

# TORIES' SINISTER PLANS

Whatever the General Election result on April 9, the acute problems facing millions of working people - young and old - will find no solution in parliament.

Apart from the fact that the House of Commons is just a talking shop, the Tories have other plans - win or lose.

Behind all the phoney electioneering and verbal

sparring between the parties is the sinister strategy of the ruling class.

## DICTATORSHIP

The collapse into bankruptcy of the British economy and government finances means that a right-wing dictatorship based on the police and military is looming.

The reorganisation of the MI5/MI6 plotters, banning of TV programmes like Panorama, the glorification of the individual through the "Citizens's Charter" and the fascist-style propaganda of the Tories are clear signs of the drive to ruthless dictatorship.

It will be needed to force workers to accept wage cuts, the ending of state benefits, ➤

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- *The Training Challenge - a trade union training adviser sets the agenda for training rights - P10.*
- *Murdering the USSR - how the "democrats" destroyed the union, by Professor Anatoly Butenko of the Moscow Academy of Sciences - p6.*

► the destruction of services and work camps for young people.

Organisations such as the National Front and the British National Party remain small and uninfluential precisely because the real fascists and racists are inside the Tory Party, waiting their chance.

Under these conditions, a Labour government based on policies of watered-down Thatcherism - would be a mere pawn in the hands of the ruling class.

### INSOLUBLE CRISIS

The Tory panic over the election, the fact that they had to get rid of Thatcher and the Poll Tax, reflects the insoluble crisis British capitalism faces.

For the City of London to reject the Lamont tax-bribes Budget by cutting

share prices shows the nervousness felt about what lies ahead.

The Tories are desperate to hang on to power and during the election campaign will not hesitate to resume the barbaric bombing of Iraq or launch an attack on Libya to try and whip up support.

A slump not seen since the 1930s has developed throughout the world. Britain is the weakest link in this international economic chain.

Under Thatcher-Major get-rich-quick cult of the individual, the Tory Bonapartes destroyed right after right and imposed widespread degradation and poverty.

Britain is the country with the largest prison population per head, where ordinary workers are framed up by the police and courts as a matter of routine, where young people commit suicide in remand

centres and a country where the mentally ill are left to fend for themselves on the streets.

### YOUTH HARASSED

It is a country where the police believe they have the backing of the government to harass youth, especially from black and Asian communities.

Mass homelessness and begging on the streets is the norm in capitalist Britain. Factories are shut, hospitals turned into production lines and schools and colleges disintegrate.

Meanwhile, large-scale financial fraud at BCCI, Lloyds and the Maxwell Corporation goes unchecked. Defendants in fraud trials are able to go free because they don't feel well enough to continue!

### NO ILLUSIONS

It is clear that the General Election only poses the problems facing workers, young people, the unemployed and homeless - it cannot provide the answers.

Voting against the Tories - and it is important to do so on April 9 - cannot alter the fact that the people who do the work have no **control** over what happens.

We will vote Labour as the only way on polling day to show our class hatred of the Tories. But we are under no illusions as to what a Kinnock government would be like.

It would be reactionary and anti-working class from its first hours and betray any hopes that people had in it by forming a coalition.

The capitalist state - parliament, the legal system, the police, the army and much of the media - is there to keep bankers, financiers, landowners and the multi-nationals in power, whoever forms the government.

In other words, whether workers have a future for themselves and their children will be decided not by elections but by the collective action of millions of people. ►



# Production line education

by Anita Lodge

The Tories are determined to wreck state education and turn it into a production line driven by profit and the market.

Latest plans will mean students no longer having their college and university fees paid by local councils. They will have to take out huge loans instead.

Most students are already borrowing heavily while at college to pay for their education needs, on existing grant and fee-paying arrangements.

Many colleges are already run as private companies under conditions where more young people than ever before are trying to receive higher education.

Official figures reveal that from one in eight young people in higher education in 1979 there are now one in four.

In 1990-1991, 236,000 youth applied to enter university, a 40 per cent increase compared to five years ago. For the first time more women applied for admission.

More students than ever before are opting for arts courses, even though this area of education has suffered most from government cuts.

There are now about half a million students in British universities. In two years' time, a figure of 746,000 is anticipated, according to figures released by the Department of Education and Science.

But the "unit of resource" - the amount of money and

learning facilities - will have dropped by 14 per cent for universities since 1989/90 and by 16 per cent for polytechnics.

The renaming of polytechnics to "universities" will do nothing to hide the rapidly falling standards of education, with overcrowded classes and a shortage of materials.

Already teachers in higher education, especially Further Education colleges are having to contend with impossible workloads.

A national survey of post-16 year education has found that for the first time funding levels of full-time further education students has fallen below those for pupils in school sixth forms.

Much of this is due to government attacks on local authority funding since the Poll Tax was introduced.

Overall, the ratio of staff to students has fallen from 10.5 students per teacher in 1986-87 to 11.8 in 1989-90.

One polytechnic recently warned that it expects the staff-student ratio to go up to 35 students per lecturer in the humanities and social sciences.

The student occupations before Christmas revealed a pent-up frustration at the demolition of further and higher education.

The only way to take profit out of education is to take it out of the hands of the capitalist class and put it under the control of students and staff. ●

► The objective must be to overturn the old, bankrupt, decrepit, corrupt and oppressive social order based on the exploitation of human labour through private ownership for profit.

It means struggling to smash the state that frames people at will, that protects the Tory ruling class and building a state that expresses the will and interests of those who work for a living.

History has shown that this is not a pipedream. In fact, such a plan is the only way to answer the moves towards fascist dictatorship now under way behind the scenes.

When the working class emerged

in the early 19th century, it built trade unions to defend and advance conditions, and then a Labour Party to support its interests in parliament.

## BITTER LESSON

The last 13 years have taught millions of workers a bitter lesson: that it is not possible to fight the Tory enemy in the same way.

Two millions workers have lost the right to vote because they could not pay the Poll Tax. Millions more will not vote to express their opposition to the existing political parties.

Others have said they will only

vote not because they support "their party" but because they are against an opposition party.

A new party is needed that tells the truth and is prepared to lead the fight for workers' power, not parliamentary majorities. The Communist League is fighting to be that party.

In every country, workers are facing the challenge of taking control of their own destiny. We are confident that with the building of a new leadership internationally, the last decade of the 20th century will usher in the age of international socialism. ●

# The choice facing the trade unions

The trade unions in Britain as throughout the world are in a period of crisis brought about by the world wide slump of capitalism.

Five sets of Tory laws from 1980 to 1989 turned the unions into essentially illegal organisations. The right to strike and picket no longer exists and unions are subject to massive fines and seizure of assets.

The Tories are planning yet more laws if they are elected. These will open trade unionists up to attack by "individuals" who will get the full backing of the state.

This poses only two possibilities. Firstly the unions could become instruments of the capitalist state and impose slave conditions on their members and the whole working class.

That prospect is shown by pro-state company unions like the electricians union, the EEPTU and

the state-sponsored scab Union of Democratic Mineworkers.

The alternative is that they become vehicles of socialist revolution, led by the revolutionary party. In Britain, the Communist League strives to be that leadership.

Since the early 1980s, union membership has dropped from 12 million to 8 million, reflecting the collapse of manufacturing jobs and the inability of union leaders to fight to retain members.

## MINERS ISOLATED

The trade union leaders did not fight to destroy the anti-union laws. They kept the miners isolated during the heroic coal strike of 1984-1985.

This lack of leadership has been the main factor in the drop in trade union membership. The loss of four million members cannot be put

down to job losses alone.

The right wing trade union leaders in the TUC secretly welcome the advance of company unions like the EEPTU, and its merger with the engineers union, the AUEW.

These right wing union leaders will not fight for the ending of the anti-union laws, even under a Labour government, should one be elected.

They tie the working class to the methods of the bankrupt British capitalist industry — which is completely against the interests of the world working class.

This is also the position of the Labour leaders in Parliament and the reason why they won't abolish all anti-union laws.

Union leaders who urge the working class to return a Labour government at any cost, as a panacea for all the economic crises facing the class, consciously

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# PARAGON CENTRE FIGHTS CLOSURE

➡ or unconsciously conceal the fact that Labour leaders such as Kinnock want to strangle the independence of the unions and tie them to the state.

Thousands of jobs are lost everyday in Britain, without the slightest resistance from the trade union leaders.

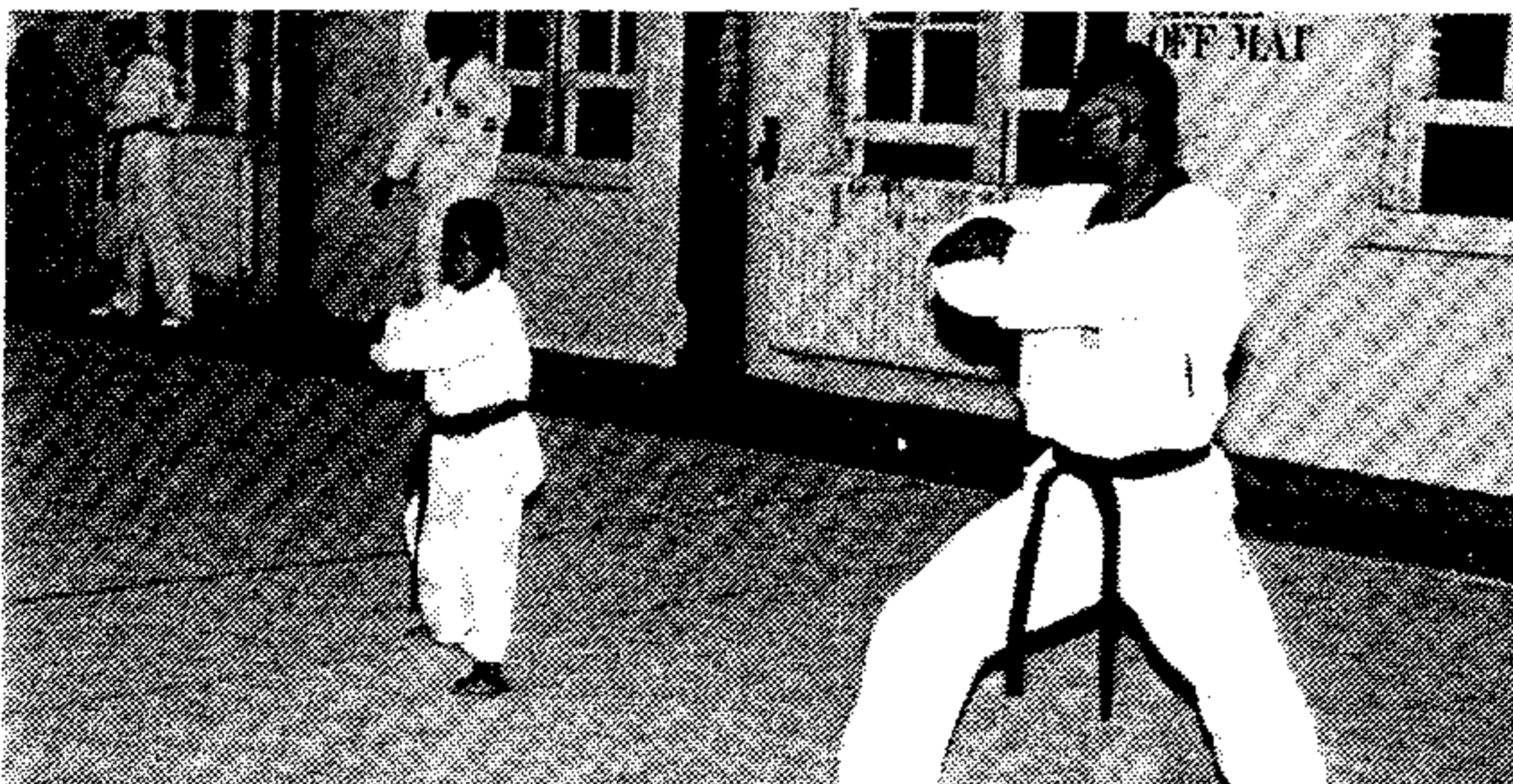
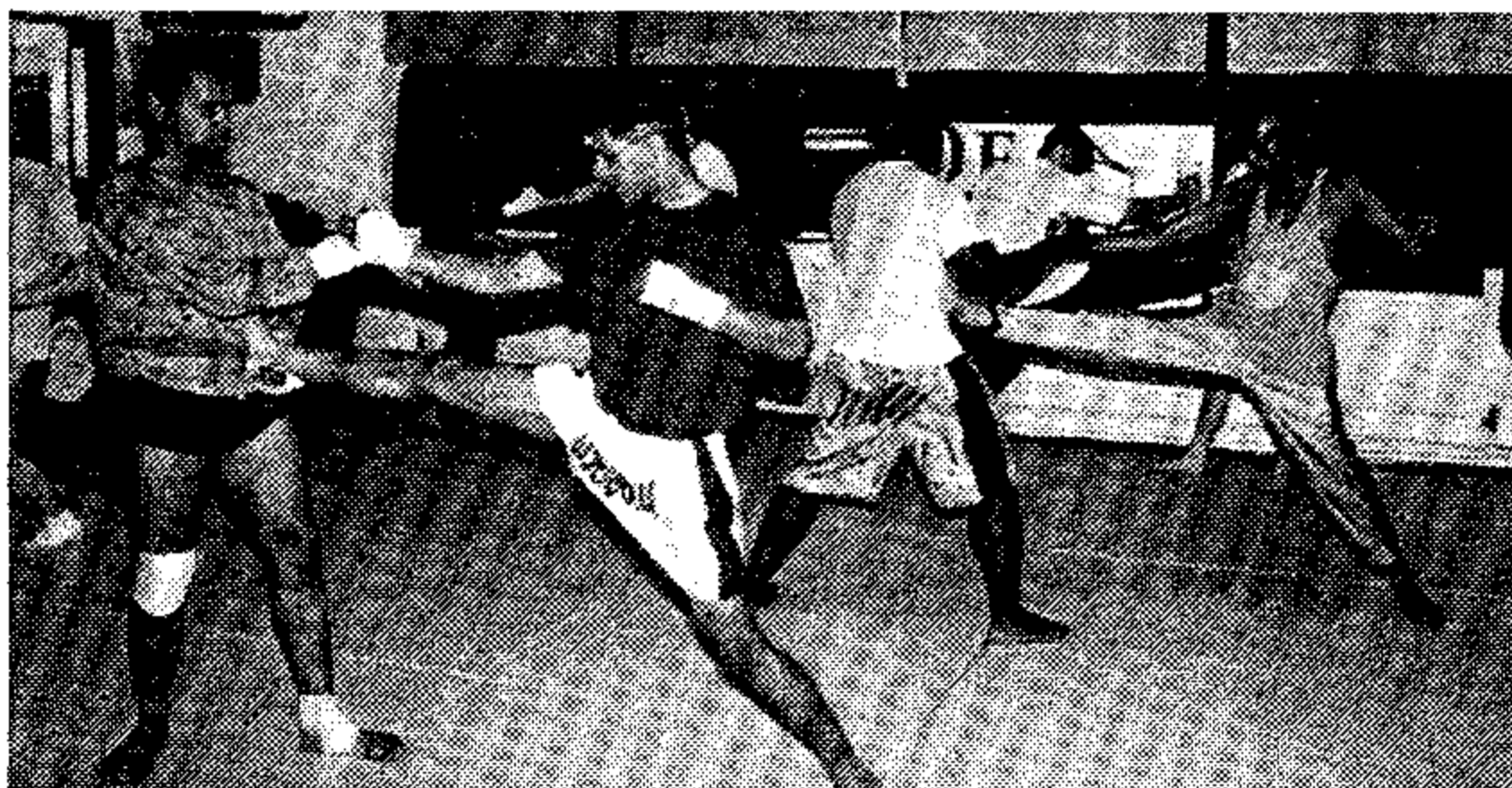
Millions of youth are condemned to a life-time of unemployment because of the trade union and labour leaders' refusal to fight for socialism to end capitalist anarchy.

Trade unions cannot replace a revolutionary party as an instrument of socialist revolution, but they are a main area in which the working class is organised and the most important link between the working class and revolutionary leadership.

The Communist League in Britain fights for revolutionary leadership in the unions.

- \* It fights for free membership of unemployed youth and workers, for the unity of employed and unemployed.
- \* It fights against factory closures and the closure of all social amenities with sit-ins and occupations.
- \* It fights for unions to have agreements of a sliding scale of wages and hours without loss of pay.
- \* It fights for the unions to take responsibility for the training of all youth in modern technology and skills.

The unions must fight all the problems confronting the working class: poverty, unemployment, homelessness, racism, lack of education - from a revolutionary standpoint. \*



One of London's most active Community Centres is facing the agony of being sold off to property speculators by the London Residuary Body, and centre members discovered the plan only when staff of a property company started measuring up.

A public auction brought no buyer, so the LRB (the government quango charged with selling off assets of the old ILEA and GLC) plans a telephone auction this month.

The Paragon Centre at the Elephant and Castle is a former ILEA school, began life as a sports club, and its 1,000 members have access to a fully-equipped gymnasium, judo and karate courses. There is also a print-making studio used by artists and others from the community. The centre provides low-rent studios for 60 artists, including highly qualified and talented painters, sculptors and print-makers, amongst them some of the most promising younger artists in London.

Representatives of the Paragon have appealed to Labour-controlled Southwark Council to help them prevent property speculators taking over this important community asset. The leader of the council praised the centre, but failed to ensure that it was not sold. ●

For the majority of Russian citizens, it is obvious: under the conditions of economic collapse and the sharp decline in production and services, prices rise enormously and absorb any salary increases, so that more and more people face poverty.

Only a small part of the nouveau riche actually enjoy the situation, while the majority of people getting wages feel uncertainty and anxiety.

People who say that even in war time it was not so bad are 100 per cent right. Why? Because now we are in the stage of civil conflict and that is very sad. Who is with us, who is against us, who is right, who is wrong, where will it end? Complete uncertainty of the situation, absence of perspective, lack of confidence in our society make our life unbearable.

That is why the deep essence of the revolution in our country consists in the destruction of political and economic structures which preserve so called "deadlock" tendencies.

### BREAKING OUT

This is the revolution of renewal of the mechanism of progress, breaking out of the deadlocked line of evolution.

This type of revolution has a deeper essence than any other revolutionary changes and the result must be more impressive. Our society has passed through very important, but only initial stages of this process.

The most wide-spread myth is about the shift from "bankrupt" socialism to capitalism in the ex-USSR, or now the Commonwealth of Independent States. Blessed are the believers!

No self-respecting sociologist or political commentator will ever consider as a socialist system that where meaningful production as well as political power were alienated from the workers - which is exactly what happened in Soviet society. We haven't had any kind of socialism, neither "human", "democratic",

# Murdering the USSR

*by Anatoly Butenko, Professor at the Academy of Sciences, Moscow. Written and translated for Socialist Future.*



Red Army recruits await the start of a parade

"degenerate", "bureaucratic" or any other kind.

In our society the party-state bureaucracy gave the ruling apparatus - and not the working class - total political and economic power.

### BUREAUCRATIC CONTROL

In a nutshell, under the rule of the "father and teacher of all peoples" in our country, a monster barracks, pseudo-socialism was created in the middle of the 1930s, as a new exploiting, anti-historical society, controlled by the state-party bureaucracy.

The level of exploitation and suppression of the working class was enormously higher than in modern, civilised capitalist society. So it is quite natural that the workers turned away from the society called "created socialism", "developed socialism", or the "transition to communist society", etc by official "communist" ideology.

And now the bourgeois democrats give us exactly the "communist" ideological stereotype when they say that people are "tired of" socialism and want capitalism. There is no need to be particularly clever to understand this mythology spread by demagogues.

The idea is simple - to convince the credulous that capitalism is the only alternative, the only way out of the crisis. But that is an absolute lie.

It is a process of transition from one exploiting, anti-popular type of society to another, no less anti-popular exploiting type - to unfettered capitalism with its stage of primary accumulation of capital, with the power of speculative capital, and new bourgeoisie.

That is why the life of working people is so difficult and hopeless. They quite understand that nothing will change for them: they will be exploited and oppressed as in previous times. Today's struggle is not against the alienation of everyone from the means of production and power but for the forms of property and exploitation.

It is difficult to argue that the August coup was an attempt by the "nomenklatura" to restore its power with the help of force and armed uprising, and to protect that type of exploiting society - barracks pseudo-socialism.



Food can be bought ...

In order to achieve that target, it was necessary to remove the democrat Mikhail Gorbachev together with his anti-bureaucratic perestroika, as well as the bourgeois elements legalised by perestroika, and their main protector, Russian president Boris Yeltsin and the Russian government. As it is known, the coup failed and the members of the coup committee, state-party bureaucrats, were isolated from power. But the events inside the country were transformed into blitz-revolution. This resulted in power for the bourgeois democrats who declared themselves responsible for the country and its destiny.

### RENEWED UNION

Gorbachev, free after his imprisonment, was unable to understand that as soon as the principal differences in socio-political systems of the republics became evident, the idea of a renewed union, and not only a centralised federation, but even confederation and even the idea of the whole state, became unrealistic. The August coup was "fatal" for the idea of union.

But the further the process went, the more the whole union power structure became an obstacle from the point of view of supporters of capitalism. It was the last obstacle on their way to political and economic power in the country.

The question of removing this obstacle was raised: the removal of Gorbachev from his political power and the abolition of the whole union structure and institutions, the constitution of the USSR, the inter-republican economic council, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with Eduard Shevardnadze and so on.

And the real obstacle was absolutely not the personal character of Gorbachev, or the members of his team, their flexibility or non-flexibility, consistency or non-consistency, but the socio-political attitude of Gorbachev's policy

Still not bourgeois, not capitalist, but popular-democratic, with elements of "communist utopia", it was raised like a mountain

obstructing the way of new political forces and their personal political ambitions. That obstacle had to be removed, because the perspective of struggle with Gorbachev was less promising than the struggle amongst themselves.

### NEW IMPETUS

That is why the December anti-presidential, anti-state coup, the coup organised and carried out in Byelorussia as a "triple agreement", abolished the USSR with the only aim being to remove Gorbachev.

It was the only way to remove all the constitutional all-union structures from power, by three signatures. The events put the other republics in a very delicate position: to sign the agreement and join the Commonwealth of Independent States or to be isolated. So the summit in Alma Ata took place, and then in Minsk. The process of murdering the all-union structures got a new impetus.



... but at a price

## Comment

# Down with Yeltsin!

We are publishing the article by Professor Anatoly Butenko as a contribution to a discussion about the tumultuous changes taking place in Russia, Ukraine and the other republics of what was the USSR.

Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolshevik Party led a successful workers' revolution in 1917. The building of socialism, however, depended on extending the social revolution to the major capitalist countries.

This did not happen, and, after Lenin's death, the isolated Soviet state came under the control of a bureaucracy headed by Stalin.

It took political power away from workers' councils and established a monstrous dictatorship. The theory of Marxism was made into a form of religion to justify the tyranny.

Despite this, the land and the factories did not revert to capitalist ownership. This enabled the Red Army to defeat the Nazi invasion and almost single-handedly and with great sacrifice turn the tide against fascism.

After Stalin died in 1953, Nikita Khrushchev started to reveal the truth about Stalinism. But his attempts to break the grip of the bureaucracy failed.

In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev launched the policies of perestroika (reconstruction) and glasnost (openness), which amounted to a political revolution against the old order.

The break-up of the Stalinist bureaucracy exposed in their sharpest form all the problems of the Soviet Union which had long been kept from public gaze.

Gorbachev tried to maintain a balance of forces in

society and in the Communist Party which, in the end, proved impossible. He himself was unconstitutionally overthrown soon after the failed coup of August 1991.

Those around Boris Yeltsin who seized power in their own coup, as Professor Butenko explains, represent the supporters of capitalism. We are totally opposed to them, just as we are completely against Bush and Major.

Under the slogan of the market, Yeltsin's regime has impoverished tens of millions of people with astronomical price rises. The "democrats" steal state property and use foreign currency to make sure they eat well while others starve.

Under the slogan of democracy, they have muzzled the press, banned demonstrations and strengthened the secret police.

In their attempts to introduce capitalism into the former Soviet Union, Yeltsin, the entrepreneurs and would-be capitalists are finding that the West cannot offer the kind of investment and financial help that was hoped for.

The United States, Germany, Japan, Britain and the major capitalist powers are experiencing an economic slump unparalleled since the 1930s.

We stand for the overthrow of the Yeltsin government and its replacement by a workers' government. All the land, factories and means of distribution and exchange should be placed under the control of workers.

Not food parcels or charity, but the fight for workers' power and a socialist Britain is the best help we can give to their struggle. ●

➤ As we say, it was as it was. So what is next? Will the actions, following the old idea that "the aims justify the means" save the commonwealth of peoples and republics named the Commonwealth of Independent States? Hardly.

And now we are getting the results of the split in the army, fleet, energy supplies, transport, and so on.

Two processes become more powerful: the disintegration, connected with unevenness of the changes in different areas grows enormously, and together with it grows dissatisfaction of the population, who now get the fruit of policy of their own republican leaders and their contradictory political ambitions.

And moreover, together with the abolition of the USSR there cannot be any other socio-political forces capable of co-ordinating or regulating the development of all states as some kind of centre. Nobody can give any kind of command to any of the republics.

### MUTUAL TOLERANCE

Well, probably the times of the "common road" are over. And now we Soviet democrats, all Soviet democrats, if we are democrats, must be accustomed to mutual tolerance, reckon with the situation when every republic as an independent state will choose its own way.

In brief, instead of the former lie

about the mutual interests of the people of different republics of the USSR comes the truth about the incompatibility of nation-state interests in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

But the realisation of the fact that truth cannot be achieved by lies, and the recognition of incompatibility of interests is only the first step in the solution of extremely difficult problems.

To look for your own profit at the expense of others is meaningless as in the Commonwealth of Independent States, where the old principle still operates - "you'll get what you are looking for". We shall see very soon whether people understand this or not. ●



# Picturing the face of fascism

*Corinna Lotz offers a selection of some great viewing on offer at London art galleries this spring*



## **Richard Gilbert**

City scenes from New York, Chicago and London, by an artist who has made a thorough study of US muralists and Seurat.

Raab Gallery, Millbank,  
6 Vauxhall Bridge Road, SW1.  
Tel: 071 828 2588  
Until March 28

German painter Otto Dix spoke out passionately against war and degradation, as in "Skat players" (above). In the words of one of his own countrymen: "The Nazis thought him decadent, and the postwar period preferred to keep mum about him - it was always possible he was a Communist."

OTTO DIX: at the Tate Gallery\* until May 17. Tel: 071 821 1313

## **Van Gogh**

### **Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man\***

How Van Gogh lived in England before becoming an artist. Touching drawings of Isleworth and Brixton, plus English painters admired by the young Dutchman.

Barbican Art Gallery  
Barbican Centre, EC2.  
Tel: 071 608 3056  
Until May 4  
(Jennifer Durrant in the Barbican Concourse Gallery until March 24)

## **Zeit-Mauer (Time-Wall)**

Photography — Installation - Painting.  
Aspects of the New Germany as seen by Graham Budgett, Rainer Görss and Toni Wirthmüller

Goethe Institut London  
50 Princes Gate, SW7.  
Tel: 071 581 3344  
Until April 24

## **Hugh Gilmour**

Recent paintings by a young artist from Scotland's worst unemployment blackspot, Irvine New Town.

The Cafe Gallery by The Pool,  
Southwark Park SE16.

Tel: 071 232 2170  
Until March 29

## **Rembrandt: Paintings, Etchings and Drawings\***

from March 26

Paintings and Etchings at the National Gallery

Until May 24

Drawings at the British Museum  
Until August 4

Also at the British Museum:

## **Wu Guanzhong: A Twentieth Century Chinese Painter.**

From March 24

\* Denotes admission charge

## **Alexander Calder\***

The inventor of the mobile, and one of the best-loved American sculptors, whose fan mail came mainly from children under six.

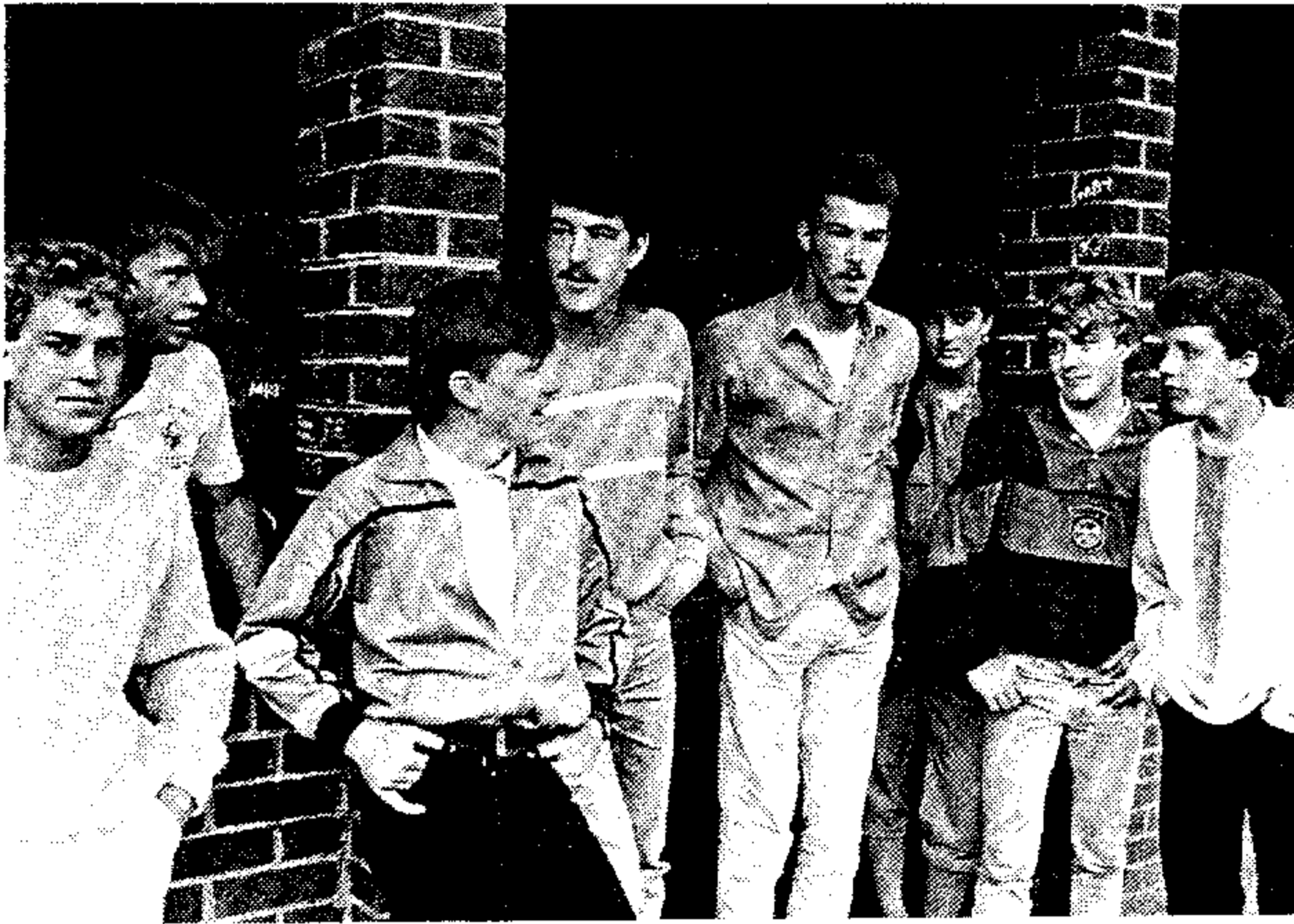
Royal Academy of Arts  
Piccadilly, SW1

Tel: 071 439 7438  
Until June 7

## **The Figure Laid Bare**

by Argenio, Auerbach, Baselitz, Di Stefano, De Francia, Kitaj, Kossoff, Lowe, O'Donoghue and others

Pomeroy Purdy Gallery  
Jacob Street Studios, Mill Street SE1. Tel:  
071 237 6062  
Until April 15



Youth in the North-East of England

The number of young people entering the labour market is falling fast due to the decline in the birth rate; 80 per cent of the workforce of the year 2000 are already at work.

Seventy per cent of the current workforce left school at the minimum leaving age, however, and 65 per cent of them receive no systematic education or training.

The latest suggestion by the Employment Secretary, Michael Howard, is that workers would become liable for the cost of their training in their contracts of employment.

Everyone needs training at every stage of their working life. There are no longer any jobs that will last, unchanged, for a working life. The pace of technological development forces change and demands re-skilling.

Education and training can only become a lifelong undertaking if they are based on a sound foundation of broad-based education early in life. Currently young people leave school with a narrow-based education under the National Curriculum.

The only opportunity to embark on training is through the government's "Youth Training" programme. But there is little choice in the training on offer and it is too job-specific too fast.

People are streamed into vocational routes from which they cannot escape.

The Tory government's answer to the adult education and training crisis is to pass responsibility to the employer. Latest estimates show that government spending on training is to be cut by £170 million.

The fact is that the British employer has never seen training as an investment, only as a "cost".

Since 1979, the government has abolished local and national "tri-partite" decision-making bodies (Industrial Training Boards) and therefore stopped any trade union involvement and consultation.

Young people need a system based on choice, coherence and relevance, none of which can be met through forced programmes, such as "Youth Training" and "Employment Training".

A real training system must combine education and training, and involve a high level of choice and "ownership" - the principle of learning for life.

To ensure this happens, there needs to be a statutory right to paid educational leave and training. The onus should be on individual choice with professional guidance designed to suit talents and interests.

# The Training Challenge

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*Special contribution to "Socialist Future" from a trade union training adviser*

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Under Y.T and E.T. government schemes people are forced to work in legitimate jobs without the benefit of a real wage or guaranteed job at the end of the "training" period.

For these people in full-time work there is no "right to training or education". National trades unions are the only bodies actively negotiating training agreements with management.

There should be a statutory right to training whether employed or unemployed, 16 years old or 60 years old. This right should include:

- **quality training and retraining to ensure skill progression and enhancement**
- **choice in training regardless of sex, age, race, disability or hours worked or not**
- **joint decision-making about the form and content of education and training**
- **national and internationally recognised standards of training and accreditation**

Without a statutory right to education and training the government and employers will continue to leave provision to "market forces" - and young people especially know only too well what that means.

# Techno pushes house to its limits

By Dave Bickley

Without doubt the last four years in popular music have been as exciting as any since 1963. From the mid-1980s onwards, music journalists were looking for the next big thing to give a "kick up the backside" to the music industry. Ironically when the proverbial blow was dealt, in the form of acid house, it took the journalists by surprise as much as it did the record companies.

Journalists find it difficult to write about the music as it is not based on issues or personalities. Its protagonists are as keen to eschew rock-star trappings as their predecessors were to embrace them. As a result the music by-passes critical judgement to work directly on the nervous system; its sole aim is to make you dance. The mainstream music press response to this has been to acknowledge the music's presence but not to go into its content in any detail - a unique admission of defeat.

Though irritating to the press, acid house has caused major problems for the large record labels, whose whole promotional machinery is geared to the marketing of bands and pop stars in the traditional sense. The people making this music are virtually invisible, so they have no image to project. Also, with a few

exceptions, these musicians do not produce albums, the mainstay of record company revenue, preferring instead the near obsolete vinyl 12-inch single. As a result the major labels like the journalists have been left



out of the equation with the product going straight to the consumer via the independent labels. Not even national radio can take credit for the music's success. Radio One is still notoriously slow to play house instrumentals. The element of danger and illegality of the music and the scene that surrounds it means that though it is

part of mass culture it still retains an underground feel to it.

The explicit identification of the music with Ecstasy is so strong that it can't be ignored. Suffice it to say that the two are synonymous in a way that has never occurred before between music and drugs.

At the moment the music is at a crucial point. The hardcore techno scene, the most extreme form of house music, has to some minds played itself out both in terms of speed and use of sounds. Its fanbase is the most dedicated and innovative at raves and numbers amongst them the "E Monsters", those who have succumbed totally to the drug and music. Their appearance is characterised by a predilection for head gear and props. Surgical masks and cardboard boxes on heads are just a few examples of this phenomenon.

The survival of techno is essential for house music as it is the purest manifestation of the music and its principles. It is also the most experimental as the fans' behaviour testifies. Not only is it redefining the possibilities of dance music, but of equal importance is the way that it is enabling people to behave that five years ago would have been unthinkable.

## LETTERS to the editor

In a few weeks time the British public have the opportunity to instigate the start of a recovery from 13 years of Tory rule. I am in my early twenties and along with my peers have only known what it is like to live under a Conservative government. In that time we have been outraged by the changes made which have led to a depression, a rise in unemployment and a deconstruction of social attitudes to fundamental issues such as health and education.

During the 1980s people were encouraged to have the "I'm all right Jack" attitude. Possibly we could all then buy our own

homes in the suburbs, draw up the drawbridge to our castle and be safe from the increasing problems in our society. This is not an attitude which correlates to our increasing knowledge of the world at large through transport and communication.

I only hope that people will now understand that mistakes have been made and that we must be prepared for radical changes in the basic political structure, for example the voting system, a constitutional review and a shift from the crawl towards right wing politics.

R Smythe, Barnet, Herts.

# Slump brings credit crunch

Every day, new evidence emerges to show that, far from ending, the recession, already the longest since the 1930s, has turned to world slump.

The "credit crunch" arrived with a bang in 1991, ending the uncontrollable 1980s boom in plastic money. A crisis has hit the banks and the financial institutions in America, Japan and Britain.

This is the clearest indication that the unlimited expansion of credit has not given international capitalism a new lease of life. It has created a debt monster that is now devouring those who created it.

The £5 billion write-off of bad debts by Lloyd's, Midland, Barclays and National Westminster confirms that the banks worldwide are now non-performing institutions.

The effects of the slump can be seen everywhere. Lloyds of London, the world's biggest insurance underwriters, has reported the worst loss in its 300-year history.

This loss occurred in 1988-89, in the wake of Black Friday, the 1987 stock market crash which wiped billions off the values of the world's major companies. Now, in 1992, fresh corruption scandals rock the world's financial traders every day.

Economic analysts are shocked and surprised by the speed of events. The collapse in profits of Lonrho, a huge multinational group of more than 700 companies in Africa, the Americas, Europe and the UK, "was totally unexpected" according to a City analyst.

Another analyst explains that "one of the fundamental problems is that it (Lonrho) isn't generating any cash. You can see why they are having to flog assets".

Lonrho is typical of the decline in world trade which has defeated

attempts to open up world markets. Five years of negotiations amongst the leading capitalist countries, known as the Uruguay round of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) have come to nothing.

Collapse of world trade leads inevitably and inexorably to war, country against country and class against class.

## LOW WAGES

During the 1970s and 1980s, as profits fell, the pressure for fewer workers to produce more for lower wages increased. Multi-national companies switched production to countries with low wages where trade union organisation was ineffective or non-existent. "German manufacturing increased its output by about 40 per cent but decreased its employment by 600,000 workers or 7 per cent between 1968 and 1987," according to the National Institute for Economic and Social Research.

"On the other hand," the report

continues, "UK manufacturing output increased by a little over 10 per cent, but the reduction in employment was three million workers or 37 per cent over the same period."

As the boom turned to recession and now slump, the drive for increased productivity gave way to closures of whole industries. The threatened reduction of British mining to only 10 or 12 pits gives a measure of the scale of what is to come.

## FIGHTING FUND

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