

# SOCIALIST

## APPEAL

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*The Marxist voice of the labour movement*

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### Labour and TUC Must...

# Step Up the Fight For Jobs



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Asylum and  
Immigration  
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and India -  
What's  
Behind  
the  
Violence?**

***Questions  
for  
Socialists:  
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**Britain in  
Crisis:  
The Fight  
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## EDITORIAL

### JOBS FIGHT MUST BE STEPPED UP

There won't be much to celebrate in the "season of goodwill" for hundreds of thousands of workers and their families as the recession continues to take its terrible toll on jobs.

Ford have announced 3,000 redundancies, the Post Office 16,000-plus, IBM up to 30,000, and councils are busy calculating how many redundancies they will have to announce following the disclosure of government funding for 1993.

In every local paper and on every news bulletin the reality of the crisis of the British, and international capitalist economy is brought starkly home to millions as companies fold, workers are sacked and pay freezes or cuts imposed. On top of this the plight of the homeless continues to stalk every major city in Britain. Young and old alike crouch in doorways to keep out the winter cold. **But it is not like this for every one in Britain.** The bosses of the recently privatised industries have enjoyed a year of unparalleled prosperity, awarding themselves massive pay rises with one hand while handing out redundancy notices with the other.

That is the reality of Tory Britain. That is the reality of John Major's sham "classless society."

The question on many workers lips is, how come this government is still in power? The magnificent demonstrations in support of the miners, the strikes in local authorities up and down the country, the protests by health workers, the vote for strike action on the tubes have all afforded workers the opportunity to take their revenge on this vicious government.

Millions have demonstrated they would respond to a clear call for action to force the Tories out.

The TUC committed themselves this year to campaigning for full employment. They must now turn words into action. The Tories are in crisis and Labour and the TUC should be stepping up the fight for jobs.

Calling for parliamentary enquiries or debates are not enough. If the Tories are forced to climb down over pit closures it will not be because of fine speeches in the House of Commons but because of the power demonstrated by the organised working class in the two London demonstrations and in marches and rallies up and down the country.

As a first step the TUC should name the day for a 24-hour general strike harnessing the enormous discontent over cuts and redundancies into a united struggle to get Major and the Tories out. This call should be combined with marches, rallies and demonstrations the length and breadth of the country.

There were those who wanted to rely on "Tory rebels" or Liberal-Democrats to win the pits battle or throw out the Maastricht Treaty. When it came to the crunch these "caring" individuals defended the interests of the class to which they belong. We can only rely on our own strength - the strength of the organised labour movement.

And we can't rely on capitalism to provide us with jobs or a decent standard of living. **Labour should be committing itself to fighting on a socialist programme, linking the current struggles with the need to transform society to provide jobs, homes and a decent standard of living for all.**

#### **SOCIALIST APPEAL**

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# CAMPAIGN AGAINST PIT CLOSURES HOTS UP

## Marching for Jobs

Despite driving rain and a last minute change of rally venue, over 500 people attended a demonstration through Southampton City Centre to protest against pit closures and job losses.

The demonstration was called by the Southampton Trades Council, who have formed a Miners Support Group despite the fact that Southampton is more than 200 miles away from the nearest coal mine!

Over the past couple of years, the recession has hit the south of England hard. In Southampton, unemployment is higher than, and growing faster than, the national average. Redundancies have been announced at the city's biggest employers, Fords, Pirelli, the Ordnance Survey and British Rail. Add these to the proposed cuts in public services and we have the biggest recession since the 1930s.

Although foul weather took its toll on numbers, the mood which greeted the march was one of anger and hostility towards the Tory Government. At the end of the march, a rally was held at Mayflower Park. Speakers included the South's only Labour MP, John Denham, and Welsh miner and NUM official, Tyrone O'Sullivan, who told the rally: "I have been a member of the Labour Party for 25 years. The new realists are taking the Party in the wrong direction - our roots are in the working classes".

He urged all union members to stand up and fight, to support a TUC day of action and to support the miners in strike action. "It will be a tragedy," he said, "for everyone in Britain if the miners are defeated again. If we lose this time, there will be six million on the dole".

This is only the start of the campaign. What is needed is to link the strands together and go forward. Lets hope even the weather will be with us.

**By Socialist Appeal supporters in Southampton**

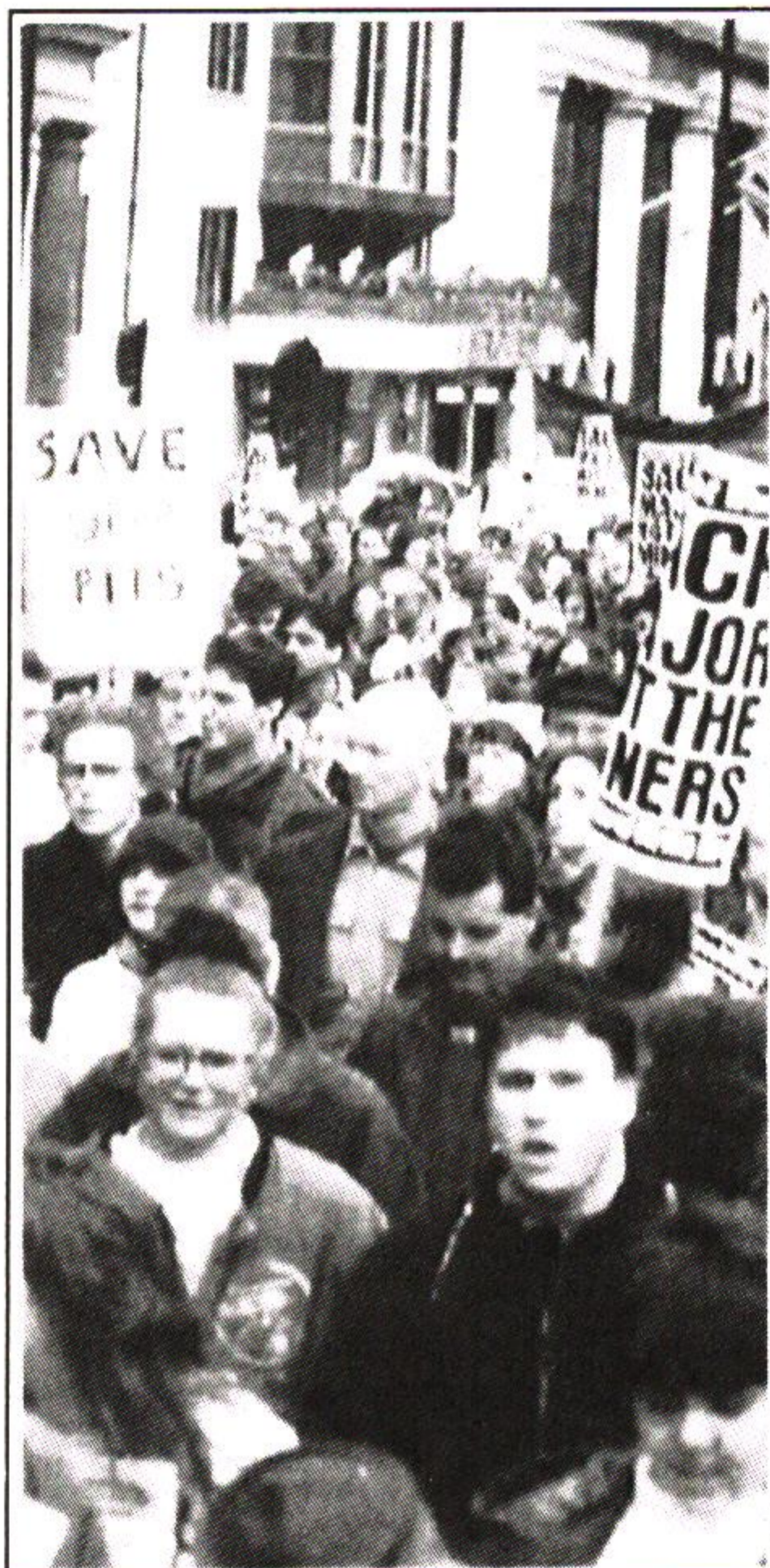


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THROUGH TO OUR  
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**021-455-9112**

## LEICESTER DEMO ATTRACTS 1,000

- Every demonstration for the miners seems to be blighted by bad weather at the moment.
- Things are getting hot for the Tories, though.
- 1,000 people marched in the rain to hear Dennis Skinner castigate the Government not only for the pit closure programme but for all the attacks they are making on the working class. He explained how the Tories are forcing even their own supporters towards the Labour Movement. The Labour and Trade Union leaders shouldn't be afraid to call for strike action to support the miners. An elderly woman approached the rally and told me that she'd always been a Tory but if she had the chance she'd vote them out tomorrow.
- Then she added, "and it wouldn't bother me in the slightest if there was a General Strike, either"!
- The local Labour Party is running the Miners Support Group. They put out 60,000 leaflets explaining the miners' case and collected thousands of signatures on petitions. Leicester South Labour Party also delivered 20,000 leaflets attacking the sham review as a procedure to buy time. People wrote in to the local office asking to join the Party. We won't leave the campaign in the air. A lot of the people joining Labour at the minute are young, so we are re-launching the Young Socialist branch this month.
- As Dennis Skinner said at the rally, "These opportunities don't come along that often. We've got to take advantage of them".
- Mike Pullin, Leicester



## Pakistan Workers Solidarity Call

A Pakistan Labour Solidarity Committee (PLSC) has been formed in Britain by activists in the British and Pakistani Labour Movements.

The PLSC was initiated during the recent brutal clampdown by the Nawaz Sharif government on the Long March protestors, and campaigned for the release of 20,000 - 25,000 detainees. The aims of the PLSC are:

1. Release of all political prisoners and an end to the brutal repression of the IJI Government in Pakistan.
2. The ending of child labour and for a compulsory and free education system. Unemployment benefits from the state.
3. The repeal of discriminatory laws against women. Equal status for women in all fields of work. Maternity leave and equal wages for working women.
4. The ending of contract labour, for full trade union rights and decent wages. For decent medical facilities and adequate housing and transport.
5. The ending of discrimination on the basis of religion. Repeal of the law requiring the indicating of religion on the national identity card. Equal rights to religious minorities. The ending of laws based on fundamentalism.

The PLSC aims also to build solidarity links between the trade union movements in Britain and Pakistan and give material and political support to Pakistani trade unionists.

Resolutions of support and donations should be sent to PLSC, PO Box 977, London SE11 6XA.

Financial Sponsorship is urgently required and is asked from: local bodies (£25); national bodies (£50). The PLSC will be producing a newsletter in January providing information on the work of trade unionists in Pakistan.

**Britain in Crisis...Britain in Crisis...Britain in Crisis...Britain in C**

# **FIGHT** **FOR** **JOBS!**

900 shipyard workers face the sack with the announcement of the closure of Cammell Laird yard in Merseyside. *Socialist Appeal* spoke to Jake Shepherd who has worked at the yard for 23 years.

The yard was nationalised up to 1985. Up until that point, because of the cold war, things looked reasonably promising on the work front. But now, with the end of the cold war, the government have done nothing to help us transform to "peacetime" production.

VSEL have said rather than close the yard they would sell it but the government won't intervene to help save the jobs and help the industry compete with other countries, especially those in south-east Asia. Germany subsidises their eastern yards up to 38% but our government blocked a 9% subsidy the EC were discussing. Leon Brittan said the money that should have been used as a subsidy

had already been used - to privatise the yards!

VSEL bought the yard for just £1. It is typical Tory economic strategy showing either complete incompetence or else doing what the French ruling class used to - do anything to break up the organised working class into small units, even if it means committing industrial suicide. This government reminds me of the Heath government. Everything they do is going wrong for them.

But at the time of the Heath government there was at least some form of opposition. The leadership of the trade unions today is very ineffectual.

At the height of this yard, 40,000 were employed. When I started in 1969, there were 16,000. Today there are just 900 - and in July we will close. Unemployment round here is as high as 30% in some areas.

What we want is a yard and jobs. Eighteen months ago we had a vote on industrial action, which was carried. But nothing was ever done to act on it and as a result some feel demoralised. But we are still keen to fight - but we are looking for a lead. Like the miners and others we want to protect our jobs any way we can.

“**The government won't intervene to help save the yard and the jobs.**”

## **Obselete Marxism or Obselete Capitalism?**

"Last night it emerged that more than 1220 companies are going under every week, and an avalanche of job cuts threatened to add thousands to Britain's dole queues.

"Company failures rocketed by 40% in the first nine months of 1992, according to business information group, Dun and Bradstreet. It warned that there would be no let-up in bankruptcies for another two years. *The Guardian*, 1992.

*"While stimulating the progressive development of technique, competition gradually consumes, not only the intermediary layers, but itself as well. Over the corpses and semi-corpse of small and middling capitalists, emerges an ever-decreasing number of ever more powerful capitalist overlords. Thus, out of "honest", "democratic" "progressive" competition grows irrevocably "harmful" "parasitic" "reactionary" monopoly....Yet when in the course of his prognosis Marx had first deduced monopoly from the inherent tendencies of capitalism, the bourgeois world had looked upon competition as an eternal law of nature." Leon Trotsky, 1939.*

## **Tories Force Big Cuts in Social Services**

The real effects of Norman Lamont's Autumn Statement are only just being evaluated by local authorities across the country. In a recent survey, nine out of ten town halls said they plan to cut funding to social services as a result of the government's funding announcement.

At a time when more and more demands are being put on council social services department the announcement comes as another kick in the teeth for the poorest and most vulnerable in society who are those who rely more heavily on the services provided

## **Pilots March on Shareholders**

Pilots, sacked following the takeover of Dan-Air, disrupted the failed company's final shareholders meeting to protest at "shameful," redundancy payments and job losses.

300 pilots were sacked when BA took over Dan-Air which had gone into receivership, some receiving pay-offs of just £205. The maximum redundancy settlements amounted to just £4,100, the equivalent of less than £200 per year for some of the workers. The protestors claim the company were more interested in protecting the bankers than former employees.

## **Merseyside Marches with the Miners**

Over 10,000 workers and unemployed marched with the miners on a demonstration organised by the Merseyside Association of Trades Councils. Local healthworkers defied management and came out in support of the miners fight for jobs. Arthur Scargill, one of the main speakers, told demonstrators how if the £1.3 billion investment put in to nuclear power was put into coal, free coal could be supplied to every pensioner in the country. Tony Benn told the rally the pit closure programme was the capitalists attack on our class and a united stand against the Tories could finish them off. Calls for days of action, both regionally and nationally in support of the miners received enthusiastic backing as the next step in the fight.

Alan Wynne and Jimmy Sutton,  
Wirral, Merseyside.

**Britain in Crisis...Britain in Crisis...Britain in Crisis...Britain in C**

## **"WE WANT JUSTICE!"**

Trade unionists in Britain and Holland have launched a joint campaign to fight for the restoration of union rights at one of the world's largest publishing houses.

UK publishers Reed and Dutch publishers Elsevier are merging to form a company employing 25,000 workers across 43 countries.

Over the past two years Reed has pursued a vicious anti-union strategy, removing negotiating rights from the print and media union, GPMU and from the NUJ at many of the group's titles.

Elsevier has always had an anti-union policy at its UK sites. Elsevier continued this strategy recently following the purchase of Pergamon Press from Robert Maxwell when they refused to reinstate the 23 journalists sacked by Maxwell for a one-day strike in defence of their union rights. For years Elsevier has paid its UK workers below the rate paid to their Dutch colleagues, who have limited legal rights to union representation. Elsevier has no intention of extending these union rights to its 11,000 UK workers. Thousands of workers will be denied the most basic rights. In response to the merger workers at Reed and Elsevier sites in the UK and Holland launched the Justice at Reed Elsevier campaign to fight for union recognition and collective bargaining rights at all the company's sites and to secure the right of any trade union member, including the Pergamon 23, to work for Reed Elsevier companies.

We are seeking sponsors from the trade union movement, Labour Parties and student and community organisations and will be launching a number of activities as well as building shop floor links between workers at companies in Holland and the UK. The campaign will work in tandem with the NUJ and GPMU and with trade union activists in Holland who are running the Dutch end of the campaign.

Local branches of the campaign are being set up in London, Oxford, Birmingham and other areas to put pressure on local managements. When the companies began derecognising the unions we were isolated in small workplaces, now the campaign gives us the chance to link together and ensure that all workers at Reed Elsevier win the right to be represented by their trade union.

**By a Reed Midland NUJ member**

## **Tories Give Green Light to Child Exploitation**

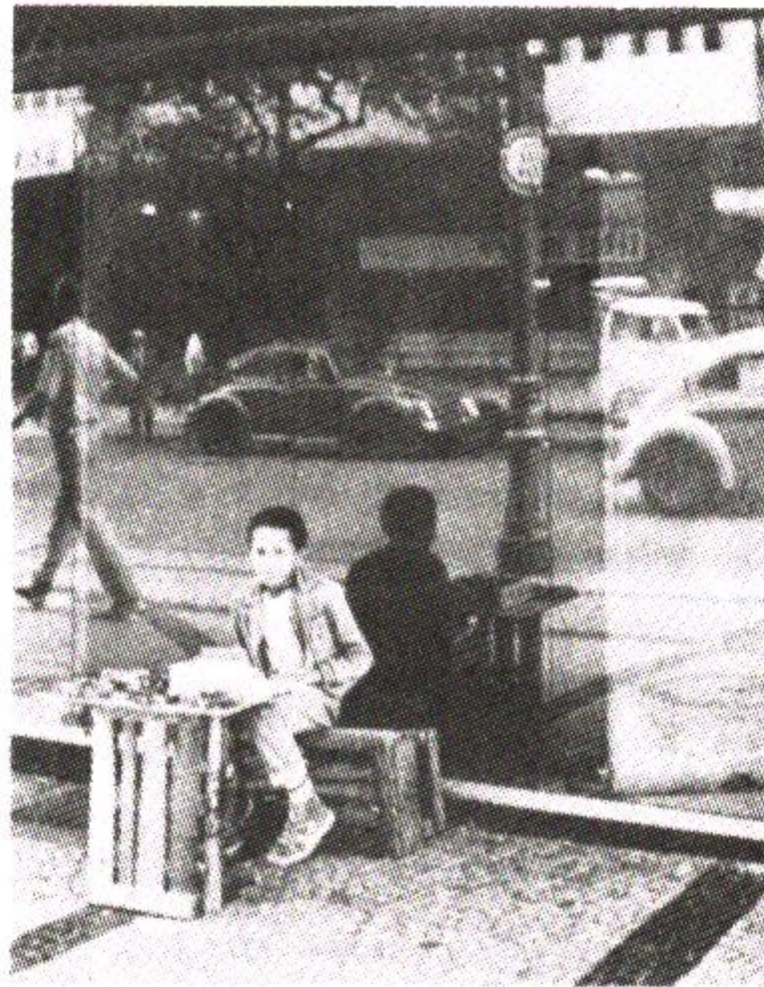
The true face of the Tories and their "market" has been blown wide open by their opposition to plans to offer limited protection to child workers.

The Tories believe it would be "an unwarranted interference and put unnecessary burdens on business," according to the Observer, to implement even the limited protection offered by new EC guidelines.

They would rather see schoolchildren working in unsafe conditions, children working illegally in factories and on farms in order to keep down labour costs than to offer young workers any protection.

That is precisely why the Tories abolished existing restrictions on child labour in their 1989 Employment Act.

Up to two million schoolchildren are believed to work in Britain and, with the exception of



Portugal, Britain has the worst record in protecting children in employment.

With around 25% of child workers earning less than £1 an hour big business is raking in the profits on the work they do. And with laws protecting them less than if they employed an adult worker at the same job then companies are only too glad to take on children instead. It is believed by child education workers that more and more children are seeking work as family budgets are hit by the recession and more and more companies are taking children on to maintain profits during the recession.

And with minimal protection it is no wonder more children are injured at work. Figures show a 60% increase in accidents at work over the past five years.

Under existing health and safety laws firms can be fined up to £20,000 for employing

children illegally or using dangerous equipment. But recent fines, (such as the Co-op supermarket in West Bromwich, which admitted unsafe work practices and was fined £250) have amounted to mere hundreds of pounds - a bargain if a company saves thousands of pounds a month employing children instead of adults, not to mention the savings on providing a healthy working environment.

But even when the EC propose limited protection the Tories oppose it!

Labour should be exposing the real nature of the Tories and the "market." It does not care about people, only profit. Labour should campaign for an end to child exploitation and fight for proper health and safety protection for all workers. But more than this Labour should be fighting for a socialist programme which takes control out of the hands of the bosses - the only way to end child exploitation and the exploitation of all working people.

### **Not Nouveau Riche But New Poor**

Charities are facing a deluge of applications for grants and loans as the recession bites ever deeper. As more and more redundancies are announced the number of applications for help has risen sharply, so much so that the Family Welfare Association had to close its doors for a month to ease the backlog of applications.

Many of those applying, were those employed during the 1980s, who believed the good times were here to stay but are now being made to pay for the economic crisis through redundancy, home repossessions and wage cuts. Many of the applicants formerly owned their own small businesses set up with "cheap money" the Tories and banks were all too willing to dish out in the early 80s. The NCH estimates half of those claiming income support are having deductions made for poll tax arrears, fuel bills or to repay government loans from the Social Fund. To add insult to injury the number of home repossessions continues to rise. Over 100,000 adults and children are now in temporary accommodation in the Greater London area alone.

As an answer the Tories plan a new crack-down on "fraud and abuse" - not in the City of London but in the social security offices!

## After Strathclyde Elections...

# Is Labour or Militant the Way Forward?

By Dave Cartwright, Glasgow

**"History is littered with the corpses of would-be revolutionary groups who have run aground on the rock of ultra-leftism."**

*(Militant: Scotland - Perspectives and tasks 1991)*

In early 1992, the Militant tendency in Scotland broke with the Labour Party and launched Scottish Militant Labour (SML), which succeeded in winning four seats on Glasgow District Council and two seats on Strathclyde Regional Council. "Militant victory rocks Labour" was the *Glasgow Herald* headline in September when Christine McVicar won the first regional council seat for the SML in a by-election in Easterhouse, defeating the Labour candidate by 1791 votes to 941.

This was followed in October with a win by Willy Griffin in another Easterhouse seat but with a lower margin of victory. In a third by-election in Govan, SML did not win but received enough votes to split the Labour vote and allow the Scottish National Party (SNP) candidate to take the seat. Only six months earlier, Labour had won back the parliamentary seat from the SNP and yet the split in the Labour vote caused by the SML has given the SNP a temporary lease of life in the shape of a council seat. **It is a sad but true fact that many of the SML supporters are not concerned about Labour being defeated by the SNP because they consider the Labour Party to be little better than the Tories.**

### Role of Labour

Although the SML is a tiny force in Scotland, they do have a high profile in Glasgow and they have raised vital questions about the role of the Labour Party in the fight for socialism. Straight after Christine McVicar's election victory, SML leader, Tommy Sheridan announced that *"we are now appealing to all socialists within the Labour Party and the SNP to leave the sinking ship and join us."*

This is the logic of the so-called "Scottish Turn" - the establishment of an independ-

ent party - which was launched by Militant in 1992 and represents a complete break with the previous policy of the Militant tendency which had previously succeeded in establishing a significant force within the Labour and trade union movement.

**Should workers follow the advice of Tommy Sheridan and abandon the Labour Party? Such advice has been given by every sectarian organisation who declare themselves the real "alternative" to the Labour Party. It is rather like the flea denouncing the elephant.**

In fact the support for Labour continues to increase in Scotland as elsewhere in Britain given the relentless attack by the Tories on jobs, the NHS and other services. This question is not perhaps an academic one, because the Militant is planning to launch in the spring of 1993 an "open turn" in England and Wales. Opponents of the so-called Scottish Turn had predicted it would in reality be a British Turn and **the argument about the "special conditions" in Scotland, which supposedly justified standing against Labour, are now proven to be completely spurious.**

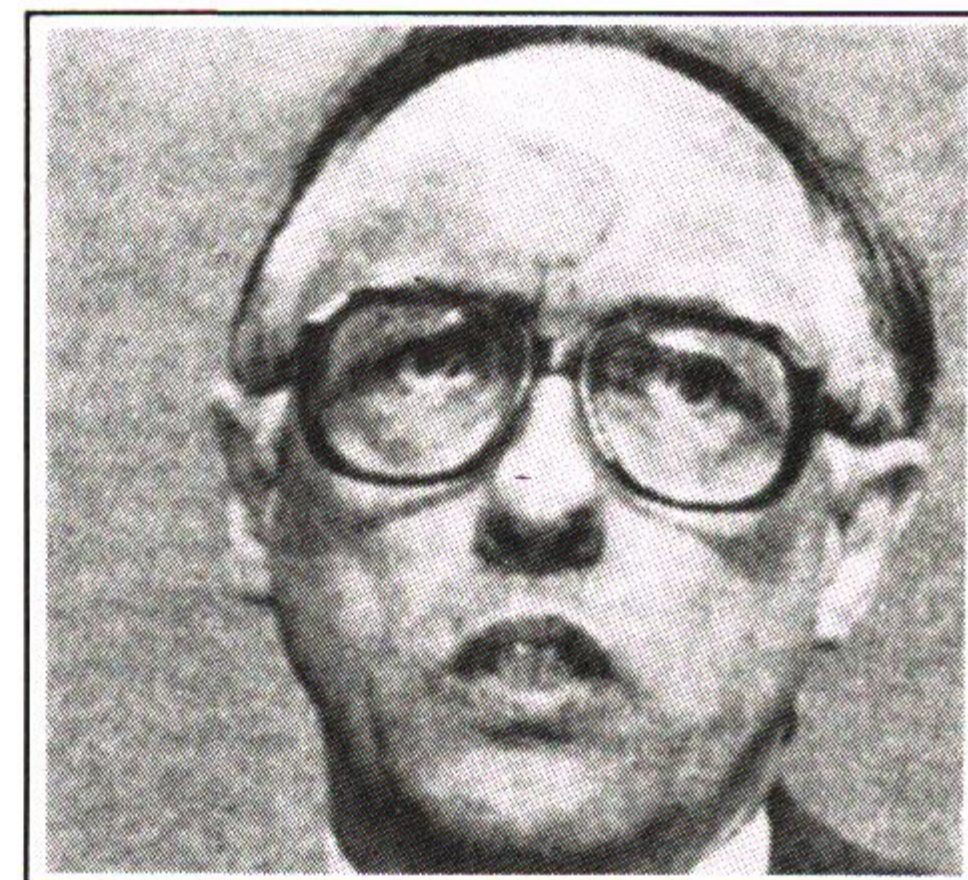
### Poverty and Neglect

The SML are convinced that their election victories vindicate their decision to launch an open organisation. The wins are significant, but they do not justify that conclusion at all. In Easterhouse, the SML successfully tapped into the anger and frustration felt by many people in the schemes. Easterhouse is one of the biggest housing schemes in Europe. It suffers from all the problems of neglect and poverty that typify housing schemes up and down Britain. The Labour Party councillors have failed to tackle any of the problems in the area and there are also widespread allegations of corruption in the past. Distrust of the Labour Regional Council was compounded further by their decision to push ahead with the hated poll tax. A member of my local Labour Party said after our last meeting that if he lived in that scheme he would have felt like voting for SML!

Under a right wing leadership in the Labour Party, the active base has been drastically

reduced. The Labour Party had very few activists in the campaign. The "leading lights" like Donald Dewar and Tom Clarke were drafted in to boost the campaign but only managed to show how out of touch they were with the real mood in the schemes. Under these conditions, the SML could capitalise on the frustration of a layer of workers in the area. The SML put forward radical demands including opposition to water privatisation. It shows that radical demands can win support despite the arguments of the right wing that Labour should adopt more "moderate" (i.e. non-socialist!) demands.

**Although the Militant puts forward radical demands they do not present a clear rounded-out socialist programme.** They limit themselves to a series of radical slogans. This is in stark contrast to the previous tradition of the Militant which always linked the fight for immediate demands with the need to transform society. In many ways the Militant is reducing itself to the level of community politics, with no clear link to the overall task of overthrowing capitalism. The fight against water privatisation is a major issue in Scotland today. A recent poll showed 87% against water



Donald Dewar

privatisation and even 77% of Tory voters against it. The SML have identified the importance of this issue and have tried to ensure they have the leading position in any campaign that develops. Hence, they have issued a leaflet in the name of their Glasgow councillors, announcing their "Hands Off Our Water" campaign. Opposition to water privatisation is clear but the Militant leaflet just contains simple agitation below a photo of Tommy Sheridan in his prison uniform. **The way that the SML has adopted an opportunistic approach is an inevitable result of their turn away from the labour movement and away from the importance of socialist theory.**

The Militant was determined to do well in the elections because their prestige was at stake. They have abandoned their position in Liverpool and have concentrated their forces in Glasgow. For gotten are the aims made clear in the past of big victories ahead in Liverpool. We

should not forget that when the Broad Left won five seats in the local elections last year a Liverpool spokesman for Militant predicted that the BL would win a majority on the council and that the official Labour Party was finished, it was "withering on the vine....the real Labour Party will rest with the rank and file." And again, "pathetic excuses that the official Labour Party was not first on the ballot paper in five out of six wards do not wash...next year they can put up Alan Ambers in all the wards and we will still win." (*Militant*, 14.6.91) This perspective was completely shattered last May. The Broad Left and the Independent Labour Party (a split off from the Broad Left) stood in 22 seats, in eight of them they were the sitting candidates. Yet they won only one seat! That is, they lost seven seats that they previously held. Worse still, they split the vote and let the Liberals in.

### Walton Defeat

The defeat of Lesley Mahmood was enormously symbolic. She was the candidate put up to defeat Labour's Peter Kilfoyle in the Walton by-election. Not only was she defeated with a derisory vote, but has now also lost her position on the council. This whole episode shows that Militant have totally misjudged the mood of the workers, both in Liverpool and nationally.

The Militant newspaper no longer concentrates on Liverpool but instead is now dominated by reports about Glasgow and Tommy Sheridan. Even then **it should be remembered that Militant supporters had more seats on Glasgow District Council when they were Labour Party members than they do now!**

Socialist Appeal is completely opposed to ultra-left adventures. As was predicted at the time, the so-called "temporary detour" of the Scottish Turn is turning out to be a detour over a cliff!

What were the arguments used by Militant a year ago for their adventure and how do the actual events compare to those arguments? They argued that the strength of nationalism in Scotland was one of the "special factors" requiring Militant to set up an open organisation in order to fight nationalism.

They argued that there would be a campaign of massive civil disobedience over the issue of devolution. As was pointed out at the time this was drastic overstatement of the real strength of feeling on the constitutional question. The SNP only obtained two seats at the general election, they are beset by internal division and the Scotland United campaign is running out of steam. The genuine desire for change in Scotland will be expressed through the class movements now developing rather than through the constitutional issue.

The Militant argued that they were setting up an open "organisation" which was not in fact a

"party"! Even if this could ever have been possible, the Militant has now openly dropped any pretence and declared themselves to be a party in Scotland. After his election victory, Willy Griffin began announcing what "our party" will be fighting for.

They also said that they would retain a pro-Labour stance and fight to defend every point of support within the Labour Party. Peter Taaffe,

Militant's editor even stated at a meeting in Govan in September 1991 that, "we never leave an organisation like the Labour Party. We are thrown out of it. We never leave voluntarily. That is a law almost for this tendency." How ironic that in the self-same constituency one year later, long-standing Militant supporter Willie Hamilton resigned his position as Chair of Govan Labour Party (in the middle of

## Militant and the Labour Party: LET'S TWIST AGAIN...

### No Exaggeration?

"It would be naive to expect that a Marxist party or organisation in Scotland would be capable of breaking the electoral grip of Labour, either now or in the foreseeable future. It would be dangerous to raise exaggerated expectations which could only lead to disillusionment."

(*Scotland - Perspectives and Tasks, produced by Militant in August 1991*)

"Tommy Sheridan went to the City Chambers (council building) in June. He went first to the provost's chair: "This is where Scottish Militant Labour will be in two years," he said."

*The Independent, July 2, 1992*

"Not only the Labour leaders, but every major political party in Scotland must now be viewing with trepidation the rise of SML in the deprived housing schemes of Glasgow."

*Alan McCoombes, Editor, Scottish Militant, MIR summer 1992.*

### Not a Party?

"From the outset it must be made clear there is no question of announcing the public formation of a new "party" That would suggest some permanent breach with Labour.

*Scotland - Perspectives and Tasks 1991*

"We were only 46 votes short of becoming Glasgow's official opposition party. Not bad for a party 12 weeks old."

*Tommy Sheridan, The Independent, 9.5.92*

### Tidal Wave of Nationalism?

"If the Tories scrape home at the next election, nationalism will rise up with a vengeance...belated concessions would be unlikely to spare the Tories from the wrath of the Scottish people."

"Already there is speculation in Scotland, partially exaggerated, but containing truth, of a crisis of Lithuanian proportions if the Tories win a fourth election."

*Scotland - Perspectives and Tasks 1991*

"I predict that the campaign around a Scottish Assembly will assume even greater political proportions than the campaign against the poll tax - in other words, mass civil disobedience to force a Tory government to grant an assembly..."

*Tommy Sheridan, New Statesman, September 1991*

"Yet several new factors have arisen in the situation since the general election which are likely to complicate the picture, and possibly even cut across the advance of the SNP, at least for a temporary period...Open civil war, leading to split within the SNP, is a distinct possibility in the foreseeable future."

*Alan McCoombes, MIR, Summer 1992*

### Only A Scottish Turn?

The founding of an open party "specifically relates to the position in Scotland...which in other areas of the country would be ultra-left."

*Scotland - Perspectives and Tasks 1991*

"The advocates of the Scottish turn allege the existence of specific conditions in Scotland, which do not apply elsewhere. The same argument about specific conditions in Liverpool was used only yesterday to justify the Walton turn and we predict that tomorrow, we will be told about special conditions in Wales, Birmingham, London and elsewhere to justify the same things."

*Document opposing the Scottish Turn, August 1991*

NB: Militant is now discussing extending the new turn to England and Wales. It is expected to be implemented this spring.

the regional council election campaign!) in order to declare support for Alan McCoombes, the SML candidate. The SML even organised a press conference around the issue for maximum impact.

The SML is attempting to sustain itself on a high level of media coverage largely achieved through stunts. They occupied the Edinburgh offices of the consultants investigating water privatisation. Then in December they occupied a room in Glasgow District Council chambers for a whole week, sleeping overnight in sleeping bags. The room was allocated to the SML for council business but required decorating.

**Official Opposition**

The SML refused to move because they claimed the Labour group had a secret plan not to let them back in after redecorating and would in fact put the SML in another room with the other parties. They also demanded to be made the official opposition to Labour in the council after one of the five Tories had the party whip withdrawn, thereby effectively leaving both the SML and the Tories with four council members.

**The SML have probably reached the peak of their electoral fortunes. Their forces are overstretched. That is why they are forced to concentrate themselves in parts of Glasgow.**

They will find it very difficult to emulate their early election victories, especially given the changed mood across Britain following the demonstrations and marches against pit closures in September and October, which will be reflected in a turn towards the Labour Party and the trade unions.

**Ultra-Leftism**

Despite the past role of Militant, it is clear they have degenerated into an ultra-left grouping. Unfortunately, there are already 57 varieties of sectarian groups on the fringes of the labour movement and we do not need any more.

**What we do need is the development of a strong Marxist current within the labour movement.** The working class has the power to change society.

In the course of the struggle workers will increasingly look for socialist ideas. They will fight to transform the traditional organisations of the working class - the trade unions and the Labour Party.

Marxists should fight side by side with these workers. Through their own experiences workers will see that capitalism offers no long term solutions to the problems they face. The power of socialist ideas combined with the strength of the labour movement will provide an invincible force for the socialist transformation of society in Britain.

# After Police Ban Demo, Labour Party Fights On!

WALSALL is an industrial Black Country town a few miles north of Birmingham with a sizeable Asian community. Like the rest of the West Midlands it has been hit hard by the recession. Wages are notoriously low.

Because of the rise in organised racist and fascist activity: the reappearance of The Flag on our streets; a National Front candidate standing in the general election; an orchestrated British National Party march and a series of ugly incidents regularly reported in the local press including Ku Klux Klan cross burnings - the issue was taken up in our Borough Labour Party.

Months of building for our march and rally followed. We sent speakers into trades union and trades council meetings, distributed thousands of leaflets and our Labour Party delegates set up a stall at the party conference to highlight the local problem and get support.

**March Banned**

Despite the march itself having been banned by the Walsall police, the afternoon rally was an unprecedented success. An audience of 800 would-be demonstrators flocked to the town hall. From the decorated splendour of the platform, festooned with Labour Party, trades union and trades council banners speeches from Sid Platt, Nalگو District Officer and regional Trades Council chair and John Tomlinson, our Euro MP were warmly greeted. Local and national Labour Party MPs spoke alongside anti Asylum Bill campaigner Kevin Fernandes, editor of The Struggle and a spokesperson from the Indian Workers' Association.

A standing ovation was given to guest speaker, Sean Coughlan, from nearby Littleton Colliery. The closure of Littleton would swell the growing 20,000 already on the dole in Walsall. As a

miner speaking publicly for the first time, he made the most rousing attack on the Tories' "unemployment policy" and its direct responsibility for the growth in racist ideas.

In the words of one Nalگو steward on the day: "We haven't had a Labour Party event like this in our town for years!"

The rally was further inspired by the appearance on the platform of three local councillors who represent constituents in the "no go" area. They had just been released from police custody having been arrested for marching with the Labour Party banner the banned route in a gesture of defiance. These three councillors were arrested for walking part of the high street of the area they were elected to represent. Yet at the same time the police allowed a rag-tag army of fascist thugs to hand out leaflets accusing us of being "queers, squatters and drug addicts!"

**Real Struggle**

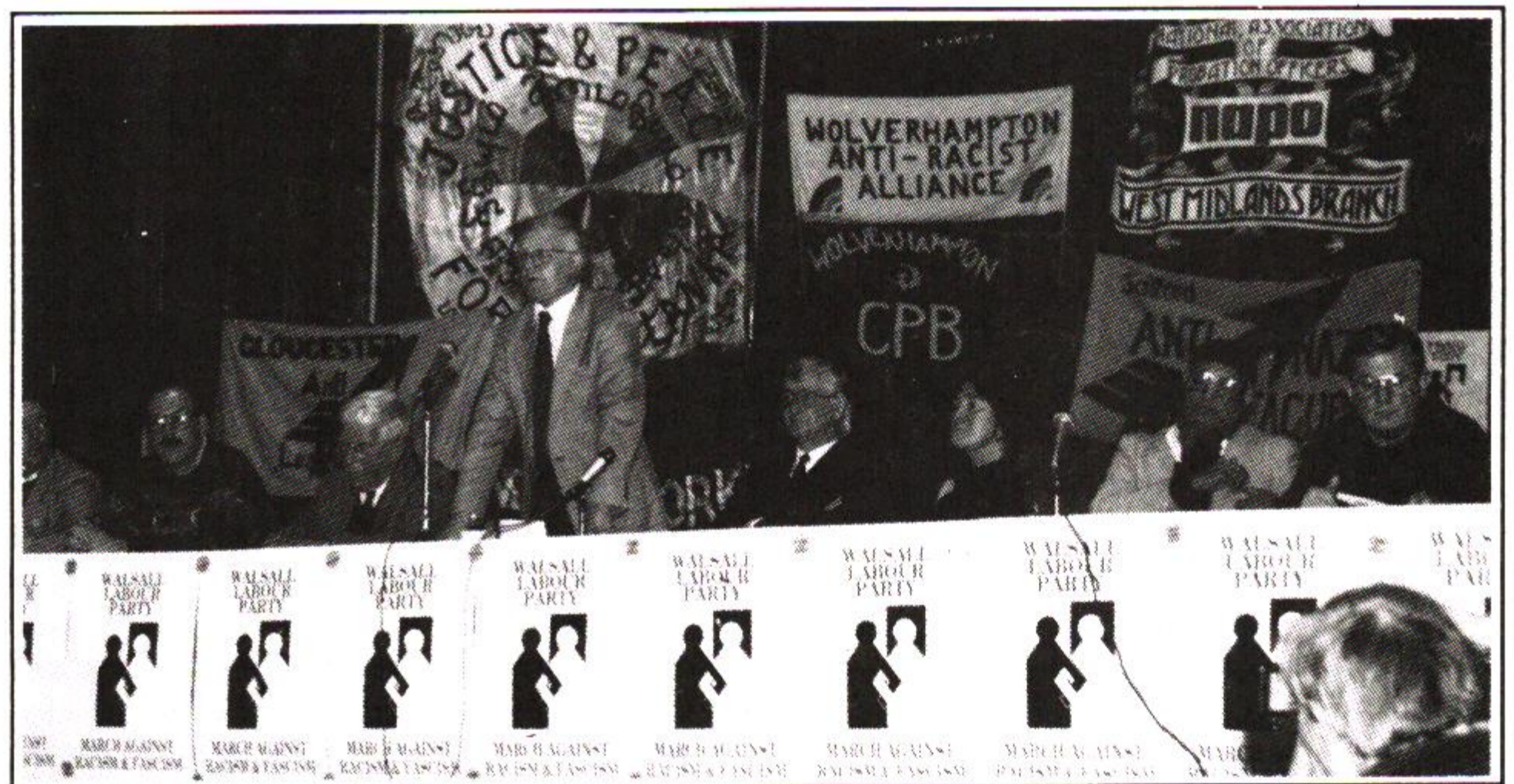
The police action on the day has been perceived by the Borough Labour Party as a threat to civil liberties; at best an acceptance that the fascists have created a "no go" area and at worst, police sympathy for the views of fascist organisations. We are calling for the superintendent responsible to be removed from his post.

In the light of continuing BNP and NF activity in Walsall, further campaigns are planned by the Borough Labour Party including another march along the original route. There can be no "no go" areas in Walsall or anywhere.

But the real anti fascist struggle lies in linking the fight against fascist and racist ideas with a coordinated fight in our trades unions against the bankrupt Tory policies of privatisation, cuts in services, low pay and redundancies carrying the twin diseases of destitution and despair which are the breeding grounds for the fascists.

These ideas were clearly explained at a Socialist Appeal readers meeting where a comrade from France explained the growth of Le Pen's racist party and Socialist Appeal editor Alan Woods showed the need to link the anti-fascist struggle with the fight of the miners, the fight to defend the NHS and the fight of all working people.

**Pat Jones, Walsall Borough Labour Party delegate, TGWU steward (personal capacity.)**





# A LEGACY OF EMPIRE

## A BACKGROUND TO THE IMMIGRATION LAWS

**Part of the campaign to oppose pit closures, stop health service and local authority cuts, and end unemployment, must be a campaign against racism and the policies of divide and rule. The Tories will attempt to split and confuse the movement against them.**

The tabling of the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Bill is part of this strategy and continues a long tradition of racist immigration policies. Britain's legislation will be a model for the rest of the EC countries. Essential to combatting this, is an understanding of the connections between colonialism, racism and successive governments' immigration laws.

In the period following the Second World War, the industrialised nations experienced a massive expansion in their economies, due to the rapid growth in world trade. Massive population movements came as a consequence of Western Europe's (temporary) thirst for labour power. Millions of people were uprooted and transported to the metropolitan world.

In Britain, as in most European countries, serious labour shortages began to occur in key sectors of the economy. Other European countries were able to recruit sufficient "contract labour";

### British Empire

Britain, on the other hand, turned to its "Empire", where, after over three centuries of plunder, there was a reservoir of unemployed labour available. Britain had bled its colonies to the bone. Massive profits were made from the triangular slave trade which provided the wealth in Europe to fire the industrial revolution.

The plantation economy of the Caribbean provided the "white gold", sugar. Other countries were forced into providing a single crop or mineral to suit Britain's interests. These colonies then imported British goods; in 1784, half of Britain's exports went to the colonies.

In the Caribbean, the freed slaves still faced miserable conditions; they were followed by half a million destitute poor from India who worked the plantations in British Guiana and Trinidad as indentured labourers - a system whose conditions resembled slavery.

In India itself, merchants accumulated enormous riches by force of arms. It was, in fact, during the brutal and rapacious rule of the East India Company that the word "loot" entered the English language (from the Hindi).

India was transformed from a country of agriculture and manufacturing, into an agricultural

possession, exporting raw materials, its economy distorted, its industry (eg. textiles) destroyed, in the service of its colonial masters.

### A history of exploitation

Economic exploitation was the root cause of poverty and starvation. Africa, in the last ten years of the nineteenth century, was carved up by the European powers, who ruled over 100 million square miles of territory, and 100 million people. The effect was to distort the continent's economy further.

In pre-independence Ghana "In a country whose output of cocoa is the largest in the world, there was not a single chocolate factory." (Africa must unite, K.Nkrumah). In Nigeria in 1948, out of 8 million children under 16, over 7.3 million received no education at all. The colonial peoples made a massive "contribution", with their lives, to British economic and political power. As Winston Churchill put it, in a speech to Caribbean sugar planters, (quoted by George Padmore) in 1939, "Our possession of the West Indies, like that of India...gave us the strength, the support, but especially the capital, the wealth...which enabled us to come through the great struggle of the Napoleonic Wars, the keen competition of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and enabled us...to lay the foundation of that commercial and financial leadership which...enabled us to make our great position in the world."

There had been a continuous black presence in Britain for 500 years, mainly consisting of servant-slaves from Africa, the Caribbean and Indian sub-continent. There were about 10,000

blacks in Britain in the latter part of the eighteenth century. However, the first post-War black migrants came to Britain after 1948, firstly from the Caribbean and latterly from the Indian sub-continent.

The Tory Government of the mid-1950's, of which Enoch Powell was a member, actively encouraged private companies and public corporations like the NHS and London Transport, to solve the problem of labour shortages by recruiting from the Caribbean and Indian sub-continent.

The economic boom meant that the indigenous workforce could usually find employment in the better-paid industries. The manual sectors of the public services, textiles, and catering were in particular short of labour.

### Boom comes to an end

An obvious advantage to British capitalism was that black migrant labour was cheaper and easy to recruit. The immigrants from the ex-colonies had little choice but to take up the offers from the "Mother country", if they were to escape from the never-ending circle of poverty.

Many blacks and Asians came to Britain dreaming of a welcoming society, which would bring rewards for hard work, and a bright future. There were promises of jobs, decent housing, and a "good British education". However, Britain's new immigrants were placed in the worst jobs, that offered little or no future, and with the poorest wages. They could only find accommodation in the most run-down housing. Despite this, there were hopes that things would improve, and consequently, immigration from the Caribbean and the Indian sub-continent continued to increase in the 1950's and early 60's.

In the aftermath of race riots in Nottingham and Notting Hill in 1958, the Tory Government announced the flow of migrants into Britain would be curbed. The Tories unleashed the first major legislative attack on blacks and Asians from the so-called "New Commonwealth" (ie. Commonwealth countries except Australia, Canada, and New Zealand).



Asylum seekers are often held in detention on arrival

The post-War boom had begun to slow down, and with it Britain's need for migrant labour. Backbench Tory MPs began to talk of the "immigrant problem". The prejudices of Empire were evident in closed discussions in the Tory Cabinet in the 1950's.

Harold Macmillan states in his memoirs that early in 1955 Churchill had proposed "Keep Britain white" as "a good slogan for the Election." Now, the prejudices were expressed for public consumption. In 1962, less than ten years after the main influx of black immigrants into Britain, the Tories passed the first Commonwealth Immigrants Act, which placed severe restrictions on black immigration for the first time. The 1962 Act made blacks and Asians second class citizens.

Before the Act, Commonwealth citizens, unlike "foreign nationals", could enter Britain freely. Now, Commonwealth citizens and UK citizens, whose passports were not issued in the UK, had to obtain an employment voucher to enter the country. There were three categories of voucher, A, B, and C. Immigration from the "New Commonwealth" declined. In 1963, 28,678 New Commonwealth citizens entered the UK. In 1965, the "C" voucher (for those who did not have a specific job to come to, nor a recognised skill or qualification) was withdrawn. In 1967, the number of New Commonwealth immigrants who entered the UK was down to 4,716.

The early 1960's saw Britain's fortunes sliding. The blacks who lived in the inner-city areas, where conditions were worsening, could easily be pointed to as the cause of the hardships. Scare stories of blacks "flooding" the country, and "draining" the already hard-pressed social services softened the ground for British capitalism's age-old policy of divide and rule.

At first, the official Tory leadership, anxious not to jeopardise its interests in the ex-colonies, were careful not to be seen to be openly pursuing a racist policy. They said the Act was to promote racial harmony. They knew the voucher system would restrict the number of black immigrants, and immigration officials would use their position to stop black migrants. The Tories found it convenient to back the

racist campaigns of some of their supporters in the localities. In the run up to the 1964 General Election, using the resources at their disposal, they focussed the nation's attention on the Smethwick constituency, Birmingham, where the Tory candidate, Peter Griffiths, had started up an openly racist campaign. The slogan "If you want a nigger neighbour, vote Labour", originated from Griffiths' campaign. Griffiths won the seat, against a national "swing" to Labour.

**Racist legislation introduced**

Racist attacks continued throughout the mid-60's, but the real turning point came in 1968, with Enoch Powell's "rivers of blood" speech. He claimed that the whites "*found themselves made strangers in their own country. They found their wives unable to find hospital beds in childbirth, their children unable to obtain school places, their homes and neighbourhoods changed beyond recognition.*" Powell's speech was very timely. It coincided with the backsliding of the Labour Government, policies of wage restraint, devaluation and spending cuts, and the demoralising of those who had voted Labour into power.

Powell's rabble-rousing speech paved the way for the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1968 which was rushed through Parliament in three days, in order to restrict the entry into Britain of East Africans, the Kenyan Asians in particular. The British Government had given an undertaking when Kenya achieved independence in 1963, that those who retained their British citizenship, could, if things became difficult in east Africa, settle in the UK.

The 1968 Act made the free right of entry open only to holders of UK passports, who were born in the UK, or whose parents or grandparents were born here. The Kenyan Asians' migration to Britain became subject to a strict quota system. This Act paved the way for more vicious legislation.

The Immigration Act 1971, passed by the Heath Tory Government, totally overshadowed all previous controls. The Act deprived thousands of black and Asian families of the right to settle in Britain, while for immigrants from

Australia, Canada and New Zealand (mostly white), it became easier to enter and settle. The 1971 Act gave the "right of abode" in Britain to people it describes as "patrials", who were basically those citizens of the "UK and Colonies" who have that citizenship by birth adoption, naturalisation, or registration in the UK, or whose parents or grandparents achieved their citizenship in one of the above ways. Also included, were those UK citizens who were ordinarily resident in the UK for at least five years, or were born in the UK, or who were spouses of "patrials" (provided they were also Commonwealth citizens).

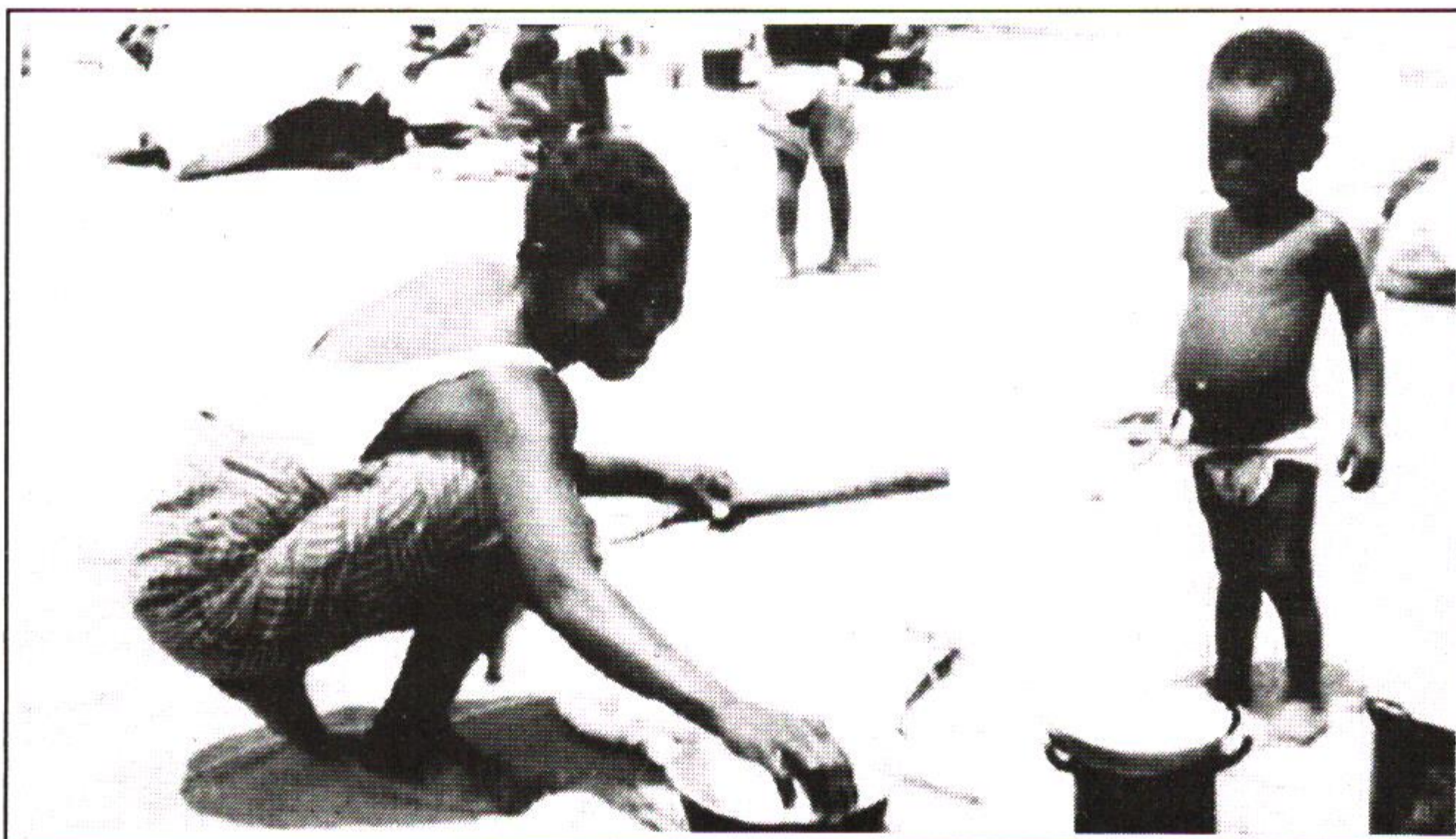
The 1971 Act meant that all "foreign nationals" and all Commonwealth citizens (including those who were UK citizens) who were not "patrial", needed permission to enter Britain. They became subject to entry by work permit, and had no right to settle. Many migrants were put at the mercy of employers having to be "model employees" in order to have work permits renewed, and avoid deportation. The Act also gave the police wide powers of arrest without a warrant, and the power to detain without a trial for an indefinite period, anyone suspected of being an "illegal immigrant".

**Rise of Fascism**

Again, in 1972, Enoch Powell hit the headlines, this time over the entry of the Ugandan Asians, who had been expelled by Idi Amin. Powell stated that "*when he looks into the eyes of Asia, the Englishman comes face to face with those who will dispute with him the possession of his native land.*" The National Front, previously a minor force, began to grow in strength at this time. They campaigned in the decaying inner-city areas for the repatriation of blacks, and gained publicity by picketing the airports when the Ugandan Asians arrived. A movement in the industrial field by the trade unions cut across this developing racial tension. It gave an alternative expression to the burning discontent. The mass opposition to the Tory Government's Industrial Relations Act meant the racists had to hold back till a more opportune time came their way.

The incoming Labour Government of 1974 continued to use the 1971 Immigration Act as a basis for its policy, despite a 1976 Labour Party Conference decision to oppose the Act. In May 1976, the Press unleashed a massive racist campaign, aimed at detonating an explosion of racist violence. As in 1968, the backdrop was a Labour Government carrying out policies of cuts in public spending, and wage controls, and now presiding over rising unemployment.

A racist press campaign was launched against two Asian families that had been expelled from Malawi. The West Sussex County Council had housed the families (13 people) in a 4-star hotel, as no other accommodation was available. The Press took this incident and used it to give the impression that immigrants were living in luxury, while everyone else suffered. The Sun blazed the headline, "The £600-a-week immigrants", and then followed a few days later with a column titled "What you think about those £600-a-week immigrants."



Refugees fleeing war, drought and famine are often turned away

It did not stop there. Enoch Powell "leaked" the Hawley Report, which contained scare stories of a "tidal wave" of immigrants about to engulf the country. Powell talked of gun battles in the streets between blacks and whites, and of white residents in the inner-city areas finding Belfast a more enviable place to live. This concerted campaign brought about the inevitable result of racist attacks. Three Asians, two in East London, and one in Southall, were the victims of racial murders.

### Labour Movement fights back

The summer of 1976 was the turning point for both the racists, and the black and Asian community. The racists, particularly the National Front, were emboldened by the successes they achieved on the basis of the hysteria whipped up by the media. But 1976 also brought dramatic changes in the mood amongst blacks and Asians. The murder of Gurdip Chaggar Singh in Southall, brought about a near uprising in the area. Thousands of Asian youth besieged the police station, demanding that action be taken to find the murderers.

That year also saw the organising of the first national Labour Party demonstration against racism (on the initiative of the LPYS), and the real start of activity by the labour movement on the question.

The whole period of 1977-78, and the first part of 1979, saw a series of attacks by the racists and counter-attacks by the black and Asian community. The National Front received a bloody nose at their Lewisham march in 1977, though later they continued to mount campaigns. The theme of the Lewisham march was to make blacks the scapegoats for literally all crime in the inner-cities.

In 1978, with a Labour Government still failing to solve the country's social and economic problems, Margaret Thatcher initiated another racist campaign. "People are really rather afraid that this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture," she said in a Granada TV interview. She also said in the same statement that they wanted to bring back to the Conservative Party those voters that had been lost to the National Front. There were three racist murders in eight months in east London that year.

The General Election campaign of 1979, again brought the issue of immigration into the public eye, with the Tories promising further controls, including a quota system for entry, particularly from the Indian sub-continent. In the Tories' Election Manifesto, immigration policies came under the heading "Law and Order".

Every year migration from Britain exceeds immigration. Very few black immigrants actually enter this country. They are usually dependents who wait months or years before even being interviewed by an immigration official in their country of origin. All members of the family over the age of eight, are interviewed by the official, and asked questions about their home or village. Any discrepancy in their answers may cause the official to turn down their application. The Tories immigration policy since 1979, has progressively attacked the rights of blacks and Asians, con-

tinuing the traditions from the 1962 Act. Immigration rules were implemented in 1983 which meant that husbands and fiances of British women entering the country had to show that a marriage was genuine and not for the "primary purpose" of immigration. When the Government was found guilty of sex discrimination, they remedied this by extending the "primary purpose" rule to cover all foreign born partners, and thus discriminating against black men and women "equally". In 1985, at a time when Tamils were facing death and torture in Sri Lanka, the British government implemented a regulation requiring that Sri Lankans travelling to the UK obtain a visa beforehand. In 1986, visa requirements for visitors were placed on people from five "black"



**Blacks in Britain and the US have faced the brunt of unemployment and police harassment resulting in riots like in Los Angeles**

"New Commonwealth" countries. In 1987, the Tories began using a car ferry, the Earl William, as an immigration detention centre. This practice, with its disgusting conditions, was only stopped when the ferry broke from its moorings in the hurricane of October that year. The Nationality Act of 1981 and Immigration Act of 1988 are further examples of the tightening of the screw as far as the black and Asian community are concerned. The Nationality Act ended the centuries-old right to British citizenship by birth in Britain. The 1988 Act restricted rights to appeal against deportation, and restricted the previous right of dependents of Commonwealth citizens (who were settled here before 1973) to claim welfare benefits.

### Inner City Riots

The 1980's also saw massive upheavals in the inner-city areas where black and Asian youth in particular were facing the brunt of unemployment and police harassment. In Brixton and Southall, in 1981, and in Brixton and Tottenham, in 1985, there were explosions of anger, with violent street battles with the police - the result, not of "cultural misunderstandings", but of bitter experiences over many

years. The underlying causes of these upheavals still remain and fester.

We are in the middle of the longest post-War recession. The issue of immigration will be brought back again and again by the racists, as a diversion from the real cause of social deprivation. The Asylum and Immigration Appeals Bill is such an example. In November 1991, Home Office Minister Peter Lloyd found it necessary to state that, "We can't have all of Africa and Asia coming to London." (!) As well as obviously affecting refugees, the Bill if implemented, abolishes the existing right to appeal against refusal of entry of visitors, students intending to study for less than six months, prospective students and their dependents. This will affect all blacks and Asians, and their friends and relatives from abroad who may wish to visit them.

We are witnessing increasing racial attacks, (there have been eight racist murders in Britain this year) and the resurgence of lunatic neo-fascist groups on a European-wide scale. While the neo-fascists in Britain have nowhere near the same base of support as their mentors in the 1930's in Germany and Italy (nor even similar support to their co-thinkers in mainland Europe) these groups must be combatted by the labour movement.

The support for these neo-fascists waned during the boom of the 1980's; the Tories' own anti-black policies, and banging of the patriotic drum, would also account for some of this fall in fascist activity. However, the permanent crisis of unemployment in Britain, which continued even through the boom, provides a basis for a continuous, although small, support for these thug elements. The onset of recession has resulted in the latest upturn in their size.

A socialist alternative is needed. Black and Asian workers and youth need to link up with the best activists in the labour movement, to ensure that the blame for society's ills is put squarely on the shoulders of the Tories, the banks, and the monopolies.

The labour movement needs to combat the scapegoating of blacks, and instead build unity between black and white workers. Racism, with its beginnings in the slave trade and colonial exploitation, is completely bound up with capitalism and the Tories' "free market" system. The Tories are ridden with crises, and must be pushed out of office. Forcing the withdrawal of the Asylum Bill must be part of this campaign. An incoming Labour government would need to implement a socialist plan of production, if it is to end the poverty on which racism breeds. Such a government would act as an example to workers in other countries. Part of its programme must also be the repeal of the repressive immigration laws.

The home policy of a government is intimately bound up with its foreign policy. The direct military and political rule over the colonies and Empire has been replaced post-War with economic domination of the "Third world" countries. A socialist government would build socialist movements internationally, and end the centuries of exploitation of human and natural resources.

**Kevin Fernandes**

# 1992 And All That

*Billy Whizz takes a look at the year's ups and downs.*

## January

Newspaper ads carried pictures of miners and introduced everyone to **"one of Britain's most successful businessmen."** The upbeat hype from British Coal explained how the miners had **"smashed every British and European record for coal production"** and that the coal industry was **"one of Britain's most powerful assets."** Hmmm. President Bush achieved a first by becoming the first world leader to throw up on TV, during a state visit to Japan. Much of the world was left even sicker at the thought that for 45 minutes, VP Dan Quayle (that's with an "e") was in charge of the planet's destiny. At Stansted airport, Bob Geldof was arrested at machine gun point after a charity flight to Africa was delayed on the runway for two hours - Geldof had remonstrated with the airport authorities in his normal courteous manner. T&G general secretary Bill Morris who was with him complained: **"I felt safer in Morocco."**

Meanwhile, Walworth Road investigated a number of Birmingham Labour Parties, after tales of infiltration, vote rigging, phantom delegates etc. Sounds familiar - except this time the accused was the EETPU. Birmingham Labour Party members were soon seen sporting badges which declared: **"I am not, nor ever have been, an electrician."**

## February

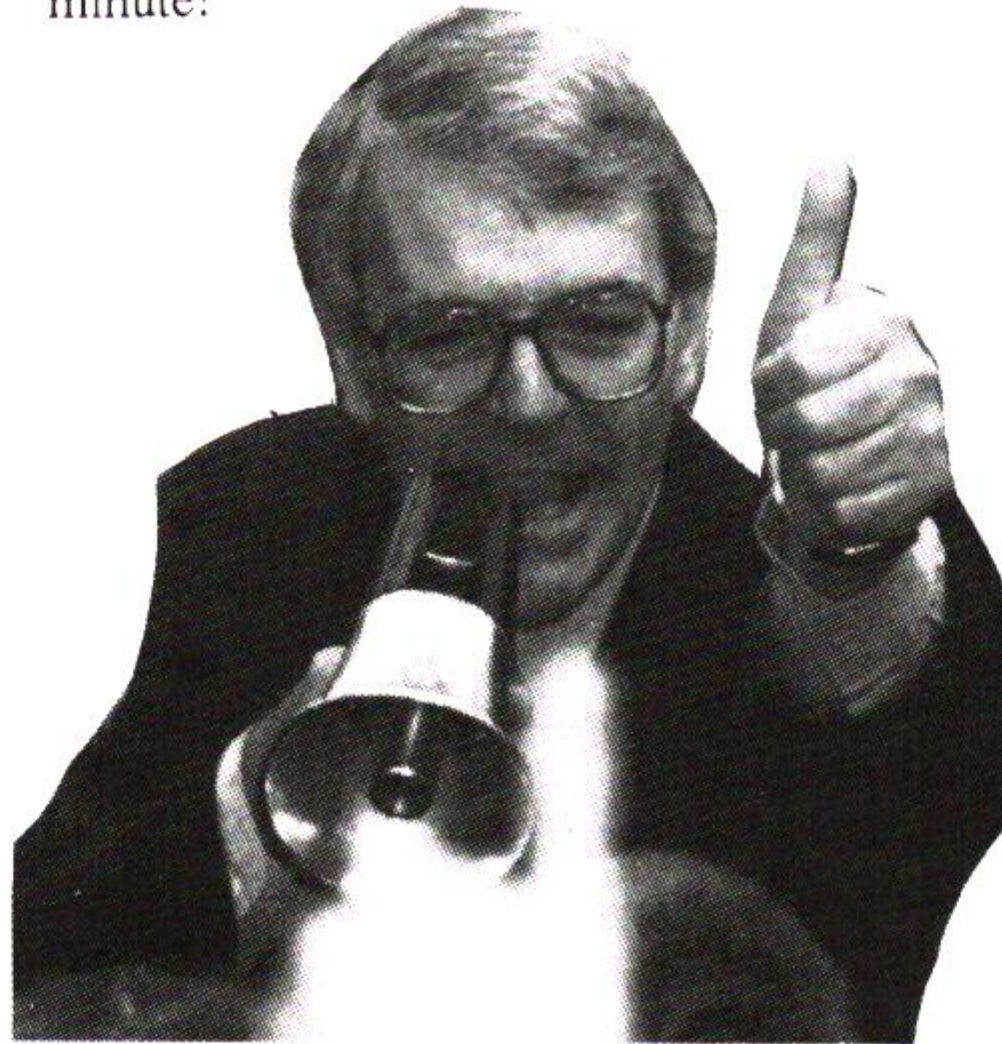
The election war hotted up with the announcement of an April poll. As market researchers reported a surge towards Labour, the *Financial Times* reported a **"historically high level of cash contributions from supporters"** for the Tory party. One of the top donations was £130,000 from United Biscuits - who after all must be crackers.

## March

On the stump the Tories got increasingly panicky as the polls showed them neck and neck with Labour. Kenneth Baker wheeled out the old racist chestnut, predicting darkly that if Labour got in there would be **"a very substantial inflow"** of immigrants. The Tories on the other hand would be keeping everybody out including refugees from war torn Bosnia. The Sunday Times meanwhile took a break from reality and carried a big splash on **KINNOCK AND THE KREMLIN**, insinuating that this well

known revolutionary was in the pocket of the communists.

Major took to touring the country with his soap box and was greeted with mass adulation in places such as Bolton, telling the country that once he was back in No10 people **"will invest in that new house, that new car, that new consumer durable."** He also warned of a **"Nightmare on Kinnock Street"**, that a Labour government would mean mass unemployment, industry closing down, economy in crisis, chaos over the ERM, more homes repossessed....hey, wait a minute!



## April

Dancing in the streets throughout the country as the first issue of *Socialist Appeal* is published. It joins the *Financial Times* in calling for a Labour government. However, the Tories slither in with a much reduced majority. Labour gained an extra 40 seats, while the SNP - despite much chest-beating from the nationalists (and others) - lost two seats. A triumphant Major declared: **"We have got a stack of new ideas to take the government closer to the people..."** Given their current record we can only presume this "stack of ideas" was written on the back of a packet of Raffles.

## May

The first month of the new Tory regime was celebrated with the Canary Wharf fiasco. When this great white elephant was opened in 1987, the then environment minister Michael Portillo sneered: **"Now the whingers and sceptics about the success of this venture in private enterprise will have to shut up."** Ha, ha, ha.

## June

Russia slid deeper into crisis with dire warnings of starvation next winter. Channel 4's Video Diary programme spoke to Russians queuing for food. One remarked: **"In the past we fought for democracy. Now we fight for bread."**

In Israel Labour swept to power reflecting the workers' aspirations for long awaited policies of reform and peace. They're still waiting.

## July

The Duchess of York caused a storm by baring her toes to the world, courtesy of the Sun and Mirror. The Queen was even rude enough some months later to suggest it was an annus horribilus - certainly it wasn't the best thing to have to look at over breakfast but that's an unkind thing for a Queen to say. However, the row over Fergies frolics obscured the real news that was taking place behind closed doors. A letter, later leaked to the Guardian, from the DTI to the Transport Minister, alerted them to the plan to close 30 pits, adding: **"You will appreciate the sensitivity of these estimates, and I should be grateful if this letter could be treated on a strictly need to know basis."** Obviously the miners, Britain's 'most successful businessmen', didn't need to know.





*August*

The government began its first step on a road paved with banana skins. Cabinet Minister David Mellor, resplendent in Chelsea strip, took up the new national pastime of toe-sucking with an unemployed actress. John Major gave reassuring statements about Mellor - the same sort of ones he's now saying about Lamont. Back in the real world, mass strikes rocked Greece, to be met by the worst violence seen in the country since the dictatorship of the generals in the early 1970s.

*September*

Space on window ledges was at a premium on September 16th, as Black Wednesday rocked the nation. The pound went into freefall and Lamont jacked up interest rates, firstly to 12% then to 15% in just over an hour or two in a failed bid to deter raiding financial speculators. As the mass ranks of the middle class began to take up arms, Lamont bottled out and dropped rates again. These yo-yo tactics cost the country an estimated £3.5 billion (and rising) and left the pound devalued by 12%. Taking a break from its normal daily fascination with the Mellor affair, the Sun's front page declared the next day: **"Now we've all been screwed by the cabinet!"**

In the world of football, Stuttgart were ordered to replay Leeds after it was discovered they brought on more non-German substitutes than they were allowed under European football rules, which prompted the refrain: **"What's the difference between Stuttgart and the Bank of England? Stuttgart's got more foreign reserves."**

*October*

The miners - and the country as a whole - arise! News breaks of the proposed 31 pit closures, and a small tremor is sent through society. On two separate occasions, both within days of each other, the trade union

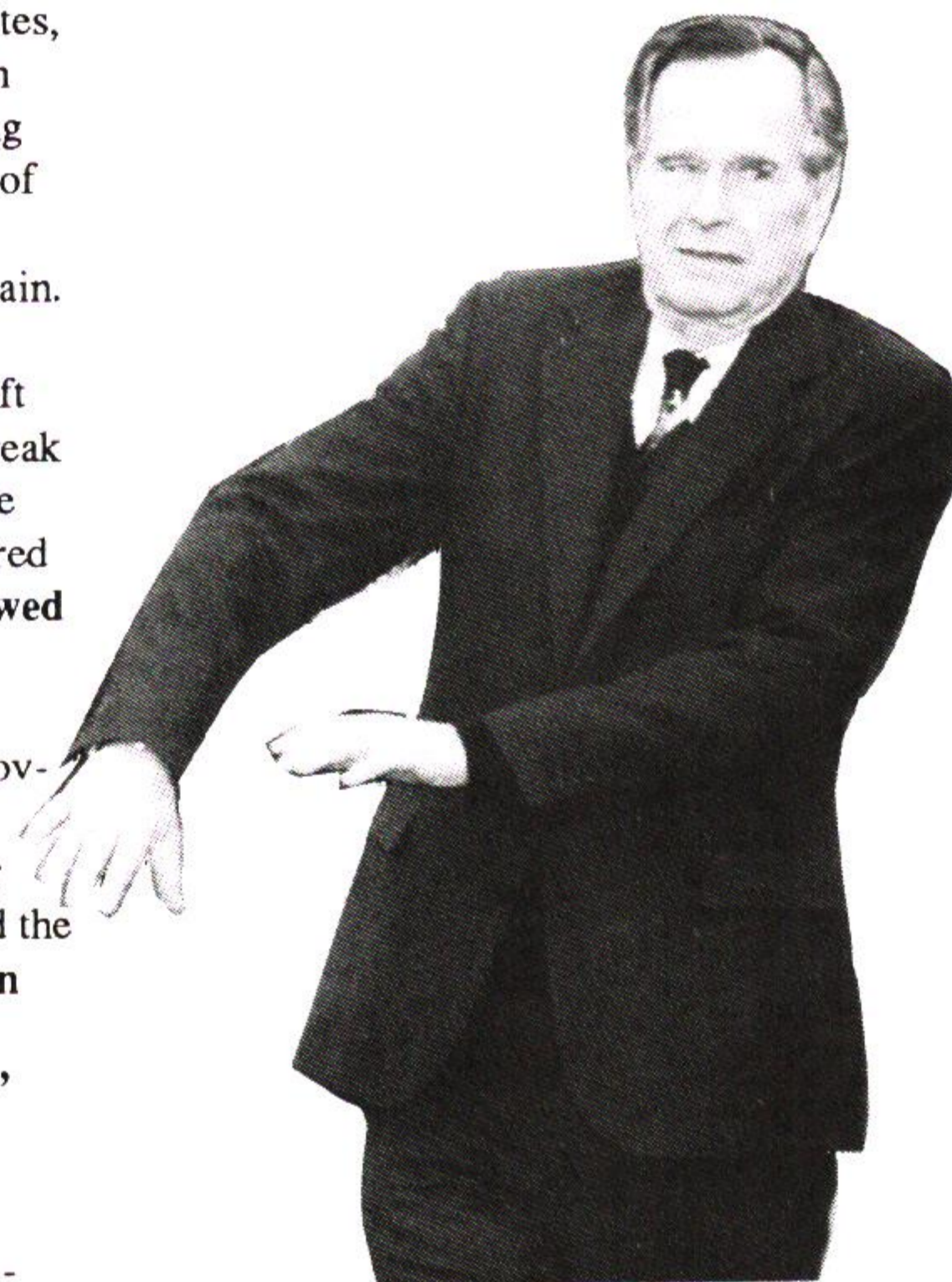
movement mobilises more than a quarter of a million onto the streets in mass protest. An editorial in the Times laments: **"John Major has achieved the impossible - he has united the country behind Arthur Scargill."**

Tory backbenchers get infected by the new mood, with Winston Churchill leading the revolt. But far from fighting them on the beaches, he and others refuse at the first hurdle and help bail the government out. Match postponed.

*November*

By now the government wasn't just slipping up now and then, but appeared to be using a giant banana skin as a skateboard as it careered towards the Maastricht vote. But help was on hand from Captain Ashdown, who will never be forgiven for standing by his principles when he should have been putting the boot in.

A new row erupted immediately over who gave permission to sell arms to a place called Iraq - you know, the country we were supposedly at war with. Scientists are now studying a new form of amnesia that only afflicts national leaders who deal with Arab states. It first struck Ronald Reagan who couldn't remember whether he knew about Oliver North and the Irangate affair. Now Major can't seem to recall when exactly he first knew that we were flogging arms to Saddam.



In the US meanwhile, a traditional event involving mudslinging, insults and lies - more commonly known as the presidential elections - was in full swing. At a Republican rally in Detroit, Bush explained why he called Al Gore, the Democrat VP candidate, "Mr Ozone." He said: **"This guy is so far off in the environmental extreme, we'll be up to our neck in owls and out of work for every American."** No, the US public didn't know what on earth he was blathering on about either, and voted for the Democrats. Other crucial issues raised during the election debates included whether VP Dan Quayle knew how to spell potato (which he didn't).

*December*

With Christmas approaching some cynics suggested that charities should be set up to help those in need. How about Lamontathon and Queen Aid: the former to help our impoverished chancellor pay off legal bills run up getting shot of Ms Whiplash (he's got a problem with his credit card so all donations in cash please), and the latter to help out a poor old pensioner whose house got burned down.

*Who knows what 1993 will bring? The Nobel Peace Prize for Slobodan Milosevic? Norman Lamont to be in credit? News printed in The Sun? Sound's far fetched but if 1992 is anything to go by, I'll believe anything.*

# World Economic Prospects For 1993

## Recession or Recovery?

1992 was "annus horribilus" (a horrible year) not just for the British monarchy but also for the world capitalist economy. The recession rolled on for another year against all the optimistic forecasts of the economic "experts" made at the beginning of last year. In the end world output was up just 1.25% in 1992, hardly better than the 0.9% recorded in 1991, supposedly "the year of recession."

Contrary to the general opinion of the "experts", Socialist Appeal had forecast continued recession in 1992. "Just as the 1982-90 boom was extended partly because the major economies were at different stages in the trade cycle, so the following recession of 1990-2 has been extended, it seems that a proper recovery will be postponed until 1993." (Socialist Appeal, July 1992)

It was the Anglo-Saxon economies of the USA, UK, Scandinavia and Australasia that first went into a downturn from the summer of 1990 onwards. Europe, led by Germany, and Japan continued to motor on. However, the weight of the huge debt built up under the artificially extended boom of the 1980s finally strangled growth there too, before the Anglo-Saxon economies could recover. In

the second half of 1992, both Japan and Germany had absolute falls in production, not just a slowdown. Only South-east Asia experienced any significant growth in 1992.

It looks as though expansion will be only marginally better in 1993, with world output probably rising no more than 1.5%. This expansion, however, suggests the beginning of a recovery out of the world recession into a sluggish boom that may last for the next few years. The recovery will be led by the US and the other Anglo-Saxon economies, which could grow by between 1.5 and 3% in 1993.

### Output Lower

World output will be lower because Japan and Germany will be at the deepest point in their recession, with little or no growth in output at all in their economies. Profits are expected to rise 10 - 15% in the US and the UK but fall by about the same amount in Japan and Germany.

The US economy is already growing at over 2% a year and by the second half of 1993 is likely to be expanding at 3% a year. It remains the largest economy in the world and also the largest market for the other Anglo-Saxon economies, including the UK. The UK and the Scandinavian economies were forced to devalue their currencies against the German mark during 1992 and break with the European Community's

Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) which obliged members to keep their currencies valued closely to the German mark. The German Bundesbank kept its interest rates high in order to try and control inflation and spending in Germany. This policy meant high rates for other economies in deep recession. Eventually the pressure was too great and Finland, the UK, Sweden, and Norway all devalued and lowered interest rates. Ironically this will allow these economies to begin a limited recovery in 1993.

But the boom in 1993 and over the next few years will be weak and insufficient to stop unemployment rising even further in the rich, advanced capitalist countries. It is already over 30 million and is likely to reach 34 - 35 million by the end of 1994. What more graphic proof is there that capitalism can never provide full employment. Under the market economy there will always be millions without work, even at poverty wages, and many million will go through their adult lives without a job at all, unless the market economy is replaced with socialist planning.

### Epoch Of Crisis

Capitalism depends on profitable investment and markets to succeed. When profit rates begin to fall and world trade slows, then capitalism enters an epoch of crisis. In the long boom of 1948-73 profitability and world trade rose as never before, at least until the late 1960s when rates of profit began to decline. Since 1973 the world capitalist economy entered a period of booms followed by recessions. There have been three recessions: 1974-5, 1980-82 and now 1990-92. Each of the earlier recessions was followed by a boom in which production, investment and trade grew more slowly than the previous boom, and unemployment stayed higher. The next boom of 1993 to 1996 (?) looks like being even weaker. Such a weak boom can only increase the tensions between the major capitalist powers as they compete for trade and profits in a more difficult environment.

Those tensions have already been revealed by the tortuous negotiations between the EC and US over agricultural exports. Now that a tenuous deal has been reached (after loud protests from France, Europe's biggest farming exporter), it is likely that a new GATT deal to lower tariffs in services will be reached this February. Even if a deal is reached, it will not boost the world economy anywhere near the wildly optimistic claims



Despite loud protests from Europe's farmers a GATT deal may be reached in February

of \$250 billion a year. At best it will be half that - or add about 0.5% to the growth rates of the major capitalist economies. That is not to be sniffed at, but it cannot be decisive in dragging the world economy out of its sluggish expansion. As it is, while GATT agreements in the last 40 years have lowered tariffs on trade from about 40% to 4%, they have been replaced by quotas and regulations designed to stop imports. It is estimated that up to 60% of trade is "managed" through trade restrictions outside GATT. Japan operates thousands of petty regulations on foreign imports, while subsidising its agriculture, the EC maintains quotas on imports from Eastern Europe while the US keeps out imports from Asia.

### European Disunity

The strains on European unity will not be relieved, even after the Edinburgh summit which carved out a deal in order to get the Maastricht treaty signed this year. The pressure on the ERM will remain while

“**If a recovery gets under way it won't be long before the trade deficit spirals upwards and the government may be forced to put interest rates up again or devalue even further**”

Germany holds up its interest rates. There is every possibility that France could be forced to break with the ERM and devalue the franc. That would break the very cornerstone of European monetary and political union - the Franco-German axis. The Germans are likely to lower interest rates as they plunge into recession, but perhaps too late to stop the further break-up of the ERM. Eastern Europe will not provide any boost to world capitalism in 1993. Output, investment and trade will continue to fall in the countries of the former Soviet Union and its former satellites throughout 1993. In order for these countries to recover on a capitalist basis, they need increased trade with each other, particularly the former Soviet Union, increased exports to Western Europe and

massive foreign investment, preferably as grants not loans like Western Europe received under the Marshall Plan following the Second World War. None of these things will happen in 1993 or for the foreseeable future.

### UK Weakness

As for Britain, the general difficulties for world capitalism are compounded by the UK's own particular weakness. Since 1950 the UK has become progressively weaker as a capitalist power compared to its rivals. Of the top seven capitalist economies it has had the slowest growth in output, investment and productivity. The so-called economic miracle under the Thatcher government was a sick joke, as ex-Finance minister Nigel Lawson admitted in his memoirs published last year. Britain fell further behind in technology and trade while its manufacturing base was crippled by two recessions and Tory economics.

Britain's feeble economy was exposed on Black Wednesday in September 1992 when the pound was devalued despite the repeated assertions by Major and Lamont that the government would defend sterling. In the process the government lost £11 billion of foreign currency reserves in one day - an amount more than enough to subsidise the coal industry for years.

### Devaluation

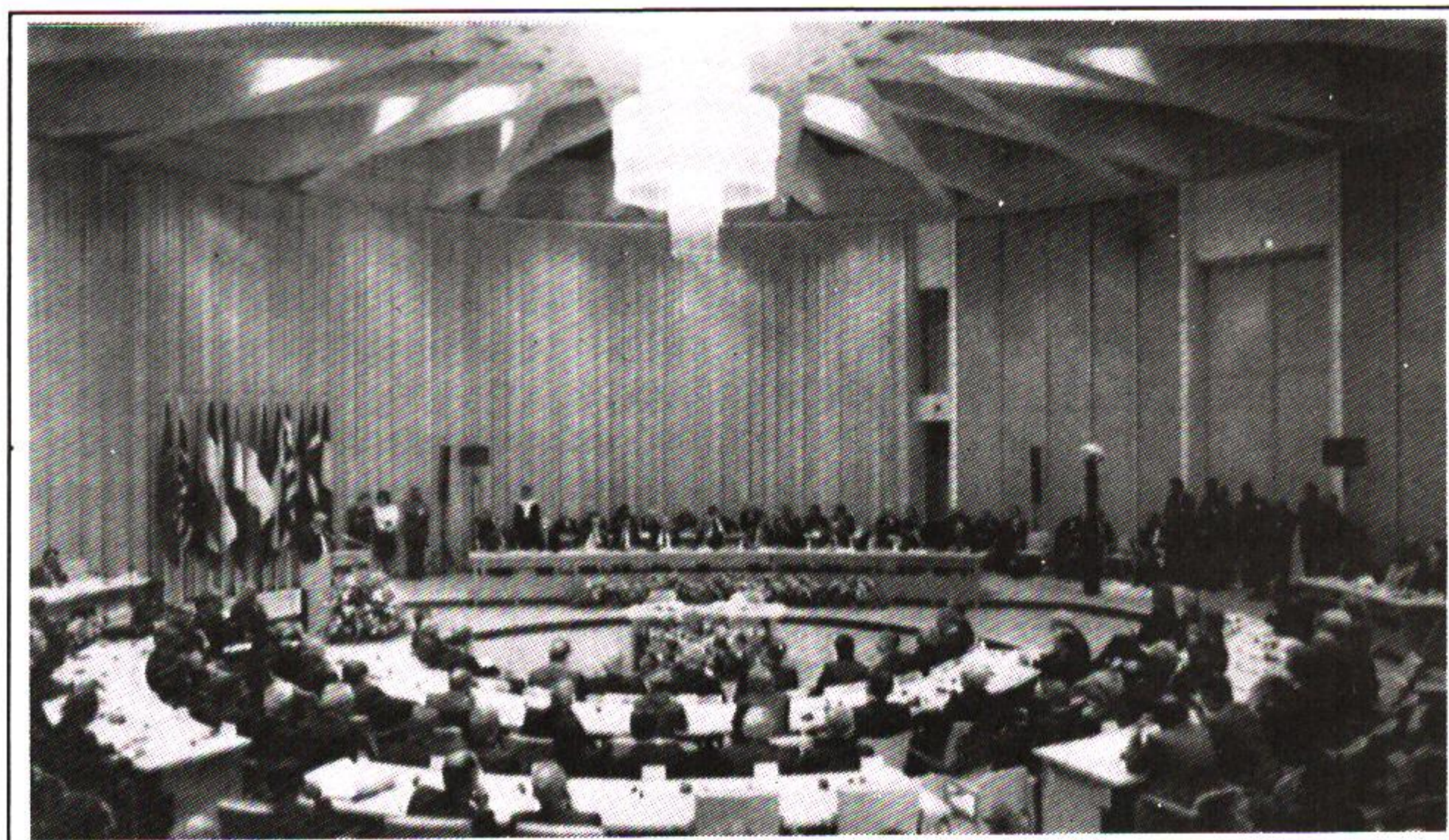
Ironically being forced out of the ERM and devaluing the pound may give the British economy a little leeway to expand by lowering interest rates so that borrowing for investment and spending is cheaper. But it will be a very weak expansion, perhaps no more than 1.5% in 1993. This will not be enough to stop unemployment rising throughout 1993 and beyond. But it will be enough to widen even further the deficit on

“**There is every possibility that France could be forced to break with the ERM and devalue the franc. That would break the very cornerstone of European political and monetary union - the Franco-German axis**”

trade which for the first time in the history of British capitalism, the UK economy is running in a recession.

Usually in a recession, businesses and consumers stop buying from abroad, and the trade balance moves into surplus. This time British industry is so enfeebled that already imports are outstripping exports. If a recovery gets under way it won't be long before the trade deficit spirals upwards and the government may be forced to put interest rates back up again, or devalue even further. These are the most likely economic trends in 1993, but economic perspectives are not a science of exact timetables so it can not be ruled out that this crisis could be postponed until 1994. The only thing we can be certain about is the growing weakness of the British economy.

**Michael Roberts**



European unity will be threatened further by the severe economic conditions in 1993

## *Belgian Anti-fascist activists attacked as...*

# Socialists Demand Action not Words to Defeat Fascists!

FOR THE second time in the space of six weeks fascists have attacked anti-fascist activists on the streets of Belgium.

Kris Berden was brutally attacked by a gang of young fascist thugs while flyposting with five others for an anti-racist demonstration in Antwerp.

During the blitz attack he was thrown to the ground and three fascist youth took advantage of the confusion that followed to batter his head with their boots and batons. They fled in two nearby cars. They left Kris with a broken skull, an open head wound and heavy concussion. While beating him they shouted racist slogans. It is clear they meant to kill him.

After a successful emergency operation his

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*Solidarity must go beyond passing protest resolutions. An effective counter campaign by the unions and the Socialist Party against the Vlaams Blok and the poor social conditions they breed on must be organised.*

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life is not in danger, but he will remain in an intensive care unit for at least the next few days.

Kris is a bus driver, an active member of the Young Socialists, a shop steward and a supporter of the Belgian Marxist paper, Vonk - Unite Socialiste.

This is the second attack in six weeks against

anti-fascists in the city of Antwerp. During the first attack two other members of the Antwerp Young Socialists and supporters of Vonk - Unite Socialiste were beaten up and hospitalised by a gang of five fascist students. Erik De Bruyn and Filip Staes were selling stickers in solidarity with the occupation by local shipyard workers against closure threats. Filip's father works in the shipyard.

**These two attacks indicate clearly the anti-worker character of the fascist Vlaams Blok**, which in recent opinion polls has scored between 32 and 40%. It also shows that, while not especially targeted, that the Young Socialists and the marxists are in the forefront of the anti-fascist struggle.

Shop stewards at the public transport company where Kris works took the initiative to produce a leaflet and distribute it at all the depots in Antwerp denouncing the attack.

The Young Socialists organised a symbolic demonstration at the place where Kris was attacked attended by union and Socialist Party leaders.

Solidarity is also being organised all over the country. But the kind of solidarity that Kris wants goes beyond passing protest resolutions.

Together with the marxists, he wants an effective counter-campaign by the unions and the Socialist Party against the Vlaams Blok and a campaign against the very bad social conditions which form the base for the support of the Vlaams Blok in working class areas.

The shock and anger amongst the socialist activists has increased enormously following the defection of a "socialist" councillor to the Vlaams Blok. This traitor, denounced demagogically the SP for having abandoned the defence of the "people." He says that the "people" would be better defended by the Vlaams Blok! 50,000 copies of his declaration have been distributed by the fascists across Antwerp.

The rank and file of the party and the unions are increasingly angry about the poor leadership and the attacks against workers by the coalition of the Socialists and Christian Democrats in the council and the national government. They are saying: "Not only do we lose socialist voters to the Vlaams Blok but we lose our leaders too!" So it is no accident that Erik De Bruyn, one of the victims of the fascist attacks and suspended from the branch of the Young Socialists nearly two years ago together with Kris, was reinstated at the beginning of 1992, and was also immediately re-elected to the city-wide executive of the Socialist Party, with an increased vote.

From this position he is building solidarity, and together with the marxists, campaigning for much more than words and for real socialist policies to be adopted by the trade unions and the Socialist Party. That is the best answer to the Vlaams Blok.

**By Erik Demeester**

## **Solidarity Fund**

**A Solidarity Fund has been set up to cover the hospital costs and to help out Kris and his family. Kris's wife is unemployed and he has three children. He will not be able to return to work for some time and will lose around 40% of his salary.**

**We urge activists throughout the movement to respond and show solidarity with Kris and the struggle to drive out the Vlaams Blok. It is an old saying of our movement - an injury to one is an injury to all.**

**Messages of support should be sent to: PB 82, 2060 Antwerpen, Belgium. or faxed to E. Demeester on 010-322-231-18-45.**



# SELLING SOCIALIST APPEAL

## Sell Out!

Congratulations to all those who took copies of our special broadsheet on the pits crisis to sell. We have now sold out!

Excellent sales were reported from right around the country and nearly every area had stalls or special sales arranged to get across our demands for a one-day general strike and for a general election now.

On top of the street sales and the heavy sales there were on miners' demonstrations and on local marches, sellers have been ensuring our voice was heard loud and clear in Labour Party and trade union meetings too.

Among the most successful sales were 60 sold in 2 hours in North Tyne, 30 on a street sale in Southampton, 40 on the Walsall leg of the miners' march from Scotland to London. One seller in London collected £38 in sales and donations and Tyneside sellers notched up 80 sales on the train to the October 31 demonstration. Twenty-five supplements were sold at the Walsall Labour Party rally against racism and fascism as well as 28 of our special anti-racist supplements and a number of journals and books from our stall.

Other very good sales were reported from Yorkshire, Birmingham and Nuneaton. NUM member Nigel Pearce said the supplement had been very well received at his pit and others have reported increased sales in their union branches and workplaces.

Keep up the excellent work!

## International Publications Available

Well Red Books has a number of international workers' papers available among others from Greece, Spain, Italy, Belgium and Pakistan.

If you are interested in subscribing to, or buying individual copies of any international papers please write to us or phone for prices and distribution.

Well Red Books, PO Box 2626, London N1 6DU or phone 071-354-3164 or 021-326-6741

## £3,000 Press Fund Appeal - Well On the Way!

In December, *Socialist Appeal* supporters launched a £3,000 Xmas appeal for our press fund to help us purchase urgently needed equipment to facilitate the production of our journal and to increase the number of pamphlets and special supplements we are able to produce. In the few short months since our first issue enormous sacrifices have been made by our readers to help us purchase computer equipment needed to keep our journal going. We are appealing to every supporter and reader to dig deep and help us achieve the £3,000 target by January 16th.

Already we have had many significant contributions from supporters all over the country. Every pound and penny counts in this appeal.

With the money raised we aim to purchase a laser printer and equipment to upgrade our copy-printer which will put the publication of *Socialist Appeal* on a much firmer footing.

Every supporter should visit their regular sales and ask them to contribute to this important campaign. Why not organise a social event or ask for a solidarity price of £2 for the journal and send us the extras.

**Please ensure all monies reach the office by January 16th and we will publish the full results in the February issue.**

## Join The Fight For Socialism

For just £12 you can receive a year's supply of *Socialist Appeal*, the Marxist monthly for the labour movement. It will be delivered to your home every month post-free.

*Socialist Appeal* explains events in society and the labour movement from a Marxist viewpoint.

Marxism is not dead, as the establishment circles, both West and East would like to claim. On the contrary, it is living in the struggles of working people worldwide and in the ideas of socialists and trade unionists everywhere.

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Questions  
for  
Socialists  
No.1

## Markets and Planning The Planned Economy: For Better or Worse?

Capitalism is not only an unjust system, it is also economically inefficient. This flows from its inner nature as an unplanned system, where production takes place not for need but for profit.

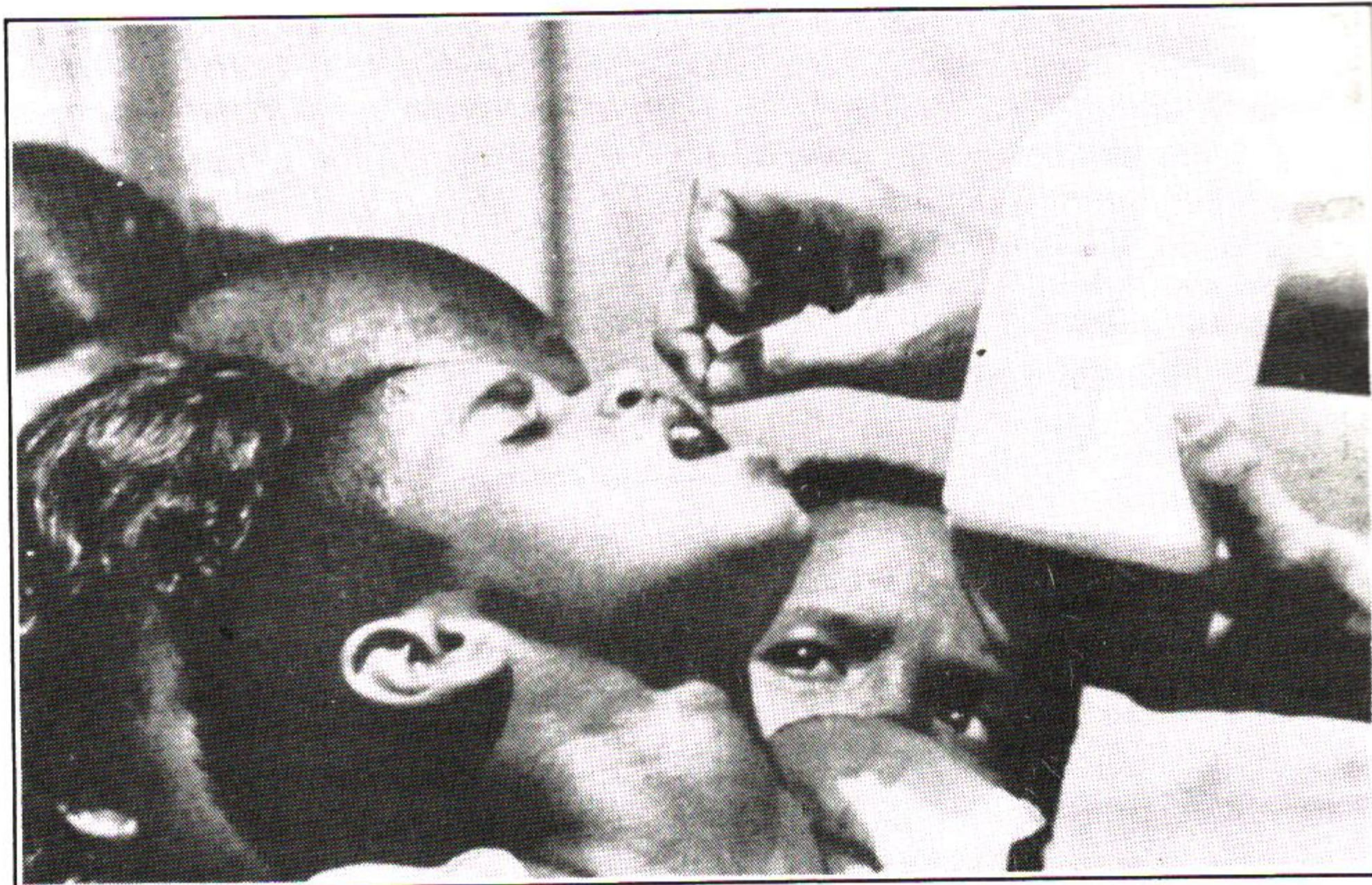
A current example of this inefficiency is the decision to sack 30,000 miners. British Coal, a nationalised company, is forced by the Tories to act like a private company, maximising profits. Because they cannot sell all the coal they produce they are forced to make redundancies. From their narrow point of view, there is a lot of sense in that. The TV has showed the pictures of stockpiles of unsold coal and there seems to be no alternative but to produce less. But what may be a rational decision for BC management is the "economics of the madhouse," from a wider viewpoint.

### Economic Decisions

Sacking the miners is not only a tragedy for them and their families but a gross waste for society. British Coal won't have to pay the miners any more - but we will! We will pay to keep the miners doing nothing, on the dole. And not only are the 31 pits directly affected, there are 60-70,000 other jobs riding on BC's decision - jobs on the railways, in power stations in small shops and pubs and thousands of other places that depend on miners and other workers spending money.

British Coal takes decisions that are the best for them but not necessarily the best for the economy. What's good for Ford or General Motors is not necessarily good for the economy. How has British Coal found itself in this situation? Since electricity was privatised, markets have been rigged against coal. PowerGen and National Power have the electricity generating industry sewn up, giving them enormous power over the regional electricity companies. The latter have responded by building up an overcapacity in new gas-fired stations. There will be 50-60% too much capacity by the end of the century and gas is actually more expensive than coal - but the generating authorities don't care. They can pass the costs onto us, the consumers. They are after all, regional monopolies.

In this situation everyone is acting rationally.



Capitalism wastes millions of in duplicating medical research because of competition

But the overall effect is highly irrational. The case for coal is a case for socialist planning. The socialist pioneers were well aware of the waste of capitalism. First some resources that are actually used are in reality misused. The luxury spending of the rich is only the most obvious example of this. And this represents a significant amount. According to the 1991 Household Income Survey, investment income accounts for 8.5% of the "average" household's income - and that does not include pensions.

### Investment Income

For many millions of households investment income is 0% of their income, while for some it may be close to 100%, resulting from the fact that the top 1% of the population have twenty three times as much wealth as the average. More important is the way public spending is prostituted to the interests of the rich - military spending is the most outstanding illustration at 4-5% of national income over the 1980s. The deliberate building in of overcapacity is an example of the waste of duplication and competition in an unplanned economy. In a dog eat dog world hundreds of millions are spent on advertising and the sales effort. This includes finance, credit, accounting, lawyer's expenses and lobbying, apart from commis-

sions, coupons, samples and trade allowances. Over ten years ago advertising alone took nearly £3 billion or 1.3% of national income. For toiletries, manufacturers spend more than 14p advertising for each £ they get in sales, for soap its nearly 10p and for pharmaceuticals nearly 8p in every £. Yet advertising accounts for only a fifth of the sales effort.

The financial services sector is still bigger and more profitable and again dogged by waste, duplication and outright gambling. All these figures start to add up!

Research and development would seem a necessary expense for any society. But very little capitalist R+D is dedicated to socially useful projects such as finding cures for diseases or producing useful social goods.

### Market Power

Most of it goes to producing un-necessary goods or to developing slight variations on products already in existence to try and build up brand loyalty or market power. Some of it goes to patenting every other chemical cocktail that will do the same as a "name" drug, while rivals spend a fortune trying to get round other firms patent rights or licences. Competition produces waste. Take for example the search for a cure for a disease. A number of different companies will employ scientists to seek a cure. Each company will protect its discoveries and hide the results of its research because of the enormous profits which will be available to the first company to be able to launch the new medical advance. Instead of hundreds of scientists pooling their research and their equipment, cut-throat competition keeps them apart making the prospect of a speedy break-through more remote.

But the most important source of waste in capitalism is the fact that human and material

resources lie idle in the face of human wants. We have poverty in the midst of plenty.

It costs £8,000 to keep someone on the dole. To keep Britain's pits open would cost £3-600 million a year. It will cost £1.4 billion in the first year (because of redundancy payments) and £600 million a year thereafter to close them.

These costs come about because capitalism is an unplanned system. Capitalist apologists tell us markets mean we don't have to plan. Who decides how much investment will take place then? The answer is, nobody. If we all decided investment was not enough how could we make it go up? We could not, under capitalism. Is this how the bosses run their factories? Certainly not! They plan production.

*"The very same bourgeois mentality which extols the manufacturing division of labour denounces just as loudly every kind of deliberate social control and regulation of the social process of production.....it is characteristic that the inspired apologists of the factory system can find nothing worse to say of any proposal for the general organisation of social labour, than that it would transform the whole of society into a factory."* (Marx, Capital)

### Monopoly Capitalism

A company making any product, designs it, works out what resources are needed, what the priorities are and then produces it. Why should the economy not be planned in the same way. Trends in the modern capitalist economy bring the vision of a planned economy even closer. Competitive capitalism becomes monopoly capitalism. The state disposes of an increasing proportion of national income. The banks act as regulators of that flow of resources to the big companies. The whole process of production is increasingly social but capitalist property relations do not reflect that fact. According to Friedrich Engels, *"modern industry...comes into collision with the bounds within which the capitalistic mode of production holds it confined and modern socialism is nothing but the reflex in thought of this conflict in fact..."*

*"The contradiction between socialised production and capitalist appropriation now presents itself as an antagonism between the organisation of production in the industrial workshop and the anarchy of production in society generally."* (Anti-Duhring)

The National Health Service and National Insurance both exist because markets cannot do the job. Planning is on the agenda.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century there were 250,000 hand loom weavers in Britain. Any socialist is quite prepared to admit that it would be very difficult if not impossible to fit so many home workers into a socialist plan of production. But today, ICI produces three-quarters of all polyester fibres and 56% of all nylon. Courtaulds produces 46% of all acrylic fibres and a further 15% of all nylon. The very advance of capitalism has



The luxury and the waste - miners facing the sack march past the Ritz

made it even more possible to plan the economy. Handloom weavers were involved in a market economy ruled by the "invisible hand." There remain hundreds of thousands of small businesses in the country. For many, independence is purely formal. A supplier of yoghurt or pre-packed sandwiches to Sainsbury's or Marks and Spencer has price, quality and everything else about the product determined by the buyer from the supermarket. There are actually advantages for the big companies in letting small business take all the risks.

### Adam Smith

This way of life is a million miles removed from the impersonal relations between equals celebrated by Adam Smith at the dawn of capitalism. It is more like the economics of industrial feudalism. Large scale production is here to stay. Then so is economic dependence of small business on big. With the socialisation of big business, we can actually involve small business in a plan of production for the benefit of all without taking over their small assets. Business historians have already made the point that we are in the era of the visible hand of large scale planning.

The collapse of Russian capitalism during the First World War put revolution on the agenda. The Bolsheviks were well aware that Russian backwardness made socialism within its national confines a utopian experiment. Their economic programme was modest and practical. Lenin began his 1917 pamphlet, *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It*, with the line, *"Famine is approaching."* He goes on, *"control measures are known to all and easy to take..."*

*"These principal measures are:*

- 1) *Amalgamation of all banks into a single bank, and state control over its operations, or nationalisation of the banks.*
- 2) *Nationalisation of the syndicates (i.e. the largest monopolistic capitalist associations.*

3) *Abolition of commercial secrecy.*

4) *Compulsory syndication (i.e. compulsory amalgamation into associations) of industrialists, merchants and employers generally.*

5) *Compulsory organisation of the population into consumers societies.."*

When the workers took power in October 1917, they were faced with a ferocious crusade of counter-revolution by twenty-two invading armies. Thus began the period of War Communism, of "communism in a besieged fortress." This was not a planned expansion of the economy but a desperate regime of rationing and throwing all resources to the war front. It was in this period that nearly all Russian firms were nationalised. As E.H. Carr has pointed out, nationalisation was, *"either spontaneous or punitive."* It was either proclaimed by the workforce in an effort to maintain supplies (often against Bolshevik advice) or dictated by the counter-revolutionary activities of the owners. There was no overall plan of production - rather the slogan was "all for the front."

### Left Opposition

The end of the wars of intervention saw Soviet Russia exhausted. Normal trading relations with the peasantry, the vast majority of the country's population were resumed.

Trotsky and the Left Opposition were the first to point out the latent dangers of a differentiation into rich and poor peasants as the economy recovered. They showed the need to plan the economy so industry could grow and sell the increasing amounts of industrial products to the peasantry. The dominant Stalin-Bukharin faction advocated a slower pace of industrial growth and rubbished the implementation of a national plan. Nobody advocated forced collectivisation of the peasants' plots.

The grain crisis duly came, as predicted by the Left Opposition. Stalin did a U-turn, breaking with Bukharin, and brought forward the first Five Year Plan, now to be completed in four

years. In the process, agriculture was forcibly collectivised inflicting terrible hardship and permanent damage to agricultural production. The system in its death throes in Russia and eastern Europe is a product of this time. From this social formation comes the common perception of socialist planning - a product of Stalinism.

Certainly "top-down" planning was regarded as not only profoundly alien to socialism but also unviable by Trotsky. *"If there existed the universal mind, that projected itself into the scientific realm of Laplace, a mind that would register simulataneously all the processes of nature and of society, that could measure the dynamics of their motion, that could forecast the results of their inter-reactions, such a mind could, of course, apriori draw up a faultless and exhaustive economic plan, beginning with the number of hectares of wheat and down to the last button for a vest."* (**Soviet Economy in Danger**)

Trotsky's position was absolutely clear, planning was absolutely impossible without two things - workers' democracy and the check of the market. It was impossible to knit the production of twenty million peasant households directly into the plan without massive coercion and a famine from which Russian agriculture has still not recovered. Peasant animals were collectivised so the peasants slaughtered and ate them. In a drive to take more and more grain, the bureaucracy took seed corn and much of the food essential to keep the peasants alive.

## Small Businesses

It is possible to take over the handful of giant corporations which dominate any twentieth century capitalist economy and run them according to a plan of production. But any twentieth century capitalist economy also has hundreds of thousands of tiny firms which cannot and should not be taken over, for two reasons. First because of the reaction that would provoke - a political backlash among the petit bourgeoisie. Secondly, because it is unnecessary. What they produce and how much they get is already dictated by the big firms. Running them directly is impossible and unnecessary. Trotsky and the Left Opposition pointed out that the first five year plan was a shambles. Astute commentators since have talked about *"the disappearance of planning in the plan."* (**Lenin**)

It is fashionable but false to identify the command economy which emerged out of the First Five Year Plan with the economics of totalitarianism. We are told we can have "democratic" market relations or vertical relations of command and subordination. In fact a market economy is far from being a relation among equal partners, and the bureaucracy existed long before the Plan. The way they carried through planning was a caricature which has

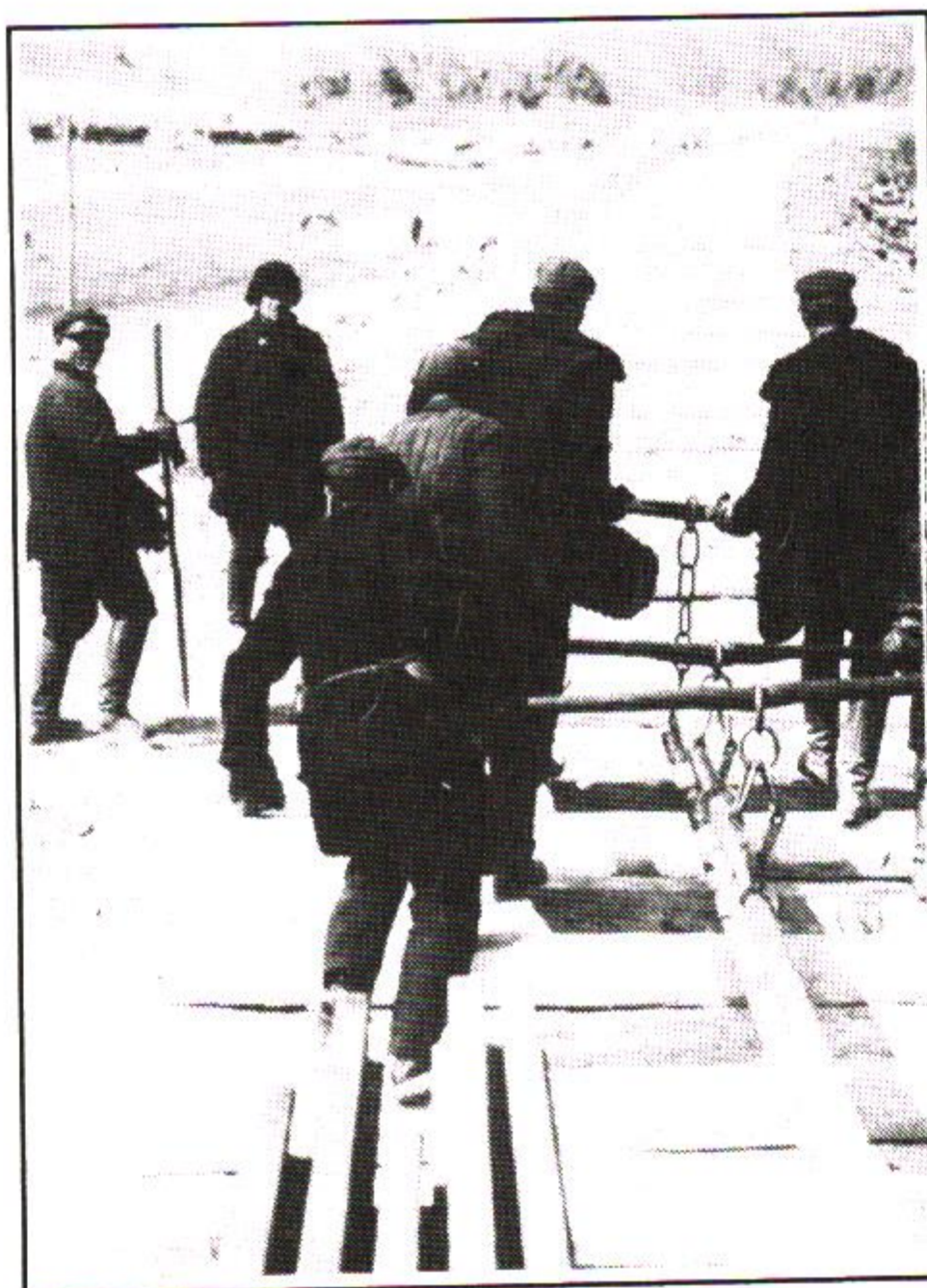
been held up against real socialists ever since. The system that emerged was imposed on Russian-occupied Eastern Europe after World War II, and is now in the process of collapse. There was a functioning consumer goods and labour market, with some distortions. Workers were hired for a wage and spent their money on essentials in shops as we do under capitalism. What was different was that state owned enterprises did not officially trade with one another. They were allotted a plan target and allocated the resources to carry out the task from the Planning Ministry.

The trouble with this was that the centre - the Ministry - did not actually know what the real situation on the ground was. Since there was no genuine workers' democracy there was no feedback or interaction between the workers and the planning officials. The planners were under pressure to achieve the impossible and it was in the factory managers' interests to conceal productive capacity so they could deliver their allotted targets. Neither section trusted or involved the working class in the productive process.

## Planning Targets

Increases in production were called for through "planning from the achieved level." A simple percentage mark-up was demanded from the previous plan target. But the planners were working blind. The philosophy of the plant managers was summed up in the saying, *"it's a wise manager who achieves the target by 105% but not by 125%."*

Periods of slack in the factories were followed by the ritual "storming" sessions to achieve monthly targets. Since the managers were hiding capacity, a black market inevitably grew between firms in raw materials so as to achieve targets. The whole system was glued together



**The drive for electrification - Soviet industrial advances were unparalleled in the '20s**

by terror from the Stalinist apparatus. Since there are advantages in allocating resources centrally rather than the wasteful duplication of haggling between competitor firms for resources, the economy grew rapidly in the essentials and simple requirements of a devastated and underdeveloped economy. The bourgeois economist Maddison estimates the Russian economic growth rate between 1913 and 1965 was the fastest in the world. Between those years output rose by 440%, compared with 400% in Japan.

## Lack of Flexibility

The system however lacked flexibility. Inevitably prestige sectors, called "leading links", were awarded the lion's share of skilled labour and other scarce resources. That is why a country which put the first man in space could at the same time have shortages of soap and toilet paper. In a capitalist economy firms can and do switch from one activity to another in search of profit. If there are shortages in any sector, prices go up and so do profits. Prices thus act as signals to producers in the absence of any conscious regulation.

It has been estimated that 12 million different commodities were produced in the former Soviet Union. Every one of these is linked to the production of every other one.

Clearly planning links like these will be unfeasible for a very long time - and is also not very important. We can allow "market" signals to tell us what colour socks people want to buy as far ahead as we are able to foresee. What is important is to plan the level of investment and the direction of major new projects centrally - and that is also readily achievable.

## Workers' Democracy

It is a lie that planning is impossible because of complexity and inevitable overcentralisation. Stalinist planning ran into the buffers because of conflicts of interests between the bureaucracy and the working class. Because of mutual suspicion and the divorcing of the bureaucracy from the workers there was no way of checking the paper plan at the centre against difficulties in the real world of the factories. Quality suffered, since the emphasis was on turning out physical units of output. The planners responded by slapping on ever more complicated regulations about quality and assortment and the factory managers replied with more ingenious ways of dodging plans that were unfeasible.

Socialists have often pointed to the slow rate of innovation under capitalism where there is an incentive for monopolies to shelve new technology that might threaten their profits, and to the wasteful duplication of efforts that passes for R&D in most firms.

Disgracefully, Stalinism proved slower to implement productive advances than capitalism



Russians protesting against privatisation and "reforms" - they are learning the reality of capitalist economics

since neither managers nor planners knew what the innovations were capable of and because innovations added another unknown to the planning game.

It is not possible to plan everything from the centre - nor is it necessary. In a workers' democracy there will be layers of decision making from the plant section to the central planning authority.

Only the most general decisions will be taken centrally. It is in everybody's interest to fulfill a plan democratically agreed upon. Since there are no inherent conflicts of interest, workers' democracy - the involvement of workers in drawing up and implementing the plan - will act as a check on bureaucracy and overcome problems of the divorce of decision makers and planners from the needs of society.

### Soviet Slowdown

The Soviet economy first began to show signs of slowdown in the late 1950s. There were, up to then, undoubted achievements in building up the economy once and then building it up again after the war with Nazi Germany. It entered into full blown stagnation in the 1980s accompanied by hyperinflation.

Capitalist apologists contrast the model of the market economy that only exists in textbooks with the real world muddle of Stalinism and conclude that "socialism" does not work. They point to queues for essential items.

In countries where market "reforms" have gone furthest it is true many queues have disappeared - that does not mean people can get the items they need - they can no longer

afford them and so do not bother to queue. Capitalism rations goods by price.

For Russians, privatisation has already proved a nightmare. They have seen national income fall by between 33 and 50% in one year - the most catastrophic economic decline since records began.

### Chaos and Dislocation

Since the old system was glued together by terror, any measures of liberalisation simply led to bureaucrats and black marketeers looking after their own sectional interests. The central allocation of resources collapsed. It was not replaced by a smooth-running system of markets. It was replaced by nothing but chaos and dislocation.

**Modern capitalism is not working: between 1960 and 1970, 3% of the world's population saw their living standards actually decline. Between 1970 and 1980 the figure was 7%. But between 1970 and 1988 nearly 24% of the world's population got poorer. These people overwhelmingly live in capitalist countries.**

The world is crying out for an alternative: only genuine socialism, combining the enormous advantages of a planned economy, with the essentials of workers' democracy can offer a future of prosperity and freedom for all humankind.

**Mick Brooks**

# Marxism and Planning

In view of the instability of the ruble as a unit of measurement, we lay aside money estimates, we arrive at another unit which is absolutely unquestionable.

In December 1913, the Don Basin produced 2,275,000 tons of coal; in

December 1935, 7,125,000 tons.

During the last three years the production of iron has doubled. The production of steel and of the rolling mills has increased almost 2.5 times. The output of oil, coal and iron has increased from 3 to 3.5 times the pre-war figure....In

1925 the Soviet Union stood eleventh in the production of electro-energy; in 1935, it was second only to Germany and the United States.

In the production of coal, the Soviet Union has moved forward from tenth to fourth place....

Gigantic achievements in industry, enormously promising beginnings in agriculture, an extraordinary growth of the old industrial cities and a building of new ones, a rapid increase in the numbers of workers, a rise in the cultural level and cultural demands - such are the indubitable results of the October revolution, in which the prophets of the old world tried to see the grave of human civilization.

With the bourgeois economists we no longer have anything to quarrel over. Socialism has demonstrated its right to victory, not on the pages of *Das Kapital*, but in an industrial arena comprising one-sixth part of the earth's surface - not in the language of dialectics, but in the language of steel, cement and electricity.

Even if the Soviet Union, as a result of internal difficulties and external blows and the mistakes of its leadership, were to collapse - which we firmly hope will not happen - there would remain as an earnest of the future this indestructible fact, that thanks solely to a proletarian revolution a backward country has achieved in less than ten years successes unexampled in history.

*Leon Trotsky The Revolution Betrayed*

# RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE THREATENS FRAGILE WORKERS' UNITY

**The demolition of the 460-year-old Babri Mosque by mobs of Hindu extremists in Ayodhya, in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh has triggered a wave of reaction amongst Muslims throughout the Indian sub-continent.**

Hindu temples have been burned as far away as Britain. Violent marches of Muslims are going on in Pakistan, Bangladesh and elsewhere. At the time of writing (Dec 9), more than 550 people have been killed and many injured during the carnage resulting from the attack on the Mosque.

The demolition of the Mosque was organised by the VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad), the Hindu fundamentalist party, supported by the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party), the largest opposition party in India and the ruling party in Uttar Pradesh province, where the Babri Mosque was situated.

The Congress central government remained incapable of stopping the attack. Now they have dismissed the Uttar Pradesh government and are promising to rebuild the Mosque.

But the VHP, who claimed that the Mosque was built on the birthplace of their God Ram by a Muslim invader Babar in the 15th century, have crossed the Rubicon.

### No basis for secularism

This incident and the religious violence during the last 45 years have shown the false basis of secularism in India. There are probably more riots and killings in India on the basis of religion than anywhere in the world. The whole facade of democracy and secularism is exposed not only by religious conflict and conflagrations but also by the brutal repression of the workers by the state during the last 45 years of so-called independent India.

The financial oligarchy dominates and crushes the democratic, trade union and other fundamental rights in India. The so-called capitalist reforms have further intensified the misery of the 850 million Indians. The

Indian economy is in a bigger mess now. The foreign debt has shot up to \$71.5 billion from \$50 billion in just two years. Inflation is soaring and massive devaluation by the Narasimha Rao government has not helped to bolster exports.

In spite of a heavy industrial base, the reliance on imports from imperialist countries is rising rapidly. Privatisation and deregulation have been the source of a wage freeze and further redundancies in various industries. Living standards have fallen further.

### Millions take strike action

Only two weeks ago, the workers in India struck. In a massive strike, 6 million workers participated. There were huge marches in the main industrial centres of India.

But the Left Front leadership comprised of CPI(M), CPI, RSP, Forward Bloc and some other Left parties failed to give any clear lead.

The movement was not followed up with a programme and plan to defeat and overthrow the bourgeois Congress government. But the severe crisis and the absence of a revolutionary programme has given way to the development of Hindu fundamentalism and reaction.

The weakness and impotence of the Indian

state and the Narasimha Rao government has been exposed by its incapacity to intervene.

The intensification of this crisis will further jolt the government.

The impact of this reactionary upsurge has been felt throughout the sub-continent.

### Danger of fundamentalism

In Pakistan, this wave of religious conflict could cut across the Long March movement launched by the PPP to oust the right wing IJI government. This can give a new lease of life to the Islamic fundamentalist elements which dominate the present IJI government in Pakistan.

It could usher in a new wave of Islamic fundamentalism in Pakistan and other Muslim majority countries of the region. It could also lead to pressure on the Indian and Pakistani governments to go to war, although the rulers of both sides are terrified of a war and will try to avert it as much as they can.

**But if we see the overthrow of the Congress government in India by the Hindu fundamentalists and the resurgence of the Islamic fundamentalists in Pakistan, the possibility of a war cannot be ruled out.**

However, the situation is fluid and unstable. The working class movements have not been defeated in either country.

With the changing international scenario, movements on a class basis can emerge and cut across this reactionary onslaught in the sub-continent. But one thing is clear: any kind of stability under the present system is ruled out.

**This article reached Socialist Appeal during December 1992 while the death toll was still rising and the situation very fluid.**



Indian women mourn one of those killed in recent violence

# PAKISTAN LONG MARCH : AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

The movement around the long march has exhibited extraordinary defiance for the last few days. If nothing else, the PPP's call for the long march has exposed the democratic facade of the Pakistan ruling class.

The unleashing of the state forces and the ominous presence of the army in the background to crush the participants of the long march, laid bare the state and its intentions. The intensity of brutality of the state in the last few days has been unprecedented even in this country's history.

The blowing up of the Shahwali bridge connecting Sind and Punjab, the barricades set up and the amount of police and paramilitary troops deployed presented the scenario of a foreign invasion rather than to crush internal dissent.

## Elections rigged

The panic-stricken reaction of the present right wing Islamic Jamoori Itehad (IJI) government above all demonstrated its own lack of confidence, as guilt of a rigged social base and extreme corruption continues to haunt it.

Mr Jatoi's exposure of rigging of 95 seats in the 1990 elections which brought IJI into power, when he was the caretaker Prime Minister, has further undermined Nawaz Sharif's confidence and the legality of the present government even according to the laws of its own class. But the two main causes of the rattling of this government are its fears of its "international" acceptance by its imperialist masters and the debt-ridden economy dominated by "Black money". (On the one hand it is dangling between the rhetoric of Islamisation and its mockery of a modern, progressive capitalist government). In the first instance it uses religion to lure primitive sections of society to its support, particularly in periods of reaction. In the present conflict between Western Imperialism and Islamic fundamentalism it can appease neither.

This policy has led to a progressive disintegration of the fragile coalition of IJI, and has also led to its international isolation.

The crisis of the capitalist economy has further aggravated these tensions within the ruling state apparatus.

In this background it becomes very clear why the call for a "long march" has touched

a raw nerve. Although the breakage of a superficial lull by the long march call may have taken some people by surprise, in reality, there are international and domestic factors that have prompted the PPP leadership to make this call.

## International background

The collapse of the Soviet Union, the fall of the stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe, and the betrayal of the planned economy by the Chinese bureaucracy had repercussions on a world scale.

These events at the end of the last decade created a temporary lull in the class struggle. This was more pronounced in the neo-colonial countries.

The world capitalist boom also contributed to this temporary stagnation. But even this period, in spite of the boasts of capitalist strategists, was highly unstable and bloody. Now the present world recession has dampened the euphoria. The defeat of the creator of the new world (dis)order in the United States, the marches in South Africa, the general strikes in Italy, Greece and other countries, show the beginnings of a new upturn in the class struggle.

The dwindling of the illusions in capitalism in the former stalinist countries, even before its restoration, were clearly demonstrated by the electoral defeat of the pro-capitalist bureaucrats in Lithuania, Romania, and other countries. The mass demonstration on the

The following article was received from Pakistan by Socialist Appeal at the end of November 1991

75th anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution in Moscow and the resentment against Yeltsin, shows disillusionment towards capitalism. These international beginnings of a change affected the traditional mass parties all over the world. These processes were an important factor, in Ms Benazir Bhutto's decision to call for a long march into the country's capital, Islamabad, on November 18.

## The Economy

In spite of a growth rate of 6.2% per annum, the living standards and social conditions are worsening. In the last 10 years the population has grown by 33% while the social services have only grown by 6.9%. This yawning gap is the basis of the social conflicts and contradictions exploding in Pakistan.

The state is now under a foreign debt of \$22.3 billion and internal debt of \$24.2 billion. This is where the money comes from which Nawaz Sharif is dishing out in tax schemes, loans, and in buying the loyalties of the members of the Parliament, to keep his shaky majority. The trade and budget deficit is rising. Inflation has gone up to 28% by conservative estimates and the state foreign



Benazir Bhutto speaks out against government brutality

exchange reserves often come close to extinction. Prices and unemployment are soaring.

This has been further aggravated by the policy of rapid privatisation. This in reality is a loot sale of national assets to the capitalists at throwaway prices. With a budget deficit of nearly Rs.98 billion, the regime has only been able to raise Rs.9 billion from the sale of 57 state enterprises, most of them profitable.

Seventy-eight percent of Pakistan's economy is "Black". The income of drug smuggling exceeds total export earnings. The owners of this "Black economy" of mainly the drugs and weapons trade are mainly the members of the Parliament, generals, bureaucrats, and the capitalists. Hence this "Black economy" generated services, employment and pushed the economy further. At the same time investment in manufacturing industry declined and the "Black economy" created new contradictions, the explosion of which has become inevitable.

### The Social Conflict

The flooding of money through the "Black economy" and drug trade has contributed to the lull that prevailed in the last period. At the same time it has ripped apart the social fabric of the society. Corruption, crime, hypocrisy, deceit and bribery, have seeped into the lowest stratum of society.

Life for the working classes has gone from bad to worse. Only 15% have access to sewerage, 25% have access to clean drinking water. Daily, 12,000 children are born, out of which 2000 die within a year. Only a quarter of them will be able to reach primary education. The spending on health is a mere 0.7% of the GDP and education gets no more than 1.3%.

The literacy rate according to official estimates is no more than 18%. The accumulation of filth and dirt in the streets all over the country has created new frustrations and conflicts. These social conditions are a recipe for a conflagration.

### Class Struggle

With a relative lull in the class struggle, national, ethnic, and communal conflicts marred the spectrum of Pakistan's politics. During the PPP's 20 month rule when it failed to fulfil the expectations of the masses, the demoralisation was further aggravated. This led to a passive support for the PPP in the 1990 elections and allowed mass rigging to get IJI into power.

There was hardly any month during the IJI's two year rule that an issue did not arise around which a mass movement could erupt. From rigging in the polls, to the Government's pro-American stance during the Gulf



Pakistani workers rally in Karachi

War, the coup scandal, and Veena Hayat rape case, these created a situation which seemed like the beginnings of a mass upsurge.

The rapid increase in the crime rate especially in Sindh forced the state to impose military rule in that province. In spite of that, the corruption, crime and social instability continued. Rumours of cracks within the ruling troika - Prime Minister, President, and the army - began to circulate with greater intensity.

### Movement Grows

However, the effect of this social crisis on the mass of the population also became intense. This pressure was continually having its effect on the PPP leadership to make a move. Certain sections of the ruling caste also moved to crush the PPP and forced Ms Bhutto to flee the country. **Apart from everything else, the call for a long march became a necessity for the Party's survival and to keep its mass base.** A certain upturn in the class struggle was shown by the victory of the pro-PPP unions in different enterprises.

Nationalist, fundamentalist and ethnic unions were defeated in the PIA, telephone and telegraph, Karachi Port Trust, KESC, Sind Road Transport Corporation, and other ma-

major enterprises. The tide was turning back. The movement around the call for the long march is far from over. The imprisonment and state brutality has failed to deter the protests. The number of the participants are not in hundreds of thousands, but if the movement is sustained for a few more weeks, a large section of the population can enter and swell the demonstrations. **The movement can assume a more revolutionary character. This could strike a decisive blow to the regime and the cracks within the ruling troika will further open up.**

Although the movement was called by the main opposition alliance PDA (Peoples Democratic Alliance) which includes some moderate parties along with the PPP, the main thrust in the movement has come from the PPP activists. The other opposition alliance of bourgeois liberal parties (NDA) has jumped onto the bandwagon by announcing its support for the long march at the last moment.

### Leaders Arrested

The movement has spread all over the country, and in all the provinces and major cities processions and demonstrations are coming out on a daily basis. A further impetus can come if there is a greater provocation by the state in the form of Benazir's arrest. The



regime is in a dilemma. If they arrest Benazir, they not only lose their international "credibility" but an uncontrollable upsurge can explode.

They have not arrested the top leadership, while thousands of PPP activists and middle order leaders have been thrown into the prisons. These included PPP leaders like Ms Shahida Jabeen and Sajida Meera who played a major role in mobilising women on the demonstrations in Rawalpindi on 18 and 19 November.

Although the movement has upset the regime, there has been no total disruption of the country as yet, apart from on 18 November.

**The main thing lacking in the movement is a clear revolutionary programme from the leadership, with concrete demands on the issues of health, education, crime, price hikes, and other miseries affecting the people.** The reliance of the PPP leadership on drawing-room capitalist politicians who have betrayed the Party in the past is a further hindrance in developing the radicalisation and mass mobilisation of the movement. The PPP leaders regionally have been giving calls for daily demonstrations, but still the movement is weak in its organisational aspects.

#### Government Indecision

**The present rulers are indecisive as to what to do.**

On the one hand they are terrified of replacing the present government under pressure of a mass movement. This could instil a new confidence in the struggle and the movement can go beyond the control even of the present leadership.

On the other hand some sections are contemplating withdrawing cases against Benazir and diffusing the upsurge by giving more concessions. But the present IJI leadership are pretending to be indifferent and are trying to resort to ruthless repression.

However, behind the veil there are initial signs of retraction.

The army, while showing some cosmetic dissent, fully backed the repression on 18 November. This is also changing. As the situation goes beyond control, it would be a classical case of imposing a military dictatorship "to save the country".

But this is not the most likely perspective, both due to the international pressures and divisions within the army bureaucracy.

However, the rising tide could force the state to act. Already the ex-PPP leaders having strong links with the army like Jatoti, Khar, Kausar Niazi, have entered the "leadership" of the movement.

The army is trying to act as an arbiter and to get some sort of a compromise. The ruling state will try to invent some sort of coalition

for national government to keep things in control and diffuse the crisis.

The army will try to be a more visible force in such a new set up. For a situation like this one, no change will be acceptable to the working classes without the PPP in power.

#### Pakistan to break up?

The ruling caste will try to bring in some capitalists and the landlords of the PPP's leadership to make a mockery of the workers' aspirations. The leaders of some sections of the ruling class who are now siding with the PPP are hoping for a short cut to power.

But a PPP government in coalition with right wing leaders and parties (who do not have much support in any case) with or without an election would be shaky from the start. If under the pressure of imperialism and the Pakistan capitalist class in the straight-jacket of the state apparatus, the PPP government carries out the same policies as in 1988-90, it will end up in a bigger disaster. **This would not only be catastrophic for the**



Sajida Meer, PPP Lahore (Women's Wing) General Secretary being arrested by police commandos in civilian uniform.

**party itself, but the existence of Pakistan will also be put in jeopardy.**

Even if the movement does not pick up momentum immediately and fizzles out, the smooth completion of IJI government's tenure will still not be possible. It could still be replaced perhaps in a three to six months

period if the present crisis continues. At the present stage, the ruling class is utterly confused and indecisive.

Under the present economic system, the solution of any of the fundamental problems faced by society cannot be solved. The contradictions between the ruling classes have at present assumed the shape of a conflict between fundamentalism and "democratic" supporters of US imperialism. Both are incapable of developing society further. It is a historical necessity for the PPP to drive a wedge between these warring factions and overthrow them. It can only do this by basing itself on its founding programme of irreconcilable class struggle and the socialist revolution. The present movement has once again opened up new vistas to accomplish this historic task.

**Lal Khan**  
**Editorial Board, *The Struggle*, (The voice of socialism in Pakistan Peoples Party and the labour movement)**

### UP TO DATE COVERAGE OF EVENTS IN PAKISTAN

**In future issues Socialist Appeal will produce more eyewitness accounts and analysis from Pakistani marxists, however if you are keen to keep up to date with fast changing events why not subscribe to *The Struggle* (Urdu and Sindi editions) Write to us at: PO Box 2626, London N1 6DU for details.**

# **FINANCIAL CRISIS** **STRIKES SWEDEN !**

The international turmoil on the financial markets finally brought the Swedish Krona to its knees after three months of speculation against the currency.

*The Tory-led coalition government, including Liberals, Christian Democrats and the Centerparty, have suffered a huge moral and political blow.*

The whole economic strategy of the Tory-led government was dependent on a stable currency and a fixed exchange rate to the ECU, which more or less meant keeping parity with the D-mark. The "hard-currency policy" was the holiest of holy crusades, it was a "life-and-death struggle" to make Sweden, as quickly as possible, a member of the European Commu-

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## **When the Labour leaders said NO, the government were forced to scrap the austerity programme**

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nity and, not content with that, they wanted to elbow Sweden to the front seat and join the German bloc, the so called "A-team" of industrial countries in Europe. It was "The Only Road", as the government slogan said.

### **Fall in output**

This mad drive was doomed to fail because of the fundamental weakness of the Swedish economy and especially its industry. Since 1989 the industrial workforce has shrunk from 1 030 000 to 850 000. Industrial output has fallen by 20% in the last three years. The expected fall in GNP between 1991 and 1993 is 4%. It was a collective delusion on the part of the Government to imagine that an economy in that state can keep up with the German bloc. Sweden, like Britain and the other Nordic countries, were the first to be affected by the world economic slowdown and the first to enter into recession. The German bloc entered

the downward cycle at a later stage and the currencies of Sweden, Britain and others were doomed to fall in relation to the D-mark.

Despite huge cuts and the support of the Labour leaders for two programmes of austerity measures by the Government in September (see SA issue No. 7), the government was forced to break the link between the Swedish Krona and the ECU. When the Government tried to knit together yet another austerity programme with cuts, cuts and more cuts, the Labour leaders, said no and the programme had to be scrapped. The Skr had to float free after the 19th of November.

The Labour leaders have come under fire from unions and the ranks of the Party for their participation in the cuts programmes. 200 000 workers took to the streets on 6th of October to protest against the two austerity programmes launched in September.

Now demands for new elections are widespread in the unions and the Party. The leadership, however, fears office. To give the demand for new elections a bad taste, they propose a "broad" coalition between Labour, Liberals and the Centerparty.

If the leadership had stood up and declared that they were ready to fight for new elections, a Labour majority and policies opposing the Tory mess, they could have mobilised the entire movement to bring down the Government. It could have been a question of days. Given the enormous mess in which the Tory-led government finds itself, it is not excluded that the government could fall to pieces simply by its inner contradictions, which in its turn is a reflection of the impasse and contradiction of capitalism. Since the free fall of the Skr, cracks in the Government have become more frequent.

If the Party and Union leadership is not prepared to politically challenge the weakest and saddest excuse for a Government Sweden has ever had, the workers will be forced to take to the industrial front.

An extremely poor two-year national contract is running out at the end of January and enormous frustrations have been accumulating beneath the surface. The Employers Federation has put a lot of prestige and campaign efforts

behind their idea to "freeze" the wages, a nil "offer". The central leadership of the unions has, due to the pressures from below, refused such a "deal". The pressure from the ranks is strong and central coordinated strikes are likely. Also the recent events in Finland - where the mere threat of a general strike made the government and the employers retreat - is good news for the Swedish workers.

The class contradictions in Sweden have grown steadily since the Tory-led government took office one year ago. We now have a situation of political crisis and an incompetent government on the one hand and sharp industrial tension on the other hand.

The road is wide open for the workers to take on the class enemy. Only a betrayal of historic proportion by the leadership of the movement will prevent the Swedish working class going forward.

**Patrik Olofsson, Stockholm**

## **OECD Jobless Set to Soar**

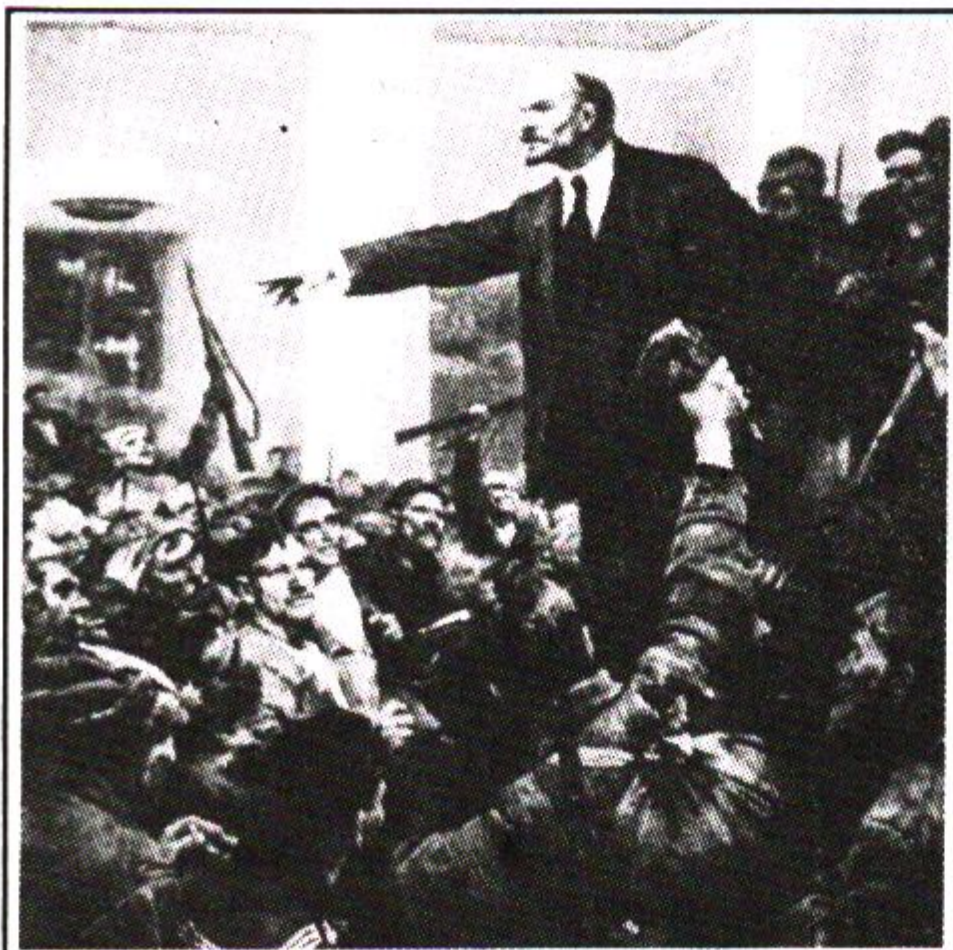
Unemployment in the world's richest countries is set to soar to record levels. A post-war high of 34 million are expected to be jobless by the end of 1993 and the report, compiled by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, said the situation could still get worse.

The report also downgraded expectations of rates of growth in many of the world's major economies including Germany and Japan.

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## **Figures hide Truth**

Hundreds of thousands of East Germans are living below the official poverty line according to reports compiled by the German trade unions. 260,000 people in former East Germany are claiming state benefits but the unions believe up to 400,000 should be claiming but are failing to come forward because "of the stigma still attached to the idea of state welfare among some people." The newspaper Die Zeit claims "the official figures hide a growing army of poor and homeless."



***Russian  
Revolution  
75th  
Anniversary***

THE APOLOGISTS for the ruling class always seek to present revolution as a bloodthirsty event. The reformist leaders throw in their two-ha'pence, by posing as peace-loving parliamentary democrats. But history demonstrates the falsity of both assertions.

The bloodiest pages in the history of social strife occur when a cowardly and inept leadership vacillates at the decisive moment, and fails to put an end to the crisis of society by vigorous action. The initiative then passes to the forces of counter-revolution which are invariably merciless, and prepared to wade through rivers of blood to "teach the masses a lesson."

In April 1917, the reformist leaders of the Soviet could have taken power "peacefully" - as Lenin invited them to do. There would have been no civil war. The authority of these leaders was such that the workers and soldiers would have obeyed them unconditionally. The reactionaries would have been generals without an army.

But the refusal of the reformists to take power peacefully made bloodshed and violence inevitable, and put the gains of the revolution in jeopardy.

In the same way the German Social Democratic leaders handed back the power won by the German workers and soldiers in 1918, a crime

In the second of his two-part series on the history and significance of the Russian Revolution, Socialist Appeal editor, Alan Woods analyses the ebb and flow of the revolutionary events from April to the seizing of power in October and draws out the lessons for the workers' movement today.

# The Meaning Of October

for which the whole world paid with the rise of Hitler, the concentration camps, and the horrors of a new world war.

Instead of taking power, the Menshevik and SR leaders entered the first coalition government with the bourgeois leaders.

The masses at first welcomed this, believing that the socialist Ministers were there to represent their interests. Once again, only events could bring about a change in consciousness. Inevitably, the socialist ministers became the pawns of the landowners and capitalists, and above all of Anglo-French imperialism, which was impatiently demanding a new offensive on the Russian front.

These same "socialists" who had held a pacifist position earlier, once they crossed the threshold of the Ministry, instantly forgot their Zimmerwald speeches and enthusiastically backed the war. A new offensive was announced. Measures to re-introduce discipline in the army reflected an attempt to re-assert the power of the officer caste.

The mood of the workers in Petrograd was near boiling point. As a warning shot and a trial of strength, the Bolsheviks considered an armed demonstration to put pressure on the Congress of Soviets in June.

The party was giving voice to the growing feeling of frustration of the Petrograd workers, summed up in slogans, directed at the reformist leaders of the Soviet: "Take over state power!" "Break with the bourgeoisie!" "Drop the idea of a coalition and take the reigns of power into your own hands!"

The idea of an armed demonstration caused an hysterical reaction on the part of the middle-class leaders who launched a campaign of slander, misrepresenting it as an attempted

coup. The Menshevik Minister Tsereteli warned ominously that "people who did not know how to use arms must be disarmed."

As a small minority in the Congress of Soviets (which the demonstration was planned to coincide with), the Bolsheviks decided to retreat. The idea of an armed demonstration was dropped. In its place, the Congress of Soviets itself called an unarmed demonstration on July 1st. This attempt to out-manoeuvre the Bolsheviks backfired.

## Growth of Consciousness

The workers and soldiers came to the "official" demonstration carrying placards with the slogans of the Bolsheviks: "Down with the secret treaties!" "Down with the ten capitalist ministers!" "No to the offensive!" "All Power to the Soviets!"

In a revolution, even such extremely democratic and flexible organisations as the Soviets were not capable of reflecting the rapid shifts of mood of the masses. The Soviet lagged behind the factory committee, the factory committees lagged behind the masses. Above all, the soldiers lagged behind the workers, and the backward provinces lagged behind revolutionary Petrograd.

The process of the growth of consciousness is never uniform. Different layers arrive at different conclusions at different times. There is always a danger that the more advanced layers of the class will go too far too soon, and become separated from the majority, with calamitous consequences.

Infuriated by the offensive, the most radical sections of the Petrograd garrison were preparing for an armed demonstration. Realising that the provinces were not yet ready for a show-

down with the Provisional Government, the Bolsheviks tried to restrain the soldiers, but eventually were compelled to put themselves at the head of the demonstration in order to prevent a massacre.

As the Bolsheviks had warned, the government seized on the opportunity to crack down on the movement, leaning on more backward regiments.

The "July Days" ended in a defeat, but thanks to the responsible leadership of the Bolsheviks, the losses were kept to a minimum, and the effects of the defeat were not long-lasting.

A revolution is not a one-act drama. Neither is it a simple, forward-moving process. The Russian revolution unfolded over nine months. The Spanish revolution took place over seven years - from the fall of the monarchy in 1931 to the May Days of Barcelona in 1937. Within the revolution, there are periods of breathtaking advance, but also periods of lull, of defeat, even of reaction. Thus the February revolution was succeeded by the reaction that followed the July Days.

The Bolsheviks were accused of being German agents and mercilessly hounded, arrested and imprisoned. Lenin was forced to go into hiding, and then move to Finland.

### Counter-Revolution

From February onwards, the counter-revolution had been biding its time, hiding behind the coat-tails of the Provisional government. The offensive, and the crushing of the Bolsheviks in July, now tilted the pendulum to the right. The officer caste began serious preparations for a coup d'état, culminating in General Kornilov's uprising at the end of August.

Only the courageous reaction of the workers and soldiers saved the revolution. The railway workers, risking their lives, refused to drive the trains, or mis-directed them. Kornilov's army found itself without supplies, without petrol, disorganised and disoriented. Agitators, mainly Bolsheviks, got to work among Kornilov's troops and won them over. Kornilov ended up a general without an army.

Reluctantly, the Mensheviks and SRs were forced to legalise the Bolsheviks. But by now the masses had begun to realise the true state of affairs.

In an early article on the revolution, written between sessions at the Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations in 1918, Trotsky recalled events still fresh in his mind: *"The growth of the influence and strength of the Bolsheviks was undoubted, and it had now received an irresistible impetus. The Bolsheviks had warned against the Coalition, against the July offensive, and had foretold the Kornilov rebellion. The popular masses could now see that we had been right."* (my emphasis, AW)

Panicked by the advance of Kornilov's "savage division," the reformist Soviet leaders had

been compelled to arm the workers. The position of the Bolsheviks now became decisive in the Petrograd soviet. Moreover, the time was growing near for the second All-Russian Congress of Soviets, at which the Bolsheviks were assured of a majority.

At one point, the counter-revolutionary poli-

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### *The Soviet system in 1917 and the years immediately following the revolution was the most democratic system of representation of the people ever known*

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cies of the reformist leaders of the Soviets had inclined Lenin to consider dropping the slogan "All power to the Soviets," and substituting for it the idea of taking power through the factory committees.

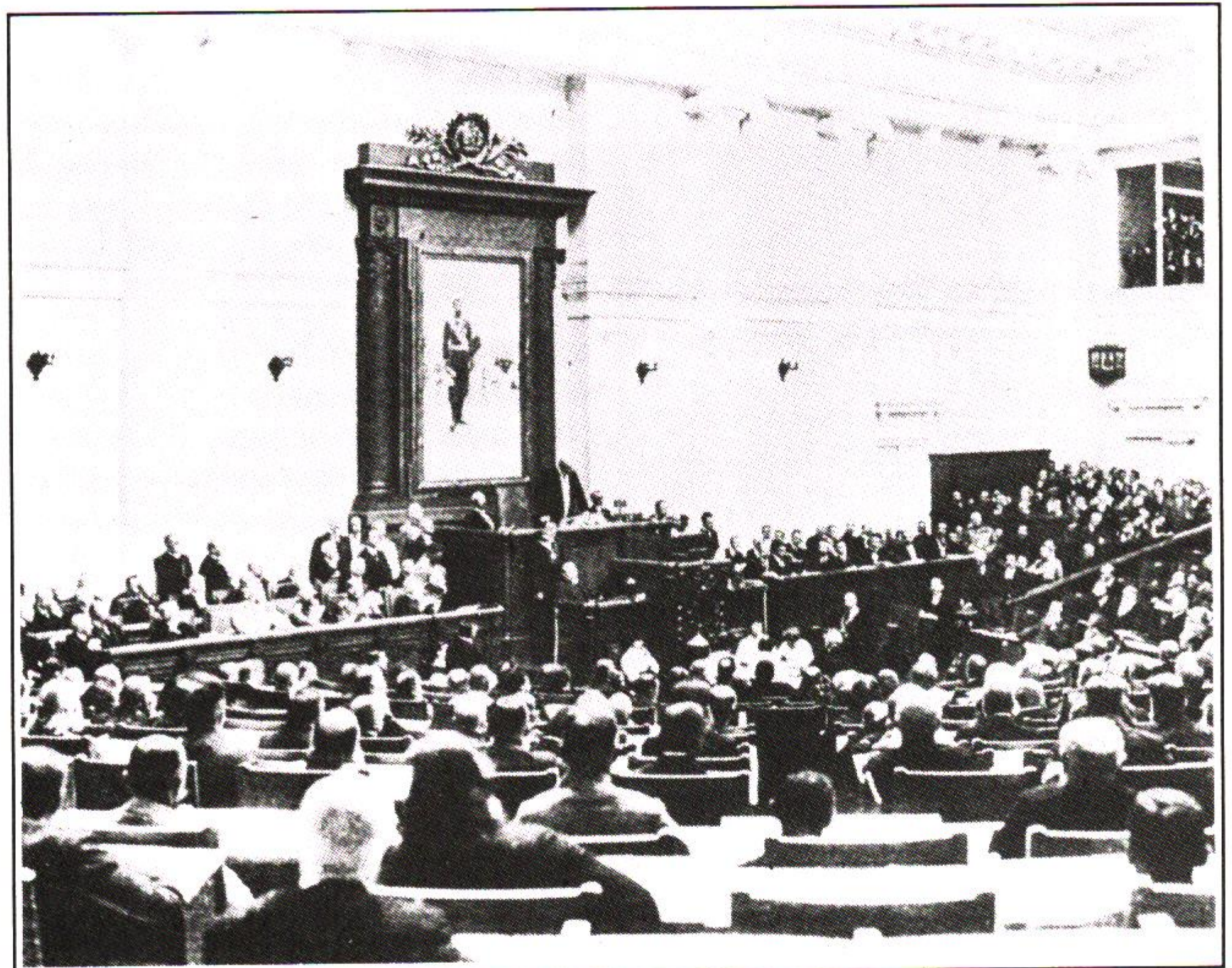
This fact shows the extreme flexibility of Lenin's tactics. There was no question of making a fetish out of any organisational form, even the Soviets. However, the Soviet form of direct elections from the workplaces and garrisons represented a far more democratic expression of the will of society than any regime of bourgeois parliamentary democracy known to history.

One of the most blatant lies about October is that the Bolsheviks were "undemocratic" because they based themselves on Soviet democracy rather than a parliament ("Constituent Assembly"). The argument is that Lenin and Trotsky represented, not the masses, but only a small, tightly disciplined group of conspirators. For these critics, October was not a revolution, but a "coup."

The truth is very different. The Soviet system in 1917 and the years immediately following the revolution was the most democratic system of representation of the people ever known. Even the most democratic models of bourgeois parliamentarianism cannot compare with the simple and direct democracy of the Soviets. Incidentally, the Russian word "soviet" merely means a "council" or "committee."

The Soviets were born in 1905 as extended "strike committees." In 1917, the workers soviets were broadened to include representation by the soldiers, who were overwhelmingly peasants in uniform. Representatives to the soviets were elected directly by their workmates and instantly recallable. Compare this to the present system in Britain, where parliaments are elected every four years on average. There is no means of recall. Once a parliament is elected, it cannot be removed until the next general election. Governments are free to renege on their promises - and invariably do so, in the knowledge they cannot be removed.

Most of the parliamentarians are professional politicians, with no contact with the people who elected them. They live in another world, with high salaries and expenses which puts

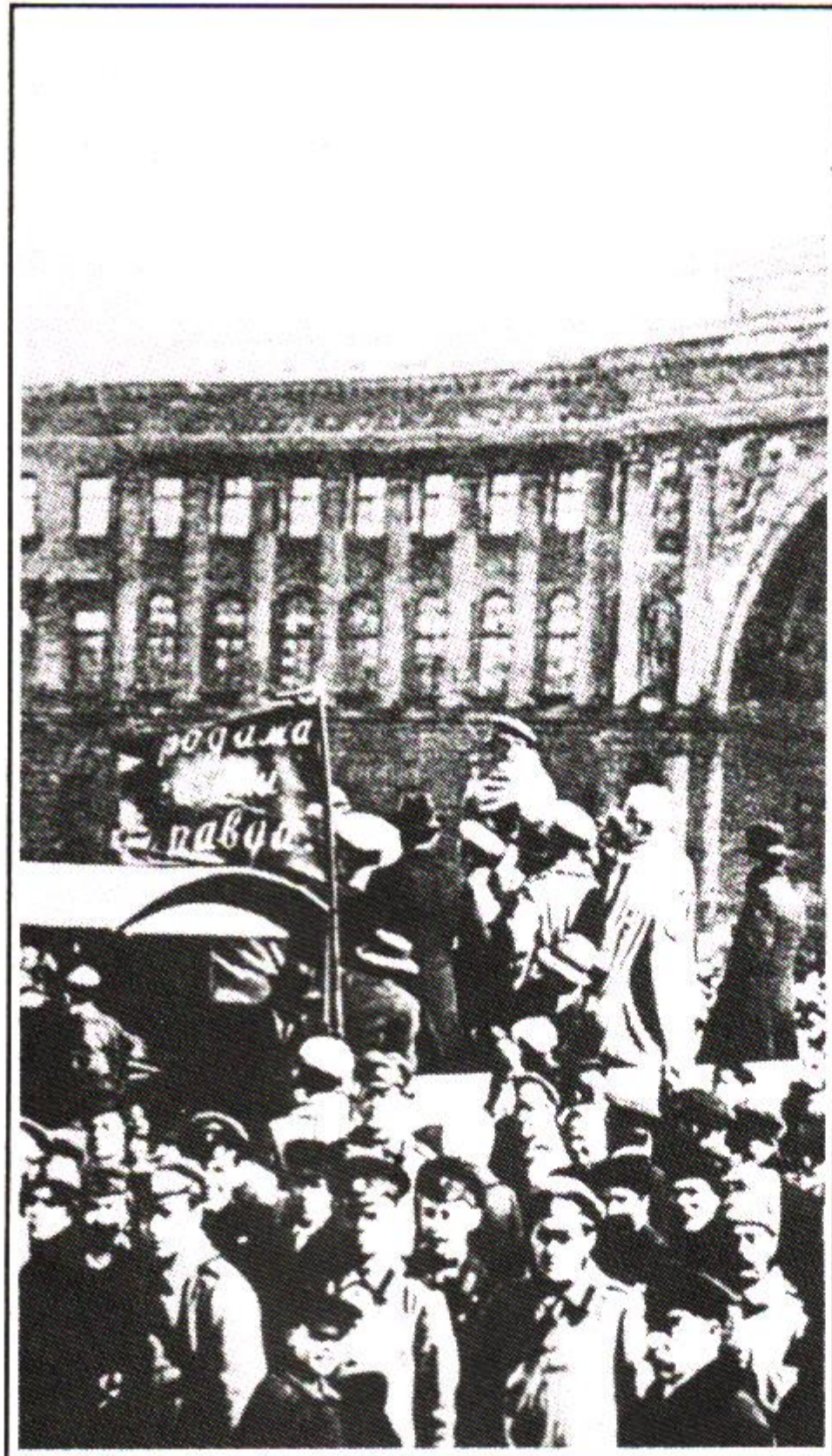


A meeting of the fourth and final Duma - soon to be replaced by Soviet democracy

them in a different social category to the people they are supposed to represent.

In a revolutionary situation, where the moods of the masses change rapidly, the cumbersome mechanisms of formal bourgeois democracy would be utterly incapable of reflecting accurately the situation. Even the soviets, as we have seen, often lagged behind.

In his 1918 work, Trotsky characterises the



Bolsheviks proclaim soviet power in Palace Square

democracy of the Soviets in the following way: "They depend on organic groups, such as workshops, factories, mines, companies, regiments, etc. In these cases, of course, there are no such legal guarantees for the perfect accuracy of the elections as in those to municipal councils and zemstvos (a kind of elected district council in the rural areas under tsarism, AW), "but there is the far more important guarantee of the direct and immediate contact of the deputy with his electors. The member of the municipal council or zemstvos depends on an amorphous mass of electors who invest him with authority for one year, and then dissolve.

"The Soviet electors, on the other hand, remain in permanent contact with one another by the very conditions of their life and work: their deputy is always under their direct observation and may at any moment be given new instructions, and, if necessary, may be censured, recalled, and replaced by somebody else." (my emphasis, AW)

The right wing socialists tried by all means to prevent the soviets from taking power. First, they organised the so-called "Democratic Con-

ference," calling for a "responsible" Ministry. This satisfied no-body, and was attacked from the right and the left. The rapid polarisation between the classes doomed all the manoeuvres of the "centre" to defeat in advance.

The endless intrigues and combinations of the politicians contrasted with the desperate position on the front that cold and wet Autumn. The mood in the villages was increasingly impatient.

The right wing socialists argued that the peasants should wait for the election of the "Constituent Assembly." The Bolsheviks demanded the immediate transference of the land to the peasants' committees. The slogans of "peace, bread and land" won the mass of the peasants over to the side of the Soviets. By October, the stage was set for the last act in the revolutionary drama.

Contrary to a widespread prejudice, revolution is not the same as insurrection. Nineteenths of the work of the revolution consisted in winning over the decisive majority of the workers and soldiers by patient political work, summed up by Lenin's slogan: "Patiently Explain!"

The main blows of the Bolshevik propaganda and agitation were directed, not against the right-wing labour leaders, but against the class enemy - the monarchy, the landowners, the capitalists, the Black Hundreds (fascists), and the liberal bourgeois Ministers in the coalition government.

### Bolshevik Majority

By October, the Bolsheviks had a clear majority in the Soviets. Trotsky insisted that the date of the insurrection should be timed to coincide with the opening of the Congress of Soviets, where the Bolsheviks would win the majority of the Executive Committee, and could therefore act with the full authority of the Soviets, which comprised the decisive majority of society.

A point is reached in every revolution where the question of power is posed point-blank. At this stage, either the revolutionary class goes over to a decisive offensive, or the opportunity is lost, and may not return for a long time. The masses cannot be kept forever in a state of agitation. If the chance is lost, and the initiative passes to the counter-revolution, then bloodshed, civil war and reaction will inevitably follow.

This is the experience of every revolution. We saw it in the period of 1918-23 in Germany, and in Spain from 1931-37. In both cases, the working class paid for the crimes of the leadership with a ghastly defeat, the fascist dictatorships of Hitler and Franco and the Second World War, which nearly resulted in the destruction of civilisation.

Such is the importance of leadership that, ultimately, the fate of the Russian revolution was determined by two men - Lenin and

Trotsky. The other leaders of the Bolsheviks - Stalin, Kamenev, Zinoviev - repeatedly vacillated under the pressure of middle-class "public opinion" - in reality the prejudices of the upper layers of the middle class, the intelligentsia and educated liberal leaders masquerading as socialists. These leaders represented the first confused, amorphous strivings of the masses to find a way out by the shortest road.

### Cruel Deception

However, the workers and peasants learned by experience that this alleged short-cut represented a cruel deception. This experience, together with the correct policies, strategy and tactics of Lenin and Trotsky, prepared the ground for the massive shift of opinion in the direction of Bolshevism. This would never have been possible if the line of the conciliators had been accepted.

Lenin was constantly being accused of "sectarianism" by the enemies of Bolshevism - and by a section of the Bolsheviks leaders who wanted a "broad left front" with the Mensheviks and SRs, and were terrified of being "isolated." This fear was even more pronounced after the experience of July.

With the exception of Lenin and Trotsky (who joined the Bolsheviks in the period of reaction during the Summer, together with an

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important group of non-party Marxists, the Mezhrayontsy), most of the other prominent Bolsheviks favoured participating in the "Democratic Conference" and even in the fake "pre-parliament" which was set up at this Conference - a "parliament" without any powers, elected by nobody and representing only itself.

The old party leaders reflected the past of the workers and peasants, not their present or their future. Finally, the Bolsheviks demonstratively walked out of the "pre-parliament," to the general applause of the workers and soldiers - and the horror and indignation of the conciliators.

Thanks mainly to the work of Trotsky, the

Petrograd garrison was won over to the Bolshevik cause. Trotsky made use of the Military Revolutionary Committee, set up by the reformist-led Executive of the Soviet, to arm the workers in defence against the reactionaries. The workers in the arms factories distributed rifles to the Red Guard. Mass meetings, demonstrations and even military parades were held openly on the streets of Petrograd.

Far from being the work of a tiny, secret group of conspirators, the preparations for the insurrection involved a massive participation by workers and soldiers.

John Reed, in his celebrated book *Ten Days that Shook the World* gives a graphic eye-witness account of these mass meetings, which were held at all hours of the day and night, addressed by Bolsheviks, left SRs, soldiers recently arrived from the front, and even anarchists. Even in the February revolution, there had been few meetings such as this. And all spoke with one voice: "Down with Kerensky's government!" "Down with the war!" "All power to the Soviets!"

### **Revolutionary Petrograd**

The power base of the Provisional Government had shrunk practically to nothing. Even those conservative regiments drafted in from the front became infected by the mood of revolutionary Petrograd. The support for the Provisional Government in the capital collapsed immediately the workers began to move. The insurrection in Petrograd was a virtually bloodless affair.

Some years later, the celebrated Soviet director Sergei Eisenstein made a film called *October*, which contains a famous scene of the storming of the Winter Palace, during which there were a few accidents. More people were killed and injured then than in the actual event!

The propaganda of the bourgeois against the October revolution is a crude falsification of history. The actual seizure of power took place smoothly, and with very little resistance. The workers, soldiers and sailors occupied one government building after another, without firing a shot.

How was this possible? Only a few months earlier, the position of Kerensky and the Provisional Government appeared to be unassailable. But in the moment of truth, it found no defenders. Its authority had collapsed. The masses deserted it and moved over to the Bolsheviks.

The very idea that all this was the result of a clever conspiracy by a tiny group is worthy of a police mentality, but will not stand a moment's analysis from a scientific point of view.

The overwhelming victory of the Bolsheviks at the Soviet Congress underlines the fact that the right-wing reformist leaders had lost all their support.

The Mensheviks and SRs won only one-tenth



**Lenin, right, reviews volunteers proclaiming their willingness to fight for international communism in 1919.**

of the Congress - about 60 people in all. The Soviets voted by a massive majority for the assumption of power.

Lenin moved two short decrees on peace and the land which were unanimously approved by Congress, which also elected a new central authority, which they called the "Council of People's Commissars," to avoid the bourgeois ministerial jargon. And power was in the hands of the working people.

### **A New October**

Now, seventy five years later, the film of history appears to be being played in reverse. The Soviet working class has paid a terrible price for the crimes of Stalinism. The collapse of the bureaucratic regime has been the prelude to an attempt to move back to capitalism.

However, as Lenin used to say "history knows all sorts of transformations." On the road of capitalism, there is no future for the working people.

On the basis of their experience, the workers of the former USSR will come to understand that fact. The old ideas, programme and traditions will be re-discovered. The basis will be laid for a new edition of the October Revolution, on a qualitatively higher basis, not only in the former Soviet Union, but on a worldwide scale.

## **Further Reading about the Russian Revolution:**

*Leon Trotsky - History of the  
Russian Revolution*

*John Reed - Ten Days That  
Shook the World*

*Leon Trotsky - The Revolution  
Betrayed*

*Zinoviev - History of the Bolshevik  
Party*

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## YOUR LETTERS.....

Send your letters for publication to: The Editor,  
PO Box 2626, London N1 6DU.

# Raising the slogan of the Triple Alliance

Dear Comrades,

I am writing to you regarding the slogan "For a One Day General Strike," which appeared as a result of the pit closure announcements. I am a member of ASLEF and my job as a driver of coal trains in the North East is directly linked to the future of the pits.

In my opinion, Socialist Appeal would have been closer to the standpoint of the miners, railworkers and power workers if it had raised the idea of co-ordinated strike action by this (extremely powerful) "triple alliance" rather than a more generalised strike. With many on the left calling for an all-out general strike I have a suspicion that the editors of Socialist Appeal would not want to advance such a "moderate" demand as I am suggesting. A one day general strike is a political demand aimed at bringing down the government (and is therefore not that transitional.) A demand for action by this triple alliance on the other hand, would be seen as a realistic strategy for stopping the pit closures and would receive a much louder echo from the workers concerned,

An ASLEF member  
(name and address supplied)

## More Jobs or More Hype?

Dear Comrades,

Recently I picked up a copy of *Employment News*, the newspaper of the Department of Employment. The front page article was a piece about how much money was being spent on jobs - not on creating them but on advertising them! In the week when the Post Office, Wedgwood, Fords and dozens of other major firms announced large-scale redundancies the government are pumping £2.4 million of public money into a glossy advertising campaign.

The reason behind the campaign is that over the past twelve months there has been a 9% drop in notified vacancies. Somehow, the Tories seem to think that if they advertise the vacancies there are more than we will all believe there are more jobs. Gillian Shepherd believes the campaign will "markedly improve the job prospects of unemployed people."

The only thing which will markedly improve job prospects is to kick out this Tory government.

Jeremy Dear, Birmingham

## Underground Workers Angry At Tube Deal

Dear Comrades,

Our strike on the underground was called off at the last minute by a leadership that has no faith in its members to fight. A "compromise" was reached "at the last minute" and without consulting the members the strike was called off.

Members of the RMT were confused and angry and there has been talk of people leaving the union. We must oppose an exodus of members from the union as a weaker union only plays into management's hands. Comrades in the RMT must get out and explain to members that they are the union and must flood their branch meetings to express their anger and demand action to stop the company plan.

Railworkers should take the lead to push for a one-day general strike to bring down this government.

An RMT London Underground Worker

# Gladio Conspiracy: The Plot Thickens

Dear Comrades,

I was interested in the article on the truth behind the Gladio Conspiracy, but, from research I am doing for a book on the Second World War, I wonder whether Claudio Bellotti may not have missed a vital dimension of the plot.

The greatest danger Italian capitalism ever faced arose when the war against fascism was drawing to a close. On the one hand, there was the Italian working class, angry and armed, wanting retribution for twenty or so years of suffering under Mussolini. On the other, there was the Italian ruling class, the backers and benefactors of the fascist tyranny. The exploiters were naked; the exploited had guns.

Throughout the entire country, the Allied powers needed stability and security. Otherwise the profit-making system could not continue. Therefore, President Roosevelt sent multi-millionaire Meyer Taylor as his personal envoy to the Vatican. As a result of the protracted discussions, the Christian Democratic Party emerged as the main prop of the existing order. It meant that the bosses could cast away their fascist stigma and pose as being truly democratic.

Simultaneously, Catholic Action created its "emergency action units" (*gruppi di punta*). These liaised with fascists, both in the police and in the Italian military. The Allies were pleased to know about the existence of bodies of armed men, thugs that could be held in reserve and used if any revolutionary hot-heads should begin to rock the boat.

These were the precursors of Gladio. And they did see action. In 1945, the distinguished Italian writer, Ignazio Silone, came on a deputation to the Labour Party. He talked about the reign of terror being conducted by the fascists, with the connivance of the authorities, against members of the resistance movement. Sixty thousand of them, he said, had had their homes destroyed.

Of course the Labour government did nothing to help them. Indeed, at that time, it was doing roughly the same thing itself; to put the lid on the Vietnamese resistance movement, Viet-Minh, it had re-armed the Japanese enemy. That situation prevailed until French colonial rule could be re-established.

Raymond C., Whitley Bay

# SOCIALIST

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*The Marxist voice of the labour movement*

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## Tories launch new attack on trade union rights...

# SCRAP THE ANTI-UNION LAWS!

The new year will witness the latest stage of the Tory's offensive against the trade unions. In November the Tory's Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Bill entered its committee stage in the Commons.

The government pledged to achieving a classless society, is now launching another vicious attack on the rights of our class and its organisations.

Among the measures proposed in the Bill are:

- Seven days written notice of an industrial action ballot
- The appointment of a Commissioner for Protection Against Unlawful Industrial Action to help individuals bring actions against unions for non-supply of goods or services
- Opening up of union finances and membership lists to independent scrutineers
- Abolition of the wages councils

The Tories have portrayed the Bill as giving back the trade unions to their members. That is a blatant lie. Their aim is to tie up the unions in a quagmire of legal restrictions and threatened penalties

to deter the unions from carrying out the tasks they were built to do - defending working people against the employers.

Every union and every union member will be affected by the proposals. The idea of seven days written notice of ballots is designed to allow employers to prepare legal defences, seek injunctions and pressure workers against taking action with threats of dismissal, discipline and loss of pay. Britain has the worst record on employment law in Europe. Since the Tories came to power they have regularly turned on the unions to divert attention away from the crisis of them and their system. So far the Tory Bill has had an easy ride. It is time to change that. The unions should fight tooth and nail against these measures.

But more than that the political argument has to be won. For far too long the trade union leaderships have bowed in reverence before the law. The point must be made time and time again. Once the working class moves into action no class law is worth the paper it is written on. The defeat of Heath's Industrial Relations Bill stands as concrete proof of this fact. The appointment of a Commissioner to help individuals take action against the unions will be used not to genuinely



protect individuals against the power of a bureaucracy but to deter unions from sanctioning action by their members for fear of expensive legal actions against them. The Tories are quite happy to help pay the bills of individuals for actions against trade unions but at the same time are cutting back legal aid to the poorest in society.

As long as the Tories are in power jobs will be under threat, the unions will face attacks and the vision of a classless society will never be realised. 1992 saw the beginning of a campaign which had the Tories reeling. From Scotland to the south of England workers took to the streets in defence of the miners, in defence of jobs and in defence of their living standards. In 1993 the unions and Labour Party must build on this new found optimism and fight to kick out the Tories and ALL their anti-trade union laws.

**Jeremy Dear,  
NUJ National Executive,  
personal capacity**