

Zimbabwe ● Bolivia ● China ● USA demonstration ● Sri Lanka

Socialist Appeal

The Marxist voice of the labour movement

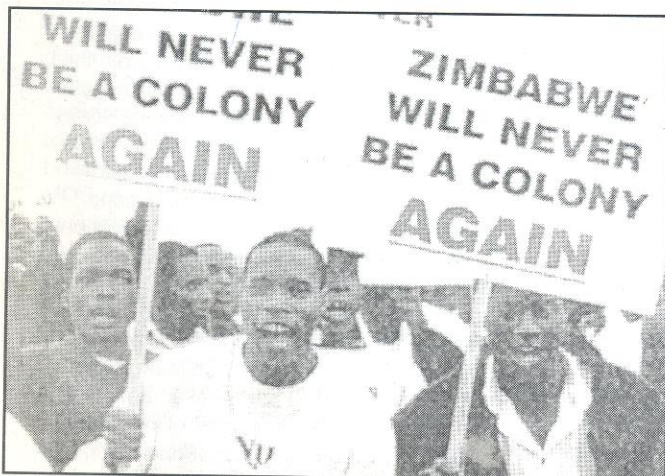
May 2000. issue 79 Price: £1

Car industry in crisis



Fight job losses now!

Zimbabwe: Mugabe's Desperate Throw



Labour's job crisis

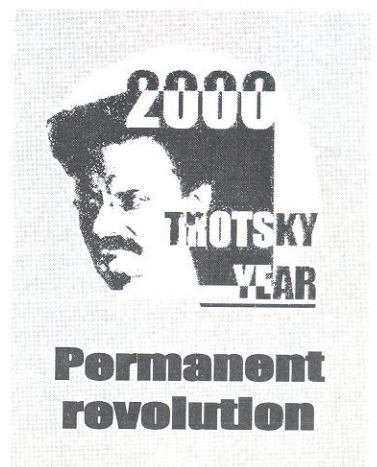
Livingstone affair

Car industry in crisis

Scotland

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Mugabe's Desperate Throw The Land Question is the Key to the Zimbabwean Revolution

The death of two white farmers has unleashed a wave of hysteria in the press against the land occupations being carried out by landless peasants, the unemployed and veterans of the war of independence in Zimbabwe. Blair and Cook denounce their actions as illegal and violent. According to them Zimbabwe is on the brink of anarchy. They completely ignore the responsibility of capitalism and imperialism who stole the land in the most violent manner from the black peasants in the first place and pushed them into utter poverty. How dare the white settlers claim these lands are theirs! The action of the land hungry peasants in taking back the land is completely justified.

The same papers and government figures have been deafeningly silent about the growing working class opposition to the IMF-inspired policies of the Mugabe regime. No western government cared when the leader of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, Tsvangirai was brutally beaten by government thugs and sent to prison. There was no talk of "illegal violence" when the union's headquarters were set on fire.

Now that 50 to 60,000 of the down-trodden rural poor are occupying some 1000 farms (out of a total of 4,500), these hypocrites denounce their actions as racially inspired jealousy and acts of vengeance against hard-working white families.

Zimbabwean President Mugabe, and his government, are actively supporting the seizure of land. Western governments, our own Labour government in particular, demand that President Mugabe uphold the "rule of law". The Attorney General of Zimbabwe, meanwhile, declared that the police would not intervene for fear of sparking a civil war in the country. Now a constitutional amendment has been adopted by parliament authorising the government to seize white-owned land.

These land seizures are clearly not the spontaneous actions of the masses. In reality they are well organised. They are part of a political scheme designed by Mugabe and his team to divert attention at a time when his support amongst the population is waning. The working class and also the rural opposition is growing and crucial elections are drawing near, elections that could see the ruling party, ZANU-PF, facing defeat for the first time. Originally scheduled for April

they have been postponed to an unknown date. This is part of an attempt to gain time to build up a new base of support to enable Mugabe to cling to power.

Behaving in a classical bonapartist fashion, Mugabe is cynically playing off one sector of the population against another. This has been his policy since the beginning of independence 20 years ago. Having accepted capitalism in the famous Lancaster House Agreements in 1980, Mugabe has been balancing between the different contending class forces in Zimbabwe from the start.

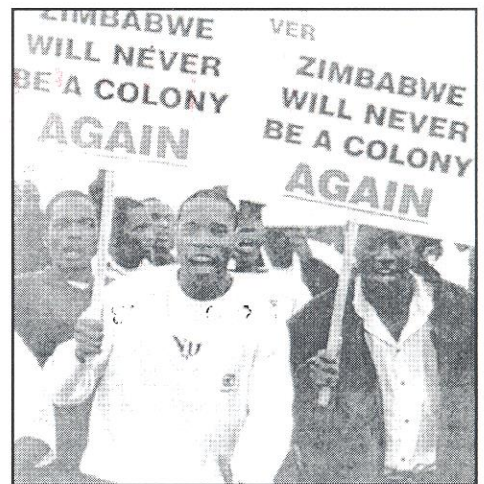
Now he cynically plays on the frustration amongst the war veterans and their unsatisfied need for land, and is using them against the urban workers who did not take part in the war of independence. When nurses went on strike for better wages a few years ago Mugabe threatened to send them "to the bush" to give them a taste of what sacrifice really means.

The acute frustration amongst the rural poor is the direct result of the compromise with capitalism at the time of independence. The two guerrilla movements, ZANU and ZAPU, had widespread support amongst the peasantry and the youth. The "hunger for land" was a driving force behind the independence movement. Indeed their struggle in the 70's for black majority rule was not only a fight against racist oppression but also for social liberation. This was reflected in the "socialist" stance of the leaders of ZANU and ZAPU.

Broken promises

The Lancaster House Agreement signed by those same leaders left the capitalist political and economic structures intact. The promised redistribution of land by the guerrilla leaders, who depended on the support of the peasants, took the form of "willing buyer-willing seller". A special clause in the Agreement included a 10 year guarantee against all forms of expropriation. Britain at that time agreed to provide funds to purchase land from the white farmers.

Since then only 50,000 families have been given land bought by the government. 4500 white farmers own 11 million hectares of Zimbabwe's prime agricultural land. 1.2 million black agricultural workers work on those lands. About 1 million blacks own 16 million hectares, often in drought prone



regions. These contradictions are fuelling the frustrations of the rural masses. Huge modern, mechanised estates are divided by a mere fence from subsistence farmers living in mud huts.

Since independence agriculture has continued to be dominated by the cultivation of export-oriented crops such as tobacco, cotton and maize. They represent approximately 40% of all exports. Part of the former black subsistence agriculture has also been integrated in the growing of export crops. Nevertheless only a tiny minority have really benefited from this development, leaving the vast majority in abject poverty. At least 600 commercial farms (more than 1000 hectares) are now also the property of rich blacks, most of whom are part of, or linked to, the ruling party.

This is part of a wider process of integrating the former guerrilla leaders into the state and the industrial and agricultural capitalist class. Nevertheless there were some important reforms during the first ten years of independence thanks to the highest growth rates in Africa during the second half of the eighties. For instance education absorbed between 16 and 22% of the state budget during the first ten years and primary education has been made compulsory and free. Rural schools and hospitals were built for the first time ever. Child mortality decreased from 130 per thousand births to 65 in the period 1978 to 1989. This was the basis for Mugabe's popular support, especially amongst the rural masses.

As the economy stagnated in 1990 the

government turned to the IMF and the World Bank, adopting 'structural adjustment plans'. This has put Zimbabwe on a chaotic road downhill. Gross domestic product which had been growing at over 4% a year increased by only 1% in 1991. Growth in industrial production, which had been rising nearly 6% per year, fell back to 2%.

The IMF plans have precipitated a food crisis. Zimbabwe had always been a surplus maize producer with stockpiles of more than 1 million tonnes to tide the country over during drought years. Now it has to import maize because the World Bank forced the government to sell its stockpiles.

In 5 years the IMF has destroyed 40% of Zimbabwe's once formidable industrial output. Zimbabwe used to be the fourth most industrialised nation in Africa (after South Africa, Nigeria and Egypt). Workers living standards have fallen by almost half and the achievements in primary health care and education have been reversed.

Alongside corruption scandals and the self-enrichment of formerly "socialist" leaders, 60% of the 12 million inhabitants of Zimbabwe now live below the poverty line. This plus an unemployment rate of 50% and inflation at 70% have weakened Mugabe's popular support. Despite this, Mugabe still won the elections of 1996, but 70% of the population abstained or supported the boycott called by the opposition.

Unions revitalised

The highly unpopular military intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo (involving 10,000 Zimbabwean troops) is accentuating this process of dissatisfaction especially when people see the returning body bags. This intervention is costing US\$1 million a day.

Organised popular opposition is mounting. Human rights groups, urban action groups and womens' defence associations have been formed. Crucially, the trade union movement has been revitalised.

Last year ZCTU, the national trade union movement, established a new political formation: the Movement for Democratic Change. Its leaders declare themselves to be social democrats and look for political guidance to Blair and the leadership of the Labour Party, but most of the working class and poor have enormous illusions in this movement being to the left. These hopes, however, are being rapidly betrayed. The MDC recently declared their support for the 'remedies' of the IMF. Their manifesto does in fact commit the party to "social democracy", but it has no clear programme for creating jobs, land distribution, free education and primary health care. It does not reject privatisation and accepts the IMF structural adjustment plans. Big business, nationally and internationally, and the white farmers, are already gathering to promise this new formation their support.

The touchstone for all parties in

Zimbabwe is the burning land question. By refusing to support the expropriation of the white settlers the MDC leaders are openly siding with imperialism. They are following the same path as the Zambian trade union leader, Chiluba. In the early '90s, he defeated the discredited president, Kaunda, surfing on a wave of discontent and a desire for fundamental change. Nurtured by capital, he rapidly became their man and continued with the same old policies.

In February of this year a referendum on constitutional reform in Zimbabwe (giving more power to the president) was defeated. It was the first time the ruling ZANU-PF party had lost a vote in 20 years. The loyalties of the rural masses and the war veterans appear to have been strained too much.

The government-inspired land seizures are intended to rebuild those loyalties and keep Mugabe and his cronies in power. But he is playing with fire. Giving the impression to the impatient landless peasants, and the rural masses in general, that finally after 20 years of independence a massive land distribution is in sight may push them to move independently of Mugabe's power game. The farm workers and the peasants should set up independent committees of action to expand the land seizures under their own control and leadership. These committees could then appeal for the support of the workers in the cities too, urging them to seize the factories in the interests of all working people.

The South African government is also worried by this dangerous game. In South Africa the land question is also a burning and unsolved issue. Events in Zimbabwe could encourage the masses in South Africa and other African countries to follow the example of their northern brothers and sisters.

Mugabe can only succeed in his high risk political game of poker if he is not challenged by a consistent leadership of the working class armed with a socialist programme. Such a leadership would support the expropriation of the land of the white settlers (also of the rich black farmers who gained their estates thanks to their links with Mugabe) and the nationalisation of the land. This would allow agriculture to be organised on a voluntary, collective basis under the democratic control and management of the farm workers and the peasants. A socialist programme for the land linked to the nationalisation of agricultural and manufacturing industry under workers control and management would serve as an inspiration to workers and peasants across the continent.

Breaking with capitalism and embarking with their brothers and sisters across Southern Africa on the road of socialist transformation offers the only way forward for the masses in Zimbabwe and the entire continent. ☆

Index

Editorial.....	2
Job crisis.....	4
Livingstone.....	5
Birmingham march.....	6
Rail industry.....	7
Potteries.....	9
Scotland.....	10
Car industry.....	12
Youth.....	15
Trotsky.....	16
USA.....	18
Economics.....	19
China.....	20
Bolivia.....	22
Sri Lanka.....	24
Jolly George.....	25
Science.....	26
Book review.....	27
Letters.....	28

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Labour's job crisis taking its toll

A staggering quarter of a million industrial jobs have been destroyed since Labour came to power in 1997. A new report from the GMB claims that only 16.5% of people across Britain now work in factories. Welcome to booming Britain! Labour's economic and industrial policy has now been put to the test, and has been found wanting.

This mounting catastrophe was compounded further by the announcement that BAe Systems Govan shipyard faces closure this summer, if no orders are found. Scotland has lost more than 25,000 such jobs since December 1997.

There is growing disillusionment with the Blair government for its lack of decisive action. With tens of thousands of jobs at risk, the government has dithered or is simply putting a sticking plaster over the problem. Regarding Rover, it is offering a "task-force" and £150 million to assist the unemployed. Given the collapse of the mining industry, it was forced to grant a subsidy of £100 million to the private owners of Britain's remaining coal mines. To prevent the closure of Govan shipyard, it 'hopes' to come up with some Navy contracts. What is lacking is a consistent industrial policy. That is the inevitable consequence of tying yourself to the rigours of the market - that is rigour mortis.

Parasitic bosses

Neither blithely blaming market conditions, nor throwing a few million pounds in subsidies to the parasitic bosses of industry will salvage these jobs. What is required is strategy and planning. That in turn requires ownership. Blair and co. are ideologically opposed to nationalisation. They are dogmatically obsessed by the market. Yet nationalisation of those firms threatening redundancy, introducing workers control and management, offers the only sane way out of this jobs crisis.

Blair is desperate, however, to avoid the allegation that he is bailing out 'lame ducks'. He is more concerned with New Labour's image in the City of London, than with the party's "core" voters. As John Edmonds of the GMB put it, "Thousands of jobs are being lost every week in the very heartland areas the Labour Party is supposed to be cultivating in the run-up to the next election."

The answer of the union leaders is no better, however. Their alternative consists of meekly asking the employers to be 'nice' to their workforce. These job losses are a direct consequence of their pathetic policy

of 'partnership' with the bosses. They appeal to the government to "ease the pressure on manufacturers," in the words of Edmonds - what about the pressure on millions of workers, hundreds of thousands of them in danger of losing their livelihoods!

The government's pro-capitalist policies are having major political consequences. In London, as we go to press, the Labour candidate for mayor, Frank Dobson, is heading for a sound thrashing. In the local elections elsewhere, Labour losing hundreds of seats has allowed the Tories to boast of an electoral recovery after winning last years European elections. In reality, this is more of a protest, with very low turnouts reflecting workers dissatisfaction with Labour, rather than growing support for the Tories. Instead of introducing policies in our interests, the government is toying with new devices like spreading voting over a whole week in some areas, or introducing polling booths into Asda stores.

Labour HQ is being inundated with reports of disquiet from working class strongholds. Even right-wingers like Peter Kilfoyle have piped up to criticise the government's record. In areas like Liverpool, Kilfoyle says, voters "are turning away in droves...they see nothing in it for them." Yet government ministers are deaf to criticism. Clive Soley, chair of the Parliamentary Labour Party, has the effrontery to describe pensioners as "conservative and often racist" at a recent strategy meeting at Millbank! Peter Mandelson, jointly in charge of election strategy with Gordon Brown, was accused of saying there was "no mileage" in pensioners, preferring to target "aspirational voters" instead! Although the party denied this, it appears to fit in well with the whole contemptuous approach of the Blairites. However, this doesn't prevent them from introducing mobile polling booths at old people's homes, so they can minimise the effect of a low turnout.

The Blair government continues with its unpopular pro-capitalist policies regardless. Despite the disaster of privatisation, new franchises are to be dished out to the rail operating companies, with other big business vultures, like the notorious security

Following the debacle over Rover, comes the threatened closure of the Ford plant at Dagenham, putting in danger 70 years of car production, and threatening tens of thousands more jobs.

by Laurie Griffiths

company Group 4, attempting to muscle in on the act. The part-privatisation of the London Underground is still being pushed through, despite overwhelming opposition. The privatisation of air traffic control, which was put on the back burner after the Paddington rail disaster, is being brought forward - threatening a massive parliamentary revolt. The Labour dominated transport committee, chaired by Gwyneth Dunwoody, said the government's proposals were "the worst of all possible options."

In desperation, Blair has entered into a filthy contest with the Tories over who is the 'toughest' on asylum seekers, both attempting to whip up prejudice against so-called bogus claimants. Such actions will only further sicken traditional Labour supporters. If Labour had carried out socialist policies to build houses, eliminate unemployment, and develop social services, then the threat of racist propaganda from the Right, would find no echo.

The Blairites, as was clear from the electoral disasters in Wales and Scotland, are wrecking the party. Their only saviour is the utter mess the Conservative party is still in.

Bold socialist policies

It is time to change course! The only way out for the Labour and trade union movement is the adoption of bold socialist policies. On the basis of the "market economy", factories are being closed like matchboxes in the name of "profitability". In every party and union branch we must demand that those firms threatening redundancies should be nationalised. Not only the 'lame ducks' but also the 'healthy swans' should be taken into public ownership. Only by taking over the commanding heights of the economy under workers control and management, paying compensation only on the basis of proven need, can the resources of society be planned and used in the interests of the majority and not a tiny handful of greedy millionaire tycoons. That is why the Labour Party was founded a hundred years ago. It's time we claimed it back. ☆

Reinstate Livingstone and fight for socialism

As we go to press, Ken Livingstone is heading for a landslide victory for London Mayor. This huge encroachment represents a severe blow to Tony Blair and his blatant attempt to rig the election in favor of his puppet, Frank Dobson. Unfortunately, Livingstone's campaign has really been little more than a one man media circus.

by Steve Forrest, Erith and Thamesmead CLP (personal capacity)

There was a fundraising music event hosted by the DJ Fatboy Slim and the New Musical Express at the Astoria theatre.

Other fundraisers have included an evening hosted by Damien Hirst, and even a play called "Snogging Ken" at London's Almeida theatre. Chris Evans doubling his contribution to the campaign fund to £200,000 after Dobson's inappropriate comments on redheads. Many may wonder if all this is necessary, after it was revealed how much Livingstone earned including his MPs salary newspaper and restaurant columns and after dinner speaking, around £220,000 over an 18 month period. Not bad work if you can get it. There has been no public campaigning, no public meetings, street meetings, just a purple battle bus with the slogan "Ken 4 London" emblazoned on the side touring round London every day. In an attempt to appeal to the youth vote, Ken Livingstone was seen spinning discs with Fatboy Slim and, in a further populist move, made noises towards the possibility of decriminalising cannabis and ecstasy, a move which would not solve the drugs crisis in Britain. Instead Livingstone should launch a war on the 'causes' behind young people taking drugs in greater numbers than ever - temporary and part-time jobs with poverty wages and no long term prospects, poor housing or no housing, and above all, even in a boom, a society that for vast numbers of young people offers nothing more than despair and hopelessness.

In a recent interview in the NME answering a question on the destruction of living standards in the third world by the behaviour of global capitalism and the IMF, Livingstone said the following: "All over the world people die unnecessarily because of the international financial system Third world governments have to cut back on clean water and health programmes.

"Every year the international financial system kills more people than second world war. But at least Hitler was mad you know." Quite correct to lay the blame for the

impoverishment of the colonial masses at the door of "the international financial system", but the following day Livingstone realised he may have upset the City of London and backtracked somewhat saying if anyone was to blame it wasn't British capitalism but the Americans.

Livingstone declared that he will: "Work with the Corporation of London and major city institutions to ensure London remains the financial capital of Europe." So much for the crimes of global capitalism and the behaviour of big business.

However, on April 17 Livingstone launched his manifesto declaring that: "Now is the time for serious debate on the issues that matter to London." This has to be welcomed by all trade unionists and Labour party members in London. However on closer inspection it is a populist manifesto described by the *Evening Standard* as a "characteristically skilful document" that attempts to appeal to the whole cross section of Londoners.

To the City he promises to champion London as the financial capital of Europe. He wants to recruit 2000 policeman to tackle crime as well as more use of CCTV and DNA testing. In appealing to the Green vote, he would introduce a "Quality of Life Index" to measure crime, health, air and access to green space, and increase recycling and home insulation. He also pledges to lead a crusade to get more money for London's hospitals. This should include a commitment to fight for the immediate end of PFI. He will increase art spending giving better access to Londoners and full support to events like the Notting Hill Carnival, which for years has been underfunded.

He does give a full commitment in his document to an integrated public transport system in London and, in particular, in relation to the Underground rejects Blair's plans to split up and privatise it. He declares as Mayor he will, "fight to retain a unified underground system in the public sector."

This is the key issue of the campaign. Privatisation of the tube is opposed by two thirds of Londoners and Livingstone would win a tremendous victory if he launched a



straight fight with Blair over the future of the underground and a commitment to keep it safe in public hands. According to the latest polls Livingstone is 36% ahead of the now third placed Dobson who falls behind even the Tory, Norris. However, Labour have built a lead in the elections for the assembly where it is not ruled out they could get a majority. This has been confirmed while out canvassing particularly in my area which is solid Labour. Voters are declaring their support for Livingstone and Labour. This result is the one that was robbed from ordinary Labour party members by Blair's manipulation of the selection process. As socialists in the trade unions and Labour party we should be demanding Livingstone's reinstatement as a Labour Mayor. Where he can begin to work with the Labour majority in the assembly against the privatisation of the tube and for a socialist programme for London. ☆

Conference on Party democracy after the Livingstone affair

**Sunday 21st May, 1pm.-5pm.
University of London Union, Malet
Street WC1**

- Cost: £5 individuals (£2 unwaged), £10 delegates.
- To register, send cheque payable to "Socialist Campaign Group Supporters' Network" to 7 Malam Gardens, London E14 0TR, stating whether you require creche or access details.

Over 100,000 March in Birmingham



Saturday's demonstration in support of the Rover workers in Birmingham was a massive show of strength not seen since October 1992. The size of the demonstration, numbering over 100,000, was the biggest demo Birmingham has seen since the 1970s. It was a thoroughly working class demonstration, as wave after wave of protesters with their trade union banners represented a brilliant show of class solidarity.

**Defend Rover Jobs!
Nationalisation
NOW!
For a Workers
Rescue Plan!**

by Rob Sewell

If transport had been laid on by the unions in every area, the turnout would have been three or four times as much. There is a mood across the country against the growing job losses, as news breaks of more redundancies across the manufacturing sector. It is time for action on behalf of the Labour movement. The mood on the Birmingham demonstration was defiant and shows the possibilities for class action to protect jobs.

Unfortunately, the trade union leaders who spoke did not offer any way forward. Their whole approach was the defence of British manufacturing industry, where the interests of the workers and bosses are supposedly same.

As opposed to the German BMW bosses, who had no interest in British jobs, British bosses would be more patriotic! In the words of Bill Morris of the TGWU, "For us, the initials BMW must mean British Manufacturing Workers."

Such a remark goes against the solidarity shown for the Rover workers by many trade unionists across Europe, including Germany. One German car worker, Hans Koebrick, who had travelled from Berlin to attend the march was quoted in the *Morning Star* (3/4/00) as follows: "I want to show my support for Longbridge. I could be involved in the next crisis."

Tony Woodley, the TGWU national

motor secretary, went so far as to say it was a fight to reduce the number of redundancies, as if there was an acceptable figure!

Sir Ken Jackson of the AEEU has called for a boycott of BMW. Well, it may be news for Jackson, but most workers have been boycotting BMW, as well as Ferrari and Porsche for years!!! Now he wants James Bond to Buy British!

Such a strategy would simply pit British workers' against foreign workers.

Our task must be to build unity of the working class across national boundaries. That is the only way to beat the multinationals.

The crisis in the car industry deepened over the weekend as Honda announced that it was halving vehicle production for the next two months at its Swindon plant. At the same time, there is deep anxiety over the future of the Ford plant in Dagenham as the Ford bosses look for reductions in capacity.

Despite the show of strength and feeling, the workers were scandalously snubbed by Tony Blair. The day after the demonstration, he ruled out any government intervention to save the threatened jobs. The Labour government would not mount a rescue operation but oversee its "transition". Blair went on: "governments in the past, of both major political parties, have been drawn towards rescuing a com-

pany in difficulties.

"We see our role now as helping to equip people and business for the new economy - as encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship."

The government has offered £152 million in aid to BMW, while the plant's closure would mean £500 million in state benefits to those made redundant.

Far better if Rover was nationalised and run by the workers. If rationally planned, with job diversification, and integrated into a publicly owned car industry these jobs could be saved. It is time the Labour government got off its knees!

A one day strike across the Rover combine linked to a mass lobby of Parliament can serve to build up the pressure to force the Labour government to take immediate action to save the 60,000 jobs that are now under threat.

It shows that the battle has to be taken into the Labour Party against the pro-capitalist policies of the Blair government. Only on the basis of socialist programme involving the nationalisation of the big monopolies, banks and insurance companies can the economy be planned in the interests of the working class and not the profits of millionaire parasites. ☆



Rail industry in crisis

Nearly 100 delegates attended the Train Crews and Shunters RMT Conference in Plymouth last month. The general mood of the conference was one of dissatisfaction from the rank and file activists regarding the actions of our full time officers, the general secretary Jimmy Knapp, the assistant general secretary Vernon Hince, as well as our General Grades Committee itself.

by Derek Goodliffe, RMT Grades Executive (personal capacity)

The conference delegates felt let down, "yet again", over the outcome of the decision over the role and responsibility of the guard. Composite Resolution number one spoke of the "betrayal" of our guards members in this dispute. It went on to say that we totally oppose the decision to accept the proposed amendments to the Section M of the Railtrack Rule Book [Train Protection]. There was a heated debate over the roll played by A.G.S, brother Vernon Hince. Betrayal is the way we feel over this matter, and on the whole, it is felt that there is the need for a change at the top level of our trade union. We feel that we are no longer being properly represented by our general secretary, our assistant general secretary and the General Grades Committee.

Another key issue raised at the conference was over safety. Five months after the Paddington disaster, the government is reducing the powers of the regulatory authorities over the train operating companies. As Alex Gordon (Bristol RMT) stated "the T.O.Cs are no better than Railtrack, with fragrant abuses of safety. The Health & Safety Executive is a paper tiger." Another delegate from Bristol criticised the RMT leaders for failing to wage a campaign over safety after Paddington as "a lost opportunity." He continued "Central Office is doing nothing."

Conference gave support to Sarah Friday, the RMT member and Health and Safety Rep from Waterloo who was victimised and sacked by South West Trains. There have been two solid strikes after a 5 to 1 ballot in favour of strike action. There is a further strike planned for 20th April.

We were informed that our trade union is now recruiting 800 members a month. But on the most important item of retention, we were given no figures. That does not surprise me as I feel this is our biggest failing. How can we hope to retain members in this climate of dissatisfaction. I feel only a change at the top level of this union will address this situation. Then hopefully we can get back to giving the members of the RMT the support it needs and deserves.

Our new pamphlet on the crisis in the rail industry got a very positive response at the RMT's Train Crews and Shunters conference. Myself and two delegates sold the pamphlet, and we held a bookstall selling journals and our other publications. In all, about a third (31) of the delegates bought the pamphlet, with another 70 being taken away for sale in the branches. One member of the National Executive of the union took ten copies to sell. We also raised more than £40 for our funds.

Activists around the country are looking for a lead, looking for the kind of programme put forward in our new pamphlet. Many are also keen to find out more about the ideas of Marxism and the struggle for a socialist society. *Socialist Appeal* supporters around the country should order copies of the new pamphlet to sell at their local RMT branch, railway station or depot.

Our industrial correspondent

Dublin Bus Drivers look for a share of the Cotic Tiger

by P.A. Dublin

Dublin Bus workers won an 8 per cent pay rise after industrial action that paralysed the city on the 28th, 29th and 30th of March. The strike was supported by rail maintenance workers and Bus Eireann staff who joined the strike after spontaneous unofficial picket lines spread the action nationwide in a low pay revolt.

With the tension escalating, the Irish Business and Employers Confederation called for the Army to provide emergency transport and the deregulation of the transport network to prevent future disruptions. According to Government sources 400,000 commuters were affected by the strike.

The bus drivers led by the National Bus and Railworkers Union sought a salary rise of 20 per cent.

On Monday 3rd of April new industrial action, agreed by the workers in a mass meeting, was ready to start. Surprisingly, at 3 am on Monday, Peter Bunting, leader of NBRU, called off the four day strike after agreeing a deal with the company without consulting the workers first.

However important the 8 per cent pay increase, this settlement is only an interim deal, it does not force the government to increase its subsidy to Dublin Bus, and the workers have to make some productivity concessions.

Now, a union committee will negotiate with the employers and send the result to a mass meeting. ☆

Rail industry in crisis. A Fighting Programme for Rail Workers

This pamphlet is written by active RMT and ASLEF members who support the ideas and programme outlined in the magazine *Socialist Appeal*. It provides a clear class analysis of events and a programme that can take the struggle forward at each stage.

The ideas put forward in this pamphlet can unite the rank and file of the rail unions and transform them into fighting organisations that can defend our jobs and services and assist the whole Labour movement in the struggle for the socialist transformation of society.

Copies can be ordered from PO Box 2626, London, N1 7SQ. £1 each plus 30p p&p.
Special offer for union branches: 10 copies for £5.

Rail industry in crisis



A Fighting
Programme for
RAIL WORKERS

£1

A Socialist Appeal Pamphlet
www.marxist.com

Capital Idea



Danger: Power stations...

The AEEU is balloting 1000 workers in Scotland for strike action over Scottish Power sacking 44 safety workers and threatening to sack a further 550 workers across the country. They intend to lay off two-thirds of the construction workers who maintain fences and doors at sub-stations. Clearly the safety of millions is less important to them than their bank balance. Would nuclear power really be safe in private hands like these...?

... And nuclear waste

Not that it is safe anyway. Over the years Britain has become famous as the world's dumping ground for nuclear waste. News that spent nuclear fuel is turning up in scrapyards is surely going too far. Nicholas Rembrance recovered a 20lb block of metal from a recycling skip at his yard in Lowestoft. "It was different from any metal I'd seen before. It was incredibly heavy for such a small lump and it gave off sparks when I dropped it." In a separate incident a uranium fuel rod turned up in a scrapyard in Tamworth, Staffordshire. It may have been there for more than a year.

Easy come, easy go?

Last issue we reported on that rogues gallery called The Sunday Times Rich List 2000. They include a list of the 100 richest youngsters. If you take away the smattering of popstars, models, footballers, lottery winners and the like, together with those who have inherited wealth, then you are left with the main group by far represented here—those linked to internet companies. Given the millions that have been gained or, more specifically, lost over the last few helter-skelter weeks it is safe to assume that this list will stand as a monument to capitalist chaos and false dreams. Easy come, easy go? ☆

Teachers to ballot for action

Members of the National Union of Teachers are to be balloted for a national one-day strike over New Labour's Performance Related Pay (PRP) scheme, following a vote at the union's national conference in Harrogate. If successful this could lead to the first national strike by the union for 31 years.

Despite calls from the right wing to hold back on action, it is clear that teachers have had enough. The attempts by the government to take teaching back to the 19th century by imposing a system of payments by results, as if schooling was just another form of mass production, has proved to be the final straw for many teachers. It is clear now that strike action is the only way to defeat these proposals in favour of the union call for £2,000 a year extra for all teachers. As one delegate noted, PRP has already been defeated in Italy, Scotland and Portugal but only after teachers went on strike. The maximum effort should now be put in for a Yes vote in the ballot. Unfortunately, the right wing seem set on sabotaging this vote. Doug McAvoy, NUT general secretary, has already said that he will not campaign for a Yes vote, despite being instructed to do so by conference. If nothing else this reminds

us once again that the need for a real fighting leadership that will pay attention to members rather than expense accounts is still on the agenda.

Teachers have suffered attack after attack: staff cuts, increased workloads, class sizes, the tyranny of Ofsted and so on. Even the normally right wing NAS/UWT conference reflected this pressure with incoming union president Martin Johnson attacking "rampant capitalism" and calling Tony Blair "bourgeois" over his policies towards education. Conference delegates followed this up with a sharp attack on the role of Ofsted. Similar criticisms were also raised at the NUT conference as delegates were told that half the teachers who took early retirement were citing stress as the reason for their decision. The mood of anger expressed at these conferences will not go away but rather will intensify as time passes. A victory over PRP is essential. ☆

Striking postal workers

Post Office workers in London are engaged in a battle over leave restrictions. While there has always been a case for some restrictions over the Christmas period, in recent years management have blocked off Easter, Bank holidays, August, because they are especially busy. The leave dates left open to us are abysmal. You can't even coincide your leave with the children's school holidays. We've now reached the ridiculous position that some people are being asked to carry leave over because there isn't enough unrestricted time available to fit everyone in.

Locally, regionally and nationally the union has asked the management to negotiate a proper agreement on leave. They have consistently refused. Now the frustration of the workforce has boiled over. With summer fast approaching we want this matter sorted out. Management are even suggesting that workers take their summer holidays in April or November.

That's why we decided to ballot for strike action. Workers from E1 to E18, in the City, South West London, Romford and Ilford, and North West London, amounting to 500 workers from something like 70 post

offices delivered a massive 83% vote for strike action. The scale of the vote shows how high feelings are running.

The first day of action on April 25 was solid. Obviously our aim is not to hurt the public but to force the management to the negotiating table. Another day is planned for May 2, unless management are willing to offer something concrete. At the moment they are making vague 'promises'. That is not enough.

On the TV news, there was a suggestion from management that the action was unnecessary because the whole matter was under review. This is a red herring. There is a review of pay not of leave restrictions. We are costing them money. In order to open some offices management were bussed in from as far afield as Lincoln. We will continue with industrial action until we get a concrete agreement that will allow us to take our holidays at the same time as our children.

**Chris Osborne, Asst. Section Secretary
London 7 CWU (personal capacity)**

Stoke: fightback begins

There is yet more misery for workers in Stoke-on-Trent. Now though, after years of redundancies and short-time working, there is evidence of the beginnings of a fightback.

Royal Doulton has announced a pre-tax loss of £29.6 million. In the last year Doulton's worldwide workforce has been cut by 24%. The majority of job losses have been in North Staffordshire.

by Mike Lievens, Stoke-on-Trent

The long-term future of Doulton is not very rosy. Geoffrey Snow, a local stockbroker commented, "The chairman refers to a four-year turnaround programme. But the company hasn't got four years to save itself. It hasn't even got two years."

Late last year Hamish Grossart, the Doulton chairman, said that he was waiting for a 'white knight' to save the company. Whether or not Doulton is taken over, more job losses are a near certainty.

Churchill China have announced pre-tax losses of £4.5 million. James Sadler and sons, which is over a hundred years old, is rumoured to be on the brink of receivership. Much of production in recent years has been outsourced abroad. The workforce in Stoke-on-Trent has already been reduced from 500 to 140 in this period.

John Tams, which is 125 years old, and one of the biggest family run pottery companies, has gone into receivership. Already 213 redundancies have been announced. The receiver has said that he cannot give any assurances that there won't be further job losses. One worker said, "Although we're all hoping this is the beginning of the end of all the problems, it's hard to believe. It's been made clear that if a buyer makes an acceptable offer, it means getting rid of another two or three hundred workers."

Waterford Wedgwood meanwhile have announced a pre-tax profit of £43.2 million, although Wedgwood on their own are still making a loss. Wedgwood workers have now rejected a 2% pay offer, despite the fact that the union leadership had advised them to accept the offer. A worker at Wedgwood described the mood of the workforce as "not good" and "the feeling is that we had a pay freeze last year, and we think we deserve something better this year."

The Wedgwood pay deal is one of the first every year and is often an indicator of how other pay deals in the pottery industry will go. So the outcome of the Wedgwood negotiations will be watched by both bosses and workers in the industry with great interest. If the union leaders were prepared to fight, then a successful outcome for the workers would be far more likely.

One union that is fighting for their members is the UNISON branch at Stoke-on-Trent city council. The council with a massive Labour majority has agreed to £11 million cuts, including 75 compulsory redundancies, and the reduction of many jobs from full-time to part-time. The new cabinet-style leadership of the council means that many councillors are kept in the dark about decisions. One councillor told me that the only way he knows what the leadership is doing is by reading the local paper.

UNISON are threatening industrial action if any worker is threatened with compulsory redundancy. They have set up a strike action committee to prepare such action prior to a ballot of the members. Members will be voting firstly on imposing a special levy to create a hardship fund, then, if redundancies go ahead, they will be balloting on industrial action.

Ken Owen, the Communications Officer of the UNISON branch said, "This is the third year we have been asked to find voluntary redundancies, and we don't think there will be enough this time...We have never had an industrial action committee before. That is an indication of how serious the situation is."

Council ground maintenance staff are also unhappy over the council reneging on promised bonus payments and redundancy payments. A ground maintenance worker said, "For ten years we have gone along with every change they wanted and now we just can't take any more!"

When the Tories were in power council workers were told to accept cutbacks, until Labour got into government. Now, however, Labour is in office. They are not only carrying out the same policies as the Tory government as regards underfunding of councils, but show complete contempt for local government which means cutbacks in education, social services etc, in other words it is the working class who suffer.

Unless Labour councils get together to fight for more money from the government, then industrial action will take place not only in Stoke-on-Trent but throughout the country. Labour faces the prospect of heavy election losses, and losing control of a number of councils. ☆

Fat Cats

Average base pay among the chiefs of Britain's 30 biggest firms last year was £560,000, excluding bonuses and perks. Include them and this figure rises to £850,000. While we are told to be grateful for 2 or 3 percent rises, these bosses are getting many times more, while all the rhetoric about controlling fatcat pay has been quietly forgotten by the Labour government.

Sir Geoff Mulcahy, for example, head of Kingfisher - owners of Woolworths and B&Q - was paid £2.06 million last year. That is 268 times as much as his average employee who got £7,670. Sir Ian Prosser who runs Bass pubs received £1.63 million, 167 times the average £9,760 paid to his workers.

When they look across the Atlantic, however, these greedy parasites go green with envy at the salaries of their US counterparts.

Steve Jobs, founder of Apple computers, rehired to save the failing business, was paid \$1.2 billion (£750 million) last year, including a \$45 million (£28 million) Gulfstream jet. Jack Welch, boss of General Electric, picked up \$94 million (£58.75 million) last year, more than he paid his entire 15,000 workforce in Mexico.

These are the top 'earners', but even the average for US chief executives is a staggering \$11.9 million (£7.4 million).

Now, in the month when it was revealed that the income gap between rich and poor has actually widened under Labour, British bosses are set to emulate yet another American management technique - paying themselves fantastic bonuses and share options while driving down our wages and conditions. First with his snout in the trough is Barclays Chief Executive Matt Barrett whose £2 million salary will be topped up with share options that could see his income rocket into the tens of millions bracket. Meanwhile Barclays will be closing branches all around the country.

All talk of controlling boardroom pay is a farce. The only reason these people are in business is to make money. If we want to control these companies then we have to own them. Having kicked out these spongers there would be plenty of cash for reinvestment, modernisation, and decent wage levels and conditions for the people who produce the wealth - us. ☆

Class divide

Polite Notice

The National Audit Office has reported that the people who are least likely to get critical hip replacement operations under the NHS are the old and the large, precisely the people who will suffer the most by not having the replacements. But to this group must be added the polite... the polite? It seems that if you are rude and complain a lot then you will be treated earlier. In other words if you are middle class and shout and moan then consultants will panic and bump you forward in the queue, working class ranters need not bother of course.

A precious weapon

Those bosses (and trade union bureaucrats) who imagined that the use of the strike weapon had finally been consigned to the dustbin of history must have choked over their breakfast on March 29th. That day's Financial Times carried a report headed "Unions voice fears of rise in unofficial strikes." The article warns that there has been a rise in unofficial strikes, showing "rising worker discontent and frustration" and continues, "The 'wildcat' strikes tend to be short lived and do not appear in official government statistics... at present the trend.. is not causing much alarm but it does represent a noticeable increase..." The Engineering Employers Federation concede that there is 'a bit more activity' and that the number of strike ballots being held is rising. Action has been strongest in those areas of industry where the demand for skilled labour is highest, which does rather explain why the article's title refers to "unions" voicing fears. By "unions" the FT means union officials who are worried that their quiet life may be under threat as workers increasingly run out of patience and return to the old methods of struggle. ☆

Sleeping with the enemy

TV newsreader Shereen Nanjani and boyfriend Mark Smith were on opposite sides of a picket line as staff at Scottish Television and Grampian TV went on strike last month.

from *Kenny Brown*

Journalists and production staff went on strike in a row with management over pay-cuts and redundancies. Scottish Media Group want to slash the wages of 160 workers, but unions fear those targeted may be made redundant. Bosses have already called for the voluntary redundancies of seven staff programme directors.

Shereen showed her support for the strike by staying away from work, while Smith crossed the picket line to help the skeleton staff prepare the day's news programmes.

News veteran Smith - now head of Scottish TV digital service - returned to his roots doing voice-overs for the day's news stories. Paisley-born Shereen started work at Scottish TV in 1983 after gaining a degree at Glasgow University. Smith - a former pupil at Edinburgh's exclusive Fettes College, Tony Blair's alma mater (that's a posh way of saying old school) - worked as a journalist for the BBC before joining STV and was later promoted to head of news.

He was replaced, after his promotion by Paul McKinney, a former Labour spin doctor, who also defied strike calls to cross the

picket line at the TV station's headquarters in Glasgow.

McKinney, 35, rejoined Scottish TV two years ago after quitting his £40,000-a-year job as the Scottish Labour Party's communications director. He had been head-hunted from STV to halt the SNP's rising profile but quit only eight weeks later to return to the station where he was previously chief of news production. Before that McKinney worked for four years as an aide to Chancellor Gordon Brown.

Some of Scotland's top broadcasters joined the picket lines outside STV and Grampian studios across the country. Despite management claims that the strike had little impact, the Scotland Today and North Tonight evening news programmes were shelved and replaced by shorter bulletins throughout the day. STV sports anchor Jim Delahunt and political presenter Bernard Ponsonby joined the official picket line.

Grampian's usual on screen presenters, Kirsten Gove, Sarah Mark and Norman MacLeod joined their colleagues on the picket lines. Even Deputy First Minister and Justice Minister Jim Wallace has demonstrated more support for the striking workers, than the former Labour spin doctors. The Lib Dem Leader refused to give a pre-recorded news interview to STV on Tuesday because it was due to be broadcast on the day of the strike. ☆

“Blair is like Stalin”

Labour's longest serving member is far from impressed by Blair. 95 year old Elizabeth Gray from Glasgow has been a member of the party since she was 16 in 1921. Interviewed in a local Glasgow paper (Evening Times 26/2/00) she says "Blair is like Stalin and Dewar is as much use as Donald Duck."

"I've been a socialist since I was a wee girl and the Labour Party has always been a part of my life," she explained.

"My father was a docker in Aberdeen and he was involved in the trade union movement.

"When I was young, as soon as you were out of school you started work and I joined the Labour Party when I was 16. It was all so different then. It was about true socialism and everyone used to work for the good of the party because we were the party.

"In the twenties it was very exciting when

we were all working in the Women's Guild and the Co-operative Society to build the party and to help people."

Today however despite remaining fiercely loyal to the party she has helped to build for the last 80 years, she doesn't think much of the current leadership and the current government.

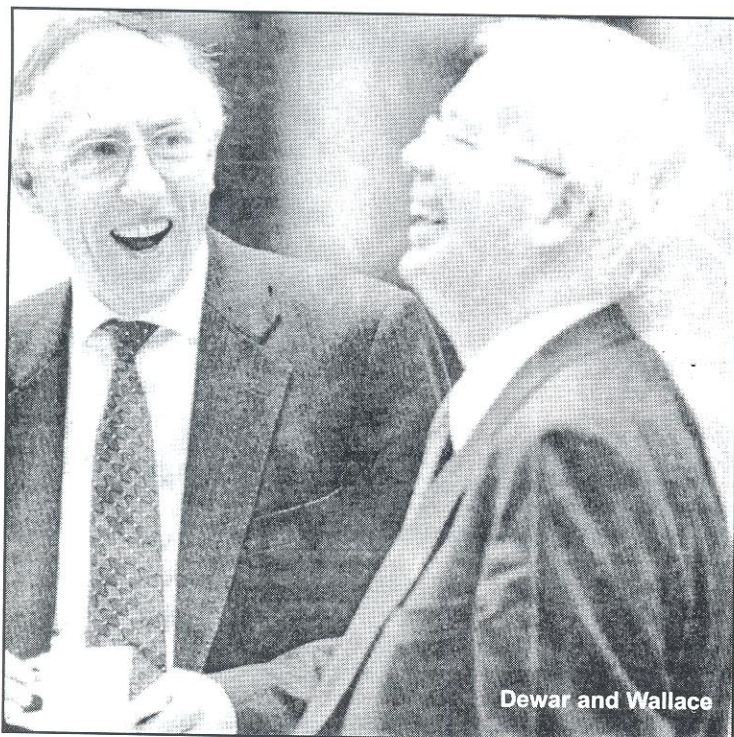
"The party has really lost its way," she says. My memory sometimes goes a bit but I wish I could forget what Tony Blair and his pals have done to the party.

"I still love the party, but I do not like the people that are running it. They do not really care about ordinary people, which is what our party was founded for.

"I just wish I was even 20 years younger so I could be able to get up and fight for the party. We need no more of this New Labour nonsense."

Those of us who are 20 years or more younger should take note. ☆

Scotland: Socialist policies not talking shops



With the crisis over the Govan shipyard, the MSF trade union criticised the Scottish Executive sponsored taskforce on manufacturing as "a talking shop with no teeth." For many people, who have not seen the parliament do anything to stop massive water and council tax rises, this description of the Executive is also very apt.

by Tom Rollings

The Executive has stumbled from one crisis to another - tuition fees, section 28, scandals involving Donald Dewar's spin men, the Lord Advocate's resignation, the new Parliament building going over budget and now warrant sales. Instead of hammering out the burning issues of the day, the crisis in the NHS and education, bad housing and poverty, particularly of children and OAPs, the executive seems to be living in a world of its own.

It has stimulated the prospect of investment in a £400m financial district and a £500m business park in Edinburgh but has done nothing for manufacturing employment.

The MSF estimates that 20,000 manufacturing jobs went in Scotland last year,

out of a British total of 130,000. Since 1971 jobs in Edinburgh have increased by 13%, while in Glasgow the number has fallen by 21%.

With the difference between the better off and the poorer regions expanding, Greg Lloyd, head of town and regional planning at Dundee University concludes that "instead of solving the problems associated with government at Westminster, such as the north-south divide, the Edinburgh parliament is reproducing them."

The Edinburgh Parliament was supposed to bring democracy closer to the people. The Cubie Report on tuition fees showed how little power the people really have. It was hailed as being fair and consultative and cost £700,000 but was then ignored in the deal stitched up between New Labour and the Liberals. The Edinburgh Parliament, like Westminster, is a talking shop.

There is a division of labour between the politicians that we elect and big business and the civil servants that have power in practice.

Local government, after 18 years of the Tories, is under further attack, squeezed by New Labour and the Executive. Despite the boom, the Labour council in Edinburgh plans savings of £12m. In Glasgow, where the rates are the highest, savings of £24m are to be made by 200 jobs going. At the same time, the council is boosting PFI with a £416m venture for the maintenance and construction of schools, for which it will pay a yearly fee of £40.5m over 40 years.

This has prepared the way for a swing to the SNP. Sam Donnelly, 59, an unemployed sanitation worker with chronic arthritis expressed this. He said in *The Scotsman* on March 9, "my arthritis is killing

me day by day, but I don't see the health service getting any better. I don't see any money in my pocket to help me enjoy my days. I've never been one for independence, but I think the SNP is the only answer to help working-class people like me."

Nationalism and independence

However, nationalism and independence are no solution to the problems of Scotland. While the nationalists point to current surveys which suggest that some people think devolution is insufficient and that nationalism is an alternative, there is at the moment a larger group of people who have become opposed to independence. Their view is that if devolution is a sideshow, independence would be even worse.

We supported devolution. Scottish people should have the right to decide their future. However, on a capitalist basis, the Scottish Parliament will not be able to satisfy the aspirations of working people, especially on the basis of a Lib-Lab coalition.

New Labour and Holyrood are not working to defend the interests of working people, like Sam Donnelly, but the SNP is not an alternative. The unevenness between regions and industries, which all countries suffer from, is due to the unplanned, anarchic and unequal distribution of wealth under capitalism, where investment follows profits and not the needs of reconstructing a decimated economy.

At the STUC conference the trade unions have attacked the big business agenda of New Labour with resolutions on Govan and the sale of council housing. However, this is not enough. They must get fully involved in the party, and take it back for working people. The Blairites have hijacked the party in the name of New Labour. The trade unions must take it back in the name of socialism.

This is a start to breaking the political and economic power of the ruling class, and their banks and big monopolies which, rather than parliaments, rule our lives. This is the only alternative that will allow us to use the wealth, talents and technology that exist to regenerate our economies, rather than make a profit for a minority at the expense of production, jobs and living standards. ☆

Car wars threaten thousands of jobs

"Modern trade unions recognise that companies must be competitive in global markets if they are to be successful and provide secure employment for their employees." *TUC document, March 1994.* "One of the best examples of the positive workplace approach can be found at the Rover group, now a subsidiary of the German conglomerate BMW. Ten years ago many of its plants were riven with bitter unofficial disruption. Now many of them are showplaces for enterprise unionism." Robert Taylor, *The Future of the Trade Unions, 1994.*

by Rob Sewell



The decision of BMW to sell off its Rover operations, the threat of closure hanging over the Ford plant at Dagenham, and the cuts in production at Honda, all graphically illustrate the turmoil facing the car industry. Despite the groveling of the trade union leaders in the name of "social partnership", and the concessions they were prepared to make to the bosses, there is no let up in the employers' offensive in the car industry.

The auto industry world-wide is facing a deep crisis. With 40 percent overcapacity, the car giants are seeking new alliances, further rationalisation and job losses, which threaten the livelihood of workers across the globe. The equivalent of all US car production could be taken out and world demand could still be met. The big five corporations - General Motors, Ford, DaimlerChrysler, Toyota and Volkswagen - are all engaged in a wave of mergers to consolidate their position as global players. Not since the 1920s and 1930s has the industry experienced such upheavals.

All the smaller car companies are in line to be swallowed up over the coming years. There is growing speculation of Volkswagen buying BMW, VW buying Rover, GM buying a share of BMW, DaimlerChrysler teaming up with PSA Peugeot Citroen, and so on. Whereas a few years ago about a dozen companies accounted for 70% of the market, the recent mergers and pairings mean that now only six firms account for that share.

This current transformation began about

a decade ago with VW's acquisition of Skoda. Then came the take-over of Chrysler by Daimler-Benz and the all-but-acquisition of Nissan by Renault last year. Other pairings have also taken place. Both Ford and GM now have satellite companies attached to them, such as Mazda and Isuzu; they have added also brands like Volvo, Jaguar and Saab. Sooner or later, all but Honda will be swallowed up, as the balance of forces between the big players is transformed.

This is an essential feature of capitalism. Over 150 years ago, Marx explained how free competition inevitably begets monopoly. In the struggle between big and small capital, the result is always the same: "It always ends in the ruin of many small capitalists, whose capitals partly pass into the hands of their conquerors, partly vanish", wrote Marx in the first volume of *Capital*. Today, the vast power of the monopolies and multinationals exercise a total stranglehold on the world. With their access to staggering sums of money, their economies of scale, their ability to manipulate commodity prices and even their power to determine the policy of governments, they are the true masters of the planet.

Rationalisation

Sweeping rationalisation is the order of the day. General Motors has shed 300,000 jobs over the past 20 years, with more to follow. In Britain, the sell-off of Rover and the Ford threat to Dagenham alone could result in 18,000 job losses, plus thousands more in

the supply industries. This comes on top of the restructuring of European operations, which include plant closures in Portugal, Poland and Belarus, and possibly in Belgium.

On Friday 18th February, the Ford Motor Company announced that its Dagenham vehicle production facility would be reduced to a single shift operation (from its current two shifts) from August, with the loss of 1,350 hourly paid jobs. Three days later an additional 150 redundancies were announced to the Department of Trade, bringing the total to 1,500.

The Ford bosses tore up existing agreements which stated that the new model Fiesta would be produced at Dagenham (1997 agreement), while a second model would be introduced with increases in plant capacity to 300,000 units per year (1999 agreement). The stark reality is, if the company does not honour its existing agreements on additional cars at Dagenham, vehicle operations and possibly diesel engine production would cease by 2002.

This would fit in with Ford strategy to solve its European overcapacity. It would be following in the footsteps of BMW, whose restructuring has broken the back of the motor industry in Britain.

As the Ford unions warned in a recent document on Dagenham: "Nobody can believe that a single shift plant is a viable proposition - the loss of economies of scale results in an automatic increase in unit costs - outside of the very short term. The reasonable conclusion is that unless exist-

ing commitments to additional product are honoured, the closure of the Dagenham plants is likely." Output of the Fiesta model at the plant has already been cut from 1,200 to 550-600 cars a day.

The fate of car workers, who produce the wealth of the industry, are so much small change for the bosses. They are only concerned with their profits and their market share. The need to cut capacity and costs is their over-riding concern. Despite all the "rationalisation" and concessions given by car workers, it is never enough. That was the real lesson of Rover. Rover workers were essentially blackmailed into agreeing to a swathe of voluntary redundancies and a "productivity" deal which saw big changes to their terms of conditions. The deal required Rover workers to forgo overtime pay and some bonuses, and to work extra hours when there was a big order-book, in return for paid time off when things are slack. In the end, the number of voluntary redundancies was oversubscribed and within a year or so BMW had pulled the plug.

Bosses have introduced team working, deskilling, lean production, Human Resource Management (known to workers as Human Remains Management), and Total Quality Management. This is the regime of speed-ups and labour flexibility which has seen a massive increase in the intensification of labour. The TUC is a champion of these new methods of work, i.e., exploitation. They stress "even greater weight to team work, motivation and commitment. Success and security, profitability and prosperity require that management and labour work together to make the best use of the talent available in each enterprise." Tell that to the Rover workers after years of "co-operation" and sacrifice. Where has it all got them? "We envisage Britain's trade unions developing a joint approach with the employers", continues the TUC, "to create the conditions for economic success and social cohesion." And finally: "It would mean talking to Britain's employers about how to achieve quality performance, cost and price competitiveness and a fairer society!"

This approach was eagerly taken up by the trade unions in the car industry. Bill Morris asserts that the TGWU has been at the forefront of workplace "reforms" introduced in recent years at the main car plants - Ford, Vauxhall and, above all, Rover. "Partnership for us is about co-operation", he says. In 1992 at Rover the New Deal was narrowly pushed through, leading to widespread changes to working practices,

to the detriment of the workers. "Having the trade unions understand what the company's mission is in life and working with us in partnership", stated Rover Group Chairman Mr George Simpson, "we have been able to



make tremendous strides in terms of productivity and costs."

Rover bosses were able to build on this deal with the agreement at the end of 1998, resulting in further changes to working practices.

The AEEU went further in its embrace of "partnership" and HRM. "We have signed a number of single union agreements with

Rover workers were essentially blackmailed into agreeing to a swathe of voluntary redundancies and a "productivity" deal which saw big changes to their terms of conditions.

inward investors such as Nissan, Toyota and Sony and we find their approach to HRM gives us no reason for complaint", said Bill Jordan. "Team-working, flexibility and multi-skilling have been central to the competitive edge that these companies have established but they have never sought to exploit their workforces by using these techniques." This is where class collaboration ends up. Single union deals and capitulation to the employers' offensive.

Although the GMB also extols "partnership", it was forced to admit that "HRM also has its negative side - increased work rates, more stress, discriminatory recruitment systems, fewer jobs in the long term and, if we are not careful, a weaker role for unions." Despite these warnings, there is no alternative put forward.

In regard to the AEEU's sweet-heart

deal in Nissan, the Nissan bosses have used a subservient union to ground down the workers. This explains the high turnover of labour in an area of high unemployment. Now the Nissan management are turning the screws further on the 5,000 workforce, using the high pound as an excuse. Bosses at the Sunderland plant are launching a 30% cost reduction programme.

The sweetener on offer is the prospect of building the next generation of Micras in 2003. However, to do so, the Sunderland plant must demonstrate a better cost base than its global competitors within Nissan. This means slashing costs by 30% between now and the end of 2002, rather than the 20% target in the Nissan global revival plan. Pressure will also be exerted on its 135 component suppliers to come up with substantial cost savings - at the expense of their workers. "I don't deny it's going to

be very difficult," said the managing director of Nissan (UK), John Cushnaghan.

This is part of Nissan's plans to axe 21,000 jobs worldwide. It aims to increase capacity utilisation from 53% to 82% over the next three years by closing plants, sacking workers and making those who remain work harder, changing a shift pattern of 3,600 hours of annual production to 4,400 hours.

Unfortunately, in Dagenham the Ford unions are putting forward a case to keep the plant open on the basis of capitalist economics. They say that Dagenham produces the Fiesta at a rate of 24.4 hours per car compared with 25.3 hours at Cologne in Germany - Ford's second Fiesta production facility within Europe. There is no meaningful productivity gap between the two plants. However, the unions point

proudly to the fact that Dagenham's hourly paid labour costs are 40 per cent lower than in Cologne - to Dagenham's advantage. British workers get paid £10.72 per hour and German workers £16.54 per hour, when social and 'indirect' costs are added. But such an argument simply pits British workers against German workers, to the delight of the bosses.

Nevertheless, the Ford unions recognise that there are other factors determining Ford's attitude. "It is our view that Ford's decision can only be based on a view that social and employment legislation in Britain makes us a soft touch when it comes to rationalisation and restructuring within Europe. The reality is that with 'exit costs' so much cheaper in Britain than elsewhere in Europe we have created a 'disposable class' of worker in Britain that would not be

tolerated anywhere else in the European Union", says the union document.

Ford's decision to introduce single shift production at Dagenham will reduce levels of production within the UK to 170,000 units in 2001 and to a paltry 70,000 Transit vans at Southampton by 2002 should the plant close.

On capitalist terms, it is dog-eat-dog economics. Workers are expendable in the carmakers thirst for profits. Unable to plan production, the industry has wallowed in excess capacity. Now the car bosses are determined to reduce capacity, especially at the older plants. That is the threat lying over Dagenham. The closure would throw 10,000 of workers on to the scrap heap, with a total job loss at around 54,000. Although this would devastate the surrounding communities, the Ford bosses are unconcerned.

More changes to working practices or measures to intensify the work process will never guarantee the existence of secure jobs. As car workers the world over have seen, it has been a race to the bottom.

Details of Ford's European restructuring are due to be unveiled this month. Tony Woody, chief TGWU negotiator for the car industry is to meet Nick Scheele, chairman of Ford of Europe to discuss the impact of the restructuring on the 19,000 hourly paid workers at Ford's 17 manufacturing sites in Britain. It is unlikely that Scheele will give any guarantees before the package is announced this month. Industry analysts believe the overhaul could lead to several plant closures and heavy job losses as Ford attempts to cut excess capacity.

A strategy of contracting jobs out is likely to be adopted by management worldwide. Ford have also begun the separation of the Ford factories producing automotive components, electrical components, fuel systems, glass and chassis systems, setting up a sub-division called Visteon. This has mirrored moves by General Motors who have recently split up their parts division, allowing them to introduce "competition" into the supply of parts, and drive down wages and conditions. Despite first-quarter profits of \$2.1 billion, Henry Wallace, Ford's chief financial officer, said the group was "still pushing for \$1bn in cost cuts" in the next three quarters. (FT, 18/4/2000)

However, these attacks will not be taken lying down. Dagenham workers were recently involved in unofficial action over pay. The PTA and engine plants have seen unofficial walkouts and a call for a strike ballot in protest at the company's attitude to racial discrimination, bullying, harassment and discrimination in job opportunities.

Mounting pressure

There is mounting pressure on the trade union leaders to stand up and fight, especially after the experience of Rover. There has been the threat of strike action. Ford

workers need to draw up an alternative plan of action. If plants are threatened with closure, they should be occupied to prevent machinery being moved. Stewards from across the car industry need to organise together and must not be divided on company lines. There must be no redundancies, work sharing with no loss of pay could be introduced as long as there was no further deterioration in terms and conditions, all posts retained remain on a full-time basis, and no loss of pay.

Nationalisation

The only answer to excess capacity is not to argue on the bosses' lines. Ford, as with the rest of the car industry should be nationalised, with compensation only paid on the basis of proven need. This would allow the industry to be properly planned under workers' control and management. Who knows better about the car industry than the people who work in it? The answer to excess capacity is to diversify production, while guaranteeing jobs. The skills of the workforce can be put to real use! So can the plant and machinery at their disposal. The asset strippers mustn't get their hands on it. Workers can build cars, or can produce, with the necessary investment, whatever is needed.

What is lacking is investment and planning - this system is increasingly incapable of either. The crisis of overcapacity is a graphic illustration of the inefficiency, waste

and anarchy of the free market. Taking one industry into public ownership would be a huge step forward, and would save jobs. Yet on its own that is still not enough. To make the most efficient and effective use of the immense resources at our disposal requires socialist planning throughout the economy.

The demand to nationalise the car industry should be linked to a socialist programme to take into public ownership the commanding heights of the economy, the banks and insurance companies, under workers' control and management. Not only would this preserve jobs, it would create many new ones and prepare the ground for a massive rise in living standards. The regime of exploitation existing throughout industry today could be ended. For the first time, the introduction of a 32-hour week, even a six-hour day and a four-day week, the democratic involvement of working people in the running of industry, the state and society, generally would be possible. An appeal for workers in other countries to follow such an example would find an eager response, laying the foundation for a socialist Europe and a world federation of socialist states. On that basis, genuine international planning would replace the anarchy, waste and destruction of capitalism. ☆

Evans' view



★ Youth for Socialism

Spain: Fighting back works!

On the 9th February 60,000 students from all over Spain, called by the Spanish Students Trade (SE), took to the streets to fight against the reform of the entrance examination for public university. This attack, making the test more difficult so that more people would fail is intended to cut the number of students.

by Raquel Estevez, from the Spanish Students Union

The most important points that the Education Ministry wanted to impose were:

- To replace the choice of two papers in the exam covering maths, philosophy and a foreign language, with just one. Previously you could choose whichever paper was based on the work you had studied.

- To limit the fields of study open to students on entering university, by allowing them to take only one type of entrance examination.

- To change the appeal procedure so that a review of your result can lead to your mark being lowered instead of being improved. Your score is vital for determining which course you can study and in which university, as well as whether you can study at all.

As a result of the pressure brought by the students on the government, only one month away from the legislative elections and with a strike called for the 2nd March (only 10 days away from the elections), the Education Ministry had to back off and retain the current selection test.

The reaction of the students was magnificent, with more than 70 demonstrations and rallies up and down the country. This frightened the Aznar government because of the impact that the strike continuing would have had on the election, which

demonstrates the power of the youth.

The importance of this struggle is not only that it was victorious, but also it has given new strength and confidence to the students' movement and shown the need for the students to be organised in their union, the SE.

The fight has to carry on because the right-wing government, now with a majority, will try to hammer students' rights and their education.

For the Spanish ruling class it is not enough that Spain already has the lowest level of investment per university student in the EU. The concrete figures show that Spain also has the highest level of unemployed graduates in Europe. Their attempts to limit access to public university are intended to cut this figure, simply by having less students. The bonus for them is that with less students, they will also be able to cut spending on university education. The sons and daughters of workers will have to be satisfied with a basic education, which will not raise their aspirations too high but will be enough for them to perform their function as cheap labour. At the same time they will keep pouring money into the private education sector, so that the bosses can stuff their pockets with cash. This is the real policy of the ruling class, and their party, the PP, which they want to intensify.



We have no choice but to organise in order to be able defend ourselves as forcefully as they attack us.

While the sons and daughters of the rich go to private universities which don't require an entrance exam, the sons and daughters of workers who cannot afford these universities are pressured into leaving secondary education in order to enter the labour market and be exploited through part-time agencies, with miserable wages and exhausting hours.

This fight has shown that we are more powerful than them, the only language they understand is a fight, demonstrations and strikes. So we must continue in order to defend what we've won in the past, and in order to win new struggles in the future, to improve our conditions while studying and in life in general. ☆

YFIS school

A one day school for youth and students interested in the ideas of socialism is due to take place in London on the 6th May. The theme of the school, organised by young supporters of *Socialist Appeal* and Youth for International Socialism, will be Trotsky's ideas on the struggle for socialism in Britain, and in the British labour movement.

The discussion will be divided into two parts. The first will cover the general strike of 1926 and its effects in the labour movement. The second will look at the lessons of the ILP split from Labour, and the ideas of reformism, centrism and Marxism.

After these discussions we will attempt to digest the ideas raised in a social. If you are interested in attending the school or you would like to have more information about this or future events, contact us on 020 7 251 1094 (ask for Phil) or visit our website at www.socialist.net

**6th
May**

Fighting for the land



In the years before the Russian Revolution of 1917 there was quite a heated debate between the different tendencies of the Russian labour movement on what would be the character of the Russian revolution, and the relation between the classes in the revolution. Undoubtedly, the theory that brilliantly anticipated and explained what actually took place in 1917 was worked out by Trotsky.

by Fred Weston

The theory of the permanent revolution was first developed by Trotsky as early as 1904. The permanent revolution, while accepting that the objective tasks facing the Russian workers were those of the bourgeois democratic revolution, nevertheless explained how in a backward country in the epoch of imperialism, the "national bourgeoisie" was inseparably linked to the remains of feudalism on the one hand and to imperialist capital on the other and was therefore completely unable to carry through any of its historical tasks. The rottenness of the bourgeois liberals, and their counter-revolutionary role in the bourgeois-democratic revolution, was already observed by Marx and Engels. In his article *The Bourgeoisie and the Counter-revolution* (1848), Marx writes:

"The German bourgeoisie has developed so slothfully, cravenly and slowly that at the moment when it menacingly faced feudalism and absolutism it saw itself menacingly faced by the proletariat and all factions of the burghers whose interests and ideas were akin to those of the proletariat. And it saw inimically arrayed not only a class behind it but all Europe before it. The Prussian bourgeoisie was not, as the French of 1789 had been, the class which represented the whole of modern society vis-a-vis the representatives of the old society, the monarchy and the nobility. It had sunk to the level of a kind of social estate, as distinctly opposed to the crown as to the people, eager to be in the opposition to

both, irresolute against each of its opponents, taken severally, because it always saw both of them before or behind it; inclined to betray the people and compromise with the crowned representative of the old society because it itself already belonged to the old society;" (K. Marx, *The Bourgeoisie and the Counter-revolution*, in MESW, vol. 1, p. 140-1.)

The bourgeoisie, Marx explains, did not come to power as a result of its own revolutionary exertions, but as a result of the movement of the masses in which it played no role: "The Prussian bourgeoisie was hurled to the height of state power, however not in the manner it had desired, by a peaceful bargain with the crown but by a revolution". (K. Marx, *The Bourgeoisie and the Counter-revolution*, MESW, vol. 1, p. 138.)

Even in the epoch of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Europe, Marx and Engels mercilessly unmasked the cowardly, counterrevolutionary role of the bourgeoisie, and emphasised the need for the workers to maintain a policy of complete class independence, not only from the bourgeois liberals, but also from the vacillating petty bourgeois democrats:

"The proletarian, or really revolutionary party," wrote Engels, "succeeded only very gradually in withdrawing the mass of the working people from the influence of the democrats whose tail they formed in the beginning of the revolution. But in due time the indecision, weakness and cowardice of

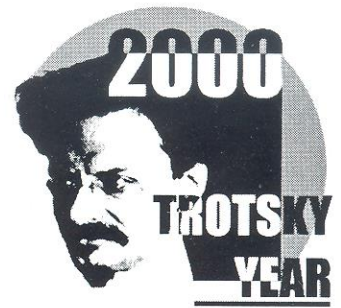
What is Permanent

the democratic leaders did the rest, and it may now be said to be one of the principal results of the last years' convulsions, that wherever the working class is concentrated in anything like considerable masses, they are entirely freed from that democratic influence which led them into an endless series of blunders and misfortunes during 1848 and 1849." (F. Engels, *Revolution and Counter-revolution in Germany*, MESW, vol. 1, p. 332.)

The situation is clearer still today. The national bourgeoisie in the colonial countries entered into the scene of history too late, when the world had already been divided up between a few imperialist powers. It was not able to play any progressive role and was born completely subordinated to its former colonial masters. The weak and degenerate bourgeoisie in Asia, Latin America and Africa is too dependent on foreign capital and imperialism, to carry society forward. It is tied with a thousand threads, not only to foreign capital, but with the class of landowners, with which it forms a reactionary bloc that represents a bulwark against progress. Whatever differences may exist between these elements are insignificant in comparison with the fear that unites them against the masses. Only the proletariat, allied with the poor peasants and urban poor, can solve the problems of society by taking power into its own hands, expropriating the imperialists and the bourgeoisie, and beginning the task of transforming society on socialist lines.

By setting itself at the head of the nation, leading the oppressed layers of society (urban and rural petty-bourgeoisie), the proletariat could take power and then carry through the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution (mainly land reform and the unification and liberation of the country from foreign domination). However, once having come to power, the proletariat would not stop there but would start to implement socialist measures. As these tasks cannot be solved in one country alone, especially not in a backward country, this would be the beginning of the world revolution. Thus the revolution is "permanent" in two senses: because it starts with the bourgeois tasks and continues with the socialist ones, and because it starts in one country and continues at an international level.

the theory of the Permanent Revolution?



The theory of the permanent revolution was the most complete answer to the reformist and class collaborationist position of the right wing of the Russian workers' movement, the Mensheviks. The "two stage" theory was developed by the Mensheviks as their perspective for the Russian revolution. It basically states that since the tasks of the revolution are those of the national democratic bourgeois revolution, the leadership of the revolution must be taken by the national democratic bourgeoisie. For his part, Lenin agreed with Trotsky that the Russian Liberals could not carry out the bourgeois-democratic revolution, and that this task could only be carried out by the proletariat in alliance with the poor peasantry. Following in the footsteps of Marx, who had described the bourgeois "democratic party" as "far more dangerous to the workers than the previous liberals", Lenin explained that the Russian bourgeoisie, far from being an ally of the workers, would inevitably side with the counter-revolution.

"The bourgeoisie in the mass" he wrote in 1905, "will inevitably turn towards the counter-revolution, and against the people as soon as its narrow, selfish interests are met, as soon as it 'recoils' from consistent democracy (and it is already recoiling from it)". (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 9, p. 98.)

What class, in Lenin's view, could lead the bourgeois-democratic revolution? "There remains 'the people', that is, the proletariat and the peasantry. The proletariat alone can be relied on to march on to the end, for it goes far beyond the democratic revolution. That is why the proletariat fights in the forefront for a republic and contemptuously rejects stupid and unworthy advice to take into account the possibility of the bourgeoisie recoiling" (Ibid.)

In all of Lenin's speeches and writings, the counter-revolutionary role of the bourgeois-democratic Liberals is stressed time and time again. However, up until 1917, he did not believe that the Russian workers would come to power before the socialist revolution in the West, a perspective that only Trotsky defended before 1917, when it was fully adopted by Lenin in his April theses. The correctness of the permanent revolution was triumphantly demonstrated by the October Revolution itself. The Russian working class; as Trotsky had predicted in

1904; came to power before the workers of Western Europe. They carried out all the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, and immediately set about nationalising industry and passing over to the tasks of the socialist revolution. The bourgeoisie played an openly counter-revolutionary role, but was defeated by the workers in alliance with the poor peasants. The Bolsheviks then made a revolutionary appeal to the workers of the world to follow their example. Lenin knew very well that without the victory of the revolution in the advanced capitalist countries, especially Germany, the revolution could not survive isolated, especially in a backward country like Russia. What happened subsequently showed that this was absolutely correct. The setting up of the Third (Communist) International, the world party of socialist revolution, was the concrete manifestation of this perspective.

Had the Communist International remained firm on the positions of Lenin and Trotsky, the victory of the world revolution would have been assured. Unfortunately, the Comintern's formative years coincided with the Stalinist counter-revolution in Russia, which had a disastrous effect on the Communist Parties of the entire world. The Stalinist bureaucracy, having acquired control in the Soviet Union developed a very conservative outlook. The theory that socialism can be built in one country; an abomination from the standpoint of Marx and Lenin; really reflected the mentality of the bureaucracy which had had enough of the storm and stress of revolution and sought to get on with the task of "building socialism in Russia". That is to say, they wanted to protect and expand their privileges and not "waste" the resources of the country in pursuing world revolution. On the other hand, they feared that revolution in other countries could develop on healthy lines and pose a threat to their own domination in Russia, and therefore, at a certain stage, sought actively to prevent revolution elsewhere.

Instead of pursuing a revolutionary policy based on class independence, as Lenin had always advocated, they proposed an alliance of the Communist Parties with the "national progressive bourgeoisie" (and if there was not one easily at hand, they were quite prepared to invent it) to carry through

the democratic revolution, and afterwards, later on, in the far distant future, when the country had developed a fully fledged capitalist economy, fight for socialism. This policy represented a complete break with Leninism and a return to the old discredited position of Menshevism; the theory of the "two stages".

In order to cover up for their own abandonment of the lessons that the Bolsheviks had drawn from the experience of the Russian revolution itself, the Stalinists mounted a huge campaign of falsification of Trotsky's analysis and conclusions. They tried to separate Trotsky's position from that of Lenin, by going back to the polemics of the period prior to the revolution, when in fact the experience of the revolution had put all theories to the test and had proven the theory of the Permanent Revolution to be correct. ☆

Together with this brief article we recommend a few short works by Trotsky that outline the theory:

- What is the Permanent Revolution? Basic Postulates The concluding section of Trotsky's work, *The Permanent Revolution*, where he briefly outlines the essential elements of his theory

- Appendix III to Trotsky's History of the Russian Revolution, where again he outlines some basic aspects of the theory.

- Appendix I to Trotsky's work, Stalin. Three concepts on the Russian revolution (this unfortunately is not yet available on line)

- April Theses for Lenin's conclusions that flowed from the situation as it developed in Russia in 1917

- Marxism and the struggle against imperialism for an updated analysis

- Chapter Four, The Theory of the Permanent Revolution from Lenin and Trotsky, what they really stood for, by Alan Woods and Ted Grant

- And of course there is no real substitute for reading the complete book by Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution* together with his original work Results and Prospects

Available at www.trotsky.net

US: Battle against Capitalism

Peter Johnson, editor of *Newyouth*, in Washington reports on the latest round of mass demonstrations in the USA

The protesters are here for a variety of reasons. From forgiving third-world debt to genetic engineering; environmental degradation to sweatshop labour, and everything in between. Just as the coalitions of global capitalism have become international in nature, so too the opposition to these institutions is developing on an international scale.

The fireworks in Washington began when environmental activists dumped four tons of manure in front of the IMF headquarters. This symbolic demonstration of discontent marked the beginning of the second round of protests pitting the proponents of global capitalism against the increasingly militant youth and labour activists. So far it is estimated that between 6,000 and 30,000 are participating in the mobilisation. Waving placards like "Smash Capitalism," and chanting anti-corporate slogans, protesters have already been involved in several skirmishes with the police. So far, some 637 protesters have been locked up, most of them for "parading without a permit." This already exceeds the 550 taken in by authorities over the entire week of mobilisations in Seattle.

Of course, the trade ministers do not do the dirty work themselves. The police department of Washington DC prepared extensively for the onslaught of protesters, hoping to avoid a repeat of Seattle. They wanted things to proceed in a nice, orderly fashion, and were allegedly committed to peaceful supervision of the rallies. According to police Captain Mario Patrizio: "Tear gas is not going to be used unless they go absolutely ballistic and set the place on fire."

Not surprisingly, as soon as this promise was made, it was broken. The protesters have been largely peaceful, with no incidents of vandalism yet reported, and already the cops are using the most appalling violence. Like the Seattle police, they have made liberal use of their batons, tear gas, pepper spray, and rubber/foam bullets. They also made effective use of preventative measures - they expanded the barricade area around the IMF and World Bank buildings, and were more proactive breaking up groups of protesters before

they could organise a co-ordinated assault on police lines. They even charged the crowds on their motorcycles.

The events in Seattle marked a definite change in the outlook, level of activity, and militancy of the long-dormant American working class and youth. Accustomed to going about their business in secret, the representatives of international finance capital were shocked by the violent opposition to their organisations which seemed to arise out of nowhere. But the fact is that the conditions which gave rise to the protests were created by the capitalists themselves. After decades of running things on their own terms, without regard to the effects of their policies on humanity or the environment, they came face to face with the pent-up anger and animosity of the workers and youth.

With the extension of global trade, as foreseen by Marx and Engels in the pages of the *Communist Manifesto*, the nation state (the artificial borders of each country) has become a huge barrier to human progress. The IMF and World Bank, which are controlled and financed by the richest countries in the world, hand out loans to poorer countries in order to "bail them out" of financial difficulty. Of course these loans do not come for free. In addition to the extortionate rates of interest, they force conditions on the debtor countries such as the lowering of protective tariffs for emerging native industries, mass layoffs, privatisation of nationalised companies at bargain basement prices, deregulation of price controls on staple food items, etc. Instead of growing food for the local population, and at the expense of developing their local economies, they are forced to focus on exportable cash crops like coffee in order to raise quick cash to repay the loans. Under the guise of "reform" and "democracy", they dismantle the economic structures of the borrowing country, impose their political will on the local government, encourage the building of sweatshops, and the smashing of labour organisations. The debt burden on the colonial world is crushing. Just a few years ago their combined debt stood at \$800 billion - today it is at \$1.2 trillion! The payments on the interest alone are enough to take up most or in some cases all of the GDP of the world's poorest countries - let alone paying back any of the initial loan. These countries are virtually enslaved to the most wealthy nations.

Although the level of politicisation has



not yet approached the level attained during the 1960s, it is notable in a very significant way. While the radicalisation 30 years ago was focused largely around the anti-Vietnam War peace movement, the present target of discontent is much broader - world capitalism. It has yet to mature into the conscious effort of the working class and youth to change society along socialist lines, but the early potential of the movement is very promising.

Another extremely interesting feature of the rising wave of activism is the role played by the Internet both in the organisation and reporting of events like Seattle and the April 16 mobilisations. The democratic potential of the Internet is being put to use in some very creative ways. In a way not possible just five years ago, roughly 450 different organisations have co-ordinated their anti-IMF/WB activities.

Environmentalists, trade unionists, anti-sweatshop-labour campaigners, religious groups, consumer advocates, representatives of organisations from the colonial world, and activists of almost every shade are represented.

The next big anti-global capitalism rally is planned for May Day 2000 - just two weeks away. These events represent merely the beginning of the waking up of the American working class, as expressed through that most sensitive of social barometers, the youth. With the US economy teetering on the brink of disaster, it is only a matter of time before the broader masses begin to focus their anger not just against the WTO and IMF, but against the capitalist system itself. ☆

Bulls, bears and bust

In the last few weeks there has been a huge crash in the stock prices of the new information technology companies. Until then, the great new economy of computers, mobile phones, digital TV and, above all, the internet had been greeted by capitalist investors around the world as an unstoppable avenue to untold wealth.

By Michael Roberts



Every day we have been told in the newspapers of yet another 20-something internet entrepreneur, who, with a small bunch of others, has come up with an idea to sell something on the internet, and then becomes a multi-millionaire overnight, thanks to a launch on the stock market.

Investors, like lemmings, have been rushing to throw their money at any dot.com company they can find. The stock prices of these companies have reached the stratosphere. Take the handheld computer maker, Palm. On March 2, it went 'public' by issuing 23m shares at \$38 each. Right away, the price jumped to \$160, making the company worth \$90bn, or equal to the annual output of Indonesia with its 200m people! But Palm has sales of less than \$1bn a year and makes no profit - pretty good for a product that's no more than a pocket calculator with an inbuilt modem for the internet. Palm was worth more than General Motors or Boeing who employ hundreds of thousands and make billions of profit.

But now the bubble is bursting. In just a few weeks, the stock price of these high-tech stocks, as measured by the NASDAQ stock market in the US, has fallen 40%. And there's much more pain to come. The whizz-kid internet entrepreneurs may have got their paper millions from gullible and greedy investors but that paper wealth is beginning to burn to ash. Within the next five years, 90% of these upstart companies will have disappeared. It's going to be short-lived for lastminute.com.

It was the same in previous technological revolutions under capitalism. There is an initial boom or rush as investors pour in money to take advantage of supposedly undreamt of riches generated by huge increases in the productivity (and profits) of the new industries. That's what happened in the steam and railway revolution of the 19th century and in the electrical/motor vehicle revolution of the 1920s. But under capitalism, investment is made in a giant casino where lady luck decides where

investment goes. It is anarchic, not planned. Investment, inevitably, exceeds the profit created.

Take the example of one company. Sothebys is a famous international auction house. In its recent annual report for 1999 released in March, it reported record auction sales, up 16% to \$2.3bn. The company made \$443m in revenues from these auctions. But that was down 1% from 1998. Sothebys made even less profit, down from \$45m to \$33m. Why did it do so badly from such huge turnovers? It had spent \$43m on launching a new internet service. So the investment cost in the new technology had actually lowered profits not raised them. Sure, Sothebys hopes to make better profits from the new service in the future. But there's no guarantee of that. On the contrary, it's unlikely. The reality is that capitalist firms everywhere must plough huge amounts into the new technology because everybody else is doing so. If you don't invest, you will be undercut by your rival. But because everybody invests, nobody gets an advantage (at least not for very long) that gains extra profit.

And worse, the huge increase in overall investment starts to outstrip the gains in productivity from the new technology. As Marx explained 150 years ago, technology is dead labour. It's the product of previous efforts by human beings, but it does not create any new value. That depends on living labour using it. As more and more computers, modems and websites are built and used, they drive up costs more than the concomitant increase in productivity from their use by workers. The result is eventually a fall in overall profitability.

We are not quite at that point yet. The great boom in new technology stock prices in the US seen in the last quarter of 1999 coincided with very low interest rates and rising profits as US workers increased the hours they worked with hardly any increase in wages. Profits in US businesses rose 8.3% in the last quarter of last year and labour costs rose just 0.7%. That compares with a fall of 1.8% in profits in the last

quarter of 1998. Indeed, the more you look at the profit figures of US companies in the second half of the 1990s, the more you become convinced that the end of 1999 was exceptional. Between 1994-96, US company profits rose massively at nearly 14% a year. In 1997, they were still up 11%. The new technology was hugely productive. But in 1998, profits rose only 1%. In 1999 it was better at 5% up, but only because of that last quarter.

And investment is continuing to race upwards. It is rising faster in relation to the growth of annual output than at any time since 1945. The only comparable period is ominously in the 1920s. And companies and investors have been borrowing hugely to finance this expansion. Without the borrowing, US companies would have enough. Company debt levels in relation to assets have never been higher. It will only take a sustained fall in stock market prices or a slowdown in the spending of American households to bring down the whole house like a pack of cards.

Now the stock market is falling. The bears (sellers) are now on top of the bulls (buyers). And the Federal Reserve Bank in the US is preparing to raise interest rates to cool an 'overheating' economy. So by the end of this year, instead of growing at over 4% a year, the US economy will manage only a 2% rate. That is going to put a lot of companies in trouble with their debts. Then it won't be just the internet companies that will be losing money.

That does not mean the information technology revolution will not happen. The great motor vehicle transformation went ahead in the 1930s, but only after a great depression that put millions out of work and led to world war. Under capitalism, scientific progress is combined with horrific cost to human wellbeing. First, the small capitalist investors will eat dirt. Then millions of workers in old and new industries take the cosh. ☆

Read a Marxist analysis of the "new economy" by Mick Brooks at: www.marxist.com

China - A Revolution in preparation



One fifth of the world's population lives in China. "Before the 1949 revolution there were half a billion Chinese, and perhaps half of these ran a real risk of going hungry. Today the population is 1.3 billion but only perhaps 50 million are so poor that they cannot always eat as much as they want." (*The Economist*, April 8, 2000).

by Phil Mitchinson

Without disputing the 50 million figure (it's probably higher), it cannot be seriously argued that this is communism, a society where Marx argued everyone would give according to their ability and receive according to their needs.

Yet the advances made since the abolition of capitalism and landlordism are nevertheless very important, as even these disturbing figures demonstrate.

The colossal waste, inefficiency and corruption inherent in bureaucratic rule however, now threaten these important gains. The remarkable strides forward made since 1949 are a direct consequence of state ownership and central planning in spite of the role played by China's leaders, who have been responsible for such disasters as the famine caused by The Great Leap Forward from 1958-61 and the tragedy of the Cultural Revolution from 1966-76.

In an effort to maintain their own privileged position the Chinese bureaucracy are today preparing a new disaster of the same epic proportions by attempting to move in the direction of restoring capitalism. Having

witnessed the chaos caused in Russia, however, they have been trying to proceed more cautiously, with strict central control. In the words of *The Economist*, "Reforms have not been as disastrous as in Russia, where the theft of state assets is an honoured pursuit; on the other hand Russia launched a full blown programme of privatisation, which China is wary of copying. So Chinese officials and managers have had to use more imaginative alchemy to turn state assets into private property. But whatever the method....what has been done to transform national assets into private wealth in China is little different from what Ferdinand Marcos did in the Philippines, or what ex-President Suharto's cronies did in Indonesia."

Many western economists would have one believe that China's growth in recent years was due to the elements of capitalism introduced and in spite of the remaining state sector.

On closer examination, however, we discover that the state sector has remained dominant in terms of size and specific weight, i.e. the nature and importance of

the sectors remaining in state hands. Even *The Economist* now admits "At the height of the euphoria about China in the early 1990s, some observers - including *The Economist* - thought the private sector might already account for as much as 75% of the economy. That was far too optimistic, and the mood may have swung too violently in the opposite direction: some people now put the private sector at only 25% of total output. More considered work by the China Economic Quarterly (CEQ)...puts the private sector somewhere between these two extremes at a little over half of the economy...the private sector contributes about 50% of industrial production...large swathes of the service sector are off-limits to private firms. The state has a near monopoly in telecoms, banking and distribution. According to CEQ, private firms have only 37% of the service economy."

China's GDP per head indicates that the country is somewhat poorer than Indonesia. However, this figure hides some gaping inequalities. The poorest province Guizhou, has a GDP per head of \$280, on a par with Bangladesh or Yemen. Sichuan with \$525 is level with Pakistan. Meanwhile Hong Kong at \$22,990 has a higher per head income than Britain. There is a huge gap between town and country but there are also huge wealth differences within each province, and extremes of poverty even along the supposedly prosperous eastern seaboard.

Explosion of unemployment

The north-eastern industrial heartlands are experiencing an explosion of unemployment. In the past the plant where you worked paid your salary, provided your flat, educated your children, paid your families health care and provided a pension. Now privatisation and closures are putting an end to all that. In 1995, for example, Liaoning had an urban working population of 12 million. By western measures around 329,000 of these would have been classified as unemployed. By the end of 1996 that figure had risen to 800,000; by the end of 1997 to 1.8 million and by the end of 1998, 2.2 million with another 400,000 scheduled to be laid off. "So much" quips *The Economist* "for the socialist paradise." In reality, it is the introduction of the market which has wrecked the lives of millions here and across China.

Elements of the market have brought

China not prosperity, but a return of many of the evils which constitute capitalist 'civilisation.' Describing the kidnapping of a young child in the city of Guiyang *The Economist* says "Mr. Wang's family is a victim of China's new capitalism, which comes with a pretty raw face. Along with child kidnapping, many 'old' Chinese practices have made a comeback in recent years. Young brides are sold to old farmers by their families, or are kidnapped in the same way as children. Prostitution is on the increase. The number of heroin addicts is rising sharply, particularly in south-western China, near the Golden Triangle. Concubinage has returned, and so have disputes, sometimes violent, between village clans."

On the advice of the now infamous WTO (which China has applied to join) the bureaucracy has launched a programme of wholesale industrial vandalism threatening millions of job losses.

Already the consequences of this 'advice' are being demonstrated in China. They have provoked an eruption of industrial and social unrest across the north-east of the country. Strikes, demonstrations, even semi-insurrectionary movements, provide a graphic illustration of the explosive potential for a new dramatic episode in the South East Asian revolution.

Absence of information

Reports of these movements have been conspicuous by their absence from our TV screens and newspapers, no doubt partly because such movements against job losses might serve as an example to others, but also because the Chinese authorities, the 'People's Police' and the 'People's Army' have been stamping them out with ferocious repression.

One example, which is apparently typical, is the movement of 20,000 miners and their families in the north eastern coastal town of Yangjiazhanzi near Huludao.

The molybdenum mine there which once supplied 35 percent of China's production has been declared bankrupt and its 20,000 workforce thrown on the slag heap. They were offered an insulting one-off severance payment of Rmb560 (£43) for every year they had worked in the mine. After that there would be no further unemployment welfare at all.

The miners and their families took to the streets and blockaded the traffic on Yangjiazhanzi's main highway. The police responded by firing tear gas into the crowd. Rather than simply disperse however the crowd fought back. This is what the press, as ever, refer to as "rioting." The police were unable to quell the crowd, and therefore the army was brought in from four neighbouring cities. After fierce fighting the army managed to gain control, but not before firing their guns. They then occupied the town until March 31.

Even now the police are patrolling the

streets. Official notices have been plastered across shopfronts warning residents not to hurl stones at factories or government buildings, destroy cars, burn oil tanks or spread rumours. The leaders of this movement have apparently been arrested. Their fate is unknown. Arresting a few individuals won't solve the problem facing China's rulers, however. These movements are caused by conditions, not by agitators.

Millions continue to pour into the cities from the countryside in search of work. These migrant workers inevitably do the most menial jobs. This has given rise to the phenomenon of dagongmei, "little sisters doing labour", that is, young working women from the country. These young women work in the most appalling conditions, yet they are the lucky ones. Many more are forced into prostitution or begging.

No-one is sure exactly how many economic migrants there are at present, but estimates range as high as 130 million. Their treatment is often compared with the situation in England at the turn of the 19th century. Others draw parallels with 19th century Shanghai. We might add a comparison with 1917 Russia, or 1998 Indonesia, or in fact any situation where the conditions for revolution are brewing.

Demonstrations are regularly taking place over non-payment of pensions, of welfare and over job losses. Even Zhang Zuoji the minister of labour and social security announced last month that between 500,000 and 600,000 retired workers had not received their pensions on time last year and that 600,000 to 700,000 redundant workers haven't received their living allowances. These official figures are undoubtedly very conservative.

The combination of elements of the free market, with a Stalinist command economy results in the worst of both worlds for many millions in China. Any further movement in the direction of capitalism will spell ruin. Already thousands of steel mills, coal mines, textile mills and cement plants are threatened with closure. The World Bank estimates that approximately 50 million state employed workers are "surplus to requirements" - the requirements of making profits that is. The creation of such super unemployment has serious consequences for the central government's budget deficit, already at a record high, and for local government administrations which will be expected to foot the welfare bill. This would increase pressure on the government to devalue the currency causing further destabilisation throughout the region. It is ironic that only a decade ago China, like Russia, was being trumpeted as a new market which would save world capitalism. Now both constitute new ingredients of instability politically and economically.

Politically there are far more serious

consequences for the Chinese bureaucracy. If the closure of one mine or factory results in an explosion, then widescale job losses threaten a new revolutionary movement which must make them tremble at the knees.

The Chinese bureaucracy has no moral difficulty in crossing over to capitalism. Equally they would have no ideological problem with throwing the whole process into reverse. What direction they will take has not yet been decided. The press make great play of the next party congress in 2002, where a new generation of leaders should emerge. There is some truth, perhaps, in the old saying that when the old men die the young ones betray. What direction the bureaucracy will take, however, depends on more than the opinions of individuals. Widespread industrial closures says *The Economist* means "The possibility...for a prolonged industrial slump and a restive population." This "restive population" is what will concern them most. Equally, despite its size, China will be far from immune from the impact of a slump in the world economy. The revolution in the rest of South East Asia too is far from over, each new episode will have a profound effect inside China too.

Crusade against corruption

President Jiang Zemin has launched a new crusade against corruption. The new wealth being created by an elite in the south is like a stab in the back for millions of workers facing no future. The bureaucracy is continuing to try to play a balancing act, now leaning on the workers against elements of corruption, now advancing new economic 'reforms.' This cannot go on indefinitely. On the road to capitalism there is no solution for the Chinese masses. In fact that road leads to ruin and even threatens the break up of the nation.

Not the minor corruption of local party officials or new capitalist bosses but the corruption at the very heart of the regime needs to be rooted out. Only the working class can do that. Once more they have begun to move. Their courage and their will to fight cannot be in question. What they will need is a programme for the socialist reconstruction of China and an organisation. Armed with these vital tools the Chinese proletariat will take its rightful place in the front rank of the struggle for a socialist transformation of the world.

It has been argued that if everyone in China jumped at the same time the whole world would shake. In the next period international capital will feel the ground quake under the impact of millions of Chinese workers on the move. ☆

Bolivia: state of emergency declared

After a week of mass protests, road blockades and a general strike in the city of Cochabamba the Bolivian government of Hugo Banzer declared a state of emergency on Saturday April 8.

The spark was the decision to sell Cochabamba's public water system to a private corporation (Aguas del Tunari, a multinational consortium of private companies) which then doubled water rates.

by Jorge Martín

The privatisation of the water system, a move pushed by the World Bank, went ahead last year and protests against it started in January, as the new company announced rates increases, in some cases as much as \$20 a month, in a city where the minimum wage is less than \$100. The company, Aguas del Tunari, also announced that water rates would be linked to the dollar!

A new organisation was set up called "Co-ordinadora de Defensa del Agua" (Coordinating Committee to Defend the Water System), and immediately a four day general strike closed down the whole of Cochabamba. This forced the government to promise a reversal of the new charges.

At the beginning of February it was clear that the authorities were not prepared to keep their promises and the Coordinadora called a mass meeting in the city's main square. President Banzer replied by sending in thousands of heavily armed anti-riot police. For two days the demonstrators fought the police, leaving more than 175 protesters injured and 2 youths blinded by teargas. Again, the level of anger forced the government and the water company to retreat promising to cancel the rate increase.

Succes

Encouraged by the success of the protests, the people of Cochabamba demanded that the contract with Aguas del Tunari be cancelled and the whole privatisation process reversed. In a survey of about 60,000 residents at the end of March, 90% voted against privatisation.

Finally, on April 4th, the population of Cochabamba went back onto the streets with mass demonstrations, calling a general strike which brought the city to a standstill in what the Coordinadora called the "final battle". By Wednesday they had won the support of the peasants' union fighting a parallel battle against the privatisation of water rights in the countryside and against the Land Reform Law which would mainly benefit the big landowners. Thousands of peasants in six of the country's nine districts started to organise road blockades.

Thursday April 6 arrived with no sign of

a solution in sight. The angry residents decided to take direct action, stormed the local town hall and surrounded the building where talks were taking place with the authorities. The government then decided to arrest all 15 leaders of the Coordinadora.

The masses again gathered in Cochabamba's central square, now joined by thousands of peasants who had come to support them. They were carrying sticks, rocks and were ready to defend themselves from the police if necessary. There were reports of the army arriving at the local airport to put the movement down. The situation was threatening to get completely out of control.

On Friday April 7 the protest leaders were released and after fresh negotiations it was announced that the government had agreed to break the water contract. The mood was one of victory.

But the central government quickly reversed this decision saying it had been taken by the regional authorities without their permission. At the same time, on Saturday morning the Banzer government declared a state of emergency for 90 days, a move which suspends most constitutional rights (strike, demonstration, assembly, etc.), bans gatherings of more than four people and allows the government to use the army to quell protests.

They arrested 22 of the country's most prominent trade union and peasant leaders during house to house searches, confining them to the remote town of San Joaquin in the Amazonian jungle.

Early on Saturday the government ordered security forces to raid the offices of the Bolivian Workers' Central Union (COB) where the wives of 13 police officers were on strike demanding higher wages for their husbands. But, in a development which shows the fragility of the state apparatus, the special anti-riot police mutinied. The mutiny rapidly spread to Santa Cruz and in other towns police officers announced they were ready to take action "in solidarity with their comrades". In the capital La Paz thousands of students and other demonstrators showed their solidarity with the rebellious police officers who were joined by the congressional guards and the local fire-fighters.

The government tried to use the army to put down the nearly 1,000 strong police mutiny but failed after armed clashes and was forced to concede a 50% wage increase, and the promise not to take disciplinary action against any of the officers involved.

There were violent clashes all weekend in Cochabamba; a 17-year-old youth was shot dead and dozens of other protesters were severely injured. It was later revealed that the army had used FAL assault rifles with live rounds. At one point, the commander of the army in the city said he would not allow the soldiers to be used against the population as "the army is also part of the people". This move exposed his fear that the soldiers would refuse to fight against the population or even would join with them, as happened during the January revolution in Ecuador. In fact, the leaders of the Coordinadora made an appeal to their "brothers police officers and soldiers to join the people to defend their just demands".

The army moved to clear road blockades all over the country. In Achacachi, the army attacked 2,000 peasants who were blockading the main road. Two peasants were shot dead and an army captain was severely injured. The anger of the peasants was such that they stormed the hospital, took the captain out and beat him to death. After that they tried to storm the local army barracks. In the town of Lahuachaca a teacher was killed in clashes with the local peasants in which the army used three armoured vehicles to chase the protesters.

Accumulation of anger

The accumulation of anger all over the country was such that the state of emergency failed to stop the protests and instead achieved exactly the opposite. The rural teachers union called for an all-out indefinite strike from Monday 10th, the students also called for strike action and demonstrations and finally the main trade union centre COB called for a national strike and demonstrations on Wednesday 12th.

Finally, Aguas del Tunari announced that they were withdrawing from the project. But this was a case of too little too late. The protesters demanded the release of all arrested trade union leaders and amendments to the law to privatise water in the countryside. The peasants, to avoid clashes with the army resorted to road blockades which were set up again as soon as the army cleared them.

Nearly 20,000 peasants, armed with sticks and machetes, marched on Cochabamba calling on the population to support their demands. As a result a visit to the city by government representatives to "explain the results of the negotiations" had to be cancelled "for lack of security guarantees". In other words the government was too afraid of the anger of the people of Cochabamba and the peasants.

The government in the meantime said that "the protests are a conspiracy financed by cocaine trafficking looking for pretexts to carry out subversive activities" with the aim of "destabilising the constitutional government democratically elected". But even a leader of the MIR, which is part of the ruling coalition, was forced to admit that: "what we are witnessing is not a coup or an act of sedition... the cause of these conflicts is not to be found in groups of conspirators but in the anger and frustration of the whole of the population" (*La Razón*, 12/4/2000). The vice president of the national trade union, COB, also replied: "the real narco-corrupt people are inside the government itself".

Workers and students

The general strike called by the COB and other trade union, peasant and student organisations on April 12 had uneven support but this was not surprising, taking into account the fact that the country is still under a state of emergency. There were clashes with the police in the main cities involving both workers and students. According to a Reuters report: "the strike had a big impact in the widespread informal commerce sector and in the schools, but had little effect on the productive and administrative tasks". The executive secretary of the miners' union (FSTMB) warned that the 24 hour general strike was only the beginning of the struggle against Banzer's government.

On the same day the Coordinadora called off the protests in Cochabamba after it was clear that the privatisation of the water service was beaten and there would be no privatisation of water in the countryside, the main demand of the peasants. Road blockades remained on the access roads to the main cities, but were slowly being lifted.

On April 13 the peasant unions reached the beginning of an agreement with the government in which the authorities promised to pay compensation to the families of the two peasants killed in Achacachi, the teacher killed in Lahuachaca and the other peasants wounded during the clashes



with the army. The peasants are still demanding the immediate release of their leader, Felipe Quispe.

On April 14 most of the road blockades were gone and there were signs of a final agreement being reached with the peasant organisations. The government released some of the confined leaders. But the students were still on the streets and there were serious clashes with the army in La Paz and Oruro and a peaceful demonstration in Santa Cruz. The army was still on the streets of La Paz and Cochabamba.

But the problems for the government are far from over. In the last few days there were rumours of a mutiny amongst lower rank and non-commanding officers in the army against the unfair wage inequality between lower and higher ranking officers. Encouraged by the concessions made to police officers over the weekend they demanded the "democratisation of the wage structure in the army". This is a further indication of the weakness of the state apparatus in a country decimated by decades of IMF austerity which has suffered 15 years of Structural Adjustment and the wholesale privatisation of public utilities.

Workers and peasants in Bolivia have organised many general strikes and mass mobilisations against privatisation. In March 1996 the previous government of Sanchez Losada faced a massive general strike against the privatisation of the oil company, YPFB, which had been nationalised during the 1952 revolution. The year before, the government had arrested more than 1,000 trade union, peasant and student leaders, declaring a state of emergency in order to crush a wave of protests against privatisations. In fact when Banzer came to power in 1997 he did so on the basis of a populist programme which promised a "war on poverty" and the "taking back" of all privatised companies. Despite that he only got around 24% of the vote and had to rely on a coalition with three other bosses parties.

The extreme fragmentation of the political scene (as in Ecuador) shows the weakness of the Bolivian ruling class, which is completely dependent on the IMF and the World Bank.

The movement in Cochabamba, and the speed with which it spread, shows us that the masses are prepared to fight and they have now seen, for the first time in years, that the mass joint mobilisation of workers and peasants can achieve results. Some commentators compared this movement with the revolution in Ecuador in January. The situation has not yet gone as far as that,

where the masses actually took power for a few hours and replaced the government by a Salvation Junta. But all the elements are there: a mass movement of the workers in the cities with insurrectional features, a mass movement of the peasants in the countryside, splits in the army and the police, the willingness of the masses to face repression.

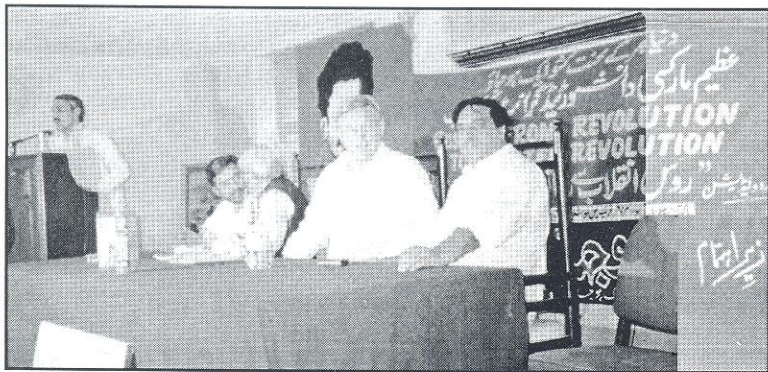
The factors which have provoked the uprising in Cochabamba and the movement of the peasants will not go away. The country, the poorest in Latin America, has been devastated by years of privatisations, deregulation, mass lay-offs, etc. Its peasants are amongst the poorest in the world. The overwhelming majority of the labour force is either unemployed or underemployed. There will be many other movements like this, especially since this time the struggle has achieved a victory (however partial this might prove to be).

A revolutionary leadership

But, as in the case of Ecuador, the most pressing task for working class and youth activists is the building of a genuine revolutionary leadership with a clear understanding that militancy in itself is not enough. A socialist programme is needed, able to link up all the struggles and focus them against their root cause: capitalism itself. Pro-Capitalist politicians of all shades are now completely discredited, as the population has already seen them in power, all using the same methods. This provides a fertile breeding ground for a programme of independent action of workers and peasants fighting for socialism.

The winds of revolution are blowing very strongly all over Latin America. The revolution in Ecuador and the uprising in Bolivia are just an indication of what is coming and are part of a massive backlash against capitalism which is gathering momentum all over the world. ☆

Pakistan and Sri Lanka Socialist Appeal editor's speaking tour, a great success!



On Monday the 20th March at PMA House in the centre of Karachi, Socialist Appeal editor Alan Woods addressed a packed meeting of workers and youth in Karachi. The subject was the crisis of world capitalism. In spite of the problems caused by the Eid holidays (many workers were out of town) 150 people attended the meeting, mostly leading trade union activists. These included the leaders of the Pakistan Steel Mill (65,000 workers) the Karachi Municipal Corporation, the Karachi Port Workers, the Karachi Electrical Supply Corporation, the Telecommunication workers, leaders of the postal workers in Karachi, the PIA workers, leaders of the unions of several multinationals based in Karachi and the president of the PPP workers' wing known as the People's Labour Bureau. The mood of the meeting was enthusiastic from start to finish.

Later Alan spoke at other meetings in Lahore and Multan, with a total attendance of almost 1,000 people. The highlight was the public meeting in Lahore where he shared the platform with the general secretary of the Pakistan People's Party, Jahangir Badar, who gave a very left wing speech, calling for socialism and the expropriation of banks, land and monopolies. The speech was repeatedly interrupted with chants of "Socialist Revolution!" and "Food, Clothing and Shelter!" (the old slogans of the PPP during the revolution of 1968-69).

The following day the meeting was prominently featured on the front pages of all the daily papers. One columnist wrote a lengthy article with the heading "Alan Woods, Ted Grant and Jahangir Badar". The main emphasis of the press coverage was that the only road for Pakistan is socialism. This reflects a growing mood of radicalisation in the working class and the

PPP.

Alan also spoke at the annual conference of the Pakistani Marxist tendency, *The Struggle*, which was attended by 271 people from all over Pakistan. This was a major

event which shows the rapid growth of Marxism in Pakistan, despite the difficult conditions. *The Struggle* is the only left wing tendency with a mass implantation in Pakistan and is now poised to make a real breakthrough. The comrades of *The Struggle* have done marvellous work in the factories, railways, colleges and villages.

The final meeting of this leg of the tour was held in Multan, the main city of South Punjab. This was attended by 230 people, mainly PPP activists, who also gave an enthusiastic response to the message of *Socialist Appeal*.

Defence Campaign

Particularly noteworthy is the sterling work of the Pakistan Trade Union Defence Campaign which has been in the forefront of the struggle for workers' rights. After the army take over on 12th October, the PTUDC has actively participated in the struggle of the railway workers, whose leaders were imprisoned and headquarters shut by the army.

In Lahore on 24th January 2000, under the noses of the military the PTUDC held a Workers' Conference attended by 18 public sector national unions and 13 private sector unions. In Rawalpindi, on 6th February 2000 they held another rally in which all the major trade unions' representatives were present. About 125 trade unionists attended that meeting. In Rahim Yar Khan on 20th February 2000. All the public and private sector unions of the area attended.

This has led to a rapid growth of influence of both the PTUDC and *The Struggle*. Recently the Pakistani Marxists won a big victory in the elections to the State Bank union. This the biggest union in Pakistan. One of the comrades of *The Struggle* was

elected as national president.

Sri Lanka

Last, but not least, Alan visited Sri Lanka, where a new newspaper has been formed to defend the ideas and traditions of Marxism. Although this is a new formation, its founders are veteran members of the Sri Lankan labour movement. Among them are the leaders of two important trade unions: the government printing union and the health workers. In addition there are student and youth activists and women. The comrades have already translated *The New World Disorder* into Sinhala, and are preparing a translation in Tamil. They plan to produce the first edition of the paper for the First of May. This marks an extremely important step forward.

In addition, Alan addressed a public meeting in Colombo organised by the prominent leader of the Sri Lankan Left, comrade Vasudeva Nanayakkara M.P. who also invited Alan to visit his constituency and attend meetings of Party activists and the Plantation Workers' Union. The visit to Sri Lanka was extremely productive on all counts and opens the way to the regroupment of the forces of genuine Marxism on this important island, with its marvellous tradition of revolutionary struggle and Trotskyism.

To further the work in Asia, it is planned to commence the publication of a new theoretical magazine in English, *The Asian Marxist Review*. This will be published in Lahore, but with a long list of collaborators in other Asian countries: India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand and South Korea. The first issue will come out this Summer. Donations are welcome and should be sent to the *Socialist Appeal* Post Box. ☆



The 'Jolly George Incident' May 1920

In May 1920, eighty years ago there took place a very significant and little publicised episode in the history of the British labour movement. Dockers working in the Port of London refused to load weapons on to a ship called the *Jolly George*. These weapons were destined to assist Polish armies which aimed to overthrow the newly formed workers state in Russia. The action of these dockers was to receive the full support of their trades union and that of the entire British labour movement.

by Barbara Humphries

The extent of the attempts of the allied imperialist powers to try to invade and defeat the Soviet Union in its early years has not received much coverage or publicity. Mostly it was sporadic and unco-ordinated. The main world powers at the time were divided on their tactics. They wanted to see an end to the Bolshevik regime in Russia, knowing that it had abolished capitalism and landlordism. But on the other hand, on the home front they were all faced with populations weary of four years of the butchery of World War I. Troops were threatening mutiny and workers were no longer prepared to put up with the hardships of wartime austerity. Increasingly governments faced political challenges of a revolutionary nature. In Britain there were significant mutinies amongst British troops in Calais and Folkestone over demobilisation. On the civilian front troops confronted angry demonstrations on the streets of Glasgow.

Although part of the British military and political establishment favoured full scale intervention in Soviet Russia, British government actions had consisted of sending troops to Murmansk and Archangel, using the issue of the German threat as a pretext. Otherwise actions had been limited to sending supplies to counter-revolutionaries in Ukraine and Crimea, assisting Japanese troops in Siberia and supplying munitions to the Polish armies who were to invade the Ukraine. Attempts were made to support counter-revolutionary rebellions such as that of General Kolchak in Siberia and support for the Union for the Regeneration of Russia. After the German armistice in 1918 the pretext for the occupation of Archangel came to an end and the allied troops left. The attempts by the Bolsheviks to call for peace were sabotaged by the "white" Russians, and Clemenceau, prime minister

of France set up a Conference of Anti-Bolsheviks in 1918. In Britain the wartime coalition was split with Lloyd George favouring peace and Winston Churchill wanting to send troops to Russia.

Armed intervention in Russia was unanimously opposed by the British labour movement. Firstly there was a mood for peace. Secondly the newly established workers' state in Russia had support within the labour movement. Litvinov addressed a Labour Party conference in January 1918 at which he said

"The revolution was not only against the Tsar and his regime but against allied capitalists. The Russian toilers wanted peace as well as freedom and social reforms". This received support from the rank and file of the movement.

Right wing Labour leader Arthur Henderson had invited Kerensky the Menshevik leader to address the Labour Party, but the continuing threat of war brought swift condemnation from the labour movement.

In the summer of 1919 the Labour Party conference had called for an end to British intervention in Russia and authorised both political and industrial action to stop the war which Herbert Morrison called "a war against the international organisation of socialism."

"A Hands off Russia Committee" was formed which circulated Labour Party branches and trades councils. It said "Russia is attacked solely because our class, the working class is in power and they have demonstrated that Labour is fit to govern."

Although British troops were withdrawn from Archangel in 1919, war against the Russian Revolution continued with an invasion of the Ukraine in 1920 by Polish troops which temporarily captured Kiev. The continued support with munitions by foreign governments including that of Britain provoked ferment throughout western Europe. The action of the dockers in refusing to load the *Jolly George* was followed by a whole campaign throughout the labour movement. 350 local councils of action were set up. Hands off Russia demonstrations were held up and down the country. George Lansbury addressed a rally in the Royal Albert Hall. At the Labour Party conference in July 1920, it was "pledged to resist any and every form of military and moral intervention against the Soviet government of Russia". A joint council with the Trades Union Congress was set up and authorised to

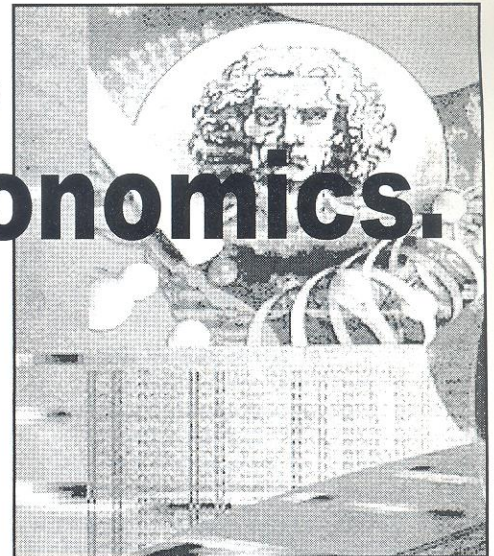


БУДЬ НА СТРАЖЕ!

"call for any and every form of withdrawal of labour which circumstances may require". This included a one day general strike. The *Daily Herald* carried a headline "Not a man, not a gun, not a son". In August trades unions and Labour Party branches were urged to send emergency telegrams to the government demanding peace with Russia. At the August conference of the Labour Party and Trades Union Congress Ernest Bevin, leader of the transport workers said "This question you are called upon to decide today - the willingness to take any action to win world peace transcends any claim in connection with wages or hours of labour."

Finally Lloyd George had to inform the Polish government that no help would be forthcoming, due to the threat of industrial action in Britain. The war had been stopped by the actions of organised labour. Alarm bells were sent ringing in the ears of the ruling class in Britain and other capitalist governments. French and Japanese governments feared that all treaties with Britain could be rendered useless as a result of industrial opposition. Winston Churchill drew the same conclusions. When the Trades Disputes Act was passed after the defeat of the 1926 General Strike, it included the provision that strikes against war be made illegal! This was because in the words of Churchill "Labour's threat of unconstitutional action in 1920 was aimed at compelling the lawfully elected government of that time to modify a policy which in its considered opinion was best for Britain, Europe and the World!" This showed the extent of the impact of labour in 1920. ☆

GENOMICS - Life and death economics.



As we all know science is big business, and none more so than genetics. The Human Genome Project, the deciphering of the 3.2 billion chemical letters which make up human DNA has already resulted in some startling breakthroughs. After 13 years the project has just passed the 2 billion letters mark. Each of these letters represents a molecule, and every cell of the human body, muscles, skin, liver etc (with the exception of red blood cells) contains a copy of the same DNA. The totality of the DNA in the cells of a species is its genome.

by Phil Mitchinson

While our scientific understanding of life attempts to race ahead, once again we find ourselves hemmed in by the enormous waste of capitalism. There are five main labs 'racing' to complete the job, wasting time and resources. Earlier this year Francis Collins head of the publicly funded research in the US turned down an offer to work jointly with private firm Celera because they keep their results to themselves for six months unless you pay them a subscription of \$5 million. Competition plus profit equals waste.

Of course, the press whip up hysterical nonsense about genes for homosexuality or criminal tendencies. Robert Sapolsky, professor of biological sciences and neurology at Stanford University explains their mistake.

"In this deterministic view, the proteins unleashed by genes 'cause' or 'control' behaviour. Have the wrong version of a gene and, bam, you're guaranteed something awful, like being pathologically aggressive, or having schizophrenia. Everything is preordained from conception.

Yet hardly any genes work this way. Instead genes and environment interact; nurture reinforces or retards nature....A particular gene can have a different effect, depending on the environment. There is genetic vulnerability, but not inevitability.... Much of DNA simply constitutes on and off switches for regulating the activity of genes....What regulates those switches? In some instances, chemical messengers from other parts of the cell. In other cases, messengers from other cells in the body (this is the way many hormones work). And, critically, in still other cases, genes are turned on or off by environmental factors....You can't dissociate genes from the environment that turns genes on or off. And you can't dissociate the effects of genes from the environment in which proteins exert their effects. The study of genetics will never be so all encompassing as to gobble up every subject from medicine to sociology. Instead, the more science learns about genes, the more we will learn about the

importance of environment. That goes for real life, too: genes are essential but not the whole story."

The only thing a gene is 'for' is a protein. The letters being sequenced, As, Cs, Gs, and Ts constitute a code. Each triplet of letters instructs the 'machinery' inside a cell to grab hold of a particular amino acid. If you string amino acids together they make a protein, a stomach enzyme that digests food, for instance. We have around 80,000 genes and we are 99.9 percent identical.

Gene monitoring

So what, you might say. Well here's the exciting bit. Already researchers are extracting DNA from patients, attaching fluorescent molecules and sprinkling the sample on a glass chip whose surface is speckled with 10,000 known genes. A laser reads the fluorescence, which indicates which of the known genes on the chip are in the mystery sample from the patient. In the last few months such 'gene-expression monitoring' has diagnosed a muscle tumour in a boy thought to have leukaemia, and distinguished between two kinds of cancer that require different chemotherapy.

Genetic testing will help early diagnosis, and will mean new drugs aimed at treating the cause of disease rather than the symptoms. The use of genes as medicine, curing disease at the molecular level before it even arises, may be further off but even now these new discoveries can revolutionise medicine.

Researchers are busily using the information from the Human Genome Project to develop ways of recognising disease early and treating it. Some are investigating ways to use genes as drugs. Others are seeking ways to alter or eliminate disease genes. A new genetically engineered antibody called Herceptin works to block the receptors responsible for the spread of breast cancer. In tests in America this treatment has so far been successful for less than a year for most patients, although some were much more fortunate. Still it gives us a glimmer

again of what can be achieved.

So, when are we going to start seeing the benefits? This is where big business shoves its nose in. As ever they are busily working out the best way to make a quick buck. Sickeningly the combination of science as big business with the current speculation bubble has prompted some economists to predict that genetics companies are the new dot coms, and will attract enough investment to keep the bubble afloat. No doubt they will attract more cash than the serious projects trying to use this science to cure cancer.

Unbelievably these biotech companies are fighting over the patent rights to genes. How on earth can you patent a gene. These people are not interested in science, owning the means of producing wealth is all that concerns them. Now they have the audacity to claim ownership of the chemical make up of our species. Such obsession with ownership and profit applied to our health has fatal consequences. Miami Children's hospital developed a genetic screening test for Canavan disease, a degenerative neurological disorder. The hospital owns the patent on the 'Canavan gene' and charges \$12.50 for anyone who uses the test.

What's the point in investing in developing a drug if others can simply copy it without paying royalties, they argue. To you and I the answer saving lives comes to mind, to these people that only prompts the further question, is there any money in it?

The science of genetics is about more than modified crops, giant salmon and sheep clones. Or rather it should be. It should be about curing cancer, about treating disease, about understanding how our bodies work in interaction with our environment. Before that can become a reality we will have to change our environment, our society, so that freed from the bondage of labour in the interests of profit, science can be put to use in the interests of the whole of humanity and not just the greed of a few. ☆

Book review

Supercollector: A critique of Charles Saatchi

by Rita Hatton and John A. Walker
Ellipsis (ISBN 1 84166 024 8)
260 pages
£12

Books on art generally tend to concentrate either on the art itself or on the artists who produced it. A few writers, such as T. J. Clark, have widened this out to include an assessment of the political and social factors which shaped art. Marxists would add to this the need to also consider the role of the classes and how the conflicts between them have affected culture. Certainly, you cannot really understand Renaissance art without also being aware of the key role of the patron. But what about art today?

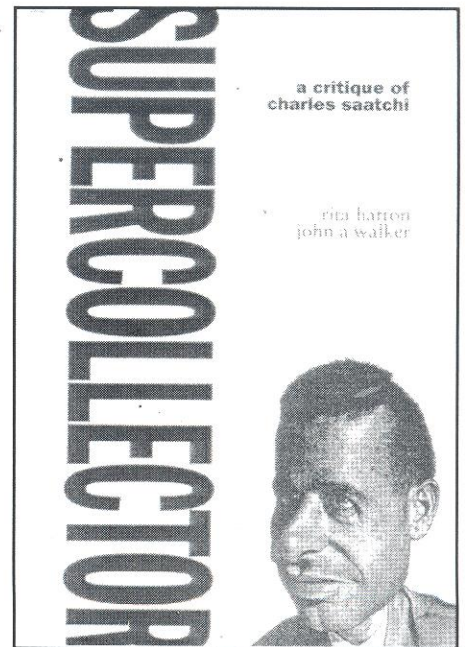
Hatton and Walker's new book on the role of Charles Saatchi, the supercollector of the title, takes a fresh look at the shadowy world of private patronage as it operates today. The authors from the outset make an interesting parallel between Saatchi and the Medici family who dominated art patronage in Renaissance Florence of the 15th and 16th Century. For a merchant and banking family like the Medici the opportunity existed to use patronage to strengthen and reinforce its position as the dominant force in Florentine ruling circles. Art was seen to be for the glory of the patron not the, often nameless, artist. Artists would be tied to the patron and totally dependent on them for work. It was the patron who would decide what and by whom the work of art would be produced, a situation that would continue until the development of the open market for art in the 16th Century. The likes of Cosimo and later Lorenzo de' Medici could make or break an artist, especially since the rights to produce certain types of art (such as bronze sculpture) were severely restricted both by law and financial constraints. This control would extend into areas which many would have presumed to be the sole responsibility of the artist such as style and character. Is Charles Saatchi a latter day Lorenzo?

Most readers of this journal will immediately recognise Saatchi's name from the advertising firm he established with his brother Maurice, whose most well known client was Thatcher's Tories with its infamous "Labour isn't working" poster of 1978.

For many Saatchi & Saatchi were the living embodiment of what the novelist Hanif Kureishi, quoted in the book, called "shallow, greedy self seekers... Thatcher's children; without dimension, mystery or inwardness, ... an appropriate monument to our age." Many readers who have suffered from the great damage caused by the Tory governments of the 80s and 90s will no doubt feel even less charitable about such characters. Saatchi & Saatchi were enthusiastic supporters of the Tories and all they stood for, "willing propagandists for a party and a government that produced a more unequal and divided society" (page 58). Yet the involvement of Charles Saatchi in the world of art has remained largely hidden from public attention despite the belief that he may possibly be spending a cool \$2 million dollars a year on this "hobby", making him one of the most powerful "super-collectors" in the world today.

Should we be concerned about the role played by the likes of Charles Saatchi? Some attention has been given to the role of corporate sponsorship in art where companies seek to use it to boost their own images. Socialists have long recognised the dubious links that have been built up between big business and our public institutions, including the great public galleries. Indeed, the Saatchi agency carried out work for the V & A (Maurice Saatchi served on the V & A board of directors) which included, as the book notes, the "ace caff with quite a nice museum attached" advert which went a long way towards underlining the clear shift towards commercialism which museums such as the V & A had started to prioritise. A shift which many felt was at the expense of scholarly work.

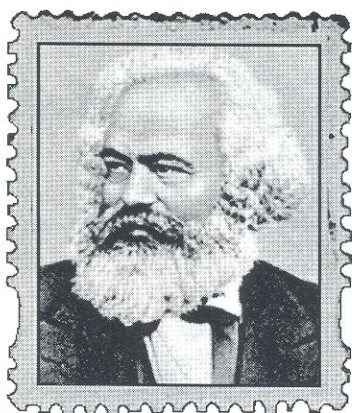
However Charles Saatchi's involvement is that of a private individual. Some may argue that it is his money to spend as he likes (although the book reminds us that such wealth was obtained through the "exploitation of ... employees, the unpaid labour ... extracted from them") and if he is going to spend it then he may as well do so on art. Clearly Saatchi gets much pleasure as well as social prestige from his collect-



ing. The Saatchi collection is massive, possibly over 2000 items, of which an estimated 1000 are thought to be by British artists, constantly changing as items are bought and sold and evidently showing no sign of consistent taste. The authors suggest that his buying policy may well reflect a desire to "corner the market", to have something from everybody, covering all the movements and trends in recent art. He has even established his own gallery to show some of his items.

This book presents considerable evidence that Saatchi has been promoting certain artists in a way clearly intended to raise their stock on the international art market. In particular they look at the recent way in which young British artists (or yBa as they are generally called) have responded with their taste for commercialism and fame, almost as if Saatchi and the yBa were made for each other. We are even presented with compelling evidence that Saatchi was involved in trying to create new movements where none existed e.g. the so-called New Neurotic Realism. If the book's authors are correct and Saatchi is attempting to shape the very direction of art's history then the implications are very serious for BritArt, as some like to call it, over the next few years. Hatton and Walker are right to complain that the power that wealthy people such as Charles Saatchi have over our culture is extremely unhealthy since they inevitably use that power for their own benefit, irrespective of the damage they might cause to artists who are no longer a source of profit, potential or otherwise. Medici patronage at least gave us the great treasures of the Renaissance-what will Mr. Saatchi give us? "Supercollector" provides us with some very unsettling possible answers.

by Steve Jones



MAIL

CORRESPONDENCE

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London N1 7SQ.
e-mail: socialist_appeal@mail.com



Dear Comrade,

I was born in New York City in 1928. While high school student in the 40s attended SWP meetings. Seaman 45 to 60s. Became close friends with Henry (Hank) Schnautz who was a stevedore (docker?). Hank was a guard in Mexico at the compound where Trotsky was in exile. He was the first person at Trotsky's side and the last person Trotsky spoke to when he was struck down.

The new site(s) is super. I particularly liked the Northern Ireland piece. I'm going to print it and send copies to my Irish friends in the Bronx

Harold (New York City).



Dear Comrades

Readers of last month's Socialist Appeal may be interested in the continuing saga of Cardiff councillors' pay. In the last month the Wales Labour Party, in the shape of the Local government officer in the Welsh Assembly, has forced the councillors to abandon their massive pay rise, and forced the mayor to accept a cut of £18,000. This still means he gets a whopping pay rise, but nevertheless it is a bit of a victory for the party rank and file.

This is still only a partial victory, however, as a second review of councillors allowances may well propose a new fatcat rise. This is all the more likely now that the Welsh Local Government Association are backing Cardiff mayor Russel Goodway.

Nonetheless this is seen as an embarrassing climbdown, and makes the chances of Goodway gaining a safe seat at the next election slim indeed. The party rank and file will cheer if this is the end of his political career. We must do more than that, however. We must organise the opposition that already exists, to start deselecting these self serving careerists.

A real victory would mean the workforce getting a decent pay rise and job security. That's how our councillors should be representing us

Fraternally

Mark Turner, Cardiff



Dear Comrades,

The article on Call centres is extremely accurate. I myself worked in a call centre and know how these sweatshops operate. I was a Project Manager. However, don't think being a manager allows for better treatment. Far from it I am sad to say. I was working 80 - 90 hour weeks with no break, no lunch and expected to be available 24/7. One day when I was completely burned out I went to get a quick coffee. I saw my boss smoking and he saw me. His statement to me was this "what do you think this is? A f***** part time job?" These people are the bottom feeders of the capitalist dog world. For any readers living in Canada, PLEASE! save yourself the agony. Don't work for Telespectrum, Marusa Marketing, Bell Canada, CTSI, et al. These are some of the larger and more well known call centres. The smaller ones are even worse. Cut your neighbours grass or beg for money on the street but don't work for these losers. They'll sap your confidence and self worth.

Thank you,

Peter Graham (Canada)



Hello

I have just read two of your articles on what you call Genetically Modified food, but what we in Hong Kong and Greenpeace International still refer to as Genetically Engineered food. The establishment has already compromised you - GM is those companies' preferred name.

Anyway, I completely agree with articles concerning GE food in *Socialist Appeal* issues 67 and 77, though I feel the earlier article is not as clear as it might be. But you seem to be missing one of the strongest arguments against GE food, which runs completely contrary to what the companies claim - that GE crops will provide a safe and guaranteed supply of food.

The argument is well described in a Greenpeace International publication called

Centres of Diversity. Simply put, single species of plants can have a variety of genomes. This is protection for the continuation of the species and for it to continue to develop. Some of the plants are more suited to warm damp sunny climates while others which produce a variant of the same species, may prefer well drained soil in shady conditions. The danger is that if a GE variety begins pollinating natural ones, the GE ones could completely take over the habitat and eliminate the natural species. When the GE variety is attacked naturally or otherwise, if the crop were to be destroyed or permanently damaged, there would be no natural varieties to fall back on, which is how farmers have managed to develop new strains throughout history. Therefore, GE crops could actually endanger the ability of the planet to feed the population - which it could already do if we wished, it's just a matter of distribution.

The Greenpeace booklet is easily understandable, and gives a far better description than the one I have just outlined. Last time I looked at their Web site, the information was available for nowt. But the booklet should still be available from Greenpeace, and is well worth the read.

Solidarity,

Ed Shepherd (Hong Kong)



First class editorial, every word true, every claim justified, every demand must happen and be acted upon by the workers at Longbridge.

We must turn out in our hundreds of thousands. All we really require is clear and decisive leadership from our unions.

Give us the objective and good strong leadership and we will achieve our goals. I demand that the leadership give these things as well as their support and we will overcome all obstacles.

M. J. Callaghan (Britain)

What do our readers think?

What is your opinion about the articles in *Socialist Appeal* and www.socialistappeal.com?

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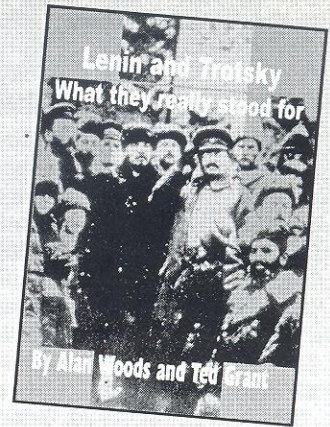
Wellred Bookshop on Line

Wellred Books has taken a big leap forward in its bookshop launch on the internet. It has become the first left wing bookshop to engage in e-commerce. Linked to the In Defence of Marxism website (www.marxist.com), it offers readers a means of purchasing Marxist literature on-line through credit card payments.

At this moment, the bookshop is stocked with the main writings of Marx and Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky. It also features other titles produced by Wellred Publications by Alan Woods and Ted Grant. This is just the beginning! We intend to expand our stock to cover all the writings of the great Marxists in the near future.

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We are launching a new, improved version of the *Socialist Appeal* web site (www.socialist.net). We have included a number of subject-organised subdirectories (Labour Party, trade unions, health, Ireland, international, etc), and also a search engine which will allow you to search the whole site. The web site will not only carry the full contents of the magazine every month but will also include weekly updates on the latest developments in the labour movement (Livingstone affair, Rover, etc), including model resolutions which you can move in your Labour Party and trade union meetings, as well as those articles which did not make it into the printed version for lack of space. Also we have launched a Marxist bookshop on-line. We think that this new web site together with our other sites "In Defence of Marxism" (www.marxist.com), Youth For International Socialism (www.newyouth.com) and the Trotsky year site (www.trotsky.net) will be an important contribution to the struggle for socialist ideas in cyberspace! ☆

An ongoing task

The struggle for socialism and socialist ideas requires sacrifice and effort from every reader, every active participant in the labour movement. Our ability to produce *Socialist Appeal* each month to help carry forward the fight is down to you. It is your sacrifice which makes it possible. But this is an ongoing task. We need the donations and collections each and every month to help keep our heads above water. At the end of the last quarter we had raised £1693.37 alongside a number of outstanding IOUs. Now we are faced with our next target of £3000 to be raised by the summer. Given the large number of union conferences etc, this should be possible. Delegates and visitors to the union conferences should weigh up carefully how much of their expenses payouts they should be able to donate to us. Remember it costs us to send sellers to push *Socialist Appeal*, print the leaflets, produce the pamphlets and so on.

Now some of you will be reading *Socialist Appeal* for the first time, perhaps having bought this copy at a conference or on a May Day event. We hope you like what you see and want to get a regular copy. This can be sorted out by approaching the person who sold you the journal or by taking out a subscription, which can be done by completing the form printed on page 28. But why not go one step further? If you agree with the ideas in *Socialist Appeal* why not help us spread the word further? We need more sellers inside the movement and that means you! Instead of just getting one journal you could take say an extra 5 or 10 copies to sell on a sale or return basis. Think of who you know inside your Labour Party or trade union or just amongst your mates who you think might buy a copy. Contact us now on 020 7251 1094 to see what can be done. Failing all this then how about a donation to help us keep the work going?

Half way through April, when this column is written, we have

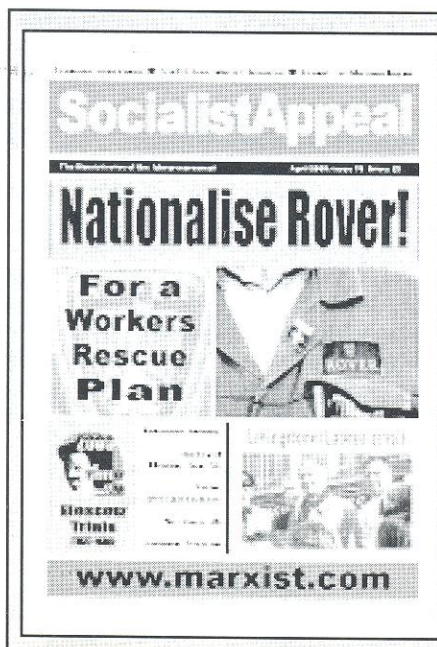


- £13,000
- £9,750
- £6,500
- £3,250

raised £1100, so we have a way to go yet in order to meet this quarter's target and cover the shortfall from the last quarter. Special thanks for donations received since last month's article was written are due to Mr B. (£1000), John Cooze (£5), St Andrews' readers (£50), Frank Cuthbert (£20), Jim Brookshaw (£20), Colin Penfold (£10), T-Shirt sales by N. London supporters (£50), another regular donation of £50 from two W. London readers, and others. Keep it up! Every penny counts: please send what you can to us at *Socialist Appeal*, PO Box 2626, London N1 7SQ.

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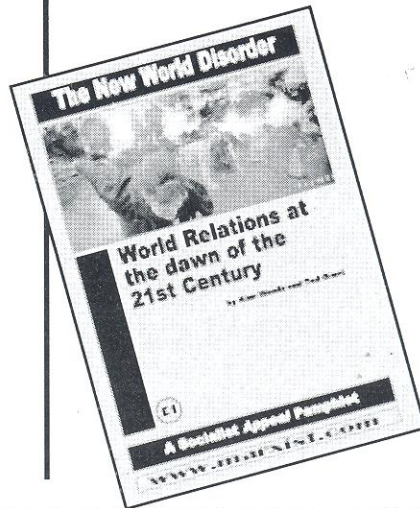
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