

socialist appeal

The Marxist voice of the labour movement

**General
election:
the final
countdown**

**Global capitalism
- world poverty**

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General election countdown

As we head into the new year, the countdown to the general election begins. The Tory Party has wreaked havoc across the country since it came to power in 1979. Take a trip round Britain today and you see a very different country to the one that existed in the 1970's.

The steel, coal and shipbuilding industries all but gone. British manufacturing dramatically "downsized."

People working the longest hours in Europe, with the shortest holidays and the least employment rights. We could go on, but it is clear for all to see.

All the old certainties of the post-war period have gone - the job for life, "cradle to grave" welfare, free education and a half decent health service.

The Tories boast that they have created the leanest and fittest economy in Europe clearly shows what has happened. Lean yes, but fit? On any one day 270,000 workers are off work with an occupational stress related problem. There has been an enormous growth in part time work, casual work, temporary contracts, split shift working, zero hours contracts and so on. What the Tories call a "flexible labour market."

In fact the labour market is so flexible that over 9 million people have been made redundant since 1992, yet unemployment, officially at least, has gone down. Before we start cheering, just look at the nature of these jobs. Even workers on managerial and professional grades face an average 25% cut in wages when they are employed after redundancy. So when the Tories boast about the great recovery that

the British economy has had since the last recession, the Rolls Royce of recoveries according to Kenneth Clarke, we know exactly what it is based on. The sweat, toil and high blood pressure of working people. These are important factors in the transformation of the situation in Britain today. Throughout the 1980s the Tories seemed invincible. But now things have changed. Since autumn 1992 in fact, when Britain was forced out of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism and we witnessed the mass demonstrations over their pit closure policy, they have consistently been the most unpopular government in modern history.

Working class

This new situation does not only affect the traditional working class. A new phenomenon has appeared, heralded even in the media - the "new proletariat" of formerly "middle class" people, teachers, civil servants, bank workers, even layers of middle management - all are suffering from some of the ills "traditionally" only felt by the working class.

The Tories may well boast that Britain is now a tremendous investment opportunity for Korean television manufacturers, but their policies have led towards the undermining of their own support. People are being squeezed to a quite intolerable level. That is why the so-called "feelgood factor" has been so evasive for them at the present time. Despite the increases in personal spending, the turnaround in the housing market and the lowering of official unemployment to around 2 million, a Tory electoral recovery is

showing no signs of materialising.

They face defeat in 1997 and they know it. This relentless pressure on them has led to unheard of splits, particularly over Europe. This division represents the impasse of British capitalism. Despite all their grand talk, the British economy still lags way behind its European "competitors." No amount of "inward investment" can hide this fact.

But it is not just on Europe that the party is divided. The anti-Europeans are also pushing hard for Gingrich style policies on social policy, more anti-union legislation and almost total deregulation of the economy. In reality they want a big business free-for-all, with the working class on its knees.

Of course the more "mainstream" Tories around the Major, Clarke and Heseltine camps are little better. They want Britain in Europe, but they want us to compete on the basis of lower wages and far worse conditions. They, too, have floated the idea of more curbs on "union power," particularly the removal of many of the immunities that unions "enjoy" when engaged in legal industrial action. The fact is, though, that we are unlikely to see either set of policies tried out in the foreseeable future. The 1997 general election will mark a turning point in British post war history.

The Wilson/Callaghan Labour governments of 1964-70 and 1974-79 were still very much governments that tried to operate within the so-called post war consensus, Butskellism as it was known after Tory Rab Butler and Labour's Hugh Gaitskell's - politically indis-

cernible.

All that changed after 1979. And with the new developments that have taken place in British society since, a change in government next year is unlikely to be a quiet affair.

Tony Blair may wish it, the media may wish it, big business may wish it, but a new Labour government will not be able to carry on "business as usual" from where the Tories leave off. Blair accepts the market, therefore the market will prevail.

Government

However, the election of a new Labour government will represent a dramatic transformation in the whole political situation. The years of pressure, the cut backs, the attacks, the defeats - all mean a tremendous expectation in what a Labour government must do. The opinion polls prove the point that people don't want just more of the same, or in Blair's case, a more "caring" version of it. People are heartily sick and tired. Labour's slogan is correct, "enough is enough," but millions of people will be waiting to see what is going to be delivered.

The Tories are trying to buy back their lost votes with tax cuts and such like. But it is not working. People are more worried about the decaying health service, the vastly underfunded education system, the long hours under intolerable conditions they are having to put in just to earn a half decent income. There is all the evidence that Labour could have a clear mandate for far reaching change if it went to the country on a radical programme. Issues like the minimum wage, employment rights, renationalisation of the utilities, full employment and a real development of health, education and welfare could lead to a landslide victory. The 1997 election will at last give millions of working people the opportunity to kick the Tories out. But we need to go further, to commit the Labour Party and the unions to a genuine programme of socialism. Only in this way can the aspirations of working people be truly fulfilled.

Magnet strike: labour movement must build support

The Magnet pay dispute in Darlington has highlighted once again the scandalous absence of employment rights in the UK. Despite complying to the letter with the anti-union laws, 300 plus workers at the Darlington site of Kitchen manufacturers Magnet, were sacked in September, when they went on strike for a pay rise.

Magnet is owned by Berisford Holdings, whose Chief Executive, Alan Bowkett, took an income of £2,905,077 out of the company in 1995, equivalent to 180 times the average salary of a Magnet worker. The Tories have developed an economic and legal framework to maximise profits at the expense of workers. With no legal minimum wage

and John Major's government fighting tooth and nail against the European "working time" directive, Britain is like a free trade zone on the edge of Europe where workers have few rights and can be exploited at will.

On 30th November Keighley Trades Union Council and the Magnet Joint Shop Stewards are holding a march and rally on the theme of employment rights and solidarity. A key demand is for the right to take sympathetic industrial action when fellow union members are in dispute. Keighley is home to Magnet's head office, so local trade unionists are making a strong protest to the main company board about the spiteful sackings in Darlington. Keighley Magnet workers are ready for the company should it

come for them. As Steve Davison, President of Keighley TUC commented: "Berisfords, the holding company that owns Magnet, can bring the full resources of its organisation to bear on the strikers, yet any form of sympathy action by other Magnet workers is deemed to be unlawful. It is an industrial dictatorship of capital over labour and we will not rest until this situation is reversed."

Messages of support and donations to:
Magnet Strike Committee, Labour Rooms, 123 Victoria Road, Darlington, County Durham.
Cheques payable to Magnet Families Support Fund

French truckers' strike

The French lorry drivers industrial action, most clearly expressed in the blockading of roads and towns throughout the country, highlights the explosion of discontent developing throughout Europe.

The most significant issue in the dispute is the reduction of the working week. The European Union directive on working hours specifically excludes many transport workers. British employers are interpreting the directive in a way that will not apply to drivers. The French employers took the same attitude - but their legal interpretations have been shown up as meaningless in the face of the drivers movement. The main demands of the drivers have been a maximum 48 hour week and earli-

er retirement.

In Britain union leaders have been arguing that lorry and coach drivers should be covered. They need to take a leaf out of the French drivers book and mobilise their members in order to fight for their rights. The French action has put these issues firmly on the agenda.

One particular problem facing British drivers is the huge level of self employment in the transport industry, and the fact that a lot of work is carried out on a straight payment basis ie. drivers are paid a set amount for the journey, no matter how long it takes. It is clear that the issue of shorter hours must be linked to the question of real employment rights. Union leaders must start to address these points.

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Higher education strike success

Tuesday 19th November saw unprecedented levels of industrial action on university campuses across the country, as academic and non-teaching staff united in a one day strike to demand greater levels of government funding in higher education.

The strike - which was supported by NUS and nearly all of the country's student unions - was in response to the pitiful 1.5% pay increase offered by university management. Since 1982 the pay of university staff has fallen by 0.5%, whereas comparable jobs have seen rises of 22%. The strike was

to demand an independent review body similar to those deciding teachers, civil servants, and, infamously, MPs pay levels.

At Liverpool University, the unions involved including MSF, Unison, and AUT, had demanded an independent pay review or suitable arbitration, which were repeatedly denied by management. The situation was worsened because of the failure of the university to grant the pay increase agreed for the 1996/1997 academic year. As a result eight unions balloted for action, receiving a resounding 90% "yes" vote.

Picket lines outside key buildings and libraries succeeded in closing more than 70% of the university. Those buildings which were opened were done so by managers employing the crazy tactic of opening blocks and encouraging students to use them, despite the lack of any security or safety cover, placing both students and university property at risk. Union leaders are expecting equally low pay offers in April for the next academic year, and as result have agreed to "work to rule" immediately, and to conduct further action after the christmas break. They have also not ruled out

strikes during the exam period if their demands are not met. Nationally the strike was a success, gaining support from the vast majority of students, who refused to cross picket lines, recognising that the attacks on staff were detrimental to their education. This show of solidarity by education unions must be repeated if decent pay awards are to be granted and for the government to provide sufficient funding in higher education. The crisis is not in education alone, since all sections of the welfare state are being dismantled. Unions must fight to ensure that a future Labour government will be committed to abolishing the cuts made by the Tories, as part of a real socialist programme that can begin to tackle all our ills.

Jonny Scott
Liverpool University

Brassed off in Doncaster

The film "Brassed Off" was filmed on location in and around Doncaster, showing quite graphically the demise of the coal industry. Already we have official unemployment rates in the pit villages of 33% with a level of 12-13% throughout the borough as a whole.

The 14th of November will, however, go down in local history as Black Thursday. On that day over 580 job losses were announced with the closure of one of the area's last major employers, Du Pont (a nylon fibre plant). Added to this, a further 188 jobs are to go at Adtrantz following the decision to downgrade a former railway plant to a basic maintenance shed.

No doubt the Tories will be crowing in the run up to the election about the boom and prosperity which in reality has passed many of us by. Ironically the only new office block to go up in Doncaster during this boom has been the new DSS offices, which opened just before these devastating job losses were announced! Brassed off we may be but we expect the next Labour government to be committed to full employment. Anything less would be a betrayal of the very people who have stood up and fought the Tories over the past 17 years.

Gary Gabbitas
Doncaster

Tories dole out £45 million to BMW

BMW's recent announcement that it is to build its new £400 million engine plant in Birmingham has been trumpeted by the Tories as a great sign of the competitiveness of the British economy relative to the 'stagnant' economies in mainland Europe. The truth is somewhat different.

In the week that the press was full of stories about the 48 hour working week it was inevitable that the government would jump on to the first bit of good news that came along. Thank you, BMW. Tory trade and industry spokesman, Ian Lang, making the announcement, claimed that such investment would have been impossible if Britain were to accept the dictates of Brussels on such issues as the social chapter and the working hours directive. Britain was the leanest and fittest economy in Europe goes the Tory refrain, and that is why there is now a queue of Japanese, Korean, US and European firms waiting to invest. But life is never so simple. Up pops BMW chief Bernd Pischetsrieder, at a dinner in London hosted by the Guardian newspaper, where he not only extolled the virtues of the single European currency but went on to claim that the investment in the

new plant was mainly in order to preserve engineering know-how in its Rover subsidiary, previously dependent on Japanese car giant Honda, and to enhance its sales in the UK market.

The plant will build over 500,000 engines a year for both Rover and BMW cars and employ 1,500 workers. The existing Longbridge engine plant builds 340,000 engines with 6,500 workers. So BMW is certainly trying to get its moneys worth from the workforce at the new plant. And then there's the little matter of Britain's labour costs: an average of £10 per hour compared with Germany's £24, and then there's the employers contributions to health and pensions benefits: which in Britain are less than one third of that in Germany. And don't forget the £45 million government aid. Sounds like a good investment for BMW, but what was that they were saying about engineering know-how?

And what do the Tories get out of it? Apart from some cheap publicity for the day, there is the question of a big new car plant, some rather marginal West Midlands constituencies and a general election rapidly approaching over the horizon.

Alastair Wilson

Jack London's 'Iron Heel'

The Iron Heel was first published in 1908 and is both one of the earliest and one of the best examples of socialist literature.

Unlike London's more famous books, *Call of the Wild* and *White Fang*, this book is not well known and has often been out of print or difficult to find. For that reason we must welcome the republication by Wordsworth of this work, especially at the bargain price of £2.

Set in a fictitious future of 1912 to 1932 it takes the form of a manuscript written by revolutionaries which has been found several centuries later. London called it "a proletarian fable in the form of a heroic romance." Its tale of the struggle between the socialist underground and the capitalist oligarchy, called the Iron Heel, brilliantly anticipates many of the more brutal regimes which have marked the 20th Century. This has often been called London's most personal book and in bringing out the revolutionary spirit of his characters he shows what traditions he believed the movement should stand behind. The main character in the book, the revolutionary Ernest Everhard, may seem rather over the top to modern readers yet we can see here the ideals to which London aspired. In the face of the brutalities of capitalism gripped by the lust for power, London's belief in the future success of socialism is clear for all to see. A most recommended book.

The Iron Heel
Jack London (Wordsworth
American Classics: price £2)

History of the welfare state

A history of the so-called Welfare State may not at first glimpse seem to be the most interesting of books but this account covering the last fifty years manages to be both readable and a concise source of information. The development of, and subsequent attack on, welfare spending is at the core of the processes which have marked capitalism since the Second World War.

The great programmes intended to develop the welfare state (a term first used in 1941) were raised in the belief that radical measures would be needed to ensure that a) the working class would be fit and educated enough for the requirements of the post-war world and b) would not seek a more revolutionary alternative to resolve their plight.

Poverty

The Twenties and Thirties were decades marked by poverty and squalor for millions of workers particularly in the North but also in areas such as the East End of London. Indeed despite the obvious hardships of war, many workers found themselves better off during the early Forties as the economy was switched onto a war footing with increased planning and the resultant virtual elimination of unemployment. Rationing may have been tough but for some it was actually better than what they had endured beforehand! The book talks of the changing political mood with over one in three of the population in 1942 stating that the war had changed their political views, according to the organisation Mass Observation.

Given what would be very high expectations at the end of the war, and the war itself as an example of what could be achieved, given the will and the resultant planning, it was not surprising that the mood of sections of the ruling class was to grant reforms to buy social peace. The book describes how a previous generation of the ruling elite had acted: "Fearing large-scale unrest and the Bolshevism which had just produced the Russian revolution, the government responded with a series of ad hoc measures starting in 1919 with Christopher Addison's 'out-of-work-donation' for the unemployed..." i.e. the dole. No wonder the Beveridge report of 1942 talked of the need for "revolutions, not patching" when describing the actions which would be needed.

The proposals of the Beveridge report on the establishment of radical new welfare measures was widely welcomed by both people and the press "the Daily Telegraph excepted". Some bosses privately opposed it but the majority reluctantly went along. However many expressed concerns as to whether the proposals would actually come to pass: "Home Office intelligence reports monitored... 'an extraordinary anxiety that somehow the report would be watered down or shelved.' Such anxiety was not without justification." When the wartime coalition government sought to delay implementation, 122 MPs voted against the line and for immediate action. Workers understood that political action would be needed to win the proposed reforms as the Tories could not be trusted and

duly acted to vote in a Labour government in 1945. Even Churchill could not save them: "At Walthamstow... he was booed into silence by a 25,000-strong crowd demanding 'What about jobs?' and 'What about houses?'"

Pressure

The book shows how the main recommendations of the report, under the pressure of the organised working class, were implemented, at least in part, both by Labour and indeed added to under the Tories. The post war boom enabled the Tories to say "you've never had it so good" and grant the required reforms to keep them in office. Consensus politics was the watchword—not surprisingly the sections of the book which deal with this era are headed "the age of optimism" and "consolidation". However the next section of the book plays a somewhat different tune and is headed "the time of disillusion". From here on in we are in familiar territory following the end of the post war boom in 1974. First under Labour, but then in a far more concerted way under the Tories, the gains of the welfare state come under attack, one by one. The full extent of the "Thatcher revolution" is recounted here and no one reading this will need any further reason not to kick the Tories out at the next general election.

The Five Giants
A Biography of the Welfare
State
Nicholas Timmins
(Fontana £9.99)

Time running out for long working hours

Steve Davison, President of Keighley trades council, looks at what lies behind the Tories attempted rejection of the EU working time directive...

From the 23 November 1996 millions of workers in Britain will have new legal rights. Desperate last minute efforts by the British Government to deprive workers of the same rights as other Europeans collapsed in humiliating defeat in the European Courts. Like most legislation the EU Working Time Directive is complicated, but the main benefits to workers will be that they cannot be forced to work more than 48 hours in a week; that they must have at least one day a week off work and a minimum 11 hours between shifts; and they must have work breaks and a minimum of three weeks paid holiday rising to four weeks by 1999.

The beneficiaries will be the four million, almost 20% of all employees, who will get extra paid holidays and especially the 2.5 million workers who

currently get none. By 1999 six million workers will have four weeks paid holiday for the first time.

Excessive Hours

The British labour market is the most deregulated in Europe. British workers' pay lags well behind that of the other developed European economies. An estimated six million workers would get a pay rise if a minimum wage of £4.26 was introduced. Low pay is the main reason why British workers work the longest hours in the EU. According to the Government's New Earnings Survey (NES) 50.9% of manual male workers work regular overtime, with as many as 5.7 million working over 45 hours per week, the equivalent of two million full time jobs. Five percent of the labour force, some 1.3 million, have two or more jobs which represents a 100% rise in the last ten years.

Over half the workers in the EU working more than 46 hours a week are British. The average length of the working week has increased from 42.2 hours to 43.4 hours in the last few years and in a typical week a British manual worker will work 3.1 hours longer than their European counterpart. In a new publication, "Pushed to the limits", the TUC reports that 3.9 million workers, 23% of full-time employees, now work over 48 hours in the UK, Inner London tops the list with 195,000 workers doing more than 48 hours. This represents a 41% rise since 1994.

Hours and Health

More British workers work shifts than any other Europeans, with an estimated 21% doing a nightshift compared to the EU average of 17%. 350,000 workers do permanent nightshifts, the vast majority without any warning of the potential dangers to their health through 'sleep deprivation' and cardiovascular disorders.

The Government claims that working time is not a health and safety issue but they put their own report, 'Mental Health and Stress in the Workplace', through the shredding machine when it stated, "Research has shown that working more than 48 hours per week doubles the risk of coronary heart disease". The report also indicated that more than 10,000 employees working more than 48 hours will die from this disease. Ill health and lost days at work cost the UK economy £14 billion according to the Health and Safety Executive.

Stress is the disease of the 1990's as workers are made to work harder and longer. It is obvious to any worker that excessive work is bad for your health. If working on a VDU screen for 40 hours is bad for your eyes then it must be even worse over 48 hours. If manual handling does your back in then the longer the hours you work the quicker you are injured. If being exposed to 90 decibels of noise damages your ears over an eight hour shift then it is even worse over a ten or twelve hour shift. In any case if hard work was good for you the employers would do some!

Government Opposition

The Government has no intention of turning the EU Directive into domestic legislation in time for the 23 November deadline. They have had three years to implement this legislation and will now attempt to stall matters further by putting it out to consultation with the employers' organisations. It is extremely likely that they will make this an election issue, of the UK standing up to the 'bully-boy bureaucrats' of Brussels and pose as champions of the workers' right to determine their own working arrangements.

In this the Tories are historically consistent. They put the same arguments forward to oppose the 10 hour Bill in 1847 when they were the champions of the right of six year olds to work 12 hour shifts. They have dragged out the same old scarecrow every time the trade unions have advanced workers' terms and conditions of employment. The real reason that they oppose the legislation is because it does two things.

Firstly it regulates the labour market and provides a bottom line below which no-one should fall, which is at odds with their attempt to turn Britain into the 'sweatshop of the world' and a deregulated 'free-trade zone' on the outskirts of Europe. Secondly the legislation allows for 'derogations.' This is euro jargon for the right of employers to vary the terms of the directive provided they have negotiated this with their workforce. Only



the trade unions can effectively speak on behalf of workers, therefore the directive gives trade unions de facto recognition in the only country in the EU that has no legal recognition rights for trade unions.

Article 18

The most contentious part of the Directive is Article 18 which gives the UK government a seven year 'opt-out' from implementing a maximum 48 hour week, providing that no worker is forced to work more than 48 hours or is disciplined for refusing to do so. The TUC, which opposes this, makes the point that no other EU country has legislated for this provision. But the government would be mistaken in thinking that long hours of work are universally popular. The TUC commissioned an opinion poll by NOP in May 1996 which found that 78% of people asked, including 72% of Tory voters, agreed that it should be illegal for employers to force workers to work more than 48 hours.

Individual trade unions should be immediately calling meetings and conferences of shop stewards to brief them on the latest position on the Directive. It is unquestionable that in many workplaces the issue of excessive overtime will cause problems for some shop stewards, particularly where their members are low paid. Nevertheless no progress can be made for the British working class as a whole if the movement panders to the 'overtime-merchants'. If trade unions wish to defeat these elements they will have to advocate the case for higher pay in their sectors and prepare the membership for industrial action if necessary to secure this. In the modern context lower hours go hand in hand with higher pay. With patient explanation, a strategy for action and decisive leadership the trade unions can win the overwhelming support of their members and, incidentally, thousands of non members for a new aggressive industrial strategy to eliminate low pay and excessive working hours. This is possible now given the enormous discontent that exists in the majority of work-

places today. However given the overwhelming mood for an end to the Tory Government this discontent is more likely to develop during a Labour Government, especially if they are lukewarm in their efforts to address these questions. Either way the time is now ripe for militant trade unionists and socialists to prepare the arguments for the reduction in the working week.

Legal Interpretation

After the 23 November deadline a fascinating legal position arises as to whether the Directive is effective in the UK or not. The Tories and employers clearly take a 'King Canute' view that it doesn't, but this doesn't seem to match up with expert legal advice given to the trade unions. The problem with the law of course is that nothing is certain and there is no point in spending vast amounts of money sending Judges to private schools if they continue to find in favour of the workers.

However there is a new dimension with implementation of EU law. For example with the Collective Redundancies Regulations, Transfer of Undertakings Regulations and the various legislation on equal rights for women (part-time) workers, the UK Law Lords increasingly leave judgement to be passed by the European Court of Justice (ECJ).

The TUC argues that if the Government fails to implement the legislation then public sector workers are immediately covered by its provisions because the Directive applies to member states and the 'public sector' is an 'emanation of the state'. This means that public sector employers should immediately implement the measures or begin collective bargaining with the appropriate trade unions to bring collective agreements in line with the Directive. An example of what this could mean would be that all workers are entitled to three weeks paid holiday and that all workers on casual or part-time contracts must immediately begin to get holiday pay or credits for future holiday pay.

Also if any worker in the public



sector suffers a quantifiable loss through the non-implementation of their rights than they will have a case to pursue damages against the government. This is made easier as a result of previous EU case law, which is binding on the UK Government, namely the Francovich case against the Italian Government, that is sometimes referred to as the 'Francovich principle', i.e. that all EU legislation applies immediately and directly to workers directly or indirectly employed by Governments. Three large UK trade unions, the GMB, MSF and Unison, have already stated that they will vigorously prepare cases on behalf of their affected members.

There is another strong legal argument that the failure to legislate by the 23 November means that the legislation should be applied to the letter and that the scope for derogation and variation through negotiation has been lost. This would mean that the legislation would apply in its strongest form. This would cause immediate problems for working arrangements like annualised hours agreements.

Bargaining Opportunity

The controversy around the Working Time Directive puts the issue of the superexploitation of the British working class firmly on the agenda. For the trade unions it represents the best opportunity they have had for a long time to

begin to win back their negotiating rights and to exert control over working practices. As many of the workers that will benefit from the Directive are non-unionised there is the opportunity to go directly to them and say that if they join the union we will get you three weeks holiday pay, breaks and protection from excessive and anti-social working hours. It is the best recruiting sergeant the unions have had for decades.

For these reasons the Working Time Directive will be hotly contested by the Tories and employers. From this opposition the workers will realise that it is in their interests. For Socialists the opportunity is there to return to the basics. To once again make the demand for reduced working hours central to the struggle of organised workers. There will be considerable debate in the unions with our 'overtime bandits', but the tide of change is now running in favour of those of us who believe that working people should be well paid for reasonable working hours. For a society that should have as its goal full employment, we are talking about a four day 32 hour working week being the norm. The benefits to workers and their families will be enormous. Time for leisure, time to spend with their children and friends. Time to be human beings!

Tory morality exposed

Over the last few weeks, Britain has been gripped by a panic over the moral state of the nation. People have been engaged in furious argument in the pubs and supermarkets as they seek to resolve this crisis... At least that is what certain politicians and the press would have us believe! The reality is of course somewhat different but as a general election approaches we can see how these people are seeking to stir up this issue so as to avoid dealing with the realities of life.

by Steve Jones

Is it moral to deny someone a job? Is it moral to repossess a house when a family cannot pay the mortgage? Is it moral to deny people healthcare because a hospital cannot afford it this year? No it is not. But the Tories and their

friends in the media are quite happy to ignore this and deal with the usual suspects instead—sex, single mothers, unruly children and sex again for good measure.

The debate on morals was raised again about a month ago when the widow of a murdered head teacher raised the need for a campaign on morals. Normally the words of the relatives of murder victims pass unnoticed, especially where they are working class, but since this case had attracted a certain amount of publicity the media took an interest. The campaign was couched in the usual middle class platitudes and as such politicians of all parties were falling over themselves to endorse it.

Lecturing

It is really taking the biscuit to see the Tories lecturing us on morality when their govern-

ment has been well and truly steeped in sleaze and double standards. They seem to feel quite happy telling us how to run our lives yet adopt quite different standards for themselves. Step forward Stephen Norris, Nicholas "drink up" Scott, Tim "family values" Yeo, assorted cash-for-questions MPs and so on. Behind these notorious examples there exists the more general standards of the ruling class to which we shall return later. We have also seen the question of morals raised in relation to education. The attempt to impose a standard of "agreed" morals on children is on one level laughable since kids, like everybody else, live in the real world and see the difference between things as they are and what the Tories tell them. An obsession of these moral guardians is the question of the single parent. This is at the heart of what is wrong with modern Britain they say. Only the good old nuclear family can work, they bleat, summoning up a vision of a happy middle class two-point-four kids family to back their case. The reality is different. Since we are on the subject of nice little families, we should note that the majority of child abuse cases occurs inside so called normal family structures. Furthermore you cannot separate family life from family income. It is poverty not the absence of one parent which creates stress in the home. It is easy to bring up children as a single parent if you are wealthy, not so easy for one or two parents if you are poor. As a matter of fact the most successful sort of family struc-

tures are those of the extended family where one or two parents are backed up, socially and otherwise, by other friends and relatives. Such arrangements spread out the stress and ensure that children are more socially integrated. But since this smacks of a communal society rather than the "fortress" approach of the Tory moralists, this is glossed over.

For bourgeois thinkers the family unit is apparently everything. They believe in a "normal" family, walled up in their home, refusing all help and giving none. This is what the likes of Thatcher have raised up as the ideal state of life, no wonder she said that "there is no such thing as society". For them it is "me first" or more specifically, "rich- me first."

Victorian

They talk about Victorian values but are quite oblivious to the sexual hypocrisy that marked that period of history. Ironically it has been the pressure of life under the Tories which has contributed most to the breakdown of family life. Pressure at work, long hours, job insecurity, unemployment, lack of decent benefits, etc—how can this fail not to put pressure onto people's lives? Pressure which inevitably has its fall-out in cases of domestic violence, family breakups and so on. If the "breadwinner" of a two parent household is forced to go out to work all day then how can they play a role as part of the family?

Allied to this obsession with the family is the obsession with sex. Almost every year, as regular as clockwork, some Tory politician or newspaper sounds off either about sex in general or about a specific "scandal." Usually this takes the form of weighing in about the level of sex on TV or the latest "shocking" film or video to come our way. The latest case to come before these protectors of our way of life is the film "Crash". This film has been shown all over the world, mainly to art house audiences, without causing people to rush out and crash cars for sexual kicks. Yet, despite the fact that this film contains less violence than an



episode of the "A-Team" the likes of Virginia Bottomley and the Daily Mail (as usual) have called for this film to be banned. Even more bizarrely Westminster City Council (remember them?) have temporarily banned the film. Quite how these characters can claim any moral superiority over us beggars the imagination. The fact that, as with previous such cases (Last Tango In Paris, Natural Born Killers etc), these films usually end up being shown without any problems whatsoever and are soon forgotten, escapes these moralists. After all, what was the point of banning a film like "The Exorcist" from being seen on video when the chances of people rushing out of the house looking for devils to possess them was always going to be somewhat remote! It is also worth noting that some Tories have also raised the question of banning the film 'Michael Collins'.

Impose

All the time the ruling class are seeking to impose their view of morality onto us. How we live, what we think—they demand

the right to control us. Yet they do not insist on these "standards" for themselves. Leon Trotsky wrote an article in 1936 called "Their Morals and Ours." Primarily intended as a defence of the methods of the Bolsheviks (and the Trotskyists against Stalinism) in the face of the attacks of the bourgeoisie against their "immorality" it takes up, as the title implies, the moral double standards of the ruling class. Trotsky gives the example of how the ruling class applies the maxim "you shall not kill." During peacetime a state will act against anyone who kill someone yet in times of war they encourage people to do the reverse and kill as many as they can. Trotsky continues with a discussion on the nature of moral precepts noting that "the norms of 'obligatory' morality are in reality charged with class, that is, antagonistic content." He then turns to the ruling class: "The bourgeoisie, which far surpasses the proletariat in the completeness and irreconcilability of its class consciousness, is vitally interested in imposing its moral philosophy upon the exploited masses. It is exactly for this purpose

that the concrete norms of the bourgeois catechism are concealed under moral abstractions patronised by religion, philosophy, or that hybrid which is called 'common sense.' The appeal to abstract norms is not a disinterested philosophic mistake but a necessary element in the mechanics of class deception."

The state, education, the media, religion (of course) and so on all seek to impose their norms on us in their interests, the interests of the ruling class. Where these interests change then their moral viewpoint will also change. One minute they can be condemning a regime as "wicked and immoral" the next they are trading with them as "good friends." They pontificate about the need for standards in society yet they themselves are not bound by any such strictures. For them it is "kill or be killed." Whether it is a competitor to be crushed or a boardroom coup to be carried out, they have no moral scruples whatsoever. And that is how they treat their own kind... No wonder they believe that bodies like the Stock Exchange should be self regulated, all the

better to cover up their shady deals and shabby practices. It is the reactionary brutal domination of capitalism which represent the greatest hindrance to the establishment of a "moral" society. The substitution of repression, ignorance, prudery and humbug for real morals sums up the character of capitalist society. To resolve this issue we need to address its material basis—the abolition of poverty and exploitation.

Exploitation

The exploitation of one class by another is the greatest of all immoralities. We should remember that the establishment of a socialist society not only addresses the question of who runs society but also how we live our lives. A society in which we all feel able to be responsible for each other and have the time to play a useful part in society, rather than being a source of profit, is part of what socialism is about. On that basis, morals will take on a reality which no amount of bourgeois preaching from on high can ever match.

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Moral hysteria over schools

The recent closures of Manton junior school in Nottinghamshire over teachers' refusal to teach a 10-year old boy, and Ridings secondary school in Halifax by Ofsted inspectors who said the school was virtually out of control, have led to a hysterical press campaign over 'uncontrollable' children. In both the schools concerned the teachers' union NASUWT had voted for strike action to try to force the removal by expulsions or suspensions of children with behaviour problems - up to 60 children in the case of Ridings.

Coinciding with these 2 schools' problems has come the call by Frances Lawrence, wife of murdered head teacher Philip Lawrence, for a national moral debate and the increasing concerns of large layers of the population over the control of guns and knives in the wake of the Dunblane killings and the perceived increase in violence in society.

With the moral bandwagon well underway, Education Secretary Gillian Shephard has raised the inevitable: "My own personal view is that corporal punishment can be a useful deterrent." Hastily she was slapped down by John Major who, in spite of voting in favour of corporal punishment in the House of Commons in 1986, is well aware of the rulings of the European Court on the issue. The more sane Tories moreover would probably have to take into account the view of the 1989 report on discipline in schools, commissioned by them under Lord Elton, which concluded that "punitive regimes tend to be associated with worse, rather than better, standards of behaviour."

But the moral issue is an important one for the Tories. It is seen as a vote-winner and they have viewed with concern (as have the left-wing in the Labour Party) Tony Blair's hijacking of the formerly sacrosanct right-wing moral conservatism. Moreover the capitalist class have genuine concerns over the breakdown of 'law + order' in urban areas and over the increasing disillusionment and isolation of layers of working class youth who have no hopes of a job or a future under capitalism. Of course for the capitalist class in 1990's Britain there is no prospect of creating jobs and a future and so they attempt instead to promote ideas of morality, respect for authority, lawfulness, individual responsibility etc in an attempt to stave off social disintegration. Alongside this they attempt punitive measures against young 'criminals' through the police, courts and prisons - the latest crazed idea being to electronically tag youths as young as 10 to enforce curfews and school attendance.

Scapegoats

In recent months the Tories have diverted some of their attention from the usual scapegoats for immoral youths - the family, working mothers and single parents in particular - towards schools. After all it is one of the current government's boasts to have created jobs in a flexible marketplace - in practice predominately low paid part-time jobs for women who have families. Rather awkward then to lay sole blame for social problems on working women - better to find another scapegoat in the form of education, already at loggerheads with the government over the curricu-

lum, cuts and teaching methods.

Convenient then that, only a few months before the election campaign, the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community (set up by the government's Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority) should have just published its statement of moral 'values' which will now be used to pilot moral and community education in schools with the intention of eventually being incorporated into the national curriculum. How the Tories could live up to this body's list of principles which include "provide opportunities for all", "make truth and integrity priorities in public life" or "support families in raising children and caring for dependents" is of course unanswerable. Even one of the Forum's members the Rt Rev Vincent Nichols, Catholic Bishop of North London commented "the values promoted in our society in practice are success, self-interest, successful deception, acquisition of wealth and winning at all costs. That is part of the dilemma."

The Forum's crusade to instill moral values in Britain's youth began inauspiciously with a minority split over the lack of a firm commitment to heterosexual marriage and not enough emphasis on the family. Gillian Shephard immediately gave her support for a stronger line and right wing Tory MP Julian Brazier said "it's a long string of empty platitudes with no firm commitment either to marriage or to Christianity."

The likelihood is schools are to be faced with yet another set of regulations, and moral instructions to be passed on, somehow or other fitted into the already overcrowded school timetable. Like the National

Curriculum itself there will have been virtually no consultation with teachers over the content or methods of teaching the new moral code. As is already the case with the compulsory teaching of religious education with an emphasis on Christianity, many teachers will resent teaching so-called values which bear no relation to the reality of teachers' or childrens' lives. With schools overburdened with the problems of budget cuts, increasing class sizes, redundancies, crumbling schools, nursery vouchers, SATS tests, Ofsted inspections, league tables, and, of course, the responsibility for the lamentable state of the national cricket team, it is little wonder that some teachers turn in despair to taking drastic measures against an often personal and immediate problem - children in their classes with behaviour problems.

Hysteria

The NASUWT, playing on genuine fears and concerns of teachers have erroneously stirred up the current media hysteria that it is children who are to blame for their problems. They have utterly failed to properly take up the real campaign, that of funding education, and special educational needs in particular. Instead of blaming supposedly unruly children, teachers' unions and the Labour Party should lay the blame for schools' problems firmly and squarely on the shoulders of the Tories. Labour has put forward the ridiculous idea of 'home-school contracts' as a way of getting parents to force education on their children. Parents do need a contract from Labour - a promise to fully fund the education system, to provide decent jobs for young people, to support families in any number of ways from a minimum wage through to increasing child benefit to improving housing and social services. The last thing children and teachers need from this corrupt system is moral claptrap.

Veronica Patterson
East London Teachers
Association, NUT

Education, education, education!

Education, education, education! No one can disagree with the stated priority of Tony Blair for education. On October 19th, over 15,000 NUT members and parent, student and governor supporters marched in London to demand a decent education for our kids. This was the start of a much-needed trade union campaign for increased education funding.

The NUT poster summarised the needs:

Nursery - £81 million to expand these for all 3 and 4 year olds.

Pupil numbers - £136 million needed for the needs of an extra 54,000 pupils starting.

Class size - over 1.3 million in classes of over 30; class sizes have risen for 5 years!

£125 million to reduce primary classes to 1994 levels.

Crumbling schools - £3.2 billion over 5 years to restore buildings.

Special needs - £372 million to implement the Code of Practice.

Security - £25 million more needed for improvements.

Further facts show the current problems: 10,000 teaching posts were lost last year alone! 18,000 primary kids are in classes of over 40!

235,000 secondary kids in classes of over 30, 765,000 kids taught in mobile classrooms, 1.26 million kids in classes of over 30.

All this adds up to a disaster in education, and after 17 years, the Tories are responsible for World Economic Forum figures showing Britain ranking 35th for education!

LEA's need an extra £1B next year to avoid cuts. They already spend £668M more than the Tories assessment of needs.

Soon after the demo, we saw the sickening events at Ridings school, Halifax in Calderdale LEA. The emergency inspection by OFSTED inspectors blamed teachers, governors and the LEA, but not the main culprit - the Tory government. The Ridings experience could be repeated in many areas, but Calderdale has suffered from more opt outs than most LEAs - Calderdale has 6 LEA comprehensives, 9 grant maintained and 2 private (independent) schools. Tory policy created league tables, competition, LMS - with most money going to schools, with little left to prioritise extra for deprived areas. It is not a sudden increase in hooligan behaviour or bad teachers, but 17 years of economic devastation that has created poverty, unemployment and cuts. The recreation of selection and grammars leads to Ridings-type situations. Intense and moralistic media attention worsened the situation for staff and kids. OFSTED leader Chris Woodhead is a Tory stooge appointee. Disgracefully, he claimed class size makes little difference to education, whereas the Government review body has had to admit class sizes increased teacher workload. It reported all teachers working longer hours:

Primary - average 50.8 hours - up from 48.8 in '94
Secondary - 50.3 hours - up from 48.9 in '94

Special needs 50 hours - up from 47.5 in '94.

Pupil exclusion is no solution. It is understandable that teachers are frustrated when no solutions are visible for threatening behaviour, etc, but the real solution lies in increased support and funding to deal with individual problem kids. The anger and violent explosions of some are not surprising when one reads the background problems they face. Only intensive help and special needs statements, acted on and fully funded, can solve the situation. Where necessary, fully staffed and funded special units for very difficult kids could be set up. Labour's commitment to reduce class size for 5-7 year olds is welcome, but hardly scratches the surface. No class should be over 30 - the Independents have no class of over 20! Now teachers are under attack again! - Over 150,000 teachers took early retirement or resigned through ill health in

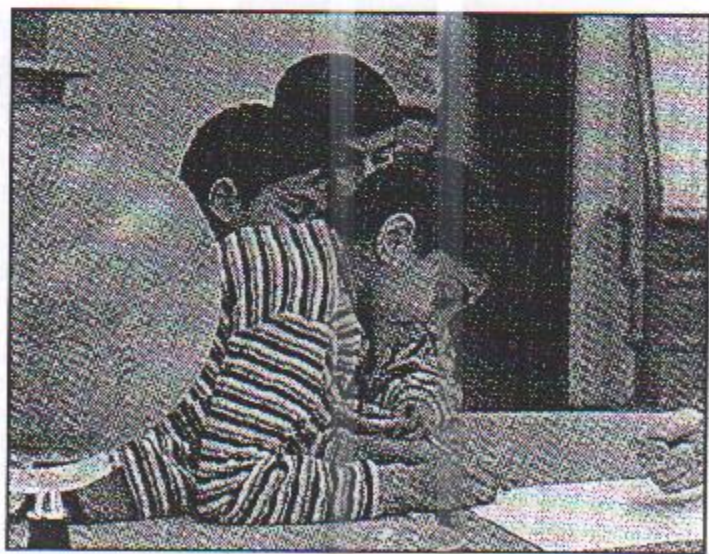
the last 10 years! - this is 3 times those leaving at the normal retirement age of 60. 40% of teachers are in their 40's, and pupil numbers are rising. The Tory solution is not to reduce workload or increase pay to aid recruitment, but to copy Maxwell and fiddle our pensions. From April, 1997, they propose restriction of early retirement. This has created enormous anger - and then they propose doubling the death grant - for teachers who die in service!

Education is a major issue for the general election, and while Labour have some meagre proposals, they fail to tackle the real needs.

We demand:

- a return to a full comprehensive system - no selection, no streaming. Get rid of GMS.
- an end to all subsidies to private schools, and league tables
- scrapping of OFSTED, to be replaced by advisors to offer help, not judgments
- a democratically decided national curriculum
- a return to democratic LEA control: plan resources for the most deprived
- reduce all class sizes to 30 maximum (lower for practical, etc), then down to 20 over time
- a crash school repair and building programme
- a massive fund injection for needed resources, books, computers, etc
- for school budgets based on needs.

**Bryan Beckingham
Oldham NUT**



Clinton election victory

The weeks following the Clinton election victory opened up discussions throughout the ranks of the new American Labor Party. In an election where less than 50% bothered to vote, the lowest percentage since 1924, it gave further proof of the disillusionment with the parties of big business. Even amongst those who voted, many did so reluctantly.

Despite the fact that over the last four years Clinton had moved further towards the Republicans, the bulk of the US unions gave him support. In the next four years, the unions will be forced to look in a new direction. According to Republican Congressman, Frank Cremeans, "The President signed 60% of our legislation into law. I'm confident he will work with us in completing the Contract (with America) issues that we set out to accomplish."

In Detroit, the November meeting of the Labor Chapter (branch) was thrown open to a Roundtable discussion on the elections. The opinions expressed no doubt reflected more general feelings within organised labour in the United States. The first speaker, an older worker,

recalled how his father, who was in the IWW, taught him to have a contempt for the two parties of big business. Labor needed a voice of its own and that is why he joined the Labor Party.

A trade union official stated his union took a luke warm approach to supporting Clinton against Dole. To think that the unions' \$35 million was sufficient to buy us influence when Clinton spent around \$500 million in the campaign, he said, was naive. He stated, however, there was no alternative but to vote Democrat to keep the Republicans out. "I went to the polls with a heavy heart. I was nearly physically sick when I cast my vote. But we had to keep Dole out at all costs."

Finished

Another member agreed: "Four years under Dole and we would be finished as a Labor movement in this country." It was simply a question, he said, of choosing "the lesser of two evils". He then gave some historical examples of Germany in the 1930s, which were not entirely accurate, to back up his argument.

(In fact, this argument was used by the German Social Democratic leaders to back the arch-militarist Hindenburg as the "lesser evil" against Hitler, but within a year he had appointed Hitler as Chancellor!) Another comrade argued that it was fine to support Clinton in order to "push him to the left". He saw the Labor Party as not a viable challenge to the Democrats, but as a form of pressure on them. Others had different views. They believed that neither of the two parties could serve the interests of the working class. "In reality, this is a one party system, with the Democrats and Republicans in the same bed". Another sister believed that the new party should fight the other parties electorally, at a county, state and national level. "I think it would be really great if Trumka would stand for President in four years time, or maybe Sweeney or Tony Mazzocchi", she said. Another trade unionist stated he was proud to stand with a majority of his fellow electorate: "I refused to vote". This fact shows clearly how discredited the two party sys-

tem is. We need to build up our own party to represent our people, the working class. There was nothing fundamental to choose between the Democrats and Republicans. This was backed up by another speaker who said they both wanted to cut welfare. The Republicans wanted to cut Medicare by \$158 billion, while Clinton "only" wanted to slash \$116 billion. They could easily come to an agreement to halve the \$42 billion difference in the near future.

Election

I spoke briefly about the situation in Britain, the coming general election and what we want from a future Labour government. I also mentioned that many of the views expressed here tonight were expressed over 100 years ago in the trade union movement before the British Labour Party was formed. At that time, the trade union leaders hung onto the coat-tails of the Liberals in opposing the Tory Party "as the lesser evil". Only through the bitter experience of the Taff Vale Dispute were the unions forced to back a Labour Party to represent the class interests of working people in Parliament. The founding of the American Labor Party was an historic occasion. The coming to power of such a party in the United States firmly committed to the principles and interests of the US workers, would shake the whole world to its foundations and become a beacon to workers everywhere. These points were warmly received and everybody agreed with the need to exchange experiences and learn the lessons of workers' struggles in Britain and America.



Susan Watson, editor of *The Sunday Journal*, spoke to us on the first anniversary of the Detroit strikers' own newspaper.

"Well, I approach this anniversary with mixed emotions. On the one hand, I am so proud of all the striking workers that we have done what no one thought we could do; we have done the impossible. We have put out this paper. We are holding our own financially, although it is hard. We have a good viable product that we put out to the community; we're kicking the ass of our opponents. And so you have to be proud of that. I have mixed emotions however, as this is a strike tool and our goal was to work ourselves out of business real fast. I would have been happy if we had put out two editions and got back our jobs. That has not happened. So I'm proud today that we are

doing this. But I pray to God that we do not have a second anniversary.

To my brothers and sisters, journalists and all union members, it's true that our struggle is your struggle and your struggle is our struggle and waters may separate us, and language may separate us, as you guys don't think we talk English.

Whatever may separate us, no matter where we are, we are all united by that little word "union", that stands for fairness, equality, and the compassion for the working class. That's what unites us across the barriers and we thank you for your support and hope you keep us in your prayers as we keep you in ours."

Check out the *Detroit Journal* at: <http://www.rust.net/~workers/strike.html>

Detroit cops put the boot in

The temperature plummeted to well below zero. Up the road, about three hours drive, 40 inches of snow fell in Cleveland, Ohio. But as the freshwater lakes began to freeze at the edges, feelings on the picket-line were red hot.

The Detroit newspaper workers - locked-out now for 16 months - stage periodic guerrilla strikes (known as 'actions') against the bosses of The Free Press and The News to force them back to the negotiating table. Today, lightening pickets assembled outside The Free Press building to greet the newspaper's owner, Anthony Ridder, who was giving the management a secret pep talk on the first floor. Quickly the bosses were forced to switch the venue to another floor. But how the sound of loud-hallers and bull-horns can carry!

Just then the cops arrive - the specials - whose business it is to harass the pickets and generally make life difficult. They attempt to clear our banners and break up the picket. "Keep moving or you'll be taken downtown", howled the cop. He then made a series of demands to curb the protest. Everyday some new rule or other is announced by these guardians of law and order, threatening to disperse the picket under some pretext or other. "Move, my ass. They always do that", shouted an angry striker. "Every time we protest, they try to shut us down." As expected, pickets tend to confront this harassment by hurling dogs abuse at the cops. Sometimes there's a stand off, sometimes not. A striker turned to the cop and accused him of being in the company's pocket. "We've been out 16 months, so don't think you're gonna push us aside."

At the same time the goons (company security guards) were using video cameras at the front and rear of the building to record each picket for the company files and to gather evidence to legally fire workers.

Those scabs that cross the union picket line are also given verbal abuse by strikers. "You scabby bastards taking our jobs!" "Judas!" "Sold your soul to

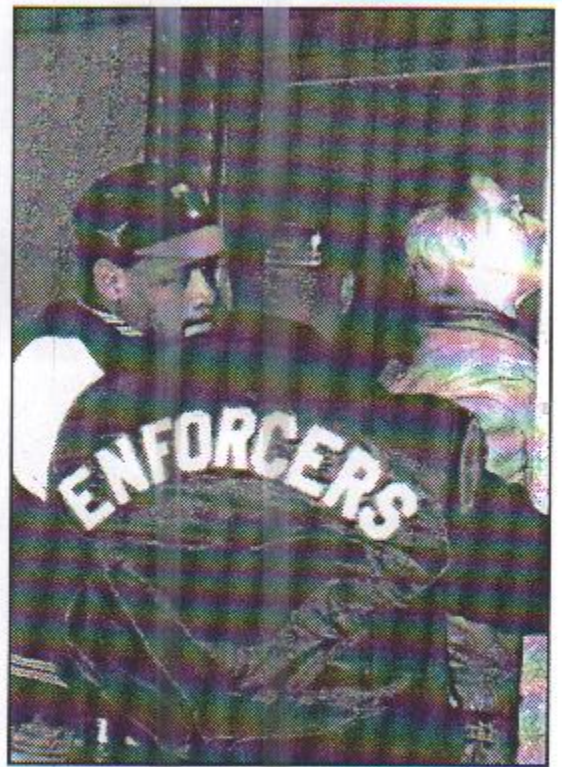
the company!" Ironical songs are made up to holler at the strike breakers.

That day, company goons seal up the front entrance, fearing some kind of attack. The head of company security - an ex-FBI man - lines up his men behind the door. Realising this is in contravention of the fire regulations, the picket captain gets on the mobile phone to inform the city fire department, demanding immediate action to 'protect' the locked in scabs in case of fire... In a well-rehearsed action, pickets break up and surge around to the back entrance of the building where scabs are being let out. The goons are there with their dark glasses and video cameras. As soon as this happens, the cops pile in, saying that this public back alley is out of bounds to anyone with placards and those failing to comply will be arrested.

A scuffle breaks out as two cops nail a picket to the wall - face forward. He openly opposed their dictates earlier on. Despite protests from his fellow pickets, they smashed his loudhailer, forced his arms up his back, cuffed him, and arrested him on charges they failed to elaborate on. Hundreds have been arrested on this picket line, including the head of the AFL/CIO, John Sweeney and Maryanne Mahaffey, President of Detroit City Council. The cops are not concerned, they simply do the bidding of the newspaper bosses. The city mayor could pull them off, but he's too scared of the bosses.

As the cops pinned the striker to the wall, I tried to take some pictures, but was blocked by another stone-faced patrolman, who put his hand in front of the camera and threatened me with arrest. Then as I stepped out into the street to photograph the two arresting officers putting the striker into their car, I was ordered by the cop to go to the sidewalk or I would also be arrested. Arrest and pepper gas appear to be the favourite weapons of the Detroit police department.

Such is life on the Detroit newspaper picket line.



Trick or treat

Out for 16 months, the Detroit newspaper strikers take all kinds of measures to further their cause. These are called 'actions'.

One such action is 'scab cruising'. This involves visiting the homes of scabs and company bosses. One took place on Halloween night. As strikers attempted to blockade the printing plant in downtown Detroit all dressed in Halloween gear, a group later thought they would go trick or treating.

Company bosses' homes are now guarded 24 hours a day by a security firm that specialises in anti-labour activities and advertises its services in your ever-so-friendly Soldiers of Fortune magazine. These hired goons sit in vans all day surveying scabs' property. On this 31st October, strikers in Halloween masks were able to easily fool the goons and approach the house of the editor and publisher of The News, Robert Giles.

They rang the door bell. "Who is it?" said the voice from within. "Trick or treat", answered the masked picket. "Oh", said the bosses' wife, half expecting children, as she opened the door. Not sure whether she should trick or treat, she said: "My, oh my, what terrible masks. Who are you supposed to be?"

"You mean you don't recognise us?" came the disguised response. "You should. We are corporate criminals... just like your husband."

The woman, aghast, slammed the door shut. The goons, realising they too had been tricked, leaped from their vehicle. But it was too late. The deed had been done. What a great trick and treat for the strikers!

All US reports by Rob Sewell

Crisis in central Africa

The recent threat of the main G7 imperialist powers to intervene in Zaire "in order to protect refugees" highlights the growing crisis in central Africa.

by Ted Grant

It was pure hypocrisy. The "protection of refugees" was simply a cover to hide the real intentions: to maintain imperialism's grip on the rich natural resources of the region. However, Western military intervention has been dealt a serious blow by the successes of the Zairean opposition forces in

defeating the Rwandan Hutu militias and allowing the mass return of refugees to Rwanda. The pretext for sending imperialist troops to the region has been removed - temporarily.

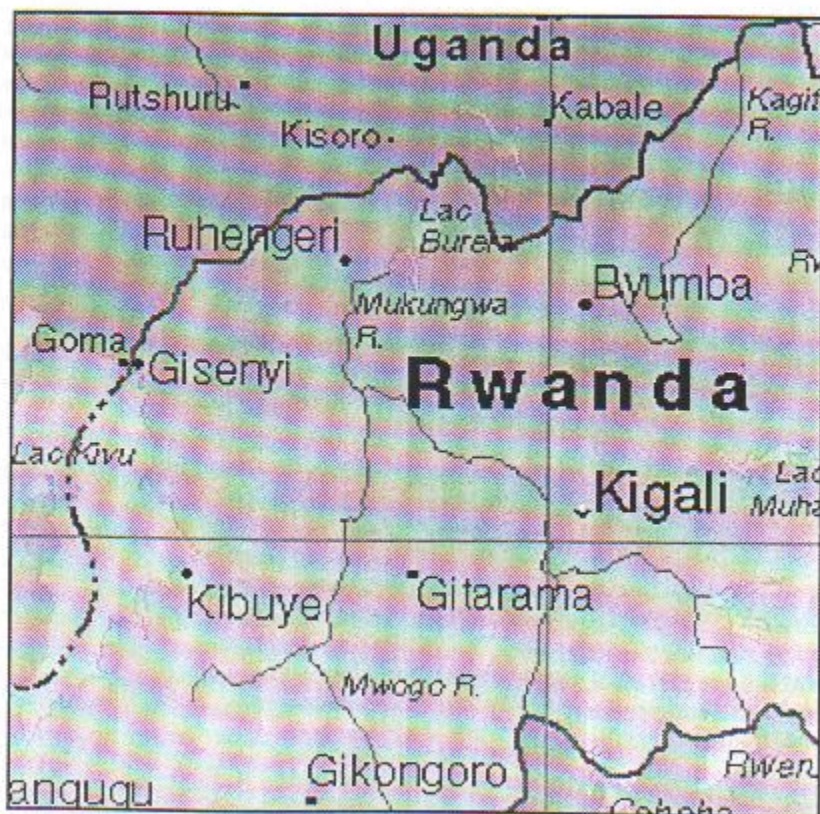
The bulk of the problems facing the peoples of Central Africa, particularly in Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi, originated through the policy of the former colonial power, Belgium imperialism, which deliberately played off the Tutsis against the Hutus, and granted the Tutsi minority the top administrative posts. Previously, various nationalities lived togeth-

er and intermarried. It was a classic case of divide and rule, leading to the present devastating conflict. However, Belgian support for the powerful Tutsi minority waned in the 1950s when the Rwandan National Union pressed for independence. The Belgian government set up the Party of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Bahutu, sparking communal strife. In 1959 there was a war in which the Hutus drove out the Tutsis, and Rwanda declared a Hutu republic in 1962. A parallel situation developed in Burundi where the Hutus were suppressed. The Tutsis in Burundi attacked Rwanda in 1963. This resulted in 250,000 refugees, mostly Tutsi, living in Uganda, Zaire and Burundi. A major part of the refugee problem in eastern Zaire came about when France intervened in Rwanda in 1990 and 1993 to prop up the Hutu government of Juvenal Habyarimana, and finally in 1994 to create so-called "safe havens". Then, the mainly-Tutsi opposition Rwandan Patriotic Front invaded Rwanda and routed government troops and its allied Interahamwe militias, which had engaged in genocide and the murder of more than 500,000 Tutsis.

The success of the oppo-

sition forces forced the Interahamwe to flee. This, in turn, resulted in the domination of the army and the militias over the one million refugees, who were forced to flee to Zaire. The Interahamwe dominated the camps and even the food rationing supplied by the international aid agencies. They launched attacks into Rwanda and prevented the return of refugees on pain of death. The Interahamwe's subsequent defeat by the Patriotic Front, freed the refugees to return to Rwanda.

In the 1950s the Belgian imperialists, through the United Nations, moved against independence leader Patrice Lumumba, who was betrayed and murdered by troops under the command of Mobutu - trained and educated by the Belgian regime. Mobutu came to power, backed by imperialism. His authoritarian regime bled the people dry, and Mobutu turned himself into a billionaire. Now the chickens are coming home to roost. The opposition Patriotic Front wants to establish a more democratic regime in Zaire and has seized control of the eastern part of the country, with the support of the Tutsis, who have lived there for 200 years. The Mobutu regime had been trying to discriminate against them as "foreigners". What motivates the imperialists, especially French imperialism, is the fear that the Mobutu regime, which is on its last legs, may collapse and open the road to possible revolutionary developments in Zaire, or even precipitate the break up of the country. This is not new. Apart from its intervention in Zaire in the 1960s, using its Moroccan surrogates, France intervened to safeguard Mobutu in



1977 and 1978. They did the same thing in Rwanda to protect the government during the first half of the 1990s. The Patriotic Front has outmanoeuvred the imperialists by attacking the refugee camps and forcing the Interahamwe to flee to the bush, so opening the way for the hundreds of thousands of refugees to return. However, this has not totally defused plans by the imperialists to intervene. France and Canada are still pushing hard for a full scale intervention. "Now is not the time to pause and reflect. We still have to have very direct action," stated Canadian Foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy. The United States and Britain, however, are having cold feet. Overseas minister Baroness Chalker, described the French plan as "daft".

Any foreign intervention would now meet with hostility and even military opposition. This was made clear by both Rwanda and Laurent Kabila, leader of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire. The Canadian advance force had difficulty getting out of Rwanda's capital, Kigali due to the opposition of the government.

The dis-United Nations has played the same baneful role as always. It represents the interests of the imperialists in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The strategic, economic and political considerations are prime. The very last considerations would be the needs and interests of the peoples involved. Britain and the US have pulled back from military intervention, putting pressure on France to do the same. However, it is not excluded that they may intervene again if civil war breaks out in Zaire - in order to protect the economic interests of world imperialism, particularly the enormous natural resources of this huge area. They will want to prop up the same interests as Mobutu represented. The United States and the other imperialists have been

converted to "democracy" in the ex-colonial areas of the world because they find such regimes much more reliable than the dictators that they supported previously. That is why they wanted to abandon Mobutu if they could, and why they came out for elections in Zaire (which were rigged in any case). They made a ghastly mess in Zaire, Rwanda, Burundi and elsewhere in Africa. This is not due to the innate qualities of the Blacks (which was the imperialist's old argument), but the class interests involved. The imperialist interest in the so-called Third World is to bleed these countries economically through adverse terms of trade, where these countries' commodities are sold below their value, while those from the West are sold at high rates. Thus impoverishing these countries and peoples. Even if "democracy" is established, it will suffer the same fate as all those "democracies" in Africa - all of which were run in effect by one-party states. There is no solution on a capitalist basis. In the long term, on the establishment of a Socialist Federation of Africa, linked to a federation of European socialist states could offer a real way forward. In the immediate period, the Labour movement should argue for the right of self-determination and allow the peoples to decide their own future without outside military intervention from imperialism. This is a principle. Despite all the hypocrisy about humanitarian intervention, what decides the policies of the imperialist powers is the interests of capital. That means that the Labour movement in the West must have a clear idea that the enemy of these countries is the same enemy they face at home - capitalism and imperialism. Only with that understanding can the movement see through the hypocrisy of imperialism and lay the basis for the real emancipation of the peoples of the third world.



It's Christmas. And 200,000 Hutu refugees from the civil war in Burundi and Rwanda are staggering on through an insect-infected, disease-ridden Congo jungle in extreme heat, desperately looking for food. They will have little time, or will, to celebrate this date in the Christian calendar, although many are at least formally Christians, another product of the mark left by Belgian imperialism along with poverty and ethnic violence.

It's Christmas. And the stockbrokers and money traders of the City of London are celebrating record bonuses from the profits made by their companies in 1996 - a year when Wall St and the FTSE stock market indexes rocketed to new heights, producing a bonanza of goodies for the few not seen since the heady days of the Thatcherite 'big bang' of the late 1980s. This staggering contrast between the lives of the many in Africa and the few in the wealthier industrial countries is not new news. But the sheer magnitude of the chasm between the world's masses and the rul-

ing class elite throughout the world is often difficult to comprehend.

The United Nations may yet again have failed the people of Rwanda just as it has done for the masses in Bosnia, East Timor or Mogadishu, but at least its statisticians have made a small contribution. They have recently published their Human Development Report. This outlines a swathe of facts and figures to document the immensity of the injustice, inequality and exploitation that is meted out on the majority by the minority across the globe, as of 1996.

Free market

Most human beings are in a bad way, and it is not getting better, according to the UN's economists, whatever the preachers of the 'free market' say and whatever the complacent platitudes mouthed by the world's capitalist political leaders.

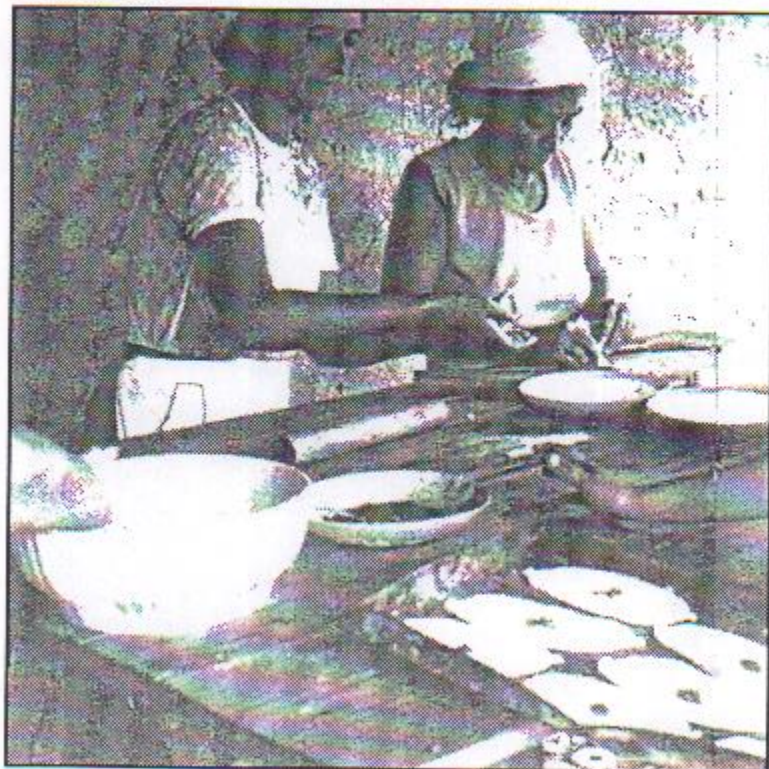
So at the risk of boring you to death with figures, let me give you a flavour of what the UN has found about the state of homo sapiens in the 1990s. Since the end of the great world capitalist boom in 1974, growth in real economic output has fallen in

Socialist Appeal's economics correspondent
the statistics contained in the UN's H

Global capitalism

100 countries, with 1.6bn or one-third of the world's population. Since 1980, 1.5bn people in just 15 countries have seen faster growth. In 70 countries, average incomes are lower than they were in 1980, and in 43 countries they are lower than in 1970! The worst falls have been in the ex-stalinist countries of Eastern Europe, where 21 countries have had falls of over 20% in just four years. At the same time, the world has become more polarised between rich and poor. The world generates \$23 trillion a year. But \$18 trillion comes from the 26 OECD countries and only \$5 trillion from the rest, who house 80% of the population. The poorest 20% of the world's population saw their share of global income fall from a miserly 2.3% in 1963 to a minuscule 1.4% in 1993. Yet the share of the richest 20% rose from a massive 70% to a gigantic 85%! Thus the ratio of rich to poor in the world doubled from 30 to 1 to 61 to 1. The extreme is revealed in just one statistic: that just

358 people have more assets than the incomes of 45% of the world's people! Okay, that is not comparing like with like, as your wealth is not the same as your annual income. But if you compared those billionaires' wealth with the wealth of the poor, the comparison would be even worse, because the world's poor have no wealth to speak of at all, just their power of labour. I continue. There's much more to come. Those experiencing growth in national income per head that was faster than 5% a year has risen from just 12% of the world in 193 to 27% now, but those experiencing falling income per head has tripled from 5% to 18%. So the gap widens. Average income per head in the OECD is about \$20,000. In developing countries it is \$4,600, a gap that has tripled in a generation. But where growth has been achieved in the last 30 years, it has not helped most people in those countries. Between 1965-80, in the golden age of capitalism, 200m people saw their incomes fall. In the last 15



pendent, *Michael Roberts*, looks behind
Human Development Report...

ism world poverty

years, more than 1 billion people did.

Advances

There have been some advances for the mass of people. In the last 30 years, life expectancy has increased by more than one-third, and in 30 countries it is now over 70 years. And the number of people with access to safe water has doubled from 36% to 70%. But 17m still die each year from curable diseases and there are now 18m HIV-infected people, 90% of whom are in developing countries. Primary education is now available to 77% of the world's population from 48% in 1960, but there are still 130m without any schooling and 275m with no secondary education. Food production per head has risen 20% in the last decade, but 800m still do not get enough food and another 500m are chronically undernourished. Maternal mortality in developing countries is still 17 times greater than in the OECD, while more than one-third of all the world's children do not get enough to eat and infant mortality is still five times greater in poor countries.

And the divisions in the quality

of life are just as great within the richer industrial capitalist countries as they are between the industrial countries and the so-called developing world. One-third of all adults in the OECD countries do not have any educational qualifications whatever. The poorest 40% of households get only 18% of the income. More than 100m people live below their countries' official poverty line in industrial countries. And it's going to get worse unless something changes, according to the UN. Poverty will deepen in the poorest countries with income per head falling to just \$325 by the end of the next generation, while income per head in the richest countries will double. At present rates, it would take fast-growing China another 50 years to catch up with OECD incomes, and slower-growing India 150 years! In other words, never. And inequality within countries is rising. The average income of an American citizen is four times greater than the poorest 20% of Americans. That compares with just a two to one ratio in more equal Japan. This gap widened most of all in Britain in the last 30 years. Now the richest 20% in Britain

earn ten times more than the poorest 20%. Wealth is also distributed unequally, according to the UN data. In 'egalitarian' Sweden, the richest 1% of households own 20% of the nation's assets, and in the US the richest 1% increased their ownership of assets from 20% in 1975 to a staggering 36% in 1990.

Weak

And capitalist growth is not only weak, uneven and unequal. It is damaging the planet and its inhabitants. Capitalist violence and wars left nearly 27m people as refugees in 1994 (before the latest Zairean exodus), an elevenfold increase since 1970. So much for the great "New World Order" after the end of the Cold War. Today, one in every 200 people is either a refugee or forcibly displaced from his or her country of origin.

In developing countries, water supply per head is only one-third of what it was in 1970. About 8-10m acres of forest is lost every year. In Sub-Saharan Africa alone, 65m hectares of productive land have disappeared in the last 50 years. Around 700m people suffer from indoor smoke because of the lack of chimneys in their homes. In the last 25 years, so-called natural disasters have affected three billion people and killed 7m and injured another 2m.

In industrial countries too the environment is being destroyed. Air pollution causes \$35bn worth of economic costs every year and about 60% of Europe's forests are damaged by acid rain. But most of the damage affects the poor. While the US and the former Soviet Union accounted for nearly one-third of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, it's Bangladesh that it most likely to be damaged. It will lose 17% of its land as the sea rises due to global warming.

What's the answer of capitalism to this study of inequality, deprivation and misery? More capitalism. Once the world is fully integrated into the "free market" and the planet is one great global market place for traders and entrepreneurs

everything in the worldly garden will be lovely, the ideologists of capitalism argue. That's ridiculous, of course, and they don't really believe it themselves. But the propaganda is essential to keep people from thinking of alternatives that might damage the interests of the rich few who benefit from this capitalist nightmare.

Capitalist ideology now centres on an economic buzzword - globalisation. Since 1965 world trade in goods has tripled and trade in services has grown fourteen-fold! Now every day over \$1trillion circulates the world's financial markets searching ceaselessly (24 hours non-stop) and endlessly for a better return and a quick buck.

Prosperity

This is the way forward to prosperity, we are told. But of course, this growth in trade and money is not evenly spread. The poorest countries containing 20% of the world's people have seen their share of global trade fall from 4% to under 1%. Of all the world's flows of money capital they get just 0.2%! Of the flow of capital to the developing world last year, around \$175bn, 75% went to just ten countries. So there we have it. A capitalist world that is getting more capitalist every day as the tentacles of finance and industrial capital seek out new areas and people to exploit in the search for profit. But more profit does not produce more prosperity, except for an infinitesimally small minority - remember just 358 people have more assets than 45% of all human beings! The United Nations has produced the damning evidence of capitalism's failure. The spreading rule of capital across the world over 200 years has brought with it better health (for some), better education (for some), and better technology (for some). But now even those benefits look exhausted. People are getting poorer (on the whole) and the planet is getting more damaged (on the whole). Happy Christmas.

'Constitutional' coup rocks Pakistan

The "constitutional" coup in Pakistan underlines the nature of the Pakistan regime as a regime of crisis. It is a graphic expression of the impasse of all the regimes of the ex colonial countries. Economic crisis, mass unemployment and underemployment, inflation, financial bankruptcy, and complete subjugation to world imperialism—these are the hallmarks of the situation.

The merciless pressure of imperialism, exercised through the IMF, compels these regimes to carry out vicious attacks on the living standards of the masses. Under the pretext of "liberalisation and free trade" they are forced to dismantle protection and privatise, leading to the collapse of national industry. At the same time, there is unprecedented corruption, the rich become richer. Ministers loot the state and engage in unrestrained plunder, while carrying out a ruthless policy of austerity for the mass of workers, peasants and shopkeepers. The crisis in Pakistan is very deep. For a long time, Pakistan has been virtually bankrupt. For

three years, the PPP government has been carrying out the policies of the IMF, which demanded that Benazir should go after the "defaulters", that is the large number of people involved in the black economy, which now accounts for a staggering 120% of the official economy. Drug dealers and others involved in the black economy have penetrated the Army and the State at high levels. In fact, it is only large amounts of this black money which keeps the economy afloat.

Resistance

Any attempt to move against this sector would meet with ferocious resistance. In the same way, Benazir's timid attempt to tax the feudal landowners also pushed them into opposition.

The military has ruled Pakistan a total of 24 years in its 49 years since independence. One of the immediate causes of the present coup was Benazir's refusal to grant the Army's request for 8 billion rupees in military expenditure. It is clear that the generals were involved in the coup, although, in order to avoid an open conflict with

the USA, they used the services of the president Farooq Leghari as a "constitutional" fig leaf.

It appears that Benazir has got out of touch with reality. In her haste to implement the cuts dictated by the IMF, she held a special Cabinet meeting on the night of the 4th of November, at which it was decided that all Army officers above grade 19 (that is all the higher echelons) would have their assets scrutinised by a committee. This was tantamount to a provocation. However, it is clear that the IMF was already planning to ditch Benazir. Leghari had a meeting with the IMF on Sunday November 3. It is probable that the president informed them about his intentions.

After three years in government, Benazir Bhutto has succeeded in disillusioning the masses who supported her. This is the fate of all reformist governments, East and West, under conditions of capitalist crisis.

Whereas her father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto carried out important reforms under the pressure of the mass movement, Benazir has carried out a policy of counter reforms. On a capitalist basis, no other policy is possible. From the beginning, having capitulated to the pressures of imperialism, big business and the Army, she has carried out a policy in their interests. Now we see the result.

In addition to a profound economic and social crisis, there is universal corruption, affecting the highest levels of the PPP, especially the clique around Benazir's husband Asif Ali Zardari, who has already been tried for corruption and acquitted. Corruption is a way of life for such elements as this. This provides an excuse for reactionaries to act against the PPP government, although corruption has been a feature of all

Pakistani governments and leaders.

The crisis of society is shown by the catastrophic situation in Karachi, which is a state of complete lawlessness, with murders being committed every day, as members of the MQM and different fundamentalist groups slaughter each other. An important turning point was the murder in September of

Murtaza Bhutto, the prime minister's brother, who had organised a left wing opposition PPP, with a strong base in Sindh. Murtaza's widow has blamed Zardari for the murder. Benazir has hinted that Farooq Leghari was responsible. This fact, in addition to a struggle to control the judiciary, were also cited by the president as reasons for dismissing the government. The coup took place one day after a court decision to reinstate Punjab's chief minister and Muslim League leader, Manzoor Wattoo.

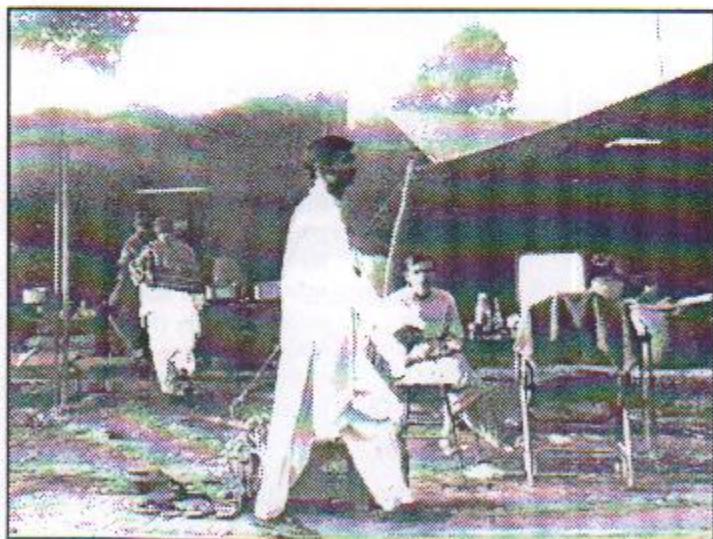
The president accused Bhutto's government of fostering corruption, undermining the judiciary and failing to stop extra judicial killings in Karachi and elsewhere:

"Corruption, nepotism and violation of rules in the administration of the affairs of the government... has become so extensive and widespread that the orderly functioning of government in accordance of the provisions of the constitution and the law has become impossible and in some cases, national security has been endangered. "Public faith in the integrity and honesty of the government has disappeared," he said in a proclamation.

Army

It is clear that Leghari acted in agreement with the Army, which immediately occupied the airports, and guarded the TV and radio stations. Troops moved into the capital Islamabad in the early hours to guard key installations, but stayed off the streets.

At this moment in time, there is no indication of any protest movements. The apathy of the masses is determined by three years of counter reforms, privatisation and attacks on living standards. Widespread corruption scandals have given rise to apathy and even cynicism about politics. Benazir's support has dwindled. Zardari is hated by the masses. The PPP is in



disarray. The streets remained calm, apart from a few firecrackers let off by celebrating shopkeepers. Schools and businesses opened as usual. The reaction of the middle class is not surprising, since the government increased the taxes on small businesses, thus pushing them into the arms of fundamentalist reaction.

In Rawalpindi, about 200 opposition party supporters fired assault rifles into the air to celebrate Bhutto's downfall.

Witnesses said they grabbed a traffic policeman and hoisted him onto their shoulders in jubilation. Mobile telephone services were disconnected overnight. Home telephones of Bhutto's cabinet ministers were out of service.

Criticism

In order to deflect international criticism, and avoid a conflict with Washington, Leghari has promised elections in February. According to the Constitution, general elections must be held within three months. Leghari would like to split the PPP. For this reason, he included former PPP leaders in the new government. In addition, with the agreement of the Supreme Court judges, he is introducing a Law of "accountability", which will mean that all key figures will be investigated, and made "accountable". With this excuse, he may postpone the elections. Meanwhile, there would be a government of "technocrats" which would carry out the dictates of the IMF and the World Bank, which also have representatives in the government appointed by Leghari.

At this stage, it is not absolutely clear that this will happen. If there is a big mass movement, Leghari might introduce a state of emergency (also a "constitutional" measure) and postpone the elections. But it is possible that they will hold the elections, and rig them to ensure the formation of a reactionary government.

If Murtaza Bhutto were alive, he could have acted as a pole of attraction. Probably for that very reason, he was assassinated. This tends to support the theory that Leghari was behind the murder. It is clear that the coup was prepared well in advance, and Leghari did not want to leave a possibly dangerous rival.

The coup will not solve the problems of Pakistan capitalism,

but will only aggravate them. The first problem is—who will replace Bhutto? Leghari has acted cautiously, appointing an 80 year old ex PPP man (a founding member of the party and former Chief Minister of Punjab in the Z. Ali Bhutto government), Meraj Khalid, as caretaker prime minister. This is intended as another way of defusing a popular reaction. A former speaker of the National Assembly, Khalid is presented as "Mr. Clean".

The fundamentalist opposition has attempted to pose as an alternative, organising a mass rally last month, which was dispersed by the police. US imperialism does not want a fundamentalist government in Islamabad. It has quite enough problems with Iran, not to mention Afghanistan. An Afghan type regime in Islamabad would mean the break up of Pakistan, a horrifying prospect not only for the masses, but also for imperialism.

For the same reason, Washington does not want an open military dictatorship in Pakistan, which is why the Army generals preferred to move in this way. Nevertheless, the regime that emerges, even if elections are held, will be only a "democratic" fig leaf for the Army generals and the feudal land owners.

The reaction of imperialism has been typically hypocritical. The IMF and Western governments are reported to be content with the dismissal of Bhutto. An International Monetary Fund official said a visiting IMF mission would pursue talks with the new government on reactivation of a \$600 million standby loan. The blasé tone of Western commentators showed that they were unconcerned, and clearly had advance warning. "It's not surprising," one European diplomat said of her dismissal. "It had looked as if she might go any time." He said international reaction was likely to be muted. "For Western governments, the attitude will probably be that any change of government that happens constitutionally and peacefully is not really their business," he predicted. Britain said on Tuesday that the dismissal of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's government was entirely a matter for Pakistan.

"Our understanding is that President Leghari has acted in accord with the constitution in dismissing the national assembly



and the government," a Foreign Office spokesman said. "This is entirely a matter for Pakistan and we have no comment to make. We shall of course deal normally with the caretaker government of Meraj Khalid," he added.

Particularly nauseating was the reaction of the Labour leaders, who merely echoed the standpoint of imperialism. British shadow foreign secretary Robin Cook said serious problems, including economic chaos and rows over the judiciary and corruption, had marred Bhutto's administration.

Election

"Obviously the interest of the international community is that the election commitment be honoured and that the agreement with the IMF (International Monetary Fund) be maintained," he declared.

This position represents a complete capitulation to reaction. It is true that the government of Benazir Bhutto was corrupt, and that its policies led to economic chaos. But the policies of right reformism, which Robin Cook defends, always prepare disasters. Reformism without reforms—reformism with counter reforms—will inevitably pave the way for reaction, not only in Pakistan, but in Britain and everywhere else.

As for the IMF, its policies (as usual) were directly responsible for the economic and social chaos which led to the coup. Now, like Pontius Pilate, they piously wash their hands of the fate of Benazir Bhutto, despite the fact that she was a loyal stooge of imperialism. Since this was a "constitutional" coup, they are happy to throw her to the wolves!

But how can a coup which overthrows a democratically elected

government be constitutional? The apathy of the masses was because of the PPP government. But once they realise what has happened, they will begin to draw the conclusion that every time they elect a leader of their choice, he or she is removed by a coup, either of a military or "constitutional" kind. Far reaching consequences will flow from this.

These events open up a new and convulsive period in Pakistan society and politics. After an initial period of disorientation, critical moods will develop. The PPP may split. In fact, elements of a split are already present, with the defection of a layer of leaders. Others will follow. It is not clear what will happen to Benazir. She has already taken the precaution of purchasing a 2.5 million pounds house in the South of England—a very desirable place in which to retire. However, things may not prove so simple.

If, as seems probable, Zardari is put on trial, this time he will not get off so lightly. With the hated Zardari out of the way, and separated from the most corrupt PPP leaders, Benazir's popularity can recover. If she remains in politics, the only way she can get back her lost support is by turning to the left, at least in words.

The new government, whether elected or not, will pursue a vicious policy of attacks on living standards. The IMF and the World Bank will insist on their pound of flesh. The Army and the landowners will insist that this is not extracted from them. Consequently, the full burden of the crisis will be placed on the shoulders of the masses even more than before. At a certain stage, this can give rise to a social explosion.

Belgian strike highlights tense mood

The general strike called in Belgium on October 28th by the socialist unions could have acted as an extension on a higher level of the so-called "white" movement against the corruption in the justice system. It only partially succeeded in that aim. Although large industries in the southern, French, part of the country and in Brussels were paralysed along with public transport, the northern Flemish part of Belgium was only affected to a small degree.

by Erik Demeesters
Brussels

It was a movement which developed at different speeds. This represented quite a contrast to the spontaneous growth of the movement against the sacking of the judge who was in charge of the investigation of the Dutroux/child murders case. That movement affected all parts of the country and indeed had an even stronger momentum in the north than in south. Does this mean that there was no relation between the general strike of the 28th and the earlier movements? To believe that would be a mistake. The earlier movements were against the infamous court decision to sack the judge, demanding social and economic justice. Students marched on the demos demanding action against "a system that is rotten to the core". So why did the workers react so differently to the general strike? There are three reasons for this:

1) the very short time between the calling of the strike and the actual strike itself (only three and a half days). This, together with the bureaucratic approach adopted to the mobilisation rather than a serious democratic campaign, explains the result. The way the action was called

infuriated a lot of activists who were fed up with this sort of method of organising by decree. 2) The lack of unity between the Catholic and Socialist trade unions. The leaders of the socialist unions called the strike unilaterally, making no attempt to involve the catholic unions, which are in a majority in the north of Belgium (Flanders), while the socialist unions have the majority in the French-speaking south. We have seen this problem before but it was clear that no attempt was going to be made to overcome this and achieve any sort of unity at all.

Strategy

Without a unity strategy, the right wing of the catholic unions were able to keep the left under control in the majority unions. Where socialist union activists were confronted with strong divisions in a factory they opted not to force things but instead concentrate on informative picket lines. The potential for unified action was revealed by the example of the participation in the south of the catholic union metal workers of Liege together with those who worked in shops, banks, insurance etc. At the socialist strikers' meeting in Brussels, the national president of the socialist union was booed, whereas the leader of the catholic union workers got a standing ovation, when he made a speech in favour of unity. In Ghent, a large industrial city in the north, catholic union shop stewards refused to distribute the leaflet produced by their own union attacking the general strike. These examples show that, with proper leadership, united action would have easily been possible.

3) The lack of clear demands or indeed of any demands at all.

Different unions ended up taking action for different reasons. First it was said that the strike would be on the questions of a reduction in the working week and in support of negotiations with the bosses for a renewal of the 2-yearly contracts. Then other unions said they would be striking against the budget proposals presented a month earlier. The remarks of a union leader, trying to explain the patchy response in his region, goes to the core of the problem: "Like many other citizens, the workers have been more preoccupied with the problems of society than the negotiations with the bosses." This comment reveals a fundamental truth: workers are less willing to respond to calls around "direct demands" which fail to give any serious answers to the problems of society, unemployment in particular. More general demands are needed to galvanise the workers into struggle. A programme for social change around the demand for a 32 hour week would have got a tremendous response but only on condition that it was preceded by a serious campaign of explanation and debate amongst the workers.

The call for a general strike exposed a profound split at the top of the socialist unions. The national leaders hoped that by calling for action they would reduce the antagonisms inside the unions. It had the opposite effect. The left and also the right have been forced to go onto the offensive after the strike. A clear left/right polarisation is developing inside the organisations. The right wing are even threatening (and expecting) a split along Flemish/Walloon lines. At other levels, union bureaucrats are busy attacking each other which reflects a feeling of nervousness and a lack of confidence in the direction of the unions. At times

it all resembles a scene from the "OK Corral" with everybody blasting away at each other. The impasse in the negotiations with the bosses on the new wage norms (wages and labour cost charges are limited by law to the average level of increases in the Netherlands, Germany and France) has sharpened differences at the top of the unions. The wage norm level has left a margin of between 0% and 0.7% to be shared out between wage increases and job creation. But a share of nothing is nothing! The prospect exists that the socialist unions will choose not to sign the deal, not because it rejects the settlement but rather because it would prefer the deal to be imposed on them in order to avoid widening internal conflicts. The bosses in the metal sector in particular are keen to cut labour costs by between 10% and 15%. Last week the bosses of the largest metal factory in the south, Caterpillar, decided unilaterally to sack 227 workers and impose new wages and conditions for young workers in the future. This would represent a wage cut of 12%—a kind of "internal outsourcing." In response to this provocation, the workers decided to occupy the factory and many union branches are organising solidarity. For example, workers in one neighbouring steel factory organised an immediate strike and demonstration involving 1000 workers. Tension is present everywhere in society. It has receded a little in the aftermath of the "white" movement and the not-so general strike. But it is not back to normal.

Expectation

There is a mood of expectation on the issues of both the justice system scandal and also of the wage/job negotiations. It could flare up at any time. Every day new scandals are coming to light. There even exists a witch-hunting mood amongst the upper echelons of the judiciary and politics. That is why the government is so fearful of provoking any new discontent. Some of the parents of the murdered children have been calling for the resignation of the minister for the interior and a new march—a red one, red for danger. The general political and social mood of the workers can be best summed up by this symbol.

Turkey

Corruption scandal exposes weakness of system

Turkey has discovered a new national hero. Not the footballers of Fenerbahce, but the "Truck Monster." On the 4th of November a lorry crashed into a car on a Turkish highway, an unfortunately common occurrence, and not usually the cause of much celebration.

by Phil Mitchinson

On this occasion however, the wreckage of the Mercedes involved contained a political revelation. Driving the car was a police official, his passengers were an MP from the True Path party, a mafia boss, his girlfriend, and a pile of guns and explosives. As a plot for a film this story would be unbelievable. The reality however, has exposed a web of intrigue and corruption, described, even by the usually slavish Turkish media, as the "mafiosisation of the state."

Protests

The day after the news broke, student protests erupted throughout the country, only to be brutally crushed by the police. Ironically, the same day a group of students were on trial for breaking the "Demonstrations Law" by unfurling a banner in Parliament, proclaiming that no-one should be allowed to interfere with their right to an education. They were sentenced to fifteen months in prison for this heinous act! The police, the courts and parliament, three vital sections of this "mafioso state," united in defence of corrupt officials, and united in prosecuting stu-

dents for peaceful protests over attacks on their education, and the involvement of that same state machinery in drug trafficking and gun-running.

As with many other recent scandals, this wasn't just one rogue politician, or one "bad apple" in the police force.

Those involved include the very tops of society. Interior Minister Agar was forced to resign after a report implicating him and other leading politicians in this crime ring was published.

This entanglement of the state and organised crime, the growth of the black economy, corruption scandals, and so on, have now become an international phenomenon, and are a symptom of the sickness of the entire system. "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark,"

Shakespeare once wrote. Today we could add Italy, the US, Belgium...the list is endless. The whole system is rotten, and its nauseating stench is engulfing the whole planet. Any talk to the effect that the world is not rotten ripe for socialist change is either ignorance or deception.

For a time Turkey's capitalists, just like their counterparts in the more advanced capitalist countries, believed that they had solved all their problems. Their illusions soon crumbled to dust.

During the 1980s Turkey too enjoyed a prolonged boom, workers still meagre living standards actually began to rise, and the myth was created that Turkey had become a "modern western style democracy." The end-of-decade

coups of the 50s, 60s and 70s, seemed to have ended with the passing of 1990. However, in 1994 the Turkish miracle collapsed in a deep slump and hyperinflation.

Military

To date the military remain in the wings. As they desperately scramble to be allowed into the EU, the Turkish ruling class are trying to avoid a military solution to their problems. However, in the absence of a decisive lead from the workers organisations, the "fundamentalist" Refah party have partially filled the vacuum, particularly amongst the millions of peasants who have flocked into the cities in recent years in search of work. The Refah led coalition have steered clear of implementing any fundamentalist change though, again for fear of exclusion from the EU. In any event, they are well aware that any attempt to go down this path, further alienating the West, would not be permitted by the military. The fragile nature of Turkey's so-called democracy has been exposed for all to see.

The illusion that Turkey was catching up with the west is rapidly disappearing. Instead it seems we are rapidly catching up with Turkey. For now, Turkish capitalism is being kept in Europe's waiting room. The customs agreement they have signed is costing them £2-3 billion a year in lost import taxes, and in return they get nothing. The lifebelt of the EU is in fact a lead weight which threatens to drag the whole economy down into even deeper crisis. This is just

a foretaste of what would happen if Turkey were ever allowed to join the EU.

Meanwhile of course, the capitalists are not prepared to bear this cost themselves, but attempt to place the burden on the backs of the working class. In addition, the cost of the war against the Kurds in the East is running at around £7 billion a year. This cost too must be borne by those same workers, and such a situation cannot continue indefinitely without provoking a response. Indeed there have already been major strikes involving textile and transport workers over the last year. As in the case of the student protests, these disputes have involved bitter battles with the police. Turkey's state forces are constantly being strengthened, but this is a sign of the weakness, not the strength of capitalism. The power of the state has not always existed in society, but grew out of the division of society into irreconcilably opposed classes. From its inception it has served to protect the rule of the minority over the majority in society. The facade it developed of acting as a kind of impartial referee in society, keeping "law and order," is being eaten away by each new corruption scandal. The strengthening of the police, the army, the infamous network of informers, illustrates the growing fear of the capitalist class for the future of their system.

Today Turkey acts as a bridge for the drugs and arms trade between east and west. The forces of the capitalist state won't put a stop to this trade, they are inseparably tied up with it themselves. This question, as much as the land question, the question of Cyprus, and the Kurds, can only begin to be solved by a socialist transformation, not only in Turkey but also in Greece, Iran, Iraq. The working class is now the decisive majority of Turkish society, and the task of solving these problems falls to them. In a socialist society Turkey, not allowed into today's capitalist club of European powers, could become a bridge instead between socialist federations in the Middle East and Europe.

Spanish students show the way

The general strike of secondary schools called by the Spanish Students Union (SE) on Thursday 14th November was a total success. Over 90% of schools answered the strike call, and a number of universities also joined in. At least 200,000 participated in over 50 demonstrations called by the SE over the length and breadth of Spain. The movement received important support not only from trade unionists but also from the important parents associations (APAS) which have a national organisation in Spain.

special report from
Alan Woods

The students' strike is the first important militant response to the programme of vicious cuts in the budget of the public sector planned by the right wing government of Aznar's ill-named People's Party (PP), which barely scraped home in last March's general election. In order to survive, this weak

bourgeois government has to rely on the votes of the Catalan and Basque nationalists (CiU and PNV). But the central aim is, as ever, to make the workers and their families pay for the crisis of capitalism.

In order to carry through the cuts, they are attempting to lean for support on the leaders of the main trade unions, the workers commissions (CCOO) and the UGT. Disgracefully, these leaders have gone along with this manoeuvre, signing a cut in pensions, and presenting it as a great victory for common sense!

However, the conduct of the union chiefs is very far removed from the mood of the rank and file. A mood of burning anger and indignation is building up in Spanish society which the leadership will not be able to hold back. This is already clearly manifested in the militant strike of the coal miners of Leon, and the movement of the public sector, which has resulted in the March on Madrid on the 23rd

of November.

The Marxist leadership of the SE was quick to anticipate the mood of discontent in the schools in the state sector, where conditions have steadily worsened. The PP government has already announced cuts in the budget for state education, while increasing subsidies to private schools. The main demands of the SE are:

- * Reduction in class size, with a maximum of 25. Building of new schools to provide 100,000 new places.

- * No sacking of teachers.

- Take on a sufficient number of new teachers to guarantee the quality of education.

- * 225,000 new university places, and easier access to higher education, to allow working class youngsters the chance to go to university.

- * For decent apprenticeships and technical education. Paid work experience under the control of the workers unions and student organisations.

- * No more repression!

- Withdraw the reactionary "Charter of Rights and Duties" and elaborate a new charter that recognises the right to strike and meet during school hours, and respect the rights of young people.

- * No to the cuts in education. 7% of the GDP for education, For well-equipped schools with laboratories, workshops, libraries and meeting places.

- * A proper job, or unlimited unemployment benefit, for every school-leaver.

Such a programme enters into direct conflict with the government's policy of cuts, which itself is a reflection of the impasse of capitalism. In order to force the government to retreat, more than words are necessary. Therefore the SE decided in September to

prepare for mass action.

As on previous occasions, the Union carefully tested the ground to see if there was a basis for action. On the 15th of October, a national day of action was called. One should bear in mind that the schools had only just started back after the long Summer break, and that the SE had not called a strike for some time. The last all-out struggle was at the time of the Gulf War in 1991, when the SE led a movement of millions against the imperialist war.

This meant that the movement was getting off to a cold start. Some doubted that the youth were ready to fight. But all such doubts were rapidly dispelled. The day of action was a success. More than 8,000 participated in the demonstration in Barcelona, 7,000 in Madrid, 4,000 in Seville, and thousands more in smaller concentrations all over Spain. Encouraged by the response, the SE decided to go for a national strike on 14th November.

At every stage, the SE has attempted to get a united front for action with the main workers' unions, the CCOO and UGT, and also with the APAS. However, the attitude of the union leaders, locked into their position of class collaboration, was anything but encouraging. When they learned of the SE's call for a day of action, they actually made a scarcely veiled threat to exclude the SE from the Platform in Defence of Public Education. They made it clear that no mass action against the government would be tolerated. However, the success of the action on 15th October reduced them to silence.

The response of the youth on the day was terrific. I have before me a list of 64 demonstrations in every part of



Spain, from the biggest industrial centres to the smallest village—over 50,000 in Madrid, 30,000 in Barcelona, 10,000 in Valencia, over 7,000 in Seville. But in some ways even more extraordinary was the response in the more politically backward provinces and small towns and villages. 1,500 in Marbella, 2,000 in Segovia and an incredible 7,000 in Valladolid—a traditional strong point of the ultra-right—were extremely important developments. Even in Ceuta and Melilla, the two Spanish enclaves in North Africa, the strike was 100% solid.

As in the past, the organisation of the strike was a model. For weeks before the day, the representatives of the SE went to each school and called a mass meeting, at which the strike was explained and debated. After this, a vote was held, and a strike committee elected to organise propaganda, information, maintain contacts with the SE headquarters, and provide volunteers for the "servicio de orden," the vitally important stewards present in every demonstration called by the SE. The representatives of every strike committee are sent to the central strike committee in every town, which in turn maintain contacts with the central strike committee in Madrid. The headquarters of the HQ is a hive of activity. The phone never stops ringing. Schools asking for information about the strike. Radio programmes asking for interviews. Parents ringing to express support. There are no negative comments. The amount of propaganda is enormous—posters, leaflets, broadsheets—all in the different languages spoken in the Spanish state: Castilian, Basque, Catalan, Galician. But the voice of the SE reaches a far wider audience through numerous interviews and articles in the main newspapers, radio and television. The attacks of the right wing government affect broad layers of society, and create a receptive audience for the SE's message among workers, especially teachers and other public sector employees, whose wages have been frozen. In most schools teachers are openly supportive. In some, even the headmaster is sympathetic—some, but not all. In

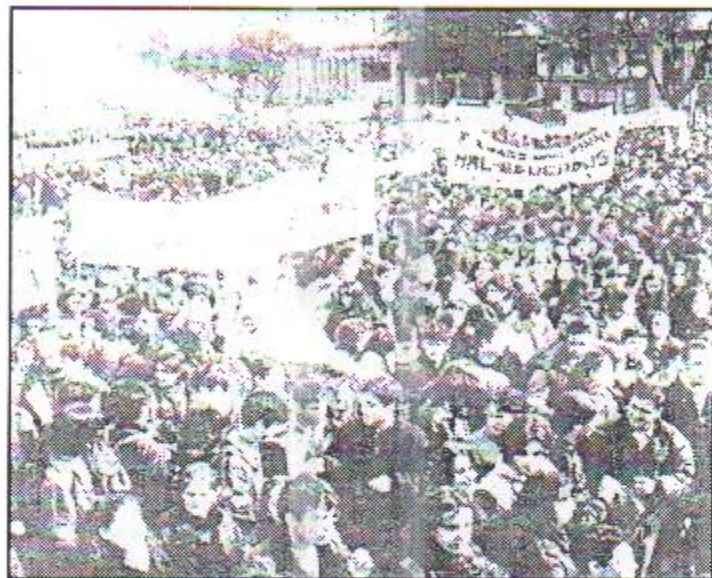
the Isabel la Catolica school, the head took extreme measures to stop pupils participating in the day of action in October. Students found the gates locked and manned by private security guards. But the situation was saved by some teachers, who came down to remonstrate with the guards—"Either you open the gates, or we'll call the police!" The gates were opened, and the students poured through them.

The following week, the headmaster called a meeting with the parents, to explain what had occurred, and denounce the strike. Clearly, he expected backing from the parents, but he had miscalculated. Instead of opposing the strike, the parents turned on the headmaster—"You should be ashamed of yourself! This is a strike to defend state education. Instead of attacking our children, you should be on strike alongside them." This mood is quite typical of the attitude of the parents, a powerful source of support for the movement, and a potential bridge between the students and the working class.

As far as the youth is concerned, they see the SE as their organisation. This is an important conquest! In 1986-7, when the SE had its baptism of fire, it had to fight for recognition against a sea of rivals, the so-called "coordinadoras" ("coordinating committees" led by the sects, and, in part, the CP youth). Now all these have virtually disappeared. The hegemony of the SE is an undisputed fact in the schools, and increasingly so in the universities, traditionally hotbeds of the "coordinadoras."

The following incident reveals the change in the mood of the university students and their attitude towards the SE. On the eve of the 14th November strike, the SE called a meeting in the Madrid Autonomous University, where it is very weak. A large number attended to hear the reasons for the strike. One sectarian began to call into question the SE, but was immediately silenced by the students. The result was that on the 14th, 1,800 students at the Autonoma staged a sit-in, and a thousand marched on the SE's Madrid demonstration.

That demonstration was head-



ed by prominent leaders of the trade unions, like Marcelino Camacho, the historic leader of the CCOO, and Agustin Moreno, the other most prominent leader of the Left Opposition of the CCOO. In his speech at the end of the demonstration, which was also addressed by leaders of the parents' associations (APAS) and Barbara Areal and other leaders of the SE, Agustin Moreno called upon the assembled youth to join the SE. Afterwards he commented that "You people have a big advantage. You have a coherent political line, and you have defended it firmly and consistently for a long time." The mass demonstration, with its combative mood, obviously had a big effect on the union leaders present. And not only on them.

In a meeting of the Madrid teachers from all the main unions called that same evening, the impact of the student movement was clear. The "official" speeches from platform were interrupted by protests from the floor—"When are you going to call a serious action like today? The students' union have had the courage to act, and all you people have done is to call a two hour strike during a coffee break. The government is laughing at us!"

The speakers on the platform attempted to drone on, but found it impossible. The protests continued—"Why do we come to these meetings, anyway? So that you can spout for two hours, and we get two minutes to speak?" Finally the platform was forced to give

way. "All right. We'll open a debate. Who wants to speak?" A forest of hands shoots up. One of the speakers is Juan Ignacio Ramos, one of the leaders of the 1986 student strike and a prominent supporter of the Spanish Marxist paper, *El Militante*. Despite the ineffective efforts of the chairperson to shut him up, he puts forward the case for a general strike in the whole education system before Xmas, and is met with an ovation.

The chair attempts to confuse the issue—"It is not clear what is being proposed...." A woman from the APAS who was on the students' demonstration angrily cuts across this—"It is perfectly clear, and I demand a vote." The question is put to the vote and carried unanimously, with only the platform sitting on their hands. Immediately after, the representative of the SE, Miriam Municio, a young female comrade, takes the floor and is greeted with rapturous applause. The collection for the SE raised a lot of money; such is the authority which the SE has won in the working class.

The reaction of the Ministry to the strike was predictable. The strike was, according to them, a flop, "only" 57% of students in Madrid were out! The fact that even the government was forced to recognise that over half the school students were on strike speaks volumes. In fact, the strike was virtually total. Even the bourgeois press said that two million had answered the call nationally. The same was true of the demonstrations. The police said there were ten thousand

on the Madrid demo, the government said 5,000 (!). In general, the press only carried photos of clashes between demonstrators and police, but carefully avoided showing the size of the demonstration.

However, the right wing ABC carried a photo which clearly showed the enormous size of the march, with tightly packed demonstrators stretching for as far as the eye could see. The real number was anything between 50,000 and 60,000.

As far as the clashes were concerned, these were minimal, thanks to the exemplary conduct of the "servicio de orden." The armed riot police were clearly under orders to provoke a violent incident at the end of the demonstration. Breaking the agreement with the organisers, to leave the control of the demo in the hands of the SE stewards, the police attempted to sow panic by staging charges at the thick of the crowd, with riot shields and batons.

In this, they were aided and abetted by the usual ultraleft provocateurs who threw stones and bottles at the police in front of the Ministry building. The press later recognised that this was a tiny group, maybe twenty in all, who were denounced by the rest. "Who paid you to throw stones, you imbecile!" was a typical response of one student, reported in *El Mundo* (15/11/96). These provocations suited the police very well. They were grin-

ning ear to ear as they charged. Since they had blocked off every exit, and the demonstrators were jammed tight around the platform, trying to hear the speeches, a stampede could have led to a bloody mess.

Fortunately, the organisers kept firm control, and the stewards retreated before the police in good order, preventing a stampede. The aims of the provocation were thus defeated. The demonstration was concluded in good order, and with minimum damage. Two students were injured, and one arrested. You could read the frustration on the faces of the cops. One or two were even apologetic. The same picture was repeated nationally.

Despite this outstanding success, the government, predictably, has dug its heels in. A furious campaign of slander has been launched against the SE. But the fight goes on. The national strike committee met on the weekend of 16th and 17th of Nov. and decided to call another strike on Dec. 4th. This is the tenth anniversary of the first big strike of 1986. If the government still refuses to make a decent offer, this will be followed by a two day strike before Xmas, to coincide with mobilisations of the workers in the public sector. In order to maintain the momentum, the SE is calling on the youth to support the march on Madrid on 23rd of November, and the demonstrations of the

APAS in defence of public education on 30th November.

The movement against the government is not confined to education. In Leon, the coalminers have been on strike since 14th

November, protesting against the threat of pit closures which hangs over all the Spanish coalfields. Once again, the union leaders have played a lamentable role, signing a provisional deal with the government. At a mass meeting of 1,500 in Leon this week, the miners showed what they thought of this deal by pelting the union leaders with eggs and tomatoes.

Subsequently, the government appeared to retreat, although there is no doubt that they will return to the attack. Their main fear is the possibility of a general strike of the powerful working class. Already the miners in Teruel have come out.

On Saturday 23rd November, there was a demonstration of 250,000 public sector workers in Madrid. Although the march had been called, under pressure, by the main union federations, there was a very critical mood. The union leaders faced booing and heckling from the crowd, until Antonio Gutierrez, the right wing leader of the CCOO, finally called for a general strike, when he was interrupted with applause. All the indications are that Spain now faces a *winter of discontent*.

Alan Woods in Basque speaking tour

In September, for the second year running, Socialist Appeal editor Alan Woods spoke at a very successful meeting in the annual Festival of the Spanish Communist Party in Madrid. Over 120 people attended this packed meeting, many standing, and many others were simply unable to get in for lack of space. This was the biggest and most enthusiastic meeting of the Festival, except for the big public Rally. The other speaker was the well known Communist woman MP, Nines Maestro.

The subject was the Communist Manifesto today, on the occasion of the republishing of the Manifesto by the Spanish Marxist tendency which publishes *El Militante*, with a new introduction by Alan Woods. Such was the interest aroused by this, following the great success of the Spanish language edition of *Reason in Revolt*, that the leadership of the Basque Communist Party invited Alan to go on a speaking tour of the Basque Country in early November.

The results of this tour exceeded the most optimistic predictions of the organisers. Meetings were organised in Vitoria (faculty of chemistry), San Sebastian (law faculty) and Bilbao (Lejona), with attendances of 60, 80 and 120 respectively. In every case, there was tremendous interest in the ideas of Marxism among the Basque youth.

There were lively debates on the National Question and Individual terrorism, which are burning questions in the Basque Country. Some supporters of the radical nationalist coalition *Herri Batasuna* asked about these things, and listened intently to the replies. At the end, many bought the Manifesto. This shows that the internationalist and class positions defended by Socialist Appeal are capable of finding an echo among this youth, where others have failed.

The last act was a public meeting organised by the Basque Communist Party in Barakaldo, the traditional working class stronghold on the left bank of the Nervion in Bilbao. 55 people attended, and everyone present agreed that the meeting was a big success. Finally, Alan was invited to attend a celebration dinner for the members of the International Brigades who have been touring Spain at the invitation of the United Left, on the fiftieth anniversary of the start of the Civil War.

Check out 'Reason in Revolt' on the world wide web: [HTTP://easyweb.easynet.co.uk/~sandy/mainindex.htm](http://easyweb.easynet.co.uk/~sandy/mainindex.htm)



Principles of Communism

by Frederick Engels

Frederick Engels wrote the *Principles of Communism* in 1847. Later, he and Marx collaborated on updating and clarifying the document, and in 1848 the *Communist Manifesto* was published. Like the *Manifesto*, *Principles of Communism* deals with the basics of scientific socialism, and presents them in an easy, question and answer form. Now out of print, our republication should benefit all our readers in their struggle to understand the nature of capitalism and the role the working class must play in the development of socialism.

1. What is Communism?

Communism is the doctrine of the conditions of the liberation of the proletariat.

2. What is the proletariat?

The proletariat is that class in society which lives entirely from the sale of its labor and does not draw profit from any kind of capital; whose weal and woe, whose life and death, whose sole existence depends on the demand for labor — hence, on the changing state of business, on the vagaries of unbridled competition. The proletariat, or the class of proletarians, is, in a word, the working class of the 19th century.

3. Proletarians, then, have not always existed?

No. There have always been poor and working classes; and the working class have mostly been poor. But there have not always been workers and poor people living under conditions as they are today; in other words, there have not always been proletarians, any more than there has always been free unbridled competition.

4. How did the proletariat originate?

The Proletariat originated in the industrial revolution, which took place in England in the last half of the last (18th) century, and which has since then been repeated in all the civilized countries of the world.

This industrial revolution was precipitated by the discovery of the steam engine, various spinning machines, the mechanical loom, and a whole series of other mechanical devices. These machines, which were very expensive and hence could be bought only by big capitalists, altered the whole mode of production and displaced the former workers, because the machines turned out cheaper and better commodities than the workers could produce with their inefficient spinning wheels and handlooms. The machines delivered industry wholly into the hands of the big capitalists and rendered entirely worthless the meagre property of the workers (tools, looms, etc.). The result was that the capitalists soon had everything in their hands and nothing remained to the workers. This marked the introduction of the factory system into the textile industry.

Once the impulse to the introduction of machinery and the factory system had been given, this system spread quickly to all other branches of industry, especially cloth- and book-printing, pottery, and the metal industries. Labor was more and more divided among the individual workers so that the worker who previously had done a complete piece of work now did only a part of that piece. This division of labor made it possible to produce things faster and cheaper. It reduced the activity of the individual worker to simple, endlessly repeated mechanical motions which could be performed not only as well but much better by a machine. In this way, all these industries fell, one after another, under the dominance of steam, machinery, and the factory system, just as spinning and weaving had already done. But at the same time, they also fell into the hands of big capitalists, and their workers were deprived of whatever independence remained to them.

Gradually, not only genuine manufacture but also handicrafts came within the province of the factory system as big capitalists increasingly displaced the small master craftsmen by setting up huge workshops, which saved many expenses and permitted an elaborate division of labor.

This is how it has come about that in civilized countries at the present time nearly all kinds of labor are performed in factories — and, in nearly all branches of work, handicrafts and manufacture have been superseded. This process has, to an ever greater degree, ruined the old middle class, especially the small handicraftsmen; it has entirely transformed the condition of the workers; and two new classes have been created which are gradually swallowing up all the others.

These are: (i) *The class of big capitalists, who, in all civilized countries, are already in almost exclusive possession of all the means of subsistence and of the instruments (machines, factories) and materials necessary for the production of the means of subsistence. This is the bourgeois class, or the bourgeoisie.*

(ii) *The class of the wholly propertyless, who are obliged to sell their labor to the bourgeoisie in order to get, in exchange, the means of subsistence for their support. This is called the class of proletarians, or the proletariat.*

5. Under what conditions does this

sale of the labor of the proletarians to the bourgeoisie take place?

Labor is a commodity, like any other, and its price is therefore determined by exactly the same laws that apply to other commodities. In a regime of big industry or of free competition — as we shall see, they come to the same thing — the price of a commodity is, on the average, always equal to its cost of production. Hence, the price of labor is also equal to the cost of production of labor. But, the costs of production of labor consist of precisely the quantity of means of subsistence necessary to enable the worker to continue working, and to prevent the working class from dying out. The worker will therefore get no more for his labor than is necessary for this purpose; the price of labor, or the wage, will, in other words, be the lowest, the minimum, required for the maintenance of life. However, since business is sometimes better and sometimes worse, it follows that the worker sometimes gets more and sometimes gets less for his commodities. But, again, just as the industrialist, on the average of good times and bad, gets no more and no less for his commodities than what they cost, similarly on the average the worker gets no more and no less than his minimum.

This economic law of wages operates the more strictly the greater the degree to which big industry has taken possession of all branches of production.



6. What working classes were there before the industrial revolution?

The working classes have always, according to the different stages of development of society, lived in different circumstances and had different relations to the owning and ruling classes.

In antiquity, the workers were the *slaves* of the owners, just as they still are in many backward countries and even in the southern part of the United States.

In the Middle Ages, they were the *serfs* of the land-owning nobility, as they still are in Hungary, Poland, and Russia. In the Middle Ages, and indeed right up to the industrial revolution, there were also journeymen in the cities who worked in the service of petty bourgeois masters. Gradually, as manufacture developed, these journeymen became manufacturing workers who were even then employed by larger capitalists.

7. In what way do proletarians differ from slaves?

The slave is sold once and for all; the proletarian must sell himself daily and hourly. The individual slave, property of one master, is assured an existence, however miserable it may be, because of the master's interest. The individual proletarian, property as it were of the entire bourgeois class which buys his labor only when someone has need of it, has no secure existence. This existence is assured only to the *class* as a whole.

The slave is outside competition; the proletarian is in it and experiences all its vagaries.

The slave counts as a thing, not as a member of society. Thus, the slave can have a better existence than the proletarian, while the proletarian belongs to a higher stage of social development and, himself, stands on a higher social level than the slave. The slave frees himself when, of all the relations of private property, he abolishes only the relation of slavery and thereby becomes a proletarian; the proletarian can free himself only by abolishing private property in general.

8. In what way do proletarians differ from serfs?

The serf possesses and uses an instrument of production, a piece of land, in exchange for which he gives up a part of his product or part of the services of his labor. The proletarian works with the instruments of production of another, for the account of this other, in exchange for a part of the product. The serf gives up, the proletarian receives. The serf has an assured existence, the proletarian has not. The serf is outside competition, the proletarian is in it. The serf liberates himself in one of three ways: either he runs away to the city and there becomes a handicraftsman; or, instead of prod-

ucts and services, he gives money to his lord and thereby becomes a free tenant; or he overthrows his feudal lord and himself becomes a property owner. In short, by one route or another, he gets into the owning class and enters into competition. The proletarian liberates himself by abolishing competition, private property, and all class differences.

9. In what way do proletarians differ from handicraftsmen?

No answer written.

10. In what way do proletarians differ from manufacturing workers?

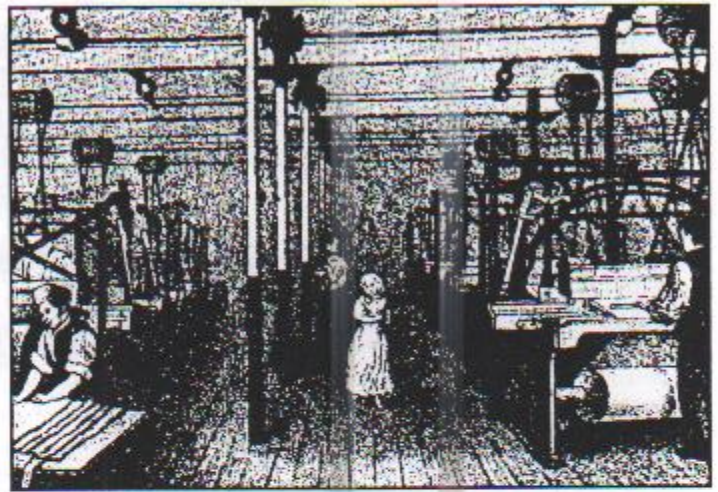
The manufacturing worker of the 16th to the 18th centuries still had, with few exceptions, an instrument of production in his own possession — his loom, the family spinning wheel, a little plot of land which he cultivated in his spare time. The proletarian has none of these things.

The manufacturing worker almost always lives in the countryside and in a more or less patriarchal relation to his landlord or employer; the proletarian lives, for the most part, in the city and his relation to his employer is purely a cash relation. The manufacturing worker is torn out of his patriarchal relation by big industry, loses whatever property he still has, and in this way becomes a proletarian.

11. What were the immediate consequences of the industrial revolution and of the division of society into bourgeoisie and proletariat?

First, the lower and lower prices of industrial products brought about by machine labor totally destroyed, in all countries of the world, the old system of manufacture or industry based upon hand labor. In this way, all semi-barbarian countries, which had hitherto been more or less strangers to historical development, and whose industry had been based on manufacture, were violently forced out of their isolation. They bought the cheaper commodities of the English and allowed their own manufacturing workers to be ruined. Countries which had known no progress for thousands of years — for example, India — were thoroughly revolutionized, and even China is now on the way to a revolution. We have come to the point where a new machine invented in England deprives millions of Chinese workers of their livelihood within a year's time.

In this way, big industry has brought all the people of the Earth into contact with each other, has merged all local markets into one world market, has spread civilization and progress everywhere and has thus ensured that whatever happens in civilized countries will have repercussions in all other countries. It follows that if the



workers in England or France now liberate themselves, this must set off revolution in all other countries — revolutions which, sooner or later, must accomplish the liberation of their respective working class. Second, wherever big industries displaced manufacture, the bourgeoisie developed in wealth and power to the utmost and made itself the first class of the country. The result was that wherever this happened, the bourgeoisie took political power into its own hands and displaced the hitherto ruling classes, the aristocracy, the guildmasters, and their representative, the absolute monarchy. The bourgeoisie annihilated the power of the aristocracy, the nobility, by abolishing the entailment of estates — in other words, by making landed property subject to purchase and sale, and by doing away with the special privileges of the nobility. It destroyed the power of the guildmasters by abolishing guilds and handicraft privileges. In their place, it put competition — that is, a state of society in which everyone has the right to enter into any branch of industry, the only obstacle being a lack of the necessary capital.

The introduction of free competition is thus public declaration that from now on the members of society are unequal only to the extent that their capitals are unequal, that capital is the decisive power, and that therefore the capitalists, the bourgeoisie, have become the first class in society. Free competition is necessary for the establishment of big industry, because it is the only condition of society in which big industry can make its way. Having destroyed the social power of the nobility and the guildmasters, the bourgeoisie also destroyed their political power. Having raised itself to the actual position of first class in society, it proclaims itself to be also the dominant political class. This it does through the introduction of the representative system which rests on bourgeois equality before the law and the recognition of free competition, and in European countries takes the form

of constitutional monarchy. In these constitutional monarchies, only those who possess a certain capital are voters — that is to say, only members of the bourgeoisie. These bourgeois voters choose the deputies, and these bourgeois deputies, by using their right to refuse to vote taxes, choose a bourgeois government.

Third, everywhere the proletariat develops in step with the bourgeoisie. In proportion, as the bourgeoisie grows in wealth, the proletariat grows in numbers. For, since the proletarians can be employed only by capital, and since capital extends only through employing labor, it follows that the growth of the proletariat proceeds at precisely the same pace as the growth of capital. Simultaneously, this process draws members of the bourgeoisie and proletarians together into the great cities where industry can be carried on most profitably, and by thus throwing great masses in one spot it gives to the proletarians a consciousness of their own strength. Moreover, the further this process advances, the more new labor-saving machines are invented, the greater is the pressure exercised by big industry on wages, which, as we have seen, sink to their minimum and therewith render the condition of the proletariat increasingly unbearable. The growing dissatisfaction of the proletariat thus joins with its rising power to prepare a proletarian social revolution.

12. What were the further consequences of the industrial revolution?

Big industry created in the steam engine, and other machines, the means of endlessly expanding industrial production, speeding it up, and cutting its costs. With production thus facilitated, the free competition, which is necessarily bound up with big industry, assumed the most extreme forms; a multitude of capitalists invaded industry, and, in a short while, more was produced than was needed.

As a consequence, finished commodities could not be sold, and a so-called

commercial crisis broke out. Factories had to be closed, their owners went bankrupt, and the workers were without bread. Deepest misery reigned everywhere. After a time, the superfluous products were sold, the factories began to operate again, wages rose, and gradually business got better than ever. But it was not long before too many commodities were again produced and a new crisis broke out, only to follow the same course as its predecessor. Ever since the beginning of this (19th) century, the condition of industry has constantly fluctuated between periods of prosperity and periods of crisis; nearly every five to seven years, a fresh crisis has intervened, always with the greatest hardship for workers, and always accompanied by general revolutionary stirrings and the direct peril to the whole existing order of things.

13. What follows from these periodic commercial crises?

First:

— That, though big industry in its earliest stage created free competition, it has now outgrown free competition;

— that, for big industry, competition and generally the individualistic organization of production have become a fetter which it must and will shatter;

— that, so long as big industry remains on its present footing, it can be maintained only at the cost of general chaos every seven years, each time threatening the whole of civilization and not only plunging the proletarians into misery but also ruining large sections of the bourgeoisie;

— hence, either that big industry must itself be given up, which is an absolute impossibility, or that it makes unavoidably necessary an entirely new organization of society in which production is no longer directed by mutually competing individual industrialists but rather by the whole society operating according to a defi-

nite plan and taking account of the needs of all.

Second: That big industry, and the limitless expansion of production which it makes possible, bring within the range of feasibility a social order in which so much is produced that every member of society will be in a position to exercise and develop all his powers and faculties in complete freedom. It thus appears that the very qualities of big industry which, in our present-day society, produce misery and crises are those which, in a different form of society, will abolish this misery and these catastrophic depressions. We see with the greatest clarity:

(i) *That all these evils are from now on to be ascribed solely to a social order which no longer corresponds to the requirements of the real situation; and*

(ii) *That it is possible, through a new social order, to do away with these evils altogether.*

14. What will this new social order have to be like?

Above all, it will have to take the control of industry and of all branches of production out of the hands of mutually competing individuals, and instead institute a system in which all these branches of production are operated by society as a whole — that is, for the common account, according to a common plan, and with the participation of all members of society. It will, in other words, abolish competition and replace it with association.

Moreover, since the management of industry by individuals necessarily implies private property, and since competition is in reality merely the manner and form in which the control of industry by private property owners expresses itself, it follows that private property cannot be separated from competition and the individual management of industry. Private property must, therefore, be

abolished and in its place must come the common utilization of all instruments of production and the distribution of all products according to common agreement — in a word, what is called the communal ownership of goods. In fact, the abolition of private property is, doubtless, the shortest and most significant way to characterize the revolution in the whole social order which has been made necessary by the development of industry — and for this reason it is rightly advanced by communists as their main demand.

15. Was not the abolition of private property possible at an earlier time?

No.

Every change in the social order, every revolution in property relations, is the necessary consequence of the creation of new forces of production which no longer fit into the old property relations.

Private property has not always existed. When, towards the end of the Middle Ages, there arose a new mode of production which could not be carried on under the then existing feudal and guild forms of property, this manufacture, which had outgrown the old property relations, created a new property form, private property. And for manufacture and the earliest stage of development of big industry, private property was the only possible property form; the social order based on it was the only possible social order. So long as it is not possible to produce so much that there is enough for all, with more left over for expanding the social capital and extending the forces of production — so long as this is not possible, there must always be a ruling class directing the use of society's productive forces, and a poor, oppressed class. How these classes are constituted depends on the stage of development.

— *The agrarian Middle Ages give us the baron and the serf;*

— *the cities of the later Middle Ages show us the guildmaster and the journeyman and the day laborer;*

— *the 17th century has its manufacturing workers;*

— *the 19th has big factory owners and proletarians.*

It is clear that, up to now, the forces of production have never been developed to the point where enough could be developed for all, and that private property has become a fetter and a barrier in relation to the further development of the forces of production. Now, however, the development of big industry has ushered in a new period. Capital and the forces of production have been expanded to an unprecedented extent, and the means are at hand to multiply them without limit in the near future. Moreover, the forces of production have been

concentrated in the hands of a few bourgeois, while the great mass of the people are more and more falling into the proletariat, their situation becoming more wretched and intolerable in proportion to the increase of wealth of the bourgeoisie. And finally, these mighty and easily extended forces of production have so far outgrown private property and the bourgeoisie, that they threaten at any moment to unleash the most violent disturbances of the social order. Now, under these conditions, the abolition of private property has become not only possible but absolutely necessary.

16. Will the peaceful abolition of private property be possible?

It would be desirable if this could happen, and the communists would certainly be the last to oppose it. Communists know only too well that all conspiracies are not only useless, but even harmful. They know all too well that revolutions are not made intentionally and arbitrarily, but that, everywhere and always, they have been the necessary consequence of conditions which were wholly independent of the will and direction of individual parties and entire classes. But they also see that the development of the proletariat in nearly all civilized countries has been violently suppressed, and that in this way the opponents of communism have been working toward a revolution with all their strength. If the oppressed proletariat is finally driven to revolution, then we communists will defend the interests of the proletarians with deeds as we now defend them with words.

17. Will it be possible for private property to be abolished at one stroke?

No, no more than existing forces of production can at one stroke be multiplied to the extent necessary for the creation of a communal society. In all probability, the proletarian revolution will transform existing society gradually and will be able to abolish private property only when the means of production are available in sufficient quantity.

18. What will be the course of this revolution?

Above all, it will establish a *democratic constitution*, and through this, the direct or indirect dominance of the proletariat. Direct in England, where the proletarians are already a majority of the people. Indirect in France and Germany, where the majority of the people consists not only of proletarians, but also of small peasants and petty bourgeois who are in the process of falling into the proletariat, who are more and more dependent in all their political interests on the proletariat, and who must, therefore, soon adapt to the demands of the



proletariat. Perhaps this will cost a second struggle, but the outcome can only be the victory of the proletariat. Democracy would be wholly valueless to the proletariat if it were not immediately used as a means for putting through measures directed against private property and ensuring the livelihood of the proletariat. The main measures, emerging as the necessary result of existing relations, are the following:

- (i) *Limitation of private property through progressive taxation, heavy inheritance taxes, abolition of inheritance through collateral lines (brothers, nephews, etc.) forced loans, etc.*
- (ii) *Gradual expropriation of landowners, industrialists, railroad magnates and shipowners, partly through competition by state industry, partly directly through compensation in the form of bonds.*
- (iii) *Confiscation of the possessions of all emigrants and rebels against the majority of the people.*
- (iv) *Organization of labor or employment of proletarians on publicly owned land, in factories and workshops, with competition among the workers being abolished and with the factory owners, in so far as they still exist, being obliged to pay the same high wages as those paid by the state.*
- (v) *An equal obligation on all members of society to work until such time as private property has been completely abolished. Formation of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.*
- (vi) *Centralization of money and credit in the hands of the state through a national bank with state capital, and the suppression of all private banks and bankers.*
- (vii) *Education of the number of national factories, workshops, railroads, ships; bringing new lands into cultivation and improvement of land already under cultivation — all in proportion to the growth of the capital and labor force at the disposal of the nation.*
- (viii) *Education of all children, from the moment they can leave their mother's care, in national establishments at national cost. Education and production together.*
- (ix) *Construction, on public lands, of great palaces as communal dwellings for associated groups of citizens engaged in both industry and agriculture and combining in their way of life the advantages of urban and rural conditions while avoiding the one-sidedness and drawbacks of each.*
- (x) *Destruction of all unhealthy and jerry-built dwellings in urban districts.*
- (xi) *Equal inheritance rights for children born in and out of wedlock.*
- (xii) *Concentration of all means of*

transportation in the hands of the nation.

It is impossible, of course, to carry out all these measures at once. But one will always bring others in its wake. Once the first radical attack on private property has been launched, the proletariat will find itself forced to go ever further, to concentrate increasingly in the hands of the state all capital, all agriculture, all transport, all trade. All the foregoing measures are directed to this end; and they will become practicable and feasible, capable of producing their centralizing effects to precisely the degree that the proletariat, through its labor, multiplies the country's productive forces. Finally, when all capital, all production, all exchange have been brought together in the hands of the nation, private property will disappear of its own accord, money will become superfluous, and production will so expand and man so change that society will be able to slough off whatever of its old economic habits may remain.

19. Will it be possible for this revolution to take place in one country alone?

No. By creating the world market, big industry has already brought all the peoples of the Earth, and especially the civilized peoples, into such close relation with one another that none is independent of what happens to the others. Further, it has co-ordinated the social development of the civilized countries to such an extent that, in all of them, bourgeoisie and proletariat have become the decisive classes, and the struggle between them the great struggle of the day. It follows that the communist revolution will not merely be a national phenomenon but must take place simultaneously in all civilized countries — that is to say, at least in England, America, France, and Germany.

It will develop in each of these countries more or less rapidly, according as one country or the other has a more developed industry, greater wealth, a more significant mass of productive forces. Hence, it will go slowest and will meet most obstacles in Germany, most rapidly and with the fewest difficulties in England. It will have a powerful impact on the other countries of the world, and will radically alter the course of development which they have followed up to now, while greatly stepping up its pace. It is a universal revolution and will, accordingly, have a universal range.

20. What will be the consequences of the ultimate disappearance of private property?

Society will take all forces of production and means of commerce, as well



as the exchange and distribution of products, out of the hands of private capitalists and will manage them in accordance with a plan based on the availability of resources and the needs of the whole society. In this way, most important of all, the evil consequences which are now associated with the conduct of big industry will be abolished.

There will be no more crises; the expanded production, which for the present order of society is overproduction and hence a prevailing cause of misery, will then be insufficient and in need of being expanded much further. Instead of generating misery, overproduction will reach beyond the elementary requirements of society to assure the satisfaction of the needs of all; it will create new needs and, at the same time, the means of satisfying them. It will become the condition of, and the stimulus to, new progress, which will no longer throw the whole social order into confusion, as progress has always done in the past. Big industry, freed from the pressure of private property, will undergo such an expansion that what we now see will seem as petty in comparison as manufacture seems when put beside the big industry of our own day. This development of industry will make available to society a sufficient mass of products to satisfy the needs of everyone. The same will be true of agriculture, which also suffers from the pressure of private property and is held back by the division of privately owned land into small parcels. Here, existing improvements and scientific procedures will be put into practice, with a resulting leap forward which will assure to society all the products it needs. In this way, such an abundance of goods will be able to satisfy the needs of all its members. The division of society into different, mutually hostile classes will then

become unnecessary. Indeed, it will be not only unnecessary but intolerable in the new social order. The existence of classes originated in the division of labor, and the division of labor, as it has been known up to the present, will completely disappear. For mechanical and chemical processes are not enough to bring industrial and agricultural production up to the level we have described; the capacities of the men who make use of these processes must undergo a corresponding development. Just as the peasants and manufacturing workers of the last century changed their whole way of life and became quite different people when they were impressed into big industry, in the same way, communal control over production by society as a whole, and the resulting new development, will both require an entirely different kind of human material. People will no longer be, as they are today, subordinated to a single branch of production, bound to it, exploited by it; they will no longer develop one of their faculties at the expense of all others; they will no longer know only one branch, or one branch of a single branch, of production as a whole. Even industry as it is today is finding such people less and less useful. Industry controlled by society as a whole, and operated according to a plan, presupposes well-rounded human beings, their faculties developed in balanced fashion, able to see the system of production in its entirety. The form of the division of labor which makes one a peasant, another a cobbler, a third a factory worker, a fourth a stock-market operator, has already been undermined by machinery and will completely disappear. Education will enable young people quickly to familiarize themselves with the whole system of production and to pass from one branch of production to another in

response to the needs of society or their own inclinations. It will, therefore, free them from the one-sided character which the present-day division of labor impresses upon every individual. Communist society will, in this way, make it possible for its members to put their comprehensively developed faculties to full use. But, when this happens, classes will necessarily disappear. It follows that society organized on a communist basis is incompatible with the existence of classes on the one hand, and that the very building of such a society provides the means of abolishing class differences on the other. A corollary of this is that the difference between city and country is destined to disappear. The management of agriculture and industry by the same people rather than by two different classes of people is, if only for purely material reasons, a necessary condition of communist association. The dispersal of the agricultural population on the land, alongside the crowding of the industrial population into the great cities, is a condition which corresponds to an undeveloped state of both agriculture and industry and can already be felt as an obstacle to further development. The general co-operation of all members of society for the purpose of planned exploitation of the forces of production, the expansion of production to the point where it will satisfy the needs of all, the abolition of a situation in which the needs of some are satisfied at the expense of the needs of others, the complete liquidation of classes and their conflicts, the rounded development of the capacities of all members of society through the elimination of the present division of labor, through industrial education, through engaging in varying activities, through the participation by all in the enjoyments produced by all, through the combination of city and country — these are the main consequences of the abolition of private property.

21. What will be the influence of communist society on the family?

It will transform the relations between the sexes into a purely private matter which concerns only the persons involved and into which society has no occasion to intervene. It can do this since it does away with private property and educates children on a communal basis, and in this way removes the two bases of traditional marriage — the dependence rooted in private property, of the women on the man, and of the children on the parents. And here is the answer to the outcry of the highly moral philistines against the "community of women". Community of women is a condition which belongs entirely to bourgeois society and which today finds its

complete expression in prostitution. But prostitution is based on private property and falls with it. Thus, communist society, instead of introducing community of women, in fact abolishes it.

22. What will be the attitude of communism to existing nationalities?

No answer written.

23. What will be its attitude to existing religions?

As is.

24. How do communists differ from socialists?

The so-called socialists are divided into three categories.

Reactionary socialists:

The first category consists of adherents of a feudal and patriarchal society which has already been destroyed, and is still daily being destroyed, by big industry and world trade and their creation, bourgeois society. This category concludes, from the evils of existing society, that feudal and patriarchal society must be restored because it was free of such evils. In one way or another, all their proposals are directed to this end.

This category of *reactionary socialists*, for all their seeming partisanship and their scalding tears for the misery of the proletariat, is nevertheless energetically opposed by the communists for the following reasons:

- (i) It strives for something which is entirely impossible.
- (ii) It seeks to establish the rule of the aristocracy, the guildmasters, the small producers, and their retinue of absolute or feudal monarchs, officials, soldiers, and priests — a society which was, to be sure, free of the evils of present-day society but which brought it at least as many evils without even offering to the oppressed workers the prospect of liberation through a communist revolution.
- (iii) As soon as the proletariat becomes revolutionary and communist, these reactionary socialists show their true colors by immediately making common cause with the bourgeoisie against the proletarians.

Bourgeois socialists:

The second category consists of adherent of present-day society who have been frightened for its future by the evils to which it necessarily gives rise. What they want, therefore, is to maintain this society while getting rid of the evils which are an inherent part of it. To this end, some propose mere welfare measures — while others come forward with grandiose systems of reform which, under the pretense of re-organizing society, are in fact intended to preserve the foundations, and hence the life, of existing society. Communists must unremittently

struggle against these *bourgeois socialists* because they work for the enemies of communists and protect the society which communists aim to overthrow.

Democratic socialists:

Finally, the third category consists of democratic socialists who favor some of the same measures the communists advocate, as described in Question 18, not as part of the transition to communism, however, but as measures which they believe will be sufficient to abolish the misery and evils of present-day society.

These *democratic socialists* are either proletarians who are not yet sufficiently clear about the conditions of the liberation of their class, or they are representatives of the petty bourgeoisie, a class which, prior to the achievement of democracy and the socialist measures to which it gives rise, has many interests in common with the proletariat.

It follows that, in moments of action, the communists will have to come to an understanding with these democratic socialists, and in general to follow as far as possible a common policy with them — provided that these socialists do not enter into the service of the ruling bourgeoisie and attack the communists. It is clear that this form of co-operation in action does not exclude the discussion of differences.

25. What is the attitude of the communists to the other political parties of our time?

This attitude is different in the different countries. In England, France, and Belgium, where the bourgeoisie rules, the communists still have a common interest with the various democratic parties, an interest which is all the greater the more closely the socialistic measures they champion approach the aims of the communists — that is, the more clearly and definitely they represent the interests of the proletariat and the more they depend on the pro-

letariat for support. In England, for example, the working-class Chartists are infinitely closer to the communists than the democratic petty bourgeoisie or the so-called Radicals. In America, where a democratic constitution has already been established, the communists must make the common cause with the party which will turn this constitution against the bourgeoisie and use it in the interests of the proletariat — that is, with the agrarian National Reformers.

In Switzerland, the Radicals, though a very mixed party, are the only group with which the communists can co-operate, and, among these Radicals, the Vaudois and Genevese are the most advanced. In Germany, finally, the decisive struggle now on the order of the day is that between the bourgeoisie and the absolute monarchy. Since the communists cannot enter upon the decisive struggle between themselves and the bourgeoisie until the bourgeoisie is in power, it follows that it is in the interest of the communists to help the bourgeoisie to power as soon as possible in order the sooner to be able to overthrow it. Against the governments, therefore, the communists must continually support the radical liberal party, taking care to avoid the self-deceptions of the bourgeoisie and not fall for the enticing promises of benefits which a victory for the bourgeoisie would allegedly bring to the proletariat. The sole advantages which the proletariat would derive from a bourgeois victory would consist

- (i) in various concessions which would facilitate the unification of the proletariat into a closely knit, battle-worthy, and organized class; and
- (ii) in the certainty that, on the very day the absolute monarchies fall, the struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat will start. From that day on, the policy of the communists will be the same as it now is in the countries where the bourgeoisie is already in power.



Taff Vale, the unions and Labour

Barbara Humphries continues her look at the history of the Labour Party...

Labour's links with the trade unions are being called into question. The Labour leadership increasingly feel that the trade union links can be broken, in terms of ending the block vote, the sponsorship of MPs and election of National Executive Committee places. Blair's supporters hope that a Labour Government will legislate for state aid to political parties, using the 'sleaze factor' as pretext.

An incoming Labour government is not committed to repeal most of the Tories anti-union legislation which has made strikes more difficult than anywhere else in Europe. They are not prepared to legislate to guarantee the right to strike as in most other European countries. Blair and Blunkett intervened in the post office dispute, on the employers' side by calling for rebalancing of the membership. This will have alienated post office workers from the Labour Party, precisely the people whose votes are needed if Labour is to win the next election.

The Labour leadership has not condemned some of the more recent proposals of the Tories to limit trade union rights. They have even hinted at being in favour of compulsory arbitration in public sector disputes - something that even the Tories have not pursued. It is not surprising therefore that some of the unions are rumoured to be reconsidering their political commitment to the Party. But breaking the links would be a disaster both for the Labour Party and the trade unions. The Labour Party owes its existence

to the trade unions. In turn the trade unions need political representation to deliver legislation in favour of the working class. This has come at a time when the government is on the verge of publishing a Green Paper which would effectively push the trade unions back to the beginning of the century. Iain Lang, secretary of state for Trade and Industry, favours removing the immunity of trade unions from being sued for damages during an industrial dispute in a 'public monopoly service'. He claims that the public were held to ransom over the summer by the tube and post office workers. Now the customers and businesses must have the right to sue for damages for losses incurred in such disputes. This would make the unions open to crippling damage claims and would effectively make strikes impossible in the public services.

In 1901 the Taff Vale Company sued the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants for damages incurred during an otherwise successful dispute. The House of Lords upheld this decision and the union was ordered to pay £23,000 in damages. This prosecution followed a decade of attacks on trade union rights. The newly formed unions for the unskilled workers had suffered loss of membership due to unemployment. Employers recruited the unemployed, including criminal gangs to break strikes, and a whole series of court decisions deprived the unions of the right to a closed shop and to refuse to deal with non-union firms. The Tory press launched a tirade against the unions, calling them 'our national mafia' and

called upon the state to protect the public from 'working class tyranny'.

The Taff Vale case had an immediate impact on the newly formed Labour Representation Committee. It was essential for the unions that legislation be put through Parliament to reverse this judgement and guarantee unions immunity during an industrial dispute. The lack of trade union support for the LRC changed. In 1900 it had less than half the trade union movement affiliated. Key unions like the Miners Federation saw the implications of Taff Vale for themselves and switched to Labour from supporting the Liberals. Within two years the affiliated membership of the LRC had doubled from 455,450 to 861,200. By 1906, now called the Labour Party, it was over 900,000 strong and had returned 29 MPs to Parliament. These 29 MPs were able to exercise pressure upon the Liberal Government to pass the Trades Disputes Act of 1906.

The behaviour of one employer had been sufficient to cement the links between the trade unions and the Labour Party. The ruling class now had to face a labour movement which was going from strength to strength and able to exercise influence in Parliament as well as on the industrial front. The years of the Liberal Government saw increasing industrial militancy with disputes in all the major industries such as mining, the docks and the railways. A triple alliance was forged between the unions of the three main industries. Amalgamation Committees were set up and the number of trade unionists increased.

Increasingly trade union militants were being pulled towards revolutionary ideas such as syndicalism and workers control. Suffragettes and Irish nationalists took direct action to achieve their aims. It was these years which saw 'the strange death of Liberal England'.

There were also changes afoot in the Labour Party itself. The Labour Party became more representative of the trade union movement and of the working class as a whole. In its early years trade unionists had represented a minority, the best organised section of the working class. Inevitably these were the skilled workers, those who could sustain employment and a bargaining position throughout the years of slump. During World War 1 engineering workers took action against dilution of industry, and lowering of wages. This was the process whereby women workers were recruited to work in the munition plants at lower wages. However skilled workers were to play a key role in the organisation of the unskilled, if only for their own protection. Today some people



say that the unions now represent some of the best paid and most secure workers. Workers on short term contracts and part timers are under represented. However that could be said, at one time, of the dockers yet they were a casual workforce at the beginning of the century. Trade union membership has been subject to fluctuation. At the beginning of the century British capitalism was beginning to break down craft barriers which provided the basis for a more homogeneous working class, throughout the 20th century. This process has been reversed in the 1980s with employers resorting to Japanese (and Victorian) practices of 'core' and 'peripheral labour' - the equivalent of the Victorian skilled and casual labour.

The growth of trade union affiliation to the Labour Party was accompanied by a rebellion against pacts with other political parties, such as the Liberals in Parliament. In 1907 the Conference called for control of the Parliamentary Labour Party by the annual conference. The limits of parliamentary action were seen. The 29 Labour MPs had secured the Trades Disputes Act and an 8 hour day for the mines, but this had not prevented evasive action by the mineowners or the decline in real wages between 1900-1909. Trade unionists had looked to the Labour Party to resolve their problems with legal restrictions. They now saw the limits of action in Parliament. The same process has been seen many times in the history of the labour movement and will be repeated again if disillusionment sets in under a government led by Tony Blair. At the present time trade union leaders are loyal to Labour because they want an end to the repressive regime of the Tories. But once a Labour Government is installed, members will want to see a reverse of the cuts inflicted over the past fifteen years.

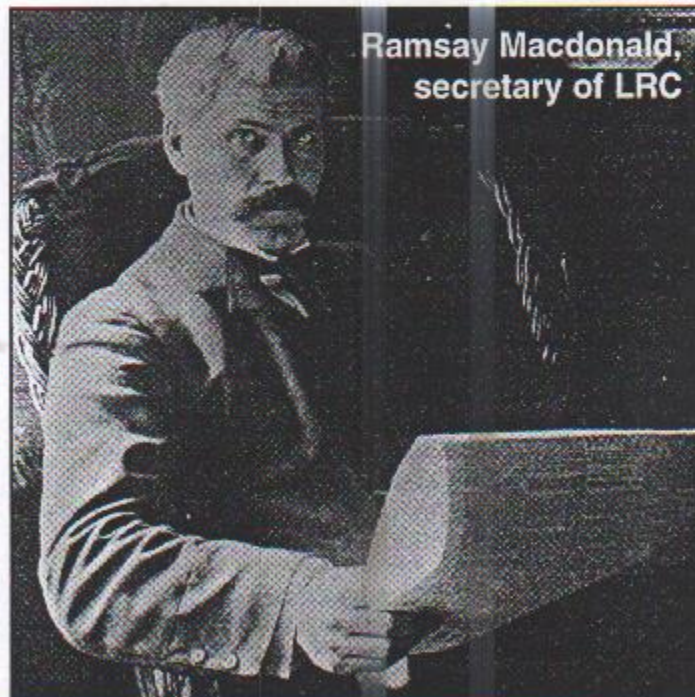
The Labour Party's commitment to socialism was raised each year by Marxists who were active in the Party. Members of the Social Democratic Federation were active in the Party and moved resolutions, although the SDF itself had ceased affiliation, to the Labour Party. One independent socialist, Victor Grayson, was also elected to Parliament for Colne Valley as a protest against the class collaborationist policies of

some of the Labour MPs. In 1908 the following resolution was passed -
'...that in the opinion of this Conference, the time has arrived when the Labour Party should have as a definite object, the socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange, to be controlled by a democratic state in the interest of the entire community, and the complete emancipation of labour from the domination of capitalism, and landlordism, with the establishment of social and economic equality between the sexes.'

The resolution which predated the formal adoption of Clause 4, part 4 was carried by 514,000 to 469,000 votes. The mover of the resolution said that he spoke from his experiences as a trade unionist. His union, the Engineering Society, had existed for 56 years but its aspirations had not been realised. There was unemployment in the engineering community and a standard of living far short of that 'which our forefathers desired.' This could only be due to the 'private ownership of the means of life'. His union had long accepted the limits of trade unionism and it was written in the rulebook that they would promote the interests of workers only until 'some more general principle of operation could be guaranteed in society, guaranteeing to every man, the full enjoyment of his labour.' With this resolution the link was forged between trade unionism and socialism. The roots of socialism in the Labour Party were there from the outset. This was regretted by the quasi-Liberals. It was also not understood by some of the Marxists in the SDF who were setting themselves up against the Labour Party on the grounds that 'it was not a socialist party.' Inevitably the struggles which took place led workers to draw socialist conclusions and that was reflected in the Labour Party itself. Keir Hardie claimed that it was the Labour Party rank and file which practised the marxian policy of class struggle, whilst its critics reduced Marx's historic formulae to a set of meaningless phrases. The lessons for today are clear. The events of the last few years are the result of the defeats which the labour movement has suffered since 1979 - they will be reversed. The alternative of building a new party is not an option.

In 1909 another attack on the labour movement was launched in the form of the Osborne Judgement. This was a ruling upheld by the House of Lords that the unions could not use their funds to finance political causes. This meant that they could no longer fund Labour MPs. The judgement was reversed by the Trades Union Act of 1913. But the funding of Labour by the unions was to come under attack again after the defeat of the general strike of 1926. An act of 1927 made trade unionists contract in, rather than contract out to pay a political levy to Labour. The ruling class in Britain have been eager to break the links between Labour and the unions. They cannot tolerate the second main political party being in the pay of the trade union movement. This has clearly marked Labour as a class party. The Tories of course obtain millions from big business, including increasingly sources from abroad. They would like a safe second party of capitalism, like the Democrats in the USA who could take over when the Tories were discredited. Blair would be keen to oblige them. In the 1950s and 1960s trade union leaders stitched up Labour Party conference votes with the block votes. No criticisms were made of lack of democracy and accountability in those days. Even in the 1970s when the Labour Party moved to the Left the trade unions were a 'moderating' influence compared to the left wing constituency activists who were directly elected. At other times

of crisis though, such as in 1931, the TUC stood against the harsh programme of cuts in wages and unemployment benefit demanded by the international bankers after the crash of Wall Street. The threatened run on the pound led the bankers to insist that the Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer balance the books to ensure that Britain stayed on the gold standard. Although a majority of the Labour Cabinet had been prepared to make these cuts there was no way that they would have been endorsed by the labour movement. The prime minister, Ramsay Macdonald, resigned and a national government was formed. Could it be that today the sort of programme the European bankers may want from a Labour Government, in order to take Britain into a single European currency would prove to be unacceptable even to the most right-wing trade union leader? At the end of the day trade unions exist to defend the living standards of their members, and there are limits to how far trade union leaders can depart from this. The campaign to maintain the trade union links with the Labour Party and the campaign to 'Keep the Party Labour' will receive support from activists in the movement, young and old, both on the left and the right of the party. The infiltrators from the 'Millbank Tendency' have nothing in common with these traditions. They will be here today and gone tomorrow when the Blair experiment inevitably backfires.



Ramsay Macdonald,
secretary of LRC

a socialist programme for Labour

• **Get the Tories out.** A Labour government must adopt socialist policies that can really answer the needs and aspirations of working people.

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

• **Restore and expand all health and safety safeguards** under the control and direction of the trade unions. 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.

• **For a properly funded extension of higher education.** No to student loans - for a decent living grant for all over 16. For the development of a programme of lifelong education, with properly paid leave for workers wanting to re-train, develop new skills, or enhance their existing qualifications. A guaranteed job, apprenticeship or place in further/higher education for all young people.

• **Solve Britain's chronic housing crisis!** Labour should

develop a programme of quality house building and renovation, with strict rent controls, that can rapidly tackle the problems of slum housing and homelessness. Nationalise the building companies!

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

• **For a programme of investment to create a cheap, nationally integrated, publically owned transport system.** Renationalise the railways.

• **Outlaw all forms of discrimination.** Equal pay for equal work. The development of quality childcare facilities available to all. Scrap all racist immigration and asylum controls. Abolish the Criminal Justice Act and other repressive legislation.

• **The environmental question is primarily a question about big business.** It is big business that pollutes our air, water and land. It is big business that poisons our food. Labour must bring in stringent environmental controls and regulations under the supervision of the relevant workforces, consumers and representatives of effected communities. These measures, along with nationalisation of the land, the big petro-chemical enterprises and the major food companies, can form the basis of a genuine socialist approach to the environment.

• **Big cuts in military spending and a planned transfer of resources to useful, peaceful purposes.**

• **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.

• **For real internationalism.** No to the bosses European Union. Yes to a socialist united states of Europe, as part of a world socialist federation.

• **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.



Join us in the fight for socialism!

Socialist Appeal supporters will be in the forefront of fighting to get the Tories out and a Labour government elected. We are also campaigning on the above programme as the only solution for working people. Why not join us in this fight? For more details:

Name.....

Address.....

.....tel.....

return to: Socialist Appeal, PO Box 2626, London N1 7SQ