

Defend the environment p8

Workers power

INSIDE

- Build Poll Tax conference
- Polish crisis
- Ambulance dispute

British section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International

Price 30p/10p strikers Solidarity price £1

Loyalist leaks implicate state forces

DEATH SQUADS LINK UNMASKED

RECENT LOYALIST leaks reveal the level of their collusion with the security forces. They have been greeted by expressions of shock from the governments in London and Dublin. An "independent" inquiry into the collusion has been announced and a British police officer appointed to oversee it.

But the shock and outrage is fake. The collusion with loyalist death squads has been known about and authorised for years.

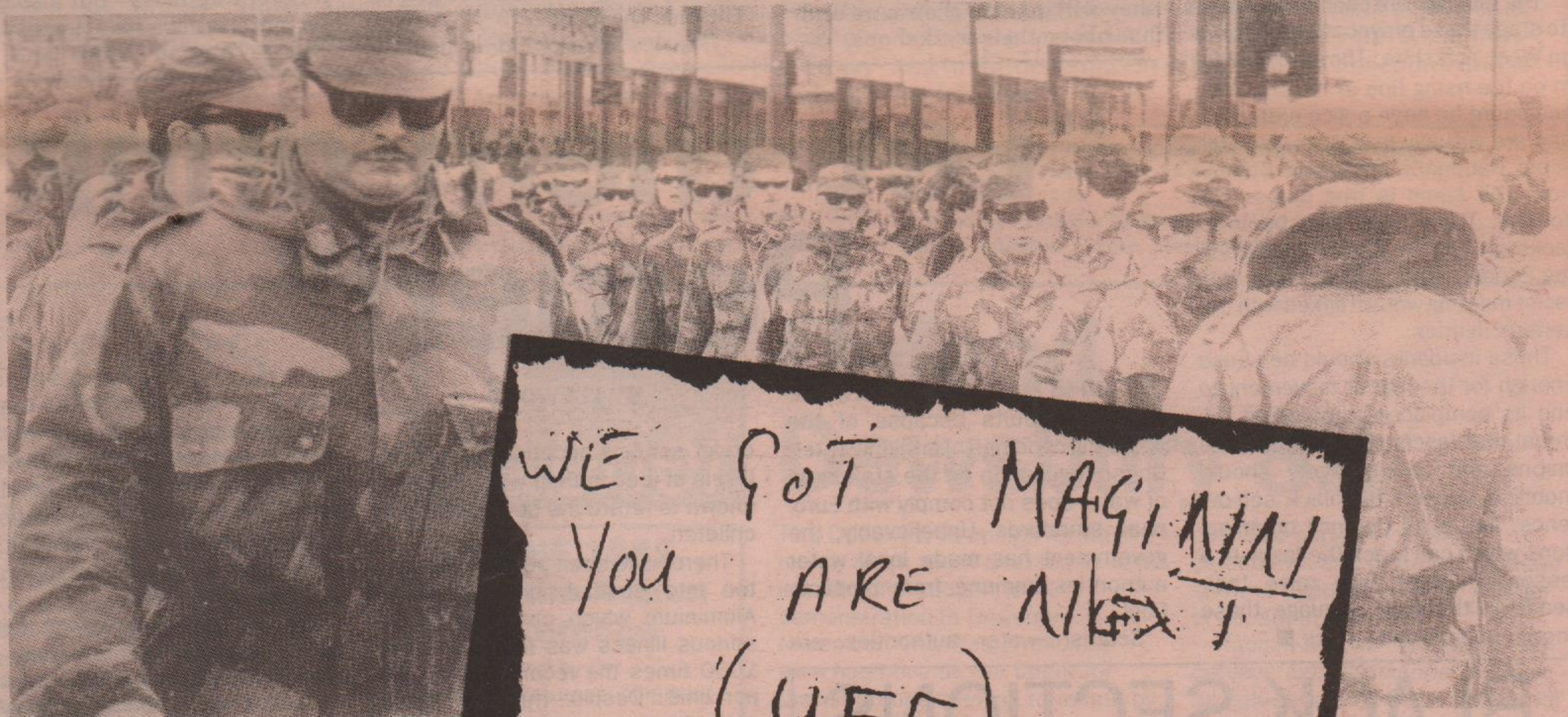
Fact: in 1987 an MI5 agent told a man he was trying to use as an informer that in dealing with Republicans, "we can always set them up or do anything we like".

Fact: an imprisoned UDA death squad member revealed that the RUC regularly handed over photographs of nationalists to the UDA and tipped them off when arms searches were to be carried out.

Fact: two former MI5 agents acknowledged that thirty sectarian assassinations in the 1970s were joint operations between the British Secret Service and the Loyalist paramilitaries.

The death squads indiscriminately kill Catholics. Their tactic of sectarian assassinations is designed to terrorise the nationalist community. This is why the British army, the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) work hand in glove with them.

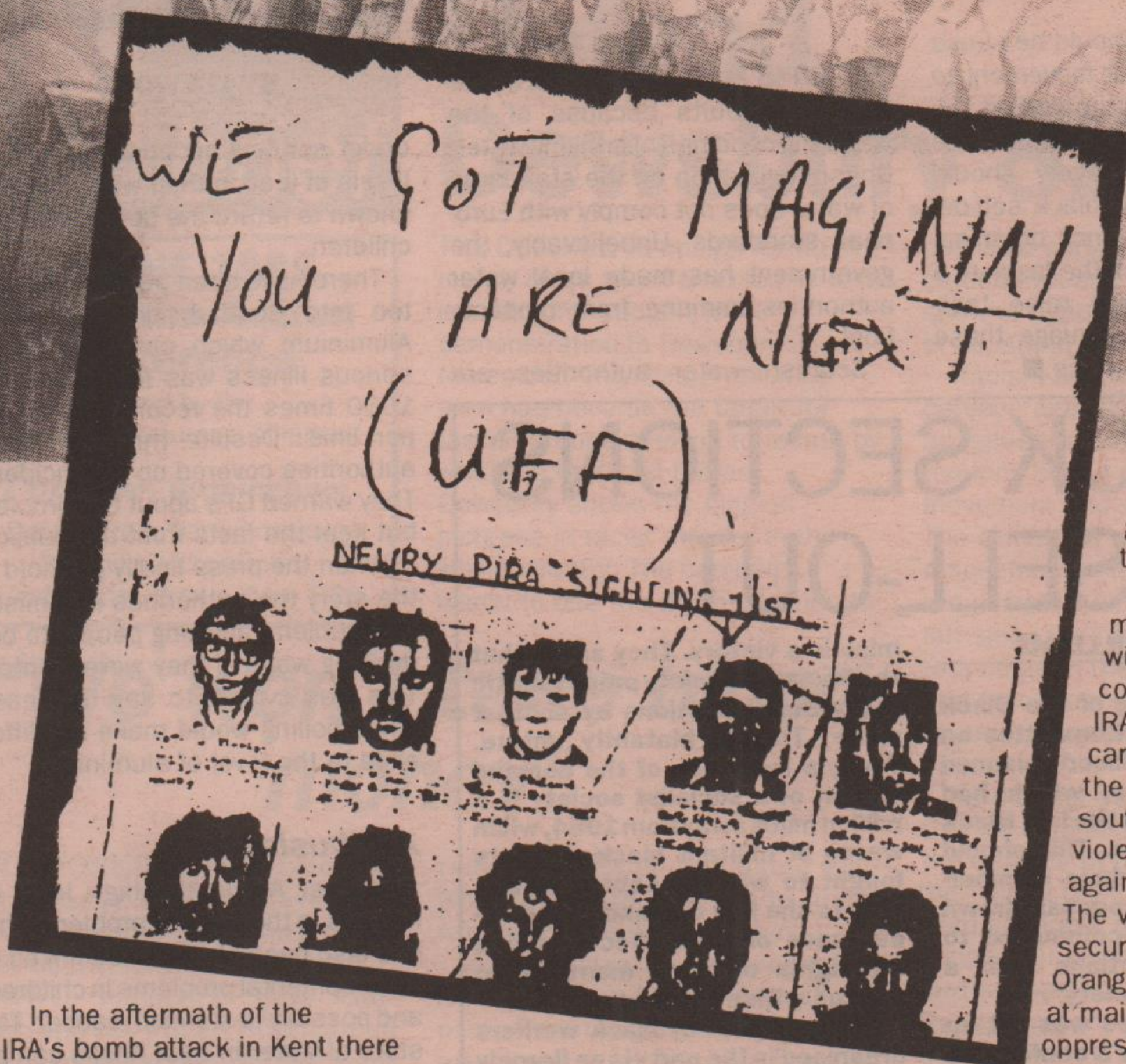
The latest revelations are not surprising to the governments of London or Dublin or to the nationalist community in the North which has been at the sharp end of the murder campaign for years. As



UDA paramilitaries

for the "independent enquiry"; if the worthy chief constable decided to reveal a fragment of the truth his investigation, and probably his career, would go the same way as John Stalker's. When he came close to exposing the RUC's policy of shoot to kill with IRA suspects he found himself suspended from duty. His "enquiry" ended with the Director of Public Prosecutions' refusal to charge the guilty men for "reasons of national security".

All of this explains why the nationalist community looks to the IRA for protection. It explains why the IRA are right to resist not just the loyalist murderers but their backers in the RUC, UDR, British army and secret service. Those forces are there to subdue the nationalists, keep Ireland divided and maintain the Orange state. It explains why the IRA's war against the British army is entirely justified.



In the aftermath of the IRA's bomb attack in Kent there will be no shortage of voices—from the press, the Tories and the Labour Party—who will condemn this action as an outrage. They will use it to "prove" that the IRA are just as bad as the loyalists and that Britain is merely keeping the peace in a religiously divided

community. It is a lie.

The IRA is waging a war against the British army and its Orange paramilitary allies. Its targets are overwhelmingly military. Its policy is not for random sectarian killings. When it has made mistakes it has

generally admitted to them.

British workers must have no truck with the chorus of condemnation of the IRA, even when it carries its war into the barracks of southern England. Its violence is directed against oppression. The violence of the security forces and the Orange state is directed at maintaining oppression.

That is why the one solution to the problems of Northern Ireland is for Britain to get the troops out now and let the whole Irish people to determine the future of their country! ■

● Now turn to page 10

Troops out now!

Fascists must be smashed

BY TOM BRIDGE

TWO HUNDRED anti-fascists prevented the British National Party from carrying out plans to lay a "wreath for democracy", in a public park in Bradford.

The fascist BNP had originally planned a provocative march to coincide with a multi-cultural carnival. When the march was banned, a rally and wreath laying ceremony were proposed instead. This was stopped when anti-fascists occupied the park chosen by the BNP for their event.

But with huge police support about thirty fascists were able to rally in a restaurant car park several miles away. It seems as if the police transported BNP supporters to this new, safe venue.

Attempted

This is the third time in recent months that the fascists have attempted to march through areas with a large black community. The BNP's press described their June rally in Dewsbury, where the police attacked and arrested 82 mainly black youth, as a "great victory". Last weekend the National Front applied to march from Batley to Dewsbury on the opening day of a new mosque. When this was banned they rallied in a hotel in Leeds.

The fascists are confident enough to stage these provocations in towns in West Yorkshire. They are cashing in on the rising tide of racism. They can count on huge police protection and are virtually free from any large scale nationally organised opposition. The same is true across the country. There have also been attacks on Labour Party meetings in the London area, and a recent anti-racist meeting was attacked with five serious injuries.

These incidents should be cause enough for the labour movement to end its complacency regarding the threat that fascism represents. The unions and Labour Party should mobilise support for black self-defence, and build defence organisations which can teach the fascists a lesson wherever they raise their heads in the only language these vermin understand—force. ■

BLACK SECTIONS SELL-OUT

BY LAURA WILLIAMS

A SPECIAL meeting of the Black Sections' National Committee on the 3 September replaced a planned recalled conference, which had been agreed upon at the last Black Sections conference. This should have allowed the whole membership to debate the proposals drawn up by an NEC sub-committee to replace Black Sections with a "Black Socialist Society".

The sub-committee was set up in line with last year's conference decision which rejected the proposal that a separate section of the party should be established which should be part of the party in the same way as the women's organisation or the youth organisation. In the interim the committee has conducted a six month long "debate" with interest groups and party members on how such a society should be structured, as well as the formats for representation and membership.

Today there are many amongst the Black Sections leadership, ready to claim that this compro-

CHARLES WINDSOR is at the centre of media attention at the moment. Even the *Sun*, which lampooned his mismatched marriage and his mystical communings with nature, has been forced to lay off him and look for another target.

Hardly a week passes without television presenting us with his videoed wanderings through the social undergrowth of the free market jungle. One week he turns up in a pensioner's flat to examine with disbelief the fungus-covered wall. The next he talks awkwardly with an unemployed youngster, whom the Prince's Trust is trying to turn into young entrepreneur of the year.

Over the last year Charles really struck gold with the theme of architecture. Millions of working class families are living in neglected tower blocks and estates. At the same time the home ownership and building boom has led to a sharp improvement in the housing conditions of the middle class. Charles' attacks on the modernist tower blocks, which are rapidly degenerating into slums in the sky, and his call for their demolition have struck a sympathetic chord with many working class people.

But his answer to their problems is a reactionary utopia. As prince of the young fogeys he wants to replace the slumlands of the inner cities with kitsch, where the unemployed steelworkers can be turned into picture framers or potters, where they will give up their cars and live above their workshops,

BRITAIN IS being prosecuted in the European courts because of the appalling condition of drinking water. British legislation on the standards of water does not comply with European standards. Unbelievably, the government has made local water authorities immune from prosecution!

Scottish water authorities are

mise is a victory. They argue that the Socialist Society proposals are really Black Sections by another name. This is blatantly untrue. Today's reduction of the demand to that of a socialist society is a million miles away from 1984, when waves of militant black activists fought to win the Labour leadership to the key demand of the acceptance of Black Sections and the rights of black members to caucus within the party.

The prospect of black workers organised in the party is as fiercely resisted today as at any time in the past. The Labour leadership in their attack on the idea of the setting up of Black Sections, maintains that they are a retrograde step and political apartheid. A Black Socialist Society affiliated to the party, is aimed at marginalising and then destroying the Black Sections and integrating many of Labour's black activists into Kinnock's new model party. This has to be seen against Kinnock's strategy of making the party safe for capitalism, which means "disowning" unpopular causes like fighting racism. ■

The prince and the paupers



Nostalgia for the past

where they stroll to church on Sundays to give thanks to god for Charles the Good.

Charles attacks modernism—

not only for what he sees as its inherent ugliness—but also for its materialism, its attempt to change "human nature" and

traditional society and above all for its lack of "spiritual values" and godliness. All the projects he favours—from Paternoster Square (around St Pauls in London) to the Dorchester new town—demand as a principle, "hierarchy", a central and respected position for church, state and municipal buildings.

His new project—what the press has dubbed "Charles' Army"—100,000 young "volunteers" to clean up the social ills of modern Britain—is potentially the most dangerous and sinister development. They are meant to promote "active citizenship" to supplement (and replace) the sagging and disappearing social services and doubtlessly to "disappear" another chunk of the young unemployed. This reactionary project has gained the support (through the Speakers Committee set up by Douglas Hurd) of labour movement luminaries like John Monks of the TUC, Rodney Bickerstaffe of NUPE and David Blunkett MP.

This invitation to the prince to enter the fray—nominally above (party) politics—will clearly strengthen his role in political life. But these luminaries will squeal that he is "above politics". What does this piece of cant mean? Only that the party political conflict is not open or honest.

Rather Labour and Tories will try to get some princely charisma to rub off on them by being associated with the project, by having photo opportunities with His Royal Highness. But behind this charade Charles' intervention into real politics—class politics—is becoming more and more pronounced.

Bleatings

The answer to it is not the pathetic liberal bleatings for him to "keep out of politics" or not misuse his prestige. It is to boldly attack the monarchy for what it is—an ideological celebration of everything reactionary and decadent in capitalist society, a rallying point outside formal democracy and for using the state power against the working class.

Charles and his court clique, with a substantial chunk of the media, are not only trying to offset the dangerous side of Thatcherism in the here and now in order to preserve its basic conquests. They are preparing an alternative social base, to tie an army of grateful paupers to a royal patron of the downtrodden.

Charles' Army—devoted to the values of law and order, good neighbourliness, the family and tradition—can grow into something a whole lot more sinister. Socialists should fight this development tooth and nail. They should attack the Labour friends of royalty.

Above all they need to mobilise young people, not to join Charles' Army, but to form an army of class struggle against unemployment, poverty, the social system that creates it and which he symbolises. ■

"Let them drink Perrier!"

BY LIZ WOOD

under scrutiny because of the high levels of lead in their water. Lead is known to retard the development of children.

There have been aluminium leaks too into Scottish drinking water. Aluminium which can also cause serious illness was found at up to 1000 times the recommended upper limit. Despite this, the water authorities covered up the incident. They warned GPs about the problem but kept the facts from the public.

When the press finally got hold of the story the authorities minimised the problem, advising people to boil drinking water if they were worried. This was cynical to say the least, since boiling would make no difference to the level of aluminium.

Agribusiness

In East Anglia the high level of nitrates is the biggest problem. This has also been shown to be linked to developmental problems in children, and possibly to stomach cancer. The state of water in East Anglia can be directly related to the intensive farming methods which have made the region one of the most profitable centres of agribusiness in the country.

Literally tons of nitrates are poured onto the land in fertilisers each year. Eventually they seep through to the water table from which much of the drinking water is drawn.

The problem is so bad, leading to the growth of algae in drinking water, that some people in the area have resorted to installing water purification plants in their own homes.

At a cost of about £400 this is obviously not a solution for the majority of workers! Neither is the suggestion from middle class Friends of the Earth that people who are bottle feeding babies should use bottled mineral water rather than tap water to make up the feed.

Rather than comply with better safety standards the Tories are spending vast amounts on privatising the industry. So far the Association of Water Authorities has spent £22 million on the national advertising campaign while individual local authorities have spent a further 10 million. The Government itself has spent a staggering £50 million just on advertising the share sell off!

Meanwhile 13,000 jobs have been cut in the water authorities since 1979, despite ever growing demand for water and the Tories are complaining because it will cost them £18 million to put right the pollution that the European community is complaining about.

A privatised water service will be even worse. The government has already agreed to the introduction of water meters in private homes. Trials have been run in some areas and it has been shown that these are massively more expensive than the old water rates. To make matters worse the cost of installing the new meters is to be passed on to the public whether they want them or not. This may be as much as £100 a time.

The record of the "water and sewage businesses" has proven to be dangerous enough under public ownership. We can only expect worse when they have shareholders to answer to. ■

"I will be Prime Minister"

AT THE end of the summer of discontent, and with Labour ten points ahead in the polls, workers might be hoping that the Labour Party Conference would be discussing how to finally defeat the Tories and their vicious anti-union laws. The use of the courts to defeat the dockers and prevent other workers taking decisive action is an issue for the whole labour movement.

But Kinnock will be concentrating his attention on showing the bosses how confidently he can rule the party and beat the unions.

Thatcher is in all sorts of trouble most of which can't simply be put down to "mid-term blues". A massive balance of payments deficit; inflation and interest rates are still high; water privatisation and the Poll Tax are causing resentment amongst millions of working class people. Even some bosses are getting increasingly impatient with her policies. Kinnock and Hattersley are trying to cash in on this. They are much more bothered about posing as a credible pro-capitalist alternative to the Tories in front of the likes of the CBI than they are about the effects that the Poll Tax will have on workers.

The Policy Review, junking unilateral nuclear disarmament, defending privatisation, their commitment to retain the anti-union laws, and the reduction of party conference to an undemocratic media spectacle are all aimed at presenting Labour as a "gentler" more "reasonable" version of Thatcherism.

Yet the TUC conference in Blackpool last month took decisions which contradict the Kinnock line. Congress decided to call on the next Labour government to repeal the Tories' anti-union laws. This is despite trade union bureaucrats like Willis, Edmonds and Todd having bent over backwards to obey these laws over the last ten years!

The TUC decision was taken under pressure from its members who face the full effect of the laws

whenever industrial action is even threatened. For the Labour leadership this pressure is precisely what they have struggled to rid themselves of. They know that the bosses will be watching to see how Kinnock deals with this "challenge" from the TUC.

This explains Kinnock's retort to the TUC's call to repeal the anti-union laws: "Under the Labour government I will be Prime Minister and the TUC will have its opinions". It also explains Michael Meacher's recent statement that "the law will be used against trade unionists". Not only will a Labour government keep and use the Tory anti-union laws it won't allow the trade unions, most of whom are affiliated to the Labour Party, any say in the matter.

Even now, in order to show goodwill to the bosses, the Labour leaders are planning to constitutionally distance the unions from Labour by devaluing the vote of trade union affiliated members at conference.

Trade union bureaucrats such as John Edmonds (GMB) are in favour of individual membership having five or six times more voting strength than affiliated members as well as giving voting powers to the parliamentary party.

In return for the sacrifice of keeping the anti-union laws and undermining the main working class link with the Labour Party—the trade union block vote—the Labour leaders promise the union bosses that it will improve the chances of Labour winning the next election.

Workers cannot afford, and must not make, such a sacrifice for the sake of waiting for a Labour government which, even if it were elected, would in turn sacrifice the working class to the needs of capi-

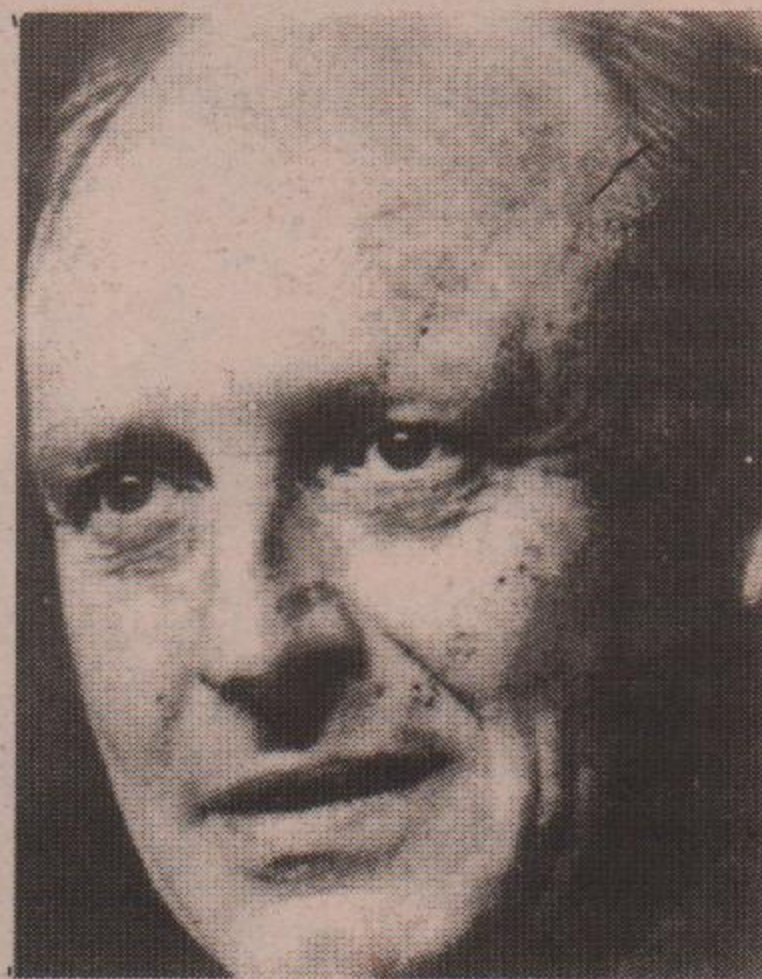
EDITORIAL

talism.

Labour Party members and trade unionists should fight within the party to demand the scrapping of all the anti-union laws as soon as a Labour government is elected. But we cannot depend on winning votes at Labour conferences against the anti-union laws. The Labour leadership in power would ignore such a policy if it upset their ruling class backers. The Tory laws can only effectively be beaten in the arena of the class struggle through militant strike action. Socialists and trade unionists need to build rank and file movements in the unions committed to smashing the anti-union laws and stopping the bureaucrats from selling out struggles by obeying the law. The whole labour movement must be won to taking general strike action when the laws are used against any section of the working class.

We should fight to defend the trade union link with the Labour Party by defending the block vote and fighting to democratise it. This means making the bureaucrats accountable to the mass of the members, and making the trade union vote represent the range of opinion in the unions. Breaking up the block vote so that it is used in proportion to the level of support in each union, under the democratic control of the rank and file, would stop the union barons' abuse of their millions of votes, without weakening the link between the unions and the Labour Party.

The pressure that workers can exert on the leadership, however democratic, will never be enough to break the reformists from their determination to compromise with the bosses. For workers' interests to be fought for in total opposition to the Tories, the bosses and the Labour Party if it comes to power, a new party is needed. A revolutionary party committed to the destruction of capitalism, not compromise with it. ■



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Kurdish refugees

THIS MONTH four Kurdish refugees fleeing persecution and repression in Turkey were released from detention and given leave to stay in Britain. But only after they had been on hunger strike and were in a serious condition in hospital.

There are approximately 100 Kurdish refugees in various prisons and detention centres up and down the country at the moment. Many were hauled in after interviews with Home Office officials for making minor mistakes on forms. The 3,500 refugees have been subject to harassment since they arrived. Interviews with the Home Office are being conducted seven days a week, resulting in lack of legal representation and further detentions. It was even discovered that an interpreter used by the Home Office was part of an important establishment family in Turkey who could easily

have been passing information on to the Turkish state.

The Kurds, who form nearly 20% of the total population in Turkey, are forbidden to speak their own language or take part in their own cultural and religious activities. 400,000 Turkish troops are currently swamping their towns and villages. 250,000 people have been tortured, imprisoned or executed in Turkey since 1981. And yet the British government still refuses to accept that the refugees in Britain are here for anything other than "economic motives".

For those who are now living in London the battle for survival is beginning all over again. With no work permits the refugees are reliant on state benefits to live. Yet most are still not able to obtain any housing benefit. Private landlords in boroughs like Islington, Hackney and Haringey are charging as much as £65 or £70 per week per person and are squeezing up to seven people in one bedroom flats. Many are now without electricity or gas or are being evicted as a result of non-payment of bills. Councils are dumping people in B&B or short life accommodation.

The plight of the Kurdish refugees is desperate. But what do the left Labour boroughs do in response to the situation? Islington Labour council is moving the Kurdish Workers Association (KWA) out of its current offices with the offer of other rooms providing they are paid for—the KWA is of course unfunded by the council or anyone else. Messages of support etc to: Kurdish Refugee Support Group c/o Hackney Trades Union Support Unit, 489 Kingsland High St, Dalston, London E8

IN brief

NATFHE 1989 Pay Claim Action Conference

Called by the Socialist Lecturers' Alliance

7 October, Birmingham

Details from Barry Lovejoy, 25 Philip Victor Road, Handsworth, Birmingham B20

"We won't take blood money"

TWO WORKERS at a Leicester firm, Granby Plastics, have been sacked for refusing to work on an order bound for South Africa.

TGWU members, Ross Galbraith and Gary Sherriff explained to their boss that they did not "want to get blood on their hands" by working on the order. Their employer said that he would consider their position. Two days later they were given a weeks notice and sacked. Because they have been sacked they will not be entitled to unemployment benefit for six months and are now facing extreme hardship because of their principled stand.

The fact that individual workers in such a vulnerable position are prepared to take this sort of action in solidarity with the oppressed in South Africa shows the

Defend Dewsbury 82

THE DEFENCE campaign for the 82 mainly black youth arrested in June is calling for support for a demonstration in Dewsbury in November. The West Yorkshire area has become the target for fascist groups seeking to recruit by whipping up racial hatred. Dewsbury shows the biggest increase in racist attacks in the whole country. The campaign wants to use the demonstration to

publicise support for the defendants and provide a massive show of opposition to the climate of racism in the area.

Racism and the support for self-defence against racist attacks is an issue that has been ignored for too long by the organised labour movement and sections of the left. The climate of racism made respectable under the Tories plus the complacency of most of the left since the late 1970s, has led to a surge in the growth of racism and no corresponding nationally co-ordinated campaign of opposition.

As the first step in redressing this we urge all socialists to raise the defence of the Dewsbury 82 in their union branch, Labour party ward etc. Pass resolutions of support for self-defence and calling for the charges to be dropped. Send donations and get your organisation to sponsor the demonstration (wide sponsorship is vital if the demonstration is not to be banned). ■

Dewsbury 82 Defence Campaign

Build for the demonstration in November (date to be announced)

Details from Dewsbury 82 Defence Campaign, c/o Kirkless Community Relations Caucus, 24 Westgate, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire

Commemorate Irish hunger striker

DEMONSTRATION SATURDAY 28 OCTOBER

In commemoration of Terence MacSwiney, left wing republican, who died in Brixton prison after 78 days on hunger strike, in October 1920.

Support the demonstration, which is calling for Troops Out Now, Self Determination for the Irish People as a whole!

Assemble Kennington Park, 12 noon

March to Brixton Prison
Called by the South London Year of Action Committee

AFTER SIX months of dithering, the executive of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU) has finally named the four engineering companies to be targeted for strikes in the campaign for the 35 hour week.

Ballots on indefinite strikes are to take place at British Aerospace plants at Preston, Chester and Kingston-on-Thames, Rolls Royce in Glasgow and Coventry, Smith's Industries in Cheltenham and NEI-Parsons in Newcastle.

Every worker at these plants should vote yes to action. There is no doubt that all out strikes could be effective; both Rolls Royce and Aerospace are working on full order books at present.

Rolls Royce has over 700 engines on order at present to civil airlines, and the two plants selected for action specialise in compounds for these. With solid support these strikes could hit the bosses where it hurts them most—their profits.

Targetted

Bill Jordan of the AEU is hoping that the targetted firms will break with the bosses' common front, the Engineering Employers' Federation (EEF) over hours or put enough pressure on the EEF as a whole to get them to back down. But selective strikes could be isolated by the employers.

Despite the fact that the levy has currently been well supported by rank and file engineers, with £500,000 per week being raised according to the CSEU, there is always a risk that support might slowly wither away if the campaign fails to get results.

The excellent response to the levy shows the feeling is there for action. To build on it we need an all out national strike of all CSEU unions. Without a quick and decisive victory there is the risk of a string of separate local agreements, with the AEU bureaucracy settling for less than the full claim. That claim should include a massive increase in basic pay as well as the 35 hour week. And a sliding scale

ENGINEERS

All out for 35 hour week!



Bill Jordan addressing a mass meeting of British Aerospace workers

John Harris/IFL

of wages linked to inflation.

The key to winning effective action and guarding against a sell-out is rank and file control of the dispute. Elected strike committees should be set up in the affected plants, to co-ordinate action and to continue the strikes if necessary when the CSEU sellout, and to spread the action, with or without the approval of Jordan and co.■

The left and the AEU

DESPITE BILL Jordan's right wing record, the opposition to his stranglehold over the current action is extremely weak. This is not a question of numbers but of politics. The left in the union has no strategy for turning the current militancy over hours into a fight for rank and file democracy and a new leadership.

The main opposition in the AEU is around the *Engineering Gazette* formerly the newspaper of the Broad Left. But under the influence of the Communist Parties, the *Gazette's* challenge to Jordan has been feeble.

The September issue contains nothing on the current campaign bar a few paragraphs which simply repeat the arguments of the AEU's official brochures. They didn't even use the current election for General Secretary to stand a candidate against Jordan!

Militant are a bit better than the *Gazette*, but not much. At least they call for meetings in every workplace to build up and maintain support, and correctly call for

blacking of work from strikebound plants, for a massive increase in minimum time rates and an end to overtime. But they cannot bring themselves to fight now for an all out national strike, though they admit in their recent bulletin for engineers that "we may have to consider extending the action". Well we've already "considered" it and are busy fighting for it in the union. *Militant* supporters in engineering should do the same.

Control

Both *Militant* and *Socialist Worker* also ignore the most important point for engineers on the shop floor—how to take control of the action. *Socialist Worker* asks Jordan to call an all out strike, but doesn't seem to realise that strike committees and rank and file organisation are needed to put the pressure on him. *Militant* just calls in the abstract for a "socialist AEU". But what are we to do in the meantime about the bosses men that run the union? They don't

say.

Silliest of all are the proposals of the Revolutionary Communist Party. Fortunately they have little or no support amongst engineers—and it shows when you look at what they are saying. They reckon that "most engineering workers are less than enthusiastic about the prospect of a cut in hours", because thousands put in hours of overtime every week to make up for low rates of pay.

It obviously hasn't occurred to the RCP that a reduction of hours with no loss of pay would reduce the amount of overtime we have to work to make up a living wage. Jordan may be using the hours campaign to head off action over pay but what's to stop engineers combining the fight for a 35 hour week with the demand for a massive increase in the minimum time rate? Nothing. Once again most of the left has no sensible fighting alternative to the right-wing. If you want to fight for a national strike and get the rank and file organised—join Workers Power.■

AMBULANCES

Step up action!

WHY DO NHS managers rush to the media after every disaster, smugly announcing that their services' response has been excellent? Because they are terrified that cuts and staff shortages will one day compound a major accident.

This is the background to the current ambulance workers' pay dispute.

At the time of the *Marchioness* disaster the south east London ambulance service was supposed to have eighteen crews on call. It had just four. Two of these were crews who had stayed on after a day shift!

Ambulance drivers take-home very little compared to the other emergency service workers. The basic starting pay is only £7,330! On top of this there is the constant stress compounded by a shortage of staff.

Now ambulance drivers have rejected a government 6.5% pay

offer. Whilst they have stopped short of strike action, the overtime ban has hit services very quickly.

In London only half the normal number of ambulances were available over the first weekend of the ban. Managers were forced to hire 400 taxis in a week to cover non-emergency cases. The immediate impact of the action has forced the Tories to put the army on standby. They will not hesitate to use military vehicles and personnel to break the action.

The overtime ban has been so effective because the service is run on massive amounts of overtime. Some ambulance workers clock up 150 hours overtime a month—nearly double the official working week. All of this on basic rates of pay!

Crews work these hours not just out of concern for patient welfare but to pay their mort-

gages and bills. It is vital that they win not only their 11.1% claim but a drastic improvement in hours. This means pouring money and resources into the ambulance service, not at the expense of other hard-hit sections of the NHS, but at the bosses' expense. Ambulance workers should fight for a massive pay increase to make the official working week pay a living wage.

Clearly the Tories are out to beat the overtime ban. They have slammed both BR and Town Hall bosses for giving in to wage demands in line with inflation. They want to make the ambulance workers' dispute a test of strength. In return the ambulance workers must discover the strength that lies in

all out strike action.

Ambulance workers have, since 1982, negotiated and fought separately from other NHS workers, but to win a substantial pay rise they will have to learn the lessons of previous NHS pay disputes. All out strike action is needed. The union officials must not be allowed to squash the ballot result with a long drawn out campaign. The drivers should grant emergency cover only under workers' control.

Unless ambulance drivers take such decisive action, the likelihood is that the negotiators will quickly settle for a slightly increased offer which will barely keep wages in line with inflation. The problem of low basic pay and under-funding will remain.■

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REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY

Volume 1 Number 2

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Build Poll Tax conference!

Resolution to 25 November Conference

This conference aims to build the maximum possible unity of the working class in action to defeat the Poll Tax.

Conference resolves to:

1. Build councils of elected delegates from every estate, workplace, anti-Poll Tax group and trade union to unite and co-ordinate action against the tax. A Britain-wide council should be elected from the local bodies.
2. Organise a mass campaign of non-registration in areas where significant numbers have not yet registered for the Poll Tax.
3. Build a mass campaign of non-payment, with organisers on every street, in every block and in every workplace.
4. Demand and pressurise Labour councils to:
 - a) refuse to prosecute those who have not registered
 - b) refuse to spend a single penny more on administering and implementing the tax.
 - c) give financial support to

local anti-Poll Tax groups including free publicity offices and other facilities.

5. Fight for direct action by council and postal workers and by civil servants to boycott the administration of the tax and the distribution of forms etc.

6. Fight to commit the labour movement and workplaces in the public and the private sector to strike action against any attempts to deduct the Poll Tax from wages and benefits direct.

7. Organise physical defence of any community faced with bailiffs, snoopers or police harassment for failing to register or pay the tax.

8. Fight for a general strike to stop the Tories and the bosses from using their anti-union laws against workers striking against the tax. For a general strike against the Poll Tax.

eration elected on 25 November should be subject to the strictest control and accountable to the conference and the local groups.

The conference must resist any attempts by the Communist Party of Britain supporters, the Labour soft-left and Green "realists" to keep the campaign within the framework of the bosses' laws.

It must not let any tendency appoint itself the "leadership" of the campaign, as *Militant* has done in the run up to the conference. It must commit itself to the above programme of action, which if passed at the conference and implemented, can not only beat the tax but lay the framework for a fight against the bosses' whole system of organised robbery. ■

ALL BRITAIN ANTI-POLL TAX FEDERATION FOUNDING CONFERENCE

25 November 1989
Free Trade Hall
Manchester

Delegates welcome from Anti-Poll Tax groups and trade union branches

Credentials from:
Tommy Sheridan
c/o 12 Renfield St
Glasgow G1

THE CONFERENCE planned for 25 November in Manchester is a key development in the mounting campaign against the Poll Tax. Across England and Wales Anti-Poll Tax Unions have sprung up in thousands of localities. These have in many cases linked together in city and even county-wide federations, drawing representation from community and estate based campaigns and from trade unionists determined to build a real fight against the tax.

And in Scotland, where the tax was introduced a year ahead of England and Wales, a Scotland-wide federation has already been established and has played a key role in the fight for organised non-payment. Now there is a chance to build a national federation. This opportunity must not be squandered.

Devastating

Every local group, every workplace organisation, aware of the devastating effect that the tax will have on workers' living standards, every trade union branch committed to action against the tax should send elected delegates and observers to this conference (details below).

Some activists, particularly in the community based groups, will be wary of forming a national organisation. They will fear for the autonomy of their local campaigns, and will point to the bureaucratic stranglehold exercised by national trade union leaderships over their members as an argument against creating a nationally co-ordinated body.

Misplaced

Although understandable, these worries are misplaced. The Tories and their henchmen in the leadership of the local councils, both Labour and Tory controlled, are co-ordinating the implementation of the tax on a nationwide basis.

The lack of a national focus to the campaign so far has raised the danger of certain areas being isolated and defeated without active support from other areas. A national federation, drawing on the lessons of the fight in Scotland, will be able to ensure a united and militant response to every step that the Tories take.

But to prevent a bureaucratic leadership developing, the new national federation must operate on the basis of genuine workers' democracy. All delegates should be elected by their campaigns or unions and subject to instant recall by the body that elected them. Similarly the officials of the fed-

Nurses victimised

WHILST THOUSANDS are still waiting for their regrading appeals to be heard, fourteen nurses could face the sack. Christopher Aggett, Director of Nursing Services at Glenfrith Hospital, Leicester, has reported fourteen of the hospital's qualified nurses to the UKCC (the professional nursing body). The charge is "professional misconduct" because the fourteen took part in a three day strike in April. If found guilty they will be struck off the register and will never be able to nurse again.

The Glenfrith nurses struck because they had been placed on the lowest grades. The nursing auxiliaries were placed on A Grade, the enrolled nurses on C. For them the regrading proved to be a sheer confidence trick. The strike ended when management promised to speed up the appeals procedure. But like 40,000 nurses nationwide the Glenfrith nurses have still to get

satisfaction.

Now, like many managers, Mr Aggett is running scared. He was shocked by the depth of anger and determination shown by nurses over the regrading. He knows that these nurses, working in a hospital for the mentally handicapped, feel the same depth of anger about the continued underfunding, staff shortages and cuts as they did about their pay. He has decided to make these nurses an example, to show what will happen if that anger bursts into action again. The right to strike is already severely limited by the Tories anti-union laws. But as yet it has not been outlawed in the emergency services. With the NHS on the brink of another underfunding crisis and with struggles against the NHS White Paper on the horizon, managers are watching the outcome of this UKCC hearing with anticipation.

If the nurses are sacked then

management will use this to prevent NHS workers taking action against cuts. If they are not sacked management may put pressure on the government to make strike action illegal in the NHS.

Every health worker must take up the case of the Glenfrith nurses. Resolutions, committing everyone to strike action as soon as they are sacked should be passed and made public by every health union branch in the country. As one Leicester nurse commented "Lets see what Aggett says when every nurse and ancillary worker walks out in support of those he is victimising. They can't sack us all". ■

MESSAGES OF SUPPORT TO
NUPE Leicester Hospitals
Branch
Leicester Royal Infirmary,
Leicester

Hospital water scandal: letter p15



SPOTLIGHT ON THE ECONOMY

From amber to red

ONE OF the leading economists within the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) noted glumly last month that "The economic warning lights are flashing amber".

This was confirmed by the *Sunday Correspondent's* columnist who noted that "the contrast is very stark between Britain's rather dim economic prospects and the glowing outlook for the other developed economies". (24.9.89)

The latest CBI survey of nearly 1500 manufacturing companies, responsible for half of UK manufacturing employment, revealed the most pessimistic outlook among Britain's industrialists since January 1983. The CBI itself expects no further manufacturing growth over the next four months.

The adjusted figures for industrial output in the UK during July show that it was down on the previous month.

Housing starts are down from 22,300 a month in January 1988 to 16,000 in July this year. The textile industry has been in recession all year and this was followed by metal manufacturing in the spring. Intermediate goods production has similarly caught a cold while consumer goods output has been stagnant for a year now. Only investment goods (machinery and plant), after a shaky start to the year, remains buoyant.

It is this situation that is leading the heads of industry to speak out publicly about the continuing high level of interest rates. They are universally seen as a large part of the problem, more so than the problem of excess demand in the economy that these interest rates were designed to dampen down in order to put the lid on inflation.

Quite simply the bosses fear that unless there is corrective action by the government over interest rates this autumn and winter then the warning lights may well switch to

red. The "hard landing" for the British economy, which many feared when the deflationary policies were announced last year, may finally arrive for the bosses.

The problem they face is not desperate at the moment. Profits are high, productivity improvements are steady if not dramatic. Unlike on the eve of the 1979 recession most companies today are not suffering intolerable levels of interest rate payments on the money borrowed for investment. Outside of the small business sector and retail only one or two construction companies which over-extended themselves in the property boom have been bankrupted to date.

Moreover the high levels of investment this year and last year are still driving the economy forward, particularly as companies seek to put themselves in a competitive position to take advantage of the opening of the EC after 1992.

Yet against this the government has little room for manoeuvre. The trade deficit is as bad as ever, putting downward pressure on the pound. This gives an added stridency to Thatcher's demands on the Japanese to open their markets and provide an escape hatch for British exports, in the hope of narrowing the trade gap and hence the pressure on the pound. But this pressure is reinforced by the strong performance of the other imperialist nations.

So the combined result is that interest rates have to remain high to stop sterling falling further. If it does it would only tend to add to inflationary pressure at a time when the underlying trend on prices (excluding the mortgage rate increases) is still high.

With very little change likely over the next three to six months British capitalists are not looking forward to the opening months of the new decade with any great joy. ■

The cost of global recovery

THE ANNUAL meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in September provide a reminder that the current seven year long recovery of the imperialist economies has been in part bought at huge cost to the semi-colonial nations in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Apart from the catastrophic collapse of raw material prices after 1982 (and oil after 1986) the other key component of the present state of the economies of the semi-colonial nations remains the crippling burden of debt.

Ever since 1982 the world's commercial banks, the World Bank and IMF, cut back savagely on further loans to these countries, loans which were already sucking the life blood out of many of these economies, leaving them with nothing like enough resources to even contemplate rounded development.

For the last seven years new loans have dried up while the interest and capital payments to the banks have continued. The World Bank brought into its coffers some \$1.5 billion more than it lent out last year.

In addition, last month the IMF and WB announced that in 1988 the 'Third World' collectively turned over \$50.1 billion to the club of imperialist nations to help finance their recoveries—a record! Moreover, this did little to reduce the indebtedness of the impoverished nations of the world, only serving to

reduce the total debt owed by these countries by a meagre \$5.2 billion to a total of \$993.2 billion.

The working class and poor peasants of these countries can expect no change from the IMF and World Bank. The present imperialist programme (Brady Plan) of debt relief is already considered more than generous. In reality the leaders of finance capital have no intention of eliminating debt since it is a constant source of surplus value that can be used to good effect in generating investment and profit elsewhere.

Instead they will demand the imposition of more and more austerity programmes and "adjustment packages" by the servile semi-colonial bosses' governments. This way they hope that debt can become manageable, steering a line between provoking an uncontrollable social crisis and forcing a complete collapse of the national economies.

The exploited and oppressed have paid their debt to imperialism many times over through interest payments and the robbing of the natural resources of these countries. Halfway house "solutions" such as a "moratorium" on payments are only a promise to pay in the future.

The cancelling of all debt payments remains a key demand that the working class and oppressed middle classes in the imperialised world need to organise around and force it upon their pro-imperialist governments. ■

EVERY MAJOR dispute over pay during the summer was settled by arbitration. The deals struck were arrived at through negotiations sponsored by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS). This body secured pay deals well below the unions' full claims in the BBC, local government, on British Rail and the London Underground. It is all set to perform a similar service in the ambulance drivers' dispute and in potential struggles over pay this autumn.

ACAS is one of the few remaining "tripartite" institutions left in Thatcher's Britain. Most of the bodies that brought together representatives of the unions and the bosses—together with either the government or "independent experts"—were scrapped or stripped of their powers by the Tories.

The Tories spoke plainly about their desire for victories over the working class. The norms of consultation were shelved to the profound dismay of the trade union and Labour leaders. Confrontation became the new norm as Thatcher took on and then defeated key sections of workers one after the other.

Yet ACAS itself survived. Certainly it went through a period of being cold shouldered by the bosses. But its machinery of arbitration was maintained. Then, during the summer pay revolt, the Tories used it to get them out of trouble. It remains a useful tool for the bosses. It enables them to avoid strikes altogether or derail them if they do take place.

By ensuring that negotiations result in affordable compromises for the bosses, ACAS is able to keep the wheels of industry turning. By having union representatives on ACAS the chance of selling the compromise to the workers is considerably increased.

Flexible

All these functions of ACAS are reason enough for the bosses to take a flexible attitude towards it. When they can afford a compromise they will resort to it. Where they cannot—and this was the case in the great battles of the first seven years of the 1980s—they ignore it and turn to the police picket-busters, the judges, anti-union laws and the scabs inside the working class.

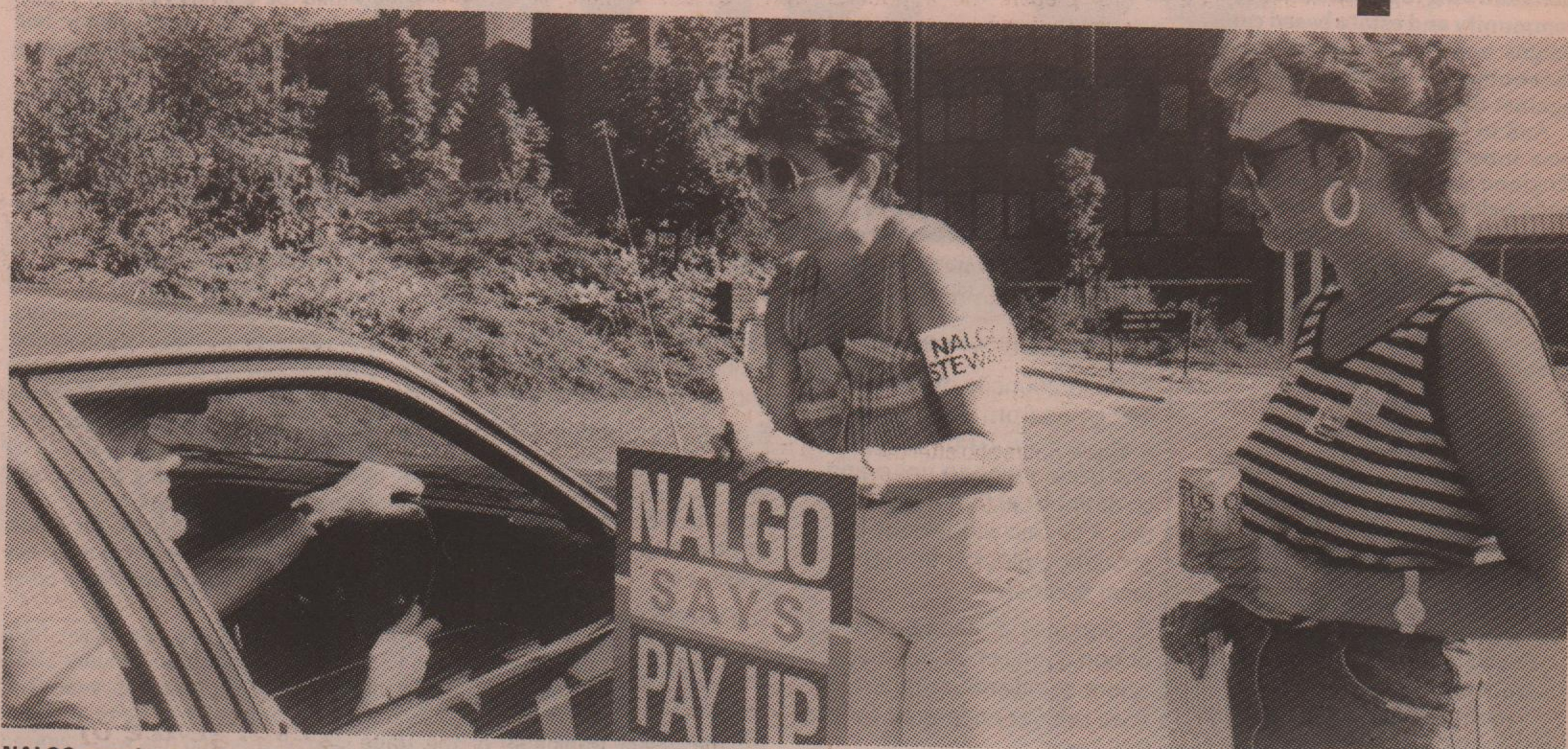
To the union and Labour leaders on the other hand, arbitration represents the favoured method of industrial relations. And ACAS is far and away their favourite court of appeal whenever strikes are threatened or underway. Of the thousand or more disputes a year that ACAS intervenes in, the vast majority are referred to it (70% to 80% on average) by either the unions alone or jointly by the unions and bosses.

This attachment to ACAS is a function of the bureaucracy's position as mediator between workers and bosses. It sees in ACAS a supposedly neutral referee, a kindred spirit, a fellow seeker after harmony and compromise. For the bureaucrats it is a means of wresting control of disputes from rank and file strikers, a means of elevating themselves to sole representatives and a means of selling deals to their members on the grounds that ACAS has ensured fair play.

Indeed ACAS itself was seen by the bureaucrats as a great step forward. It was established by the Wilson/Callaghan government as an "independent" body with a statutory footing through the Employment Protection Act in 1975. Prior to this, arbitration—popular with governments and bureaucrats since the 1896 Con-

G R McColl explains the role played by "arbitration" in the sell-outs of recent disputes

The ACAS Trap



NALGO members picketing in July—before their negotiated settlement

John Harris/IFL

ciliation Act—had been overseen by government ministries. But this had become identified with policing of Tory and Labour incomes policies and discredited accordingly. By giving ACAS independent status Labour created for the bureaucrats an "ideal negotiating" forum.

While the TUC has passed resolutions congratulating the work of ACAS every militant worker needs to understand that ACAS is in no way independent or neutral and is certainly no friend of the working class. While ACAS operates out of a dozen regional offices in major cities, the organisation rests under the nominal control of a nine member council and a chairperson appointed by the Secretary of State for Employment, currently none other than Norman Fowler.

They are chosen on the basis of recommendations from the TUC and the bosses' umbrella organisation, the CBI. Each is entitled to three nominees on the council, who are joined by "distinguished" academics in the fields of industrial

served Michael Edwardes at British Leyland. As chief personnel officer he presided over the butchering of more than 20,000 jobs and a general attack on union organisation and working conditions.

Even when ACAS was chaired by a Labour man—Jim Mortimer—from its foundation to 1981, its record was appalling. Though supposedly responsible for promoting the recognition of trade unions where disputes had arisen with employers, ACAS had no powers to impose its decisions on the bosses. At best it offered only compulsory arbitration on a limited set of terms and conditions of employment.

In a total of 247 disputes over union recognition heard by ACAS between 1975 and 1980, it ruled in the unions' favour 158 times, but only in 58 cases could ACAS claim that the employer had complied with the ruling. Instead many bosses simply turned to the courts, the most notorious example being Grunwick in 1977, in order to obtain a swift reversal of an ACAS ruling.

sues.

ACAS became directly involved in three of last year's most significant and hard-fought conflicts. Two pitted seafarers in the NUS against ruthless cost-cutting bosses determined to slash their workforces and tear up existing contracts. The first dispute was against the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company, the second against P&O at Dover. In both struggles the NUS leadership grovelled before the courts and obeyed injunctions banning an escalation of industrial action.

Under the auspices of ACAS a new contract was agreed between the Isle of Man firm and NUS officials, resulting in redundancies, wage cuts and greater management control over hiring and firing. The NUS could claim that it was still recognised. The outcome at Dover proved even worse with hundreds of strikers sacked and the NUS out of the gate thanks to Sam McCluskie's betrayal.

In the words of the ACAS council report it "sought to conciliate

gratulated themselves on persuading the ACAS panel to see the light, tube drivers wound up with a paltry £7 a week extra for the stress of one person train operation. London Underground management may not have been happy with the package but they must have appreciated that the ACAS deal had saved them from conceding far more.

Finally, ACAS' function of providing a conciliation service in disputes between individual workers and employers can foster the illusion in the ability of an isolated worker to take on the system and win on his or her own. ACAS is charged with hearing claims brought under the Equal Pay Act and included the celebrated victory of Cammel-Laird chef, Julie Hayward, a victim of blatant sex-discrimination.

Resorting to ACAS, however, lets trade union officials off the hook, allowing them to spend months and eventually years (with court appeals) on complex wranglings instead of mobilising workers to take collective action on issues such as discipline and equal pay which covers millions of their brothers and sisters.

For workers coming into struggle, the experience of fifteen years of ACAS bears important lessons. First and foremost, when bureaucrats talk of going to arbitration, alarm bells should ring. Such a move means the loss of any control over the conduct of a dispute. Workers must rely on the strength of their own collective organisation, not on the mercy or sense of fair play of panels who are not accountable even to the trade union bureaucracy much less to those at the sharp end of the struggle.

Above all, the years of sell-outs and rotten compromises highlight the need for strike committees, elected by, and accountable to, mass meetings to oversee the running of all key aspects of a battle including negotiations with the bosses.

For all its claim to stand above the class struggle, ACAS could never concede workers' real needs, but only what Britain's bosses as a whole deem affordable to maintain their profit margins and relative class peace. The only true ally workers in struggle can and must depend on is their class as a whole. ■

Every militant worker needs to understand that ACAS is in no way independent or neutral. It is certainly no friend of the working class

relations or labour law.

The very fact of government control over appointments should be enough to explode the myth that ACAS is independent. Governments appoint the people they want. The track record of appointed chairs underlines this point. Douglas Smith, a career civil servant, is the current chair. His claim to fame is that he was Barbara Castle's private secretary in the late 1960s. She was the Labour Employment Minister then and is chiefly remembered for trying to introduce severe restrictions on the trade unions through "In Place of Strife". Her failure did not deter Smith, who went on to try and help Heath carry through his anti-union Industrial Relations Act. In both cases this arbitrator was a determined enemy of effective trade union organisation.

Smith had taken over from Pat (now Sir Patrick) Lowry at the end of 1987 on Lowry's departure to head the Institute of Personnel Management. Prior to his six years at the top of ACAS, Lowry had

In his farewell report to the Thatcher government, Mortimer noted that the ACAS "... recognition procedure was no longer operable to a satisfactory degree". The Tories had a simple answer to Mortimer's complaint: they abolished this aspect of ACAS' role completely with the 1980 Employment Act. During Thatcher's offensive on the working class ACAS' profile waned. In the great miners' strike of 1984-85 it played only an occasional bit part. Nevertheless, it continued to serve the bosses through its interventions into a host of other disputes.

In its annual reports for both 1987 and 1988 the ACAS board boasted that "no industrial action took place in over four-fifths of the cases we completed". In each year more than 1,000 disputed cases had gone to its conciliation service. Disagreements over wages and conditions proved the predominant source of disputes, suggesting the extreme reluctance of union leaders to rally their members' discontent even on bread and butter is-

throughout" and "explored all the possible options involving staff reductions, radical changes in working practices", etc. With this encouragement from ACAS the P&O management devised an "alternative" package of attacks which were accepted by a demoralised minority of sacked workers who agreed to scab.

ACAS was also influential in the official conclusion to the long running battle by ACTT members against the management of TV-AM. ACAS' principal contribution to the end of the strike was a scheme for determining levels of severance pay for sacked ACTT technicians after the production company had achieved its aim and smashed the union in the studio.

Most recently London Underground drivers and guards were sold out through a deal stitched up by a three man ACAS panel which included the TSB bank's personnel chief and the retired SOGAT bureaucrat Bill Keys.

While NUR and ASLEF officials breathed a sigh of relief and con-

Mark Abram reviews:
The Unbroken Thread
by Ted Grant
Fortress £6.95

Ted's red thread?

IN THE introduction to this book we are told that:

"It is due to the works of Ted Grant, more than anyone else in the post-war period, that Marxist theory has been defended at the same time as being significantly deepened and extended. . . . It is to one person alone that the credit must go for the maintenance and development of Marxist theory" since Trotsky's death.

These are bold claims to make about any individual and can only be tested by looking at how Grant's "development of Marxist theory" stood up to the reality of post-war events.

Role

Ted Grant is the political leader of the Militant Tendency. He was drawn towards Trotsky's ideas through reading the US *Militant* during the late 1920s in his native South Africa. He played a central role in the British Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) created in 1944 through a fusion of the Workers International League and the Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL).

In the period after the war, as the collection testifies, the RCP leadership developed political positions on Eastern Europe and the post-war imperialist stabilisation that were at odds with the majority of the leadership of the Fourth International (FI) in Paris led by Michel Pablo.

The RCP was dissolved in June 1949 and Grant joined Healy's group inside the Labour Party. But Grant, like Tony Cliff, was victim to Healy's purge of the ranks and was expelled in August 1950. This was upheld at the Third Congress of the FI on a motion moved by Ernest Mandel.

The book draws a veil over Grant's political affiliations between 1950 and the appearance of *Militant* in 1964. The implication is that he had broken with the "FI" by then. It fails to acknowledge that from the late 1950s to the mid 1960s he was actually head of the official British section of the Pablo-led International Secretariat of the FI. This is of some significance since it is the political method of this strand of centrism that occurs time and again in Grant's writings and in the politics of the *Militant*.

Grant was undoubtedly one of the more perceptive and original of British Trotskyism's early leaders.

His articles on the post-war reconstruction of the European capitalist economy stand the test of time as measured against the false and catastrophic perspectives of the FI leadership. Moreover, analysing the momentous events in Eastern Europe between 1945 and 1949 Grant was quicker than the FI leadership to recognise the social overturns that were taking place there. When Mandel and Pablo finally acknowledged that capitalism had been overthrown and began to find "unconscious Trotskyists" or centrists in the Stalinists Tito and Mao, Grant kept his bearings and defended the need for political revolution.

Wrong

But the errors that do exist in Grant's writings are not incidental or secondary. There is enough evidence in this book to show that key aspects of *Militant's* wrong politics are rooted in Grant's early work. For example, while it is true that Grant recognised the post-war economic recovery, he continued to underestimate or minimise the scope of this recovery during the 1950s and 1960s. In 1946 he argued that the recovery "cannot lead to a blossoming of the economy of capitalism. A new recovery can

only prepare the way for an ever greater slump. . . . there can be no real growth of the productive forces as in the past". (pp381-383).

More damaging is the view expressed in 1952 that the recovery "was drawing to a close" (p392), or that argued in 1960 that "The world economy is beginning to move towards slump". (p393) Wrapped up with a stout defence of the basic positions of Marxist economics against the revisionists in the Labourite camp is a constant Marxist millenarianism that has become a hallmark of *Militant*.

A stopped clock is right once every twelve hours and after the mid-1970s Grant's economic perspectives seem to have a tinge of reality about them. But the fact is that they remain an article of faith rather than a guide to the immediate period ahead. This was underlined once more when Grant wrote in the months after the October 1987 stock market crash that the world capitalist economy was going to slump within months.

Schema

The fact that Grant's prognoses are more akin to a comforting and opportunist schema than a perspective is obvious from his writings on Britain. In 1977 he wrote what he called "long term perspectives over the coming period of ten to fifteen years". (p501) Apart from the fact that it is an ambitious Marxist indeed who advances perspectives for such a time-scale, we find that most of it is refuted. Thus:

"For a whole historical period of years, stretching probably to even a

decade or more, British capitalism will stagger from crisis to crisis. The ruling class will swing desperately from one government to another." (p500)

We will witness "the Italianisation of British politics" during which the working class will triumph or "a military police dictatorship will destroy the labour movement and kill millions of advanced workers." (p501)

Tempo

While he charted the rise of the Tories and predicted their election victory he argued that "it would be a Pyrrhic one."

Referring to these predictions twelve years later the editor shrugs off the errors as one of a mis-estimation of tempo. He casually notes that the 1980s "have not led, as was originally expected, to the early collapse of their government". (p437) "Unpredictable factors" including the "longevity of the world boom..and the abject weakness of the trade union leaders" are to account for the "temporary postponement" of the perspectives. Still, we are comforted: "Britain is entering the stormiest period of her history..in the coming years".

This is quackery not science, it is a schema not perspectives.

The truth is that *Militant* have replaced perspectives with a triumphalist optimism about the forward march of labour. The decline in trade union and Labour Party membership, the ideological incoherence of the left's challenge to the right in the Labour Party and unions leading to

"The truth is that Militant have replaced perspectives with a triumphalist optimism about the forward march of labour. The decline in trade union and Labour Party membership, the incoherence of the left's challenge to the right in the Labour Party and unions leading to the resurgence of the right again, rather than the triumph of the 'Marxist wing'. Grant seems ever able to dismiss these setbacks as 'temporary postponements'."

the resurgence of the right again, rather than the triumph of the "Marxist wing". Grant seems ever able to dismiss these setbacks as "temporary postponements".

Trotsky characterised this approach to politics as one of seeking to surmount "real obstacles by means of bombastic phrases, the tendency to evince lofty optimism on all questions" (CLO 1923-25 p255-56). At root is a wilful underestimation of the strength of the ruling class as well as the hold of reformism on the working class even when it has led it to defeat or failed to defend it from attack. *Militant's* right centrism involves the use of Marxist phrases to justify a reformist practice. In the realm of theory and tactics in the class struggle they adapt to reformism in order to retain their positions in the labour and trade union movement in the belief that the fruits of working class radicalisation and the bankruptcy of reformism will fall into their lap.

Centrist

Ted Grant's major writings are not simply the insights of one man; he is the political tool-maker for the largest centrist organisation in Britain. All of the *Militant's* familiar errors are to be found in this book. For that reason alone it should be read by those interested in building a revolutionary alternative to *Militant's* centrism.

Contrary to the claim embedded in the title of the book there is no unbroken thread. Revolutionary continuity with the ideas and programme of Trotsky was broken in the period when Grant helped to dissolve the RCP.

Today he is as much an epigone of Trotsky as Tony Cliff or Gerry Healy and this book helps us understand why. ■

Out of his skin

Arthur Merton reviews a new study of racism in football focused on the "John Barnes phenomenon".

THE RACIST quip "play the white man" could easily be the motto of football. Racism infects every aspect of the game—the clubs, the players and the crowds. Dave Hill's book uses the story of John Barnes' first season with Liverpool to uncover the full extent of this racism. The book—cheaper than the price of a seat at a first division match—is well worth a read.

Crowd

John Barnes, the gifted winger Liverpool bought from Watford two years ago, refused to co-operate in any way with the author. The reason for this lies in the fact that Barnes has never chosen to make racism an issue.

Hill's revelations show why Barnes is wrong. His skills can destroy opponents' defences but not the prejudices that thrive in and around the game.

The crowds are the most vocal racists. Hill explores two aspects of their behaviour. On the one hand there is the straightforward bigotry fanned by fascists like the National Front. On Merseyside—with a 6% black population—that bigotry is ripe in the white preserve of football.

Hill does not reduce this behaviour to the antics of a "lunatic fringe". Rather he locates its real source. He shows the way football loyalties have been deliberately used to foster localism, nationalism and racism so that these passions can be used by the ruling class to divide the working class itself or to inflame it against other "foreign" workers.

On the other hand, in looking at Barnes' first season at Liverpool, Hill shows how racism was apparently undermined, at least amongst a majority of Liverpool fans. His skill

conquered their prejudices. John Barnes' method had triumphed. Or had it?

Hill quotes an incident at a game against Charlton, after Garth Crooks had menaced the Liverpool defence: "The next time he got the ball, a cry went up from an isolated voice: 'Get that black bastard!' Seconds passed. Then someone replied: 'Which one? Theirs or ours?' Straight to the heart of a hurtful truth in the space of five words." (p 164)

Hill's point is that the virulent side of racism—temporarily obscured from view at Anfield because Barnes is playing well—is capable of re-emerging at any point.

The racism of the football establishment is less crude than that of the terraces, but every bit as pernicious. It ranges from the casual racism of the white players through to the obstacles placed in the way of black players by the clubs. Jokes and insults on the field and in the dressing room are constantly directed at black players. And clubs insist that the problem with black players is their lack of "British Bulldog" spirit and determination.

Target

With the increased numbers of black players "making the grade" as the clubs put it, the target for this brand of racism has shifted. The football authorities have now started claiming that it is Asians who suffer from this lack of spirit, referred to by at least one club boss as the "lazy native" attitude. It is an attitude that is now used to excuse the fact that there are no Asian players on the book of any Barclays Football League Club.

So how is racism to be combatted in football? In the end Hill does not try to provide an answer. If you are



John Barnes

a communist or an anti-racist football fan, however, you cannot bury your head in the sand for a Saturday afternoon.

The key lies, first, in taking the fight against racism up in the labour movement. The bulk of fans are working class. If we take on their racism in other spheres of their lives, if we forge working class unity against racism at work, we will help erode it at the game.

But it must be tackled in the grounds as well, and the best prospect for this lies in getting the networks of fans who have developed around club fanzines to launch campaigns around the issue. Propa-

ganda and leaflets at the ground are vital. Taking on and physically removing the fascist cliques at the ground is also necessary. Organised anti-racist chanting to drown out the "monkey chants" can and has been done. At Leyton Orient, Leeds and Everton fanzines have initiated such campaigns. Dave Hill's book will help this campaign. Alas John Barnes' deferential attitude will not. ■

Out of His Skin:
by Dave Hill
Faber and Faber £4.99

EVERY SHADE of the political spectrum is frantically trying to colour itself green. Tories who have campaigned for years to stop new houses and roads disturbing the peace of their country mansions have discovered that they were greens all along. Labour has discovered that its "municipal socialism", which allowed millions of workers to live and work in barely adequate conditions, was in fact a major contribution to the environmental cause. The assortment of cranks and mystics in and around the Green Party lay claim to centre stage in electoral politics. They claim to have discovered something which really "breaks the mould" of party politics.

In fact only the working class has the ability to put an end to the environmental crisis which confronts humanity. That crisis is rooted in the existence of capitalism—the system which subordinates human need to profit.

As long as humanity has laboured to provide itself with the means to live it has disturbed, altered and in some ways destroyed its natural environment. Every new discovery has had unforeseen consequences as well as those which were intended. From the discovery of fire to the discovery of nuclear fission developments in technique have improved humanity's ability to meet its needs. At the same time they have enhanced its ability to damage itself and its environment.

All forms of class society have strangled the potential of scientific and technological advances to benefit humanity as a whole. Society, organised to generate surplus wealth for a few, has been unable to prevent the destruction of natural resources in the pursuit of that wealth.

The imperialist epoch has qualitatively intensified this feature of class society. It has unleashed new productive forces on a vast scale. With the creation of a world economy and global division of labour it has produced environmental problems on an international scale.

During the post-war economic boom new techniques of production were introduced and new demands made on agriculture and raw materials. As a result humanity now faces environmental danger on three fronts.

- The environment's ability to regenerate itself is threatened, no longer just locally but regionally and even globally.
- The environment is being destroyed and poisoned by the uncontrolled use of various materials and production processes.
- Human society suffers from all sorts of social ills due to the effects of the first two dangers.

Species

The threat to the regenerative capacity of the environment is nothing new. Long before the twentieth century human progress led to the destruction of entire species through intensive hunting or the destruction of vital aspects of their environment. In every epoch there are examples of the destruction of forest to make way for agriculture resulting in the destruction of regional eco-systems. All forms of capitalist agriculture have intensively farmed the soil. Increasing its fertility in the pursuit of higher short-term yields has robbed the land of its lasting fertility. The intensification of farming in the American mid-west, first by impoverished share-croppers and later by large scale agricultural capital, created the infamous "dust bowl". Capitalism achieves within decades the destructive results which took ancient societies centuries.

Imperialism, however created the potential to destroy the whole global environment.

There is now firm evidence that the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil and natural gas) and the destruction

of forests have led to an increase in the proportion of carbon dioxide in the air. Scientists claim it is rising by 0.4% each year, giving rise to the so-called "greenhouse effect". Carbon dioxide acts like the glass in a greenhouse by trapping heat from the sun. The more carbon dioxide in the air, the greater the increase in the earth's average temperature.

The current rate of increase could be enough to raise average global temperatures by up to 4.5°C over the next hundred years. One side effect would be the partial melting of the polar ice cap, raising the sea level. Estimates vary, but scientists generally agree that a rise of one to three feet is the likely prospect in the course of the next century. Around the globe millions would starve and face homelessness in the wake of widespread flooding.

Threat

The temperature increase is expected to be higher in the temperate zones. Here temperatures could soar by as much 10°C. In North America this would drive the corn-growing belt further north where the soil is too acidic to sustain efficient production of the crop.

Another threat to the global ecological balance comes with the thinning of the ozone layer. This is the portion of the upper atmosphere which shields the earth's surface from ultra-violet radiation coming from the sun. Again there is firm evidence showing that this protective layer is being destroyed. Between 1977 and 1984, ozone levels fell by 40% over Antarctica. A fall of 2.5% over the whole earth's surface was recorded by the Nimbus 7 satellite between 1978 and 1985.

Scientists have pointed the finger of blame for this at chloro-fluorocarbons (CFCs). These gases have been widely used as propellants in aerosol sprays and coolants in refrigerators. It has been shown that CFCs when released into the atmosphere, do destroy ozone.

Yet another threat lies in imperialism's potential to unleash a nuclear holocaust and, in its wake, a "nuclear winter" which could reduce those humans who survived to the level of primitive civilisation.

The second major threat to the environment comes from the various forms of pollution. In addition to any long term effect on the global ecosystem these cause immediate and disastrous damage to human beings and their surroundings. The most notorious of these is radioactive emissions from nuclear power stations and waste reprocessing plants. The spectacular disasters at Three Mile Island (USA) and Chernobyl (USSR) are just the tip of the iceberg. Not only have power and waste disposal workers in the nuclear industry been repeatedly exposed to radiation, but "clusters" of cancer cases around these sites suggest long term damage to the surrounding communities.

Pollute

But it is not only nuclear power which can fatally pollute. The accident at Bhopal chemical works caused 3,300 deaths and 200,00 injuries. In 1952, the four day London smog, caused by pollution from fossil fuel burning, claimed 3,700 lives.

In addition to these disasters there are the countless cases of water and food contamination which result from unsafe or inadequately controlled production processes.

Finally, there are the immeasurable social consequences of environmental damage. The destruction of forests in Bangladesh has led to the silting up of rivers and greatly worsened the effects of periodic floods, killing thousands and making millions homeless. This is not a

Every day seems to bring new evidence of the growing threat to the environment. Contamination, global warming, water pollution etc, have become headline news. Colin Lloyd outlines a workers' answer to the environmental crisis.



ONLY WORKERS ACTION CAN

Defend the environment

"natural" but a social disaster. Deforestation occurred because of the intense land hunger of the Bangladeshi peasantry. In Africa capitalism's inability to develop environmentally safe forms of agriculture has led to droughts and famines and the obscene sight of millions starving to death amid a world of surplus food mountains.

These are just some of the environmental depredations which have given rise to the so called "green agenda". In fact there is no separate "environmental question" which stands above and outside class politics. The environmental crisis is above all else a class question.

The capitalist class which owns the means of production is incapable of defending the environment and protecting humanity from the effects of environmental damage. This is because of capitalism's commitment to production for the sake of profit. Individual capitalists decide what to produce and how to produce it, not with the good of humanity in mind, but the good of their own balance sheets. The result of this is what Marx aptly described as "the anarchy of production". The social mechanism under capitalism which decides the relationship between production and human need is the much vaunted "market". In the market need is measured not in terms of hunger, sickness, and pollution but in terms of money. Individ-

ual capitalists have no reason whatever to avoid the pollution of the environment if this impedes the production of profit.

Of course, the state exists in capitalist society in order to regulate the dealings of individual capitalists and make sure that the system as a whole can reproduce itself, even at the expense of individual capitalists.

Thus throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the state has acted to limit the length of the working day and impose minimum health and safety standards on employers in order to protect the source of its profits—human labour power—from total exhaustion. At the same time it was able to legislate for various environmental reforms—sewage systems, public health laws for food and housing. Like all reforms these were carried out partially under the pressure of the working class but also in line with the interests of the capitalist class as a whole.

The capitalist politicians who have taken up the green cause in the past twelve months claim that all the questions on the "green agenda" can be settled in the same way. It may involve a struggle with individual bosses but it is entirely possible, they believe, for the environmental crisis to be resolved on the terrain of capitalism. They point to the evidence of individual capitalists beginning to compete with each other for

the "green market" as consumer goods producers spend millions to promote their petrol, hairsprays, and foodstuffs, as "eco-friendly".

But a capitalist solution to the environmental crisis is not possible. In the first place, there are large multinationals whose very existence relies on the continuation of dangerous processes and unchecked pollution: among them, the petro-chemical giants, major electricity generators and the food and drink conglomerates. These firms have a major and often decisive say in the running of the capitalist state itself.

Link

The salmonella-in-eggs crisis in 1988 gives a perfect illustration of this. Once the proven link between the salmonella outbreak and unhygienic egg production led to a massive fall in egg sales and producers' profits it was Edwina Currie, the Tory minister who started the scare, who lost her job. The power of the farming lobby defeated the attempts of the Health Ministry and civil servants to regulate egg production.

The international nature of the crisis also makes a capitalist solution impossible. The same capitalist state which can regulate the activities of individual capitalists at home is fiercely competitive on a world scale.

Imperialism has created a world

ent. Toxic waste, food
ws. Mike Burton and



John Harris / Report

economy, divided up and strangled by national capitalist states. Throughout the imperialist epoch, but especially in periods of economic crisis and recession these competing national capitalist states have progressed from economic rivalry to open warfare.

Even where agreements exist between imperialist countries they are flouted. Britain's power stations produce acid rain that falls in Germany and Switzerland. The cost of setting this right has to be weighed against making electricity generation as profitable as possible for British capitalists. There are no prizes for guessing which is their priority.

Between the imperialist countries and the semi-colonial world few such agreements exist. Imperialism has exploited the natural resources of the third world regardless of the environmental cost. It dumps not only massive amounts of toxic waste in the semi-colonies, but palms off their populations with inadequate or dangerous medicines and foodstuffs rejected under the environmental laws of Europe and North America. Not only is imperialism unwilling to solve the environmental crisis of the third world. Its very existence relies on the continued exploitation of the semi-colonies, as rapaciously and profitably as possible.

Finally capitalism is incapable, either politically or economically, of deploying the vast resources to address problems like the greenhouse effect and the hole in the ozone layer. This would need massive amounts of government cash, money which the capitalists regards as so much wasted profit. It would need planning and international co-operation on a scale impossible for capitalism.

The Green Party alternative is no less utopian than the capitalist answer to the environmental crisis. The Greens start out from the premise that "productivist" and "industrial" societies inevitably produce forces of destruction they cannot control. In fact they mistake the social causes of environmental damage for purely technical ones. They

cannot envisage industry without grime and pollution, developed agriculture without soil erosion and famine. In short they cannot envisage society without capitalism.

As a consequence, however radically they attack capitalism, their programme is one for reforming the existing social system. Because productive and technological progress go hand in hand with environmental destruction they aim to turn back the clock of productivity and technology. The zero growth economy, depopulation, small scale production are the environmentalists' goals.

These goals represent the voluntary retreat of humanity from its conquests over nature. But a retreat to where? There never was, at any stage in history, a society without poverty, starvation, war and environmental degradation. The "zero growth" economy could only exist if humanity were to give up its fundamental impulse to alter the world to its own will and rationality. Every technological advance springs from the desire to increase the productivity of labour. Every advance in productivity brings economic growth.

Utopia

The Greens' utopia is a very clear ideological reflection of the class position of the petit bourgeoisie under modern capitalism. Small scale commodity production without capital accumulation, the unchanging rural life of the small community: this was the lot of the peasants and artisans before capitalism, lost as whole sections were proletarianised by the development of industry. Idyllic as it seems, it was not for nothing that Marx called this "rural idiocy". Disease, ignorance and grinding poverty were its natural by-products. The low level of productivity, of division of labour, of mechanisation etc, kept humanity in thrall to natural forces it could not control.

The working class solution to the environmental crisis is to go forward, not backward. It is to apply all the scientific and technological conquests of humankind to the task of eradicating disease, ignorance and poverty altogether. It is to raise individual human beings' ability to rationally alter their environment to the level of society, to make it a social task. In the process human society will be able to remove many of the causes of ecological damage, mitigate others and discover the means to set previous damage right.

Planning

There is one essential precondition for this: the eradication of the profit motive and its replacement by planning. Only the working class has the material interest and the social strength to achieve this by smashing the capitalists' state and replacing it with workers power.

The trade union and Labour leaders have pointed out that the workers' movement was the first to fight for clean air, proper sewage systems, health and safety at work. But the struggle to eradicate the causes of environmental damage is not a simple extension of the workers' health and safety struggle. That struggle, whether pursued in national and local government or in the workplace, has remained a struggle within the limits of capitalism. Like every aspect of the day to day struggle the health and safety struggle has to be transformed into a fight against capitalism itself. The working class programme for the defence of the environment ranges far beyond the individual factory, town or country. It is an international programme. Its core is workers' control, state ownership and democratic planning.

To prevent the further destruction of the tropical rainforests, with the resulting threat not just to wildlife

but to the world's climate, we demand land to those who till it. The land hunger of the poor peasantry from Brazil to Bangladesh is the immediate social cause of the slashing and burning of a key natural resource.

Against dangerous processes and practices in industry and agriculture we fight for factory committees and the trade unions to impose a workers' veto. Safer technology and conditions should be introduced under workers' inspection and at the bosses' expense with no loss of pay to workers during shutdowns etc.

Impose

Where danger extends beyond the plant we fight for direct action and mobilisation by the mass of workers, where possible in conjunction with the production workers themselves. We demand governments impose safer methods and materials. Wherever the bosses or their state deny danger or cite economic grounds for refusing to act against dangerous plants we demand a workers' inquiry, with the companies books, as well as its technology, open to inspection by workers and their appointed experts.

We reject the demand for the immediate closure of nuclear power stations. If every unsafe process were to be shut down unconditionally half of industry would have to close. That does not mean we ignore the dangers of nuclear power and reprocessing plants, nor the dangers of chemical plants like those at Seveso (Italy) or Bhopal which killed thousands.

We demand workers' inspection of such plants. Where a workers' inquiry or labour movement commission demands immediate closure of such plants, or where there is immediate and acute danger, we rely on the mobilisation of the working class to enforce closure. In such cases we demand the defence of the workforce's living standards by the state.

Damage

Many dangers cannot be counteracted at the level of plant modification or closure. Atmospheric and marine pollution, destruction of entire ecosystems such as deforestation or by mono-culture, or the complete exhaustion of natural resources are often international phenomena even if their effects are more noticeable in some countries than others.

As at the national level so at the international level we are in favour of establishing legal safeguards for the environment—but we fight for them by the methods of class struggle of the proletariat and we place no trust in the imperialists' international agencies to police such standards even when established. Ultimately, only a world wide, democratically organised, planned economy can reconcile human production with nature.

The environmental question for the working class is not only a preventative struggle. Much damage has already been done and must be repaired. We demand that within programmes of public works restoration of the environment be given a high priority. Whether it be the provision of adequate sanitation and, therefore, reliable drinking water in shanty towns, integrated regional rehabilitation programmes in areas of desertification or the construction of river and sea defences in the monsoon regions, capitalism should, here and now, pay the price for these necessary repairs.

By fighting for this programme through direct action workers can begin to effectively defend the environment now, in a way that lays the basis for turning that struggle in to one against capitalism and for international planning. ■

IN DEFENCE OF MARXISM



Engels and ecology

THE GREENS reject both capitalism and socialism, they claim, because both are committed to industrialisation and production for its own sake. They point to the undeniable environmental damage in the Stalinist states. They claim that Marx and Engels, the founders of scientific socialism, were carried away with the scientific innovations of the nineteenth century and ignored their ill effects on the environment.

Nothing could be more mistaken. Marxism recognised from the very beginning both the destructive effects of capitalist development and the fact that technical innovations could have unforeseen consequences.

Marx for example wrote in *Capital*:

"Capitalist production . . . only develops the techniques and the degree of combination of the social process of production by simultaneously undermining the original sources of all wealth—the soil and the worker."

Engels reminded the nineteenth century capitalists:

"Let us not flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human victories over nature. For each such victory nature takes its revenge on us. Each victory, its is true, brings in the first place the results we expected, but in the second and third places it has quite different unforeseen effects which only too often cancel out the first."

Why then did Marx and Engels not reject economic progress, capitalist agriculture, industrialisation etc? Because the goal of Marxism is the realisation of humanity's full potential.

Marx and Engels recognised that the beginnings of that potential lay in the capacity of human beings to carry out purposeful labour to change its surrounding conditions.

"The animal merely uses its environment, and brings about changes in it simply by its presence; man by his changes makes it serve its ends, masters it" wrote Engels. Once humanity had discovered ways to make its labour produce more than a meagre subsistence, once surplus wealth was being created, class society itself came into being. Class struggles over the distribution of this surplus produced successively slave societies, feudalism and then capitalism.

Marxists do not lament the passing of primitive communism based on scarcity and the lowest possible productivity of human labour. We recognise the development of class society as the necessary precondition of a communism based on the abundance of material wealth. Through successive forms of class society humanity raised the productivity of human labour to the point where it has the potential to free itself from poverty and disease.

Only on the basis of such a highly developed level of knowledge and technique, Engels argued, could humanity set to rights its relationship with nature.

The Green Party Manifesto bemoans the fact that "Over the years we have set ourselves up to control, dominate and exploit the planet". Green politics, it claims, "is about building a new way of life, one based on respect for our planet and humility about our role in it".

In fact the first human being who consciously fashioned a hunting implement or shelter was "setting itself up" to "control, dominate and exploit" its natural environment. "Over the years" humanity has done nothing else. Because they reject this means the Greens can never achieve their laudable end of wanting humanity to live in harmony with nature. It is certainly not an

end Marxists reject.

After discussing a catalogue of unforeseen environmental disasters from antiquity to the nineteenth century Engels concluded:

"At every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people, like someone standing outside nature—but that we, with flesh, blood and brain belong to nature and exist in its midst, and that all our mastery consists in the fact that we have the advantage over all other creatures of being able to learn its laws and apply them correctly."

This ability to learn and apply the laws of nature is not antagonistic to but dependent on technological and scientific progress. The Greens reject the introduction of new techniques and therefore economic growth because of the "unforeseen consequences". Marxists recognise that the same progress which creates such consequences also creates the means to understand and overcome them. In fact it is the existence of unforeseen by-products and consequences of all human interaction with the environment which makes the "zero growth economy" impossible.

Few Greens would argue for a society without penicillin. Yet the introduction of this antibiotic, which revolutionised medicine and surgery, also led to the creation of infections resistant to the original drug. Consequently medicine has entered its fifth generation of anti-biotic drugs. In the zero growth economy humanity could not deploy technical and scientific labour to meet this and the thousands of other challenges which testify to the fact that humans interact with the environment in a constantly changing and developing way.

It is not technological or scientific progress which threatens humanity but the inability of class society to use them to meet human need. Marx and Engels did not "reject" capitalism, industrialisation and intensive agriculture. Because as well as destroying "the soil and the worker" they created the essential preconditions for the destruction of class society itself.

At the same time as threatening humanity with extinction and the globe with ecological catastrophe imperialism has created the means to escape both. That means is the common ownership of the means of production—the factories, farms offices and banks—and rational, democratic planning to eradicate need. Such planning on a worldwide scale could systematically anticipate and counteract the "unforeseen consequences" of innovation. It could use existing and future technologies to end the life of back-breaking, mind-numbing labour which "undermines the worker".

It could progressively abolish the distinction between city and countryside—a demand which Greens may be interested to know was written into the founding documents of Marxism 150 years ago—enabling the destruction of the soil's fertility to be ended and reversed.

And on this basis . . . we will leave the last word to that nineteenth century obsessive productivist and industrialist Engels:

"The more this happens, the more will men not only once more feel but also know their oneness with nature, and the more impossible will become the senseless, unnatural idea of an antagonism between mind and matter, man and nature, soul and body which arose in Europe after the decline of classical antiquity and which obtained its most elaborate expression in Christianity." ■

THE LONGEST WAR

THE ORANGE ARMY

LOYALIST LEAKS have revealed the depth of collusion between the British state and the Orange death squads in Northern Ireland. The security forces are there to defend the Orange state. Who better to help them carry out the dirty work than the heavily armed outfits rooted in the Orange community.

The official Orange security forces are of course the army's first choice allies. The Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) are the main props of law and order in the province. Both are heavily armed. Both are drawn almost exclusively from the loyalist community.

The UDR was originally created to replace the infamous "B Specials" (the Ulster Special Constabulary). This part time paramilitary force was formed specifically to counter the IRA. It was recruited entirely from the protestants and specialised in the sectarian harassment of catholics.

Acknowledged

By the time the British troops were sent on to the streets in Northern Ireland in 1969, even the British government acknowledged the fact that the B Specials were out of control. They had been involved in some of the worst anti-catholic pogroms. Britain decided to disband the force and replace them with the UDR under the direct control of the British army.

A change of name has obviously done nothing to change the sectarian nature of the force. The UDR has been linked literally hundreds of times with loyalist murder gangs such as the Ulster Defence Association (UDA). Sixteen members of the UDR are currently serving jail sentences for murder and 7 for manslaughter.

There are over 100 ex-UDR men in prison for passing on information about nationalists to organisations such as the UDA. This is a legally tolerated paramilitary organisation which stages military marches, has a uniform and is known to have arms caches. Its overt terror attacks are carried out by its related organisation, the Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF).

The UFF claimed the credit for the recent killing of Laughlin Maginn. They got the information on Maginn from British security files, courtesy of their friends in the security forces. It is clear that over the years many unionists have found membership of the UDR entirely compatible with membership of the UDA/UFF.

The RUC and the British army have also been linked to loyalist organisations. As recently as May this year an army corporal was convicted for passing information to yet another loyalist organisation the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). He is already back in the army as a training instructor, no doubt specialising in counter-insurgency methods!

The targets of of the loyalist death squads are not just IRA volunteers. The Shankhill butchers randomly mutilated catholics. While the UDA/UFF use the more "civilised" method of shooting

catholics, they are every bit as random in their choice of targets as the Shankhill butchers. Since 1969 500 catholics have been assassinated by the Orange paramilitaries. Of these 500 only a tiny percentage were IRA members. An indication of quite how random the murders are is that of the 37 catholics killed since the beginning of 1988 only three were in the IRA.

One person who is blithely unconcerned about the UDR's murderous doings is Margaret Thatcher. To reassure the UDR that despite the leaks she was with this group of what she calls "very brave men" all the way, she held a reception with, among others, Brigadier Charles Ritchie, head of the UDR and protector of the death squads in its ranks.

The most recent evidence that it is the Orange paramilitaries who are the real instigators of sectarian murder campaigns is the circulation of what appears to be photocopied internal UDR documents containing photographs and files of information about people suspected of being members of the IRA.

These documents first came to light when they were shown to a BBC journalist following the shooting of Maginn. They have since been sent to the *Sun* newspaper and to some of the individuals on the suspect list with the words "We got Maginn, you're next" scrawled on the bottom.

Why have the Orange paramilitaries decided now to send photocopies of the "confidential" documents, passed to them one way or another by members of the security forces, to the press and even to the constitutional nationalists of the SDLP?

Manoeuvre

The reason is not because they want to shop their sources or have had a sudden change of heart. They are engaged in a political manoeuvre to try and disrupt the Anglo-Irish Accord. The loyalists see in this deal between British imperialism and Dublin a danger to their dominance in the Six Counties.

Despite the fact that the Accord does not in any sense pave the way to a united Ireland the collaboration between Dublin and London is deeply feared by the Orange forces. The revelations and a spate of murders came precisely around the time of a scheduled Inter-governmental Conference in Dublin.

The purpose of the revelations was to provoke a rift between London and Dublin and throw a spanner in the works of the Accord.

In fact the actions of the paramilitaries will cause little more than a few verbal outbursts from a Dublin government easily pacified by the promises of an independent inquiry. For the nationalist population, however, such squabbles and manoeuvres will mean little.

Both the death squads and the security forces will continue their regime of brutal repression and their collusion. Such is the necessity imposed by the war in Northern Ireland and shored up by the Anglo-Irish accord. ■

No compromise with apartheid

Following South Africa's recent white elections pressure has begun to build up for a negotiated settlement between the apartheid state and its black opponents. **John Mckee** examines the dangers of a sell out

THE US and British governments are jubilant about the results of the recent South African elections and it is little wonder. These two major imperialist powers, the ones with the biggest stake in that country, see the possibility of pressing a settlement on South Africa. It will be one which guarantees their investments and the continued exploitation of black workers by giving apartheid some form of "democratic" face lift.

The elections were dominated by talk of "reform" and "negotiations". Much of this was for international consumption. At home the troops and police were given a green light to go on the rampage in the week before the elections. At least 29 blacks were shot dead by the police in the Cape on election day.

This apparently contradictory policy suited the Nationalists. The vague talk of reform appeased Bush and Thatcher while the repression was designed to show the white voters that "the Nats" had not gone soft. Given the Nationalist fear of losing more of their voting base to the hardline supporters of "Grand Apartheid" in the Conservative Party this was absolutely necessary. The tactic appears to have paid off. While the Nationalists lost seats to the CP on the right and to the new Democratic Party on its left, it retained a substantial parliamentary majority and the Conservative Party made fewer gains than predicted.

Stayaway

But the elections showed that none of the factors which have led the imperialists to press for reforms have gone away. Election day itself was marked by the most massive stayaway by black South Africans. An estimated three million workers responded to the call from the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) and from a workers' summit of COSATU and NACTU for strikes around the elections. This was the highpoint of a several-week long campaign of mass defiance which challenged the continuing state of emergency and the apartheid laws.

On the other side of the class divide pressure for a settlement is also starting to make itself felt. For some years the major sectors of capital in South Africa have been in favour of reforming apartheid, which even in its present form still restricts the use of black workers in skilled occupations and gives expensive privileges to white workers. Numerous exploratory discussions have taken place between the political representatives of these capitalists and the ANC.

The growing economic crisis in South Africa has given added urgency to the need for an escape from the impasse. It is estimated that since the revolutionary upheaval of 1984-86 nearly R60 billion have been taken out of the country's and invested abroad, almost 20% of the value of the country's entire stock of fixed capital.

Increased repression and a soaring military budget have pushed

government spending up from 21% of GDP in 1979 to 27% today. The economy is growing extremely slowly (1.5% likely this year) while inflation is up to 16%. There are growing fears that a coming recession, combined with difficulties in paying the \$20 billion external debt, will produce another major economic and political crisis as workers and the townships struggle against layoffs and unemployment. With renegotiation of the debt due for next year the USA has a powerful weapon of pressure at its disposal and de Klerk knows it.

At the same time the Reagan/Bush/Gorbachev agreements, especially Moscow's "co-operative" role in the Namibia settlement and removal of Cuban troops from Angola, have given real hope to the USA that pressure from the USSR will moderate the ANC's demands and neutralise the SACP. This pressure is having the desired effect—making the ANC "safe" for sharing power. Last year the ANC adopted new "Constitutional Guidelines" which made clear its commitment to a capitalist South Africa.

At a recent meeting between the ANC and the "Five Freedoms Forum", an organisation that organises the white "middle ground", the SACP representatives declared their commitment to a multi-party democracy and a free press, spoke out against "wholesale nationalisations" which would, they said, discourage foreign investment. They insisted that there would be no "pole vault to socialism" in South Africa.

The ANC proposals place as a precondition for negotiations the unbanning of outlawed organisations and the lifting of the state of emergency, freeing all political prisoners, and the removal of troops from the townships. This will be followed by a "ceasefire" and an interim government being set up to oversee the drafting of a new constitution. The statement implies that security will remain in the hands of the present government during this process.

With this new emphasis on negotiations the role given to the MDM, to defiance campaigns, to trade union action and stay aways, becomes ever clearer. They will be mobilised and demobilised, a stage army used to force the government

to talk.

The problem for both the ANC and for Bush and Thatcher is that there is still a yawning gap between what the National Party is willing to offer and the demands of the black majority in South Africa. President de Klerk is clear that the new constitution he envisages will enshrine "group rights", i.e. white domination. He has ruled out the lifting of the state of emergency, promising only to "gradually move away from it".

However the possibility exists that pressure from the major imperialists plus a growing struggle at home will force de Klerk to shift.

But could the ANC and the MDM deliver support for something less than free and equal universal suffrage? In October a "Conference for a Democratic Future" is to be held to discuss the question of a negotiated settlement. This is another attempt to create an even broader anti-apartheid coalition. The last attempt, which attempted to draw in sections of the Democrats as well as some of the "Black Homeland" parties, was a planned anti-apartheid conference banned by the government. Clearly the construction of such a broad popular front is designed to strengthen the compromisers within the MDM and to tie all sections of the opposition to any agreements that come out of it.

In the present situation it is vital to rally the workers' movement against any attempt to sell out the struggle for black majority rule. The massive stayaway at the election shows the continuing mobilising potential of democratic demands. Against "federal" or "group rights" solutions we counterpose the convening of a constituent assembly elected by all those over 16 years of age irrespective of race or creed, where a simple majority will decide on the new constitution of South Africa.

Such an assembly will have to be forced out of the ruling class through mass revolutionary struggle, through intensifying defiance campaigns, stayaways, general strikes and factory occupations.

Exploitation and misery will not disappear, however, through winning the vote. The Stalinists of the SACP who criticise "pole vaulting" to socialism are in fact saying to the workers "all your struggles and sacrifices over the last period and to come will result in a society where you will continue to be exploited and oppressed".

Revolutionary communists say the opposite: use the mobilisations now to strengthen the workers' organisations; do not separate the struggle for democracy and the struggle to overthrow capitalism and establish a socialist South Africa into distinct stages; do not sacrifice the independent interests of the working class.

If a revolutionary workers' party is not built now to fight to the end for such a solution, the sell-outs will triumph within the mass movement and the trade unions. The urgent task of the hour is to stop this. ■

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Namibia goes to the polls in November to elect a Constituent Assembly. South Africa is not merely watching with interest, it is intervening to get its way, as Joan Mayer explains

UNDER THE terms of the United Nations' peace plan for Namibia elections to a constituent assembly are to take place in November. The assembly is charged with working out a constitution for a Namibia "independent" of South Africa.

Voter registration closed on 15 September. It was preceded by a wave of South African inspired harassment and overt terror against the black population in general as well as the candidates and organisers of the South West African Peoples Organisation (SWAPO), the dominant nationalist force in Namibia. This campaign of violence is set to continue.

Its main perpetrators are the Namibian police, particularly the ex-members of the notorious counter-insurgency unit Koevet. Koevet has now been disbanded—straight into the police force! There is plenty of evidence that its old command structures are being used inside the police and inside the white dominated, pro-South African party the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA)

Much of the white minority population in Namibia would have preferred things to go on in the old way. They don't like elections under majority rule and want to keep their own privileges. The aim of their terror squads is to prevent a SWAPO victory and disrupt the elections.

South Africa—the occupying imperialist power in Namibia—also wants to prevent an outright victory for SWAPO. In the peace settlement South Africa's senior partners in the US and Europe insisted that the time for direct rule was over. Constant war throughout southern Africa is bad for business. The big multi nationals, including the South African ones, like De Beers, which dominate the Namibian economy, also wanted a settlement.

The window of opportunity came with the change in foreign policy from Moscow. The MPLA government in Angola was told that Moscow would no longer underwrite the presence of the Cuban troops that had kept the South African backed UNITA forces at bay. In exchange for the withdrawal of the Cuban troops, Pretoria was to stop supporting the UNITA forces. At the same time, SWAPO would lose its bases inside Angola—and South Africa would allow elections to go ahead under a UN peace plan.

Pressure

With pressure on it from Washington, with a soaring military budget adding to economic troubles at home, and having received a bloody nose in the 1988 battle at Cuito Cuanavale, South Africa was willing to do the deal. The settlement has the big advantage for Pretoria that SWAPO is weakened militarily and disarmed in the election period. It means that the threat of an armed overthrow of the puppet government is removed. And after all there is more than one way to keep your grip on an area. This is what the apartheid regime intends to do.

The South Africans are backing the attempts to intimidate SWAPO supporters because they want to ensure the nationalist organisation does not get a two thirds majority in the Assembly. Under the terms of the UN settlement, the new constitution to be drawn up by the Constituent Assembly must get two-thirds support. Pre-



Above: SWAPO youth demonstration. Inset: Assassinated SWAPO leader, Anton Lubowski

IDAF

toria would like to construct a constitution—and subsequently a government—through which its interests can be safeguarded.

The two-thirds rule for the Constituent Assembly is only one among many undemocratic aspects of the UN peace plan. As we argued at the time of its unveiling (WP112), the deal is an "imperialist peace"—one which by no means guarantees peace, one which limits real independence and which will mean the continued exploitation of Namibia's workers and peasants by the imperialists.

South Africa remains in charge of Namibia throughout the election period. UN officials and forces are so much window dressing. They have stood by while blatant acts of terror have been carried out against the black population. South African and white Namibian bosses remain in charge of the factories and mines—and have been preventing Namibian workers from registering to vote. South African money has, by contrast, been organising big registration campaigns for white South Africans who may qualify to vote.

Some key repressive legislation remains in place while the elections are in progress. Restrictions remain on freedom of the press and assembly and on strikes and boycotts.

Economically and strategically, Pretoria intends to keep a strong grip on the territory. This is made much easier by the fact that the peace deal leaves South Africa occupying the deep sea port of Walvis Bay. This not only gives it trading advantages but also provides a base for the SADF, including an air strike force.

And if South African imperialism's wishes are thwarted, it will no doubt resort to the methods of terror it has used to destabilise Mozambique and Angola.

In the face of the continuing South African occupation, and in the absence of a revolutionary workers' party expressing the independent interests of workers and poor peasants, it is necessary to call for a vote for SWAPO in the coming constituent assembly elections. If South African imperialism succeeds in its intimidatory tactics, reduces the SWAPO vote and boosts that for the DTA or other pro-South African parties

Namibia's unfree election

then the possibility of continuing the struggle for genuine independence will be weakened. South Africa will be able to write its own preferred constitution.

As part of the fight for genuine independence, workers and poor peasants must demand of SWAPO that, in the event of it securing a majority, they liquidate all the undemocratic aspects of the peace deal and step up the fight to rid the country of South Africa's presence altogether. This way the limitations of SWAPO's petit bourgeois nationalist project can be exposed to the masses who look to it. This way the basis for an independent working class movement and a new revolutionary workers' party can be laid.

The critical vote for SWAPO, therefore, is a block to South African imperialism's plans not a vote for a SWAPO government. If SWAPO aims to rule, it must place its programme before the Namibian masses in new elections to a genuinely democratic constituent assembly, one without any restrictions, without the limiting "party list" system, which works against workers' representatives, and one directly elected by universal, free and equal suffrage.

Democratic

In such elections the working class must not support SWAPO, but would have to counterpose itself to SWAPO. In the absence of a revolutionary socialist party this could be done by the election of candidates from democratic workers' assemblies. Whatever the form, the key task would be to consolidate the independent organisation of the working class and

the fight for a revolutionary programme based on the interests of the workers and poor peasants.

A SWAPO government would in no way constitute a workers' and peasants' government. It would be a bourgeois government. This is clear from the very nature of SWAPO.

Its programme envisages a post-election period of social peace and co-operation with the capitalists. It envisages a "mixed economy", that is, a capitalist one.

It advocates the new government buying in to the big mining companies to the tune of a 50% share. And while De Beers, Rossing and Anglo-American may be mildly uncomfortable with this, they, like other multinationals, are quite happy to accommodate to such a situation if it keeps the profits rolling in. What they will demand in exchange is that a SWAPO government keeps the working class in check.

The big profits made in Namibia arise in part from the migrant labour system which provides cheap labour for the uranium, diamond and copper mines. Migrant workers have already shown their capacity to organise, and will be expecting better conditions and new rights in a free Namibia. But SWAPO supporter Loide Kasingo, the education officer of the National Union of Namibian Workers, spelt out earlier this year what SWAPO's attitude would be to workers' struggles:

"SWAPO is a workers' organisation. It is therefore obliged to help the workers and will continue to do so when in power. Of course, capitalism won't disappear when SWAPO takes over, but the role of the labour movement will be to

assist the government to reconstruct the country... There will be no need for strikes because the government will be serving the workers' interests. Strikes would put back our programme". This is a veiled threat to the Namibian working class.

SWAPO's programme for the land question is inadequate to meet the burning needs of the poor peasantry. At present 70% of the black population is confined to only a fifth of the farming land. The rest lies in the hands of the white farmers. SWAPO's programme talks only of buying out the absentee landlords. But this will leave the land question unresolved for the majority. And while this is the case, elements of the migrant labour system will remain.

Goal

A SWAPO government would seek to tie the working class and poor peasantry to the capitalist reconstruction of Namibia. Moreover, the current controversy over SWAPO's torturing and murdering its own "dissidents" indicates it would use brutal repressive methods to achieve this goal.

Of course, there is a danger that South Africa is using this controversy to discredit SWAPO. But this possibility cannot be used to justify suppressing the truth or continuing repression against the masses. It was necessary to ensure security against South African spies during the war of liberation.

But SWAPO appears to have gone well beyond the necessary maintenance of security and, using Stalinist police methods as its model, has carried out repression against anti-imperialist fighters. As part of the current election, therefore, it is vitally necessary to demand of SWAPO that it release its "dissidents".

A workers' and poor peasants' enquiry must be set up to investigate the instances of torture, murder and detention alleged by organisations like the Parents Committee and workers' justice must be meted out against perpetrators of such actions no matter how high up the SWAPO hierarchy they are as well as to any proven South African agents.

The goal of struggle for the workers and poor peasants of Namibia must be to liberate their country under the banner of socialism. No other "liberation" will put an end to poverty and exploitation. To achieve this a new party must be built with a programme which expresses the immediate needs of the workers and poor peasants and advances a revolutionary road to socialism.

Control

Such a programme would include full democratic rights, especially at work, the nationalisation of the big monopolies and the banks, and the nationalisation and seizure of the big estates without compensation and under workers' and poor peasants' control. The building of workers' and poor peasants' councils, workers' militias as the basis for a real workers' and peasants' government in Namibia must be carried through in the course of the fight for these demands.

With 330,000 workers in a population of 1.4 million, the working class certainly has the social weight to lead the nation. The barrier is the political hegemony of SWAPO which ties it to the middle class and effectively to the black bourgeoisie now emerging.

The current elections must be used to try and break down that barrier and pave the way for workers' revolution. ■



the LRCI

NEWS FROM THE SECTIONS

GRUPPE ARBEITERMACHT/ARBEITERINNEN
STANDPUNKT

German language journal launched

THE SEPTEMBER issue of ArbeiterInnen Standpunkt (Workers Standpoint) concentrates on the theme of the crisis of Stalinism in the USSR and Eastern Europe. It contains articles on the Soviet miners' strike and on Gorbachev's "new thinking" in the sphere of foreign policy. It also examines the crisis developing within the Austrian Communist Party (KPO)—a previously hard line Stalinist party but now racked by debate as a result of Gorbachev's *glasnost*.

Also in September the first issue of a new publication, Revolutionärer Marxismus (*Revolutionary Marxism*), has appeared. It is the theoretical journal of the German language sections of the LRCI (at present the AST—Salzburg Soal of Austria and the GAM of West Germany). This issue is entirely devoted to the publication of the LRCI's "Theses on the Nature of Women's Oppression". This journal is another valuable weapon in the whole of the LRCI's struggle for a revolutionary renewal of theory and practice at a time when scribblers of the world bourgeoisie are once again celebrating the "death" of Marxism. ■

PODER OBRERO

A new journal in October

PODER OBRERO—the Peruvian section of the LRCI is calling on the international workers' movement to protest against the dirty war being waged by the Garcia government against the workers, peasants and students of Peru. The recent Amnesty International report is a grim catalogue of human rights violations, assassinations, torture etc. In addition Poder Obrero calls on the workers' movement world wide to help the Peruvian Miners Federation to recover from their setback in the shortest time possible by sending cash donations to the union, by protesting against the repression aimed at the union and by demanding the immediate and unconditional release of all militants arrested during the strike. ■

POUVOIR OUVRIER

Newspaper out now!

THIS MONTH sees the publication of the second issue of the new paper of Pouvoir Ouvrier. Hitting the streets during a series of wage struggles in France, the paper addresses the issues involved in this upsurge. Over the last five years, unlike in Britain, real wages have been hit hard and the French workers have decided to enter the fray to recoup those losses.

The wage struggles are not the only issue at present: there is a fight against the privatisation of the Post Office too and this is considered in the paper. This issue also contains an important survey of the state of the Communist Party led trade union federation, the CGT.

Pouvoir Ouvrier carry three articles in their paper that get to the heart of the USFI's errors: the recent developments in the USSR under Gorbachev; the nature of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua and the USFI's perspectives for party building. Articles on the lessons of the democracy movement in China and a spread on the current upheavals in Poland complete the issue. For anyone with an interest in French class struggle this paper is a must. You can get it from Workers Power by sending £1 (including postage). ■

Lutte Ouvriere debate

SOON TO be published in English French and Spanish: debate between the Irish Workers Group and the French organisation Lutte Ouvriere on Republicanism and the Irish National Question. Published in the Lutte Ouvriere journal *Lutte de Classe*, October issue. Available from Workers Power. ■

FUND DRIVE

OVER THE last two months Workers Power has contributed £1130.98 to the LRCI Fighting Fund. £103 was raised at a Bastille Day social in London, £282.98 at Workers Power's national conference, £145 from Leicester and £68 from Reading branches respectively through fund raising events. A Sheffield health worker donated £500, a reader from Leicester £4, plus £30 sent in from our Sheffield branch. A reader in Frankfurt has also sent us £10.

The LRCI

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 LRCI with the aim of becoming an affiliated section.

PERU

Miners' strike defeated

PERU HAS been engulfed in a wave of poor peasant struggles. The Government of Alan Garcia has signed dozens of agreements and promises to resolve the demands of the rural poor. But it has done nothing.

In the countryside there has been an almost permanent mobilisation of peasants. They are fighting for land, against harsh credit conditions, against low crop prices and the militarisation of the countryside. In Huancavelica, which has been under military control for seven years, in Cuzco, Puno, San Martin and Apurimac the peasants have staged strikes and massive meetings.

In August the peasants found they were no longer confronting the government alone. The miners, electricity workers, teachers, post office workers, university lecturers, transport workers and the medical association all went on strike for better wages and conditions.

The government's response was brutal repression. Two student militants were brutally assassinated in a dynamite attack on a Lima beach. Five residents of the workers' district, Pueblo Libre, were killed. The army occupied the mines and enforced a curfew there, arresting hundreds of miners. They occupied the offices of the miners' union, banned trade union meetings and censored reporting of the strikes.

The miners struck on 14 August. This was the first time that all of the Peruvian miners managed to present a common pay claim, representing more than 80,000 workers. They demanded a minimum wage for all miners in Peru. This was important because more than 20,000 work for sub-contractors and are thus denied many benefits

and the minimum wage. Secondly they demanded an automatic wage rise linked to inflation as well as advancing democratic demands against the growing militarisation of Peru.

On the day the miners' strike began Garcia called for the formation of Military Tribunals against "subversion". He received the immediate support of Mario Vargas Llosa, his arch critic and the Thatcherite FREDEMO's candidate in next year's presidential elections. The army was sent in against the miners in central Peru, to enforce a return to work at the point of a bayonet. They killed a miners' union lawyer, arrested dozens of leaders and hundreds of rank and file miners. They offered some miners double pay plus a bonus for scabbing. The combined tactics of bribery and repression, coupled with the betrayal of the CGTP (the Peruvian TUC), led to a return to work. On 31 August the miners' leaders decided to suspend the strike at the Second Congress of the Miners' Federation of Peru.

The fifty delegates insisted that the decision to suspend the strike was not a defeat but a necessary measure to regroup against the attacks of the bosses and armed forces.

Here they are clearly wrong. The miners did not gain any of their objectives and were forced back to work. The defeat of the advanced guard of the Peruvian proletariat cannot but have a serious demoralising effect on other less militant and less well organised sectors. The defeat of the miners under a left leadership could well strengthen the right in the CGTP. If success or failure in every sectional struggle holds enormous consequences for all the working class; if the conditions for victory

in these sectional struggles, both economic and in terms of state repression, are becoming more and more unfavourable this shows that the time is ripe—perhaps over-ripe—for united working class political action i.e. a general strike. It means creating mass workers' militias in every union and every shanty town. These demands cannot just be tacked on at the end of a list of sectional demands or left to speeches at conferences and mass rallies. They necessitate an organised struggle within all unions and mass popular organisations to combat the sabotage of the CGTP leaders.

Above all this means a resolute fight against the hardened Stalinist reformists and against centrist vacillation. The leaders of the left, the Peruvian CGT and the Popular National Assembly, did all they could to put a break on the miners' strike and other workers' mobilisations. They called only one small demonstration of passive support.

Yet the more radical left wing (the PUM and UDP) again showed its tendency to accommodate to the Stalinists. They talked a lot about the need for a "strategic" general strike to confront the September economic package of the Garcia government but in practical terms they followed the Stalinist tactic of limited demonstrations and one day strikes.

One reason for this is the chronic electoral cretinism that affects the Peruvian left. The United Left (UL) candidates in Lima's municipal elections have refused to say one word about the waves of strikes that are going on across the country. The refusal of the UL to carry out even a limited offensive against the government's economic and military offensive is helping Vargas Llosa's FREDEMO to gain support. A victory for FREDEMO would open Peru to a "Thatcherite revolution". Only the Peruvian workers themselves can prevent the bosses solving the crisis in this way. But to stop the bosses they also have to break with the Stalinist and reformist leaders. They have to link up with the peasants in a mass direct action to end the economic pauperisation of the masses and smash the militarisation of the country. ■

FRANCE

A hot autumn?

had not been on strike since 1972! But management's offer of a 2.7% (£8 a month) pay increase pushed these workers into strike action on 5 September.

Although supported by all the main union federations (CGT, CFTD and FO) the strike has, nonetheless, shown some of the classic weaknesses of the French labour movement. For example, it was nearly two weeks before the first mass picket was set up and the Mulhose plant was temporarily closed down! Picketing scabs was downplayed in favour of collecting strike fund donations from them!

It was a week before flying pickets were sent to the massive Sochaux plant—with 23,400 workers—the biggest French car plant. At the time of writing, only a few of the Sochaux shops are out, with a mass meeting of the workers having refused to play their strongest card by blocking the production of the new 605 saloon, due to be launched at the beginning of October. The other five plants—including Poissy—with 10,000 workers—have been left untouched.

Faced with such uneven strike action Peugeot's response has been to stand firm. Their boss, Caldet, has refused to even see the unions, hoping to wear the strikers into the ground and divert their

anger away from the fight for pay and into more negotiations. That is certainly the way the union leaders are playing it, supported by leading Socialist Party members.

The French economy is looking good for the capitalists at the moment, with record increases in production and inflation at 3%. Despite the bosses' dreams of a decade of uninterrupted prosperity in the 1990's, the recovery is extremely weak and largely based on the massive attacks on working class living standards carried out by Mitterrand.

That is why behind the scenes, the government is urging Peugeot not to give in and is itself setting a "good example" by refusing to pay up when faced with the striking tax workers.

If French workers are to beat their bosses and their "socialist" government they are going to have to up the stakes. Nothing less than all out strikes backed by effective pickets and spread to both private and public sectors will force PM Rocard to back down.

The problem for French workers is that their leaders in the trade union movement are not prepared to fight for this necessary action—French workers need to deal with these traitors as well as their bosses. ■

Stop capitalist restoration with workers' revolution!

THE INSTALLATION of a government with a majority of non-Communist Party members in Poland for the first time since the Second World War, indicates the depth of the crisis facing the Stalinist regimes of Eastern Europe.

The crisis of political legitimacy revealed in the June elections came on top of the combined failure of Jaruzelski either to destroy Solidarnosc or bring any order into the chaos and misery of the bureaucratically planned economy. The state of the planned economy forced the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP) to the unprecedented pass of agreeing to share power, as a minority partner, with Solidarnosc and the revived Peasant Party under Tadeus Mazowiecki.

Far from threatening intervention, the Soviet Union intervened only to moderate the PUWP's demands for a larger share in the government. It was clear that Moscow would not even exert pressure, let alone intervene militarily, to ensure the Polish Stalinists' monopoly of power.

Gorbachev and Jaruzelski remain content with absolute control over the army and police force, the "special bodies of armed men" that guarantee that state power is still in the hands of the bureaucratic caste that is loyal to its elder brothers in the Kremlin.

Obliged

The Russian and Polish Stalinists have been obliged to allow Solidarnosc a leading share of governmental office, if not a decisive hold on political power, by the electoral fiasco they suffered on 4 June. Not only did Solidarnosc make a clean sweep of the 25% of seats for which they were allowed to stand, but the masses expressed their total rejection of the Stalinists by voting against them even where they were the only candidates.

This vote represented more a vote of no confidence in Stalinism than a whole-hearted endorsement of the new Solidarnosc. "New" because, despite the continuity of many of the leading personnel, the "political Solidarnosc" candidates were not the representatives of Solidarnosc as it existed in the early 1980s when it was a ten million strong movement combining features of a trade union, workplace committees and a political party.

Its national leadership has not been renewed or re-elected since its first and only congress in 1981. Then, despite the fact that Walesa and company were disguised Catholic bourgeois nationalists, the movement's policy and objectives were centred on calls for workers' self-management of the economy and a self-managed republic.

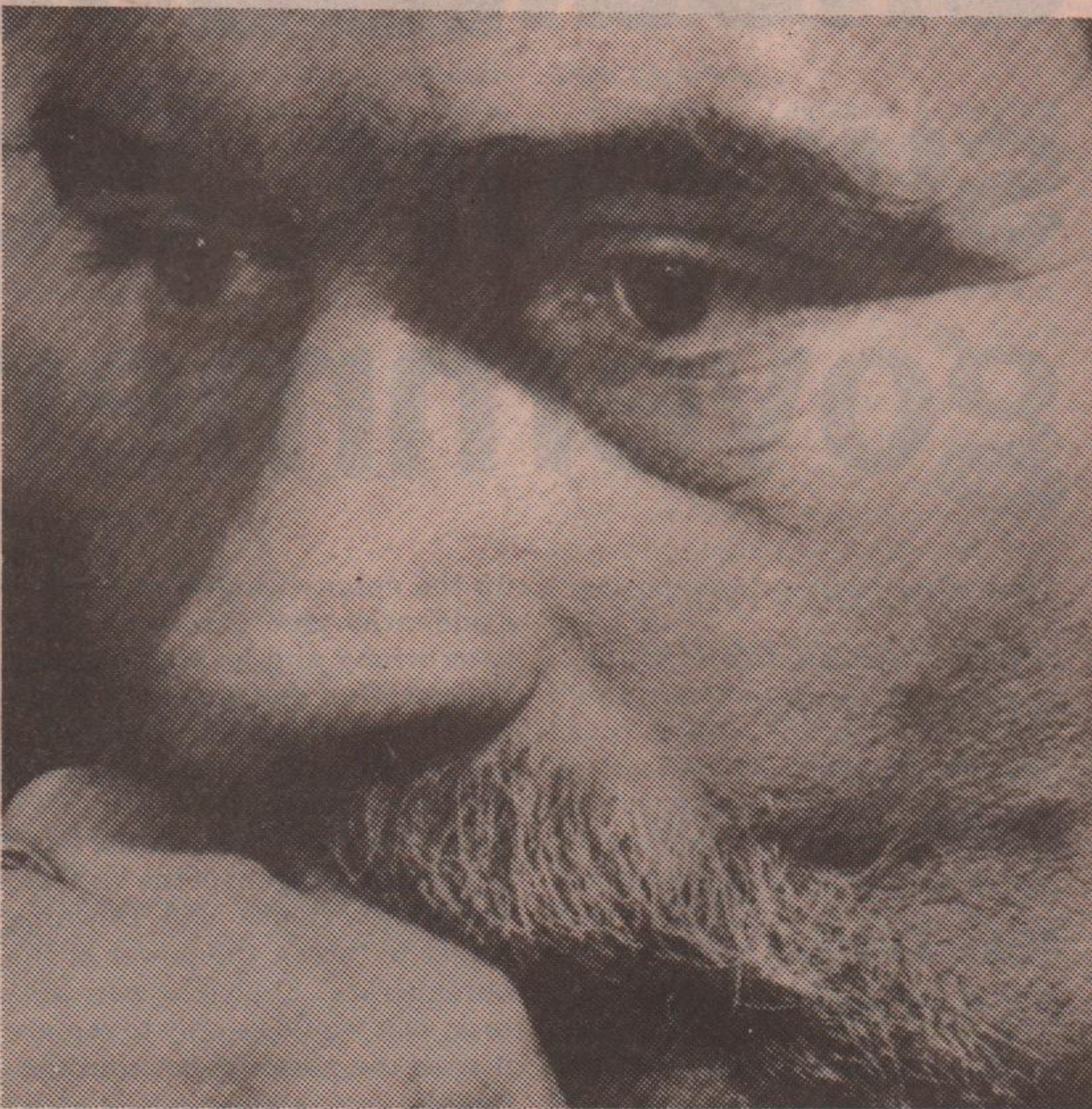
In 1989, Political Solidarnosc's candidates were largely chosen by self-appointed committees of Catholic intellectuals, priests and the burgeoning class of businessmen and women. Walesa has resolutely obstructed any attempt to recall a congress of the "union". As a trade union, Solidarnosc now has only two million members as against the re-constructed government-sponsored unions (OPPZ) which have seven million.

This is only partly the product of seven years of repression. The OPPZ unions have made increas-

The new Polish cabinet has united Stalinists and Catholic nationalists around the project of restoring capitalism. The workers who will be victims of this can and must stop them. Here we print a statement issued by the League for a Revolutionary Communist International in response to the latest Polish crisis.

ing moves to defend workers against government and management attacks on the one hand whilst Walesa and company have, on the other, repeatedly obstructed elementary self-defence by Solidarnosc, condemning strikes and calling for returns to work. Oppositionists within the movement—on the right, Fighting Solidarnosc and the KPN and, on the left, the PPS-RD—have been allowed neither voice nor representation.

Walesa now pledges a moratorium on strikes and talks openly about the government starting a reform process that will see the transition, "from a communist system of ownership to capitalism". The Government's Solidarnosc Industry Minister, Tadeusz Syryjczyk, is one of the growing breed of private businessmen who announced that, "we must change



Walesa—Christian Democrat in disguise

David Stewart/Insight

skyrocket the cost of living and privatise the 96% state owned industry.

Clearly this government has adopted an openly, even a brazenly, pro-capitalist programme. It is obvious why both the USA and the EC imperialists support it. It is equally clear why Poland's private farmers in Rural Solidarity and the Peasant Party support it. Both recognise that the new Solidarnosc, its leadership, its advisers and its mass base of Catholic intellectuals, are a bourgeois party in embryo.

Jaruzelski, Gorbachev and the PUWP support, and participate in, such a government because they have to try to solve the economic crisis at the expense of the working class. In fact, Jaruzelski and his predecessors have been trying to force through exactly the measures Mazowiecki must take for

Every marketising and privatising measure will weaken the cohesion of the caste and hasten its disintegration. Of course, its leading bureaucratic clique hopes that these measures will revive the economy and relax its contradictions before the crisis reaches a point where qualitative change in the state becomes unstoppable and they lose their political and economic power altogether.

What, then, is the nature of this new government? The PUWP remains a bourgeois workers' party, albeit that its working class base is almost totally eroded. The Solidarnosc ministers, on the other hand, are, politically, Christian Democrats—bourgeois ministers representing an embryonic Catholic nationalist party.

The government, therefore, is a form of popular front, pledged to the strengthening of capitalism within Poland but without agreement as to its final restoration, that it, the return of political power to a revived Polish bourgeoisie. We are equally opposed to both elements of this government, both are conscious enemies of the Polish working class.

The Solidarnosc ministers are open capitalist restorationists but with a utopian programme of peaceful reform to bring about this restoration. The Stalinists are prepared to go a long way along the road to restoration, some of them all the way, in the hope of becoming capitalists themselves or bureaucrats for the capitalist class and imperialism. Others, tied to their caste privileges, hope to avoid this. Left to their own devices, the Stalinists would not, and will not, be able to resist restoration.

There is only one objective force capable of preventing capitalist restoration in Poland, the proletariat. Despite its terrible misleadership, its ideological poisoning with Stalinism, Catholicism and nationalism, it will be obliged to resist the government's programme because it will be both the immediate and the ultimate loser by the whole process. The only question is whether it will resist consciously and victoriously.

Working class resistance, if limited to a trade union level, will bring social and economic chaos and civil war. The bureaucracy will split as will the present popular

front. Interventions both by imperialism, seeking to preserve its investments and to complete the task of restoration, and by the USSR, seeking to preserve its military security, are possible.

If the working class is to avoid becoming the plaything of either a bureaucratic or a bourgeois counter-revolution it must find a new programme and a new party to fight for it. The working class must give no support to this government of capitalists and capitulators to capitalism. It must fight by demonstrations, occupations and strikes, up to and including the general strike, against the introduction of the Mazowiecki-Jaruzelski austerity programme.

The state ownership of the factories, services and transport must be defended against both closure and privatisation. Workers' control and workers' management must replace the bureaucratic bullies and bunglers and block the road to the new bourgeoisie and its overseers.

A congress of the factory committees, the trade unions and the poor peasants' organisations must be called to draw up a new five year plan to meet the vital needs of all the toilers. Likewise, it must draw up fighting plans to seize control of the central, regional and local planning apparatus with the aim of purging it of incompetents and time-servers and putting it entirely at the service of the workers' plan.

To defend this it is necessary to oust Jaruzelski's Bonapartist clique and Mazowiecki's bourgeois ministers and to install a revolutionary workers' and peasants' government. In short, economically and politically, it is necessary to carry through a proletarian political revolution which simultaneously pre-empts the social counter-revolution planned by Walesa and Mazowiecki.

In the course of this revolution, the workers' organisations must not only organise and arm to defend themselves but must also take positive steps to win over the rank and file of the army and the militia to their side and to defence of planned property by calling for soldiers' committees and the election of all officers.

Democratic rights

Such a revolution must defend and extend women's democratic rights including the right to free abortion and contraception on demand against the Catholic bigots. It must restore religion to the status of a strictly private matter as far as the state is concerned—secularising the schools and removing any open or hidden state subsidies for the spreading of religious propaganda.

To create a party capable of leading the political revolution, Polish revolutionary Marxists must fight to defeat the Stalinist and Catholic nationalist misleaders within the workers' mass organisations. They should support calls for the convening of democratic congresses of both the OPPZ unions and "trade union" Solidarnosc, calling for the renunciation and ousting of the entire present leaderships and for the mobilisation of the unions against the austerity plan and the government which implements it.

They should call for an immediate congress to unify the trade unions on a programme of resistance against the pro-capitalist offensive and for the defence, and transformation, of the planned property relations in the interest of the workers and poor peasants. They should call for the renunciation of the external debt and the cessation of the ruinous interest payments to foreign bankers. ■

● See p14 The left and Poland

POLISH WORKERS

- Fight austerity, closure and privatisation!
- Fight capitalist restoration and Stalinist dictatorship and betrayal!
- Break with the bourgeois leaders of political Solidarnosc!
- Down with the Stalinist bureaucrats—For political revolution!
- For a workers' and poor peasants' government!
- For a democratic workers' plan that opens the road to socialist equality and prosperity!
- For international solidarity with the Russian workers and the workers of Eastern Europe!
- Russian troops out of Poland, Poland out of the Warsaw Pact!
- Defend the workers' states of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe!

the structure of ownership. The only guarantee of democracy is a middle class which prizes the notion of contracts and property".

Solidarnosc's economic advisers include Jefferey Sachs, the planner of the Bolivian economic miracle (!) of 1985-86, which saw the almost complete closure of all the country's mining industry. He now advocates, "shock treatment" with an abandonment of food subsidies and closure of unprofitable industries including the Gdansk shipyards. This, he says, will mean six months of chaos and then a recovery. Alongside Sachs are a collection of other advisers from the USA and Britain, including from the infamous Adam Smith Institute, vying with each other to advise Solidarnosc on how to slash jobs,

eight years and more. Being totally unwilling, and unable, to fight imperialism, they seek to concede to it, to use it, to act as its agents, hoping only to be able to preserve their political power and their economic privileges. Indeed, they did not yield political power when they gave up their monopoly of government office. Their Bonapartist dictatorship still remains intact. Nor has their control over their chaotic and disintegrating planned economy yet been broken. But they now recognise that they will have to make massive concessions to private capital.

The immense and multi-layered bureaucratic caste, as a totality, is under enormous strain. The course that they have taken will increase those strains to breaking point.

THE NON-STALINIST far left in Britain has been, in its majority, uncritical in its support for Solidarnosc from the outset. This has included blind support for its leadership.

The installation of the new Polish government, dominated by Solidarnosc ministers, has been followed by a stream of pro-capitalist statements from these catholic nationalist leaders and their advisers. The "sudden" realisation by many on the left of the slavishly pro-western imperialist nature of this very leadership has caused considerable turmoil amongst Solidarnosc's fans.

Socialist Worker, the paper of the SWP, a "state capitalist" tendency, hardly knows which way to turn. It declares that the entry of Solidarnosc into government "can only encourage those fighting for change the world over" but then add darkly that "there is another side to the picture".

The bad side is that Solidarnosc does not have enough power or rather it does not have any real power at all, only governmental office. Their enthusiasm for the entry of Solidarnosc into the government is because they see it as a victory for the millions of workers who were part of the Solidarnosc movement in 1980.

But the leaders who have been elected to office nine years later are not in any shape or form representative of that revolutionary struggle of the working class. Although the Polish proletariat and peasantry overwhelmingly awarded its franchise to the Solidarnosc candidates, the government is not a workers' government.

Firstly, the Walesa leadership can in no way be described as the democratic representatives of the union's two million members. Unelected since 1981, Walesa has refused to reconvene a Solidarnosc congress since then. Secondly, the candidates were selected by committees of intellectual experts, clerical and lay functionaries of the church.

Party

They stood on no political platform beyond the name "Solidarnosc". Their popularity in the election, an expression of opposition to the ruling Stalinist dictator Jaruzelski, was not an endorsement of the policies these leaders now advocate. Rather than a party of the working class, the Solidarnosc leadership is divorced from any direct accountable link to the union members, relying instead on the historic popularity of the movement to win them votes.

Since the election, however, the viciously pro-capitalist austerity programme of Walesa and Mazowiecki, which they share with Jaruzelski and the dominant faction of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP), has been openly displayed.

On 22 August Walesa told the Italian daily *Il Messaggero*:

"Until now nobody has adopted the road that leads from socialism towards capitalism. And that is what we will try to do: return to the pre-war situation, after having gone through a long period of socialism... Our economic and political models are those of western countries that have obtained good results." (22.8.89)

In addition to this loyalty pledge to capitalism, the government has demonstrated its determination to make the working class pay the price of stabilising the economy in preparation for the great auction of state property to the capitalists of the world. As the SWP themselves report, "The enthusiasm of Solidarity supporters has been tempered by price increases of up

SOCIALIST WORKER ON POLAND:

Should socialists support Solidarnosc government?

The Socialist Workers Party describes the attacks of the Solidarnosc government on the workers as "tragic". Mike Evans looks at the tragedy of the state capitalists' false analysis of Poland's class struggle.

to 500% for basic foods and consumer goods at the start of August."

This austerity programme is completely in line with the project of the Solidarnosc leaders, but for the SWP it appears as some kind of accidental betrayal of the working class.

"Tragically, the leaders of Solidarity look to be set on playing this role, attacking workers' living standards while using their popular support to head off any social upheaval which threatens the rulers' power".

To avoid this "tragedy" the SWP call on the Solidarnosc rulers to remain true to their working class supporters and pursue policies which would defeat the real power of the "bosses", i.e. break with the Stalinists. Their advice to Walesa is that: "Solidarity should be trying to strengthen factory organisation in order to build a real power base." Nowhere do they challenge or even discuss the goals of the leaders of Solidarnosc, thereby evading the issue of what such a "power base" in the factories would be used for.

They see as the essential problem the Solidarnosc leaders becoming dupes of the crafty Stalinist bureaucrats. Their demands

LABOUR FOCUS ON EASTERN EUROPE
Labour Party Conference
Fringe Meeting
Eastern European socialists speak

8.30 Tuesday 3 October
Brighton NALGO Club
164-167 Edward Street

relate to how to make them break from the bureaucracy and pursue an independent road. But they dodge the issue of which class interests such independence would represent. Only in passing does *Socialist Worker* implicitly criticise Solidarnosc for looking "to the market as the solution to the problems of the economy".

The Walesa leadership is no more a representative of the working class in Poland than the Stalinist butchers he is doing deals with. Both want to take Poland along the road of marketisation, opening

up the enterprises to imperialist exploitation and profiteering. It is as wrong and as stupid to see Walesa as an instrument of working class power as it would be to see Jaruzelski in that role. Only the blind Stalinophobia of the SWP could make them call on the feted and cosseted agent of the Vatican, the White House and Downing Street to "break the power of the bureaucrats". Even if he were able to do so it would be only to replace it with the power of the multinationals.

Despite the clear anti-working class programme of the Solidarnosc leadership the SWP still have illusions that they can be won to a different road. They say there is a different strategy which the new government could pursue. "If the Solidarity leaders looked to that power (of workers' struggles—WP) and led, instead of holding workers' struggles back, a very different road is possible."

The question the SWP constantly dodge is what the class character of a Solidarnosc government with real power would be. Walesa's goal

maintain a total silence on the issue of property relations.

In their position there is not a word about the need to defend the state property against privatisation by the local and international capitalist vultures. Not a word about the only alternative to "market methods"—planning.

Their non-Marxist theory holds that the features of a workers' state, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, total state ownership of the means of production, centralised planning and the monopoly of foreign trade can be and indeed are for them, features of "state capitalism". The working class has no reason to regard these as its conquests or its instruments, nor has it any particular reason to defend them.

Revolutionary Marxists (Trotskyists) on the contrary assert that there exist no other economic instruments than these to defeat and subordinate the law of value. That is, to transform society from one based on the anarchy and crises of capitalism into one based on the rational allocation of abun-

opposition and because they claim this chaos and repression is socialism, then they increasingly alienate the working class from its own state. But this caste is not to be identified with the planned property relations. It exists in contradiction to them.

The bureaucracy's parasitism and mismanagement will bring the planned property relations, to the brink of collapse. This is what is happening now in Poland. The bureaucracy is not a class which historically embodies a specific mode of production but a parasite—ultimately a deadly parasite.

It is—as the Polish workers themselves have shown—quite possible to "break the power of the bureaucracy in every factory" as the SWP suggest, and to drive out the bosses (since there are few private owners we can only assume they mean the state appointed managers). And then?

The factories have to produce or people starve. What shall they produce? It clearly cannot be left up to each workplace to decide in isolation. But our state capitalists dare not even mention the plan or what the workers should do about it. At this point they remark that seizing the factories would be a revolution.

But they are wrong. What they call for would be at best half a revolution like the one the Polish workers made in 1980-81. And, as Lenin said, those who make half a revolution are doomed.

Deprivation

If workers know only what they do not want to be done—if they merely obstruct the plans of the bureaucracy (and Solidarnosc)—then all that will happen is that there will be further chaos, economic deprivation and demoralisation until they bitterly and reluctantly give in.

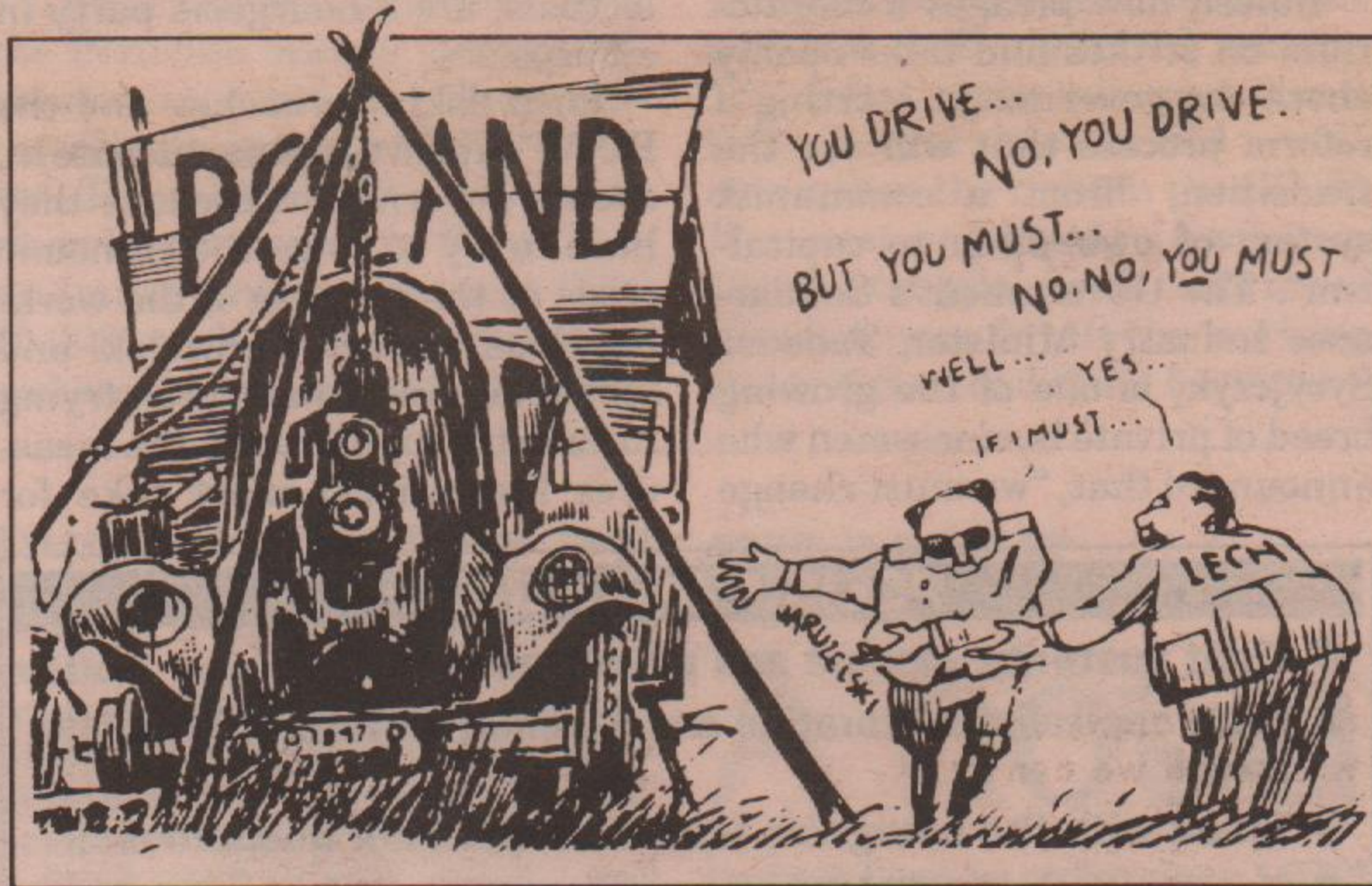
A real revolution would destroy the power of the bureaucracy by force and institute a regime of genuine workers' power committed to the transition to socialism. To achieve this the Polish workers must know what they wish to preserve and what they wish to destroy.

They must employ means sufficient to achieve this—the general strike and an insurrection that smashes and wins over the armed forces of the state.

To mobilise and deploy this force requires the creation of workers' councils, a workers' militia and a party. None of these can be built except in remorseless struggle against Walesa and Jaruzelski.

The SWP is incapable of recognising, let alone defending, the Polish workers' past gains. Nor is it capable of outlining a strategy for the seizure of working class political power in Poland.

Instead the SWP can only muse on the "tragic" dilemma of Solidarnosc. ■



is capitalist restoration. The policies of the government, supported by Jaruzelski and sanctioned by the Kremlin, are leading towards the maximum marketisation of the economy. Pursued to its logical conclusion this would mean the restoration of a bourgeoisie in Poland, a social counter-revolution. Just as the road of political revolution to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy requires the armed action of the working class in Poland, so too the total restoration of capitalism in Poland will require the violent smashing of the workers' state. However degenerated it may be, this will be defended by the working class who will never peacefully accept the re-introduction of unbridled imperialist exploitation.

A clear class analysis of the events in Poland is not possible for the SWP. They are thrown completely by their wrong class characterisation of Poland and therefore of all the contending forces. Their state capitalism leads them to ignore the pro-imperialist character of the Solidarnosc government because, for them, Poland is already capitalist. They therefore

dant resources to meet human need. The state capitalists blithely junk all this without offering any alternative economic instruments they may have discovered.

They cover up their unilateral programmatic disarmament in front of capitalism with confused cries about the existing degenerate workers' states which boil down to the jibe; "call this socialism?". No we do not!

Revolutionary Marxists have always argued that workers' states that suffered a qualitative degeneration, or were created as degenerate workers' states, were not only *not socialist* but not even advancing towards socialism.

On the contrary, if the working class is deprived of political power over its own state (its own because it still defends the social expropriation of the bourgeoisie) by a usurping caste of bureaucratic parasites then a process of increasing chaos and collapse could lead to a restoration of capitalism, a social counter-revolution.

Because the bureaucrats direct the plan to magnify their own privileges; because they stifle all freedom of criticism and terrorise all

School controversy

Dear Comrades,
A row has developed in Birmingham over the Labour council's appointment of Wendy Bartel as a home liaison officer at Springfield school in Sparkhill. The Springfield School Parents' Action Group are protesting at the appointment while the local rag, the *Birmingham Evening Mail*, are backing Wendy Bartel. What's the fuss about? In a word, racism.

The *Mail* is whipping up a vile racist campaign to "defend" Wendy Bartel from the Asian parents who are protesting. But they are rightly protesting because the appointment of Wendy Bartel was a racist act by Labour's right wing council.

Racist, because Wendy Bartel's job means that she spends much of her time liaising with parents, yet she does not speak Urdu, the language of most of the parents at a school with over 95% Asian students.

This is just the latest in a whole line of racist decisions. It shows quite how shallow Labour's claim to be in favour of real equal opportunity is. It is an insult to the 95% of parents who are Asian and who are supposed to be liaised with by Wendy Bartel.

It is another way of peddling the racist message—stated openly by the Tories—that the Asians should learn English. The fact that education cuts have hampered the many Asians who are attempting to learn English is conveniently overlooked.

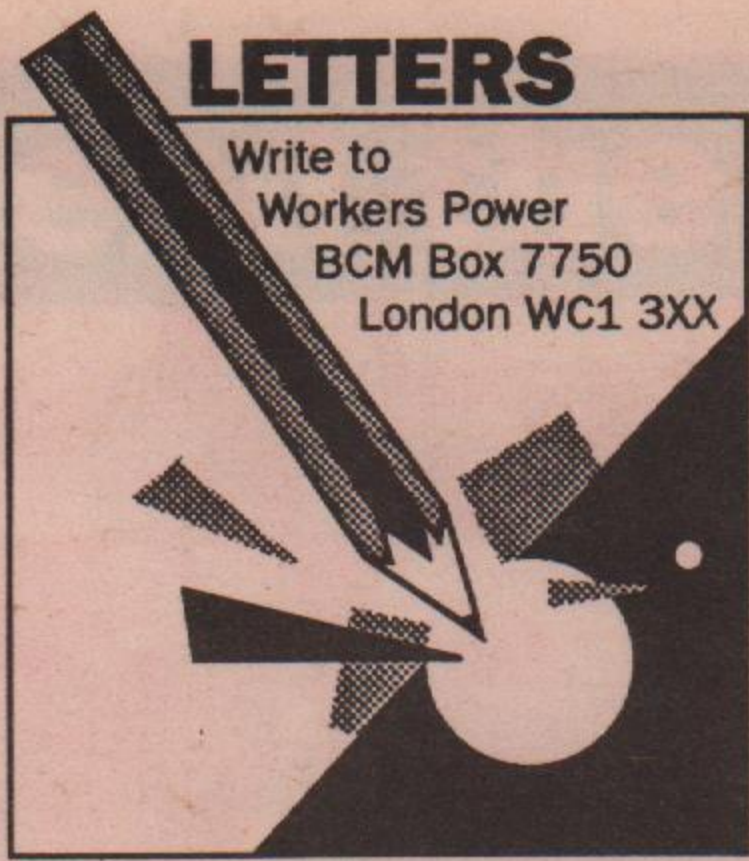
Of course socialists are not in favour of sacking Wendy Bartel now that she has been appointed.

Indeed, despite the hate campaign being whipped up by the *Mail*, that is not what many of the parents are demanding. But we should demand that the council acknowledges its decision was racist and make the funds available immediately for an additional full time post in the school for an Urdu speaker to work with Bartel.

Only this course of action will

force the council to take responsibility for their racism. They made the appointment, not Wendy Bartel. They, not her, must pay for it and resolve the situation in the interests of the large numbers of Asians affected.

Yours in comradeship
Pauline Atienza,
Birmingham



Write to
Workers Power
BCM Box 7750
London WC1 3XX

How to fight fascism

Dear comrades,
Recently in Leicester a meeting was held by the Campaign against French Fascism (CAFF). At the meeting we discussed the rise of fascism in France, which *Searchlight* have said is "the most significant development of fascism in Europe since 1945".

Part of CAFF's future plans is to support a tour of veteran anti-fascists from the Anti-Nazi League (ANL). CAFF are correct in condemning the non-confrontational tactics of SOS Racisme, the largest anti-racist group in France.

Where they fall down though is their belief that the ANL defeated the rise of fascism in the late 1970s in Britain. CAFF are correct that the ANL organised large counter-demonstrations against the National Front, but they turned away from this so as not to lose the support of "public figures" and the liberal establishment.

In reality the ANL turned to precisely the same methods as SOS Racisme. The best example of this is when the National Front marched down Brick Lane, through the centre of a large Asian community. The ANL, instead of organising its thousands of supporters to oppose the Front, organised a concert in another part of London.

CAFF are correct in their call to oppose the French Front National on the streets, but unless they learn the lessons of the ANL in the 1970s they are condemned to make the same mistakes.

Yours in struggle,
A Leicester Anti-Fascist.

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 methods but with militant class struggle methods including the forcible disarmament of "our own" bosses.

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

The LRCI 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!

HOSPITAL DROUGHT

Dear comrades,

The Tories brought in private contractors to the NHS supposedly to provide a more efficient service. What could be further from the truth? At the Leicester Royal Infirmary where I work private contractors have managed to poison the whole water system with Xylene, a highly toxic solvent, whilst doing routine maintenance work on the water tanks.

As a result, for the first week after their handywork there was no water available for washing and drinking. Patients were allowed only cold food, couldn't wash and had to drink Perrier water. The nurses had to carry heavy buckets of water from the temporary tanks outside. Operations and waiting lists were cancelled. Even after a week there was only water for washing available. Nurses and domestics had to boil drinking

water on top of all their normal duties.

Management couldn't be bothered to issue proper information about the risks and guidelines were written down on scraps of paper.

The only thanks the workers got for their efforts was a small article in the hospital magazine. The patients and staff were put through misery all for the sake of private contractors cutting corners to save money and boost profits.

The full story of accidents like this is never told. The local press hardly mentioned it and not one national paper covered it. We need to get rid of all private contractors from the NHS now before more mistakes are made and lives endangered.

NUPE Nurse,
Leicester Royal Infirmary

workers power

Sell Workers Power!

IN THE summer the Tories were rattled by thousands of workers taking strike action. In Scotland at the moment there is a mass campaign of non-payment of the hateful Poll Tax. In England and Wales the Poll Tax registration forms have been alerting people to the approach of its implementation in England and Wales.

Against this background the leaders of the labour movement are running scared. They did their best to sabotage the summer of discontent. Neil Kinnock is telling people to stop defying the Poll Tax and obey the law until the day he enters Number 10.

The need for socialist ideas to combat this claptrap, the need for a revolutionary organisation and a fighting programme as an alternative to the sell out merchants is

desperate. Our paper spreads the ideas, outlines the programme and helps in the building of the organisation that every worker in Thatcher's Britain needs.

The task now is to increase the circulation of our paper. To get the message across to hundreds of new readers we need a big sales drive. Around every trade union branch and workplace we can get to the paper needs to be sold. On the estates we need to regularly get the paper to the thousands who oppose the Poll Tax and want to fight it.

New estate sales, new workplace sales, regular town centre sales must all be stepped up. Buy our paper, read our paper and start helping us to sell it on a regular basis.

Order extra copies from our box number.

Fighting Fund



Thanks this month to readers in Chesterfield (£20), Leicester (£6), Reading (£10) and Sheffield (£160). These donations give us a grand total so far of £14,972. While this takes us past the 20% mark in our drive to raise £70,000, there is still a long way to go.

The money is for new premises. We urgently need them to carry through plans to increase the frequency of our paper. But property doesn't come cheap. The cost of offices in London, whether you buy or rent, is high.

We are appealing to all our readers to redouble their fund raising efforts over the next three months so that by the new year we are well within reach of our target.

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Has Stalinism killed Communism?
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Marxist Discussion Group
Labour after the conference
Thursday 12 October 7.30
Londor Hotel, Londor Rd, SW9
Nr Clapham North tube

Central London:
Public Meeting
South Africa after the elections
Thursday 19 October 7.30
Yorkshire Grey, Theobalds Rd WC1

TROTSKYIST INTERNATIONAL

English language journal of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International
Issue number 3 Summer 1989

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INSIDE

- Water sell off
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British section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International

AS RACIST POLICE RAMPAGE...

SMAASH APARTHEID!

ALL OVER the world, the realities of South African "democracy" are well known. The majority black population, 80% of the country, are denied even the right to vote. People of mixed race and Indians can vote, but only for their own toothless separate assemblies. Real power lies with the white minority.

Despite all the talk of reform apartheid continues to maim and kill.

A few legalised and peaceful marches cannot hide the daily repression meted out to the black majority. Only days after the legal demos in Cape Town and Johannesburg riot police savaged a Pretoria women's march, mercilessly beating innocent bystanders.

In September an NUM

member at the Rustenberg Platinum Refinery was shot dead by a white supervisor at work. His crime? He dared to drink out of a teacup reserved for whites!

This was just part of the daily humiliation for thousands of black workers. At this refinery black workers are searched at the gate while the white workers carry guns in. They are forced to change in separate

rooms to the whites and eat in different canteens. For all de Klerk's rhetoric of change this is everyday reality of today's South Africa.

But violence isn't just, or even mainly, the preserve of bigoted individuals. It is an instrument of the state to quell black protest. Violence flared on election day last month as the police and army moved in to break up protests. At least 29 people were killed, some as young as twelve years old. A woman was beheaded in the bloody repression and a three year old girl was rushed to hospital with gunshot wounds to the head.

But the racists aren't getting things all their own way. Four years after the defeat of the revolutionary struggles of 1985, the black masses of South Africa are back on the move in battle for democracy and against the obscenity of apartheid.

In a mighty display of strength in September, the black working class showed their contempt for the whole election charade in a courageous and militant way. Millions marked polling day by staying away from work in a protest strike. A week later, in an unprecedented demonstration, 40,000 people marched through the centre of Cape Town to protest at the election killings.

In neighbouring Namibia South Africa is trying to maintain control through blocking a victory in the



Western Cape protest

forthcoming elections for the liberation movement SWAPO. But the black masses are mobilising against the puppets of the racist state. Their real victory against South Africa will be determined, not so much by the elections, as by the renewed struggle by the black working class in South Africa itself. It has the power to undermine apartheid's ability to maintain its brutal domination of Namibia. Its solidarity with the Namibian workers is a model for British workers to follow.

At this time of renewed mass resistance the British labour movement has a duty to respond with a vigorous campaign of protest and solidarity action. The sympa-

thy within the British labour movement is undoubtedly there. This was reflected in the greetings sent to the recent summit of the trade unions in South Africa. USDAW, UCW and the NUT were among those that sent their solidarity. AEU even sent fraternal delegates.

But it is time to move beyond telegrams to concerted action. It's time to get the unions to organise workers' sanctions against trade with South Africa. It's time to respond again to the requests of BTR workers who are asking for our support in protesting against this British multi-national's role in bolstering apartheid. We should use the opportunity of another national South

African BTR workers' strike in the autumn to take action here in solidarity.

The AGM of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in November should not be an occasion for premature celebration of the results of the current round of resistance.

It is a long road from here to victory and we can best do our bit to shorten it by using the AGM as a forum for organising workplace based trade union solidarity action to boycott all trade with South Africa at the ports and airports, on the road and railways, in the telephone exchanges and sorting offices.

- For workers' sanctions against apartheid!
- For a socialist federation of southern Africa!

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