

- Elections in Argentina
- Labour's Policy Review
- Crisis in China

British section of the Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International

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Workers power

As cost of living soars . . .

7%

PAY NORM

DAYLIGHT ROBBERY!

THE TORIES are facing a pay revolt. No wonder, with inflation officially at 8% and mortgage rates set to rise to 14%. Workers must smash the unofficial 7% pay norm.

The government inflation figures always underestimate the real price rises that workers have to pay for food, fuel, rents and mortgages.

Simply to keep abreast of rising costs over the last 12 months workers now need at least a 9% rise. And even this could be turned into a real pay cut as the cost of living grows from month to month.

Enough

One after the other groups of workers have decided enough is enough. London tube workers and bus drivers have rejected offers below inflation. NUR members have thrown out a 7% offer from the rail bosses. Cadbury's Bournville workers have thrown out an 8.75% pay offer and started action for a 10% pay rise.

Last month showed that industrial action can beat the bosses. Perkins workers in Peterborough won 9% after strike action. The threat of industrial action secured a 9.2% rise in the electricity industry. The MSF has just secured two 9.5% deals in financial service industries.

The Engineering Em-



Lawson—balancing the books by attacking our pay

ployers Federation has warned its members that they face a wage explosion. The Governor of the Bank of England announced that wage deals are "the most dangerous element ahead of us economically". But the very market forces which the Tories worship are forcing individual employers to settle.

The key to victory is effective strike action. As NUR chief Jimmy Knapp said after the power workers won a new offer:

"This pay decision is

very important . . . I am certain that many of my members will feel it was achieved by the threat of industrial action."

Too right! But what are union officials like Knapp doing to build on the new militancy of the rank and file? In a word, nothing.

No backing

Knapp and the other rail union leaders have given no official backing to the disputes on the Underground and British Rail.

Despite a clear mandate

for action Ron Todd is still working overtime to prevent a docks strike. Neil Milligan of ASLEF has sabotaged a joint pay struggle on the rail by refusing even to ballot his members on industrial action. The AEU leaders are trying to get out of action against the Engineering Employers by limiting action to a small number of profitable firms.

The TUC has, predictably, done nothing throughout the whole last period.

The officials fear that a generalised pay revolt will

sweep them into conflict with the employers and the courts. It will force them into the kind of showdown with the government that they have been avoiding for years.

It is up to millions of rank and file workers to organise this fight. The unofficial disputes show the willingness to fight is there.

But as long as the disputes remain unofficial the bureaucrats who run the unions can sit on their union funds but still reach deals with managers above their members' heads.

Rank and file

That is why rank and file workers in every dispute should be building strike committees to take control of strikes out of the hands of officials, but force them to give official backing to workers action.

The pay revolt can win. It can sabotage the Tories plans to make workers pay for spiralling inflation. Workers should be fighting not just for a one off percentage rise, but a wage deal linked to inflation, with the figures worked out by committees of workers and consumers, not government computers.

The union leaders planned a quiet summer of seaside conferences. In the next few weeks workers must turn it into a summer of discontent!

The facts

- Mortgage repayments up 32-42%
- Numbers living below the poverty line up to 29%
- Company directors' average pay up 26%
- Inflation up to 8%
- Value of benefits over last decade down 12%

PRIDE '89

Twenty years since Stonewall

This month marks the twentieth anniversary of the Stonewall riot against a police raid on a gay bar in New York. As we organise for the annual pride demonstration on 24 June in London, **Ian Hassell** examines the extent to which those twenty years have secured meaningful improvements in the rights of lesbians and gay men.

IT MAY seem the case that the situation for lesbian and gay men is a dramatic improvement on twenty years ago. Lesbian and gay rights are now seen as a legitimate area of discussion on the political agenda. Thousands upon thousands came out onto the streets in response to Section 28. Many Labour councils and trade unions have progressive policies on the question.

The Labour Party, at its 1985, 1986 and 1988 conferences, has given an undertaking to end all discriminatory laws as well as to equalise the age of consent. In the

social sphere, lesbians and more particularly gay men enjoy access to pubs and clubs that contrasts sharply with the dark ages of the 1950s and 1960s.

However, have things really changed for the vast majority of lesbians and gay men? The answer has to be a resounding no! In the social sphere, access to the "pink economy" is strictly controlled. Only those with money need apply. In the face of huge attacks on jobs and services, Labour local authorities' equal opportunities programmes have proved a sham. They have consisted of pious state-



ments about the need to end discrimination and fat salaries to buy off a few lesbian and gay equal opportunities workers.

In the trade unions, policies have

been adopted without a struggle to convince the members in the workplace of their relevance. The leaders have committed no resources to implementing them.

Just how fragile the Labour Party's commitment to our rights is was vividly illustrated two weeks ago with the announcement of the Policy Review on social justice (sic). The review has dropped the explicit commitment to equalising the age of consent and to repealing discriminatory laws.

Roy Hattersley has stated that he and Kinnock are "not prepared to see Labour ruined over an issue like this, which is not a priority for the party". The work that the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights (LCLGR) has done over the last five years has come to nothing.

Campaign

We have consistently argued that LCLGR's orientation and method of organising within the Labour Party and unions has been flawed. The method of back room lobbying of Labour Party delegates was a substitute for a campaign in the base of the trade unions and Labour Party branches to win a real commitment to lesbian and gay equality.

Is there any chance that LCLGR will learn from this? On the evidence of the reaction of Sarah Roeloffs' (a leading light of the campaign) to the news of the Policy Review decision, the answer is no. "This will be a no holds barred, all out campaign" she announced in response to the review. And what

nature of all immigration controls. Their cases clearly demonstrate the British state's attitude to immigration. The very laws which the government uses to prevent immigration into Britain and to carry out the deportations of many thousands of black people each year are loosened just sufficiently to accommodate the labour needs of particular sectors of British capitalism. Restrictions like these aim to divide the working class by isolating a section of workers from the rest and from the organisations of the labour movement.

The plight of the Filipino women is a direct result of imperialism's exploitation of the Philippines. Grinding poverty—only 15% of Filipinos live above the poverty line—forces them to look for work away from their homes and families. It is estimated that Filipinos abroad send back up to 80% of their earnings to support their families. 50% of that is claimed by the Philippine government as tax on foreign earnings.

In Britain there is a campaign fighting for the eradication of these

is the campaign to consist of? "... we appeal to all lesbians and gay men who support us to raise the issue with Labour MPs and let them know we will not stand by and let them turn their backs on us". Stirring stuff, Kinnock must be shaking in his boots. Lobbying MPs hasn't exactly paid off in the past, why should it work now?

It is clear that nothing much changes. Twenty years on we still have an age of consent of 21 for gay men (with more prosecutions now than before 1967). There is still massive discrimination against us in employment. Indeed, queer-bashing, the most obvious and direct expression of anti-gay bigotry, is at a higher level now than for many years. Section 28 was a powerful reminder of the situation we still face.

The way forward to change this situation has to be through winning the labour movement to a commitment to our rights. Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners and Lesbian and Gays Support the Printers showed that patient work and an orientation to workers over a period of time can pay off. Trade Unionists Against Section 28 also showed some potential in seeing an orientation to the labour movement as the key objective.

If we are to go forward in the fight for our rights, to end the human misery caused by anti-gay bigotry and legalised repression then an urgent necessity is to link the caucuses within the trade union and labour movement on the basis of a programme that has as its objective the winning over of workers to lesbian and gay equality. ■

vile practices. Kalayaan, means freedom in Tagalog, the main Filipino language. It offers refuge for women who leave their employers. The campaign bases itself on fighting for the democratic rights of overseas domestic servants, the right to work, the right to change employers if they wish, the right to normal work benefits and health care and campaigning against deportations.

Organise

Occupations like that of domestic servants have traditionally been unorganised and isolated. Women working long hours in private homes have little time to seek contact with other workers. Yet as domestic workers in South Africa have shown it is possible to organise such workers into a fighting force. This can best be done with the trade union movement actively involving itself in the struggles of immigrant and migrant workers in combatting their oppression and the immigration controls. ■

FILIPINO WOMEN

The modern slave trade

While most immigrant labour in Britain comes from former colonies and semi-colonies there is a growing pool of migrant labour. The Philippines provide Britain with the largest numbers of non-Commonwealth, low paid permit holders. Within Europe there are more than 210,000 Filipinos. 85% of these are women migrant workers. Most are super-exploited as domestic servants. **Laura Williams** looks at their plight and at a new campaign to organise them.

IMAGINE WORKING for 14 and 16 hours a day with the constant fear of physical and sexual attacks from your employer. Imagine being powerless to act, or even to escape these conditions, because you are shackled with terms of employment that prevent you from choosing to leave that employer. In the end your only choice is to run away and join many others forced to do the same.

However, if you do manage to flee, you run the risk of imprisonment and deportation, because according to the Home Office you will have broken the law. Sounds like a nightmare, doesn't it? But for many thousands of women this is the reality of their working lives in Britain today.

Those who most often find themselves at the brutal end of this system in Britain, are Filipino women. The overwhelming majority of them are recruited for work as domestic servants and become caught up in the immigration control trap which serves to facilitate their super-exploitation.

Domestic servants

Although women are allowed into the country to work as domestic servants, they are at the same time denied access to work permits. So a woman may be admitted without a work permit if she is accompanying or joining an employer and will be expected to leave the country on termination of that employment.

Her immigration status is automatically dependent on her employer and their good-naturedness. She officially becomes part of the employer's household and as such is open to a wide range of abuse. Some women are forced to surrender their passports to employers, others are confined to the house.

These women are victims of the Tories' drive to harmonise Britain with the "guest workers" system

commonly in operation in many European countries. Under this system the immigrant workforce can be shunted in and out when needed by the bosses. In return the bosses have an unorganised workforce which is in constant fear of its immigration status, and forced to accept low pay and poor conditions.

Recruited in the Philippines, many women find that once in Britain, contracts of employment earlier negotiated and agreed upon are simply torn up, and replaced by the most exploitative conditions of employment. Occupations attracting this labour are rarely covered by a statutory minimum wage. This can mean that wages may vary from as little as £1 an hour for a live-in domestic job to £3 for part time cleaning in a private home.

It often means that there is either a "no rights to holiday leave" clause built into contracts or no payment for such leave. This is usually extended to sickness leave as well. There are a number of harrowing cases of women seriously ill who carry on working out of fear of losing their jobs. Women have found living-in accommodation is little more than a mattress in the garage.

Most Filipino migrants are recruited through employment agencies back in the Philippines. These agencies are huge business enterprises, with migrant workers paying relatively high placement fees for the offer of jobs abroad. The sort of women employment agencies attract and recruit are typically aged between 20 and 35 who can come to work in Britain without children and other dependents.

Restrictions on welfare benefits are seen as a necessary part of the process of super-exploitation. So if a woman applies for her children to join her in Britain, she must be able to show immigration officials that she can support and accommodate them "without recourse to public

funds". Which means she may not claim Supplementary Benefit, Family Income Supplement, Housing Benefit, Homeless Persons Housing and some education and medical facilities. Yet she may be stuck in an extremely low paid job and be contributing to public funds.

Degrading

But this is by no means the end of the matter. She still has to confront another layer of obstacles. First she is likely to be subjected to a series of degrading Home Office devised genetic tests which it is claimed will "prove conclusively who really is the mother". And if she manages to survive that, she will then have to prove that the children have remained wholly or mainly dependent upon her throughout the period of separation.

In general the process is just as arduous for women wishing to bring foreign born husbands or fiancés to settle with them here. They are far more likely to fall foul of the notorious primary purpose rules. Under this act more men are prevented from joining partners, than women applying to join their partners.

Controls

As many women have found, changes to the more blatantly sexually biased aspects of the immigration laws have not significantly altered the situation. The free movement of workers of either sex has not come about as a result of these changes. The situation has become worse as the Tories tighten the controls even further. This is clear testimony to the fact that ultimately it is the laws themselves which have to be destroyed rather than any particularly sexist or racist aspect of them.

The plight of these women workers lays bare the anti-working class

Thatcher's capitalism – not so popular

REMEMBER “popular capitalism”? Remember Loadsamoney? Remember Sid and his British Gas shares?

These were the buzz words and advertising symbols of the Tory “economic miracle”. But now the miracle workers of Downing Street are at each other's throats. Sid has discovered, as the small print warns, that “shares may go down as well as up”. Loadsamoney's famous “wad” buys less and less; half of it is going to pay his mortgage off.

For millions of people capitalism isn't popular anymore.

Inflation has leapt from 3.2% to 8% in fourteen months. Britain's trade falls deeper into the red. The pound slides on the world's currency markets, forcing Chancellor Nigel Lawson to raise the cost of borrowing to 14%.

The economists witter on at the end of news bulletins in their mystifying jargon. But millions of workers are no longer mystified.

Encouraged to buy houses like there was no tomorrow they have become the victims of Lawson's economic shambles. Every rise in the interest rate Lawson imposes to “attack inflation” dramatically raises the real cost of living for working class families with a mortgage. And there is no escape. Lawson is able to slice chunks out of workers' pay packets through mortgage rate increases in a way no individual boss would dare.

His only complaint is that mortgage repayments are counted in the inflation figures at all. Workers' home loan repayments, which have risen by up to 42% in the last 12 months, should not be counted as a real factor in the cost of living according to miracle worker Lawson. Clearly any further economic miracles are to be performed on the stage magician's principle; the hand is quicker than the eye!

What is the cause of the Tories' economic problems? Essentially it is the weakness of the British economy combined with, and exposed by, a new period of instability in the world economy.

The fact that all these problems have occurred during an economic boom proves what Marxists have always said about the profit system. It is crisis ridden. It cannot meet the needs of the mass of humanity. It is forced to destroy people's lives and decimate their real incomes even when the bosses' order books are full and their bank accounts are overflowing.

It is not just wine lakes and food mountains which capitalism has to periodically destroy. Lawson's March budget drained off £15 billion of taxpayers money into paying off the “national debt”. The reason? He could not spend a penny of it without boosting inflation and plunging the economy even deeper into trouble.

Thatcher and Lawson are at present falling out over the fine details of the economic mess. They both lack any coherent strategy for coping with it. They are in the grip of the laws of capitalist economics which, as Marx said, “work behind the backs of the participants”.

And it is not just interest rates and inflation which are causing dissent in the Tory camp. A deep division over Britain's role in Europe after 1992 has opened up within the ranks of the Tory party. Again it is world economic forces which are dragging British capitalism into Europe. Protest as she might about “Brussels dictats” and “creeping socialism” there is nothing little-Englander Thatcher can do to reverse this fundamental tendency.

Is it inevitable that economic forces beyond our control should ruin our daily lives?

No. The problem lies with the capitalist system where profit, not need, dictates what is produced and the vast majority of society's wealth remains in the hands of a few bosses.

By taking the factories and offices out of the capitalists' hands working people can put an end to the economic anarchy of the profit system. They can plan production to meet the needs of everyone instead of the luxury lifestyles of a few. They can

EDITORIAL



abolish the obscenity of the food mountains and the money hoarded whilst millions struggle to make ends meet.

This is the meaning of socialism, a word not popular in the decade of Loadsamoney and cheap shares. A word the Labour and trade union leaders have abandoned in the name of “realism”.

But as the 1990s beckon, promising the world's rulers nothing but uncertainty and unrest socialism will again prove to be the only realistic option open to humanity.

It is up to the workers - mobilised today around wages and against slave conditions at work - to build a new party that will fight for socialism, not just preach about it: a party whose aim is the destruction of capitalism, not a temporary compromise with the bosses.

As Thatcherism flounders, as Labour searches in vain for an acceptable “big idea” to replace it with, a new generation of workers must discover and take up the fight for the one “big idea” which can put an end to capitalist chaos, waste and misery: the workers' socialist revolution. ■

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Newham ban

THE LEADING Labour Group of councillors in the London borough of Newham have banned Sinn Fein and other republican representatives from speaking in any council owned premises. This was in response to a bid from the East London Irish Year of Action Committee (ELIYAC) to invite either Bernadette (Devlin) McAliskey or Sinn Fein to a meeting in West Ham Town Hall.

Within a week of ELIYAC's request the Labour Group had adopted a “no platform” policy towards the republican

movement. Deputy leader of Newham Council, Conor McAuley, defended the Labour Group's decision on the grounds that Sinn Fein is associated with “terrorism”.

Yet Newham Council was recently prepared to fly the ANC flag over the Town Hall.

In response to the ban ELIYAC is holding a series of pickets at the Town Hall with speakers from the local unions and community.

Pickets of West Ham Town Hall, Barking Road, E6:
Wed 7 June 6-30-8-00
Mon 24 July, 6-30-8-00

KURDISH REFUGEES Asylum now!

BY G R McCOLL

MORE THAN 1,000 Kurds, fleeing state persecution in Turkey, have found a temporary refuge in three North London boroughs. The vast majority arrived penniless on flights from Cyprus and Istanbul since 2 May hoping to escape for good the well-documented brutality of Turkish troops in the Kahramanmaras region.

The Kurds have found themselves sleeping in community centres and church halls as the resources of voluntary organisations and London's existing Turkish and Kurdish communities are stretched to breaking point.

In an act of barbaric racism the Home Office has declared it will hold any more Kurdish arrivals in the cramped Harmondsworth detention centre (near Heathrow) or in the overcrowded squalor of HM Prisons as far away as Exeter and Gloucester. In their rush to secure Turkey's entry into the European Community the Tories have repeatedly ignored overwhelming evidence of the murder and torture of thousands of political prisoners over the past decade.

In January 1988 Evren's security forces raided eleven Kurdish villages, detaining and torturing up to a hundred residents for their “failure to fight Kurdish guerrillas”. In March, troops terrorised and beat up Kurds in the village of Yemisli, while later in the spring a mass grave containing the bodies of 300 Kurds was discovered. An estimated 36,000 Kurds are now living in sub-human concentration camps in Turkey, having es-

the homeless have gone by the board.

The plight of the Kurds in their native territory, and the vile treatment they have suffered at the hands of the British state so far, highlight the urgency of building a national campaign, rooted in the labour movement, to stop any further deportations and to scrap the whole battery of racist immigration laws. The Hackney Anti-Deportation Campaign is circulating a model resolution for trade union and Labour Party branches (printed below) to rally support behind the refugees and bolster demands for proper state funding.

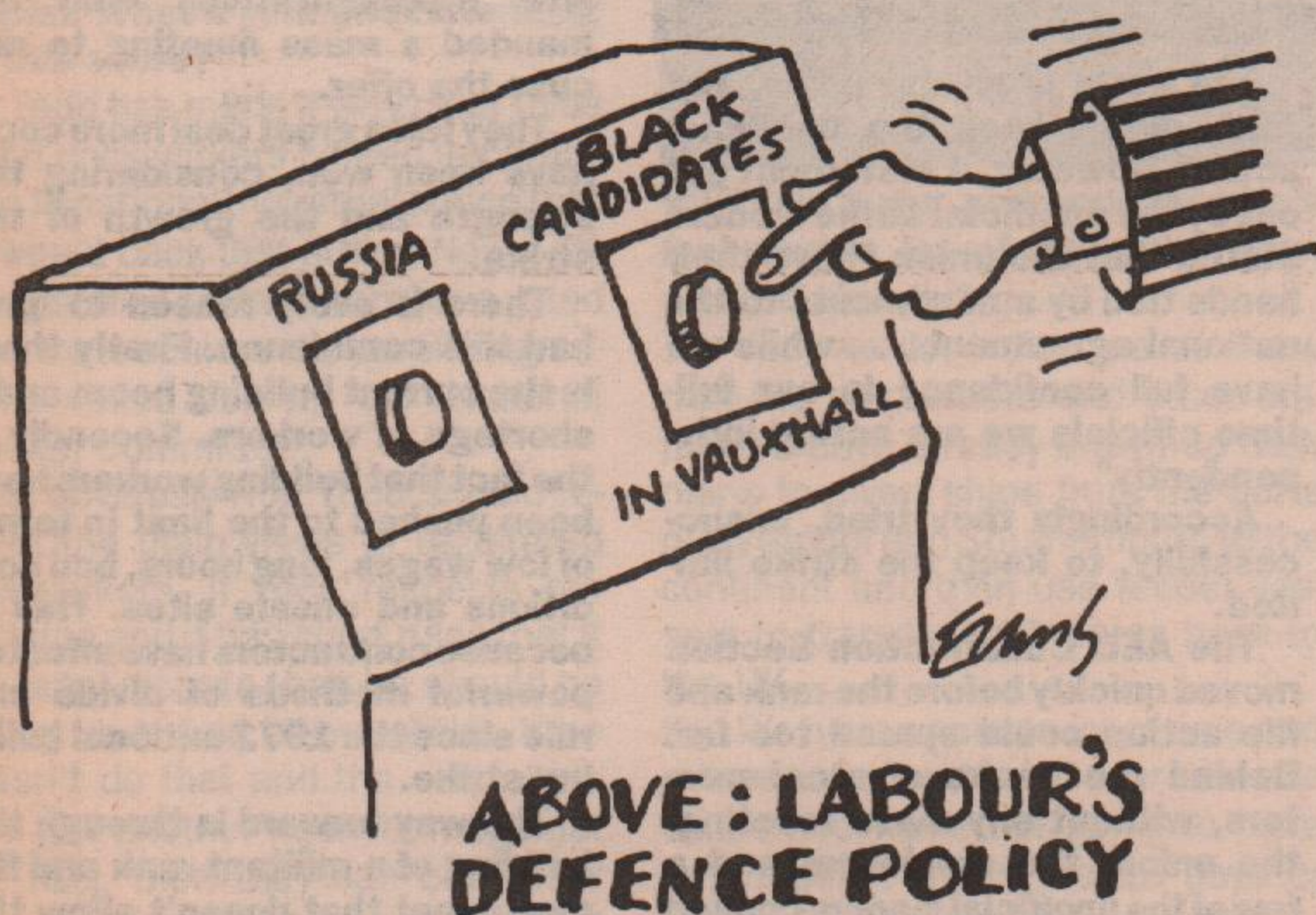
In the meantime money is urgently needed to aid the effort to feed, clothe and shelter the Kurds. Please make cheques payable to:

Hackney Anti-Deportation Campaign, No 3 Account
c/o Kurdish Refugee Support Group
489 Kingsland High Street,
Hackney, London E8.
(Tel. 01-249 6930)

A rally is planned for 8 June 7.30pm at Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street, to highlight the desperate situation of the Kurds.

This meeting notes that hundreds of refugees have recently fled from the Kurdistan region of Turkey to Britain. We recognise that they are attempting to escape torture and political persecution by the Turkish government. This meeting:

- 1) Condemns the policies of the Turkish government which is forcing Kurdish people to flee from their homes.
- 2) Demands that the British government gives the refugees permanent residence and allows their families to come and stay with them.
- 3) That the government provides the refugees and their families with adequate accommodation and benefits.
- 4) Demands that the union/organisation nationally publicises the case of the refugees and supports their demands.
- 5) Agrees a donation of _____ to the Kurdish Refugees Support Group.



TUBES

For an all out strike to win

"I WON'T sack Tube wildcats!" declared Underground boss Dennis Tunnicliffe; "it will only make martyrs out of them".

Tunnicliffe's negotiators had just held a secret meeting with twelve leaders of the unofficial Tube strikes. Their last minute attempt to stop further action failed and London was paralysed by the fourth unofficial one-day strike.

The same Dennis Tunnicliffe had been fuming about "faceless men" leading the strikes through "threats and intimidation". His climbdown and loss of face should encourage Underground workers to unite their disputes and step up the action to win.

The NUR is at present balloting for a second time after an 88% vote for all out action was deemed unlawful by the courts. That ballot was for a strike against Action Stations—a flexible working onslaught against platform and booking office staff. For weeks the train drivers and guards were left to organise their own unofficial claim and the so-called "wildcat" action to win it.

But Tunnicliffe has now come forward with a pay and conditions "package" for train crews which is every bit as vicious as Action Stations. Dubbed the "slaves' charter", it rips up every agreement between the train crews' unions and the bosses.

It provides the opportunity to link the train and station workers' fight around the demand for:

- £6.43/£5.50 per hour for drivers/guards with no strings attached
- A 15% increase for all LUL workers, with a minimum of £200 a week
- Scrap Action Stations and the New Employment Package
- Scrap the new Late and Absence Procedure which disciplines staff

London Buses

A SUCCESSFUL one-day strike by London Bus workers called alongside the Tube strike immediately forced management to up their pay offer from 7.1% to 7.5% with a £20 Christmas bonus. This being early summer, bus workers have said no thanks to a Christmas bonus and balloted for a series of weekly one day strikes.

Like the Tube workers, what the bus workers need now is effective rank and file organisation to build for an all out strike.■

British Rail

BR WORKERS were stabbed in the back by the ASLEF conference last month. On the leadership's recommendation delegates voted not to ballot drivers over BR's proposal to end national pay negotiations. Meanwhile the NUR leaders continue to dither in the face of having to run (i.e. run away from) several disputes at once.

Instead of preparing to link the fight over pay with the fight to save national pay bargaining they are busy working out how to deal with them separately, one after the other.

But an unofficial ban on overtime and rest day working on the South East region has already led to a 30% loss of service.

Train crews also struck alongside the tube and bus workers on 16 May, adding to the impressive show of transport workers' strength on the day.■

for taking sick leave

- Defend every job on the Underground; no to casual working

So far the strikes have been one day and unofficial. Tube workers should be organising to make the strikes all out and official.

Whilst the mood is confident now, there is always the danger that the weekly one-day strikes will sap the will to fight. Management will sit tight, waiting for this, hoping the strikers will cave in.

Many Underground workers fear their own pockets could not sustain an all out strike. Living costs are soaring, especially home-loan repayments.

Against this there is the fact that management could not afford an all out strike. If a really solid Tube strike gripped London it would be a matter of days, not weeks, until the bosses caved in. And this would happen even quicker if bus and British Rail workers struck at the same time.

Strike pay would be crucial in sustaining an all out strike. It is vital to win official backing.

We welcome ASLEF's moves in this direction but until official action is called the unofficial action must continue. To keep up the pressure and avoid a sell-out the rank and file must retain control of the strike.

What Underground workers need now is an elected strike committee representing every depot on the network to run an all out strike. They need to forge direct rank and file links with the BR and bus workers, to co-ordinate the action and link the claims.

- Make all strikes official
- Elect a strike committee to lead an all out strike
- Build rank and file links with bus and BR workers. For a united transport fight!■



Scottish Central Buses

EIGHT HUNDRED Scottish busworkers are in their second month of strike action. The Scottish bus network has been chopped into pieces to prepare for privatisation, so Scottish Central Bus Group workers have been banned from calling for solidarity action from other sections by the courts.

However, persistent picketing has already brought out garages in Fife and Gavinborough. The T&G officials, who should be organising action, have spent their time denouncing the pickets. The dispute centres on four stewards victimised by Scottish Central management and a new working pattern that could leave bus workers on shifts of up to 14 hours!■

Massey Ferguson

MASSEY FERGUSON workers have won a resounding victory against their management's attempt to dismiss 15 trade union militants as part of a "voluntary" redundancy package. Despite warnings that they would lose bonuses and holiday pay the entire 1400 workforce struck solid until management climbed down completely and withdrew the dismissal notices. One more example of how united strike action can beat the bosses.■

THE GOVERNMENT'S attack on civil service workers is set to enter a new stage. Having made their intention clear in February last year, the Tories have now decided the time is ripe to break up the civil service for good, and with it national pay and conditions.

Top of their agenda at the moment is the largest and most militant section, the DSS. They might have bitten off more than they can chew. In particular, recent months have seen a blossoming of rank and file militancy in the civil service. The Socialist Caucus, a grouping inside and outside of the Militant-led Broad Left, has been actively involved in organising strikes. It claims to have broken from the chronic electoralism of Militant, and seems to have little time for the "downturnists" of the SWP. Their meeting at last month's CPSA conference attracted 130 delegates (more than the Broad Left's!).

Workers Power urge all CPSA militants to attend the Caucus meeting in Birmingham on 10 June. We talked to Mark Serwotka, secretary of Merthyr Tydfil DSS branch and a leading Caucus member. Below we print a shortened version of that interview.

WP: Mark, can you tell us a little bit about the current attacks in the DSS and the strikes taking place?

MS: Primarily, the two biggest attacks are the introduction of new technology on a massive scale and now the threat of agency status announced in the past week.

New technology is going to affect every single DHSS worker. If introduced in line with government thinking, it will involve total deskilling of the work, take

Oil rigs

IN A display of new confidence a wave of unofficial occupations is spreading among construction workers on the North Sea oil rigs. It started on the BP Forties platform and, at the time of writing, has spread to seven other platforms. The workers are protesting at penalty pay practices and the absence of guaranteed safety standards. In the light of the death and appalling misery inflicted on workers on the Piper Alpha rig every worker must stand behind these AEU and MSF members in their courageous struggle.■

Steel erectors' strike

FIVE DAYS of all out unofficial strike by 1000 steel erectors in London last month ended in a partial victory for the strikers. Working a normal 54 hour week at a pitiful £4.34 per hour, with minimal lodging allowance for non-Londoners and a high accident and death rate, is it any wonder that these building workers saw red.

From being threatened with the sack they won a 50% increase in bonus and a 30% increase in lodging allowance—giving a deal worth just £60 to £100 a week.

But this is pin-money next to the £12 per hour demanded. Further, not only can bonus money easily be taken away when the bosses feel confident, this form of payment is also used to divide workers.

CIVIL SERVICE Rank and file regroups

the instruments of payment away from local offices and put them in the hands of non-civil service workers in four centres in the country. There's been quite a bit of strike action over the implications of it.

Agency status threatens target-setting to cut staff even further, take away trade union negotiating rights and will again have a fundamental effect on the workforce. Together with new technology, the two tools give government a privatised civil service with less civil servants and far less chance of having successful strike action.

In terms of strike action, there's been a series of strikes on staffing, work-sharing, casuals, overtime. There's recently been unofficial strike action in London where they plan to shut 21 offices and farm the work out to Glasgow, Belfast and Wigan. All of these strikes have been strikes against the wishes of the union leadership, but in favour with branch activists in the areas—especially in Wales, the north east and the north west.

WP: What is the attitude of the civil service unions' leadership? What are the problems facing DSS workers who want a fight?

MS: Summed up, I'd say both executives have a lukewarm attitude to campaigning and a very frosty attitude to any action. The problem this has left members and activists in the offices is that isolated strikes have broken out but they haven't been linked. And that has meant there's never been a major confrontation between workers and the government.

WP: Is the Hoxton strike an example of this?

MS: Hoxton's an excellent example. We had a situation where management and the union executive together forced strikers back without achieving their aims.

WP: Workers Power believes that in these strikes lies the key to driving back the government offensive on the whole civil service. The CPSA in London DSS are amongst the best organised workers in the civil service, with a tradition of unofficial action and solidarity strikes.

How can activists use this to trigger wider action?

MS: It's very important that we build around those areas that in the short term are prepared to go out on strike. It seems to me that our priority must be spreading the message among DHSS workers that what goes on in London today will be in their area tomorrow. And then—quickly spread it through the benefit network in the DE and other areas. Now I think the way that can be achieved is getting strike action off the ground unofficially if needs be—and it's almost certainly going to have to be unofficial—and using those strikers to get into other offices.

WP: Socialist Caucus (SC) are critical of the Broad Left (BL). Can you explain your criticisms and outline what we need to do instead?

MS: The entire emphasis of the BL is to elect left union officials at all levels of the union and that often impedes—in fact is used instead of—building a strong rank and file in the civil service. An example, I think, is during the 1988 election campaign. We had 50,000 BL leaflets printed, not one BL leaflet printed anything about the Camden DHSS/DE strikes. That clearly shows where priorities lie.

The BL has always been in my eyes an electoral machine. SC believe it is long overdue that the rank and file is organised, involved in running the union. Although it is better to have John Macreadie than John Ellis, at the end of the day it's not about bureaucrats left or right, but about members controlling the union themselves. That's why SC has recently started to expand in quite an extraordinary way, drawing in new members not previously active. That's why the SC meeting in Birmingham on 10 June will see lots and lots of new faces.

WP: What is the aim of the Birmingham meeting?

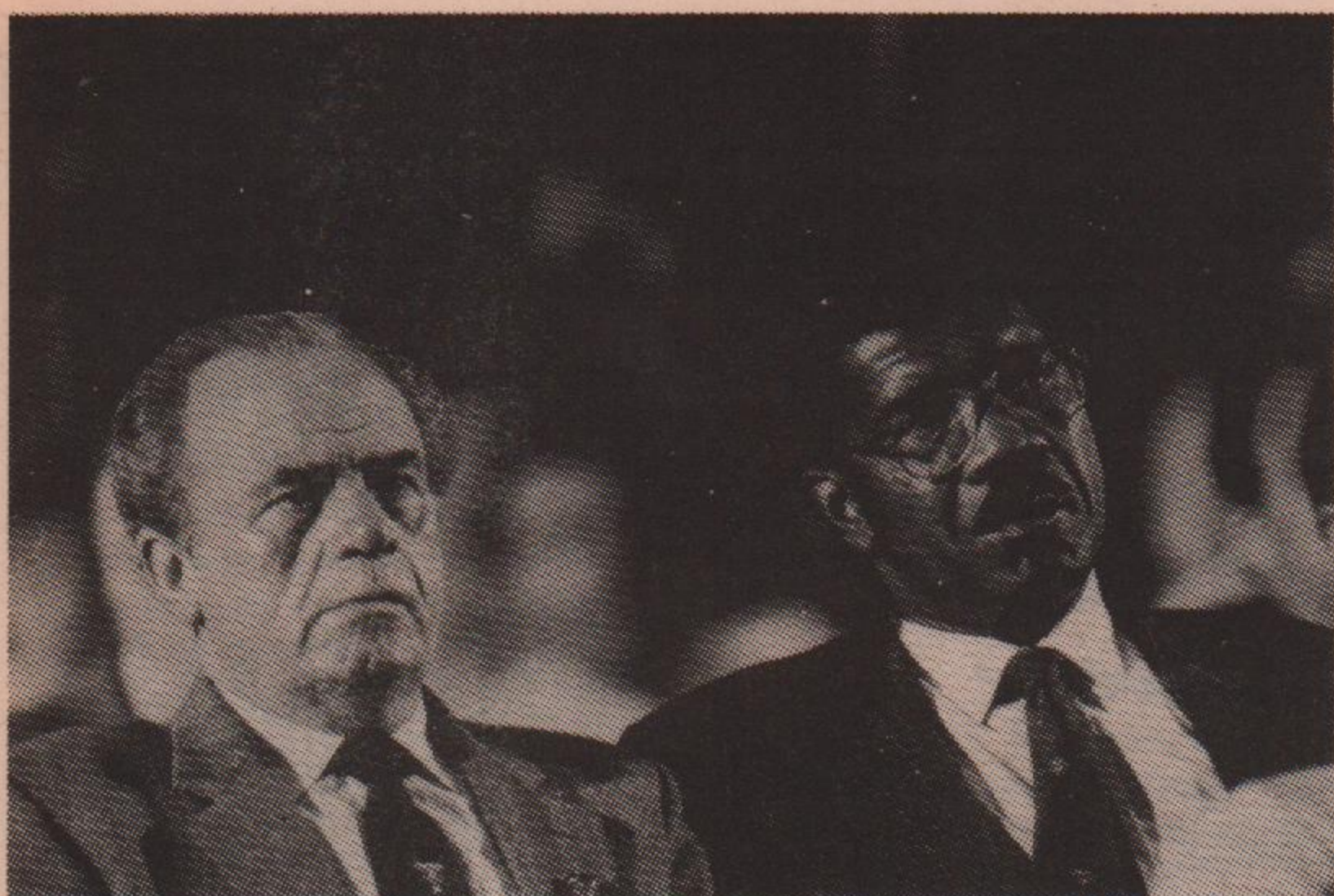
MS: I think the meeting in Birmingham should come out with a call for an unofficial conference of all departments, branches, workplaces of the union to see what we're going to do about the agencies now that it's clear the bureaucracy's going to do nothing.■

siderable anger from rank and file building workers and a number of site representatives who demanded a mass meeting to discuss the offer.

They felt a great deal more could have been won, considering the strength and the growth of the strike.

There is every reason to have had this confidence. Firstly there is the current building boom and a shortage of workers. Secondly is the fact that building workers have been pushed to the limit in terms of low wages, long hours, bad conditions and unsafe sites. This is because contractors have effected powerful methods of divide and rule since the 1972 national building strike.

The way forward is through the building of a militant rank and file movement that doesn't allow the construction union leadership and their unofficial "friends" to sell out struggles.■



Neil Turner/Insight

DOCKS

No more delays—strike now

THE DECISION of the National Port Shop Stewards Committee (NPSSC) not to call a strike at their end of May meeting was a set back. Despite the militancy and bitterness shown by many of the delegates, the majority once again left the decision to the TGWU leadership. A resolution from Tilbury to put a time limit of 6 June was lost.

What none of the delegates know is what they will do if Todd lets the appeals and injunctions take their course. He has made it absolutely clear that this is what he intends to do.

Courts

Millet's ruling allows for an appeal and grants a holding injunction until that appeal is heard. Once that hearing begins Todd will argue a strike cannot be called. And whatever is the outcome a further appeal can go to the House of Lords.

The bosses and the courts can

BY ADRIAN SWAINE

easily drag such action well beyond the 28 days. And that would mean—surprise, surprise—that a strike without another ballot would be unlawful. As the Workers Power leaflet to the meeting argued—the time to strike is now.

Other workers are in struggle and winning. With the docks out the Tories would be in a sweat. They are already facing mounting economic problems. A dock strike would make them worse. Victory is on the agenda if action is immediate.

The NPSSC should convene mass meetings at all the ports to explain the current position. These meetings should then vote to mandate their delegates to reconvene the NPSSC and vote for an immediate strike. Any wavering ports must be the target for flying pickets. Solidarity from other workers must be fought for. Links must be forged with those already in dispute. If the laws are used

THIS YEAR'S NUPE conference was a good one for the new realists and a bad one for rank and file public employees fighting in their workplaces. NUPE's transformation into a Kinnockite union was finally completed with an overwhelming vote to drop the union's commitment to unilateral nuclear Disarmament.

For the benefit of the dismayed, soft-left Tom Sawyer assured conference that NUPE would demand that any money saved through multi-lateral disarmament should go on social services!

For the Executive, the debate was not about unilateralism, but how to get a Labour government elected. This was the theme of conference, as it has been every year since 1983.

The first major debate, on low pay, resulted in a stab in the back for NUPE members. Low pay is the scourge of public employees, yet Rodney Bickerstaffe offered nothing but a strategy of negotiation. Despite the opposition of a militant minority the vote went against any form of action to fight poverty pay.

Once unilateralism had been thrown out it was plain sailing for Sawyer and Bickerstaffe. Virtually every vote on the major Tory attacks; Poll Tax, NHS White Paper, Education, Privatisation, was a vote to do nothing but wait for a Labour

government.

The most scandalous result was on the Poll Tax. The NUPE executive's position is "pay it, don't break the law, there is nothing we can do".

There were three minor setbacks for the NUPE leadership. The anger of nurses who have struck against re-grading forced and won a card vote in support of last year's strikes and demanding a serious campaign on pay for all NHS staff. This anger spilled over into the Sectional conferences of both Health and Local Government workers, where delegates rejected the National Committee's report on the NHS and censured the Executive over the local government pay fight. These explosions of anger could not alter the fact that Kinnockite new realism won the day at conference.

In the Executive and Deputy General Secretary elections the left made progress. Sawyer was made to sweat as Militant supporter Mick Brady challenged him, taking 30,000 votes compared to Sawyer's 48,000. Unfortunately how-

Nupe's new realism

ever there is no sign that Militant wish the NUPE Broad Left to remain anything other than an electoral machine. The danger is that the three Broad Left candidates elected to the Executive will remain isolated and without an active base.

Workers Power supporter Jane Bruton, a nurse from the Leicester Hospitals Branch gained 4,360 votes in the elections for the Midlands Womens' seat on the Executive, standing on a clear revolutionary communist programme, including Troops Out of Ireland. Bruton, who was prominent in the fight for strike committees during the NHS strikes was not elected. She was denounced from the platform along with other militant activists for "saying everything and doing nothing". The next day her NUPE branch won the Shield for the biggest recruitment success in 1988. As she explained "This was due to the branch's consistent fight to recruit from the RCN and unorganised nurses, instead of the NUPE leadership's political truce with the bosses union".

At the same time the dockers must ensure that they have majority representation on any negotiating committees with the bosses. This is the best way to stop a sell out once a strike is underway. Already Todd has signalled a willingness to compromise. Last Wednesday he told the court, "I do accept that some understanding can be reached that falls short of the provisions of the NDLS but which can provide the basis for an agreement". The writing is on the wall. A parallel agreement on the bosses' terms is being considered.

The danger, and it will be increased unless a solid national scheme port strike is launched now, is that local agreements will be struck with the port employers. Already the Associated British Ports (ABP) have been arguing that a majority of ports voted against the strike. They would

dearly love to increase the divisions between the ports and create a situation where dockers fight dockers in the scramble to sell off pay and conditions in order to keep their jobs.

Dockers have a long and proud record of militancy and solidarity. Many have already said that to lose and give up the scheme without even fighting would be unforgivable. We say, that launching the fight now, unofficially if necessary, will provide the best possible chance of winning. And when that action is underway the shop stewards' committees must open themselves up to a broader layer of militants in order to run the strike. They must form strike committees directly accountable to regular mass meetings.

- The Tories can be beaten!
- Defy the anti-union laws!
- Strike now—no more delays!

Sanction

Of course dockers must continue to fight for official backing all along the line. They must demand that, in line with the ballot result, the TGWU must sanction the strike. They must take up the fight throughout the TGWU to win a commitment from the union to fighting the anti-union laws, in action alongside the dockers and not just in high sounding resolutions.

Workers Power discussed recent developments in the battle to defend dockers' pay and conditions with Jimmy Nolan, a Liverpool docker and chair of the National Port Shop Stewards' Committee (NPSSC), and Kevin Hussey, a long-time steward at Tilbury and delegate to the T&G's National Docks Committee. The interview took place during an adjournment of the 27 May meeting of the NPSSC as dockers awaited word of the High Court ruling.

WP: Don't you and your members feel that a lot of time has been wasted already?

JN: Yes, we do. In fact we do know that the shipowners and other employers have already drawn up their plans to divert ships from the ports of Liverpool and Southampton to the continent and then use feeder vessels to transfer their cargo back to the UK.

KH: We have wasted a lot of time and everyone knows that. So far as we're concerned we're not going to have any re-ballot within the 28 days or whenever. For us once is definitely enough.

WP: If this were to drag on in the courts, into the Lords until mid-June

that would give the employers more time to stockpile key commodities and pursue the plans you mentioned. So isn't it key that you decide here and now to take action as soon as possible?

KH: That's right but you've also got to realise that they can only stockpile once and that's already happened. Our dock was virtually cleared of cargo so that at the moment there are very few ships coming into Tilbury. They've more or less started to use that stockpile up.

WP: Do you have any evidence that they're actively recruiting scabs for the registered ports?

JN: According to their own media they've actually said that they're

prepared to employ scab labour from across the world, but we're extremely confident that once we have a national docks strike we're going to get support from other British workers and also European workers, particularly dockworkers in Europe.

KH: This is certainly going to be a major dispute and the type of dispute where people in the labour and trade union movement can get behind us with a lot of confidence because we in the docks have got a history of going through strikes, winning some and losing some, but being prepared to fight long and hard. There's a lot of people about in the movement today and a lot of groups waiting to come in for a fight. I believe that we in the docks can and should show them a lead and that with a lot of solidarity from other groups we can beat the government.

WP: In terms of the registered ports themselves are there any cracks in the unity, especially on the issue of coming out unofficially? Your members at Tilbury and Liverpool, while preferring it to be official, presumably don't have any problems with unofficial action. Are there problems in that regard with ports like Southampton and if so how are you going to address those?

JN: The main position is this: every major port has rallied behind the T&G, the vote has been taken, and we all hope that the T&G acts on our

decision. If they act on our decision then every registered port in the country will come out. If, for example, the Law Lords make a decision that goes against us then we'll obviously have no choice but to go out on unofficial action and then faced with the anti-union laws the T&G will wash their hands of us. If they do that then there's no way that we as registered dockworkers will accept that whether it be Southampton, London, Liverpool, Hull, or any other port. We will all come out on strike for the one simple reason that we know what we're fighting for. We've got to say to other groups of workers are they prepared to accept that only Britain and Turkey in all of Europe have such repressive anti-union legislation? So it's entirely up to workers in this country to understand what's really at stake and come out automatically to safeguard the conditions of any worker.

WP: So do you see this as parallel to the Pentonville situation in 1972? Are you prepared to call on other workers to strike to smash the current anti-union laws?

KH: We'll be asking people to stand alongside us, stand behind us, and to stand up and be counted—no more, no less; no more and no less than what we've done for other groups of workers in the past when they've been in trouble. ■

Workers Power: What's the importance of the High Court ruling to whether or not you come out now or later?

Jimmy Nolan: If the law decides that ours is indeed a "legal" dispute then our union, the T&G, will be calling us out on an official strike. So it is very important that we await the outcome of this particular ruling.

WP: We understood that Ron Todd had actually said that he would wait until any appeals process was complete before declaring the strike official. What's your understanding on this score?

JN: Todd has made it very clear to us that if dockworkers agreed to participate in national industrial action that he would back that strike. Now 74% of registered dockworkers have voted to strike to achieve the parallel agreement called for by our National [Docks] Committee.

So obviously Ron Todd should respect the plain views of registered dockworkers. If Todd respects our decision and if this court rules that it is a legal dispute then he should be calling us out on all-out strike. If he doesn't do that and the employers then get another injunction against the T&G, then they can bide their time until mid-June and hope that we'll have to have another ballot. Once we know the decision from the High Court there should be an immediate call for a national docks strike.

YOU HAVE to pity Neil Kinnock. He has managed to complete Labour's conversion to Thatcherism at the very moment when Thatcherism is coming unstuck.

By defeating the left Kinnock has proved to the bosses that Labour is fit to take charge of British capitalism. But the bosses have yet to be convinced that Labour is capable of getting them out of their current economic mess.

Meanwhile Labour's new policies offer workers nothing but more of the same restrictions and attacks dished out by the Tories over the last ten years.

Bosses' gains

The success of Labour's Policy Review ensures that, whoever wins the next election, all of the bosses' gains of the Thatcher decade will be maintained.

Labour's new policy is clear in its support for the profit system:

"It is the system we live in and we have got to make it work more efficiently, more fairly and more successfully in the world market place."

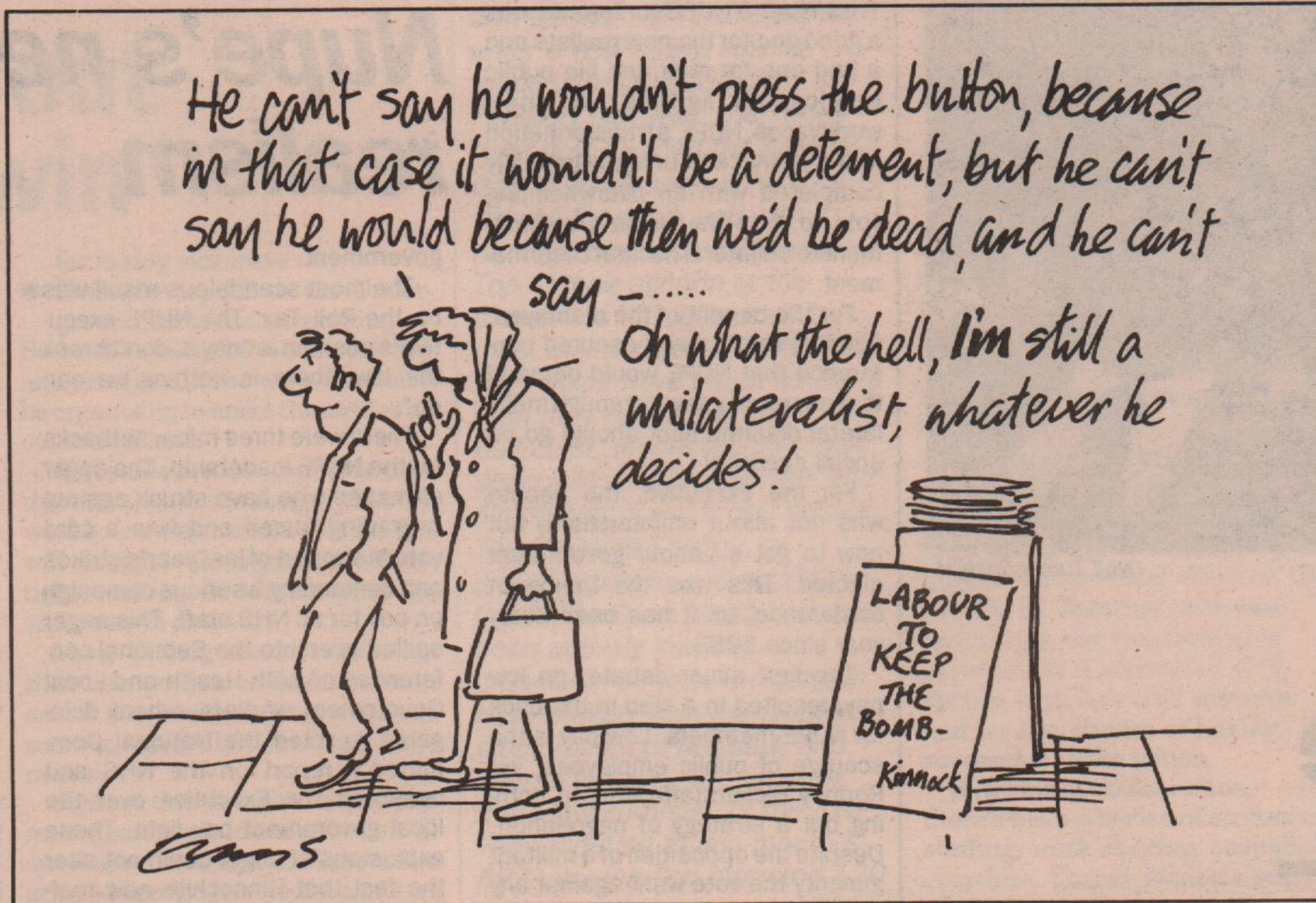
But this is a utopia. Economic crisis, inefficiency and poverty are essential to capitalism. Even awash with oil money and in the middle of a boom British capitalism is having to walk the tightrope between rampant inflation and recession.

As always the bosses try to make the workers pay for the crises of the profit system. With the Policy Review Labour has adopted a programme fully compatible with the bosses' priorities and totally at odds with workers' needs.

Shares

Gone is any commitment to nationalisation. Only British Telecom and water will be taken back under government control by buying back a majority of shares. All the millions handed out to the bosses in the cut-price privatisations will be left in their pockets in Kinnock's vision of a "more fair" capitalism.

The Policy Review documents do promise to spend more money



Kinnock wins; workers lose

BY JULIAN SCHOLEFIELD

on pensioners, the disabled and the unemployed. But Kinnock has stated categorically that:

"We will not spend, nor will we promise to spend, that which we have not got."

With millions feeling the pinch of inflation Kinnock has a comforting message... for the bosses:

"On pay generally we shall make it clear that our emphasis is on investment rather than on consumption and that money spent too generously on pay today would jeopardise jobs and services tomorrow."

Or as Norman Tebbit used to say, don't price yourselves out of a job.

Even on Local Government the

Policy Review accepts the Tory agenda. It makes no promise to restore local services to meet workers' basic needs. Instead, under the cover of wanting to improve the "quality of service" it proposes to contract out to the private sector, those services which are under par.

But as millions of workers know, private contractors' services are even worse than those provided direct by local councils.

The Policy Review maintains the key elements of the Tory anti-union laws. It pledges to maintain compulsory strike ballots. It accepts that managers have the le-

gitimate right to call on "outside assistance" in a dispute arguing only that workers should have the same rights. Workers should be able to call on other workers to take solidarity action "if they have a genuine interest in the outcome of the dispute".

But Michael Meacher assured the bosses that "railway workers coming out in support of a nurses' pay claim would be ruled out". No matter that railway workers have an interest in a well funded and staffed NHS; no matter that, at present, they share the same ultimate boss, the government: if they go on strike together in Kinnock's "more fair" vision of the future they end up in court.

On the much debated issue of disarmament Kinnock has succeeded in replacing Labour's commitment to unilaterally getting rid of nuclear weapons with a commitment to using them. That is what multilateral disarmament means and no amount of "pacifist" Labour MPs supporting it should blind workers to this fact.

Victories

Kinnock is riding high on a string of easy victories; the Policy Review, unilateralism, beating the left in the Vauxhall selection battle. But what the bosses want is a resolute political leadership with clear answers to inflation, the trade deficit and Britain's role in the EEC. They want a Labour leader who is prepared to deploy nuclear weapons against the USSR, as well as to deploy block votes against Ken Livingstone.

Despite having a clear and cogent vision of Britain as a future caring capitalism, Kinnock is prepared to give few answers to the current problems facing the bosses.

That is why Kinnock threw a tantrum when the BBC's James Naughtie asked him what Labour would do about inflation. That is why Labour's Euro-manifesto is a meagre eight pages of public relations waffle compared to the Tories 64 page programme. And that is why Gerald Kaufman had to claim that "no responsible government would answer" the question "will you press the nuclear button?"

Attack

Kinnock knows full well that the only way to make capitalism work is to attack the workers. There is nothing new in having a Labour Party politically equipped and prepared to do this.

The Policy Review confirms what revolutionary Marxists have said throughout the eighties, to be greeted with shaking heads and groans from the Labour left: Labour is a bosses' party, though supported by the mass of workers. It cannot be transformed but must be replaced by a revolutionary workers' party. ■

VAUXHALL

Left runs for cover

BY BRIAN GREEN

the polls.

Workers Power supporters in Vauxhall CLP were alone in arguing that the constituency should defy the NEC, select a candidate not on the NEC-approved short-list, and stand against the officially imposed Kinnockite candidate Kate Hoey.

We argued for the selection of Martha Osamor and proposed Vauxhall CLP stand her in the by-election. As the black candidate with the most support amongst the Labour rank and file there was every chance she could win.

But the Vauxhall left, including the so-called Trotskyists of *Militant* and the International Socialist Group (ISG), ran for cover.

They claimed that standing a democratically selected candidate would be "suicide", it would "confuse the voters", it would "split the vote and let the SLD win". If Osamor had a vote for every excuse they made not to fight she would have won a landslide victory!

Having accepted the NEC-imposed candidate, Black Sections now argue that the Vauxhall party should abstain from canvassing and campaigning. Opting out of a fight with the leadership is fast becoming their hallmark.

There is no doubt that the NEC would move to suspend Vauxhall and expel its leaders if they stood

against Hoey.

But there is no use in denouncing Labour as racist, its leadership as pale pink Tories unless you are prepared to fight them.

And if the price of organising to fight, of carrying out democracy in the Labour Party, of defying racism, is a break with the Labour Party then it is a price workers in Vauxhall must pay.

At present there are several "alternative" candidates to Hoey: black lawyer Rudy Narayan and the RCP's Don Milligan. What they have in common is a refusal to fight Kinnockism, a refusal to fight alongside black and white workers in the Vauxhall labour movement against Kinnockism and new realism.

Narayan left the Labour Party over a previous selection battle, but his politics are no better than those of the Labour soft left. The RCP habitually stands stunt candidates on a minimum political program.

There is no evidence that either of the candidates attract the support or the illusions of workers in Vauxhall. The task remains to expose Labour in practice by mobilising workers to fight, organising to place demands on Labour and proving in practice Hoey and Kinnock's commitment to the capitalism which causes poverty, racism and homelessness in Vauxhall.

That's why we say: vote Hoey, but organise to fight. ■

MANCHESTER

Poll Tax fight

BY BILL JEFFRIES

AS IN many places throughout England

and Wales last month, the Poll Tax registration forms arrived on every doorstep in Hulme, Manchester. In response 120 Hulme tenants attended a Hulme Anti-Poll Tax Union (HAPTU) meeting to build a mass campaign of non-registration.

This was HAPTU's biggest public meeting so far. It shows the real possibility for building opposition to the tax amongst tenants. Four tenants' associations, the all-Hulme Tenants' Alliance, the local Labour Party, NUPE, NALGO and Mossdale Housing are affiliated to HAPTU. As well it has signed up 200 households as members.

The secretary of HAPTU, a supporter of *Workers Power*, addressed the meeting on the need to link non-registration to wider mass action, including strike action by all sections of the working class. He argued the case for uniting the fightback

through delegate based councils of action, a position HAPTU supports.

A lively debate on these and other issues was ensured through the invitation of a rival Hulme Tenants Against the Poll Tax campaign.

Argument centred on the delegate basis of the campaign, the exact form non-registration should take and on the need for a united campaign. The democratic debate has hopefully now paved the way for real unity in action.

Speakers called for an occupation of and mass demonstration at the Council and demanded Labour refuse to implement the tax. The case for Labour taking the necessary action against the poll tax, regardless of its legality, was stressed.

HAPTU has already organised a follow up meeting and is putting into practice the demand of the Hulme tenants for a mass campaign of non-registration. ■

Demonstration
against the
Poll Tax
called by the
TUC
Platt Fields
Manchester
1 July

Ever since the mid-1970s pornography has been a key issue in the women's movement. Jenny Scott surveys the debates, and some of the key books on the subject

Censorship and pornography

LAST MONTH a major work of the most famous post-war British composer—*Death in Venice* by Benjamin Britten—was banned by local Tories from being performed before a school audience. The reason—the central theme of the opera is the obsessive attraction a young boy has for an older man. This is in breach of Section 28. But this is only one ignorant and philistine example of the censorship that the Section has unleashed.

Yet it is not only lesbian and gay sexuality that is targeted for suppression. To combat "sex" on TV, Thatcher has set up the Broadcasting Standards Council (BSC). In the face of Tory pressure on the media, the Campaign against Pornography and Censorship (CPC) has emerged committed to opposing government censorship.

So far so good. Yet, contrary to this principled position, it is in favour of giving the state the right to ban pornography. Its policy is for pornography to be "eliminated through correct information, education, persuasion, legislation and lawful direct action on the grounds that it harms women".

The CPC embraces a fairly wide range of people, from radical feminists, through Labour figures, to the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCCL). Indeed the NCCCL voted at its last conference to abandon its long standing opposition to the banning of pornography and adopted the CPC's policy. This is a clear signal that the CPC's double standard on censorship is gaining ground. Its arguments need to be combatted.

Male power

The CPC's view of pornography is summarised by its policy statement:

"We believe that pornography is the most extreme portrayal of women as less than human and less than equal . . . We believe therefore that pornography is propaganda against women which perpetuates sexism, sex discrimination and sexual violence."

This definition itself is based on the theories of the North American radical feminist Andrea Dworkin, most clearly expressed in her book *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*. She argues that pornography is the key means for the perpetuation of male power, of the oppression of all women by all men. It is in Dworkin's view, "Dachau brought into the bedroom".

She claims that pornography is not merely the depiction of violence against women, it is violence against women. In the CPC, Catherine Itzin has expanded upon and popularised these views, equating the violence of war with the violence of pornography and treating them both as the eternal "products of patriarchy".

These views of pornography are wrong, misleading and dangerous. The idea that an explicit representation of sexual activity—however sexist the imagery used—is the most fundamental manifestation of women's oppression is ludicrous.

Women's oppression dates from the birth of class society and is universal. Yet differing societies have had widely different attitudes to the depiction of sexual activity. In India erotic carvings were a central element of religious art. In Ancient Greece there was virtually no restriction on the depiction of sexual activity not only in art but on everyday objects (cups, plates etc).

Women were no less oppressed in these societies than in ones with a strict taboo on the representa-

tion of sexual life (the Judaeo-Christian-Islamic tradition). Who would argue that the ban on pornography in contemporary Iran means that there is no longer systematic violence against Iranian women?

In all of these cases women's oppression exists, irrespective of pornography. It is rooted in the unequal social position of women

where actual violence is used then we have no hesitation in condemning the film makers for actual acts of violence. They are guilty of violent crimes and should be dealt with accordingly.

But by equating the representational with the actual and by portraying all pornography as violent assault, the radical feminists are using a sleight of hand to justify

tions.

Attacking pornography as the principal source of violence simply misses the point. It is a diversion.

A final objection to radical feminism's view of pornography is that it is based purely on the subjective reactions of some women to certain types of pornography. Writing against the radicals in a collection of essays called *Feminism and Censorship*, Sue George argues, convincingly, that reactions from women to pornography actually vary. Some are appalled, some are bored, and some are turned on sexually. Explaining this latter reaction—which despite feminist denials undoubtedly exists—she writes:

"Women can manipulate porn to fit their own fantasies, as men do. Many anti-pornography campaigners cannot accept that women may choose to use porn. In their view, women are forced to use it by their men, who then inflict what they learn from porn on women. This view only allows women to be victims, which we are not."

This argument does expose the profound subjectivity at the heart of the radical feminist case. At its most consistent that case denies the possibility of women enjoying either pornography or so called erotica. Dworkin describes erotica as high-brow porn.

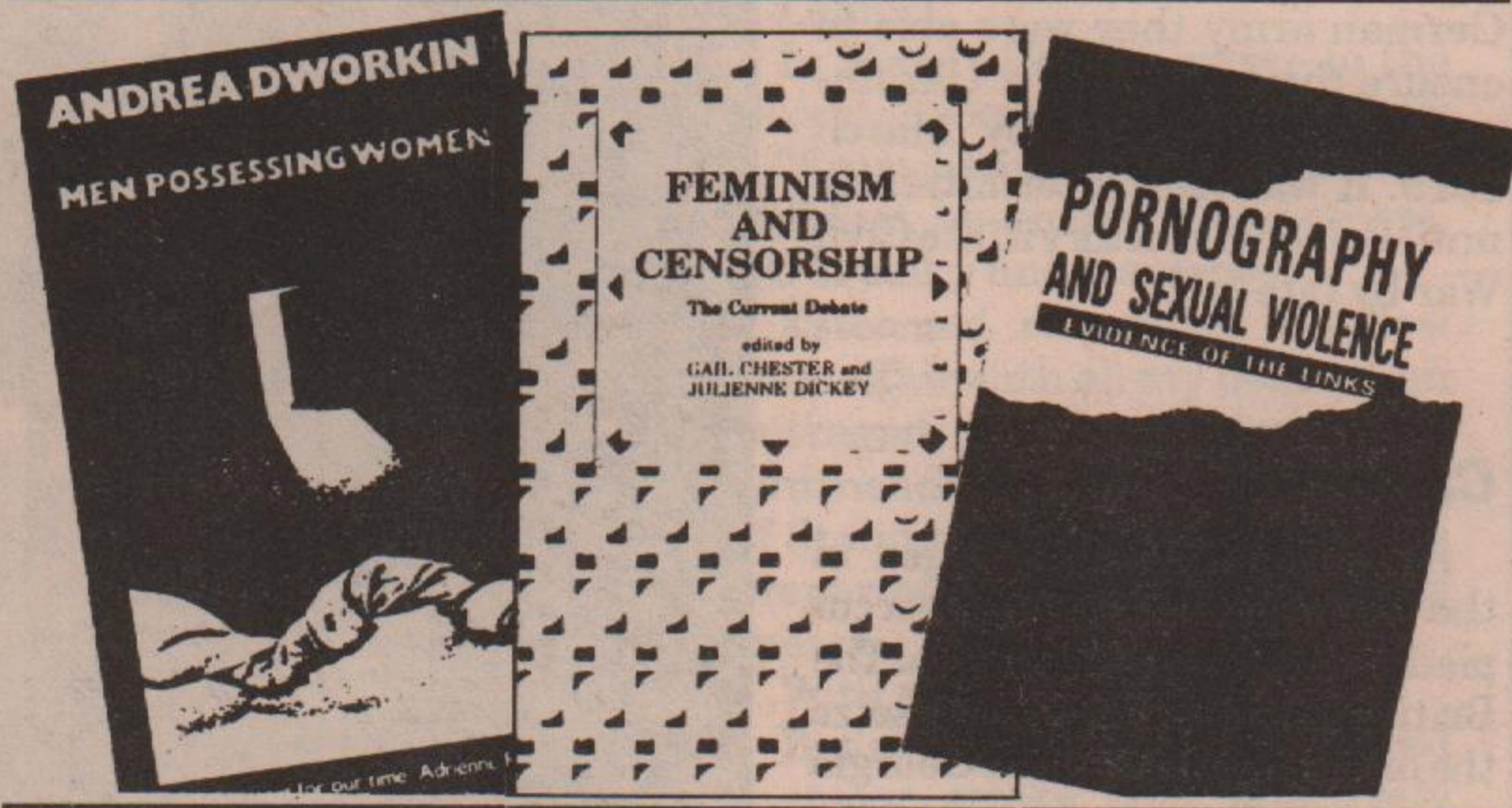
Bigots

The CPC itself draws back from this and talks about the validity of an erotica based on equality. But who is to be the judge of what complex individuals find sexually stimulating to read or view? Surely one woman's erotica would prove another's porn. Radical feminism therefore adopts the mantle of puritanism and, in its campaign against porn, has lined up with right wing anti-sex bigots like Victoria Gillick.

The CPC ends up in a muddle, against porn but in favour of non-oppressive erotica. And, to solve the problem of which is which, it calls on the state. Here is the Achilles heel of the CPC. Instead of fighting inside the labour movement to combat sexism in all its manifestations, including pin-ups at work, in union journals etc, and fighting for the right of reply for women in the media, it urges greater powers for the state.

Yet that state is an enemy of women and an enemy of sexual equality. It has constantly attacked lesbian and gay literature on the grounds that it is porn. It has attacked sexually explicit works of art because they offend bourgeois morality. It is the coercive guardian of institutionalised sexism. To give it the right to distinguish between porn and non-oppressive erotica is foolish. It won't make that distinction. Worse, it is dangerous. The state will gain ever greater powers of censorship as a result.

Communists can have only one response to the current campaign against pornography. That is, a commitment to oppose all censorship and an equally vigorous commitment to fight all manifestations of sexism through working class methods of struggle. ■



in class society and in the existence of the family as a domestic prison. Where sexist imagery is widespread it is merely a reflection of this material reality, not its principal cause.

The existence—and often blatantly sexist nature—of modern pornography, both hard and soft core, does not contradict this standpoint. Pornography, like all other forms of imagery and representation, reflects the values of a society in which the oppression of women and in particular the repression of their sexuality, are institutionalised. It is not, as the CPC, claim, a thing apart specifically and uniquely designed to subordinate women.

The radical feminist counter to this argument really centres on the question of violent porn. Dworkin and the CPC are highly selective in telling us what pornography is. Contrary to the experience of millions who use pornography that is predominantly the depiction of people (straight, lesbian and gay) engaging in various forms of non-violent sexual activity, the radical feminists claim that most porn is about the raping, mutilating and even murder of women. From this they conclude that pornography is a direct incitement to men to perform such atrocities against women—"porn is the theory, rape the practice", as the radical feminist slogan puts it.

This is emotive territory. Feminists who have tried to counter this argument have been labelled self-haters. Male socialists have been stigmatised by Dworkin as turning women into "left wing whores: collectivised cunts". The vitriol is in inverse proportion to the validity of the case being put forward.

Sado-masochist (S&M) pornography does exist, and in the USA lesbian S&M porn is flourishing. It remains a minority interest in the world porn market. But whatever your views on S&M there is no doubt that pornography within this category is overwhelmingly representational. It is an image of violence, a fiction, a fantasy, not violence itself. In those cases (snuff movies, films of real rapes etc)

their own prejudices. Once again we are told the image of violence is the cause of real violence. But if this is true in a sexual context, surely it is true in others. Does this mean we should ban all representations of violence in the media and the arts? Of course not, but there is not a shred of logic in the radical feminist argument to justify it stopping short of this conclusion.

The way out of this dilemma is to prove that there is a causal connection between violent pornography and violence against women, that one produces the other. This Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon claim to have done. In their fight to ban pornography they went to a Minneapolis court and brought witnesses to prove the link. The results of this court case are contained in the recently published book *Pornography and Sexual Violence: Evidence of the Links*.

Violence

Certainly the transcript of the hearings contains sufficient evidence to prove that in a number of cases pornography has incited rape and violence. But the scientific and circumstantial evidence presented does not come near to proving that in general pornography incites violence against women. Still less does the relatively selective evidence prove that sexual violence is caused by pornography.

The principal forms of violence that men inflict on women are rape, beating and murder, both in the marital home and outside it. The origin of this brutal and inhuman behaviour lies in the tendency to disordered sexuality and warped personalities that the patriarchal family and capitalist exploitation generate in men and women alike.

Women's isolation in the family home and their sanctioned subjection explains why the state either condones this violence or investigates and punishes it with little or no enthusiasm. Violent behaviour certainly finds representation in the fantasy world depicted in pornography but there is no persuasive let alone conclusive evidence that it incites people to such ac-

WHERE WE STAND

WORKERS POWER is a revolutionary communist organisation. We base our programme and policies on the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, on the documents of the first four congresses of the Third (Communist) International and on the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International.

Capitalism is an anarchic and crisis-ridden economic system based on production for profit. We are for the expropriation of the capitalist class and the abolition of capitalism. We are for its replacement by socialist production planned to satisfy human need.

Only the socialist revolution and the smashing of the capitalist state can achieve this goal. Only the working class, led by a revolutionary vanguard party and organised into workers' councils and workers' militia can lead such a revolution to victory and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. There is no peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism.

The Labour Party is not a socialist party. It is a bourgeois workers' party—bourgeois in its politics and its practice, but based on the working class via the trade unions and supported by the mass of workers at the polls. We are for the building of a revolutionary tendency in the Labour Party and the LPYS, in order to win workers within those organisations away from reformism and to the revolutionary party.

The misnamed Communist Parties are really Stalinist parties—reformist, like the Labour Party, but tied to the bureaucracy that rules in the USSR. Their strategy of alliances with the bourgeoisie (popular fronts) inflicts terrible defeats on the working class world-wide.

In the USSR and the other degenerate workers' states, Stalinist bureaucracies rule over the working class. Capitalism has ceased to exist but the workers do not hold political power. To open the road to socialism, a political revolution to smash bureaucratic tyranny is needed. Nevertheless we unconditionally defend these states against the attacks of imperialism and against internal capitalist restoration in order to defend the post-capitalist property relations.

In the trade unions we fight for a rank and file movement to oust the reformist bureaucrats, to democratise the unions and win them to a revolutionary action programme based on a system of transitional demands which serve as a bridge between today's struggles and the socialist revolution. Central to this is the fight for workers' control of production.

We are for the building of fighting organisations of the working class—factory committees, industrial unions and councils of action.

We fight against the oppression that capitalist society inflicts on people because of their race, age, sex, or sexual orientation. We are for the liberation of women and for the building of a working class women's movement, not an "all class" autonomous movement. We are for the liberation of all of the oppressed. We fight racism and fascism. We oppose all immigration controls. We are for no platform for fascists and for driving them out of the unions.

We support the struggles of oppressed nationalities or countries against imperialism. We unconditionally support the Irish Republicans fighting to drive British troops out of Ireland. We politically oppose the nationalists (bourgeois and petit bourgeois) who lead the struggles of the oppressed nations. To their strategy we counterpose the strategy of permanent revolution, that is the leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle by the working class with a programme of socialist revolution and internationalism.

In conflicts between imperialist countries and semi-colonial countries, we are for the defeat of "our own" army and the victory of the country oppressed and exploited by imperialism. We are for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. We fight imperialist war not with pacifist pleas but with militant class struggle methods including the forcible disarmament of "our own" bosses.

Workers Power is the British Section of the Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International. The last revolutionary international (Fourth) collapsed in the years 1948-51.

The MRCI is pledged to fight the centrism of the degenerate fragments of the Fourth International and to refound a Leninist Trotskyist International and build a new world party of socialist revolution. We combine the struggle for a re-elaborated transitional programme with active involvement in the struggles of the working class—fighting for revolutionary leadership.

If you are a class conscious fighter against capitalism; if you are an internationalist—join us!

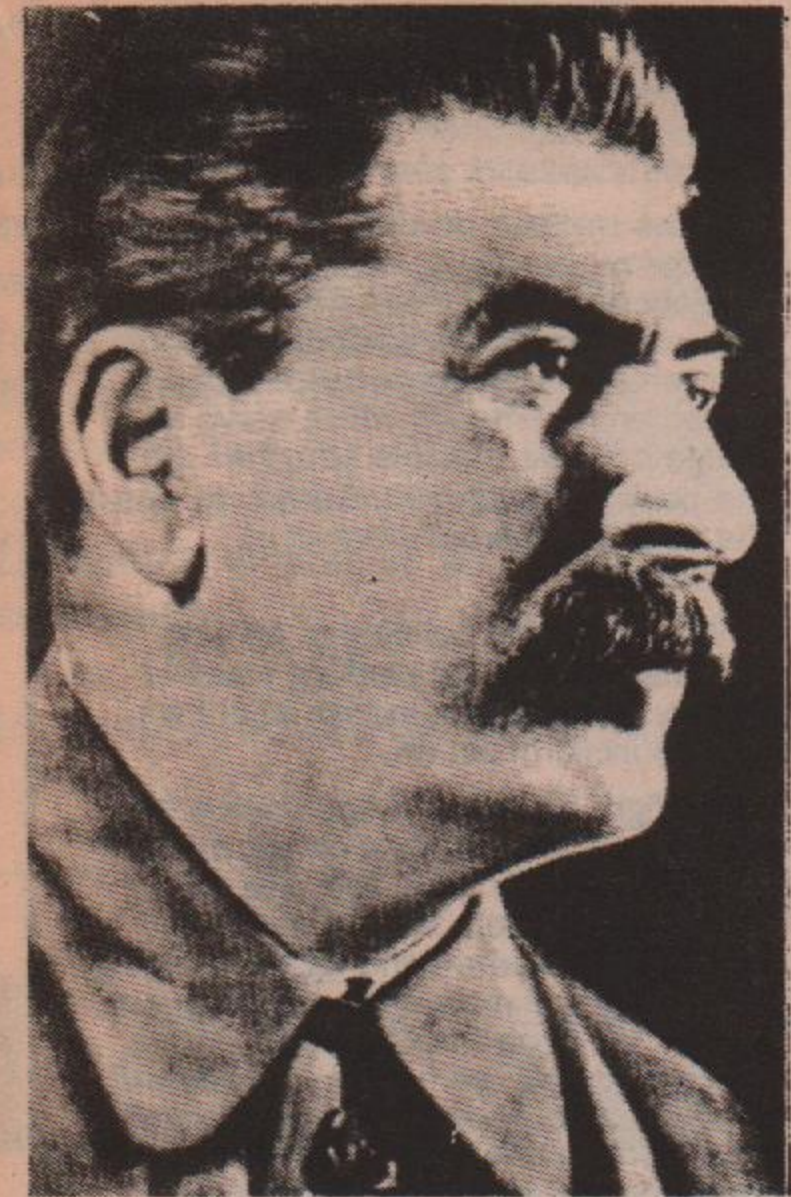
In the light of contemporary movements among the USSR's non-Russian peoples John Hunt looks at Lenin's strategy on the national question and how he defended their legitimate rights against Great Russian bureaucratic bullying

FROM THE Baltic coast to the Caucasus the past years have seen a mounting tide of mobilisation of the national minorities of the USSR. Demands have been made for the right to veto central legislation, for greater economic independence for the republics and even, in certain instances, for separation from the USSR itself.

As the bloody fighting between Armenians and Azeris has shown, and as the anti-semitic great Russian chauvinism of Pamyat reveals, nationalism has a deadly potential for dividing the Soviet workers. It has the potential for diverting them from settling accounts with the ruling bureaucracy. But given the Russification of political and cultural life in the USSR, and given that certain republics were incorporated into the USSR against the will of their peoples, it should come as no surprise that the relaxation of the police dictatorship should result in the re-emergence of demands for national democratic rights against the Stalinist legacy of Russification and bureaucratic centralisation.

In truth the national question in the USSR threatens to be one of the most immediately explosive issues confronting the architects of bureaucratic reform in the USSR. It threatens to divide the bureaucracy itself along national lines.

With that in mind, and in the face of mounting nationalist pres-



sure, Gorbachev has announced plans for an extraordinary Central Committee plenum to address the question of the relations between the nationalities of the USSR. For the revolutionary communists fighting for a programme of political revolution it is equally necessary to know how to handle national antagonisms which can easily become the mobilising ideology of social counter-revolution and capitalist restoration.

In that light it is timely and necessary to look again at the nationality policy of the Soviet state in its earliest and healthy days. And it is necessary to look at the struggle waged by Lenin and Trotsky against the signs of Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration that manifested themselves initially in the sphere of national relations in the Soviet state.

In the multi-national Tsarist Russian empire, where only 43% of the population were Great Russians, the Bolsheviks had programmatically committed themselves to defending the right of nations to self-determination up to, and including, the right to form their own separate state. However, they combined this with a tireless battle

for the unity of the working class internationally. They set themselves against all those aspects of nationalism that pitted workers against each other to the benefit of the exploiting classes.

They did not in the slightest degree advocate that the working class of the Russian Empire should be dispersed into a series of separate states. As Marxists they realised that the productive forces could be most effectively developed on the basis of a centralised plan and the maximum international co-operation and division of labour. The proliferation of small states would run counter to this prerequisite of socialist advance.

However the Bolsheviks were in favour of that co-operation being secured on the basis of the complete equality of peoples and voluntary agreement. The November 1917 "Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia" declared that Tsarist oppression was being replaced by the "voluntary and sincere alliance of the peoples of Russia" and included "the right of the peoples of Russia to free self-determination, up to secession and the formation of an independent state".

Voluntary

The "voluntary and sincere alliance" took a number of forms in the early Soviet state. In Finland and Poland, in 1917 it took the form of recognising their right to form independent states. In Estonia and Latvia it saw the creation of independent Soviet republics in 1918. In Great Russia itself it took the form of a federation (the RSFSR) within which non-Russians were to have their own autonomous regions. An autonomous workers' commune of Germans of the Volga was established. There were to be autonomous republics within the Russian federation for Kazakhs, Kalmyks, Bashkirs and Tartars.

However the early nationalities policy of the Soviet state was engulfed by German advances in late 1917 and by imperialist intervention in 1918 aimed at destroying the young workers' state. The policy was inevitably and necessarily subordinated to the struggle for the workers' state's very survival—"the safety of the revolution is the supreme law". What this could mean in practice was first demonstrated in the Ukraine and then in the Caucasus. It is a picture complicated by the fact that the proletariat in each of these regions was disproportionately Russian. The Ukraine's largest industrial town, Kharkov, for example, was predominantly Russian. It was the peasantry who made up the bulk of the non-Russian nationalities in these regions.

"I declare war to the death on dominant-nation chauvinism, I shall eat it with all my healthy teeth as soon as I get rid of this accursed bad one."

In the Ukraine in 1917 petit bourgeois nationalists with their own council—the Rada—declared themselves to be an autonomous republic in June and in November to be the Ukrainian People's Republic. At least initially it identified itself as part of a larger federation of "equal and free peoples". It existed alongside soviets, particularly in Kharkov, which had failed to seize power in

line with their Russian, Estonian and Latvian counterparts. The Russian soviet state nevertheless recognised the Ukrainian Rada.

However the Rada was prepared to court the backing of armed counter-revolution and imperialism in order to assert its independence. It allowed the White General Kaledin to assemble his troops on their territory while preventing Red Army movements against him. When asked to desist by the soviet state the Rada called for French support and, in February 1918, actually called in German military forces.

In this situation, with the Ukraine becoming a bastion for international counter-revolution and with the persistence of elements of dual power in the cities the Red Army had no alternative but to defend the Russian workers' state and the Ukraine's workers by entering the Ukraine in force. With the collapse of the German army they were able to ensure the creation of a Ukrainian Soviet Republic by March 1919. It was held intermittently until Bolshevik victory in the Civil War by late 1920.

Caucasus

A similar picture emerged in the Caucasus. The Turks occupied Azerbaijan and Armenia. The British also intervened to seize the oil rich Baku area. In Georgia a soviet based government led by Mensheviks also secured aid from German imperialism and, once the German war machine collapsed, looked to the Second International to prop them up as an anti-Bolshevik base. In September 1920 they invited Kautsky, Vandervelde and MacDonald to Georgia as proof of their willingness to be the launching pad for an anti-Bolshevik crusade by Anglo-French imperialism. In February 1921 the Red Army entered Georgia, overthrew the Menshevik regime and oversaw the foundation of a Georgian soviet regime. Again the right to self-determination was subordinated to the defence needs of the fledgling workers' state.

That Georgia's national rights had been violated was entirely due to the military needs of the Soviet state. It was in no way due to any programmatic commitment to using the Red Army as an alternative to international proletarian revolution as the means of spreading socialism. In fact if one looks at the major Bolshevik lexicon of the time—the *ABC of Communism* by Bukharin and Preobrazhensky—it actually defends the right of a nation with a bourgeois government to separate from "a nation with a proletarian regime" should its workers so wish it.

"Even in this case it would be better to allow the proletariat of the separating land to come to

terms with its own bourgeoisie, for otherwise the latter would retain the power of saying 'It is not I who oppress you, but the people of such and such a country'."

While communists oppose such a severance, Bukharin and Preobrazhensky with Lenin's sanction recommend that communists:



The Soviet Nationalities

Lenin against Russian chauvinism

"Act as a mother acts when she allows her child to burn its fingers once that it may dread fire ever more."

It was only as the interventionist armies were driven out that a pattern of order and stability emerged in relations between the nationalities. The British overthrew the soviet republics in Estonia and Latvia in 1919. In retreat they left behind them bourgeois governments which the Soviet state recognised by peace treaty in 1920. These bourgeois governments posed no immediate threat to the Soviet state and the working class of these countries was not ready or able to overthrow them. As Britain withdrew from Azerbaijan a popular uprising in Baku established an Azerbaijan Soviet Republic in January 1920.

The pressing problem for Lenin and the Bolsheviks was what form of relations should exist between the autonomous republics within the Russian federated state and between that state and the Soviet republics of the Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia, White Russia and Armenia that had been established

by 1921. It had been the case that, as much as possible, military resources had been centralised during the Civil War out of stark necessity. In 1920 and 1921 that centralisation was extended by formal treaties between the republics to move towards unifying communications, foreign trade, economic activity and finance. Those treaties were entered into voluntarily and between formally equal parties.

It is with the growing effects of the isolation and bureaucratic degeneration of the Russian Revolution that we begin to see the erosion of the principle of voluntary union and mutual respect between equals. In 1921 Lenin himself floated the idea of economically fusing the three Caucasian republics. The Georgian party objected, defending its existing independence within the Soviet system, and in particular objecting to what they termed the consular way that a henchman of Stalin, the People's Commissar for Nationalities, Ordzhonikidze, had conducted himself towards them. The Georgians posted guards on



ainst sm

Russian republics were to be incorporated in the Russian Soviet Republic as "autonomous republics" with the Russian government as their central government. Once again the Georgians, and a little later the Ukrainians rejected the proposal for one government for all. As the Georgian Central Committee put their case:

"We regard the unification of economic endeavour and of general policy indispensable, but with all the attributes of independence."

Lenin opposed the autonomisation plan in what was one of the last struggles of his life. Instead he proposed "a federation of republics enjoying equal rights" in a "formal union with the RSFSR, in a Union of Soviet Republics of Europe and Asia". That union was to be presided over by a Federal Council of People's Commissars. As Lenin, now ill, summed up his own deep concern on this issue in a letter to Kamenev:

"Comrade Kamenev! I declare war to the death on dominant-nation chauvinism. I shall eat it with all my healthy teeth as soon as I get rid of this accursed bad tooth. It must be absolutely insisted that the Union Central Executive Committee should be presided over in turn by a

Russian,
Ukrainian,
Georgian.
Absolutely!
Yours, Lenin."

Degeneration

And it is evidence of Stalin's early degeneration that when Kamenev passed him a note in a Politburo meeting saying "Ilyich is going to war to defend independence", his response was "I think we should be firm with Lenin" and the circulation of a memorandum accusing Lenin of "national liberalism".

Notwithstanding Lenin's opposition Stalin and Ordzhonokidze, even despite or because of being Georgians themselves, proceeded to ride roughshod over the Georgian communists. Under the false pretext of abiding by democratic centralism the latter were not allowed to clarify their objections to the plan in public.

In August 1922 Stalin had already informed Georgian party leader Mdivani that Russian government decisions were binding on Georgia. When the entire Georgian central committee resigned over the refusal to permit them to join the union as a separate entity Stalin and Ordzhonokidze promptly appointed a new central committee. Ordzhonokidze even physically struck a supporter of Mdivani at a meeting.

Lenin's last political battle was over Georgia and was an integral component of his attempt to forge a bloc of Bolshevik leaders against the process of bureaucratisation that was giving birth to such behaviour. In his last testament he announced:

"I suppose I have been very remiss with respect to the workers of Russia for not having intervened energetically and decisively enough on the notorious question of autonomisation which, it appears, is officially the question of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."

He denounced the persistence, in the bureaucracy and the party of:

"that really Russian man, the Great Russian Chauvinist, in substance a rascal and a tyrant, such as the typical Russian bureaucrat is."

Autonomisation, he argued was "essentially premature" and instead he proposed that it was necessary to persuade and prove the

desirability of greater union rather than impose it. He continued to insist on a "Federation of Republics with equal rights" with, initially, union operating only in the sphere of defence and foreign affairs. Elsewhere he argued for the complete independence of the commissariats.

The desperately ill Lenin proposed a pact with Trotsky on this very issue:

"I earnestly ask you to undertake the defence of the Georgian affair at the CC of the Party. That affair is now under persecution at the hands of Stalin and Dzerzhinsky and I cannot rely on their impartiality. Indeed, quite the contrary! If you would agree to undertake its defence, I could be at rest. If for some reason you do not agree, send me back all the papers. I will consider that a sign of your disagreement."

With the very best comradely greetings,
Lenin."

In March 1923 he wrote to the Georgian communists themselves: "From Lenin: Strictly secret to Mdivani, Makharadze and others. CC Trotsky and Kamenev."

Esteemed comrades, I follow your affair with all my heart. I am outraged at the rudeness of Ordzhonokidze and the connivance of Stalin and Dzerzhinsky. I am preparing for you notes and a speech.

With esteem, Lenin."

But shortly after Lenin suffered a major stroke that effectively ended his political life.

As the nationalities of the USSR mobilise again it is vital that the working class of these peoples do not confuse the Great Russian chauvinist, bureaucratic centralist, nationalities policy of Stalin with the policy of Lenin and revolutionary Marxism. Lenin was a bitter opponent of all that was base and divisive in nationalism. In the young Soviet state, once its borders were secured against intervention and internal counter-revolution disarmed, he turned his fire on Great Russian chauvinism as the nationalism of an oppressor, rather than oppressed, nation.

Internationalism

"Internationalism on the part of the oppressors of 'great nations', as they are called (although they are only great in their violence, only great as bullies), must consist not only in the formal equality of nations but even in an inequality of the oppressor nation, the great nation, that must make up for the inequality which obtains in actual practice."

With his internationalist goal set as a genuine union of liberated peoples Lenin understood that this could not be achieved by force. The workers of the once oppressed nationalities had to take their place in a free union persuaded that their cultural rights would be fully defended and persuaded that ever closer union met their most vital economic and military needs.

Sixty five years of Russification in the guise of Soviet rule, now open, now concealed official anti-semitism, the brutal incorporation of the Baltic states into the USSR in connivance with Nazi Germany all mean that the national question has an explosive force in the USSR today.

Only a new internationalist communist party that bases itself on the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky can ensure that this explosive force is directed towards blowing up bureaucratic rule whilst at the same time preserving the social conquests of the workers of all the nationalities of the USSR. ■

IN DEFENCE OF MARXISM



The Second International

EVERY MARXIST knows one thing about the Second International—that it betrayed the international working class in 1914 when most of its national sections actively supported the bosses of "their" own country in the First World War. The International called on its sections to replace fraternity with fratricide in the imperialist carnage.

For many Marxists ambiguity towards the legacy of the Second International goes beyond disgust at the 1914 betrayal, however. And, as its July centenary approaches doubts are likely to be deepened at the sight of Mitterand, Kinnock, Gonzales and Craxi celebrating a century of social democracy.

Yet the historic work of the Second International is not the heritage of these reformist traitors. They have stolen it for their own purposes. What is the historic legacy of the Second International and why do we lay claim to it?

After 1872, when the First International disintegrated, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels acted as a two person "international" co-ordinating their sympathisers in various countries.

Their greatest initial success was in Germany. By 1875 there was a united Socialist Workers Party of Germany. It had an inadequate programme and Marx and Engels were at first deeply worried about it. However a prolonged period of state repression and illegality (1878-1890) compelled its members to carry on underground work and made them much more receptive to Marxist ideas.

By the late 1880s Engels had won and trained a generation of young leaders—August Bebel, Karl Kautsky, Eduard Bernstein, Franz Mehring—to Marxism and to an intransigent pursuit of independent working class politics.

To the new party these leaders brought their own genius for centralised and disciplined organisation and systematic propaganda via a regular press—both popular weekly (and later daily papers) and a monthly theoretical journal. After the conquest of legality in 1890, the party, renamed the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), adopted a programme which in its theoretical basis was Marxist (Erfurt Programme 1891).

Even before its legalisation the SPD played the leading role in relaunching the working class International in July 1889 in Paris. Two congresses of socialists met in Paris.

They were attended by representatives from Germany, France, Britain, Russia, the United States, Austria-Hungary, Poland, Argentina and other countries. Both Congresses called for a united International and for an international celebration of 1 May as a day of international working class solidarity for a legally compulsory eight-hour day.

1 May 1890 saw the first worldwide celebrations and greatly stimulated the moves for the creation of a united International Congress. It finally met in Brussels in August 1891, with 337 delegates from 15 countries. Thereafter congresses were held at Zurich (1893), London (1896) and Paris (1900).

At the Paris Congress of 1900 the "Revisionist Controversy" that had broken out in the SPD was internationalised and given a practical importance by the "Millerand Affair". The debate centred on the fundamental question of social revolution (Marxism) versus gradual social reform (Revisionism).

The French Socialist Millerand

had agreed to serve in a bourgeois ministry "in order to defend the Republic" against growing clerical and monarchist agitation. The SPD leaders with the Russians and militants from many countries rallied to defend the revolutionary nature of the socialist programme against Millerand and his defenders Bernstein.

Since Engels' death in 1895 Bernstein had degenerated and become an arch revisionist, developing the evolutionary reform strategy and the tactic of taking office in bourgeois governments. In this international battle Rosa Luxemburg first came to the fore as the most theoretically developed opponent of Revisionism.

The Paris Congress also set up the International Socialist Bureau made up of delegates of the major national sections. Its job was to convene the congresses and to seek to create unified national sections in each country.

The Congresses became ever larger and more authoritative bodies. Although formally the national parties were not bound by discipline to accept decisions they almost invariably did. At the Amsterdam Congress (1904) Revisionism was condemned theoretically and tactically. The tactic of the general strike was debated and colonialism and imperialism were condemned. At the Stuttgart Congress in 1907 a German Resolution on the mounting war danger was successfully strengthened by Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg to include the pledge:

"Should war none the less break out, it is their (socialist parties) duty to intervene in order to bring it promptly to an end and with all their strength to make use of the economic and political crisis created by the war to stir up the deepest strata of the people and precipitate the fall of capitalist domination."

At Copenhagen (1910) and at the emergency Congress at Basel (1912) called in the middle of a war threat originating in the Balkans the international pledged itself to make "war on war". It made quite clear that the coming war in Europe would be an imperialist war, one which no socialist could support and which all parties should use to hasten the revolutionary downfall of capitalism.

This was the highpoint of the achievements of the Second International. Its gains for Marxism and the working class can be summed up as the creation in many countries of mass, centralised and disciplined political parties on a programme of class struggle for socialism and the carrying out by these parties of elementary Marxist propaganda and education. Wherever this was done, revolutionary communism, after 1917, made the greatest headway (Germany, Italy and France). Where it was not done (Britain, the USA) revolutionary communism remained weak.

In the womb of the Second International, Marxism developed. In the hands of Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg it was developed to meet the needs of the new Imperialist epoch. Last but not least the Second International pledged itself to revolutionary struggle against Imperialism and war—a pledge its leaders shamefully broke—but which hundreds of thousands and then millions of proletarians came to realise was a betrayal.

These historic gains of the Second International are ours, to learn the lessons of and to defend against the descendants of the traitors of 1914. ■

THE LONGEST WAR

PROTESTANTS AND PRIVATISATION

FOR YEARS Northern Ireland has been carefully exempted from Thatcher's free market economics. Government subsidies have continued to sustain the ailing state industries that act as the social and economic props of the protestant sectarian statelet.

Whilst on the mainland all subsidies to shipbuilding have been ruthlessly withdrawn, Harland and Wolff, Shorts and other subsidised industries have kept the loyalist working class tied to Orangeism. Now, however, it is clear this was but a respite. The miserable failure of the protestant class alliance to break the Anglo-Irish Agreement has finally convinced Thatcher that she no longer needs to continue the handouts and violate her most cherished principle—profitability. The lame-duck shooting season has opened at last.

Since Harland and Wolff was taken into state ownership in 1945 it has cost the government a cool £500 million. In the last three years alone Harland and Wolff and Shorts together have cost £250 million. In August last year the Tories announced their privatisation plans. These would give a huge boost to the already horrendous unemployment figures in Northern Ireland—in August 1988 there were 118,239 unemployed, 20% of the workforce!

The vice-chair of the Irish Congress of Trades Unions (ICTU), Pat McCartan, estimated a job loss of 3,000 at Shorts and half that number at Harland and Wolff. These redundancies would come on top of the 2,500 jobs lost in the last three years. The recent productivity deals, 24 hour shift working and new demarcation procedures that have been introduced have done nothing to offset the drive to reduce the workforce.

Since August, despite their declarations of support for the workers, Unionist politicians, especially Ian Paisley and his Democratic Unionist Party, have done little more than foment sectarian hatreds. They have been busy denouncing the privatisation plans as a nefarious attempt to equalise the position between protestants and Catholics by making more protestants unemployed (both workplaces are strongholds of discrimination with over 90% protestant workforces). In addition they claim it is proof of Thatcher's secret plan to withdraw from Ireland altogether.

Yet beyond this poisonous propaganda they offer protestant workers nothing. As fierce foes of socialism and advocates of the god-given free market themselves, there is little they can say or do. Outside of the reactionary utopia of Paisley's independent Ulster, they simply have no alternative to Thatcher. Their losses in the recent local government elections indicate that some protestant voters are beginning to catch on to this.

The trade union officials offer little better than the Orange bigots. They bleat about how "responsible" their record has been. Indeed the most damning comment on their record is Tom King's comment on them. The Secretary of State, after discussion with them, commended their "construc-

tive and positive approach to economic issues".

Following the farce of ship owner Ran Tikoo's bid to buy the Harland and Wolff yard at a knock down price to build his super cruise ship, the union leaders have backed a management buy out—the same management that has been slashing jobs and conditions for years. But if the union leaders are a wretched bunch of forelock tuggers there have been outbreaks of direct action. Unfortunately this has received no overall leadership and has been squandered. Shorts has just accepted 700 redundancies amongst skilled, managerial and clerical workers without a fight.

Why should British and Irish socialists and trade unionists support the struggle against privatisation? After all the workforce have refused to oppose discrimination in their workplaces. In Shorts 95% are protestant and the workers have an odious reputation for discrimination and sectarian harassment. Their "militancy" has been limited to action against management attempts to curb the worst excesses of their bigotry. They are notorious for festooning the workplace with union jacks, Orange symbols and all the ridiculous and degrading paraphernalia of the Protestant Ascendancy.

What British workers must realise is that British governments and the British labour movement are responsible for all this sectarian garbage. They have colluded in the maintenance of the sectarian state and its sectarian dominated trade unionism for over half a century. British socialists and militant trade unionists and their Irish brothers and sisters should not respond to the attack on Harland and Wolff and Shorts by saying "it serves them damn well right".

The beneficiary of the privatisation is our class enemy—the British bosses and Thatcher herself. If the protestant workers face her as an enemy then we have to prove what socialists have said all along—that class solidarity alone can defend the workers and national chauvinism is a dead end. When the chips are down for the protestant workers it is only trade union and class unity that can fend off the Tory attack. This creates the possibility of breaking at least sections of protestant workers away from the Orange Bigots.

Of course trade union struggle on its own will never resolve the national question in the Six Counties. But if trade unionists and socialists use the, perhaps temporary, solidarity of this struggle to combat the pro-imperialist ideology of the protestant workforce then the class block of Orangeism can be fragmented further. We must prove to these workers that only a workers' republic in all of Ireland can assure workers of a decent life, full employment and equality.

Only an active intervention by revolutionary internationalists—Trotskyists—can break the more class conscious protestants from Orangeism. Struggles like that against privatisation are thus an opportunity to begin this task. Any ignoring of them will only benefit Thatcher and Paisley.■

Polish elections



BY HARRY WALL

IN COMMON with most of the rest of Eastern Europe, Poland is formally a parliamentary democracy. Members of the lower (*Sejm*) and upper (*Senate*) houses have been elected—until now—by a variation on the "one member, one vote" system. There was only one candidate to vote for and he or she was invariably a member of the ruling PUWP (Communist Party) or one of its tiny allies.

On the surface that system has now disappeared. In June's elections, candidates from the newly legalised Solidarity are allowed to stand for all Senate and 35% of the *Sejm* seats. However the remaining 65% of *Sejm* seats are reserved for the ruling party. The net result is that the ruling PUWP will be guaranteed a majority in the National Assembly (the combined *Sejm* and *Senate*) even if it is beaten in every contested election.

This electoral carve up was the result of the "round table" talks held earlier this year between Solidarity and Jaruzelski's regime. It represents a victory for Walesa and his project of accommodating to the regime.

In return for this deal Walesa has used his authority within the Polish working class to discourage and demobilise independent working class action. He has even called for votes for some of the more moderate PUWP candidates in the uncontested seats, in order that

the balance of power within the party does not change in favour of the hard-liners.

But the real problem for the working class is the austerity programme that the new government—hand in hand with Walesa and the big banks—will impose. Everyone knows that state subsidised prices are set to rise after the election, the only question is by how much.

Walesa has called on workers not to strike so as not to discourage western bankers from lending money to Poland. He has given his backing to a government imposed deal fixing wage rises at 80% of inflation. With inflation running at over 100% per year, even the official trade union OPZZ has been forced to decry this attack on workers' living standards, and outflank Walesa in the process.

The elections are a fraud. Jaruzelski needs Walesa to diffuse working class resistance to his austerity measures. Walesa wants the legitimacy of parliament and "peaceful" politics. Both hope that a high turnout in the elections will legitimise this project.

The opposition Polish Socialist Party (PPS-RD) [see interview in *Workers Power* 118] are right to argue in such circumstances for a boycott of the elections. Even a vote against a Stalinist bureaucrat is a vote for the integration of Solidarity into the corrupt anti-working class regime that rules Poland.■

Inkatha Attack

Statement from the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa Campaign Support Network

23 May 1989

We received a telephone call yesterday from South Africa informing us that Jabu Ndlovu, the most senior of the "Sisters of the Long March", was attacked by Inkatha vigilantes on her return home to Imbali from the NUMSA Congress on Sunday night, 21 May.

The attack took place at midnight—it started with a gas cylinder being thrown into her house, which exploded and set the house on fire, and was followed by gunshots. Jabu's husband, who was a member of FAWU (Food and Allied Workers' Union), was killed almost immediately. Jabu and her two daughters were seriously injured. Since then Jabu's 19 year old daughter has died. Jabu herself has 35% burns and a bullet lodged in her head, and is in a critical condition in intensive care. She was undergoing surgery at the time of the phone call—we don't yet know the outcome. Her 13 year old daughter has survived the attack. Neither have been told yet that Jabu's husband and daughter have died.

Neighbours reported that Inkatha vigilantes were responsible for the attack. It would seem that it was a professional job as no fingerprints were found. Jabu is a shop steward at Prestige, Pietermaritzburg, and is well known for activities in the labour movement, and this would appear to be a targeted attack. There is now widespread fear amongst other union activists and people are fleeing the township.

This is all the information we have at present, which we received on Monday night. As soon as we have further information and a press statement from NUMSA, we will send it on to you. Meanwhile, could you please get as many groups and organisations as possible who met the "Sisters" during their tour to send messages of condolences and support to Jabu and NUMSA. Faxes can be sent to:

■ Geoff Schreiner
(NUMSA Johannesburg)
010-27-11-8384092,

and
■ Alex Urwin
(NUMSA Durban Office)
010-27-31-372590

We will be back in touch very shortly with a press statement from NUMSA and details of the campaign against the Inkatha violence.

Margaret Levin

US abortion rights

THE ANTI-ABORTION movement in the USA is deeply concerned with the sanctity of human life. So much so that in the last decade they have carried out 30 bomb and 38 arson attacks on abortion clinics.

Lives have been put at risk time and again as these "pro-life" bigots have fought to limit the right of women to choose whether or not to have an abortion.

During the Reagan years they got encouragement from the government for their crusade. Now the motley alliance of Catholics, Christian fundamentalists, conservatives and fascists are gaining ground.

George Bush has made clear his own opposition to abortion. Meanwhile outfits like Operation Rescue, not to mention the Ku Klux Klan, are combining active protests (pickets at clinics and the harassment of women attending them) with legal efforts to outlaw abortion.

At the end of April the Supreme Court began hearing the case of

Webster versus the Reproductive Health Services in a bid to overturn a 1973 ruling that had legalised abortion.

Opposition to these attacks is widespread. Women in the USA are not prepared to see their (limited) control over their own bodies taken from them by the woman-hating coalition of moral and political right-wingers. On 9 April a huge demonstration, estimated to be over half a million strong, converged on Washington DC to defend abortion rights.

The vast majority of the demonstrators were women. Significantly, the march did win the support of a number of unions, including the United Mineworkers of America.

The task now is to build on this success. A mass campaign, which fights to win solid and extensive active trade union support must be forged. Reliance on the courts is no way forward. Permanent rights to abortion will have to be forced on the US bosses through class action.■

After the recent elections in Argentina and Bolivia **Saladin Meckled** analyses Menem's victory and the MAS' "success" in Argentina. **Diego Mocar** looks at the electoral tactics of Guillermo Lora's POR-Masas in Bolivia

Elections in Latin America

ARGENTINA

THE RESULTS of the Argentine election—a landslide for the Peronist candidate Carlos Menem—have caused a wave of anxiety to rise in the British media. Even whilst the campaign was on, the popular press decided to re-run its "Argie-bashing" theme of 1983.

After five years of democracy with the "mature" Raul Alfonsín in the "childish" Argentine electorate was about to fall for a cross between Benito Mussolini and Fidel Castro. He was, to boot, an Arab, a womaniser, looked like an ageing bullfighter or flamenco guitarist, and in short, was quite the wrong sort of person to entrust a valuable country to. What the media could not explain was why the mature democrats of the Radical Party, loyally following the advice of the IMF and the World Bank and supported by the White House, had led Argentina into economic chaos.

Inflation has risen sharply from 57% in November to 89% in January. Alfonsín has repeatedly been forced to go to the World Bank for further loans whose sum total now stands at some \$60 billion. Yet despite Alfonsín's Primavera (Spring) Plan the negotiations failed and all further loans were suspended, and this despite the fact that the US government pleaded with the financiers to give the Radicals a last chance to win the election. Since the Malvinas War British investment has almost ceased and the US big banks and corporations hold the purse strings. Clearly they thought Eduardo Angeloz, the Radical candidate, was dead in the water. Now they are warily looking to see what they can do with Menem.

Peronists

Menem's Peronists had already blocked elements of Alfonsín's neo-liberal economic policies—his attempted sell-off of the national airline to Swedish Airways and of the telecommunications system to Spain's CNTE. The Peronists blocked the latter on the grounds that CNTE has close links with British Telecom and Argentina was thus opening itself to the national enemy. When the government tried to freeze public sector wages after a derisory rise of 25% the Peronist-dominated Argentine Unions (the CGT) demanded a minimum increase of 37% and promised to take "whatever measures necessary to protect workers' interests."

Yet despite the Peronists' denunciation of Alfonsín and the Radicals as unpatriotic lackeys of imperialism and as anti-worker—rhetoric that clearly upsets the imperialist commentators—what is the reality behind the words?

Historically Peronism—a bourgeois nationalist movement with powerful working class support via affiliated trade unions—has favoured a strong state capitalist sector in the economy. It opposed Alfonsín's privatisations but made sure not to do so on principle. Eduardo Menem (Carlos' brother) said that privatisation "can be a valid political measure

which leads to an improvement in public services and the development of the country".

Peronism is also not short on the rhetorical flourishes when it comes to denouncing imperialism. During the election Menem created a furore by saying that he would ensure that the Malvinas "returns to form part of the national territory even though we have to endure the spilling of blood". Colourfully (and correctly) he referred to the British as "The Pirates of the World". His Argentine listeners will call to mind that the submarine that sank the retreating *General Belgrano* killing hundreds of Argentine sailors when it returned to port, flew the skull and crossbones.

But always the prizewinners when it comes to bare-faced hypocrisy, British and US diplomats set up such a hullabaloo that Menem was hastily obliged to explain that he was speaking metaphorically and that he would only recover the islands "with love, with faith and with decision".

Peronism throughout its existence has specialised in anti-imperialist "balcony rhetoric" which Argentine workers take in all sincerity as evidence that perhaps here is a man or a movement that will tackle the stranglehold of the IMF, of the City and Wall Street. But apart from Peron's post-war reforms nothing half serious has been done. Peronism has since then repeatedly deceived, disoriented and misled the Argentine labour movement.

Once again the working class and the petit bourgeoisie have hoisted the Peronist "strongman" to power with 46% of the vote as against Angeloz' 38% and despite an electoral system that favours the Radicals. They are likely to discover the harsh reality behind Menem's words very quickly. Alfonsín—despite having a further year in office available to him under the constitution has announced he will dump Argentina's economic disaster into Menem's lap.



LAST MONTH, elections were held in Bolivia. As we go to press the final outcome is unclear. This is because under the Bolivian constitution, the election is for deputies and senators to parliament. They then elect a president and vice-president. The horse trading between the rival parties is still going on.

What is clear however is the bankruptcy of one of Bolivia's main left wing organisations, the POR Masas, led by the veteran "Trotskyist", Guillermo Lora. They took an abstentionist position in the elections. This was not because there were no independent working class candidates who could be put to the test through the tactic of critical support. Nor did the POR abstain because of undemocratic rules that deny registration to small parties. It is a registered party. Lora's case for abstention rested on his assertion that the masses no longer have any democratic illusions. He wrote:

"For imperialism which supports the three nationalist parties [ADN-MNR-MIR] and also for the country's bourgeoisie the election will be used to consolidate control over the country. It is their future that will be decided on 7 May. But whatever the election result the masses do not care about it in the slightest.

After the exhaustion of their democratic illusions they will come out onto the streets, fighting for bread, jobs, schooling, health care and the demands of the regions. Then the masses will ask themselves, 'What do we do now?'. Then the ability of the POR to give the answers to these questions will play a decisive role in the political evolution of the masses." (G. Lora *La Colmena* No 235 Oruro 20 March 1989)

Illusions

According to Lora, Bolivia is on the threshold of insurrection and therefore the masses have already shed their illusions:

"More than 1,300,000 will vote with toilet paper or they will abstain... we are marching with the masses towards the conquest of power that leads to the destruction of private property, the state, democracy and its parliament."

This whole schema is summed up in the crisp slogan "Down with the Electoral Fraud! Viva the Insur-

Menem has some resources that Alfonsín did not have or rather had less of. The right wing top military brass clearly prefer Menem. Their extreme fringe has disrupted Alfonsín's presidency with a string of abortive coups. They can be relied on to back Menem if he decides on bitter medicine for Argentina's economic ills. Also he can rely on the corrupt and undemocratic union bosses who will doubtless offer him

BOLIVIA

rection!".

But outside Lora's fantasy world, the reality is completely different. After the defeat of the miners' strike in the March For Life and Peace (August 1986), the Bolivian workers suffered attack after attack. More than 600,000 workers are unemployed, mining communities have disappeared, savage cuts in education, health and public services have been imposed. This has been possible not only because of the Victor Paz government's notorious decree 21060. It is also because of the cowardice and betrayals of the reformist bureaucracy of the COB, and the leaders of the UDP, now transformed into the United Left, a Popular Front with bourgeois formations inside the coalition.

It is true that the Bolivian workers have been struggling against the government of Paz, but these struggles have all had a defensive character. The problem is how to transform fragmented struggles into a class wide offensive. The Bolivian workers have demonstrated again and again their tremendous capacity for fighting and defeating various governments but, due to the absence of revolutionary leadership, they have not been able to take power for themselves.

What is the real reason behind the POR-Lora's ludicrous mis-estimation of the class struggle situation and its total lack of tactics for dealing with it? The POR is a legally registered party, able under constitutional laws to stand candidates. In 1985 they did stand and got an insignificant number of votes. This caused a major crisis in the POR leading to splits and expulsions. Lora clearly does not want to go through this again.

His alternative is to set up phantom "Committees against the Electoral Fraud". Then when the results come in he can claim all the blank votes and all the non-voters belong to the POR! This trick might pass muster with people new to politics but it has nothing to do with a revolutionary strategy for the working class. Indeed, Lora has no such strategy.

some sort of national accord whereby the workers voluntarily agree to pay for the crisis.

In the elections the only organised opposition to the two big bourgeois parties came from the Izquierda Unida (United Left). It is a bloc of the Argentine Communist Party with the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS), founded by the late Nahuel Moreno, together with various bourgeois mini parties like the Humanists and figures like its presidential candidate, Nestor Vicente, a Christian Democrat. Despite a class collaborationist platform this wretched popular front with the shadow of the bourgeoisie gained only 2.5% of the vote.

Discredited

Before the IU was formed the pro-Moscow CP was in a poor way. It was deeply discredited by its collaboration with Alfonsín in signing a document with the bourgeois parties during the army rebellion of Easter 1987 which amounted to a real capitulation to the "gorillas" on the question of justice for the victims of the Dirty War of the late 1970s. The MAS on the other hand refused to sign and gained working class support as a result, overtaking the CP electorally in the most industrial districts.

But the Morenoites saw their defeat of the CP merely as a bargaining counter to bring them into an electoral bloc. The CP was willing to re-establish its credentials by a bloc with the "Trotskyists". Nahuel Moreno had described this tactic as

With sectarian abstentionism, he combines the grossest spontaneism. We are told that because the masses "do not believe in parliament, they are going to develop their direct action and their creative capacity, that at moments of great tension at the high point of the struggle the organs of power will emerge in almost a natural way." (*La Colmena* No 235)

Thus Lora and the POR are not obliged to fight for mass organisations of struggle now—just as they did not fight for soviet-type organs in the revolutionary crisis period of the years 1983-86 and especially during 1985 when the miners occupied La Paz and the COB launched two general strikes.

Vital

It was vital for revolutionaries to intervene in the recent election campaign, either by mounting candidates—if they had the strength—or by putting demands on the COB (Bolivian TUC) and the workers' parties, particularly the Bolivian Stalinists.

The PCB joined with the Eje (Axis) of Delgadillo, and the Movimiento Bolivia Libre of Arambar to form a popular front with the MAS-Unzaguista. This is named after the founder of Bolivian fascism (Unzaga de la Vega). Clearly no class conscious worker should have supported this rotten block, misnamed the United Left.

In the absence of a revolutionary party what was needed was to fight for an action programme of struggle to act as a basis for a workers' candidacy. To get this, a serious struggle was needed within the COB amongst the rank and file to force the calling of a congress to nominate workers' candidates independent of the bourgeois parties or fronts. In doing this it would have been possible to unmask the leaders of the COB who supported the United Left popular front with a bourgeois programme and bourgeois parties.

This tactic could help rally the defensive struggles of the workers, giving them a political direction. Also it could have linked the various struggles in a coherent way and taken up the demands of the peasants and the impoverished petit bourgeois of the cities. This workers' platform would have to include an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist programme. ■

the "hugging to death" of the CP. But the MAS have discovered that it is quite difficult to outdo the Stalinists when it comes to a class collaborationist embrace.

In the internal election for the IU presidential candidate Luis Zamora (MAS) was beaten by the Catholic Nestor Vicente with CP support. In the election proper the IU gained no more than the constituent parties gained previously. Although Zamora was elected as a deputy the 2000 strong MAS will not be celebrating for long.

The Argentine workers will soon face a vicious attack from the IMF via Carlos Menem, the Argentine state forces and the Peronist union bosses. The task facing Argentine workers is not to form fronts with bourgeois riff-raff or to ape the Peronists with empty "anti-imperialist" rhetoric but to revive the rank and file fighting strength they showed in the early 1970s and again in the early 1980s. They must resist the austerity measures and throw off the tutelage of Peronism politically and at the trade union level. This requires an all-out emphasis on class independence.

Trotskyists must combine the tactic of a workers' united front of struggle based in the workplaces with the fight to win the best militants to a revolutionary vanguard party that can lead the strong and combative Argentine proletariat to establish its own dictatorship, without gorillas, without bourgeois nationalist demagogues and without the "mature" agents of British and US imperialism. ■



NEWS FROM THE SECTIONS

PODER OBRERO

Peruvian journal launched

IN MAY our comrades in Peru produced the first issue of their duplicated journal *Poder Obrero*. This marks an important step forward in the life of the group. In fourteen closely printed pages the journal analyses the key problems facing the left under Alan Garcia's crisis wracked government. Articles include "The Workers Response to the Crisis"; "The Disunited Left, an X-Ray of the fracture of the Izquierda Unida" (the IU effectively split at its April Plenum); "Revolutionary Politics and the IU", an analysis of the various tendencies in the IU and what a genuine revolutionary tactic towards the Popular Frontists should be.

Two articles analyse the positions of the Left in the election campaigns in Argentina and Bolivia. An article reports the disintegration of the Committee of Socialist Unification (CUS) which was formed a few years ago to overcome the crisis of Peruvian "Trotskyism". *Poder Obrero* also reviews the development of the MRCI since its foundation five years ago.

Our Peruvian comrades have unfurled the banner of genuine Trotskyism in the difficult circumstances of hyper-inflation and economic chaos, of mounting repression and the reformist misleadership of the Peruvian labour movement. The comrades give a measure of their seriousness in the editorial where they say:

"The first objective that our press has set itself is to lay down the programmatic and tactical bases that will contribute to forming a solid group of cadres who can intervene actively in the workers' movement and will go on to build the future revolutionary party of the proletariat. Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement' as Lenin said. We reject the passive propagandism of the sect. *Poder Obrero* is a fighting propaganda group. We will intervene in the key struggles of our class. We reject the opportunist desperation that seeks to build huge apparatuses at the price of permanent unprincipled manoeuvres."■

POUVOIR OUVRIER

Newspaper and pamphlet a success

FROM 13 to 15 May the annual Lutte Ouvrière Fête took place, outside Paris. As usual it was very well organised and drew, according to the organisers, some 30,000 people to the site. The MRCI and in particular its French section organised a lively participation with two forums—one on the Fourth International, the other on Ireland. Two special pieces of propaganda had been produced for the Fête, an eight page newspaper edition of *Pouvoir Ouvrière* which sold very well and a pamphlet (in French) containing a Lutte Ouvrière article on Ireland and a reply to it by the Irish Workers Group.

This too was well received and a number of interesting discussions took place with LO members. Unfortunately the Fête organisers saw fit to schedule the IWG's forum on Ireland at the same time as their own presentation, despite these being the only two discussions on Ireland at the Fête. The IWG offered to cancel its forum in return for equal debating time in a joint forum, but LO refused, demonstrating the extent of their commitment to democratic debate.

In terms of discussion on the left wing of the "International Trotskyist Movement" there were no new initiatives. Discussions continue between the PTS (a recent split from the Argentinian MAS), the Preparatory Committee (WRP and Varga's grouping) the GOR (Italy), the RKL (Austria, the former IKL) and the ITC but no immediate steps towards the long awaited "International Conference of Trotskyists" (open or closed) were taken. In the midst of the Fête to their own great excitement the iSt (Spartacists) re-labelled themselves the International Communist League (Trotskyist). This repackaged version is, needless to say, no less of a right opportunist, pro-Stalinist sect than the previous one.

Workers Power healthworkers intervened in a lively discussion of the French health strikes with nurses from LO and the CRC, a new organisation formed by health workers expelled from the French unions.■

ARBEITERSTANDPUNKT

Austrian groups fuse

OUR AUSTRIAN section the Arbeiterstandpunkt group is in the final stages of fusion discussions with the Socialist Alternative group in Salzburg. These discussions have lasted a number of months and thoroughly examined the programmatic agreements and resolved the differences that existed between the two groups. A fusion conference will now resolve all questions by majority vote. The fusion will give the Austrian section a two branch basis, (Vienna and Salzburg) with a perspective of expanding to other important cities. The fusion will make the AS the second largest section of the MRCI. We send communist greetings to their conference and look forward to their continued rapid expansion.■

The MRCI

Arbeiterstandpunkt (Austria), Gruppe Arbeitermacht (Germany), Irish Workers Group, Poder Obrero (Peru), Pouvoir Ouvrier (France), Workers Power Group (Britain)

Guia Obrera (Bolivia) is in the process of discussions with the MRCI with the aim of becoming an affiliated section.

Japan's corrupt democracy

In the land of political scandals it has been the biggest of them all. What started last summer with the resignation of a deputy mayor in a provincial Japanese town has now claimed the Prime Minister himself. On 25 April Takeshita announced his resignation to take effect from early June. Keith Hassell looks at the background to the scandal.

THE RECRUIT bribery scandal in Japan has claimed four cabinet ministers, forced forty or so other resignations and led to over a dozen arrests as it has unfolded. And still the government has not resigned. Nor is it certain that it will lose heavily in the coming elections for the upper chamber of Parliament. What is going on?

During the 1980s Japanese capitalism has undergone a remarkable transformation. At the start of the decade Japan was renowned for its ability to dominate the world market in consumer electronics, it was a burgeoning export-led economy. It exported little capital for an industrial giant and had a relatively closed domestic economy, littered with restrictions on imports of goods and foreign capital.

But during the long recovery from the 1980-82 world recession Japan's standing in the world economy has changed markedly. It has continued to extend its competitive advantage in sector after sector of industry, especially the crucial area of capital goods. Its financial sector is the world's strongest; its banks are the most numerous and amongst the biggest in the City of London, its stock market is barely less important than New York.

It has used its surplus capital to finance the gap between spending and revenue in the USA and has thus become banker to the world's largest economy. The USA is dependent on Japanese money. Japan is now the world's largest "aid" donor (in reality funds to semi-colonies to facilitate trade and extend political influence) at \$11 billion in 1988.

But this growing economic power has not been matched to date by political power on the world imperialist stage. It is still forced to follow the US lead. This is as much true in East Asia, Japan's backyard, as further afield. Despite its important underpinning role for the US economy it acts as a subordinate political and military power.

This has never been clearer than

in Japan's response over the last four years to US pressure to make some fundamental changes to the Japanese economy. With more stick than carrot the USA has demanded (and is getting) far reaching changes in US business access to Japanese markets, particularly in heavily protected agriculture and semi-conductors.

In the same spirit of forcing Japan to liberalise and reflate its domestic market to reduce its trade surplus with the USA the Japanese government undertook to inject a huge \$50 billion boost to domestic demand in 1986 and 1987. This involved Takeshita in pushing through an unpopular consumption tax to help pay for it at a time of soaring land and property prices.

And it is the consequences of these internal changes in Japan's economy that explain why the Recruit affair has wracked the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Japan's bourgeois politicians have always been particularly corrupt because of the nature of the political system. The present system of multi-seats in a single constituency was introduced by the bosses in the Second World War in order to divide the strong labour movement parties. But the price has been that the ruling party, the LDP, has had to run candidates against itself.

For forty years the LDP has been in virtually uninterrupted power and it is permanently divided into four main factions that do not diverge over policy so much as over the path to personal advancement for the MPs. Each is closely connected to big business and funded by it directly and indirectly (through fund-raising parties).

In turn the MPs take the money on offer eagerly because each needs \$1 million a year to buy votes in the constituencies; large donations are handed over at the many weddings and other events the MPs attend. Nor is the ruling LDP alone implicated in such corruption. The MPs of the Japanese Socialist Party (JSP), the largest opposition

party, receive money from the LDP for "helping" get legislation through parliament!

What is at stake in the Recruit affair is an organised attempt by sections of the Japanese business sector (especially those in the small and heavily protected distribution and agriculture sectors) to disrupt the process of opening up their firms to the chill winds of US and European competition.

For years the monopoly of political power by the LDP and links with big business was a virtue for them. It helped the state and business partnership to beat the workers and the foreign competition. But now this monopoly is proving to be a major problem. No one in the LDP or the main opposition party is untainted. Moreover the constitutional system makes it difficult for an alternative to the LDP to come to power.

The Japanese ruling class is in disarray and cannot provide effective political leadership at present. In these circumstances it stands a chance of clashing and colliding with the USA over trade. Japan has the economy of a growing and major imperialist power but the political system of a clientist, corrupt, inward looking minor power. It lacks a bourgeois political leadership capable of acting decisively, even against sections of the bosses themselves when necessary. Without such a leadership Japanese imperialism will find it difficult to fashion an independent global political strategy in keeping with its economic might.

The great tragedy of the present troubles of the LDP is that the working class is not exploiting it to its advantage. Under its existing leadership the working class is tied to the corrupt political system and to the "enterprise" oriented class collaborationism of many of the unions. A new leadership is needed that can combine the struggle against the corrupt electoral system with social and political demands that advance the struggle for socialism and real working class democracy.■



Takeshita—not much to celebrate now

THE FUNDAMENTAL question in China today and, indeed, ever since the bureaucratic expropriation of the remaining Chinese capitalists during the Korean War emergency, is the direction and control of the economy. The pro-market reforms of the last ten years have brought economic and political crisis because they stand in contradiction to the basic structure of the Chinese economy.

For the bureaucrats the problem is ultimately insoluble. Because they cannot even agree upon short term measures, they refuse to allow public discussion even of the existence of the problem. That is why the demands of the students for a free press, in which the problems of China could be aired, strike at the heart of the bureaucracy and gain mass support from the rest of society.

Nationalised

Since 1953, the industrial sector of the Chinese economy has been completely nationalised and directed by state planning. Inasmuch as this required the expropriation of the Chinese capitalists and asserted the possibility of conscious control of the economy, revolutionaries support and defend this. However, this system should not be mistaken for the communist strategy of socialist planning.

Socialist planning means replacing the capitalist system of directing the economy according to what is profitable with the proletarian system based on the criterion of need. Capitalism decides what should be produced as a result of billions of decisions taken "in the market" by individuals calculating what is most profitable to them. Socialist planning takes those decisions by democratically deciding on production priorities and monitoring them, controlling them, correcting them, with the constant overseeing of millions of workers, the direct producers and consumers.

Expropriation

Obviously, for this to work it is necessary for the workers, collectively, to have the right to take decisions over production. The expropriation of capitalist private property is, therefore, an essential prerequisite of socialist planning. Equally important, however, the workers must have the means to take the necessary decisions. This requires both information and the political power, and confidence, to assess priorities and change targets in the light of what the class, as a whole, needs.

What exists in China is a bureaucratically planned economy. Instead of relying on the working class to oversee and plan production, the bureaucracy attempts to plan it all itself. It cannot. For nearly forty years it has tried to overcome this fact. Different factions have tried different approaches, they have fallen out with their Soviet mentors, they have launched virtual civil war against each other but they cannot effectively plan an economy that should grow rationally and harmoniously.

In desperation, the faction around Deng Xiaoping concluded that the rationality of the market, the profit criterion, would be preferable to no rationality at all and introduced their reforms from November 1978 (see WP 118). At the same time, they did not wish to relinquish their own political power over society. What they proposed was the operation of the market in certain specified areas of the economy where they wanted fast development and a continuation of command planning in others. They called this, "Two



Deng Xiaoping and Zhao Ziyang

The roots of China's crisis

As millions of students and workers took to the streets of China the ruling bureaucracy was ever more openly divided over what their response should be. Peter Main looks at the historic divisions within the Chinese bureaucracy over the most effective means of maintaining their parasitic rule.

Systems, One Country". In effect what they were saying was, "Two sets of property relations, defended by the same state". Any Marxist can see the inherent impossibility of this idea.

The crisis of the bureaucracy, the cause of its current paralysis, is the practical expression of this impossibility. Defence of the requirements of the market inevitably undermines the resources going to the planned sector. In turn defence of the planned sector equally means denying them to the market sector.

Some parts of the bureaucracy are more closely attached, or reliant, on the planned sector than others and wish to defend it. Others, probably a majority within the administration as a whole, know that defence of the planned sector led to economic stagnation and political instability in the first place.

Reformers

What western journalists now call the "hardline" faction consists of those, like Deng Xiaoping and Li Peng, who favour extension of the market plus state repression of the social conflicts that they know this will create. The so-called "reformers", by contrast, favour controlling the social consequences of market forces by political means. This wing leans towards Gorbachev's strategy of glasnost as a necessary accompaniment to perestroika. What they share in common is the fact that neither faction has any intention of relinquishing their own power and privileges.

The working class of China should put no faith in either faction. Its way forward lies in political independence and the struggle to construct socialist planning of

the economy. The latter cannot be achieved overnight but every move the working class makes should be aimed at this objective. In the here and now this means fighting to gain the initiative from the bureaucrats. The students' demands, though limited, are entirely justified but they remain demands on the bureaucrats to reform their state machine. The working class must mobilise to achieve those demands by the imposition of its own class control.

Censorship

A press and broadcasting system that honestly reports events can only be guaranteed if the working class exercises its "veto" over censorship and government lies by stopping production and distribution/broadcast of material it judges to be wrong. The involvement of thousands of journalists in recent events shows that the possibility exists for this.

In the plants, workers are facing 20% inflation and corruption which causes shortages and inefficiencies. Workers' control in this context means enforcing wage rates which compensate for inflation and fighting to gain access to enterprise records to publicise how the managers and officials have been working. If there is evidence of corruption and nepotism then workers' commissions should investigate and workers' courts should judge their findings.

Similarly, workers' organisations should take the initiative in establishing links with the countryside. The division between rich and poor peasants is now considerable (see WP 118) and could be utilised by the workers by proposing direct links for the supply of food in return for industrial prod-

ucts in the short term and agitation for re-collectivisation and re-cooperativisation of rich peasant land in the longer term.

Such initiatives will generate the necessary self-organisation of the class. Again, the last two weeks have already shown the creative capacity of the working class in this respect. The blockading of the capital city, in a state where there were no pre-existing independent workers' organisations, is proof enough of that.

However, spontaneous organisation and plant based workers' control can only be the starting point of the struggle for political revolution, the overthrow of the bureaucracy and its replacement by a state based on workers' councils.

The example of the Beijing workers in creating the "Autonomous Organisation of Workers", reportedly on a city-wide basis, needs to be copied in the other cities of China. Delegates to such bodies need to be won to the perspective of the struggle for power. This, and all the decisions and strategies that flow from it, is more than an organisational question. It is a political question. For the spontaneous rebelliousness of the long-repressed masses to be transformed into conscious, calculated and disciplined revolution requires the intervention of revolutionaries. That is to say, a revolutionary party is necessary.

Bureaucracy

The most important argument for revolutionaries in China today is that peaceful democratic reform is structurally impossible. The only way to gain the basic demands of the masses is by overcoming the bureaucratic state machine. As

Marxists have had to insist, time and again, the state is essentially bodies of armed men. When the bureaucracy has agreed its policy it will move to crush any independent opposition. The hunger strikers and demonstrators felt that they had gained a moral authority over the likes of Li Peng because they stopped the advance of the (largely unarmed) troops into Beijing. This was, no doubt, momentarily true—but it will not stop the use of more reliable troops, even if there is a delay while they are brought from other regions or from Tibet. The bureaucracy has the state, it will use it.

Assault

To really build on the successes gained in Beijing, the working class must prepare for a more determined assault by the army at some point. This means preparing the armed defence of Beijing. This is not impossible. The PLA was for decades a conscript army, millions of workers have had military training and the whole population of Beijing was at one time prepared for civil defence.

Fraternalisation will still remain an excellent tactic wherever it is possible to apply it—but against tanks, paratroops or elite regiments it will not be enough. The hunger strikers were prepared to kill themselves—the working class must be prepared to kill others.

As we go to press rumours abound of the ascendance of Li Peng over Zhao Ziyang despite the return of Wan Li. To the best of our knowledge there is no revolutionary organisation in China that is able to ensure that the working class will be prepared to take the range of measures that could prevent the untrammelled rule of the bureaucracy being re-installed. This does not mean that all is lost, only that all cannot yet be won.

Mobilisation

Only greater and greater mobilisations of the workers will limit and even defeat the inevitable attempt at repression. What has to be remembered is that neither wing of the bureaucracy has an answer to the socio-economic crisis wracking China. This is the guarantee that, whatever the immediate outcome of the present events, there will soon be further explosions of working class opposition to the bureaucracy. Everyone will build on the lessons of May 1989, no matter how protracted, or how bloody. ■

REPLY TO COMMUNIST PARTY OF BRITAIN

In defence of Trotskyism

THE GIST of Coyle's attack is that Trotskyism is "the main form of ultra-leftism in the developed world". As evidence for this, we are given a catalogue of the RCP's positions on Labour and the unions, a quote from Tony Cliff when he was a Luxemburgist, an account of the RCG's mistakes over the 1983 miners' disputes and an allegation that *Militant's* strength in the CPSA is due to the "political inexperience and immaturity of this section of the working class". In terms of analysing the practice of the "ultra-left" this is literally the sum total of Coyle's evidence.

Workers Power has no reason to defend the ultra-leftism of the RCP and RCG, Cliff's Luxemburgism or *Militant's* opportunist practice in the CPSA. The fact that three out of the four groups mentioned explicitly reject the label "Trotskyist" hardly makes the article a damning indictment of Trotskyism. But Coyle's four pages of assertions, omissions and half truths reveal a thorough continuity between what he calls the "reformist" CPGB and the new party.

Reasons

Coyle cites three reasons why Trotskyism is the predominant form of "ultra-leftism" today:

1. Firstly, by tracing their lineage through Trotsky, Trotskyists claim to be the genuine descendants of the October Revolution. They also claim a moral superiority from their opposition to Stalinism.

2. Secondly, its 'fidelity' to pure Marxist principles is untarnished by the the nasty complication of having to apply them in practice. Its very failure is a source of its success amongst those with no experience of the difficulties of either revolution or socialist construction.

3. Through its theories of *Permanent Revolution*, the *Transitional Programme* and critique of Soviet society, Trotskyism represents a sophisticated programmatic expression of ultra-leftism." (CR p22)

The startling thing about the rest of Coyle's article is that it contains nothing at all to refute the "claims" outlined in the first point. Trotsky, and the international movement he led, fought Stalin and continued to apply and develop the programmatic method of Lenin's Communist International (1919-23). Trotskyists do not claim a moral superiority from having opposed Stalin, but political superiority from having fought him from a consistently Bolshevik and Leninist standpoint.

Denounced

By contrast, the *Morning Star* and its predecessor the *Daily Worker* followed Stalin's line faithfully. During the ultra-left third period (1928-33) the CPGB and the rest of the Comintern denounced social democrats as social fascists, set up "red unions" and refused to build the workers' united front against fascism. The practical result was Hitler's triumph over the German workers.

By 1936 yesterday's social fascists were Stalin's trusted allies. Subordinating the working class struggle to the needs of Kremlin diplomacy, Stalinism sacrificed the Spanish revolution to its alliance with the "democratic imperialisms" of Britain, France and the USA. The Trotskyists and centrist forces who opposed this policy were denounced as fascist agents in the press of the British CP. In Spain, they were murdered by the Stalinists.

The Communist Party of Britain (CPB) was founded in April 1988 as a result of various splits from the Euro-communist CPGB. At present the CPB is debating a re-draft of the old CPGB programme, the British Road to Socialism. As part of this process of political re-arming the CPB has set its Youth Secretary, Kenny Coyle, the task of what Stalin called "burying Trotskyism as an ideological current". Colin Lloyd responds to his latest attempt at this, "Marxism and Ultra-leftism", (Communist Review Spring 1989)

Is it any wonder, comrades of the CPB, that there are "groups and movements" who claim that the Stalinist communist parties have "betrayed Marxism and the cause of socialist revolution"? Against Trotskyism's claim to have consistently fought what Coyle calls "the crimes of the Stalin period", the CPB has no answer, especially when they start from the idea of a return to the pre-Eurocommunist days of the CPGB before 1977.

Coyle's second argument is that we "purists" cannot apply Marxist principles in practice. This is a hoary old opportunist charge. Its purpose is to disguise the point that Stalinism long ago abandoned the most fundamental principles of Marxism.

Basic Marxist principles, embodied in the key programmatic documents of the revolutionary movement, are against support for bourgeois governments, for revolutionary defeatism in imperialist countries when they are at war, and for the defence of the working class' independent interests against the bosses at all times. The British Trotskyists held to these principles during the Second World War and were denounced as fascists by the CPGB.

The CPGB proved its "practical" grasp of Marxism by supporting Churchill's coalition government, supporting Britain's imperialist war effort and attacking workers who struck to defend their pay and conditions during the war once the USSR joined the Allies against Germany.

Betrayed

For good measure, they betrayed the Marxist principle of supporting the right of an oppressed nation to self-determination. The dictates of Kremlin diplomacy meant that the British CP scandalously refused to support the Indian national independence movement after 1941. "We deplore that the Congress resolution should even contemplate the adoption of civil disobedience in the event of its proposals being rejected" wrote Harry Pollitt in 1942, after Churchill ordered the arrest of nationalist and communist leaders alike in India.

It is a Marxist principle that the capitalist state cannot be taken over and used by the working class but must be smashed and replaced by a government based on workers' councils and a workers' militia. As late as 1935, statements to this effect were written into the British CP's programme. But at Stalin's behest the CP dropped all reference to the dictatorship of the proletariat in the first version of the *British Road to Socialism* (BRS) in 1951:

"The enemies of communism accuse the Communist Party of aiming to introduce soviet power in Britain and abolish Parliament. This is a slanderous misrepresentation of our policy. Experience has shown that in the present conditions, the advance to socialism can be made as well by a different road." (BRS 1951 p14)

The BRS spelled out what "road" applied to Britain: "the people of Britain can transform capitalist democracy into a real people's democracy . . . into the democratic

instrument of the will of the vast majority etc." (ibid)

Are these just examples from the dim and distant past? No; in every case the political method embodied is reproduced in the positions of the CPB's new draft of the *British Road*.

Though the CPB claims to be rejecting the politics of the Euro-communists on the question of class alliances, it shares the same basic supposition that: "There is therefore an objective basis for an alliance between the working class and many in these sections of the capitalist class. For they all confront a common enemy—the big British and foreign transnational corporations and banks". (BRS 1989 p23)

Familiar

On anti-imperialism, whilst the new BRS is full of rhetoric against British colonialism, it contains a familiar formulation on Ireland:

"... all sectarian laws, repressive and undemocratic laws and practices should be ended immediately and British troops withdrawn from Ireland".

When should the troops come out? The BRS says nothing about the timescale and predictably fails to include the only demand consistent with Marxist principle, Troops Out Now. This is no accident, as the leaders of the present CPB pioneered the various shoddy compromises—troops back to barracks, phased withdrawal—touted by the CPGB.

And on the state? "The necessity of revolution, therefore, the taking of state power by the working class and its allies, is a fundamental precept which is not open to question" says the new BRS. But behind this radical sounding passage lies a very different interpretation of "taking state power" than that of Lenin:

"Only when democratisation of the key sectors of the state is taken to the point where the working class actually takes over the state apparatus, and transforms it into an instrument that enforces its policies, will it be possible for the working class to remove the basis of its own oppression." (BRS 1989 p21)

Theory

Nor is all this simply a matter of theory. In practice the CPB acts according to the precepts of its class collaborationist programme. One of its leaders, Derek Robinson, showed this all too clearly during the last Labour government. He defended the trade union bureaucracy's social contract with that government by lining up with the British Leyland bosses to implement the closure of a Liverpool car plant.

Workers' jobs were sacrificed on the altar of class collaboration as Robinson stuck to his part of the bargain with the management. A few years later, his reward was victimisation. Yet he has never renounced his treachery towards the Liverpool car workers.

This was no realistic and practical application of Marxist principles. It was a practical betrayal of those principles.

Neither now nor since the mid

1930s has the tradition represented by the CPB applied Marxist principles, pure, or otherwise. It has consistently abandoned them proving its loyalty to the Kremlin and its imperialist allies at every crucial point.

Finally Coyle claims that the *Transitional Programme*, permanent revolution and Trotsky's critique of the Soviet bureaucracy are "sophisticated programmatic ultra-leftism". Since he doesn't bother to substantiate this with regard to either permanent revolution or the USSR, we will leave these arguments to future articles. But Coyle's attack on the *Transitional Programme* is the most cleverly constructed piece of his argument, aimed as it is at the centrists who habitually treat Trotsky's programme as a catalogue of unchanging truths.

Coyle attacks the perspective outlined in the first section of the *Transitional Programme*; mankind's productive forces stagnate and a generalised pre-revolutionary crisis exists, creating a real crisis of leadership as the aspirations of the masses are blocked by their traditional leaders. Coyle argues that this was a perspective "which we can identify today as common to all Trotskyists regardless of other differences". (CR p22)

Perspective

This is simply not true. This is not the perspective of the MRCI. Nor for all their other failings is it the perspective of *Militant*, the SWP etc. It certainly was the perspective of the Healyite WRP/SLL from the 1950s to the mid 1980s. More importantly it remained the perspective of the Fourth International (FI) in the immediate post war years long after it should have been replaced. It was the FI's failure to replace Trotsky's perspective, once the imperialist peace was consolidated, which led to its own political degeneration.

None of this falsifies Trotsky's original perspective as a summary of the global situation on the eve of World War Two. Coyle writes:

"It would be a great mistake to assume that simply because a general crisis of capitalism exists it necessarily follows that all capitalist countries are at all times in a profound crisis and that the crisis is proof of a revolutionary situation."

True, but Trotsky made none of these mistakes. He argued that imperialism had reached a profound but specific crisis which was creating pre-revolutionary situations in key areas of the globe and would result in one of the most spectacular forms of capitalist crisis, world war. Nowhere did Trotsky argue that political and economic crisis was proof of a revolutionary situation. He specifically argued against this view.

For Coyle, what unites Trotsky and all of his modern day followers is the "voluntarism" contained within the method of the *Transitional Programme* itself:

"Voluntarism does not ask whether objective conditions have matured to the necessary level for action nor whether the balance of class forces is favourable or unfavourable. Policies, or more usually slogans, are

adopted which bear no relationship to the actually existing level of political consciousness or situation." (CR p24)

First let us remember where the method of the *Transitional Programme* originated. Not with a few hundred beleaguered Trotskyists in the 1930s, but in the Leninist Comintern, and not in a generalised pre-revolutionary situation but a period of retreat.

Transitional demands are a linked series of objectives which aim to focus the consciousness and organisations of the working class towards the seizure of power and the tasks of socialist transition. Do genuine Trotskyists advance them without consideration of the existing level of struggle and consciousness? Not at all. But they also take account of another important factor—what is necessary. What is the immediate next step for a particular section of workers involved in struggle?

Practice

Let us take one example to show what we mean in practice. When *Workers Power* argued for the formation of picket line defence squads in the miners' strike it was the necessary next step for a workforce and its communities under police siege. We certainly had to argue against the pacifist and legalist ideas of many miners; that is we had to fight for a revolutionary strategy and tactics against their existing reformist ideas. That, comrade Coyle, is what building a revolutionary communist organisation is all about.

But for the CPB all this is voluntarism, essentially because it goes beyond the programme of the left trade union bureaucracy. In the miners' strike, like Scargill, the CPGB "refused to condemn" the violence of the strikers. At the same time, like Scargill, it refused to call for or organise the legitimate physical defence of picket lines and pit villages. In the current round of disputes, the CPB and *Morning Star* advance not a single demand beyond what the left trade union leaders themselves call for. As a tendency the CPB precisely reflects—and is wedded to—the left trade union leaders.

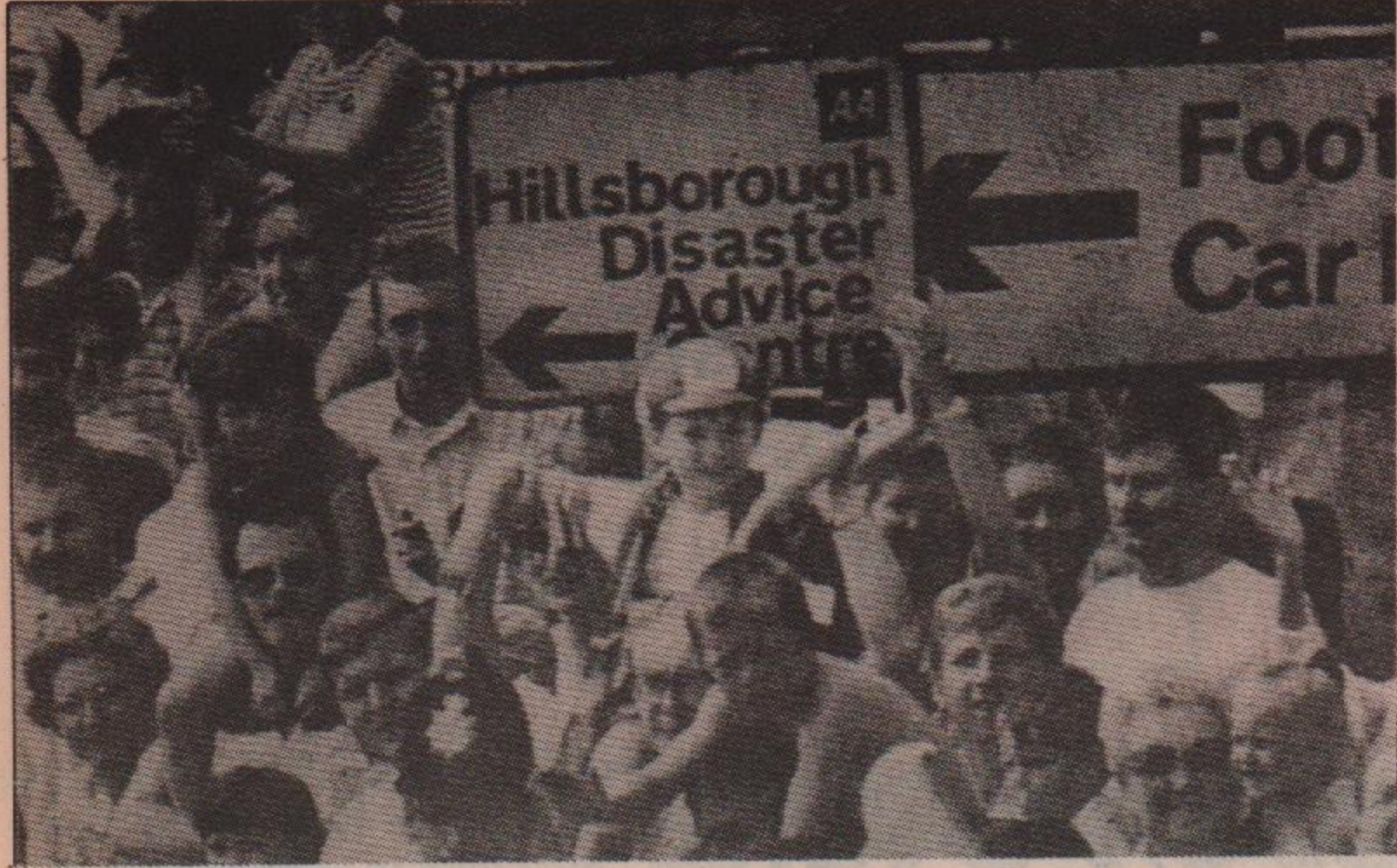
For Trotskyists it is the power of rank and file workers in fighting organisations which can and must be mobilised into a movement to smash the capitalist state and start the socialist transition. Against this strategy, any argument will do for Coyle and the CPB.

Equates

Coyle readily equates Trotskyism with syndicalism, correctly attacking the SWP's Tony Cliff for his vision of a revolutionary party as "a shop stewards' movement with a political life of its own". Against Cliff, Coyle wheels out Lenin, who argued that the Marxist ideal "should not be the trade union secretary, but the tribune of the people". And this from a party which had Mike Hicks and Derek Robinson as the only contenders for the post of General Secretary!

Coyle's case that Trotskyism is ultra-left, voluntarist, syndicalist etc is not proved with regard to Trotsky and the FI (1938-49). Despite the political errors of the British centrist left, Coyle's assertion that it is united by an ultra-left perspective and voluntaristic practice is not proved either. And against the genuine Trotskyism of *Workers Power* and the MRCI it will not stand up to reasoned argument and debate.

That is why we challenge comrade Coyle and the CPB to publicly debate the issues raised in *Communist Review* with us, and let any genuine worker militants and youth within the ranks of the CPB judge for themselves whether it is Trotskyism or Stalinism which represents modern revolutionary communism. ■



WEMBLEY

Dear Comrades,
I thought your article on Hillsborough nailed the lies that were used to try and discredit the working class victims of capitalism's control of football.
Since your article the FA Cup final itself has added a new twist to events in the aftermath of the Hillsborough tragedy. I was at the final and it was a day of mixed emotions. As an Evertonian I was fed up that we lost. But, apart from our last minute equaliser, a moment of pure joy that I will never forget was the reaction the royals got.
After the two teams came on we were informed that they would be presented to the "royal guests" (parasites who got tickets without queuing or paying). As at the

Hillsborough memorial service the royals decided to send on their substitutes—the Duke and Duchess of Kent.
As soon as they came on I started booing and shouting anti-royal abuse. At previous finals I've done this but usually I've been in a minority. This time was different. Everybody around me started doing the same. And when the national anthem started thousands of fans who were in the stands all deliberately sat down.
The Liverpool fans started singing "You'll Never Walk Alone" and we started a huge chorus of booing and whistling. The national anthem was drowned out completely. It was brilliant. By contrast the one minute's silence was strictly observed by everyone. The 95 who died were our people and we knew how to remember them with dignity.
After the match I found out that the assembled "experts" on telly had all denounced us for showing

Sing when we're winning

disrespect to royalty and to "our nation's" anthem.
Of course a lot of fans were booing or singing because of the royal snub to the memorial service. But thousands were all too aware that there is no such thing as "our" nation. There is a gaping chasm in this country between the bosses and the workers and it was on full display at Wembley on 20 May.
While we sat in the newly installed cramped seats or stood on the packed terraces, while we queued for up to half an hour to go to the toilet or buy over priced food and soft drinks a few thousand others settled into their luxurious

boxes (although quite a few toffs didn't even bother to make use of their complimentary tickets) fresh from the big tents outside Wembley where champagne and caviar buffets were laid on. For these people the final is a one-off social event, not the climax to their team's season.
Here were Britain's two nations. And we showed what we thought about it during the national anthem. And I must admit, as we all did this at five to three, I felt—as the song says—happy and glorious!
In comradeship,
a communist Everton Fan

CHINA

Dear Comrades,
There have been plenty of popular songs banned from Radio One, but it's not often they get censored on

Radio Four. One song in particular has been talked over and edited out of the BBC's news bulletins for the last three weeks: the Chinese version of the *Internationale*.
Whilst BBC pundits have been busy telling us about the Chinese revolt against "communism" workers and students have treated us to chorus after chorus of the communist anthem of the international workers' movement.
Written by two refugees after the defeat of the Paris Commune in 1871, the *Internationale* became the anthem of the mass workers' movement at the end of the nineteenth century.
As the Second International increasingly covered its reformism with lip-service to Marxism the *Internationale* came to be sung more as a dirge than as a call to action.
But the US syndicalist movement (the Wobblies) and then the Russian Revolution, reclaimed the *Internationale* as a stirring song of mass struggle. It became the first anthem of the USSR, when its leaders still saw it as the centre of a world revolutionary movement.
By the mid-1930s its call to "unite the human race" was at odds with Stalin's project of "socialism in one country". He ordered its replacement with the present Soviet anthem which celebrates the "unbreakable chain . . . around great Russia".
By singing the *Internationale*, the Chinese masses are speaking not just to us, but to workers all over the world, in a common language, the language of international working class solidarity.
Communist greetings
Pete Murphy,
London.

workers power

Fighting Fund



£70,000 Premises fund drive

WE ANNOUNCED last month the launch of a new £70,000 fund drive. We aim to raise the money between now and the end of this year. We want to enter the 1990s with enough cash to lay our hands on new premises for Workers Power. Our need for a new office is pressing.
We want to build on the success of our expanded paper by moving towards a fortnightly production schedule. To do this more office space than we have at the moment is necessary. We are appeal-

ing to all of our readers and supporters to dig deep and help us get the cash in.
A bankers order form giving us a regular donation is one way of helping. Just write to us asking for one or get one from your paper seller. Lump sum donations are equally welcome.
The appeal has got off to a good start. Since announcing the £70,000 target we have received £1,212.
Thanks to a supporter in Sheffield (£500) and another in Birmingham (£600) for big donations to get us off the starting blocks. Thanks also to readers in:
Reading (£38.60),
South London (£45),
North London (£4),
Birmingham (£13),
Leicester (£5)
and to Keresley miners and wives (£6.40). ■

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Workers power

British section of the Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International

INSIDE

- The Soviet national question
- Censorship and pornography
- Dockers speak out

Down with the bureaucracy!

China: for workers' democracy!

ORDER REIGNS in Beijing. The sighs of relief can be heard in Whitehall and the White House. But it is an order built on sand.

As we go to press the demonstrations have become smaller. The strike wave has subsided. The barricades have come down. Deng Xiaoping and his cronies have tightened their grip on the press and the party apparatus.

The euphoria of May is over. No longer are troops and demonstrators fraternising on the streets. No longer are police bands entertaining millions with the Internationale on Tiananmen square.

Instead party and government chiefs have launched a campaign against those they will blame for the break down of order in China. Veteran conservative Chen Yun has declared:

"We must expose the plot hatched in secret by a very small number of people. We must struggle against them and never yield to them."

Zhao Ziyang

Number one candidate for vilification is Party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang. The feud in the party leadership has been settled against him. But Deng and Li Peng are sure to follow this up with the victimisation of key student and worker militants.

Today's order can only be temporary. Millions, including party members, have voiced their opposition to bureaucratic oppression, corruption and privilege. The workers have shown that

they have the power to bring the system to a grinding halt. Millions will learn the lessons of this round of struggle in order to ensure victory in the inevitable battles ahead.

The opposition lost this time round because they did not have an effective political programme to deliver a death blow to bureaucratic rule. The movement rallied round the cry of democracy. But what did this mean?

Clique

For most it meant ousting the clique around Deng Xiaoping by an assertion of "people's power" expressed through demonstrations and hunger strikes. While the students called on the workers to strike they saw the workers as auxiliaries of the students not as the force that could destroy the regime and replace it with workers' democracy.

Instead the movement increasingly focused on backing those in the bureaucracy who posed as reformists such as Zhao Ziyang and Parliamentary Chairman Wan Li against premier Li Pen. "Democracy" came to mean backing one side in the bureaucratic feud. Or it came to mean, for a few, open support for capitalist democracy itself.

Now it is time to learn the lessons. And there are many to be learnt. The working class showed the enormous power it has in its hands. Many students came to learn this. Student and worker coordinating committees have been formed and remain in existence. They must learn

that it is the workers' general strike that has the power to commence the destruction of bureaucratic rule, not the students' hunger strike. The workers must organise themselves as the leading force in that struggle. The democracy of their workers' councils and their strike committees must replace the bureaucratic rule of Deng Xiaoping and Li Pen.

Those who want to destroy bureaucratic rule and privilege must orient to the workers. They must seek out every link, legal and illegal, with them. They must develop a programme geared to the workers, resolutely opposed to capitalist restoration, that will lay the basis for a revolutionary workers' party to lead the struggle ahead.

Martial Law

The millions who put their trust in a reforming wing of the bureaucracy introducing "democracy" have had their hopes dashed again. Zhao Ziyang has been swept aside. One time hero Wan Li came out openly in favour of martial law. As he put it:

"The imposition of martial law is in keeping with safeguarding the constitution and it is absolutely necessary to resolutely stop turbulence and rapidly restore order."

Ten years ago the far smaller democracy wall movement was crushed and its party mentor Hu Yaobang dismissed. Now a much mightier movement, not simply restricted to intellectuals, has seen the same thing happen again.

There will be some who

will claim from this that the only road to end bureaucratic oppression is to restore capitalism in China and create a western-style parliamentary government. The huge demonstrations in Hong Kong and of the Chinese elsewhere in the capitalist world continue to give voice to this programme. Deng Xiaoping himself has led the way in dismantling planned property relations and opening China up to imperialism. Hand in hand Stalinism and imperialism serve to popularise capitalist restoration.

But Chinese workers, those who oppose privilege

and those who want democratic liberties and an end to corruption, have no interest in seeing capitalist restoration. It will serve to increase inequalities. It will legalise corruption and speculation. It will prevent the rational and rounded development of the country that only a democratically planned economy can achieve.

Capitalist restoration will open up the profitable bits to imperialist exploitation and leave the rest in far worse backwardness and poverty. What is more, in a backward country like China, it will not even result in bourgeois

democracy. It will lead to a dictatorship as repressive as that of the Stalinists.

The only alternative to bureaucratic rule and capitalist exploitation is workers' political revolution.

Lesson

The lesson of the Chinese spring is that the bureaucracy cannot co-exist with any independent organisation of the Chinese workers and oppressed masses. It must be overthrown by revolution. Those who don't organise to overthrow the bureaucracy will doubtless be beaten by them again.

As Poland showed in 1980 and China shows now, the bureaucracy can bide its time; it can regroup its forces; it can allow opposition movements to exhaust themselves and fragment. But all the time it will be preparing to use its armed force and the weakness of its opposition to reassert its power.

Nevertheless as the regularity of mass explosions such as this shows, the bureaucracy's days are numbered.

Chen Yung has blamed the disorder on a slackening of Marxist agitation and called for it to be stepped up. By this he means a campaign to prove the permanence of bureaucratic rule and its coexistence with market relations. Sure enough Chinese workers and students need to study Marxism.

But the Marxism they study must not be that of Mao and Stalin, but that of Lenin and Trotsky; the Marxism of workers' democracy, of the struggle to put an end to all inequalities and privileges.

The future lies with revolutionary Marxism. ■

