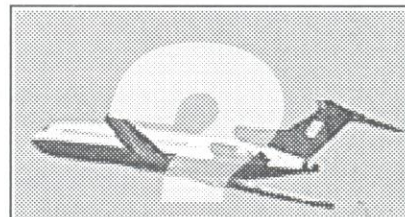


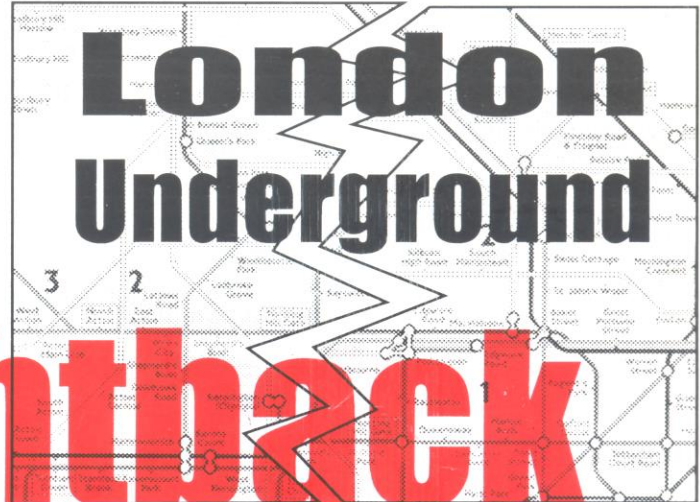
Socialist Appeal

The Marxist voice of the labour movement

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Contents

editorial

In defence of Socialism.....3
Why is LP's morale so low?

trade union

Vauxhall - National action needed.....4
by *Andy Viner*

**London Underground
hit by trade union solidarity.....5**
by *Derrick Marr*

Steel Crisis.....10
by *Miles Tood*

labour party

features

Marxism and women, a class question.....11
by *Espe Espigares*

Unmasking the human genome.....12
Alan Woods examines the significance of the human genome project from a Marxist perspective

What is Marxism?.....16
Marxism and History
by *Mick Brooks*

**Youth:
Reason in Revolt meeting at ULU.....18**
by *Colin Rice*

**Economics: Wealth for the few
created by the many.....20**
by *Michael Roberts*

international

Iraq: Imperialists Embark on "Protective Retaliation", by *Rob Sewell*.....22
Brief international news.....23
France, Workers strikes, shaken bosses, by *Greg Oxley*.....24
California Silicon Valley hit by power cuts, by *Mick Brooks*.....26

Plus

Fighting Fund.....28
Letters.....28
Book Review, No logo,29
Wellred publications.....30
Pamphlets.....31



Peter's Passport from power.....6
by *Phil Mitchinson*

**Young Labour Conference:
Stitch-up Protest.....7**
by *Steve Forrest*

Education: "Bog-standard" Blairism....8
by *Dave Simms*

YFIS School in Scotland

Youth for International Socialism is hosting a one day educational school in Edinburgh on the 10th of March. Sessions will include a discussion on the Revolutionary Life of James Connolly, leader of the 1916 Easter Uprising. There will also be a brief session on YFIS and it's involvement in the Labour Movement abroad. If you would like to attend, please contact us either by Phone or Email - 020 7 515 7291 espe@newyouth.com

In Defence of Socialism

The likelihood of an April or May general election increases by the day. Blair's speech to Labour's Spring Conference was clearly intended as a rallying call to the troops. But for most activists it failed to have the desired effect.

At the event a string of government ministers did their best to boost the party's morale after nearly four years under New Labour. But the question is immediately posed: despite opinion poll leads of 15 points and more, and a Chancellor's "war chest" of over £16bn, why is party morale so low?

Although Labour is riding high in the opinion polls, the string of election results over the last two years tells a different story. Labour has repeatedly done badly, its share of the vote slashed by low turnouts. Using a logic straight out of Alice in Wonderland, Blairite ministers have put this down to voter satisfaction (!) But others, like Peter Kilfoyle MP, have warned of growing disillusionment in Labour's heartlands.

Apathy amongst Labour voters has reached record levels. A recent Council by-election in Wrexham saw Labour's total vote slump to just 50 - in a seat where the previous majority was 654. Other elections have produced post-war record lows in voter turn-out. The latest being the by-election in Falkirk West.

In Wales, traditionally a Labour stronghold, the party was rocked to its foundations when Plaid Cymru gained the Rhondda, Llanelli and Islwyn. This was clearly a protest vote against Labour, both nationally and locally. Now Labour sources are warning that the party could lose between 7 and 10 of its 34 seats in the coming election.

The apathy affecting Labour's supporters is not hard to explain. After 18 years of Thatcherism, the massive vote for Labour in May 1997 was a vote for change. True, there have been some reforms, like the minimum wage, rights at work and devolution, although even these were watered down. However, for the mass of working people, things have not changed. For the first two years Labour continued with Tory spending limits. With just two months to go, the government has spent only £2.2bn renewing public infrastructure - more than last year's miserable £1.4bn - but well short of Brown's target of £7bn. In three months of the financial year, the public sector actually disinvested, i.e., it spent less than depreciation costs! This is at a time when the surplus (April to January) was £40.7bn - the highest on record - including the £22.5bn bonanza from mobile phone

licences.

Public services have been starved of cash as limits were ruthlessly imposed on spending by government departments. Public sector pay has been squeezed, as under the Tories. Despite a record financial surplus, public services continue to crumble and the morale of stressed-out, under-paid workers is rock bottom.

At present, the Tory party is in complete disarray. They are trailing far behind Labour in the polls, with no hope of revival before the election. Although sections of the middle class Tory voters who swung behind Labour in the last election will undoubtedly swing back to the Tories, it is doubtful whether this will be sufficient to get Hague elected. Most people still remember their 18 years of cuts and attacks.

No enthusiasm

Nevertheless, there is no enthusiasm for Blairism either. Fewer and fewer activists are prepared to knock on doors for the party, and without this, the turnout is likely to be one of the lowest on record. The reason is not hard to find. Labour's performance for many workers has caused bitter disappointment. In fact, Blair has continued with discredited Tory policies, such as privatization, 'Best Value', cash-limits and a pay squeeze into the bargain. This has pushed many Labour councils into collision with their workers. Such policies and actions have led to wide-spread disenchantment and apathy among Labour supporters

If, as seems likely, Labour wins the next election, it will not be thanks to Blair, but in spite of him. He is praised and applauded by Big Business - the sworn enemies of Labour, because he has done everything they have asked for - and more. Moreover, they hope that he will succeed in his bid to turn the Labour Party into a capitalist party. Up till now he has failed. But that project will be revived after the election. We must see to it that it is decisively defeated!

Class conscious workers will continue to vote Labour to keep out the Tories. However, that is not enough! The Labour Party was created by the trade unions to represent the interests of the working class in Parliament. That is their historic mission. In 1918, the party realized that this aspira-



tion could not be achieved on the basis of capitalism, and Clause 4, the aim of socialism, was introduced. It is necessary to fight to return Labour to its real traditions! We must fight to defeat the Tories, but at the same time we must fight to defeat the right wing policies that are undermining Labour and, if not checked, will end up in disaster.

Socialist Appeal rejects the arguments of the defeatists and sectarians who call on workers to leave the Labour Party, but have no serious alternative to offer. This is not the time to opt out of the Labour Party, but to opt in to the fight for a change of course: for a socialist policy and a decisive break with Big Business! Above all, the trade unionists must commence a serious fight to reclaim the Party for the working class. Demand the repeal of all Tory anti-union legislation! No to privatisation! For the renationalisation of all privatised industries and utilities, starting with the railways! For legal minimum wage of at least £6 per hour! Labour must defend the workers, not the bosses!

Only a vision of socialist change will inspire working people to vote Labour. That means a socialist programme that can urgently tackle the problems of poverty pay, unemployment, dead-end jobs, homelessness and the other ills affecting the lives of ordinary working people. Such a programme would really transform the lives of the majority of people. In the long term, the only way Toryism can be defeated is for a Labour government to carry out a socialist programme, based on the nationalisation of the banks, finance companies and big monopolies and the introduction of a socialist plan of production which puts people before profits. Only then will the aspirations of working people be realized. I

Capital Idea

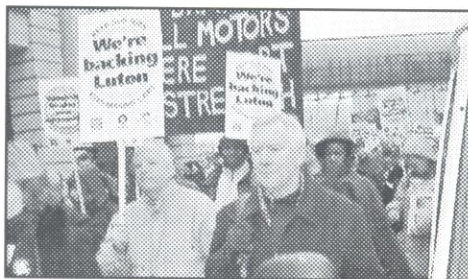
The UN met in Copenhagen in 1995 to attempt to cut the numbers of people living in 'absolute poverty', cut infant mortality by 2/3s and put every child in school by 2015. On current trends, this is not going to happen.

World Bank figures show, that for Sub-Saharan Africa, the worlds poorest region, incomes per head still falling dramatically and life expectancy plunging because of Aids.

Meanwhile, there is still the unsolved problem of Third world Debt. The UN can have no hope of meeting the 2015 targets if the Debts are not begun to be cut.

Although 22 countries have begun receiving 'debt relief', many other countries have still to meet the 'criteria' laid down by the IMF and World Bank at Cologne in 1999.

A potential obstacle to the issue of debt relief is the new Bush Administration in the US. It will be difficult to persuade 'free marketeers' such as George Bush and Alan Greenspan to spend US taxpayers money on poverty reduction.



Vauxhall: National action needed

On the 20th January, Luton saw a magnificent demonstration of over 10,000 local people, workers and their families. This was despite the bitter cold weather. The anger against Vauxhall's decision to close the plant kept everyone warm.

by Andy Viner

Many local people realized that the closure would also spell disaster for other local jobs and the economy in general. At the rally every speech that condemned General Motors was applauded and cheered. Ken Jackson, Bill Morris, Roger Lyons and John Monks all made fighting speeches. The rally reserved the best reception for the international car workers present from Germany, Spain and Belgium. They did not have to say a word. Everyone knew and appreciated their support in this struggle to keep the Luton plant open. On the 25th January the European day of action in support of Luton workers was a great success. The unofficial action at all the Vauxhall plants was solid.

The ballots across all 3 Vauxhall plants for strike action to save Luton have not gone as well as hoped. The T&G received a majority of 58% in favour of industrial action. The AEEU lost their strike ballot by 200 votes, but received a 76% vote in favour of action short of strikes. The MSF also lost their strike vote. It would not be surprising for some workers at Luton to feel a little wind has been taken out of their sails, following the ballot results. Management has been distributing a lot of propaganda since Christmas. The announcement to invest more in Ellesmere Port would have won some workers, who were not sure what to do, over to the soft option. This is just the first round. With all the votes added together, a slender majority for strike action was received.

The logical and moral argument is all in favour of the Luton workforce. A Commons Select Committee has produced a report vindicating all the unions arguments for keeping the Luton plant open. The World

Automobile Association reports that there is a cyclical downturn in car sales in Europe. This is not the case in Britain. In countries where demand is still up production should continue. In fact, they predict that despite what is being said about overproduction, by 2010, under-production will be the order of the day if more car plants are not built now.

The bosses are desperately trying to rush through their plans to close Luton. They want to introduce a 1-shift system from the 19th February. To do this they need to transfer 1200 workers to the IBC plant next door. Only 550 workers have inquired about this option. Even some of these have now withdrawn their interest in going to this plant. Meetings are still continuing on a European level.

The mass rally at the Luton plant on the 15th February should be used to launch Round Two of the fight. If the T&G announce the first strike date, and material is produced to build up confidence; a momentum can be built. The forthcoming support from General Motors' workers across Europe will be a great leveller against Vauxhall. The speech by John Monks must be turned into action. The TUC should be preparing for solidarity action across Britain. The decline in the manufacturing base has got to be stopped. Luton's fight must be linked with workers from other companies like Corus steelworks in Wales who plan to close. Luton is not just a fight against closure. It is a fight against globalisation. The same fight as that of workers at Corus, Rolls Royce Aerospace, Coats Viyella, Abbey National and the rest.

London Underground hit by trade union solidarity

Not since the Taff Vale dispute in 1901 has a court judgement been so damaging to a trade union. One hundred years on the Rail Maritime & Transport Union (RMT) have been dealt a similar blow to that of their forefathers the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants (ASRS).

by Derrick Marr
National Union of Rail,
Maritime and Transport

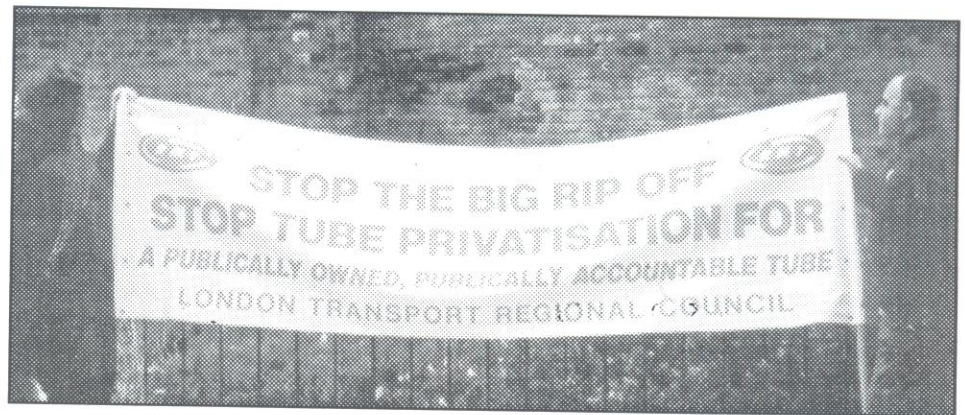
Following the joint action by rail unions RMT and ASLEF against London Underground Limited (LUL) regarding their concerns over the implementation of the Labour Party's privatisation of the underground system called PPP, the members of both unions gave resounding support in each of their unions ballots.

Both unions agreed to enter in to this dispute together and laid down three dates for action on consecutive Mondays commencing 5th February 2001. Immediately LUL's legal team was hot on the case and with RMT being an all grades union and the larger of the two unions, it was the automatic first choice to be set upon.

With LUL grabbing at as many straws as possible to defeat RMT's 9 - 1 majority ballot result, it finally went to court citing the 1992 Trades Union & Labour Relations Act, as amended in 2000, and claimed RMT had not given sufficient information prior to balloting. The fact is RMT had only quoted the number of members they were balloting in the various shadow franchises and felt that it was no longer necessary to give names following Labour's Fairness At Work Act last year. ASLEF, on the other hand, continued as before by disclosing the names of their members balloted.

Mr. Justice Gibbs, presiding over matters, stated that in his opinion, under the amended 1992 act, which states, "the union must provide as a minimum, any information which it possesses as to the number, category or workplace of the employees concerned", the RMT had not carried out proper balloting procedures and issued an injunction on behalf of LUL against RMT.

During the course of the two day court action RMT put in their defence that they were not necessarily privy to this kind of



information as, aside from members only stating this information on joining and often moving within the company without informing the union, the company had removed the facility for the payroll deduction of RMT contributions which also kept both parties informed of who was in the union and their grade and location. Mr. Justice Gibbs responded to RMT's defence by claiming, "organising a trade union is no different to organising a bowls club". He also said that it was not acceptable for a union to claim it did not have this information which could be collated through the various branch structures/ reps. and even if a union rep/branch did not have the facilities to collate this information, it should be given to them.

Found Solidarity

When RMT offered to give names in line with the information ASLEF had provided, the Judge responded by saying that in his opinion, members names alone are unacceptable and that the information ASLEF had provided was insufficient but that he had not been asked to pass a judgement on their procedures, merely on the RMTs'. This was interpreted as a clear invitation to LUL to challenge ASLEF. But challenge ASLEF they did not, instead they offered to enter in to talks to reach agreement.

The problem for LUL was that they had not considered this new found solidarity between the two unions and believed that having injuncted RMT they would now, at the very least, be able to run a skeleton

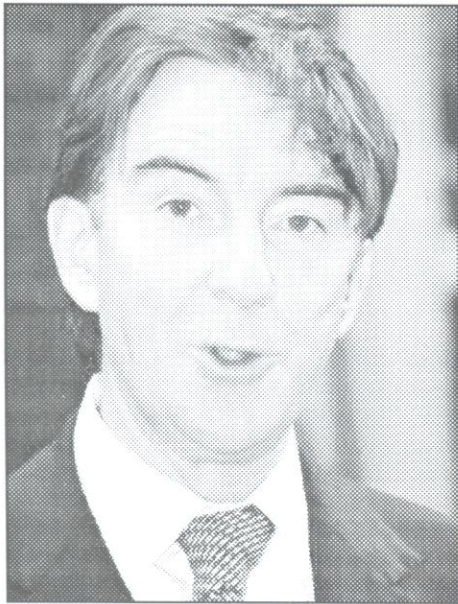
service to break the resolve of the unions and having left ASLEF on their own to fight would automatically split the two groups of members.

This was the furthest from the truth because although RMT's National Executive called off the action the members on the ground were far too fired up to be held back and on the 5th February 2001 over 4,000 employees refused to attend work where LUL had only expected the 2,000-odd ASLEF members. Only one service ran through the city centre and that ran a greatly reduced service of less than 50%, every where else it was "NO SERVICE".

Picket lines were manned by ASLEF and RMT alike and RMT members refused to cross them. The highly publicised 'train drivers' dispute had been an absolute success with several stations closed into the bargain. In return for this show of solidarity ASLEF was more than equal for LUL was on the warpath. They had sent a letter via the solicitors with a list of names that had openly gone on strike. But ASLEF far from going behind the backs of the RMT and entering in to individual talks, stood shoulder to shoulder with RMT and stated they would not talk unless RMT was involved and until LUL gave them a written guarantee that no internal disciplinary or any legal action would be taken against RMT members who supported the strike. This was duly given from the management who, when challenged as to their intentions to claim financial damages off the RMT, responded by saying, not at all, we just want to put RMT members in jail. I

Stop Press: RMT is now rebalotting for industrial action

For a further article dealing with this issue, by Andy Viner, see www.socialist.net



Mandelson's departure from office will be celebrated by Labour members and trade unionists around the country. His resignation for the second time during a single parliament must be unprecedented, and is a blow to the Blairites and their 'project' to destroy the Labour Party. Surely there can be no Third Way back for Mandy.

by Phil Mitchinson

The newspapers are full of stories of splits at the top of the Labour Party, between Blair and Brown, in the cabinet and so on. However, these divisions are not motivated by principle, other than the Blairite creed of power, as ministers vie and jockey for favour and position. Yet opposition does exist at every level of the party. Even in the parliamentary party. Rebellion in parliament has been too limited in numbers to challenge the government's majority. Still the news of Mandelson's departure was celebrated by some MPs like Bob Marshall-Andrews reported in the press as sipping champagne at Westminster and joking with fellow MPs, "Do you think he'll top himself? ... "You always want the cherry on the cake, Bob" ... "Do you think they'll give us the M1 for the street party."

This opposition is more often than not muted and incoherent. It has no organisation and no programme. The Left as an organised force has been barely noticeable in the last period. The massive opposition

Peter's Passport from Power

in the ranks remains generally passive, breaking through only when the opportunity arises, as the example of the Livingstone business demonstrated, because it lacks a focal point.

Activists and party members understandably become angry and frustrated. It is this, and the consequence of Blair's continuation of Tory policies, not the loss of Mandelson the 'election campaign guru' that will probably result in a decline in Labour's vote at the forthcoming election.

The 1997 election result had nothing to do with Mandelson and everything to do with a rejection of the Tories. Over 18 years Thatcher, Major and co. embarked on a mission to transform Britain into a model of deregulation, privatisation and anti-trade unionism. The consequences of these policies and the general position of British capitalism has been a counter-revolution in the workplace, the virtual destruction of the NHS and a gaping poverty gap. It is an outrage that after four years of Labour government, on the eve of a new election, so little has changed. Not content with mimicking the Tories social and economic policies it seems the cliques masquerading as a Labour leadership are intent on aping that other success story of the Tories - sleaze.

By sticking by the market rather than the needs of the people who elected them, Blair and co. could never address the problems we face every day.

Continuing with the market, the profit motive, greed has another consequence too. Those at the top with the power to do so are more concerned with enriching themselves than with standing up for the millions of ordinary working people who put them there.

Beginning with the Ecclestone affair, and continuing with Mandelson's previous 'indiscretion' the home loan scandal, the current scandals surrounding Mandelson (again) and Vaz are the latest in a shameful procession of Labour leaders' 'errors of judgement.' Such polite language for lying and cheating.

This time Mandelson was accused of covering up involvement in rushing through the Hinduja's passport application. The Hinduja brothers then later donated £1 million to the Faith Zone in the Dome. I don't know the professed religions of any of those involved, but they clearly share the same god, money.

We are not so much concerned here

with the constitutional niceties of the 'register of members' interests', as the outrage of Labour government members who believe it is acceptable to buy luxury mansions, aping their rich friends, while so many families in Britain are homeless, or live in the gutter ghetto conditions of estates like Peckham whose tenants are suing under the Human Rights Act. Or those who think it is acceptable to arrange passports for wealthy business types while supporting reactionary policies on immigration and the deportation of asylum seekers.>

Yes, Mandelson should go and so should Vaz. Not simply because they've broken some Westminster rule, but because they do nothing to represent the interests of those who elected them. As prominent supporters or even architects of the Blairite project they have done more than most to try to disenfranchise millions of ordinary working people by attempting to destroy the very party they claim to represent.

This is not just a case of a few rotten apples, the entire 'project' is rotten to the core. Getting one or two individuals out of office, whilst a pleasure to watch, solves nothing. The Labour Party needs to be reclaimed by ordinary workers, trade unionists and young people.

It is common these days for the knowledgeable experts who write learned tomes on the causes of crises like Japan's long slump, or the financial crash in South East Asia, to blame corruption for spoiling an otherwise perfect system. In truth there are more fundamental reasons why the capitalist system does not and cannot work. Nonetheless the crisis inherent in the system's own contradictions breeds the corruption we see all around us.

Labour and trade union leaders should stop cosying up to big business, and start standing up for the working class.

Labour should break with their big business friends and its Tory policies. To shake off the filthy stink of corruption, all Labour officials, MPs, trade union leaders etc, should earn no more than the wage of a skilled worker. Their expenses should be vetted by the movement. This would raise them above suspicion and perhaps more importantly make them live in the same world as the rest of us, the real world, the one where Blairism is failing to address our needs, the one crying out for socialist change. I

Young Labour conference: Stitch-up Protest

The Young Labour conference took place over the weekend of the 16th to 18th of February in Glasgow. It was one of the five conferences that formed the basis of the Labour Party's Spring conference. The others were the Local Government, Women's, European and Political Education conferences. The sessions in the main lasted no more than an hour or so before all delegates and visitors were returned to the main conference hall to hear the full array of cabinet ministers in what was basically a showcase rally for the leadership.

by Steve Forrest,

Youth Officer Erith and Thamesmead CLP.

The Young Labour conference session was the worst attempt in stage management witnessed in many a year, to the point where delegates and visitors were forced by the stewards to sit at the front for appearances sake. There weren't even any workshops where debate could take place let alone motions up for discussion and debate. There was the usual speakers lined up to speak at the conference: Bob Mulholland from the Californian Democrats, Jim Murphy MP and an employee of Millbank. Jack Straw was introduced as the man who could brighten up a dreary Saturday afternoon. Tell that to the asylum seekers.

Young Labour as an organisation was set up in 1993 to counter the party's rising average membership age and provide canvassing fodder for the party in election campaigns. Every single conference since then has been stage managed and rigged but what took place in the session to decide the new NEC youth rep was really the first time that anger and protest had reached the conference floor. It was directed against the attempts to stitch up the election in favour of the Blairite candidate. It was never going to be possible for the Blairites to control Young Labour indefinitely certainly not when young people are discriminated against in the minimum wage and have to pay tuition fees and borrow their way through university under a Labour government.

It all started with a point of order regarding the validity of all the candidates

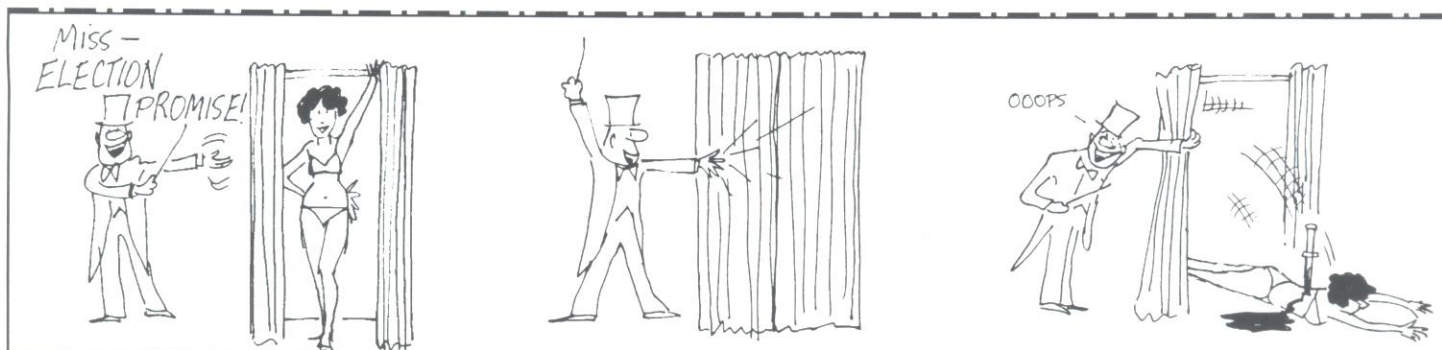
to stand for this position and over "delegates" who had put in ballot papers who weren't delegates. The conference then took a break for the voting to take place. One of the candidates Mathew Willgress had earlier withdrawn in favour of another candidate, the youth officer of Ellesmere Port CLP. This was not brought to the attention of the conference until voting was underway and in fact voting was underway, even before the hustings had taken place. After the break a further point of order was made on these further irregularities. The chairs contempt for conference, when she announced that all matters had been dealt with, really just served to open the floodgates of protest.

Lost of control

The chair, an employee of the national constitutional committee, completely lost control of conference with delegates and visitors standing seven or eight deep at each of the two microphones to make points of order into not just this election but the whole running of Young Labour. Even the National Chair and Vice Chair of Young Labour made a joint point of order on the running of the election. Under the pressure of the mood of the meeting even the current NEC youth rep moved that due to the lack of confidence in the process the election should be suspended and put on the agenda for the following morning and then run with full democracy including the showing of credentials so that

conference could have confidence in the election. The chair of the conference amidst this mood further ignited the situation when she over ruled the NEC youth reps proposal and moved to the vote. This was immediately challenged by a whole number of delegates who called for a vote of no confidence in the chair. This was ruled out of order by her sidekick, also from the national constitutional committee, on the basis that Young Labour doesn't have a standing orders committee.

In the hustings that followed it was quite clear that there was two trends in the conference as anti-leadership candidate declared to applause that he stood for no discrimination in the minimum wage, in favour of the union link and for a democratic Young Labour. The leadership candidate did indeed win the election but, as the National Chair of Young Labour said when he opened the hustings, the winner will possibly have a short life as the NEC youth rep when the election is looked into. For the first time Young Labour showed its potential to develop as a campaigning socialist youth organisation. As Young Labour members we have a duty to continue the struggle for democracy but also to fight against the policies that effect young people in work, at university or in school. On that basis we should give our full support to the demonstration called for the 30th June in Glasgow by the Scottish TUC youth committee against the discrimination of young workers in the minimum wage. I





The new proposals for secondary education from the Blair government, despite all the rhetoric about the importance of education, has created widespread alarm. The attack on 'bog-standard' comprehensives and the move towards specialist schools smacks of Toryism.

By Dave Simms

For nearly twenty years under Thatcher, the system of comprehensive education was systematically undermined in the government's drive towards greater selection. The Tory government, as the political representatives of big business, was the champion of the grammar school, the opt-out school, and private education generally. It sought to reinforce selection and make education and learning more attentive to the needs of capitalism. It introduced league tables together with a greater emphasis on testing. Chris Woodhouse, the reactionary Witch-Finder General, was employed to carry through this 'counter-revolution'.

The Tories' aim was to re-establish the 'old' traditional system of learning, with a far greater participation of business. They dreamed of reintroducing a ver-

sion of the notorious 'eleven plus' system, which segregated children between 'secondary modern' and grammar schools. This two-tier system was brought in originally with the help of the reactionary Sir Cyril Lodowic Burt, a keen promoter of IQ testing and eugenics. He claimed men were more intelligent than women, Christians more intelligent than Jews, Englishmen than Irishmen, upper-class Englishmen than lower-class Englishmen, and so on. These reactionary views helped to construct the British education system, and Burt was duly knighted for his contribution to humanity.

It was hoped that a new labour government would reverse this process towards selection. But the Blair government has simply continued where the Tories left off. They have become the new champions of selection and business sponsorship. The hated Woodhouse was left in his position, and the disgraceful campaign to blame poor standards on "bad" teachers was pursued with renewed vigor by the ex-left education secretary Blunkett. For the Blairites, who admired Thatcher's "reforms", the problems in education were less to do with scarce resources and envi-

Education: 'bog-standard' Blairism

ronment, and more to do with 'liberal' teaching methods. Poor performing schools - identified by Woodhouse - were 'named and shamed', and threatened with closure or take over. Teachers were forced to rapidly adapt to the new regime and were forced to fill in endless bureaucratic forms. The government's attack on teachers and their failure to address the real problems in the classroom resulted in an increasingly demoralised teaching staff.

The Blair government, consistent with its groveling before the wonders of the market economy, has sought to substitute state funding of education by involving big business directly in sponsorship and even the control of learning. This is a return to the reactionary ideas of the past, where education was openly regarded by the ruling Establishment as simply a means of producing educated workers for industry, the bulk of who received simply the three 'Rs'. There were those who were born to be hewers of coal and carriers of water, and those who would receive an elite education and who would rule over society. Clearly education under capitalism is shaped by the needs of capitalism. This has always been the case, but was largely camouflaged by the post war upswing and the expansion of education.

Now testing and segregation is back with a vengeance. Blairites have now attacked comprehensive school learning as "bog standard", and have projected a vision of education based upon the expansion of specialist and religious schools. Socialists have always opposed the segregation of children on the basis of sex, creed or religion, which serves to reinforce division and prejudice. As a sarcastic letter to *The Guardian* put it recently: "So there will be more schools admitting children based on their religious background. Just the kind of arrangement which has worked so well in Northern Ireland, where you may study Catholic or Protestant maths and geography as well as Protestant or Catholic domestic science. That really is progress."

Blair's new proposals include plans to turn nearly half of comprehensives into 'specialist schools' by 2006. These schools will be able to select 10% of their pupils by 'aptitude' and will qualify for extra funding. What will happen to the intake of the 54% of schools without selection and without additional funding? Without

doubt specialist schools will receive greater resources at the expense of the "bog standard" comprehensives. As the *'Daily Mail'* gleefully announced on its banner heading: DEATH OF THE COMPREHENSIVE.

The majority of comprehensives are being transformed into "secondary moderns", not by the Tories, but by a so-called Labour Government. The grammar schools will be back. It is a two-tier education system. Its aim is the promotion of the 'brightest' children, while the remainder are seen and treated as second class. Even the traditional right wing of the Labour Party are opposed to these moves, as is witnessed by Roy Hattersley's defence of comprehensive education.

The 'fresh start' scheme - whereby 'failing' schools are reopened with new managers and staff - will be ditched and private sponsors invited to take over. McDonald's, Nike and NatWest Bank will become candidates to run our children's education - for a profit.

Class-ridden capitalism is not interested in paying for a rounded-out education for everyone. That is regarded by big business as a waste of money. Why educate someone beyond his or her status? The working class needs only the education required for it to fulfill its tasks - and no more. Selection and specialization is needed from an early age. That has always been the position of the representatives of capital.

For an education geared to the rounded-out development of the new generation, would mean that it would have to be taken out of the hands of big business and its representatives. Such an education, developing to the fullest the latent talents of individuals for the benefit of society, is utterly incompatible with capitalism. The driving force of the capitalist system is the profit motive. Education is directly linked to this need. As a result the talents of millions are squandered. But as long as the elite is allowed to rule, they are not interested in this trifle.

That is why socialists see the only road to real education, where experiment and critical thought is encouraged, can only come about with the end of this class-based system of capitalism. Only when the working class owns the resources of society, can they be fully used to develop society, ushering in a revolution in learning and culture. Rather than being pigeon-holed from an early age, young people would receive an all-round education, allowing them to develop freely and make a real contribution to society. At this point, we must fight against the reactionary stance of the Blair Government.

- Big business out of education!
- Free education open to all!
- For a socialist education policy!

Livingstone Steps back

In London we have just witnessed a tremendous show of industrial power as the tube drivers brought London to a standstill. This strike by ASLEF drivers was supported by vast numbers of RMT drivers and station staff who refused to cross picket lines even after their union was barred by the court from striking. Commuters in London, many of whom had to walk miles to get into work supported this strike over safety on the underground and against PPP. Only one month previously Livingstone announced to a packed meeting of tube workers: "If the trade unionists take the decision for industrial action, I will join them on the picket lines." Everyone at the meeting greeted this with a standing ovation. But for reasons only Ken Livingstone himself knows he did not join the picket line on the day. In fact he was travelling back from his second home in Brighton where trains conveniently arrive in Victoria station, which is within walking distance of Ken's office.

During the course of the week after the first strike, Livingstone returned to his old ways. He spoke in some quarters of definitely being on the picket line for the next day of action, Monday 12th February. But he also told the right wing Tory press that he wouldn't be on the picket line because he felt the dispute would be resolved by then.

Livingstone was given his mandate by the voters of London on the basis that he opposed PPP (privatisation in all but name) but when it came to the crunch he did not support the tube workers who were prepared to give up a days pay and in the case of RMT members risk far more in their support of the strike. And now there seems to be a deal done that will allow private contractors to carry out the work on the underground under the single unified management of Bob Kiley. As socialists in the Labour party and trade unions we need to continue the campaign in support of the rail unions for a publicly run publicly funded underground system in London.

Steve Forrest,
GMB London region personal capacity.

NEC Elections

The left slate from the grassroots alliance has produced its slate for the forthcoming Labour Party NEC elections.

The names are:

Ann Black
Rozanne Foyer
Kumar Murshid
Mark Seddon
Christine Shawcroft
Pete Willsman

As last year the ballot forms will probably be hidden inside the copies of 'Inside Labour' normally sent out to all party members (and usually binned without opening) so warn people to look out for this and rescue the ballot form!

Renationalise the Steel Industry!

Steelworkers have responded with fury to the latest redundancies announced by the Anglo-Dutch company CORUS formerly known as British Steel. Corus announced it was axeing 6,000 jobs in early February. South Wales will be hardest hit with 1340 redundancies at Harwen near Newport. The nearby plant at Ebbw Vale will close altogether with the loss of 780 jobs and other jobs will be lost at Sholton in North Wales.

by Miles Todd, Scunthorpe

On Teeside 234 jobs are to go at Rediar, at least 250 are expected to lose their jobs in South Yorkshire and although no immediate job losses were announced at Scunthorpe, unions braced themselves for a possible 500 job losses within the next two years.

Dari Taylor Labour MP for Stockton South told MPs the announcement of severe job losses in Teeside meant her constituents believed "that their livelihood and those of their families are in straight terms in question". She went on: "Their anger is added to because they heard this news on the radio. The ISTC were refused the opportunity to speak with management to see what options could be achieved to save jobs". North Lincolnshire council leader Nik Dakin said: "The job losses are a betrayal of the workforce which is amongst the most productive in Europe".

Bob Shannon, notional officer for the AEEU said: "CORUS has kept us in the dark, then hit us for six. They have taken the heart out of our industry, shattering the workforce and their communities. Corus has behaved like the mill owners of Victorian Britain, this will go down as one of the darkest days for steelworkers."

The news come as *Socialist Appeal* has previously warned on the back of a world-wide downturn in demand for steel. In the EU alone the drop is expected to be in the order of 3 million tonnes. Figures from the UK Steel Association show that the demand for UK steel in 1999 was the lowest for 5 years at 13.2 million tonnes and over 10% down on 1998. Export dropped 14% to 5.5 million tonnes. In terms of export only Scotch Whisky reaches more countries than steel produced in this country, but with the general crisis facing British manufacturing industry this round of cuts represents another nail in the coffin for domestic production.

At Scunthorpe though the first signs of a coordinated fightback by steelworkers have emerged. There has been an 83% vote in favour of industrial action in three key branches of the ISTC including the BOS plant, the continuous casting plant and the Anchor rail traffic department, 63% of those who voted were in favour of strike action. The ISCT General Secretary, Mick Lealy said "the ballot results showed the mood of Scunthorpe steelworkers". These figures

represent a decisive vote for a fightback and the ISTC should organise plant wide ballots up and down the country. With a well organised campaign a "YES" vote for action could be achieved quite easily. Dutch steelworkers have offered their support and as a start a One Day National Strike would be a massive stepforward, the first action of its kind since the 1980 steel strike.

Despite condemnation from the Government over lack of consultation, it is obvious that the government has little to offer and it is up to steel workers through militant action to force CORUS to reverse these job cuts and plant closures.

CORUS seems more interested in their shareholders and the City than the lives of ordinary steelworkers. When it merged with Dutch firm HOOGOVENS over £700 million was dished out in a special dividend payments and when the latest redundancies were announce CORUS share price reached a 6 month high. Steelworkers have nothing to gain from big business and should fight for the immediate re-nationalisation of steel.

- ✦ For a 32 hour week and for retirement at 55 with enhanced pension for all
- ✦ For militant action
- ✦ For a day national strike as the first step towards a coordinated campaign to reverse the cuts
- ✦ Victory to the steelworkers!

Get your May Day greetings at Socialist Appeal

The May Issue of *Socialist Appeal* will be the 90th of the journal. It will also be a Special Issue, devoted to May-Day. It is therefore the intention of the editors to carry a special 4 page supplement containing May-Day greetings from labour and Trade Unions at home and abroad.

We are approaching all of our readers and supporters active in their Trade Union and Labour Party to consider discussing with their local Branch the possibility of taking out a greeting in the journal. Our rates are competitive and are indicated below.

- A box 12cm/20cm will cost £60
- A box 8cm/14cm will cost £30
- A box 4cm/10cm will cost £15
- A box 2cm/14cm will cost £10

The actual size and design of the separate boxes are available on request from the usual address.

Please send the wording of your message and size of box to:

Socialist Appeal
PO Box 2626
London
N1 7SQ

All Cheques should be made payable to Socialist Appeal. Please let us know of your requirements by the 15th April.

Socialist Appeal
PO Box 2626
London N1 7SQ
appeal@socialist.net
<http://www.socialist.net>
<http://www.marxist.com>

International Women's Day

The 8th of March is celebrated worldwide as International Women's Day. That day is quite well known by people in the developed countries although its origins are not so famous. If we are not careful we could end up thinking that it was established about twenty years ago by the United Nations who have adopted it as one of its many "humanitarian activities" and now present it as a day for celebration, without any political or militant content, the main idea being that "things were terrible but now we are more or less OK".

by Espe Espigares

Nothing could be further away from reality regarding the oppression of women today or the origins of International Women's Day itself.

On the last Sunday of February 1908, socialist women in the USA declared their first Women's Day holding a demonstration demanding the right to vote and other economic and political rights for women. The following year, 2,000 people participated in a rally in Manhattan.

In 1910, at the Second International Conference of Socialist Women, 100 delegates from different organisations in 17 countries decided to adopt the 8th of March as Women's Day internationally. They had in mind that this day should be a day of struggle, to denounce the exploitation of women, and they chose the 8th of March to commemorate the struggle of the shirtwaist workers of the Cotton factory in New York who were on strike for 13 days for higher wages and an improvement in their conditions of work. This struggle, supported by the Women's Trade Union League, ended up with the cruel murder of 119 workers through the burning of the factory where they were protesting.

So we have to take into account that the origins of International Women's Day lie in a period in which women started entering massively into the labour force, working under terrible conditions of exploitation, segregated from male workers, mainly in the textile industry and with dreadful conditions of work and payment. It was a period of major turbulence with massive industrial disputes at all levels in which women, in trade unions and unorganised, participated actively.

What is the situation 90 years later?

As a result of the struggle of the workers there has been a certain improvement in the conditions of the workers in general. However, the situation of women workers has not improved sufficiently to justify International Women Day becoming a celebration without any political meaning at all.

Women are one third of the workforce

on a world scale although we work two thirds of the hours worked in the world receiving 10% of the income generated. Women also constitute 70% of the poorest people on the planet and, as an average, we receive 20-30% less in wages than men.

Class society

In Britain women make up more than 50% of the workforce and, in general, they have the worst jobs, with flexible and part time contracts, concentrated in low skilled jobs. This has nothing to do with women not being able to do the same jobs as men because of physical differences, because "it is in our genes" or because our brain is smaller, as bourgeois "scientists" try to demonstrate. Such arguments are just an attempt to divert attention from the root cause of the oppression of women: the existence of class society, in this case capitalism. As Engels explained in *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*, the development of agriculture and cattle breeding created a surplus which was not enough to be shared equally amongst all members of the community, and therefore a minority appropriated this surplus. This marked the beginning of class society and private property. This, in turn, made it necessary for men to pass on their private property to their offspring. Thus patrilineal hereditary rights came to dominate alongside the development of private property. Here we find the origins of the oppression of women, in the division of society into classes and the emergence of private property and the state. Physical differences and the different roles played by men and women before this division had not created inequality. Private ownership and class division turned these differences into the basis of oppression.

We could say that the capitalist system played a progressive role with the massive incorporation of women into the workforce, this is a basic point for her liberation. But at



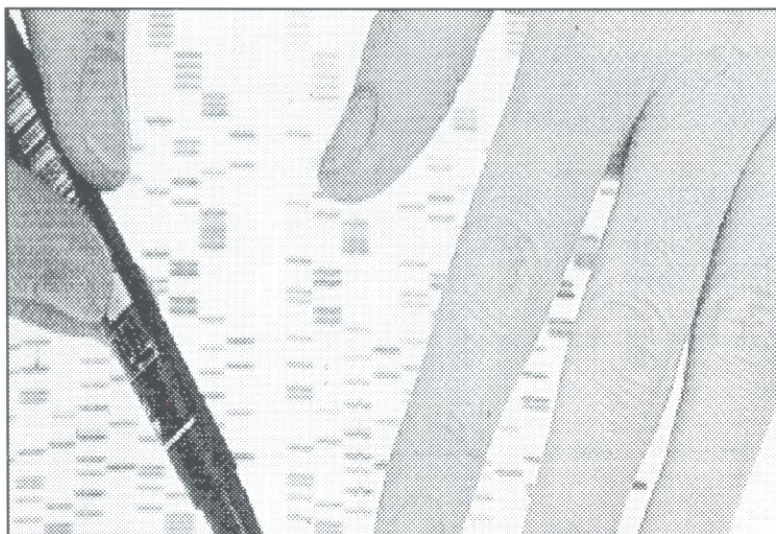
the same time this has not meant the freeing of women from the slavery of domestic work.

It is fundamental to understand the origins of the exploitation of women in order to work out a programme of action that can lead to real emancipation. Only Marxism has provided a scientific analysis of the way to achieve women's liberation. It is clear that if the exploitation of women came with the beginning of class society their emancipation can only be achieved by abolishing that class division. The capitalist system rests on that class division, therefore to end the class divide we must do away with capitalism itself. This is the only realistic solution. The real emancipation of women is something that the capitalist system cannot grant. Women have the worst and most casual jobs so when the economy enters in crisis they are the first ones to be laid off. That's why Mr Hague is proposing to give £1000 per year to married couples where one of the partners decides to stay at home looking after the kids. If women in general have the worst jobs, when a couple decides that one of them will stay at home we know which one of them is going to give up employment. By discouraging women from seeking paid work they also reduce the official unemployment statistics.

It is the capitalist system that pushes women back to the drudgery of domestic work at home, at the same time forcing women to accept the worst paid jobs with the least rights.

If we say that the only way to achieve genuine women's liberation is through the struggle for socialism then it becomes obvious that the struggle for women's liberation can only be successful as a part of the general struggle of the working class against the capitalist system.

As long as capitalism exists there will be plenty of reasons for women workers and the labour movement in general to organise a militant and fighting celebration of International Women's Day. I



Unmasking the human genome

Once every century or so great scientific breakthroughs grip the imagination of the world. With the publication of the results of the human genome project, we stand on the threshold of such a breakthrough.

by Alan Woods

For the first time, the human genome has been mapped, opening up the inspiring prospect of understanding how evolution works, changing the way doctors diagnose disease, curing illnesses that were thought to be incurable and extending the human life-span far beyond its present limits.

Despite the enormity of their discovery, the biologists who reported their first analysis of the decoded sequence were clearly as perplexed as they were enlightened. The chief puzzle is the unexpectedly small number of human genes. The problem is that the textbooks have long estimated the number of human genes to be far greater. The string of biological code present in humans was so long - some 3 billion units - that scientists had expected it to contain instructions to create anywhere from 50,000 to 150,000 genes. In fact, the number of genes in humans is in the region of 30,000 - not much more than twice the 13,000 genes in the humble fruit fly!

The small number of human genes poses a dilemma for scientists. *The Christian Science Monitor* posed the question thus: "If man is so advanced, how come his gene count doesn't look that much different from a weed's or a worm's?" And if, as suspected, the chimpanzee genome turns out to be very similar to the human genome, then scientists will still have to explain how one species has come to so dominate the world in the past 50,000 to 150,000 years while others are still climbing trees. This question, however, cannot be answered purely in terms of genetics. The great advantage of the recent discoveries is that they have moved away from the concept that everything could be explained in terms of individual genes. The human genome can now be approached as a complex totality. Genes have to be understood, not as a collection of entities but as a process of highly complex interactions.

The relatively small number of genes rules out the possibility of individual genes controlling and shaping behaviour patterns such as criminality and sexual preference. It completely destroys the case of people like Dean Hammer who claimed to have isolated a gene on the human X-chromosome which allegedly dispos-

es people to homosexuality. Similar claims have been made for a whole series of human traits from running ability to artistic taste and even political tendencies! In reality human behaviour is extremely complex and cannot be reduced to genetics. The latest discoveries flatly contradict all the nonsense which has been put forward for years as irrefutable.

The biological determinists insisted that in some way genes are responsible for things, like homosexuality and criminality. They attempted to reduce all social problems to the level of genetics, as in the case of the notorious Bell Curve by Charles Murray, which resurrected the old argument that genetics explains the gap between the average IQ of American whites and blacks. When we criticised these false theories in *Reason in Revolt*, we had no means of knowing that in a few years their unscientific character would be so clearly demonstrated. Now the revelation that the number of genes in humans is not more than 40,000 and possibly as few as 30,000 or less has shattered the case for biological-genetic determinism at a single stroke. Dr. Craig Venter, the US geneticist whose company Celera was one of the main groups responsible for the sequencing project, put the matter very simply: "We simply do not have enough genes for this idea of biological determinism to be right. The wonderful diversity of the human species is not hard-wired in our genetic code. Our environments are critical." (*Observer*, 11/ 2/ 2001)

The environment - the external stimuli of both the physical world and the conditions in which we live - that condition evolution in a decisive way. The role of genes is important, but the relation between genes and development is not simple and mechanical, as maintained by the crude theory of biological determinism, but complex and dialectical, as argued by Marxism

Thus, there is a complex interplay between the genetic composition of the organism and the physical conditions that surround it. In Hegelian language, the genes represent potential. But this potential is only activated by external stimuli. The genes are "switched on" by the environment, producing small changes,

some of which prove to be useful from an evolutionary point of view, although in fact most genetic mutations are harmful or confer no benefit. Over a period, the beneficial mutations give rise to qualitative changes in the organism, giving rise to the process we refer to as natural selection.

Creationism and racism exploded

The results of these investigations are highly significant from another point of view. The genome reveals the existence of unity in human diversity. They completely destroy the myth of racial superiority. The biological essence of human populations is the same. The absence of a race gene was confirmed from two different directions. Celera used DNA from males and females who described themselves as Asian Chinese, African American, Caucasian and Hispanic Mexican. Scientists could not distinguish one ethnicity from another. No gene by itself or together with others could predict the race of those studied.

The new research suggests that all individuals are 99.99 percent alike. And researchers are finding that the gene pool in Africa, where humankind is thought to have originated, remains more diverse than in the rest of the world. These findings completely undermine all notions of differences based on skin colour. Svante Pääbo, a German researcher, noted in an essay published in *Science* magazine with the release of the draft genome sequence explains: "It is often the case that two persons who descend from the same part of the world, and look superficially alike, are less related to each other than to persons from other parts of the world who may look very different."

The research on the human genome has proved beyond doubt that while outwardly we may be different, genetically we are 99% identical. Only about 3 million of the 3 billion chemicals in the genome differ from one person to another, which makes distinctions such as race scientifically meaningless. Ethnic and cultural differences among different groups of humans undoubtedly exist, but these differences are insignificant at the genetic level where people are remarkably the same, regardless of race and gender. Racial hatred cannot therefore be justified and rationalised as arising from genetic differences.

The revelation of the genome's long and complex

of capitalism. It is an extremely striking example of the dialectical contradiction of the lag of human consciousness. In the most technologically advanced country in the world, the minds of millions of men and women are sunk in barbarism. Their level of consciousness is not much higher than when men sacrificed prisoners of war to the gods, prostrated themselves before graven idols and burnt witches at the stake. If this movement were to succeed, as one scientist recently put it, we would be back in the Dark Ages.

The latest discoveries have finally exploded the nonsense of Creationism. It has comprehensively demolished the notion that every species was created separately, and that Man, with his eternal soul, was especially created to sing the praises of the Lord. It is now clearly proved that humans are not at all unique creations. The results of the human genome project show conclusively that we share our genes with other species - that ancient genes helped to make us who we are. Humans share their genes with other species going far back into the mists of time. In fact, a small part of this common genetic inheritance can be traced back to primitive organisms such as bacteria.

Science and dialectics

The spectacular march of science in our epoch makes the speculations of philosophy seem pale and uninteresting by comparison. The deeds of humanity have by far outstripped the general level of its consciousness, which remains largely mired in the barbarous past. The new discoveries provide the human race with inspiration and confidence in itself. It provides us with a vision of ourselves, who we really are, and where we have come from - perhaps also where we are going to. Yet philosophy still has a role to play. More correctly, dialectical materialism has a crucial role to play.

Although many of the main tenets of dialectical materialism have re-surfaced in recent years, incorporated into the theories of chaos, complexity and, more recently, ubiquity, this debt has never been acknowledged. This is a pity, since a knowledge of the dialectical method would certainly have helped avoid a number of pitfalls into which science has occasionally strayed as a result of incorrect assumptions. The human genome is a case in point.

Of course, there is no question of any philosophy

The research on the human genome has proved beyond doubt that while outwardly we may be different, genetically we are 99% identical. Only about 3 million of the 3 billion chemicals in the genome differ from one person to another, which makes distinctions such as race scientifically meaningless.

history, so long hidden from view, has prompted discussions about the nature of man and the process of creation. Incredibly, in the first decade of the twenty first century, the ideas of Darwin are being challenged by the so-called Creationist movement in the USA, which wants American schoolchildren to be taught that God created the world in six days, that man was created from dust and that the first woman was made out of one of his ribs, the Almighty presumably being on an economy drive that day.

The Creationist movement is no joke. It involves millions of people and is - incredibly - spearheaded by scientists, included some geneticists. This is a graphic expression of the intellectual consequences of the decay

dictating to science. The results of science must be determined by its own methods of investigation, observation and experiment. Nonetheless, it is a mistake to imagine that scientists approach their subject matter without any philosophical assumptions. Behind every hypothesis there are always many assumptions, not all of them derived from science itself. The role of formal logic, for example, is taken for granted. It is an important role, but one that has definite limitations. Trotsky explained that the relationship between formal logic and dialectics resembles that between elementary mathematics and calculus. The great advantage of dialectics over formal logic is that it deals with things in their motion and development, and moreover shows how all

development takes place through contradictions. Thus, Marx predicted that the line of evolution was not a straight line, but a line in which long periods of slow development ("stasis" in modern terminology) was broken by sudden leaps - breaks in continuity that impelled the process in a new direction.

What is the source of the error which led geneticists to conclude that humans possessed far more genes than is, in fact, the case? It is known in philosophy as reductionism, and flows from the mechanical assumption that nature knows only purely quantitative relations. This lies at the heart of biological determinism which approaches humans as a collection of genes, and not as complex organisms, processes, the product of a dialectical interrelation between genes and the environment. Their mode of reasoning is that of formal logic, not dialectics. And from this philosophical standpoint, their conclusions were quite consistent. Logical - but radically false. They reasoned that, since humans are bigger and more complex than fruit worms and roundworms, they must have vastly more genes. However, nature produces many examples to show how changes in quantity eventually beget changes in quality. In many instances, quite small modifications can produce huge changes. The apparent contradiction between the size and complexity of humans and the relatively small number of genes involved can only be explained by recourse to this law.

The most important thing to grasp is that very small genetic mutations can give rise to huge differences. For example, the genetic difference between humans and chimpanzees is less than two percent. As the latest research shows, we have a lot more in common with other animals than we would perhaps like to admit! Most of the genetic material present in modern humans is very old, and identical with the genes which are found even in such lowly beings as fruit flies. Nature is inherently conservative and economical in its workings! Organic matter has evolved from inorganic matter, and higher life forms have evolved from lower ones. We share most of our genes, not just with monkeys and dogs, but with fishes and fruit flies. But merely to state this fact is insufficient. It is also necessary to explain the dialectical process whereby one species is transformed into another.

Human genome and Big Business

The human genome project has naturally attracted the attention of Big Business. Scientists - at least the good ones - are inter-

ested in pursuing knowledge for its own sake, of breaking new ground and pushing forward the horizons of science. Big Business is interested only in making money. In this case, they have been prepared to invest because they see the prospects for juicy profits. The biotechnological industry is based on isolating genes that go wrong in our bodies in order to create new drugs which they can sell for a profit. Even 30,000 potential new drugs spell a lot of money - for some.

The chaotic mechanism of the market, impelled exclusively by private greed, threatens to cripple the potential of the new breakthrough even before it has been born. The question is immediately posed of property rights ("patents"). Because companies usually want to have secure ownership rights to genes before investing the millions of dollars it takes to develop drugs from them, doubts about patent rights could have far-reaching effects. Some researchers have said this suggests that two scientists or companies, while researching different proteins involved in different diseases, are likely to have sought to patent portions of the same gene. The result could be a series of clashes over patents that would block one or both companies from continuing their research, producing a drug or developing a genetic test for disease. The patent office estimates that it has issued patents on about 1,000 full-length human genes, but it has tens of thousands of applications pending. The vultures are already circling! The prospect for chaos and endless lawsuits is clear and will work to the detriment of science and, ultimately, the millions of people who are desperately in need of new medical treatments, made possible by the genome project.

Unlike the middle class pressure groups which seem to have a principled objection to any scientific advance, Marxists are in favour of developing science and technology to the maximum extent, in order to solve the most pressing problems of humanity and lay the material basis for a higher form of human society - socialism. However, as long as the needs of the majority continue to be subordinated to the greed of the few, the marvellous discoveries of science will not be used for the advancement of humanity, to lighten the burden of work, to cure diseases and abolish poverty, but only to pile up riches for those who have too much wealth already, at the cost of the majority. The problem lies, not in science and technology, but in the use to which it is put.

Like genetically modified food, or any other technological discovery, the human genome in the hands of greedy and irre-

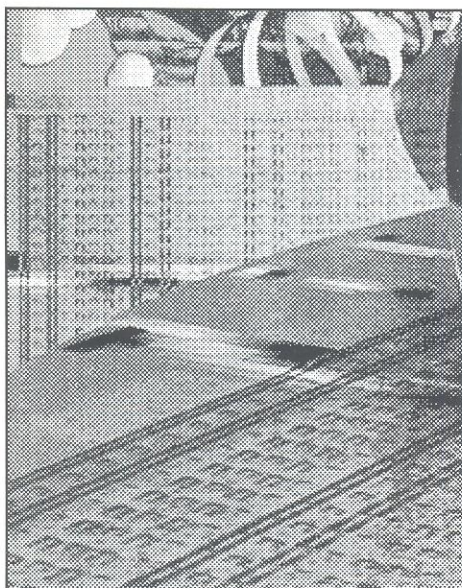


sponsible capitalists can be changed from a blessing on humanity to a curse. The latest marvellous discoveries in genetics, which were only made possible by the collaboration of men and women from every continent and nationality, and which go to the heart of that most profound question: who we are, cannot be monopolised by a handful of profiteers. The Labour Movement everywhere must demand the nationalisation of the big bio and pharmaceutical companies, as the first step to nationalising all the big banks and monopolies that dominate our lives and subject every aspect of our existence to the dictatorship of Capital. Only in a rationally planned socialist economy can the new discoveries achieve their full potential and be placed where they belong - at the service of humanity.

Limitless possibilities

The mapping of the human genome has carried us one step nearer to the goal of developing our physical and intellectual capacities to the fullest extent. This process is as yet in its earliest infancy. The next great challenge is to understand how genes are regulated. The tantalising prospect opens up before us of a world free from the scourge of disease, the obliteration of cancer and AIDS - those modern equivalents of the Black Death, the eradication of malaria and all the other illnesses that spell misery, suffering and death for millions of the poorest people on earth. We have the realistic prospect of curing the mentally ill and the helpless victims of genetic disorders.

All these are now practical propositions that can be realised within years or decades. But these things pale in insignificance before the longer term prospects that open up before us. In the long run, it is not inconceivable that human beings can attain mastery over the blind workings of natural selection itself. In the hands of private capi-



talists who put personal gain before all other considerations, genetic engineering poses a deadly threat even to the future of life on earth. But in a rationally ordered society, the new technology can pave the way to the most tremendous achievements yet seen. In the pages of the Bible, the blind saw, the deaf heard, the lame walked and the dead were raised. Now all these miracles can be achieved by science without recourse to the supernatural.

Of course, men and women will never achieve the kind of tedious immortality held out by religion. We should not desire to live forever, but to live this life - the only one available to us - to the full. The Bible promises us a life span of "threescore years and ten". Yet in the period of capitalism's senile decay, for countless millions, this is a dream. Life for the overwhelming majority of our planet in the first decade of the 21st

and all other fields of social activity, to raise ourselves up to the fullest potential permitted by Mother Nature, and then, when we have given all that we have to give, to retire from this world in good heart to make way for the new generations who will continue and extend our life's work. Such a perspective - essentially modest in the context of what we now know to be possible - could be considered "utopian" only by second-rate intellects and people who have become so demoralised and de-humanised by the decay of capitalism that they have lost all hope and all sense of human dignity, and have persuaded themselves that the present miserable state of affairs is all we can hope for.

What these wonderful achievements of science reveal to us is the limitless potential of the human race. And what it should also do is to make us all the more painfully aware of the criminal waste that is the most horrific feature of the so-called market economy. Until now, the defenders of the present system could hide behind the pseudo-scientific argument that the social inequality that condemns the majority of men and women to the rubbish heap was the result of "iron necessity", that it was "all in our genes".

The implications of this are truly staggering. In the course of human history, there have not been many geniuses. It is clear that Albert Einstein had the (genetic) potential to become a world-famous scientist. But it is equally clear that the same Albert Einstein, if born in a slum in Calcutta, would never have become such. The potential would have existed as a bare possibility, but would have simply been wasted. And such is the fate of a very large number of potential Einsteins,

develop whatever potential he or she possesses, while the other is driven down by poverty and despair. Human potential is ground down just as surely as a seed that is crushed under the heel of a boot.

The answer lies, not in our genes, but in the socialist transformation of society. By changing the material conditions of existence, we can create a favourable environment in which every individual can develop their personal potential to the full. This would mean a new Renaissance - a literal rebirth of humanity - on a far higher plane than anything seen hitherto. That, and nothing less, is the real meaning of socialism.

Marx explained long ago that "social being determines consciousness". So-called human nature is not something fixed and immutable. In fact, it has changed many times in the course of millions of years of human evolution. The idea that evolution has reached an end, that men and women have already reached the pinnacle of their physical and mental powers will not be accepted by any minimally cultured person with the slightest knowledge of how our species has struggled to reach the present point of its development. Far from ending, as Francis Fukuyama has suggested, human history has not yet begun. Nor will it begin until men and women finally take their destinies consciously into their own hands.

Ancient Greek mythology has handed down to us the story of Tantalus, the giant who was condemned by Zeus to suffer the torments of hunger and thirst while an abundance of food and drink lay just beyond his grasp. In this myth we have a direct analogy with capitalist society in the period of its decadence. All the material means exist for

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century, in the celebrated words of Hobbes, remains nasty, brutish and short". Yet there is no reason why this should be the case. The potential of modern industry, agriculture, science and technique is more than enough to solve all the pressing needs of humanity and create a paradise for men and women, not in the cloudy realm of the Hereafter, but right here and now - a paradise in THIS world.

By making use of the benefits conferred upon us by science and technology, the ordinary human life span can be extended far beyond its present "natural limits". It is entirely possible to foresee a world in which it would be considered normal to live a healthy and active life beyond a hundred years: to live life to the full, to add to the total store of human achievements in art, science

Darwins and Beethovens, whose potential is crushed and wasted by this infamous system of capitalism.

Trotsky once asked: "How many Aristotles are herding swine? And how many swineherds are sitting on thrones?" This question, until now was answered by the defenders of the established order - using the pseudo-scientific arguments so generously supplied from the genetics departments of universities.

Now all this has been blown to smithereens. The difference between the rich man in his castle and the poor man at his gate, in terms of their human potential, is negligible. The difference is not that they are born with different genes, but that one is born into a world of riches and privilege, and given every incentive and opportunity to

achieving the goal of socialism - a classless society in which humans will control their own lives instead of being the blind objects of unseen forces beyond their control or understanding. The next great step on the role of human evolution demands that we finally put an end to the degrading social apartheid of class society, that we put an end to the modern equivalent of slavery, and replace capitalist anarchy and the law of the jungle with genuinely human relations. Once we create the necessary conditions for human development, freeing the vast potential that exists in industry, agriculture, science and technology - and above all the virtually infinite potential for development that slumbers inside every human being - the sky would be the limit. I

d History

talism different systems of society, based on different structures and modes of production existed.

For the bulk of human existence, society was based upon "primitive communism", where no private property and no class society or state existed. Around 10,000 years ago we saw the emergence in some parts of the world of the first class society.

Slave society in Greece and Roman its day represented an enormous leap forward over barbarism, in that it took society forward. It allowed the productive forces to develop. On this basis, the Greeks and Romans developed scientific knowledge to tremendous heights. It was a necessary stage in the development of productive forces, culture and human society. As Hegel put it: "It is not so much from slavery as through slavery that man becomes free." In slave society the ruling class owned the means of production, in this case the slaves themselves. Whether the state was Athenian democracy or the unlimited despotism of the Roman Empire, it represented the interests of the ruling class.

The merchant oligarchy that now dominated the towns soon came into conflict with the restrictions of feudalism. At first this new bourgeoisie sided with the absolute monarchies against the powers of the feudal barons. Then later, they sought power for themselves.

The collapse of slave society with the decline and fall of the Roman Empire resulted from the impasse of that social system. It had exhausted itself and could no longer develop the productive forces effectively. The slave empires had to constantly wage war to replenish the slave population, leading to greater and greater conquests, which eventually over-stretched and doomed this form of society.

On the ruins of slavery emerged a new social system with a different mode of production: feudalism. Whereas the slave societies were based upon the ownership and exploitation of slave labour, feudal society based itself on land ownership and the exploitation of the peasants. Unlike the slave who owned nothing, but was himself the object of ownership, the peasant was a tenant of the landlord. He had more rights

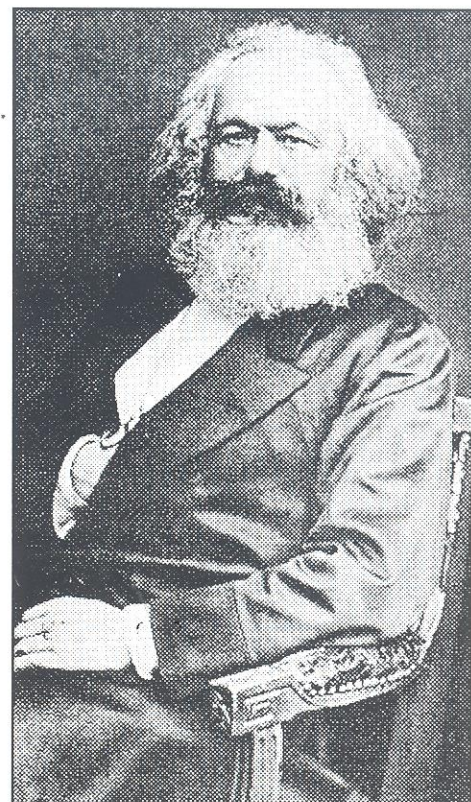
than the slave: he could not be sold, but was tied to the land. For this security he was obliged to work on the lord's land for a set time without payment. In an overwhelmingly agrarian society the means of production was the land itself, property of the feudal lords.

Within feudal society, the towns acted as a point of growth for elements of capitalism. Trade began to give rise to new forms of wealth. No longer was land the sole source of power and privilege. The merchant oligarchy that now dominated the towns soon came into conflict with the restrictions of feudalism. At first this new bourgeoisie sided with the absolute monarchies against the powers of the feudal barons. Then later, they sought power for themselves.

The basis of feudal economy was undermined as the power of the new bourgeoisie increased together with the development of the productive forces. They developed new ideas, philosophies and morals to challenge the old feudal order, which had become a massive fetter on the

further development of society.

In Holland, Britain and France, the young bourgeoisie overthrew the old feudal order and prepared the way for the massive growth of capitalism. These revolutions "freed" (that is expropriated) the peasants from the land to become wage workers for the new capitalist class. The means of production were forcibly separated from the peasants and the small artisans and drawn into the hands of the new ruling class. They owned the means of production - capital. The state did their bidding. The new working class produced a surplus, as had the slave and medieval peasant, but the forms of exploitation changed. Wage labour served to disguise the exploitation. The proletariat was forced to sell their labour power. However, in the course of their work they produced greater values than they



received in wages. This surplus value which was appropriated by the capitalists represented the unpaid labour of the working class.

Capitalism has its own laws of motion based on commodity production. It inevitably leads to a concentration of capital into fewer and fewer hands, resulting in the creation of giant monopolies. A boom and slump cycle characterises the convulsive

development of capitalism, which periodically leads to overproduction. Capitalism also creates the modern nation state together with the world market. While it resulted in a massive development of the productive forces, it also led to crises of mass unemployment and the polarisation of wealth. However, capitalist society lays the material basis for a new higher development of society. It creates its gravedigger in the form of the working class, which can only resolve its problems through the abolition of the private ownership of the means of production and the profit motive. Capitalism, like the slave and feudal modes of production before it, has taken production as far forward as it can. Capitalism in turn has become a fetter on the productive forces. It is time for it to go, and Marxism is a vital weapon to help despatch it. I

Youth for Socialism

"It is a striking fact that, every year for approximately the last 150 years, Marxism has been pronounced defunct." *Reason in Revolt*, p13

Reason in Revolt meeting at ULU

On the 13th of February, Alan Woods, co-author of *Reason in Revolt*, addressed a meeting at the University of London Union, on Marxism and how it relates to Modern Science.

by Colin Rice

The speaker first turned his attention to genetics. The recent discoveries in the field of genetics, with the recent publication of the "human genome" confirmed and validated the ideas put forward by Frederick Engels over 100 years ago.

Previously, the mystery that had surrounded this topic had enabled right wing politicians and scientists alike to make wild and outrageous statements about different classes and racial groups. Black people, women and the long term unemployed were all thought to be at an unavoidable disadvantage to white, middle class males. The latter supposedly had specific genes that made them 'less privileged' than the former. 'Women were stupider than men'. For black people, criminal activity was inherent (the so called 'criminal gene'). Armed with this 'science', right wing politicians in the USA could then cut benefits and other forms of state help to these groups with scientific justification.

But as Marx stated in the 19th century - 'Social being determines consciousness'; It is not a 'genetic defect' that provokes some sections of society into criminal activity, it is the discrimination of capitalist society that leaves blacks and the unemployed no option but to commit crimes and become reliant on welfare payments. Why is Colin Powell, the Secretary of State for Defence in America, not out stealing cars or breaking into innocent people's houses? Isn't he black? Does he not have the 'criminal gene'? Of course not. Neither does the black man mugging people in the ghettos of New York. The difference between them is not genetic: It is a social one. Powell has led a very easy life, relatively speaking. But the mugger is surrounded by poverty and social malaise.

However, it has now been established that human beings have approximately

30,000 genes as opposed to the previous estimates of 150,000. We only have twice as many genes as a fruit fly. This has amazed many people - Humans and fruit flies are vastly different, are they?not? Of course they are!

What scientists are missing is the dialectics in genetics. It is the leap from quantity into quality that sets us apart from fruit flies, and other such animals.

Unfortunately, as genetics is such a wide ranging subject, the speaker was left with little time to discuss the Big Bang and Chaos Theory, as fully as possible, and could only give short explanations of them.

The original proponents of Chaos Theory were not Marxists, nor did they have the slightest knowledge of Marx or Engels, yet the Theory bares a striking resemblance to the notion of the transformation of Quantity into Quality, one of the laws of Dialectics.

The most commonly known explanation for this theory is given by the example of the 'Butterfly Effect': A butterfly flaps its wings in the Amazon, causing a hurricane in Texas, which destroys towns and cities. We can see that this is the point that quantity transforms producing a qualitative result. The small changes build up provoking a qualitative change. This is also true for society. The small pressures will build up. The contradictions will grow and become more evident until they reach a point when the transformation of the quantity will result in the result of the qualitative socialist revolution.

The speaker ended the meeting with a brief summation of the Big Bang theory.

This theory, which is expounded by many respected physicists, states that the universe came into being around 15 billion years ago. Before this, all matter was



concentrated at a single point before being released by an explosion (when 'time began'). As a result, all matter filled the universe, which is still expanding today.

The theory contradicts the law of physics that states that matter is constantly in motion. If the theory of the big bang is correct, then surely there must have been a period before it when matter was not in motion, before the Big Bang occurred. The Big Bang is now being used by Creationists (who believe that the earth was created in six days by a supreme being) to justify the first Genesis. This no accident. The mysticism that surrounds the Big Bang theory allows for such people to adopt it for their own purposes.

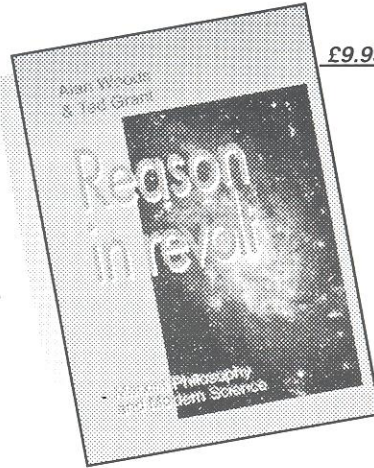
Reason in Revolt has been published in many countries around the world, including Spain, Pakistan and Russia. The international interest in the book reflects the growing unrest ordinary people have at the present capitalist system. This, ten years after the supposed 'end of history' when the forces of 'Communism' were 'defeated'.

In the period of capitalist decline, and at a time when people's disaffection with capitalism is being expressed through mass anti-capitalism marches, it is important that we stay loyal to the ideas of Marxism and defend them not only against the forces of capitalism but against the growing threat from Creationism. The revelations that the Human Genome has produced in the past few weeks have confirmed what was stated by Marxists, previously. However, the scientists, for political reasons, are afraid of the implications that would arise, were they to be seen to be allying themselves with Marxism.

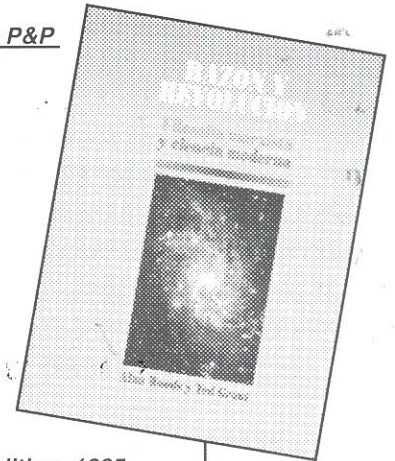
Marxists must reaffirm their commitment to dialectical materialism and to their struggle for a socialist future. *Reason in Revolt* is an excellent starting point for all young students and workers in educating themselves for the fight ahead.

The meeting was well attended, some 30 students and other members of the public were there. Half a dozen journals were sold, plus books on Russia and Bolshevism were also sold. A copy of *Reason in Revolt* in Urdu was also sold. A number of people submitted their mail addresses to receive updates from the In Defence of Marxism web site.

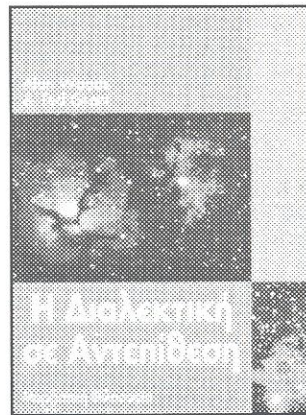
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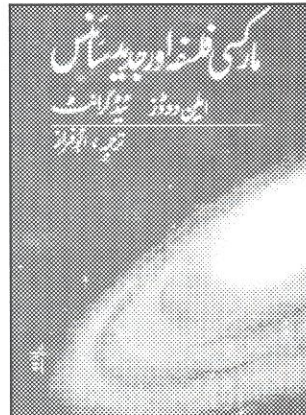
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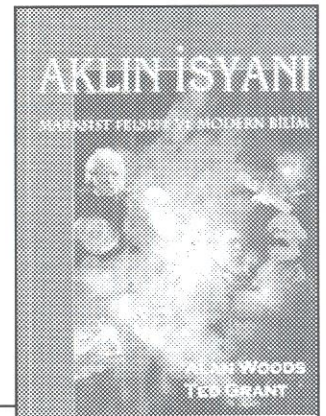
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Wealth for the few created by the many

As you read this, Gordon Brown will be about to announce his last budget before Tony Blair calls a general election for May. We can expect some tax cuts for working families and for those rich enough to save money in tax-free savings accounts.

by Michael Roberts



Last month, the dynamic duo, Blair and Brown, delivered their message of 'success' to a carefully selected audience at New Labour's so-called 'Spring Conference' in Scotland. Then we were told that New Labour was aiming for some big objectives after it wins the next election. First, Gordon told us that New Labour was going to end child poverty in Britain. Great! When was this to be done? In the next parliament? In the next ten years? No, in the "next generation". So the target was 30 years, not three. Not so great news for the 2 million children in poverty now or about to be born into poverty over the next-10-20 years.

According to a new study by the Microsimulation Unit at Cambridge University, about 250,000 of the poorest of poor British children have become worse off under New Labour since 1997. These are the children of lone parents who cannot go to work. They have suffered because of the infamous decision of the government under "feminist" former social security secretary Harriet Harman to drop lone-parent benefit. Britain still has the worst level of child poverty in the OECD!

Gordon Brown also told the conference that New Labour has pledged to achieve full employment in the "next generation". Perhaps that doesn't seem such an impossible task, with official unemployment levels down to nearly 1 million. But unemployment rates, even after the distortions and trickeries of the statistics introduced by the Tories, are still higher than they were in the golden age of the 1960s. And we are at the peak of a long boom in the advanced economies of North America and Europe. That boom is coming to an end.

If you want to measure economic success, a rough guide might appear to be what economists call the 'misery index'. If you add the official rate of unemployment to the official rate of price inflation, you come up with a figure that is currently 6.5 (3.8% unemployment and 2.7% inflation). That's very low by the standards of the 1970s and 1980s and even for the 1990s. So the level of 'misery' in the UK is low historically. Of course, if the capitalist world starts to slow down and goes into a recession or slump, the unemployment rate is going to move up sharply. And it's also possible, to begin with, if companies try to raise prices to compensate for falling sales that the inflation rate could pick

up as well. So the misery index has only one way to go in the next parliament and that's up.

It may be that Gordon and Tony can claim that the British people 'have never had it so good' at the moment. And that will probably be enough to clinch another victory for New Labour despite a wave of apathy about the government and because of a continued snarl of disgust for the Tories. But the current low level of the 'misery index' hides the reality of the British economy.

First, the British people have never been more unequal in the sharing out of the wealth created by the hard work of the many. According to a brand new report by the American Brookings Institution, the relatively better growth in national output during the 1990s has been accompanied by extremely increased levels of inequality in income and ownership of wealth. According to Brookings, Britain had the fastest growth in inequality of wages and incomes of all the top seven capitalist economies in the last two decades.

Just 'aspirations'

Second, the sanctimonious talk by Brown and Blair of ending poverty and joblessness in a generation is really a smokescreen to hide the downgrading of what were promises at the last election to just 'aspirations'. Now New Labour 'aspires' to achieve better conditions for the poor, but it is not a promise for this new parliament. Remember the pledges to reduce waiting lists in hospitals and class sizes in schools, written on every Labour party membership card. They will not have been met by the time we go to vote again in May.

Third, the state of public services in the UK is a scandal. Even relatively poorer European countries like Spain or Italy can boast efficient rail services and bus routes. Thanks to the Tories, Britain cannot even provide a reliable transport network that can ensure capitalist companies get the workers they need to the factories and offices on time, or even alive! And it ain't cheap either. What could be a more convincing argument against privatization.

But what has been New Labour's answer? First, they held public spending at the miserly Tory levels for two whole years of this four-year parliament before finally pushing some money into the hands of discredited Railtrack and the awful franchised private rail companies. But, of course, only after rail passengers were killed in a series of preventable accidents and after a nationwide oil price protest. Indeed, in the first three years of New Labour, real spending on public services was lower than the Tories



planned in 1996! And public spending annual rises from now on will only match the increases achieved under the Major government.

And then, they stubbornly refuse to even consider renationalizing the rail service and providing one national operator (as in most European countries) so that rational planning and reasonable pricing can be reintroduced. Even worse, they continue to try and privatize the London tube and air traffic control despite the obvious damage to safety that it must inevitably mean. It beggars belief!

And as for extra money to sort out the mess of deregulated bus routes in Britain's major cities or doing something about the horrible monopoly that is Stagecoach plc, well forget it. New Labour prefers the support of big business for another term in office.

Fourth, as I have shown in this column before, the level of taxation for ordinary people in Britain remains at high levels if you include all the indirect taxes first introduced by the Tories and increased by Gordon Brown, like fuel and tobacco taxes. Sure, direct tax on income has fallen, but that really only benefits the highest earners. But national insurance contributions have risen the most for the lowest earners and small businesses. And new taxes on air travel and insurance premiums have been introduced. So, overall tax receipts have risen from 36.7% of GDP in 1997 to 40.2% in 2001.

We'll get some cuts in this March budget. But what does New Labour have to show for its high taxes on ordinary people - not better public services but instead a lower public debt owed to the City of London. It is the right choice - to pay off

competitors abroad. The cutbacks in the UK car industry and steel industry may take the headlines. But high real interest rates (after taking into account inflation rates), low investment and poor productivity growth (British industry is still failing to boost productivity much) mean that any slackening off in world demand will hit British industry hard across the board. Already profitability among British companies is falling.

The argument of the capitalist economists is that UK manufacturing is now irrelevant. It generates less than 20% of national output each year and employs just 4 million people out of over 27 million. The most important sectors now are the City of London and financial services in general plus a range of high-tech service industries, along with tourism and the entertainment industry.

To the wall

This sort of talk seems to get a sympathetic ear from New Labour's ministers of trade and industry. They may wail about job losses in Wales and the Midlands, but they do nothing but provide agencies to 'retrain' people into telephone call centres, dot.com startups and supermarkets. That may work while employment continues to rise in the new industries. But what happens when the capitalist world slips back and the banks and finance houses start to lay off staff as well? And there are thousands of compa-



The latter is a small country of just 10m people, surrounded by rich European capitalist economies. It does not have huge regional disparities, it does not have significant poverty and inequality, and above all it does not have to find jobs and a living for 60 million people. Relying on a few multinationals, a floating financial island based in the City of London and Canary Wharf and some pop stars paying their taxes will not be enough.

Without proper investment into new technology and planning of industry and services, the UK cannot survive well in a world economic downturn. But that would mean breaking with the government's policy of making the UK, in Tony Blair's words, "the most business-friendly economy in the world".

Then there is the vexed question of entry into the European Monetary Union. New Labour is pledged to hold a referendum on Britain's entry in the next parliament. The most likely scenario is that after victory in May, the government will

British capitalists have no 'loyalty' or 'patriotism'. They use more and more of their profits to invest overseas. Through the City of London and directly, they plough billions into factories and companies overseas that are more productive or where labour is cheaper.

debt to the rich by taxing the poor harder? Or should it not be to write off that debt and lower taxes to the poor?

But the real story of the next four to five years of the New Labour government will be how it handles a major downturn in the world capitalist economy. New Labour has had it easy with real GDP growth rising at 3% a year and the misery index falling. The next few years will see both those measures in reverse. The US economy is slipping fast into recession and when it catches cold, the UK usually catches pneumonia.

That's because the UK economy is not well equipped to withstand a world economic recession or slump. First, British manufacturing industry is still shrinking in the face of lower costs and more productive

panies and millions of workers whose livelihood depends on providing services for the big manufacturing companies and financial institutions. They will go to the wall as well.

British capitalists have no 'loyalty' or 'patriotism'. They use more and more of their profits to invest overseas. Through the City of London and directly, they plough billions into factories and companies overseas that are more productive or where labour is cheaper. There is no more 'open' economy than Britain as a result. We have become similar to a rather large Switzerland (a finance economy backed by 'globalised' international drug and food companies). Switzerland's income mainly comes from abroad and increasingly so does the UK's.

But the UK is not really Switzerland.

announce a referendum perhaps as early as this autumn and certainly by autumn 2002. Blair and Brown want to do it early. If they lose a 'yes' vote, then they still have time to recover in order to win another election in 2004-5. At least, that's the theory.

But what difference would it make to working people in Britain if the UK joins the Euro or not? That is something for another article. Suffice it to say, that a world economic recession is going to throw Europe into a new paroxysm of reaction and racism as still high unemployment starts to rise there. Joining the single currency will not reap rewards for ordinary people in that environment. But neither will Britain 'going it alone' under the shaky, moth-bitten cover of the British pound. I

Imperialists Embark on 'Protective Retaliation'

The recent missile attacks on Baghdad by America and Britain, with the loss of two civilian lives and over 20 wounded, marked a further escalation in the undeclared war against Iraq. Since the Gulf war ten years ago, nearly 200,000 allied sorties have been carried out against the regime. The most powerful imperialist power on the planet, together with its lap-dog, Britain, have attempted to terrorise the Iraqis as a warning to all those in the 'third world' who dare threaten their interests.

By Rob Sewell



After the defeat of Saddam Hussein at the hands of the Coalition, no-fly zones were unilaterally imposed by the United States in the north and south, under the pretext of helping the Kurd minority and the Shi'ite Muslims. Draconian sanctions were applied to bring the Iraqi regime to its knees, severely limited its ability to import food, medicine and other essentials. The blockade went so far as to prevent the import of lead for schoolchildren's pencils lest it be put to military use! Such measures had devastating effects on the Iraqi population, with the resulting death of around one million children. Rather than weaken the regime of Saddam, these measures simply served to strengthen his position, as the population blamed the imperialists for their desperate plight.

The excuse given for the latest bombing attacks was that Britain and the US felt that Baghdad had improved its air defences to a point where the loss of an allied aircraft had become increasingly likely. President Bush shrugged off the air strikes as "a routine mission conducted to enforce the no-fly zone." He added: "I was informed, and I authorized it." The Pentagon came forward with the justification for bombing as "protective retaliation". Tony Blair, eager to demonstrate his loyalty and "special relationship" with the new American administration, also endorsed the action as "the steps necessary to protect our forces, and to prevent Saddam from once again wreaking havoc, suffering and death".

Things change

How things have changed! When it suited their foreign policy interests the imperialists were prepared to arm and back Saddam to the hilt in "wreaking havoc, suffering and death" against Iran during the 1980s. Then the enemy was the Iranian Khomeini regime. Saddam used chemical weapons against Iran, but the West was silent. Robin Cook constantly repeats the fact

that Saddam has used gas "against his own people", without mentioning he did so against Iran in which Britain enthusiastically supported the "Beast of Baghdad".

The Kosovo war illustrated vividly the crushing superiority of US military might, which reduced the Europeans to a secondary supportive role on their own territory. Since the Second World War, Britain has been reduced to a virtual client state of US imperialism. This reflects the decline of Britain and the colossal might of America. This humiliating dependence lies at the bottom of the so-called special relationship of Blair and Clinton, or the new master in the White House. Blair has even signaled his support for the US missile defence project that is threatening to drive a wedge between the US and Nato. He has proved even more subservient than the Tories in his fawning before American power.

"This government is more authoritarian than the previous Conservative government and its subscription to US foreign policy is just contemptible", states the former Labour sympathizer and playwright Harold Pinter. "We have been bombing Iraq for years and killing people. The sanctions are killing even more people."

The hypocrisy of the bullyboy imperialists is nauseating. They say they need to enforce the no-fly zones to protect the population. However, a close ally of the American imperialists is Turkey, which is currently allowing its military bases to be used by the US to carry out their attacks on Iraq. From these very same bases, the Turkish government is carrying out its own murderous attacks on the same Kurdish people the US is supposed to be protecting! The US "concern" for the lives of oppressed peoples is touching, given its record of crushing all ex-colonial peoples that stood in its way, not least in the Middle East, where they have wholeheartedly backed the Israeli oppression of the Palestinians.

So the Americans and British imperialists continue to bomb, insisting that their attacks were aimed at "sites well away from civilian areas". The Foreign Office has stated that the warplanes were "well within the 33rd parallel" - the limit of the self-imposed no-fly zone - and used "stand-off" missiles - those fired at a safe

Brief international news

distance - to hit their targets.

However, the Coalition of 1991 against Iraq has fallen to pieces. In reality, it has been reduced to the United States, with Britain in tow. The recent military actions have met with growing opposition, even amongst members of the UN Security Council. France, who was not consulted, condemned the bombing. Its opposition is linked with developing lucrative contracts in the wake of any Iraqi rapprochement. Russia and China who view the expansion of American power with growing alarm also condemned the action. The whole of the Middle East, except for Israel, and the Arab states of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, which allowed the American and British to use their bases, has been forced into opposition. Mass demonstrations and flag burning against America and Britain have spread throughout the region. Saddam has not wasted any time in linking Iraq to the issue of Palestine.

World's policeman

The United States sees its role as the world's 'policeman'. Iraq has to be made an example of to the rest of the ex-colonial world. The American administration, and in particular the new US Secretary of State Colin Powell, wants the sanctions strengthened. But the sanctions are breaking down as more trade deals are extended to Iraq via intermediaries. The missile strike, while being regarded as a success, has caused considerable diplomatic and political fallout. The Middle East as a consequence is far more unstable when the bombing is coupled with the breakdown of the Israeli/Palestinian peace agreement.

"The likely radicalization and heightened anti-US feelings the air strikes will create among Arab public opinion could exacerbate the region's instability and add pressure on moderate Arab governments to follow a harsher line towards Mr Sharon", states the Financial Times (19th February).

The regime of Saddam Hussein is no friend of the working masses of Iraq or the Middle East. However, the responsibility for its removal lies not with the robber-imperialists, but with the workers and peasants of Iraq itself. The British Labour movement must condemn the imperialist aggression against the people of Iraq, who are the only ones to suffer from the bombing and sanctions. Instead we have to offer the hand of solidarity to our brothers and sisters in the Middle East in their struggle against capitalism, landlordism and imperialism. Only a socialist federation of the Middle East can offer a way out of the present nightmare. I

Hungarian Airlines workers on strike

On Monday, 5th February Malev Hungarian Airlines and Budapest Airport has received a shock. The technicians who service and repair aircraft in the airport have gone on indefinite strike. The issue is pay and the technicians have a strong case. Their employer is a wholly owned subsidiary of Malev which insists that they are not running at a profit, but the union is sure that their section of it is very profitable. They put in for 15% and the offer on the table is 7% plus a 2% productivity deal. The answer was a resounding "no". Not all technicians are member of their union, but participation in the action is 100%.

Malev is trying every dirty trick in the book, but the technicians are fighting back. Their spokesman announced on the television news that they have appealed for international solidarity with their fellow technicians abroad and received totally supportive messages. This is especially important, as Malev has shifted aircraft maintenance to Warsaw and Vienna. The technicians from those airports are ready to stop them in their tracks.

This action is costing Malev at least 20 million forints a day and the money at issue is no more than 100 million per year. The hard nosed attitude of the Malev spokesman on the television was in stark contrast to the very good case the technicians put forward. The strike is rock solid, the flight cancellations are mounting and victory is in the air.

Daewoo car workers fight to stop job cuts

Hundreds of Daewoo car workers clashed with riot police in Seoul on the 18th of February to protest against mass job losses imposed by the bankrupt car firm.

Around 300 workers and their families tried to break police lines and enter the main assembly lines, where several hundred Trade Union leaders had been staging rallies all week. The clashes were bitter as stones were thrown and fire extinguishers sprayed. Protesters wore masks to protect themselves from the onslaught of the police.

The riots were the results of the management trying to sweeten potential new owners, General Motors into taking over the company. 1,751 workers were laid off by Daewoo the previous Friday as part of this plan.

Daewoo has also cut jobs in Britain, with 187 going to its technical centre in Worthing, West Sussex.





Workers strikes, shaken bosses

Over recent years, the French labour movement has been in the forefront of the struggle to defend public services, wages, working conditions and pensions.

Since the public sector transport strike of 1995, millions of workers have been involved in some form or other of militant action.

by Greg Oxley

In the last few weeks, a series of huge strikes and demonstrations have once again shaken the bosses, the government and the state institutions. Nearly 100,000 workers demonstrated in Nice on 5th December at the time of the European Summit. Anything between 300,000 and 500,000 took to the streets all over France in defence of pension rights on 25th January. On the 30th, a national strike of public sector workers took place, demanding wage increases and job creation to replace the hours lost by the introduction of the 35-hour week. Since then, a national strike has broken out in the hospitals, with the biggest mobilisation of nursing staff since 1988. In both the private sector and the public sector, sporadic strikes and protest meetings are taking place every day. Strike figures for the year 2000 will no doubt be even higher than the figures for 1999, which increased by 43% in relation to 1998.

In fact, the number of days lost in strikes, through inevitable ups and downs, has been generally on the increase for the last six years. The year 1995 marked a turning point in the recent history of the French labour movement. Jacques Chirac won the presidential elections in that year and appointed Alain Juppé as Prime Minister. Chirac and Juppé were in no hurry to introduce unpopular measures. When Alain Madelin, a notoriously right-wing minister, called for attacks on the "privileges" of public sector workers, he was unceremoniously sacked. This alarmed the most powerful representatives of big business, both in France and internationally, and led to a speculative war against the French currency. Chirac reorganised the government. Juppé was kept on, but the previously cautious policies were replaced by the infamous "Juppé plan", which amounted to a large-scale assault on the past gains of the labour movement. The immediate consequence of the "plan" was a one-day general strike of the public sector involving 5.5 million workers. Juppé tried to imitate Thatcher, who had taken on and defeated the British miners in order to clear the way for attacks on other sections of workers. He therefore targeted workers in the transport sector, launching a frontal attack on their past gains in terms of retirement, wage levels and working

conditions. This strategy backfired. A national transport strike, enthusiastically supported by more than two-thirds of the population, almost completely paralysed the French economy, and forced Juppé into an ignominious retreat. Within fifteen months, the right-wing parties were thrown out of the government.

With better trade union and political leadership at national level, the whole of society could have been raised to its feet in a struggle against capitalism in 1995. As it was, millions of workers who were not actively involved in the general strike were nonetheless inspired by it. Millions of workers who had never been on strike, nor even in a union, could see and feel the unstoppable material power of a collective struggle against the rich and powerful. The psychological impact of this event on the working people as a whole is undoubtedly the most important factor in the course of events in France since that time.

Jospin, Blair and Schröder

Jospin is considered more left-wing than any of the other European social-democratic leaders such as Blair or Schröder. In fact, his aims are no different. He supported the "Juppé plan" and since 1997 has tried to put it into effect. Jospin, however, unlike his counterparts in Britain, Germany, or Italy, came to power on the basis of a massive wave of social discontent and strike action. Since his election in 1997, he has had to deal with an aroused, militant and increasingly experienced labour movement. Recent strikes have involved lorry drivers, ticket collectors, hotel workers, prison guards, firemen, airline pilots and many other formerly inert layers of society.

The strike movement came to a head in March 2000, when Finance Ministry workers and teachers forced Jospin to abandon the counter-reforms he was trying to force through. The three ministers most closely associated with the unpopular measures (Zuccarelli, Sautter and Allègre) were sacked. In the new ministerial line-up, the Communist Party participation in the government was increased and the leader of the left tendency (Gauche

Socialiste) in the Socialist Party was brought into the government.

The strikes and protests have not only involved workers. In December and January, a six week long strike of lawyers and court clerks over working conditions and pay took place. At the same time, policemen, who do not have the right to strike, instead of working, were giving out leaflets in the streets saying that they were "not on strike" against understaffing and poor working conditions. Judges organised demonstrations in a number of towns, for the first time since the years preceding the French Revolution of 1789! The very marked shift to the left in the thinking of the middle layers of society is also shown by the mass demonstrations of small farmers, by the sudden sprouting of the ATTAC organisation, with 25 000 members, which, although putting forward a very confused mixture of leftist and reactionary measures in its program, is nonetheless seen as an "anti-capitalist" lobby.

Voting patterns

Another unmistakable sign of the radicalisation of the middle class is the swing in the voting patterns in Paris. Rents and the cost of living in general in the French capital are very expensive, and most working class families have been forced to move out to the surrounding areas over the last 30 years. In the poorer quarters that remain, non-EEC workers who do not have French nationality have no voting rights. Ten years ago, all twenty arrondissements (administrative districts) in Paris were held by the right-wing parties. In the forthcoming elections in March, the left is poised to take sixteen or seventeen arrondissements, including those of the very wealthy central area, which includes Notre Dame cathedral, the police headquarters, and the high society snobs who live on the banks of the Seine.

All the right-wing parties have split over recent years, including the racist Front National. The ruling class is demoralised, with almost all of its main spokesmen, including president Chirac himself, implicated in corruption scandals. In the Socialist Party, the militant mood of the workers and the radicalisation of the middle layers of society has been reflected in a sharp increase in support for the left opposition tendencies, which increased their support from 10% to 27% over the last two years. The Communist Party (PCF), whose leaders have been unwilling to challenge the right-wing policies of the Jospin government, is now in crisis and in decline. Tens of thousands of former members have left the party over the last few years. Sales of the party paper, *L'Humanité*, have fallen dramatically. Dozens of workers on the staff of the paper have been sacked and the paper itself will no doubt cease to exist over the next year or so. In the presidential elections that will take place in 2002, the PCF is not likely to win more than 8% of the vote, some polls placing its score as low as 6%.

The French economy has been growing since the latter part of 1997, but all the signs point to a marked slow-down over the last six months. To a large extent, the economic upswing has taken place at the expense of the working class. Whilst it is true that unemployment has fallen, at least according to official figures, there has been a massive increase in the proportion of short-term, part-time and casual employment. Rather than solving any of the basic problems faced by working people, the upswing has only served to bring the various manifestations of poverty and social inequality into even sharper relief. With the "boom" now fading out, new and more stringent attacks on living standards are on the cards. However, in view of the developments of these last few years, it is clear that these attacks can only be made at the cost of a series of major confrontations with organised labour. I

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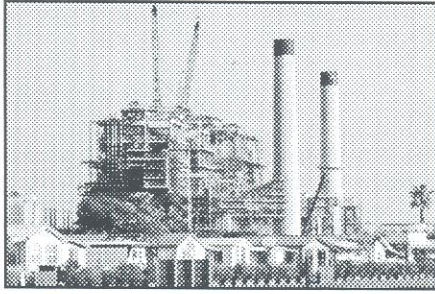
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Silicon Valley hit by privatised Power cuts

"I have seen the future, and it doesn't work." Adlai Stevenson, on visiting California 'Brownouts' in the golden west, power cuts in Silicon Valley and, in the longer term, threats by big chunks of high tech business to relocate out of California, the most advanced industrial state on earth. What the hell is going on? Deregulation of the electricity industry, that's what They've decided to introduce market forces into the energy sector, and the result is they're creating havoc.

by Mick Brooks

Energy, let's face it, is boring. Except when all of a sudden you plug in and nothing happens - then it's panic stations. We all take it for granted, but it's a basic requirement of our lives. How did the old system work before they brought in market forces? Well, at least it worked. Gas, and later electricity, were first provided for mass consumption by the local council. At this time local authorities were run by business people for business people (workers had not yet won the vote). Now these local capitalists were not wild-eyed ideologues of the free market. It is not well understood that capitalists are suspicious of and dislike market forces. These practical people knew that capitalism in their area needed mass generation of power. And they knew that capitalism couldn't provide it. So Tories like Joseph Chamberlain in Birmingham embarked on a programme of what was called 'gas and water socialism'.

Chaos

Imagine different companies competing to provide a basic resource like gas or electricity to households and firms. They would all be trying to run different cables or pipelines to different households in the streets. The roads would be up all the time. It would be chaos. Even if they overcame the logistical problems, it would cost an arm and a leg to heat and light each household through small-bore pipe and cable.

This is why capitalism was unable to advance this basic service in any country in the world in the nineteenth century. It makes sense to have one mains cable or pipeline running down the street, and all the houses being fed off it. But a single capitalist supplier of water, gas or electricity would have all the rest of us by the short and curlies, once we were wired up to their system. That's why Tories like Chamberlain made sure such facilities were publicly owned. They didn't want the rest of the local business community to be ripped off. In classic fashion the local state was doing what the capitalists couldn't - in their own interests. It is true that most of these 'public utilities were privately owned in the USA. But local government didn't allow them to act as an unaccount-

able monopoly and charge what they liked. Their activities and profits were carefully regulated. Remember those Utilities on the 'Monopoly' board? They're a safe investment, but you'll never make enough to win the game by snapping them up.

It's true we now have the appearance of competition in Britain. You can buy electricity from gas companies and gas from electricity companies. And if you play the field, it can work out a bit cheaper. But a moment's thought will establish that it's the same gas molecules flowing through the pipe, whoever you write the cheque out to. So what's happening.

'Competition' just lets new firms trying to break in offer discounts to grab market share from the established players. How are they able to make such sacrifices? Because the whole industry has been awash with monopoly profits since privatisation. They just give us a tiny bit of our money back to win our custom.

In the old days the system did have some 'socialist' features - and it worked. At any time some areas will have spare capacity in energy while others are working flat out to meet demand. So the generators shared capacity through the national grid. In this country the grid was introduced in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and led to huge economies throughout the system. Energy consumption is pretty predictable and therefore plannable. The experts do know exactly how many people will put the kettle on for a brew after the F.A. Cup whistle blows for half time.

The end of the great post-War boom of 1948-73 meant that workers and capitalists could no longer cosily co-exist, each with rising living standards within an expanding economy. Something had to give. There was a ruling class offensive against the working class spear-headed internationally by Reagan and Thatcher. Corresponding to this, there was an ideological offensive using neoliberal economic theories and programmes. Privatisation and deregulation were much in the air. This is the programme that has brought California to its knees. Deregulation of energy was tried first in Britain, not for 'efficiency' reasons but to smash the power of the miners. The 'problem' with

energy generation and distribution was there was no market. The original nutty professor of Thatcherism, Littlechild, set out to create one. We needed supply and we needed demand. Generators of electricity were to sell to distribution companies. Instead of a co-operative grid across the network to deal with sudden peaks in demand, we'd have a pool, a spot market where energy could be bought and sold. (Workers and 'customers' of the health service will recognise the dreaded purchaser-provider split - the attempt to inject market forces where none can or should exist.)

The pool was an instant disaster in Britain, but that didn't stop the idea of energy deregulation spreading like a virus worldwide. Since energy is very difficult to store, sudden surges in demand produce price 'spikes' on the pool as all the distributors outbid each other for the same electricity. In California since deregulation prices have temporarily soared from the standard \$30 per megawatt hour to over \$1,000. As the reader will realise, deregulation has proved very expensive for consumers in California, and someone has made a great deal of money at their expense. Voters in the golden state were persuaded that voting for deregulation would get them 20% smaller bills as a result of 'efficiency savings'. In fact bills have gone up by 379% since 1996!

Crude price

Part of the problem is that the two main distributing utilities, Southern California Edison and Pacific Gas and Electric, undertook to cap their retail prices in 1996. They used their entrepreneurial genius, not given to the rest of us, to foresee that oil prices could only go down in the future. So the recent crude price rises really put the squeeze on them. They were paying more wholesale but couldn't pass it on retail. Well, tough. They've built up debts of \$12 billion as a result. Of course they're crying for public money to be thrown at them. Big business always discovers the virtues of 'socialism' (of socialising losses) when they're in the mire. Their behaviour is just like Railtrack in Britain. They're blackmailing the Governor by threatening to default on debts of \$596 million. Clearly this would bring the whole State to a halt.

Let's put the spotlight on the wholesalers. These are either firms owning generating plants or speculators who buy electricity out of state and sell it on to the California utilities. They have got money coming out of their ears at the moment. To take a typical example, Dynegy California's fourth quarter earnings doubled to \$105.9 million. Under capitalism a crisis for the many is an opportunity for some. Presumably they regard these windfall profits as a reward for entrepreneurship and risk-taking. The same generating companies were bleating for handouts in 1996 to cope with their 'stranded assets'. This elegant phrase covers the fact they had many totally stupid investment decisions such as building nuclear power plants. Another case of profit as a reward for individual initiative and socialising the losses when they get it wrong. The Economist comments that 'California agreed to value those stranded assets more than other

states'. This seems a polite way of saying that the State of California, and all its citizens, was ripped off by the generating companies.

The irony of introducing the profit motive into energy generation is that it can destroy the livelihoods of other would-be profit makers. Deregulation in Britain opened the eyes of state-side utilities to the mouth-watering prospects before them. Southern California Edison is a subsidiary of the mighty Southern company. As Littlechild got going over here, Southern executives realised they could get twice as much for selling a unit of energy in the UK as in Georgia. So they took over the South Western Electricity Board. An orgy of cross-holdings followed. Southern Energy also owns Hyder in Wales. AES Corp owns the Drax power station. Dynegy tried to merge with Powergen. And TXU owns Eastern Electricity. The trouble with American utility companies is that they're overpaid and over here! (Footnote: If you understand that joke, you're showing your age.)

Let's focus a little more closely on two companies active in California - Enron and TXU. Both are based in Texas. Alert readers will realise that this is the home state of President Bush. Both firms backed Bush with serious money. Enron's Kenneth Lay top-scored with \$555,275 to the campaign fund and \$310,000 over the previous two years. TXU's Earl Nye stumped up \$50,000. These sums are usually described as donations. Lay and Nye no doubt regard them as investments. And very good investments they were. Guess what? - Lay and Nye have both got jobs in the energy division of the Bush administration. They are arguing that what America needs is much more energy deregulation, and presumably Enron and TXU stand ready to give America what it wants. This is the corrupt symbiosis of American politics.

Governor Davis of California calls the electricity suppliers 'pirates and plunderers'. It's hard to disagree. He's declared a state of emergency. He's desperately trying to sign long term contracts with generating companies to keep the State up and running. He swears, "Never again can we allow out-of-state profiteers to hold California hostage." Actually his rhetoric is a little off-beam. The problem with Lay and Nye is not that they wear ten gallon hats. It is that they are representatives of the capitalist system.

The crisis is not hitting the whole of California. Los Angeles is immune. Why? Because L.A. continues to have a publicly owned publicly controlled generating system, that's why. The new head of the Californian Public Utilities Commission is proud not to be an economist. He says, "It is orthodox economics that got us in this mess in the first place." He's half right. Neoliberal economics is the ideology of rampant capitalism. It's capitalism that's got California in this pickle. Next time somebody tells you about the magic of the marketplace, remind them about California. To paraphrase Milton Friedman, it shows there's no such thing as a free market. I



► Chris Warner, chief counsel of one of the California utility companies

Spring offensive needed!

We have managed to move to our new premises with your help and are up and ready again to fight for socialism. The new premises have given us much needed space for our press and all the computers that are needed to produce Socialist Appeal and other stuff such as leaflets and posters. This is the hardware needed for the socialist fight. But everything we do in our fight costs money (as regular readers of this column are aware) and we are not afraid to get out the rattling tins to keep ourselves afloat. With a probable general election looming, it is going to be more important than ever than we have a socialist voice ready to explain to voters and Labour canvassers alike why we not only need a Labour victory but also why we need Labour to adopt socialist policies. Many activists will be wondering what is to come-Socialist Appeal provides both a clear analysis of likely developments and what should be done about it. But to do this, in the unions, CLPs, on the streets and in the colleges needs your ongoing support.

The new fighting fund total for the

quarter is £5,000. With our increased costs, including rent, this money is essential. Could you help us raise it? We came within £250 of hitting our Xmas quarter target so we know it can be done if we all do our bit. Please send what you can.

You will find in this month's Socialist Appeal an article about capitalist sponsorship. We are taking a leaf out of their book by asking people to be sponsors of Socialist Appeal. We are asking would-be sponsors to send a regular amount of money each month to help us with our work. It doesn't have to be large, every penny helps. This can be done by standing order. Simply drop us a line or an e-mail and we will send you a standing order form which you can complete and send to your bank. They will do the rest. However if you do not want to see up a standing order then an old fashioned cheque or postal order will do just as well. Either way our address is PO Box 2626, London N1 7SQ.

Incidentally if you or your organisation need any printing work done at a

good affordable price and by people sympathetic to the labour movement then why not contact us and we will get our printshop to give you a quote based around your needs - be it just printing or layout or whatever. We can help you and you can help us. Simple!

Special thanks this month goes to the following: Comrade Linda from Hants for a splendid donation of £500! , A Kinraide (£25), Tom (£150), Carlisle readers (£70), Brentwood readers (£17), and a number of other small amounts plus 3 readers who together gave £80 by standing order. Well done to one and all. Lets keep it up.

Steve Jones



To the international Labour and Trade Union movement

We the workers at the OBI Hypermarket in Warsaw have joined the trade union KONFEDERACJA PRACY in order to defend our elementary rights.

Poland is a country with a very low degree of union organisation and any attempt to form a union is a high-risk project, as all union members have to face severe harassment from the management.

We turn to international labour movement for support, as we believe that we have a joint cause. The threat of moving production to a low wage Poland should not be used to undermine the gains of workers in other countries.

Please send solidarity messages to.

Name: Bojan Stanislawski

International Secretary, Polish Young Socialists

Address:

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What is your opinion about the articles in *Socialist Appeal* and www.socialist.net? Send your comments to: PO Box 2626, London N1 7SQ or socialist_appeal@mail.com

NO LOGO

By Naomi Klein

(Flamingo books) paperback £8.99

Many years ago a book came out called *The Hidden Persuaders* which raised the issue of the way in which advertising deliberately sought to shape our opinions and tastes, whether we liked it or not. Quite shocking for its time, the ideas of that book are now accepted as the norm by everybody. We are all aware of the influence of adverts although most of us would like to believe that in some way we are personally immune to all their efforts. But one look at our clothes would soon knock that idea on the head. One thing above all else which has marked advertising over the last couple of decades has been the rise of the logo. Whereas once upon a time logos just appeared on shop hoardings and boxes, now we have all become walking adverts, our clothes festooned with all manner of brand names. What's worse, we want them to be there as if in some way it's not cool to go without them!

This is no accident as Naomi Klein explains in her book *No Logo*, now out in paperback. Last year we reviewed a book by George Monbiot on the rise of corporate power over all our supposedly impartial bodies of state. In that book, Monbiot outlined the use of sponsorship as an alternative means of advertising. Klein here develops that analysis, showing how virtually every aspect of what we see and do seems to have a brand name attached. Football teams have sponsors names on their shirts, TV programmes are brought to you in association with one company or another, concerts are sponsored, even official and educational projects come with logo's attached - even payslips have adverts on them!

This works both ways. The sponsors and the sponsored become as one. Their coolness or their authority, depending on what it is, rub off on each other. We are encouraged to identify with the brand name, to want to be a part of what it represents. In fashion, to give the most blatant example, to be recognised as wearing designer or hip clothes means displaying the logo so that everybody knows that this is what you have. Without the logo it doesn't count. Of course, the downside for the firms has been the rise of bootleg designer clothes, since logo's are easier to copy than quality clothing.

For these firms, the important thing is to promote the brand, to become the brand leader, to have your brand recognised by all, even if no one knows what the goods you produce actually look like! The next stage, as Klein outlines, is to destroy the opposition. This is done by flooding the market so that people identify you only by your brand to the exclusion of all others. Anyone who thinks that capitalism really believes in free enterprise and the benefits of competition should read this book. The dominant trend has been towards monopolisation, mergers and the

undermining of the competition. The methods are that of warfare. But its gets worse.

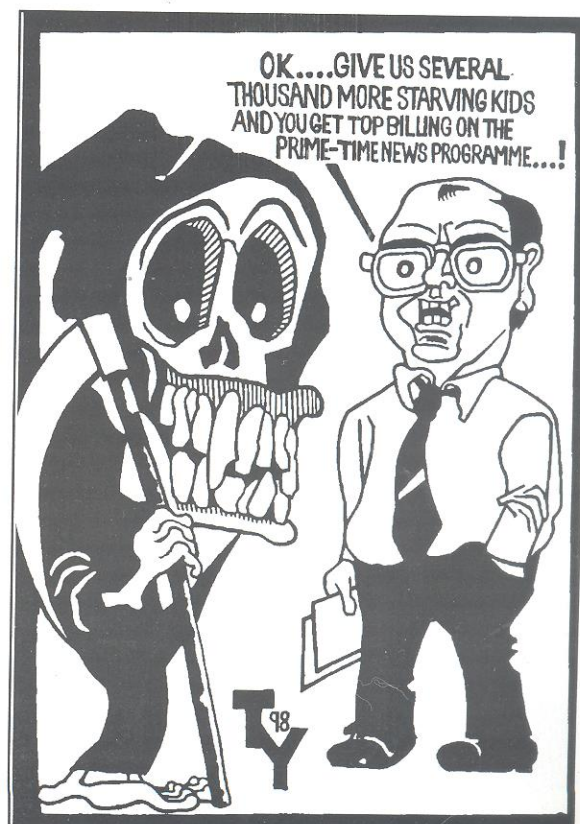
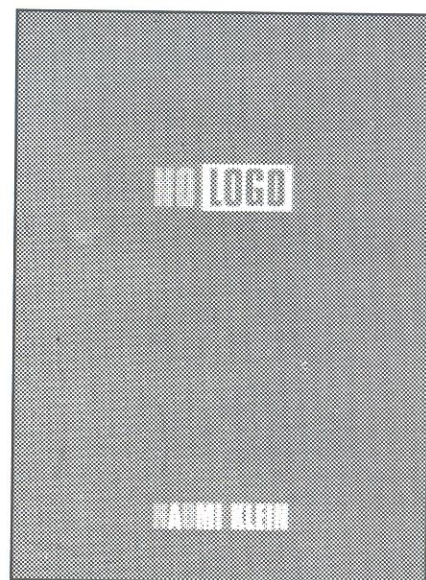
In the section headed 'No Jobs' we see how they cover the costs of this war. Jumping on the back of the drive towards liberalisation (liberalisation of exploitation of course) they head off to the third world to make maximum use of cheap labour. With huge advertising budgets to pay for, this is how they maximise their profits. Away from prying eyes and legal restraints they happily set about using child labour, working people in poor conditions and for long hours, relying on friendly states to smash trade unions and look the other way.

There has been a fight back, activists have exposed firms like Nike, encouraging people not to buy the brand. But this has been limited. Klein notes that the only real successes against the abuses of capital have been achieved by the trade union and labour movement, fighting to unionise and outlaw the sweatshops and child labour rackets, enforcing proper conditions and introducing appropriate laws. This should be borne in mind when you hear people talking about getting rid of 'red tape' and 'restrictive practices.'

What they mean is lets remove anything which protects workers and customers so that we can drive down our costs for our benefit alone not yours.

Klein concludes by noting that if capital has become global in its exploitation then the response must also be global. This is an important message for the international trade union movement. The linking together of workers from various countries to fight the very common foe can provide just the power to hit these people where it hurts.

Reviewed by
Steve Jones



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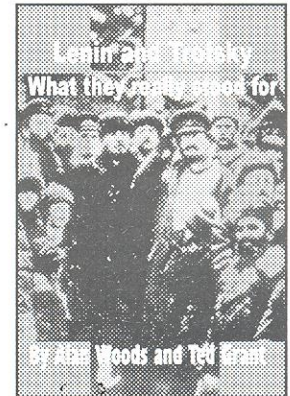
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This book was written as a reply to Monty Johnstone, who, at that time was a leading theoretician of the Communist Party of Great Britain, and who had published a reappraisal of Leon Trotsky in the Young Communist League journal *Cogito* at the end of 1968. Alan Woods and Ted Grant used the opportunity to write a detailed reply explaining the real relationship between the ideas of Lenin and Trotsky, which had been systematically falsified by the Stalinists ever since the invention of "Trotskyism" in 1924. This was no academic exercise. It was written as an appeal to the ranks of the Communist Party and the Young Communist League to rediscover the truth about Trotsky and return to the original revolutionary programme of Lenin.

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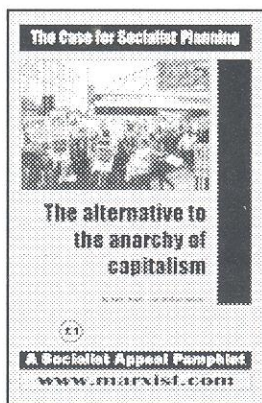
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☆ **A fully funded and fully comprehensive education system under local democratic control.** Keep big business out of our schools and colleges. Free access for all to further and higher education. Scrap tuition fees. No to student loans. For a living grant for all over 16 in education or training.

☆ **The outlawing of all forms of discrimination.** Equal pay for equal work. Invest in quality childcare facilities available to all. Scrap all racist immigration and asylum controls. Abolish the Criminal Justice Act.

☆ **The reversal of the Tories' cuts in the health service.** Abolish private health care. For a National Health Service, free to all at the point of need, based on the nationalisation of the big drug companies that squeeze their profits out of the health of working people.

☆ **Reclaim the Labour Party!** Defeat Blairism! Fight for Party democracy and socialist policies. For workers' MPs on workers' wages.

☆ **The abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords.** Full economic powers for the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly, enabling them to introduce socialist measures in the interests of working people. ☆ No to sectarianism. For a Socialist United Ireland linked by a voluntary federation to a Socialist Britain.

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

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