediate layers, professional people, civil servants, functionaries of all kinds, who would follow the proletariat if the latter was mobilised in action, but, if no lead is given, can be drawn behind the ruling elite by fear, bribery, or a combination of both.

Western economists have roughly calculated the nascent bourgeoisie at about 10% of the population (this would be an extremely broad definition, including all sorts of petty "entrepreneurs," whereas the big capitalists would be a tiny handful). Together with their families and dependants, and all other layers who are somehow linked to the "market" such as drivers, street traders, self-employed people, servants, private bodyguards (there are 600,000 of these alone) and criminals, we are talking about maybe 20% of the population. This is approximately the percentage of votes won by all the "pro-market" parties in the December elections. It is a not inconsiderable portion of the population, but not enough to win an election.

Coup

There was also another factor. Interviews published in the West with such people gave interesting responses. Many of them were afraid that a Zyuganov victory would have meant a coup and civil war. This appraisal is not wrong. As we have pointed out repeatedly, the bourgeois had no intention of allowing Zyuganov to win. One way or another, he would have been blocked. Such a development would have created an explosive situation, which could have ended in civil war. If Zyuganov had been a genuine Leninist, and not a hopeless reformist, that would have been no obstacle. It is an elementary truth that no ruling class, or, in this case, ruling elite, ever surrenders power without a struggle. If Zyuganov had been a Communist worthy of the name, he would not have confined himself to warnings about vote-rigging, but would have set up committees to defend democracy in every workplace and locality, composed of the elected representatives, to organise and co-ordinate the fight-back against the

Yeltsinites and their corrupt, anti-democratic regime. Any violence that ensued would be exclusively the responsibility of this gang of crooks and reactionaries. A decisive attitude on the part of the workers is the prior condition for winning over the wavering middle layers. Above all, in order to win over the youth, a bold vision is necessary, one which would inspire with hope for the future. But no such perspective was put forward. Zyuganov, in fact, offered no perspective at all. His attitude to the Stalinist past was half apologetic, which gave the Yeltsinites the possibility of identifying him with the crimes of the old regime—concentration camps and so on. Yet Zyuganov did not even clearly advocate the re-establishment of the USSR and a nationalised planned economy. The word socialism was conspicuous by its absence. Instead, he scandalously flirted with Russian chauvinism, even to the point of inviting Orthodox priests onto his platform, a tactic which was grist to the mill of Lebed.

After generations of totalitarian bureaucratic rule, broad layers of society do not want to go back to the Stalinist past. Even when Yeltsin's rating in the polls fell to 5 to 10%, there were still more than 40% of voters who declared that they would not support a KPRF presidential candidate under any circumstances. If we exclude the nascent bourgeois, their dependants and hangers-on, this figure still means that millions of workers and youth, who are undoubtedly hostile to Yeltsin and capitalism, have also decisively rejected Stalinism. Only the democratic, internationalist banner of genuine Marxism can win over these layers. By contrast, Zyuganov's combination of Stalinism and nationalism only served to repel them. Despite its huge resources, the KPRF, at the moment of truth, was unable to connect to a wide layer of the population which was looking for a genuine democratic socialist alternative. After decades of totalitarian and bureaucratic methods, the party leaders had no idea how to appeal to the masses.

If Zyuganov's campaign in the first round was bad, in the sec-

ond it was almost non-existent. Some of the western commentators were so perplexed that they wondered whether Zyuganov's tactics were not the result of some cunning plan to increase public apathy, and thus cause a low poll, which, allegedly, would benefit the CP. But it is not necessary to seek such a subtle and "profound" explanation. There was no such plan. Zyuganov's failure was the result either of his inability to put a real alternative before the people, or because he was afraid of winning the elections. Most likely, it was a combination of both.

Perspective

Lacking any revolutionary perspective, Zyuganov was terrified of the prospect of civil war. This would have meant leaning on the working class, something which the CP leaders wish to avoid at all costs. Once the workers were aroused, it would be difficult to control them. Under such circumstances, it would not be possible to consolidate a neo-Stalinist regime. No doubt the Yeltsinites made it clear in advance to Zyuganov that he would not be permitted to take power by electoral means. The choice was clear—either mobilise the masses for an all out struggle for power, or capitulate. It does not require much imagination to understand what occurred between Zyuganov and the leaders of the Yeltsin camp between the first and second rounds, if not before. Once Zyuganov refused to mobilise the working class for action, the result of the election

was a foregone conclusion. Boris Kagarlitsky believes that the CP leaders did a deal with Yeltsin to hand him the elections on a plate, on the understanding that they would be offered positions in the government. For obvious reasons, this cannot be directly proved. However, it would explain a great deal about the complete absence of an election campaign in the second round on the part of the KPRF, the failure to denounce the blatant irregularities after the elections, and the indecent haste with which the CP leaders rushed to accept the idea of accepting posts in Yeltsin's government. While hinting at the possibility of fraud, Zyuganov made no attempt to mobilise any kind of protest movement, but hastened to accept the result as "the will of the people." The bourgeois in the West could scarcely conceal their glee at the spectacle of this fearsome "Communist" meekly accepting defeat. *The Financial Times* of July 5th carried the headline "Communists accept defeat like democrats." What the FT means to say is that the Zyuganov wing of the CP have abandoned all pretence at being Communists and openly embraced "democracy," that is, capitalism. Following the Polish CP leaders, they have transformed themselves from Stalinists to Social Democrats. No wonder the western media which yesterday foamed at the mouth against the danger of a Zyuganov victory, now pay hypocritical tribute to this "statesmanlike" behaviour, that is to say, this abject betrayal.





What "will of the people" is Zyuganov talking about, when even the western media is compelled to admit that the whole election campaign was shamefully biased in Yeltsin's favour? Thus, Zyuganov has entirely capitulated to bourgeois ideology in its most vulgar and myopic form, parliamentary cretinism. However, he is not alone in these illusions. The upstart bourgeois, who only weeks ago were panicking at the prospect of a return to "Communism," have now recovered their nerve and succumbed to euphoria. In the same issue, one of the representatives of the Russian bourgeois, Boris Berezovsky, was quoted as saying *"We shall never again need to choose between communism and capitalism."* The relief of these elements was best expressed by their most consummate representative, Victor Chernomyrdin the day after the election—*"The choice is made for always, today democracy has won forever."* However, such judgements are premature. From a Marxist point of view, elections in and of themselves solve nothing. In the best case, they provide a snapshot of the mood of the masses at a given moment. But in this case, even that can be doubted. In any event, the social tendencies are shown here in an extremely mangled and indirect manner, as through a distorting mirror. Had Zyuganov won, that would have been a significant change in the situation, reflecting a major setback for the pro-capitalist elements. But, for that very reason, it was not going to be allowed to happen. Those who had enriched

themselves by plundering the state would not just have handed over with a polite bow. A Zyuganov victory would have brought the country to the brink of civil war. As all history shows, the decisive questions are settled, not by parliamentary arithmetic, but by the struggle of real forces. However, the fact of Yeltsin's victory does not signify a fundamental change. True, for a time, the pro-bourgeois wing will receive an important access of confidence, while the mood of the working class will be temporarily depressed. The movement in the direction of capitalism will continue and even be speeded up in the next few months. But none of the fundamental contradictions have been removed by the election. On the contrary, they will become enormously exacerbated from now on. Not the July election, but the resolution of these fundamental contradictions, is what will finally determine the outcome. Trotsky predicted that the restoration of capitalism in Russia, if it occurred, would be a regime of decline. And what a decline! A collapse of more than 50% in the first four years, compared with the 30% drop after the Wall Street crash in 1929. Yet, in spite of this, the CP proved incapable of mobilising the working class to take power. The most important element in the equation is the subjective factor. Zyuganov and the ex-Stalinist leaders of the KPRF act as a powerful brake on the movement. But that will not last. Explosive events will shake the CP from top to bottom. During the election campaign,

Yeltsin promised, among other things, a 20% increase in the minimum wage; holiday pay for teachers; Chechnya reconstruction; support for coal miners; compensation for elderly savers, the elderly and handicapped; increased pensions; write-off of farm debts; home building loans; payment of all unpaid wages and pensions; more state spending on defence research and development; payment of state debts to power ministries. It has been calculated that the total value of these promises is about 100 trillion roubles (\$19.8 billion). The problem with a promissory note, however, is that eventually it is called in. And where do you get the funds to draw on?

Thus, not one stone upon another will remain of Yeltsin's election promises. Not that he will be much worried about that. The President's health is clearly in a somewhat fragile state. Whether his "indisposition" in the closing stages of the campaign owed more to his heart or a vodka bottle is unclear. But it was sufficient to set the alarm bells ringing in every Western foreign ministry. Everywhere the question was asked anxiously: After Yeltsin, what?

Contradictions

No sooner had the election result been announced than it became clear that the government was riven with contradictions. The most obvious is the open rift between prime minister Chernomyrdin and general Lebed. The former is the most consummate representative of the new class of robber-capitalists who have enriched themselves from *"the biggest theft in history."* From a faceless bureaucrat, he has become a billionaire controlling a huge oil and gas conglomerate. As prime minister he has a powerful position, and probably enjoys the support of a big section of the nascent bourgeois as well as the imperialists who see him as their most reliable representative. On the other hand, Lebed is an unprincipled adventurer who only just joined the camp of the "reformers" and whose voters probably made the difference between victory and defeat. As a result, he succeeded in winging out of Yeltsin the key

post of head of the Security Council. At least formally, he has concentrated immense power into his hands as head of the army and police. Yet this is not enough for him. Lebed aspires to absolute power, and makes little effort to conceal the fact.

However, even the fact that he was put in charge of the campaign against crime and corruption was, in reality, a calculated manoeuvre to discredit Lebed, since this campaign is doomed to fail before it starts. In order to stamp out crime and corruption in Russia, it would first be necessary to arrest the biggest criminals, who are to be found at the heart of government, commencing with the prime minister. Lebed has attacked corruption in high places, but, so long as the Chernomyrdin clique remain in the saddle, all this remains on the level of worthless demagoguery.

By placing Lebed in charge of the army and police—a desperate move by a man afraid of losing the election—Yeltsin was taking a big risk.

Everything seems to indicate that Lebed was promised a lot more in exchange for his help in winning the election. But such promises are about as valuable as all the other ones made by Yeltsin, that is, not a lot. Lies, treachery, deceit—these are the stock-in-trade of the entire regime, and Yeltsin has them worked out as a fine art. Probably at this stage, Lebed does not have a sufficiently strong base to challenge the Chernomyrdin gang. It is not even sure that he has a solid control over the armed forces. But he will be constantly striving to build such a base. Yeltsin is a sick man, who can disappear from the scene at any time. That would be the signal for an open power struggle between the rival factions. Being at a disadvantage, Lebed will try to entangle the CP in his machinations. It is not clear at this moment whether Zyuganov, or his close collaborators, would be prepared to enter a coalition government. Nor is it clear that, if they were to do so, whether the rest of the Party would accept it. We lack the necessary information to make a judgement on this. But it is likely that such a move would

cause sharp differences even in the leadership. Leaders like the CP spokesman A. Lukyanov have at least shown a modicum of understanding when they predicted that Yeltsin would "implode." If the CP remains outside the government, they would pick up a lot of support, thus placing them in a strong position to take power. But everything seems to indicate that the Zyuganov wing would be quite prepared to act as the fifth wheel of Yeltsin's cart.

Split

By this means, Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin intend to split the CP, by drawing sections of the leaders into the thieves' kitchen of corruption. After all, they know these people very well, being "old comrades." A split is guaranteed, if the CP leaders are stupid enough to accept this kind offer. Even now, there must be a lot of unrest in the ranks of the CP. If the leaders take upon themselves the slightest responsibility for the crimes of gangster capitalism, there will be convulsions. At a certain point, the CP will split. Probably they would fuse with Anpilov's Communist Workers' Party, which would get increasing support by remaining outside the government. If there was a strong Trotskyist tendency present, it could get an important echo for a policy based on class independence, workers' democracy and internationalism.

Communist Party

In effect, the old party of the bureaucracy has become transformed into a Communist party, not in the Leninist sense, but like the CPs in the West, i.e. a reformist workers party. This is a peculiar development, which was not foreseen either by Trotsky or ourselves. Once the link with the state was broken, the KPRF has lost its previous character as an extension of the bureaucracy, and come more under the direct pressure of the class. Its upper layers are composed of that section of the old bureaucrats, who have lost out in the division of the spoils. These are the most incompetent, conservative or just unlucky elements. Among them are those whose only disagreement with the nascent bourgeoisie is that they are not part of it. They look with envy at the likes of Chernomyrdin, and would be quite willing to reach a deal with him, if he would make them "an offer they cannot refuse". This faction must be well represented in the Duma group of the party, which Chernomyrdin is skillfully attempting to split. However, even in its leading layer, the KPRF is not homogenous. Another wing of the bureaucracy looks wistfully to the past, when their power, prestige and income were guaranteed by the "command economy". This section would like to go back to the old system, if they could. However,

they are faced with the dilemma that the only way to defeat the nascent bourgeoisie is by mobilising the working class. Apart from the fact that their whole psychology and past and present interests fills them with distrust and lack of confidence in the working class, their entire experience of life has been sitting behind a desk giving orders. They are organically incapable of appealing to the workers, even if they wished to do so.

Below the leading stratum is a large number of "cadres" many of whom are close to the working class and honestly aspire to socialism. However, they lack a genuine Marxist-Leninist education, and are also inexperienced in serious work in the masses. Nevertheless, as the crisis develops, many of these can be radicalised and move in the direction of a real Leninist policy. This process will be enormously accelerated in the event of a split in the CP, which is inevitable at a certain stage.

"Time of Troubles"

The confidence of the bourgeois and the West in the future of capitalism in Russia is misplaced. Already there is the outline of a massive crisis in Russia. As the social, economic and political crisis unfolds, their forces will melt away. The idea that Communism cannot return because of Yeltsin's victory is a foolish pipe-dream. The very confidence of the bourgeois will be a factor in its undoing. Like the bullfrog in Aesop's fable, they are puffed up with their own importance. As a result, they will press on in the direction of "market reform" and will inevitably overreach themselves. They imagine that everything is settled, whereas nothing is settled. For a Marxist, an election is only an incident in the general process, and not at all the most decisive incident. The real test still lies in the future. With the utter decay of Stalinism, and the general throwing back of consciousness at all levels of society, the most primitive and barbarous ideas have re-emerged from the murky slime of a half-forgotten past—Pan Slavism, Great-Russian chauvinism, anti-Semitism, astrology, superstition, faith healing,

Orthodoxy—all this ideological and spiritual muck is a faithful mirror of social decline. Most striking of all the expressions of this decline is the way in which Zyuganov, instead of combating nationalism and religion, the inseparable soul mates of reaction, above all of Russian reaction, has completely succumbed to these poisonous influences, against which Lenin struggled all his life.

In the absence of understanding, self-styled intellectuals—not only on the right—take refuge in mysticism, referring to the "Russian soul," and drawing the conclusion from superficial analogies with Russian history that the Russian people are "not suited for democracy," and so on. In reality, such "explanations" explain nothing at all, but can be used as a ready-made excuse for the next gangster who seeks to seize power in the name of Russia, Order and Orthodoxy.

Far from the future of Russia being guaranteed, new upheavals and chaos lie on the horizon. Russia has entered a new "Time of Troubles"—*smutnoe vremya*, as the Russians call it—referring to the period of anarchy and social breakdown which preceded the coming to power of Peter the Great in the first half of the 18th century. The unstable, corrupt, gangster regime of Yeltsin bears some resemblance to the rule of the *streltsy*, the bandit rulers of Muscovy at that time. But then there was no working class such as the powerful Russian proletariat, which could, with proper leadership, show a way out of the impasse. As always, historical analogy is a lame substitute for a scientific analysis of the real class balance of forces. There is nothing at all inevitable about the descent of Russian society into chaos, or the victory of Bonapartist reaction, any more than in 1917. Now, as then, the causes are not to be found in the "Russian soul," but exclusively in the leadership of the working class—or the lack of it. The problem of problems is that the Russian working class has not yet moved as a class. This fact conditions the whole situation. But it will not last forever.



Problems of democracy in Pakistan

by Lal Khan

We are passing through very turbulent and hazardous times. Corruption, crime, unemployment, drug addiction, state and individual terrorism, fundamentalism, pollution, congestion and population explosion are the hallmarks of today's society. The social fabric of society is in tatters. Price-hikes, disease, illiteracy are on the rise while living standards, social and physical infrastructural facilities, social values and life in general are rotting. Misery and apathy stalk the land. The state institutions are embedded in flagrant corruption, they have lost control over the social processes along with the remnants of their credibility amongst people. The attitude of the masses towards parliament and their elected representatives is to say the least that of cynicism, disgust and contempt. Their leaders have betrayed them, their life is a misery, they

can't even envisage a flicker of hope, and they have for the time being lost their perspective. In front of their eyes most of their leaders are involved in an orgy of plunder and in a mad rush for power and privilege. They have been left in the wilderness of this ocean of misery, poverty and insecurity. This "democracy" has humiliated, disgraced and insulted their soul and spirit. They have been left in the lurch.

Rulers

Sometimes it seems that the rulers of this country belong to another planet. The views of the oppressed classes and their rulers and "leaders" are diametrically opposite about every fundamental phenomenon, fact and issue. And this is not accidental. Life in the echelons of power and that in the shanty

towns and villages is such a contrast, yet unforeseen in the history of this country. Paradoxically, this is the death-knell of the rulers. Precisely because of their comforts, luxuries and power they are not only distancing themselves from the rot going on in society but they have also become alien to the realities on the ground. It is ironic that in palatial surroundings, the television pictures of crowded streets, dusty roads and villages, polluted towns and cities, congested inner cities, overflowing sewers, stinking railways, drudgery of infant children, the broken roads, roofless schools and broken down and festering hospitals don't and cannot have the same effect as that of having to live a lifetime in these conditions. Nor can they ever feel the pain and misery these teeming millions have to endure while suffering this ordeal. A proverb from Greek mythology says: "Whom the gods want to destroy, they first make mad." Being unaware of these realities, our leaders and rulers cannot envisage the gravity embedded in this situation. The existence of even this fragile democracy is facing a threat from medieval and conservative forces. The dark clouds of reaction are hovering over the horizon. The threat of another coup d'etat, a right-wing reaction or a fundamentalist catastrophe looms large. This danger of mullah fanaticism won't go away either by rotating the tasbi beads nor through the low cultured and vulgar musical extravaganzas of Ms Raana Sheikh. And if the mullahs and reactionary Generals do take

over the spectre of a devastation on the levels of Afghanistan haunts Pakistan. The tragedy of the "liberal", "democratic", "secular" and "progressive" scholars, economic experts, intellectuals and intelligentsia, is that they are infected with the same disease as the one which has penetrated the thinking of the political leadership. More than 90 per cent of the GDP goes to debt-servicing, military and state expenditure. There is a hue and cry of decreasing the "defence" spending but they usually observe a conspiratorial silence about the imperialist plunder.

The bourgeois revolution which took place in the west transcended through a time span of almost five centuries. Beginning with the earliest revolutions of Denmark and Holland, it led to some of the greatest changes in human history. The Cromwell rebellion in Britain, the movement around Martin Luther and the great French Revolution of 1769 led by the Jacobins are but a few examples of the capitalist revolution. The revolution of Germany (1848-52), Japan (1856) were paradoxically led by the feudal elite against its own class and system. But these revolutions were restricted to the continents of Europe, North America and Australasia. The only country in Asia where the national democratic/bourgeois revolution was completed was Japan. This means the fruits of the capitalist revolution would only reach less than one third of mankind and that also in a period of three to five hundred years.

Revolutions

These revolutions, although with different variations in different countries, were the most progressive step of those times and in those societies. Although there were wideranging changes in many spheres of life but the main accomplishments were the following:

- (1) The smashing of feudal aristocracy and fiefdoms and uniting them into a new nation under a new form, a nation state. Modern nationalism and national unification was one of the most important aspects of the bourgeois revolution.
- (2) The agrarian revolution, distribution of land and the overthrow of landlordism.
- (3) The crusade against reli-



gious orthodoxy (mainly Catholicism) separation of the religion (Church) and the state. Secularism was introduced by the emergent bourgeoisie, which was supposed to be the first secular class in history.

(4) The massive development of science and technique based on enormous inventions and discoveries. The breakdown of the shackles of religious orthodoxy which had hindered all social intellectual, cultural and creative development was a major factor in this scientific and technological revolution. This led to the development of infrastructural foundations on which modern industry would be erected.

(5) The formation of parliamentary or bourgeois democracy where adult franchise could be exercised. Although parliament was to be firmly in the hands of the capitalist ruling class due to the social, political and economic domination of financial oligarchy.

Due to the rapid industrial growth on the basis of economic development of this revolution, there was an unprecedented rise in commodity production by the middle of the 19th century, the national markets could not sustain the absorption and consumption of this rampant production. Hence the colonialism of the 17th and 18th century took a new dimension and importance. This was the main factor in the conversion of capitalism into its imperialist form which led to the intensive colonialisation, exploitation and oppression of millions in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The enormous loot of the colonial peoples was utilised by the western imperialists on one hand to enhance their state, military, and financial wealth. On the other hand, they used it to develop the infrastructures of those societies and to pacify the working classes in the advanced capitalist countries. However, this process was not at all uniform and there were lots of exceptions and variations in this process.

In the Subcontinent this process of colonialisation cut across the existent modes and the patterns of socio-economic development. Religious orthodoxy, the extreme aristocratic extravagances of the local rulers and many other factors were responsible in the delay of the national democratic revolu-

tion in this part of the world. The general primitiveness of society, modes of production, cultural levels (in certain aspects) led to the victory of imperialism. The irony is that the British conquered India with the Indian troops. The mode of industrial/social economic development under the British Raj was extremely distorted, vulgar and trumpeted. In spite of that, they had to build railways and other infrastructural facilities mainly to enhance their imperialist exploits. But in spite of this, as Marx had put it, every mile of the railway line being laid by the British would prove to be their grave digger. The mass movement of national liberation against the British Raj in the Subcontinent, especially during and after the second World War shook the Raj in the Subcontinent. General Auchinleck the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in India, had sent a telegram in 1946 to Whitehall in London saying: "If you don't give them freedom ... they will take it..." This was in wake of the massive strike movement of the textile and other workers in many parts of the Subcontinent. But above all, the revolt of the sailors in Bombay and Karachi and the sepoys in Mhoro and other cantonments ignited the whole situation. But British imperialism being one of the most wicked of Imperialists devised a new strategy to defuse the situation and to keep the Subcontinent under its stronghold, even after the end of "direct rule".

Cadre

The Communist Party of India with a cadre membership of more than 48,000 and rapidly rising was in a leading position in the movement during the early 40s. But after the Yalta Agreement between Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill in 1943, the CPI committed a huge blunder by renouncing its struggle against British rule and supporting "democratic Britain" against fascist Germany in the war. This was, in fact, presenting on a platter the leadership of the national liberation movement to the political representatives of the Hindu and the Muslim ruling classes. This also diverted the process through which the national liberation movement, if united and successful, would have inevitably



developed into a movement of social and class emancipation.

On the other hand the indigenous bourgeoisie had not risen to its position through any revolution but under the sponsorship, "guidance" and patronage of British imperialism. They were, in fact, grafted by the British. In any case, they were comprador by their very nature of origin and character. After the cleavage of the Subcontinent into the states of India and Pakistan, the Hindu and the Muslim capitalists and landlords and their political representatives who were already at the helm of political, bureaucratic and military structures formed under the British rule, only had to rearrange their positions. The penal code, the military structures and other state functions have changed little from what the British left. The Muslim bourgeoisie had struggled for a separate state mainly to achieve a "free" market support from the state and to avert competition. 50 years after the so-called independence, this ruling class has not been able to accomplish even one of the fundamental tasks of the national democratic revolution. They have failed to create a national unification and a nation state devoid of exploitation of the oppressed nationalities. They have not been able to carry through comprehensive land reforms nor have they been able to obliterate feudalism or the feudal class. Rather due to their own intrinsic weakness and a rising threat of the nascent working class, they have forged an alliance with the landed aristocracy, which means a semi-feudal/semi-capitalist, hotchpotch of a ruling

class. The social, moral and cultural remnants of feudalism remain in different spheres of society while there is an overall dictatorship of financial capital.

Prejudices

The reactionary nature of this class is also revealed from the fact that they have not even been able to eliminate the prejudices of caste, sex, colour, religious minorities, creeds, communalism and ethnicity. On the other hand, due to their financial, technological and socio-cultural weaknesses, they have not been able to compete with imperialism and its monopolies. Rather they have become subservient to them in spite of hatred and contempt towards the imperialist onslaught among certain sections of the so-called national bourgeoisie. This has placed them in a very vulnerable position to imperialist designs and they were and are at the mercy of imperialism, markets and other needs for sustaining indigenous enterprise.

Hence, they have not been able to generate enough revenue for the state to develop the basic infrastructure (both physical and social) for erecting a modern industrial economy. On the contrary, they have been leeching the state in the form of bad loans, theft of electricity, gas and power supplies and through many other means. It has become a vicious cycle in which due to the extremely corrupt and parasitic nature of the ruling classes, all infrastructural and social development is reliant on imperialist aid which further strengthens the economic and political, stranglehold of the IMF, World Bank and other imperialist institu-

tions.

Hence the patterns of social, infrastructural and economic development are still on the lines and methods deployed under the British Raj, i.e., profit-orientated rather than for the purpose of overall social and economic uplift of society. The so-called developmental projects, both governmental and through the agency of non-governmental organisations initiated by western agencies, are to avert a social revolt of which imperialism is terrified.

Social change

Yet in no way are these projects capable of carrying out a significant social change which can improve the lot of the masses in general. The amounts being spent on "development" through all agencies are a drop in this ocean of misery. Ironically it is the black economy which is sustaining society. By its very nature, black capital can only invest in shortterm profits as in the services sector (construction, transport, shopping plazas, hotels, banking, speculative financing, etc.). Manufacturing production is in a shambles. The lowering of tariff barriers, privatisation of profitable sectors of the state economy at throwaway prices and other acts enforced by the IMF have further aggravated the crisis of industrial economy. With the organic weakness of the ruling class, it was inevitable that the state had an extensive role in political power in the post "Independence" period. This is why the whole period was marred by military-police dictatorships, parliamentary bonapartism and other repressive forms of governance. The first elections on the basis of adult franchise

were held in 1970. This concession was given in the wake of a revolutionary upsurge of the proletarian masses in 1968-69 which overthrew the brutal dictatorship of General Ayuh Khan. The inability of the movement to carry through the revolution to its conclusion led to another discourse. The "democratic formation" after 1971 was a respite for the ruling classes as their structures and financial oligarchy remained intact. The radical reforms instituted by the first PPP government were suffocated by the constraints of the system. The ruling classes could not even forego the slight scratches they were subjected to and showed their vengeance by assassinating Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who had initiated those reforms and nationalisations. The Zia dictatorship from 1977-88 was, in fact, a revenge of the ruling class against the people who had dared to rise in revolt in 1968-69.

The post-Zia "democratic" era was the result of a bloody split (Zia's assassination) within the state and sections of the ruling elite. But the ruling strata only allowed PPP into the corridors of power, in 1988, due to the pressure they were facing from below. They used the Benazir government to defuse the pressure and once they had stabilised and saw an ebb in the mass movement, they kicked her out of power. They brought their own classical representatives under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif with a thumping two thirds majority (Muslim Leagues, since soon after independence, have always been the political offshoots of the ruling state apparatus). Yet they could not sustain it for more than 29 months and extensive economic crisis

led to a split which under threat of a long march or a mass movement opened the way for another PPP government in 1993. US imperialism and important sections of the ruling class have been trying to use the Benazir government to do their dirty work (privatisations, etc.) ever since. The experiences of US imperialism with puppet military dictatorships like Noriega, Saddam, Ziaul Haq, etc., in the past decades were expensive and not very sweet. Now they prefer these "democratic" regimes which are relatively less expensive and more controllable. Those sections of the ruling class hurt by the present liberalisation policies are yearning for revenge. They are trying to pamper and paint Imran Khan as a new liberator. A more formidable alternative of the right in place of Nawaz Sharif. Although if he comes to power, he would be another disaster.

Transformation

Without a socio-economic transformation, higher levels of mass literacy and culture, genuine democracy is a utopian dream. All "democratic" governments have not been able to get rid of the dictatorial laws and acts of state repression which are rampant at grassroot-level. If we thoroughly examine the results of the last few elections, we can clearly see that they comply to the "package deals" propped up by the dominant sections of the ruling elite at particular junctures for particular vested interests. The overthrow of dictatorships was, of course, a step forward. But the extreme distress under the existing "democratic" system is a recipe of a huge social explosion and unprecedented convulsions. They can move in both directions - revolution or reaction. The triumph of fundamentalist or other forms of reaction will spell disaster and unprecedented bloodshed for generations to come. All sections of the ruling class and their system are rotten to the core. Reforming it and stabilising these corrupt institutions is a utopian dream. Only a new leading class - the proletariat - can carry through the social change. At the moment, it is bewildered, quiescent suffering, stagnant and perhaps a bit demoralised. This will not last

forever.

Another 1968-69 is bound to happen, although on a much higher plane. This is the inevitable conclusion of the laws of history and dialectics. Revolutionary periods are historical exceptions, but they are inevitable. Once the class moves, the prevailing reactionary modes and tendencies will be swept away. It will have to fulfil the fundamental demands of national liberation by breaking the yoke of imperialism, solving the land question, laying the foundations of infrastructure and building modern industry, emancipation of women, oppressed nationalities and religious minorities, breaking the stranglehold of religious orthodoxy, the attainment of full democratic rights by all sections of society and other tasks of the national-democratic revolution. But the proletariat vanguard can't achieve this without taking socialist steps of expropriation of black capital, commanding heights of the economy, landed estates, imperialist assets and loans, banks and financial oligarchy. In other words, the accomplishment of these tasks demands the passing over of the national democratic revolution into socialist measures - i.e., transformation of the property relations. This means that nothing less than a socialist revolution can end this misery and avert the impending catastrophe. Such a change would amount to a fundamental change in the present cause and motive of production, which is rate of profit into a mode and method of production based on fulfilment of human need. Hence the anarchy and chaos of the so-called "free" market economy would be replaced by a planned economy democratically decided and developed by an organised working class and masses in their own basic institutions (panchayats or Soviets) which would inevitably be created, controlled, elected and developed by the masses in the course of the revolutionary struggle itself. Humanity has yet to witness a higher form of democracy. The Such a socialist revolution would only succeed when it becomes a Subcontinental, Asian and a world socialist revolution. This is the only way forward for humanity.



"Have gun, will travel!"

"Have gun, will travel!" This is the slogan of a company called Executive Outcomes (EO), a South African based mercenary organisation. They have men from Portugal, Belgium, Zimbabwe, Russia... but mainly they recruit from South Africa and Britain where there are large numbers of suitable men available who are looking for work.

Executive Outcomes has about 2500 men on their books; veterans of conflicts in Namibia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Angola and beyond. They have sent men into Bosnia, Chechnya and anywhere else where they are "needed". In Sierra Leone, EO have declined to reveal the size of their team but reliable sources

estimate it at over 300 men working 'full time' in that country. Officially they are not supposed to be involved in any military operations but rather, according to their chief recruiting officer, just there to retrain the army and provide officers with expertise on intelligence planning, medical procedures and so on.

The most interesting question is who is paying for all this and how much? The Sierra Leone government claims that it is using the proceeds of a \$7 million dollar off-shore prospecting concession which they sold to the South African diamond firm De Beers. However experts cannot see how this can generate enough to cover the costs. There is much speculation that a recent IMF debt rescheduling agreement may have provided funding promot-

ed by Western powers seeking to prevent Sierra Leone becoming a second Liberia. There is also talk of a secret deal with De Beers who are keen to prevent widespread diamond smuggling. It is worth noting that there are also mercenaries in Southern Sudan working to protect the petrol companies from the ravages of the Sudan civil war. These mercenaries are raking in cash everywhere. Millions of dollars of international aid money has been spent on military activities in Angola. Eighteen former South African helicopter pilots were hired in 1994 to work in Angola on salaries of \$18,000 dollars per person per month. EO were quoted on their activities in the Kenyan paper 'Daily Nation' of 26/6/96 as follows: "We are, really, performing a service to

build up peace in every country. We are not only a business. For example, it was as a result of our efforts that Jonas Savimbi, leader of UNITA, was forced to the negotiating table. As a consequence of that there is now peace in Angola." They try and claim that they are a social service but for them it is just a business, albeit a violent one. The peace they are working for is one that acts in favour of the multinationals. Call them what you like: soldiers of fortune, military advisers... they are there to protect the ambitions of the West throughout the whole of Africa. They are turning up all over the continent and have signed several new contracts with African governments. One was signed with the President of the Central African Republic to try and safeguard his skin. Another was with Bob Denard in 1995 to assist his French backed efforts to overthrow the local government of the Comoro Islands. EO and firms like them are there to act in the interests of the wealthy parasites and multinationals and do the dirty work for them without being seen. No doubt all major credit cards are accepted!

Fabrizio Monti

Pakistan trade union defence campaign

Sponsored by the Punjab Labour Federation, the United Labour Federation, the Progressive Workers Alliance, the National Railway Workers Union and the National Union of Postal Employees.

Name.....

Organisation.....

Address.....

I wish to sponsor the campaign

I want to make a donation of £.....

All correspondence and donations to:
Shahida Jabeen, Secretary, PTUDC, PO Box
6977. London N1 3JN. All cheques payable to
PTUDC.

Renewed efforts are to be made to get Shahida Jabeen, international secretary of the Pakistan Trade Union Defence Campaign, over to Britain so she can report on the struggle of trade unionists in Pakistan.

This is dependent on the decision by the British Embassy not to grant her a visa being overturned. This will only be possible if the maximum pressure from the Labour and trade union movement is brought to bear. The PTUDC will be coordinating this during the Autumn. If your union branch or Labour Party has not yet affiliated to the campaign then we would appeal to you to raise it as soon as possible. The scandal of child labour and the shooting and oppression of trade unionists in Pakistan are just two of the issues that the campaign is seeking to bring to the attention of the labour movement internationally. Indeed the campaign itself was established in honour of Arif Shah, President of the Punjab Labour Federation, who was assassinated by hired guns of the bosses in January 1995. Please join now or consider making a donation.

Socialism and anarchism

William Morris 1834-96

1996 marks the centenary of the death of William Morris. It is as an artist and designer that Morris is remembered in the media, his political work being conveniently forgotten. And when his political work is eventually discussed it is misrepresented - both reformists and anarchists laying claim to his mantle. But as we can see from his writings Morris clearly considered himself a communist and Marxist. In fact AL Morton describes him as "the first English Marxist."

he joined the Democratic Federation (soon to be renamed Social Democratic Federation) in 1883. This was the turning point in his life. Between then and 1896 he is known to have spoken at 578 meetings - there were undoubtedly more which went unrecorded.

He played a central role in the factional struggle against the opportunist and sectarian leadership of HM Hyndman. This led to the creation of the Socialist League.

The Socialist League, too, was riven with internal struggle. The "parliamentarians" around Edward Aveling and Eleanor Marx wanted to develop a real socialist party with roots in the trade unions, and an anarchist wing. Morris attempted to stand in the middle, attacking the sterile "leftism" of the anarchists, while at the same time criticising the group around Aveling. For Morris the task was to "make socialists," and this meant a lot of hard propaganda work. He travelled constantly to every area of the country and wrote profusely.

But the League split and by 1890 Morris was to continue his work through the Hammersmith Socialist Society. Despite ill health Morris was extremely active right up until his death. His last lecture in the Hammersmith Clubroom was on the subject "One Socialist Party." Within a few months he was dead.

In answer to our comrade Blackwell's suggestion and in default of someone else beginning that free discussion he speaks of, I wish to note down a few thoughts suggested by reading the clauses of the Anarchist Congress at Valentia, as stated by our comrade; premising that I do so in no polemical spirit, but simply giving my own thoughts and hopes for the future for what they may be worth.

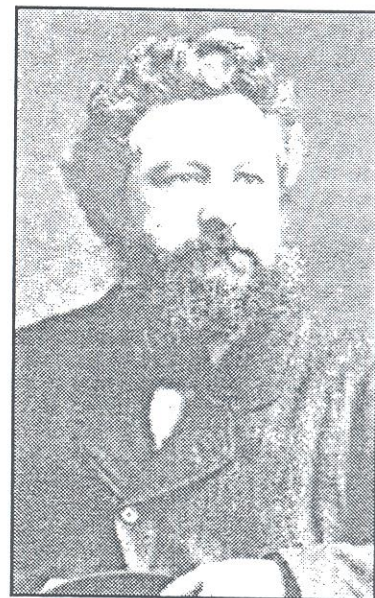
I will begin by saying that I call myself a Communist and have no wish to qualify that word by joining any other to it. The aim of Communism seems to me to be the complete equality of condition for all people; and anything in a Socialist direction which stops short of this is merely a compromise with the present condition of society, a halting place on the road to the goal. This is the only logical outcome of any society which is other than a close company sustained by violence for the express purpose of "the exploitation of man by man" in the interest of the strongest. Our present "society" dominated by capitalism, the society of contract, is a form of this class-society which has been forced upon those who hold the slave ideal by the growth of knowledge and the acquirement by man of mastery over the forces of

nature. The history of "society" since the fall of feudalism has been the gradual freeing of class or slave-society from the fetters of superstition, so that it might develop naturally within its prescribed limits of "exploitation of man by man," and that stupendous and marvellously rapid growth in power and resources of modern slave-society is due to this shaking off of superstition.

Communism also will have to keep itself free of superstition. Its ethics will have to be based on the recognition of natural cause and effect, and not on rules derived from a priori ideas of the relation of man to the universe or some imagined ruler of it; and from these two things, the equality of condition and the recognition of the cause and effect of material nature, will grow all Communistic life.

So far I think I can see clearly; but when I try to picture to myself the forms which that life will take, I confess I am at fault, and I think we must all be so. Most people who can be said to think at all are now beginning to see that the realization of Socialism is certain; although many can see no further than a crude and incomplete State Socialism, which very naturally repels many from Socialism altogether. All genuine Socialists admit that Communism is the necessary development of

Socialism; but I repeat, further than this all must be speculative; and surely in speculating on the future of society we should try to shake ourselves clear of mere phrases: especially as many of them will cease to have a meaning when the change comes that we all of us long for. And here I join issue with our Anarchist-Communist friends, who are somewhat authoritative on the matter of authority, and not a little vague also. For if freedom from authority means the assertion of the advisability or possibility of an individual man doing what he pleases always and under all circumstances, this is an absolute negation of society, and makes Communism as



the highest expression of society impossible; but when you begin to qualify this assertion of the right to do as you please by adding "as long as you don't interfere with other people's rights to do the same," the exercise of some kind of authority becomes necessary. If individuals are not to coerce others, there must somewhere be an authority which is prepared to coerce them not to coerce; and that authority must clearly be collective. And there are other difficulties besides this crudest and most obvious one.

The bond of Communist society will be voluntary in the sense that all people will agree in its broad principles when it is fairly established, and will trust to it as affording mankind the best kind of life possible. But while we are advocating equality of condition i.e., due opportunity free to everyone for the satisfaction of his needs - do not let us forget the necessary (and beneficent) variety of temperament, capacity and desires which exists amongst men about everything outside the region of the merest necessities; and though many, or, if you will, most of these different desires could be satisfied without the individual clashing with collective society, some of them could not be. Any community conceivable will sometimes determine on collective action which, without being in itself immoral or oppressive, would give pain to some of its members; and what is to be done then if it happens to be a piece of business which must be either done or left alone? would the small minority have to give way or the large majority?

A concrete example will be of use here, especially as it affects my temperament. I have always believed that the realiza-

tion of Socialism would give us an opportunity of escaping from that grievous flood of utilitarianism which the full development of the society of contract has cursed us with; but that would be in the long run only; and I think it quite probable that in the early days of Socialism the reflex of the terror of starvation, which so oppresses us now, would drive us into excesses of utilitarianism.

Indeed, there is a school of Socialists now extant who worship utilitarianism with a fervour of fatuity which is perhaps a natural consequence of their assumption of practicality. So that it is not unlikely that the public opinion of a community would be in favour of cutting down all the timber in England, and turning the country into a big Bonanza farm or a market-garden under glass. And in such a case what could we do? who objected "for the sake of life to cast away the reasons for living," when we had exhausted our powers of argument? Clearly we should have to submit to authority. And a little reflection will show us many such cases in which the collective authority will weigh down individual opposition, however, reasonable, without a hope for its being able to assert itself immediately; in such matters there must be give and take; and the objectors would have to give up the lesser for the greater. In short, experience shows us that wherever a dozen thoughtful men shall meet together there will be twelve different opinions on any subject which is not a dry matter of fact (and often on that too); and if those twelve men want to act together, there must be give and take between them, and they must agree on some common rule of conduct



to act as a bond between them, or leave their business undone.

And what is this common bond but authority—that is, the conscience of the association voluntarily accepted in the first instance.

Furthermore, when we talk of the freedom of the individual man, we must not forget that every man is a very complex animal made up of many different moods and impulses; no man is always wise, or wise in all respects. Philip sober needs protection against Philip drunk, or he may chance to wake up from his booze in a nice mess.

Surely we all of us feel that there is a rascal or two in each of our skins besides the other or two who want to lead manly and honourable lives, and do we not want something to appeal to on behalf of those better selves of ours? and that something is made up of the aspirations of our better selves, and is the social conscience without which there can be no true society, and which even a false society is forced to imitate, and so have a sham social conscience-

what we sometimes call hypocrisy.

Now I don't want to be misunderstood. I am not pleading for any form of arbitrary or unreasonable authority, but for a public conscience as a rule of action; and by all means let us have the least possible exercise of authority. I suspect that many of our Communist-Anarchist friends do really mean that, when they pronounce against all authority. And with equality of condition assured for all men, and our ethics based on reason, I cannot think that we need fear the growth of a new authority taking the place of the one which we should have destroyed, and which we must remember is based on the assumption that equality is impossible and that slavery is an essential condition of human society. By the time it is assumed that all men's needs must be satisfied according [to] the measure of the common wealth, what may be called the political side of the question would take care of itself.

William Morris 1889

Football: a hidden history

"It is only through such accidents that we arrive at anything like perfection. There will no doubt be a complete overhauling of the arrangements at Hillsborough." This quote from the Sheffield Independent are the first words printed in the introduction to the 3rd edition of Simon Inglis' book 'Football Grounds of Britain' (Collins Willow 1996).

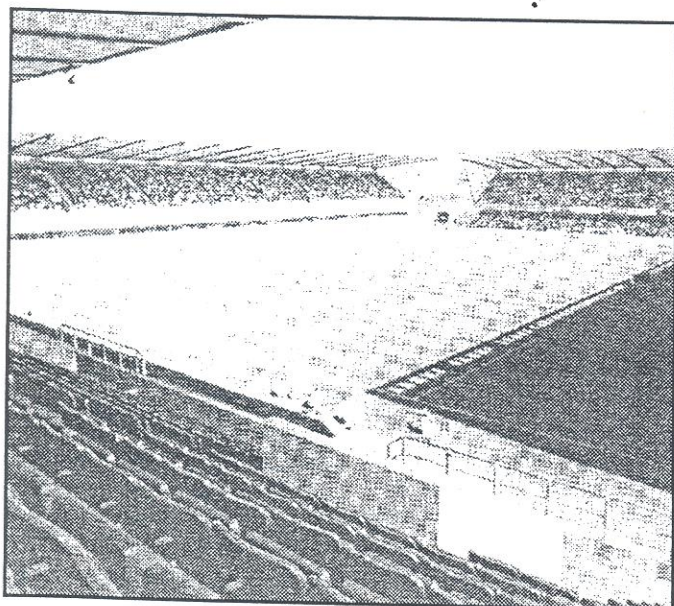
Now this is not the sort of book normally included in the review pages of a political publication, however it does contain some interesting material in relation to health and safety and the rush for profit which any trade unionist will instantly recognise and relate to. The above newspaper quote says more than you might think as it is dated February 1914 not May 1989!

The book continues: "the 1989 Hillsborough disaster was no freak event and the resultant Taylor Report in 1990 no knee-jerk reaction. Both were the inevitable culmination of years of complacency, neglect, low investment, and in many cases, rank bad management." Inglis makes clear that far from anticipating dangers, the powers-to-be in football were primarily only interested in making money on the cheap and showed no interest whatsoever in the safety of those who paid to watch. As he says in relation to terracing: "(they) evolved as they did; not out of some ethereal pact between Victorian clubs and their supporters in order to satisfy a popular longing, but because they were cheap to build and could pack in as many punters as possible, with minimal extra facilities. Even when it came to

adding roofs, at many clubs the money had to be raised by supporters' clubs." Anyone who has stood on a packed terrace or battled up or down crowded stairways on match days will recognise the dangers which existed unchecked for decade after decade. In listing the most serious disasters at games as well as the many near misses and unreported cases where deaths have been "attributed to 'seizures', 'heart attacks' or whatever" it is clear that this is clearly "part and parcel of a deep malaise." Even after 1989 it is clear that many clubs dragged their feet. Anyone who has ever had to fight the management in a workplace on health and safety issues will instantly recognise this lack of commitment. Of course, the most visible result of the repercussions of the 1989 Hillsborough disaster has been the ending of the terraces and the creation of all seater stadiums. Inglis is clear on the reason for this. "It was not Lord Justice Taylor who closed down the terraces, therefore. It was the football industry, by its own ineptitude. Instead of grasping the nettle and making the safety and comfort of supporters a priority, the majority of clubs abdicated responsibility for crowd management to the police... while regarding safety as something imposed upon them..." However, whilst Inglis clearly welcomes the introduction of seating he does draw attention to the affect that this has had on ordinary supporters to attend matches. Clubs have used the requirement to

implement the Taylor recommendations as an excuse to raise prices to pay for the work and to eliminate the cheap sections of the ground. This together with the reduction in capacities at many grounds has meant that "instead of being 'palaces of the people', more grounds are becoming like private members' clubs." Given the cramped nature of the seating and the lack of decent entrance and exit facilities at most if not all grounds, I cannot help but wonder if the changes have made stadiums as safe as the author hopes. As a former fire safety rep I had the opportunity to watch the unedited footage of the Bradford Fire disaster of 1985, the purpose of which was to show just how quickly—a matter of minutes in this case—a fire can spread. The point to remember is that this fire occurred in a seated stand. The blatant ignoring of the interests of ordinary supporters has not gone unchallenged. The book deals, club by club, with each league ground in Britain (the history, design etc.) and within these sections are described the relevant campaigns of the supporters. The various struggles against bond schemes, ground closures, unhelpful local councils, greedy developers and so on are all listed here and the recent events surrounding grounds such as Brighton shows that these issues have not gone away. In truth this book will obviously interest those who are football fans rather than the general reader. However the success of the two previous editions of this book does show that football grounds, situated as they often are in the heart of working class communities, are an important part of the fabric of our lives. It says something about the class nature of our society that virtually no football stadiums have preservation orders on them or are mentioned by architects in the same way that other similar sized structures are. Yet they command the affection and passion of the people in a way that is quite unique.

Steve Jones



The Great British Tradition



by Beatrice Windsor

Captain Swing: The last rural rebellion

If the industrial revolution brought appalling conditions for the new breed of working class, then the peasants who remained in the countryside suffered destitution and desperation.

In France, following the revolution, the large estates of the bourgeois had been broken up and divided into small plots worked by free peasants. In England, the reverse took place. The combination of the Industrial Revolution and the Napoleonic wars demanded greater levels of food production. The old landowners responded by grabbing yet more and more land, and introducing agricultural mechanisation. The old, albeit unequal, partnership of landlord and peasant was shattered. Whereas peasants could pay their way by working 'in kind' for their landlord, now they wanted cash. The ability of the peasant to, at least, survive by living off the land had disappeared too. The greater demands on food production led to a new era of land enclosures, while the rich stole what had been common: between 1770 and 1830 six million acres of common land was lost, being grabbed by the landowners.

The destitution of the land labourers was further compounded by the Speenhamland Act. This well intentioned paternalistic law had aimed to provide a safety net of Parish Relief for all labourers who fell below a certain level of poverty. But the new breed of landowners used it to supplement their wages bill and virtually all land labourers could only work by the degradation of appealing for Parish Relief.

The landowners arrogantly thought they would face no threat from the peasants, who had no political representation, no trade unions and were illiterate and scattered throughout the countryside.

But the landowners did have an Achilles Heel however. All farms stored their produce—hay, corn and peas—in ricks. Unfortunately for the landowners, these were highly inflammable.

In 1830 the labourers hit back—the skies of Kent were soon red at night as ricks blazed across the country. Threshing machines were also mysteriously wrecked in the dead of night. The landowners were furious. One Kent landowner thundered in the Times (3rd January 1831): "I should be well pleased if a plague was to break out among them, and then I could use their carcasses for manure..." His ricks went up in flames the following night.

As the fires spread to Wiltshire and throughout the Southern counties, the ruling class dithered about what to do. If food production came to a halt so would most of society. Now the labourers were striking deals with farmers, who were locked in their own struggles against the landowners over the tithes they were forced to pay. Local deals were being struck agreeing minimum wages and peasants celebrated their deals by attacking the oppressive overseers of the Parish Relief—in the village of Brede, the local official was paraded through the village in a dung cart.

The revolt was spreading as fast as the rick fires. Landowners were now receiving letters signed by the mythical countryside figure of 'Captain Swing', who gave them a stark choice: "Bread or Fire."

The ruling class decided to act, if only to stop the revolt spreading to the highly combustible cities. A wave of vicious repression was unleashed and the movement smashed. Nine labourers were sentenced to death, 457 transported and hundreds more imprisoned, even though throughout the struggle not one person had been killed or injured.

The peasants soon realised that their direct action could only have limited success—after all, once you had burnt down a landowner's ricks you could do no more, whereas the rich landowner had enormous reserves to fall back on.

New methods would be needed—and six agricultural labourers in Tolpuddle were demonstrating just what that method should be. But that's another story.

(This concludes the Great British Tradition series. Beatrice Windsor is pleased to announce the arrival of Roisin Kathleen Wade, and will now be spending more time with the family!)

Steakholder of the month



Readers will no doubt by now have got used to hearing stories of how company chairmen and directors all seem to need massive pay rises whilst referring to somewhat more modest pay claims from workers as "unreasonable," and if workers take action "holding the country to ransom." The arguments they muster never change: they need the money as an "incentive" and to ensure that they get the right "calibre" of person for the job. This is somewhat strange when you look at the sort of imbeciles you find in the boardrooms of our finest companies. Most of them seem only to be around for a few hours a week and would certainly not be missed if they went on strike, unlike their "unreasonable" workforce!

However let's be fair. Some of them do suffer the same fate as us and get sacked (or downsized as they like to call it). But not for them the ignominy of getting a few pounds in their pocket alongside their P45. According to information compiled by *Labour Research* a quite different fate seems to be the norm for these sad souls. For example, the transport firm NFC gave four of their directors payoffs of more than £200,000. The departing chief executive got £585,000 for evidently doing such a fine job. Many also get to keep company cars, have their pension funds boosted and so on. You don't even have to be with a company that long to get your wad. When the "troubled" building group YJ Lovell decided to take action, over £801,000 was spent in payoffs to sacked directors with a Mr. Edward Smith getting £293,000 despite only being at the company for 13 months. No hassles about length of service to get redundancy here. The most galling thing is that most of these people will end up getting new jobs pretty quickly—if they haven't already got one (or more) already that is. As for the rest of us....

socialist appeal

The Marxist voice of the labour movement



Stressed out

The past period has seen an enormous redistribution of wealth from the poor to the rich. In America alone the figures are staggering; in 1979 America's richest 1% held 22% of the nations wealth, now they hold 42%. A survey conducted by the Institute of Policy Research in Washington DC showed that there was now 447 dollar billionaires in the world with a combined wealth that "exceeds the annual income of the world's poorest 3 billion people."

The past period has also seen an explosion in part time and temporary working. In the Netherlands nearly every second worker now holds a part time or temporary job. Spain is not far behind with 41% and France has seen the level of such working jump from 14% to 26% of the workforce in the last decade.

In addition 10% of the European workforce is officially out of work with 10% of those being unemployed for more than a year. In Germany the figure is now at 4 million, the highest post war level ever. as companies struggle to grab profits in what has been called the "joyless recovery" there has been a continued and deepening assault on workers conditions. "Cradle to grave employment security is history, its gone. Uncertainty has replaced the age of entitlement" (Win Nystrom, PCM outplacement firm—Brussels). Downsizing is the name of the game. *Newsweek*

magazine ran an article called 'Corporate Killers' which showed mug shots of company bosses together with their salaries and the numbers of staff they had sacked. Top of the list was Robert Allen of AT&T who had a salary of £2.2 million and had sacked 40,000 workers! This is the road companies have taken in the battle for so-called competitiveness. After General



Motors failed to reach their profit target of 5% they started outsourcing work to low paid non union workers to reduce the amount of parts produced in house and save costs. In Dayton, Ohio, the resulting threat to jobs from this led to the biggest strike in the US car industry since 1970. There is enormous anger building up over the effects of all this. Even the *Financial Times* has recognised this when it said recently: "Corporate restructuring has disrupted or ruined the lives of individuals and communities." The *Wall Street Journal* spoke of thousands of workers being "left in its wake."

This process has had a particu-

larly devastating effect on the middle classes and the over 40s. An employment company survey showed that over 60% of those interviewed who were aged over 35 felt that they were being excluded from job interviews because of their age, the figure for those over 45 rose to 80%. The middle classes in white collar jobs are now facing the same conditions as the old system for

dockers with hiring and firing by the day. Professor Dennis Snower at Birbeck college went so far as to refer to these changes as being almost "as profound as the industrial revolution." A sacked Fokker engineer summed it up thus: "...what depresses me is that I'm 50 years old and I don't have any perspectives anymore... it's like after a certain age you are told that your life has stopped." He spoke of pretending to go to work because he was "ashamed to meet peoples eyes." Siegfried Bootz, trained as a wholesaler in Germany, has been in and out of training programmes—from data processing

to computer programming—since losing his job back in 1991. After rent and child support he is left with just £100 per month: "I used to make good money. Financially I can't afford much of anything now...so many qualified people doing nothing, how can a state allow that to happen."

We have already seen the signs of the reaction to all this in the movements that have taken place throughout Europe, especially in France, but in Italy, Belgium and Germany too. With the world about to move back into recession, things won't get any easier. Struggles are set to intensify. The bosses were given a warning recently from Ethan Kapstein, a leading economist: "The world may be moving inexorably towards one of those tragic moments that will lead future historians to ask; why was nothing done in time? Were the economic policy elites unaware of the profound disruption their economic and technological changes were causing men and women? What prevented them from taking the steps to prevent a global social crisis?"

The struggle for socialist ideas is given an impetus when you see the profound pessimism of the thinkers of the ruling class. They see no way forward, for them it is a case of "take the money and run." For socialists the task is to fight for a real future that will end this nightmare—it's time capitalism was given the P45 of history.

Steve Forrest

Labour to power on a socialist programme