

# SOCIALIST VOICE

Journal of the International Socialist League  
British Section of the IWL (FI)

**No  
Loans!  
Free  
Access  
to  
Education!**



**INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST LEAGUE**

★ The Nurses' Struggle

★ Sergei Trotsky Cleared

★ The First Anniversary of the Intifada

# Editorial:

## For Class not Individual Struggle

There is no lack of literature showing how the working class, and particularly the poorer sections of society, are suffering and going to suffer, from Tory cuts in Health, Education and Social Services generally. However, there is a lack of answers to the question of what to do?

Leaders of the Labour Party will make parliamentary speeches criticising Tory policies. They remain within the confines of a loyal parliamentary opposition, careful to separate themselves from the encouragement of any real movement outside.

Kinnock has given not the least encouragement to the nurses' struggle. When the students marched on Parliament he went out of his way to denounce them for coming within the sacred square mile, separating himself from those MP's criticising the police attack.

Not only Thatcher, but the majority of voters with hostility to Thatcher, as even the polls show, are contemptuous of this loyal Labour opposition.

As to the lefts, their answer is general propaganda against the Tories plus nothing beyond "folded arms" policies. Refuse to pay the Poll Tax; Refuse to go on Employment Training.

In fact, of course, as we have commented before, a great mass of the working class just will not be able to pay the tax. Something more than general propaganda and "folded arms", "refuse to do", is going to be necessary. Some of the lefts argue that there can be such a movement, that the Tories would be swept away.

Positive policies of struggle and organisation are needed and not just vague hopes. It took an organised mass movement to put out Heath. And let us not forget that there were movements in the state forces for a military coup at that time.

The other movement of folded arms in the unions, around Employment Training, is now collapsing. The unemployed did not enter the scheme in the way the Government planned. The TUC General Council now comes to the assistance of the Tory Government by reversing that face of the two-faced policy at the last Congress, which

supported boycott.

They have presided over the destruction of a generation of trained youth. Many in the bureaucracy are congratulating themselves on having defeated Employment Training just as others help it grow.

The Tory Government will now tie up the trade union bureaucrats in its plans to make ET compulsory. The past years have shown very decisively, particularly in relation to the anti-union laws, that when the trade union leaders offer a little finger, the Tories bite off the hand.

For our part, we are all in favour of propaganda and agitation on the anti-working class nature of Poll Tax and ET. But the net result of placing the emphasis on individual refusal of these government measures has been to take the struggle away from moving workers' organisations and from mass mobilisation. It takes the heat off trade union leadership. It is this method which led to the left in the T&G assisting Ron Todd's manoeuvres, which in turn assisted the manoeuvres of Kinnock and Willis.

Youth have a right to work and a right to free education. These rights involve the future of our class and are higher than the interests of profit. The present student campaign should consider how it can build a movement amongst all the youth and build a class movement against the Tories.

We stand on the needs of youth and working class men and women. What we demand or even win is not a question of what capitalism or its finance houses can afford. It is a question of what workers require that should animate us to build the strength of workers to obtain their needs.

One of the necessary conditions for the progress of humanity is that large sections of working class youth should have access to culture and science. We demand the expansion of adult colleges and the full maintenance of youth and the unemployed who wish to study.

As against the Government Schemes and the craven policies of the trade union bureaucracy on youth, which mean the "training" of youth in the interests of capitalism,

we pose that the capitalists must be forced to open technical training centres under workers control and with training courses drawn up by committees of trade unionists.

A training scheme will make sense only if the weight is borne by the big capitalists while it is controlled by the workers. There is no other choice for the unions between struggling for that and capitulating to the Tories, their state and the multi-nationals.

In order to throw trade union doors wide open to exploited youth we demand the establishment of reduced dues for young workers.

Class demands are the only road. But, of course, they will only be obtained by mass movements inside the unions, on the streets, in the communities and the factories. And the essential core of that movement can only be the youth and the exploited themselves.

### A New Format and the Fund

The new format of Socialist Voice has been developed in order to allow the International Socialist League to produce other important material such as documents, pamphlets and leaflets. The paper is now produced and published by the ISL, ensuring that Socialist Voice will be on sale at the start of each month.

In order to expand our number of pamphlets and leaflets we need donations for our fund. The new rise of militant struggles against the Tories will be the soil on which our paper grows and becomes stronger - join the fight - send us a donation.

## International Socialist League

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### Socialist Voice

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# Bradford:

## Tories Threaten the Inner Cities

Thomas Hood

There has been a massive reaction to Tory plans to use Bradford to change the face of local government.

6,000 people, half of them striking NALGO members, lobbied the council meeting on October 25th which introduced £5.8 million of cuts in the council's budget and promised a radical new Tory approach to the role of local authorities.

Bradford is the only inner city area under Tory control. They have power through the casting vote of the Lord Mayor. He used it more than fifty times in the marathon council meeting. His power to do so is the subject of a legal challenge by Gemima Wilson, a Tory voting old age pensioner who lives in one of the fifteen homes, Eric Pickles, the council leader has pledged that his group will privatise.

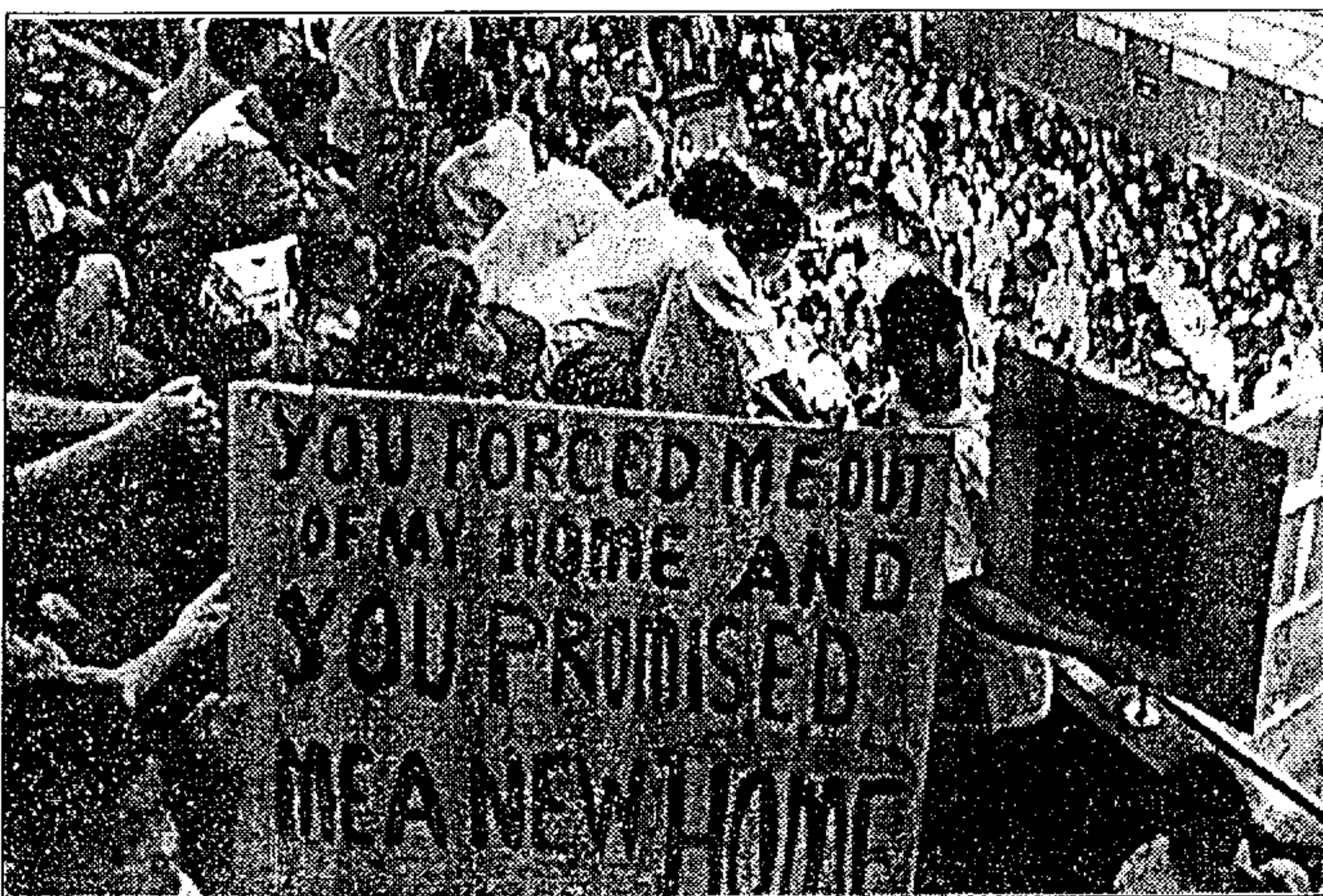
The cuts package itself is smaller than ones being introduced by Labour local authorities such as Manchester, Sheffield, Brent and the Inner London Education Authority. Its significance is in the stated intention of the Tory group that they are not just interested in avoiding rate-capping or keeping down rate increases. They want to undo the whole structure of what they describe as: "municipal socialism", not just to manage it more efficiently.

They have already announced plans to sell off all major leisure facilities and the teachers centre as well as the old peoples homes and a team has been set up to see what other assets can be sold. It is also to look at what services can be hived off from the council to private companies in addition to school meals and school cleaning which are already to go as a result of government legislation.

For those services that remain under council control new management techniques are to be introduced to ensure greater exploitation of staff and the weeding out of "unsatisfactory" employees.

Senior managers are to be placed on fixed term contracts with performance related pay. They will only earn 80% of their present pay unless they make significant progress in achieving the objectives set for them by the Tories. But they can earn up to 115% of existing salaries by making savings. Previous negotiating machinery with trade unions has been scrapped and managers have been given full responsibility for determining the conditions of service of staff.

Over the next five years the objective is to get rid of 9,000 of the councils present



26,000 employees. In just one field, education, this year's cuts include; getting rid of supply teachers who cover for teachers who are off work ill and scrapping the remedial teaching service which gave support to children in mainstream schools with special learning difficulties. School meals have been increased in price by between 25% and 75% resulting in a drop in take up of nearly half. Forty school meals staff have already been sacked because of this and hundreds more will follow. Posts for giving support to children whose first language is not English, more than a third of all children in Bradford, have been dropped, even though 75% of the cost is met by the government. This is in line with a new race relations policy which says: "all users of council services should be treated equally whatever their needs". All posts concerned with improving opportunities for women in employment or girls in education have gone. There are also big cuts in school building and repairs and in the money available for school books and materials.

There has been tremendous popular opposition to the proposals continuing on from the October 25th demonstration. 15,000 people voted against the privatisation of old peoples homes in a ballot conducted in the town centre with only 400 voting in favour.

Members of the NUT are conducting a similar ballot on the cuts in education by approaching parents at school gates. So far the vote is 99% against.

All sorts of ad-hoc campaigning groups have been set up and council unions have experienced a huge rise in membership. The role of the unions and Labour Party has, however, been a very mixed one. The trades council and district Labour Party leadership, dominated by right wingers, whose main pre-occupation is witch-hunting Militant and other lefts, have sat on demands that they should mobilise action even when these have gone through meetings.

NALGO, the local government officers union, has dropped its industrial action against the cuts despite large votes in favour, in response to a promise of no compulsory redundancies among its own members. However, NATFHE is balloting for action against the cuts in the colleges and the NUT has achieved an 83% yes vote, in a large turn-out, in a ballot for half day strike action, to begin a campaign of action. At the moment the national leadership is holding back the actual strike to "give the Tories a breathing space to respond to demands made by a national deputation."

The will exists among council employees and users of council services to conduct a major campaign against the Tory strategy.

It is important that this takes place despite the 'new realist' resistance to action of the Labour and National Trade Union leaders.

What faces Bradford now is intended to be the blueprint for local government in the future.

# Hands off the Newcastle Students' Union

The Newcastle Polytechnics Students' Union Executive have been served with a court injunction preventing them from campaigning against "CUTS", "LOANS" and "MOVES" and from encouraging anyone else to do so. They are no longer allowed to lobby, leaflet or hold meetings.

On Friday 18th November at 7am executive members of Newcastle Polytechnic Students' Union were awakened by bailiffs and served with a writ to appear in court on 25th November. At the court they were served with the injunction.

They are accused of besetting (a charge often used in the miners' strike when no modern law could be found) and prevented from carrying out their duties as elected officers.

The injunction was illegal, as it did not follow the normal procedure. The authorities demanded the injunction for life. Although this was refused and the judge admitted the injunction was not a legal document and that the servers did not follow procedure, the injunction was granted.

The Judge's explanation for this was, "I am not a person who abides by rules, rules are meant to be broken". The precedent he was using was the miners and printers strikes! In fact this sets a new precedent which must be repudiated by the entire labour movement.

The case for an injunction should have been thrown out of court in thirty seconds. The barrister for the NUS could not believe what was happening.

The college administration had been photographing every leaflet and poster put up by the students publishing their campaign against the moves, cuts, student loans and for women's safety and used this as evidence in the court. The photographs were produced as evidence!

When the judge refused to grant the injunction for life the Labour controlled Newcastle Council demanded it for three years, when this was refused they demanded the injunction stick for the length of the executives term of office providing they could not resign.

The executive, according to British law, cannot appeal against the injunction.

While this outrage is allowed against the Newcastle students the police go wild in London. So much so that a group of barristers whose rooms overlook Westminster Bridge have offered their services free to any student who was arrested during the carnage.

What is the reasoning behind this unprece-

*The judge said "I am not a person who abides by rules, rules are meant to be broken"*



dent attack on students civil liberties? Nobody has committed a crime, nobody has done anything illegal-apart from the court, that is!

The students in Newcastle had been campaigning, in the first instance, against proposals to move certain polytechnic departments, including sociology and psychology off the city centre campus to a site about four miles out of town.

Direct action taken in the campaign, such as occupations, were peaceful and non-violent. Women had been in the fore-front of the campaign which was also highlighting the bad lighting on the city centre campus putting their safety at risk and the incidence of homelessness. The council intimated that the women students had been manipulated in the campaign; as if they are not directly affected by the cuts themselves.

The real reason for the heavy handed tactics of the council, working at the behest of the Polytechnic, is revealed in the fact that the Poly is to move to corporate status in April. This means that the Poly's assets will become their own and will no longer be owned by the city council.

The city centre building is worth a fortune and will be flogged off by the Poly who want the students out of the buildings concerned to assist in the process of transition to corporate

status.

The students feel that the council and the Poly want to turn the college into a prodigious business. The students oppose this move and were quick to sense the devious plans behind the seemingly innocent transfer of departments. This opposition and the broad campaign is what has provoked this arrogant attack.

This case of political suppression and attempt to silence the students should be taken up throughout the labour and trade union movement. It should be a campaign for all students to highlight and fight against.

\* Hands off the Students Union.

\* Hands off the Newcastle executive.

## London Police Attack Students

The biggest mobilisation of students for many years against the Tory Government's Education Reform Act, culminated in a head on clash with the police at Westminster Bridge, London, on Thursday November 24th.

The demonstration, numbering tens of thousands, was a tremendous show of strength which left the NUS leadership ducking for cover, mainly behind police lines. From there they proceeded to lecture us about the necessity to observe the law while police were pushing and shoving.

The reason for the excessive policing is because we live in a 'democracy', enshrined in that noble institution the Houses of Parliament, which lay just across the bridge. If the students had been allowed across we might have woken up a few of our elected representatives.

The police deemed it necessary to disperse the crowds by the use of mounted riot police, as used to keep "law and order" during the miners strike, and at Wapping during the year-long printworkers dispute.

The police caused numerous injuries and made many arrests. A spontaneous march was organized to Bow Street police station to demand their immediate release. This stopped the traffic in London for hours.

The Labour Party leader, Neil "I condemn violence" Kinnock, was the first to rear up on his hind legs and, you guessed it, condemn student violence.

The real violence is that being carried out by the Tory government, who are attempting to pauperise the student population and destroy the right to a free education through their plan to introduce student loans.

# Access to Free Education Under Attack

Last month saw the re-emergence of the student movement on a scale not seen since the late sixties.

On 16th November over 4,000 students marched through the centre of Manchester. They blocked traffic and defied police attempts to disperse them when they sat down on the steps and in the road outside the BBC offices demanding that publicity be given to their protest.

They held an impromptu rally outside the Manchester Town Hall, then marched en masse to the Department of Education before returning to their colleges, where they occupied their administration offices. They vacated the offices twenty four hours later in order to join a nurses demonstration in the city.

Scenes like those in Manchester were repeated in many other cities across the country. The following week thousands of students converged on London for what became a mass demonstration and lobby of Parliament despite the NUS leadership's attempt to limit the numbers of demonstrators.

One thing that has marked these mass mobilisations is their spontaneity. None of the marches, demonstrations or occupations has been called or organised by the leaders of the National Union of Students, either nationally or locally. All the proposals for action have come from the "floor" of meetings and have been acted upon immediately. When local officials in Manchester said they must talk to the police before marching they were ignored.

The demonstration in London was not led by the national NUS leadership. They had booked a room near Westminster for the rally which would hold just 3000 people.

The organisation and tactics on the day was thus left to leadership which "emerged on the day"

There are two things which mark the new movement amongst students. The first is the similarity between their mobilisations and that of the recent workers strikes including postal workers, the nurses and the civil servants in that all the initiative and organisation has come from the grass roots. The movement has either overwhelmed the official leadership or has had to go ahead in conflict with it.

The second is that this is the first movement of students to come close to the size of the movement of the sixties and of course it has many of the same features in the form

that actions take. However, the context is much changed. The sixties movement was mainly a solidarity movement as in the Vietnam Solidarity Movement.

The Tories are attempting to take back all of the big gains of the working class since the second world war.

One of these gains was the right to free education for all. Already thousands of youth have been denied access to further education through changes in the DHSS benefit rules which mean that only those who can afford to maintain themselves can go to college. For the rest the only alternative is a work for your dole scheme such as Youth Training Scheme (YTS) for 16-18 year olds and Employment Training (ET) for 18-60 year olds. Now access to university and higher education is to become the privilege of only the rich with the removal of student grants.



## Spanish Unions Strike Against Cheap Labour

In mid-November the Spanish Social Democratic Government of Felipe Gonzalez announced its plan for a "Youth Employment Scheme" aimed at those under 25 years old.

The scheme will mean slave labour for youth and cheap labour for the bosses, who will receive subsidies, tax exemptions and will not have to pay insurance contributions for the young workers. The employers will spend no more than £10 per month on each youth employee.

In fact, the scheme is a carbon copy of Thatcher's Youth Training Scheme and, just like the British scheme, will be used as a substitute for real jobs and to undermine wages and working conditions of full time employees.

The difference is that in Spain the unions are preparing to fight the scheme. Under the pressure of the rank and file movement, the CGT and C.C.O.O. (the two national trade union federations, led by the Socialist Party and the Communist Party respectively) have organised a campaign of action against the scheme including demonstrations across the country which are due to culminate in a 24-hour strike on December 14th.

## Trotskyism and Youth

In the past student struggles have quickly taken on an international character. We can expect this again as the attacks on health and education are a characteristic of government attacks throughout the world.

The fighting vitality of Trotsky in the Transitional Programme and in the Resolution on Youth passed by the World Congress of the Fourth International will be of interest to all now coming into the fight. Here is part of what it says on youth:

*"The young want to create a new world, and they are permitted only to maintain or consolidate a rotting world that is falling to pieces. The young want to know what tomorrow will be, and capitalism's only reply to them is: "Today you've got to tighten your belt another notch; tomorrow we'll see... In any case, perhaps you're not going to have any tomorrow."*

As in this Youth Resolution, we declare that one of the necessary conditions for the progress of humanity is that large sections of working class youth should have access to culture and science. The Youth Resolution declared the slogan: *"Open the schools and universities to all the young who are willing to study"*.

*"In order to throw trade union doors wide open to exploited youth, the Bolshevik-Leninists demand the establishment of reduced dues for young workers."*

These are words in the Youth Resolution of the Fourth International, written fifty years ago! Left and right bureaucracy in all the unions resist enrolling the young unemployed. They hope to have control over them with no intention of organising them in struggle.

We must today adopt the struggle for youth in the unions as put forward by the Fourth International in 1938. *"In all branches of trade union organisations, union Youth Commissions must be created and imposed on the union bureaucracy, whose tasks shall be to study the demands of the youth, and to recruit and educate young workers."*

The Transitional Programme is a programme which is permeated with optimism in what the strength of the working class can achieve. The working class can defend its gains and, what is much more important, it can push capitalism back and achieve world wide victories. The essence of the Transitional Programme is that the advance of workers threatens the whole base of capitalism so that in this period the victories of workers come when rulers are fearful of the loss of everything.

# Environment is a Class Issue

Kevin Townsend

After all the hot air and hypocrisy at the Tory party conference over environmental issues the news of the Tories pitiful reforms to protect the environment come as no surprise

Their real commitment to the environment can be measured by recent statements of leading Tory 'mouthpieces' and by the new acts of parliament to be introduced for this term.

If a balance sheet was to be drawn up it could be safely said they have done nothing. What have they done to reduce acid rain? NOTHING! - or to tackle the Greenhouse effect, caused by the burning of fossil fuel? NOTHING! What about the pollution of the seas, rivers, lakes and beaches? Apart from the new acts to be brought before Parliament to raise water and electricity charges to pay for the costs of clearing up the mess left behind by capitalist industries - NOTHING! - and what about pollution from nuclear processing and power stations? NOTHING! (they actually intend to extend the programme of nuclear plant construction to include a plant at Druridge Bay on the Northumberland coast).

The attitude of these 'mouthpieces' for the industrialists was well illustrated just after the Tory party conference in an attack on a European Commission proposal to set up a European wide network of protected areas for wildlife and rare plants. Hardly a revolutionary demand to tackle the rapidly approaching and in some cases almost irreversible problems of the earth's ecosystem (more a case of draining the oceans with a teaspoon!)

In a cynical reply, Lord Caithness, Tory minister for the Protection of the Environment, waved the Union Jack and whined about centralization in Brussels and the bureaucracy going mad and said: "Britain wished to stick to its traditional voluntary approach for protecting the habitat". God forbid an intrusion on the rights of the fox hunting classes is the squeal of this privileged aristocrat.

The question of the environment for socialists is not an issue in and of itself separate from other problems of everyday life. It must be viewed as part of the whole question of class struggle and the fight for the socialist transformation of society.

Like the working class, who are exploited daily to profit a few, so too is the environ-

ment and the earth's natural resources.

Unlike the utopian dreamers of the Green party who deny the class struggle as the vehicle for change and hope to make a gradual peaceful ascent to power through the machinery of parliament, we say that there is a link between the socialist revolution and the fight to defeat the multi-nationals and trans-national conglomerates who roam the globe seeking fresh areas to exploit and that the working class will play the vanguard role in this fight.

How do you even attempt to fight the pollution of the seas if you don't win the seafarers who sail the ships to your programme.

How do you stop the pollution of rivers, lakes and beaches if you don't develop concrete policies for water authority workers and develop an all round class hostility amongst these workers who fight against the same exploiters who pollute the planet anyway.

Is the protection of the earth's environment and natural resources for future generations not their concern or business - nothing at all to do with them?

Would not chemical workers, coal miners and nuclear workers prefer an alternative form of employment, rather than the dangerous and hazardous jobs they are forced to work in.

What of nuclear weapons and the threat of a nuclear holocaust? Any serious minded person would ask themselves; who drives the nuclear convoys? Who protects the nuclear installations? Who operates the nuclear submarines and can they be won from, broken or divided from the state's armed forces?

As Trotsky once argued against the opportunist Frossard, with his cries about the omnipotence of the French military and the growth of military techniques, concluding from this that revolution was impossible: "We reply: behind each machine there are men who are linked not only by technical but by social and political bonds. When historic development poses before society an unpostponable revolutionary task as a question of life and death, when there exists a progressive class with whose victory is joined the salvation of society - then the development itself of the political struggle opens up before the revolutionary class the most varied possibilities - as much to paralyse the military force of the enemy as to win it over, at least partially."

Unlike the Greens who look to a non-class populist movement we, as socialists, fight for the integration of the issue of the environment into a wider struggle for socialism and base our fight to achieve this goal upon class struggle policies.

## Lawson's Future in the Balance

Peter Windeler

The "good house-keeping" of the Tories has now produced the worst trade figures ever! In October the UK's trade deficit was £2.4bn bringing the total for the year to October to £12.4bn.

These figures which expose why a few days earlier the Tories priced their latest sell-off, British Steel, at only 125p per share forced Lawson to increase interest rates for the ninth time since June to 13%. The Stock Exchange shuddered with this double-dose of interest rate and trade bad news and registered its second largest fall of the year to 1794.7 on the FT-SE 100 INDEX.

Back in the 60's and 70's economics students were told that any visible trade deficit didn't matter for the UK as it would be covered by "invisibles". "Invisibles" being profits made from banking, insurance and latterly tourism. This is no longer the case, the invisible trade surplus to October was £4.6bn against a visible surplus (manufactured goods) of £17bn.

The figures were far worse than even the gloomiest city commentators had forecast. Another crucial factor is that Thatcher/Lawson are now losing the confidence of

both the overseas investors who lend us the money to cover our bills and the shareholders back home. Only a couple of weeks ago, Lawson, the Chancellor of the Exchequer forecast a total deficit of £13bn which by October had almost been met.

At the same time US interest rates are looking increasingly likely to rise due to the present economic difficulties being experienced in Reagan's last days of office. In fact, now, both the UK and the US economies only cover 70% of their imported goods by exports. As stated in the Financial Times on 26th November both "Britain and the US, as transatlantic partners, are sitting in the same - inherently unstable - boat".

As inflation is likely to reach 8% next year what is of paramount importance for the British ruling class is to control the growth in wages which are now rising by 9.25% and likely to increase after the recent inflation-linked pay-rise at Fords of 8.9%. The stumbling British economy must reduce wage costs and the living standards of workers if it is to stand the slightest chance in the international trading arena.

# Justice for Tottenham Youth

## Broadwater Farm Defence Committee

On 12th December British 'justice' will give one last chance to the three men it framed for the killing of a policeman during the Uprising in Tottenham in 1985. The Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign and the families of the three are calling for a mass picket of Wormwood Scrubs prison, Ducane Road at 4pm on 11th December, to give comfort and strength to the framed youth and their loved ones, and to show the establishment that they cannot play games with the lives of these people.

Readers will be aware of the daily indignities heaped on black people by a police force who abuse both their powers and the community while enforcing Tory 'law and order' in the inner cities. Many may even be familiar with the torture that was inflicted on arrestees in the wake of the Uprising, recently documented by Amnesty International. Particularly disturbing, for example, is the case of one child, aged 13, who was arrested along with his entire family and held naked, except for his underpants and a blanket, in isolation for 52 hours. The police denied him access to a lawyer although he asked for one, and interrogated him until he broke down and "confessed".

Outrage at this torture is not enough, however. What is required is an understanding of the way in which the racist and authoritarian policing imposed on communities such as Broadwater Farm interlocks with the government's plans for the dismantling of the British Labour Movement.

The fact is that the soon-to-be-abolished right to silence, like the right to legal representation, was denied to the youth arrested after the Uprising - a clear demonstration of the fact that the inner cities, like the six Counties are a laboratory in which the state tests new methods of repression and social control before turning them on others. The kind of brutality which the miners and printworkers experienced at the hands of the police has been daily fare for Britain's black communities for longer than anyone cares to remember. Unless we couple our understanding of these facts with a determination to defend the framed youth, we will discover that the next victims of such outrageous injustices will be trade unionists and labour movement activists.

The only way to defend ourselves is to defend the framed youth, and the only way to do that is to make 11th December the largest ever picket of a British prison. For more details, leaflets etc, or copies of the Amnesty Report, contact the Defence Campaign at 79 Tangmere, Willan Road, Broad Water Farm Estate, London N16 6NB. Tel 01-885-3752.

Socialist Voice calls on the labour movement to support the Broadwater Farm community against the police attacks and here we reprint the model resolution against the frame up.

This organisation believes:

1) That the Uprising on Broadwater Farm in October 1985, during which a policeman was killed, was occasioned by the death of Cynthia Jarret at the hands of Tottenham police, and by the racist and authoritarian behaviour of those police towards her family

they arrested the right to legal advice and kept them isolated, often for days on end.

5) That the police held one thirteen year old in a cell for three days, naked except his underpants and a blanket, and questioned him for fifteen hours until he "confessed" to killing PC Blakelock.

6) That many of those convicted in connection with the Uprising were sentenced on the basis of similar confessions, obtained under duress, and without the benefit of legal advice.

7) That many of those convicted have been refused to leave to appeal against their



and generally towards the Broadwater Farm Community.

2) That the police's behaviour following the Uprising, in the shape of random arrests and raids, the targeting of community leaders for harassment, and the military-style policing of the estate, demonstrates that they had no interest in discovering who the real culprits were, but only wanted scapegoats for the killing of one of their colleagues, and revenge on the whole community.

3) That the police broke the law in their treatment of so-called "suspects", and that this has been well documented by Amnesty International, and by other respected persons and bodies.

4) That the police denied most of those that

sentences, and that a public inquiry is therefore the only chance that they will ever get to establish the facts of the case and their innocence in the clear light of day.

This organisation resolves:

1) To support the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign's demand for a public inquiry.

2) To donate £ to the Defence Campaign.

3) To raise this matter at the appropriate higher level (area committee / national conference, etc.)

4) To urge its members to attend the Defence Campaign's picket of Wormwood Scrubs prison on 11th December.

# The Blood Sucking External Debt

Mark Smith

Argentine President, Raul Alfonsin, said at the meeting of the 'Group of 8' last October that Latin America is in the midst of "the most serious economic crisis in all its history". He is right. In 1977 Latin America's external debt was \$107.5 bn. In the following ten years it paid back \$128.9 bn. The external debt was \$408.9 bn in 1987.

The "Group of 8" is formed by Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela who collectively owe \$350 bn to the imperialist banks. The Presidents of seven of these countries met at the end of October to discuss the problem of the debt. Panama was summarily dismissed from the talks by the rest of the members to avoid any friction with North American imperialism.

All the Presidents criticised the International Monetary Fund in the meeting. There were speeches repudiating "the vision of a world economy which relegates us to the margin", highlighting that "the effort of Latin America's people has not met with fair reward" and denouncing the IMF for "blocking the possibility of a reconstruction of the international economic system".

But all the talks and 'analysis' culminated in a call for the creditors to develop a means of reducing the burden and for a "new dialogue" with the United States and industrialised nations. A proposal that has failed several times in the past decade.

It has failed because imperialism, with its own deep economic crisis, cannot reduce the burden. The British banks: Lloyd's, Barclays, Midland and National Westminster have loans for £16 bn in Latin America. In the case of Midland, these loans are 350% higher than its assets. This means that if Midland's loans are paid back it will profit enormously. But if not, a bankruptcy is almost inevitable. Midland is only an example of the generalised situation. The imperialist creditors cannot give the debtors any respite.

The "new dialogue" proposed by the

'Group of 8' is impossible. It will fail again.

While speaking strong words against the I.M.F. each of the Presidents of the 'Group of 8' continue to apply the economic plans imposed by the I.M.F. and the World Bank, whose central objective is to reduce wages in order to save money to pay the debt.

They use different methods for this objective.

One is the taxation of essential goods and

of workers mass struggles demanding better living conditions, higher pay and an end to the austerity plans of their governments.

## Mexico

In Mexico, for the first time in fifty years the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) was faced with the possibility of being defeated in the elections last July and was forced to resort to fraud to remain in power. This provoked a wave of anti-government demonstrations which reached a new stage in November when the Government had to use the police to repress the demonstrations of the opposition in the run up to the election for Governor in the State of Tabasco on 8th November.



Latin American Workers Demanding, "For Wages not to the IMF"

## Brazil

services. For example, in Argentina, the price of electricity, gas and telephone rose more than 500% in the first three months of the year.

Another is their use of inflation - even if they insist they want to combat it. In Peru and Brazil it will reach 1,000% this year and in Bolivia it rose to more than 8,000% in 1985.

All this is still not enough to satisfy the imperialist usurers. In response, their allies, the Latin American governments, reduce their investment in education, health, housing and other public works, subjecting the public sector to ruin and deepening the grave problem of unemployment, which in Peru is 64%, according to the official figures.

The external debt is imperialism's newest method of super-exploiting the peoples of the semicolonial countries with the support of their bourgeois governments. The only way to stop this super-exploitation is by stopping the payment of the debt.

Of course, not one of the members of the "Group of 8", nor the other Latin American governments want to do that. In the report of the meeting in October, the Financial Times welcomed the fact that "Not one of the heads of State proposed a repudiation of the region's \$420 bn debt."

Latin America is being shaken by a wave

A wave of strikes and combative demonstrations is taking place amongst the Brazilian workers in the state-owned enterprises. The most outstanding struggle has been the strike of 25,000 steelworkers in Volta Redonda. The strength of the rank and file was such that a Government official said that an agreement with the trade union leadership would not guarantee a return to work. In realisation of this fact, the government sent in the army to repress the strikers, killing five and injuring seventeen. Instead of breaking the strike, this inflamed the situation spreading the strike to other sectors.

Meanwhile in Sao Paulo (the largest city in the world) the electricity workers have struck causing complete black-outs. The oilworkers of the state-owned Petrobras have been on strike and forced the government to increase oil imports to avoid bringing transport to a standstill. All these struggles have unfolded in the middle of an electoral process in which the party in government party was defeated by an overwhelming majority of left-wing opposition.

## Peru

In Peru the miners went on strike on the 18th October, demanding the Government



fulfil its obligation of an industry-wide claim, achieved after a 29 day strike in August. In the fifth week of the current strike, the press reported that thousands of miners had marched with their families to Lima and attacked the Finance Ministry and the Labour Ministry in support of the National Federation of Miners' position demanding the nationalisation of the whole mining sector.

At the same time, Alan Garcia with a team from the I.M.F. and the World Bank were preparing a new economic austerity package. This has provoked a wave of strikes even before the economic measures are announced. Even lottery ticket sellers are on strike.

## Argentina

The last economic plan of the Argentine government established a maximum 4% monthly wage increase for the last three months of the year (while the official forecast for inflation is 30%). However, the railway workers have obtained a 20% increase after a four-day strike. The postal workers have been fighting for the last two months, and after achieving a 15% increase they continue to struggle, working to rule, against the instruction of the trade union leadership, demanding the 20% gained by the railway workers.

Teachers in ten provinces, telephone workers, university lecturers and staff, nurses and doctors in the public hospitals and even policemen have all been on strike.

There is no doubt that the only solution for the Latin American working class is to stop paying the external debt. To this end they must defeat their own pro-imperialist bourgeois governments. This process has already begun and is developing apace all over the Latin American continent.

## Life of the L.I.T.

The Spanish PST (Socialist Workers Party) commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Fourth International with a rally attended by 700 members and sympathisers in Madrid on 5th November. Jose Paez, who led the struggle at Fiat Cordoba in the 70's, who suffered a long term of imprisonment during the military dictatorship and who is a member of the Central Committee of the MAS, spoke in the rally.

# A Real Trotskyist Challenge

On 24th October the MAS (Movement towards Socialism) and the FRAL (a front of the Communist Party and other smaller forces) officially announced the foundation of "Izquierda Unida" (United Left) to run joint candidates for the May 1989 presidential and Congressional elections.

Izquierda Unida constitutes a strong working class alternative to the bourgeois parties in the forthcoming elections.

The essential features the MAS considered the minimum for agreement when it called for the front of the left was the 23-point programme of the 1985 "Front of the People" and the democratic election of candidates in the front. Both were accepted by the FRAL.

## The Programme

The 29-point electoral programme of Izquierda Unida represents an advance from the Front of the People and the front in Catamarca.

Izquierda Unida calls for the working class and community fighters to join to fight for a programme for a government of the workers and the people in order to apply the necessary measures to satisfy the needs of the poor and to achieve national and social liberation.

To carry out this struggle, Izquierda Unida calls for a fight to remove the union bureaucracy and to replace it with workers democracy in the trade union organisations.

Starting from the demand to stop payment of the external debt, the programme develops an economic plan which includes the nationalisation of banks, trade and monopolies; an increase in wages and pensions and the establishment of a sliding-scale of wages; the nationalisation under workers' control of every factory that closes and a plan of public works in order to solve the problem of unemployment; the application of the principle "equal pay for equal

work", to defend the rights of women and young workers; an end to privatisations and a plan for agrarian reform.

In answer to the problem of how to deal with the military, Izquierda Unida fights for the dismantling of the repressive apparatus and for the trial and punishment of all those responsible for the crimes during the military dictatorship.

In linking with the anti-imperialist struggle, Izquierda Unida calls for support for the peoples of Nicaragua and El Salvador; for the defence of Cuba against imperialist aggression; for Argentine sovereignty over the Malvinas and for the expropriation of British property in Argentina; and for breaking every pact and agreement with North American imperialism. This they sum up in the slogan For the Second Independence of Latin America.

## The Candidates

The MAS and the Communist Party agreed to elect the Izquierda Unida candidates with the direct participation of the rank and file.

The poll will take place on 18th December. There are two lists of pre-candidates proposed. The list of the MAS has Luis Zamora at the top, as pre-candidate for president and for Deputy representing the province of Buenos Aires.

Ballot boxes will be available throughout the country and all those registered for the internal elections, including youth from 16 years old and immigrants will have the opportunity to vote for their candidates in this working class alternative.

By supporting and developing the workers' and people's struggles and using the current electoral campaign Izquierda Unida has the prospect of become the fourth political force in Argentina. Our Argentine comrades are fighting for this within the struggle for a Trotskyist party with mass influence.

The Italian LSR (Revolutionary Socialist League) is holding a meeting in Rome on 4th December to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Fourth International. Speakers include Jose Paez; Bonifacio Miranda, leader of the Nicaraguan PST (Socialist Workers Party); and Bill Hunter, leader of the British section of the LIT (International Workers League).

On 26th October the Italian LSR proposed

that the left in Italy organise a demonstration on 9th December to celebrate and salute the struggle of Palestinians on the first anniversary of the Intifada "the extraordinary revolt of the Palestinian people fighting to recover their homeland." The LSR sees this as an opportunity to mobilise an effective campaign around the feelings of solidarity felt by Italian workers with the Palestinian struggle.

# Sergei Trotsky Cleared By

An announcement from the Soviet Supreme Court, reported in the British press at the end of last month, said the Court had "lifted all charges" against Sergei Sedov, one of Trotsky's sons.

In 1934, Sergei was sentenced to five years in a labour camp for "conspiracy against the state". In 1937, in the infamous Moscow Trials, he was accused of "premeditated mass poisoning of workers", and executed.

Sergei remained in Russia when Trotsky was deported. He was an engineer and not involved in politics. In his evidence to the Commission of Inquiry into the charges made against him at the Moscow Trials, Trotsky spoke about what happened to Sergei and other members of his family. This independent Commission was set up under the chairmanship of John Dewey, the eminent American philosopher. The following extracts are taken from a verbatim report of its proceedings, published as "The Case of Leon Trotsky" by Harper and Brothers, 1937.

Trotsky's attorney, Albert Goldman, asks him:

I understand you had two daughters, Mr. Trotsky. Will you kindly tell us what happened to them?

Trotsky: The younger, Nina, she died in 1928, during my deportation to Siberia. Her husband was also arrested together with me and deported. I don't have any news from him. He remained about eight years in prison. She became very sick at that time, and she died in Moscow. The letter she wrote to me I received, I believe, seventy days after her death.

Goldman: What happened to your other daughter?

Trotsky: She committed suicide.

Goldman: Can you tell us anything about the conditions under which she committed suicide?

Trotsky: She came to Berlin, Germany, for medical treatment, with the authorisation of the Soviet Government. She did not participate in any political action abroad. She was sick. But she was deprived of citizenship together with me by the same Government decree, and this fact deprived her also of the possibility of going back to the Soviet Union. She was separated from her husband and children and she committed suicide in Berlin.

Goldman: Going back to your son, Sergei - was he interested in politics?

Trotsky: Never. My daughter Zina was interested, not abroad, but in Russia. All the children, three, were interested in politics,



Sergei and Trotsky

# Court

with the exception of Sergei.

**Goldman:** What was he interested in, then?

**Trotsky:** As a boy he was a sportsman and athlete, then he became interested in mathematics and technical subjects. In his twenty sixth year he became a teacher in a technical school, of mathematics.

**Goldman:** Did he remain in Russia after you were deported?

**Trotsky:** Yes. The reason why he remained in Russia - he was absolutely sure that his political neutrality, if I can so speak - he could never be persecuted by the Government. In the first year, he was a very esteemed young professor in a technical school.

**Goldman:** Can you tell us, Mr. Trotsky, whether, under the Soviet law, treason or alleged treason in one member of the family, especially the father, is attributed to the children? What is the rule?

**Trotsky:** Formally, not.

**Goldman:** What is the practice?

**Trotsky:** All the criminal proceedings, all the trials, and all the confessions are based upon the persecution of members of the family.

**Dewey:** Will that be verified by documentary evidence?

**Goldman:** This is simply an opinion. It is an opinion of the witness. I will ask him whether there is any documentary evidence -

**Trotsky:** Excuse me, it is not an opinion. It is my personal experience.

**Goldman:** In what way?

**Trotsky:** I paid for the experience with my two children.

**Goldman:** Can you produce any further evidence outside of your own experience?

**Trotsky:** I know that the wife of Piatakov was arrested eight months before him and you can find in his last declaration that he lost everything, *"my family and everything"*. By personal experience and by the persecution of the Opposition I know. Pankratov, a former militant member of the party during the Civil War was deported. Then he came into prison in Siberia, and his wife was arrested only because she refused to separate from her husband. The authorities declared: *"It is a proof that you are connected with him ideologically, because physically you are separated from him, and the fact that you will not separate from him legally is a proof of your ideological connection with him."*

# Polish Leaders Enrol in Thatcher's School

That great fighter for civil liberties and a healthy environment, Mrs Thatcher, is trumpeting the virtues of "free enterprise" throughout the world. She was in Poland last month and will be in Africa in the next few weeks.

Representing a government which has pursued a relentless war against the unions, she expressed her sympathy with Polish shipyard workers about to lose their jobs without the trace of a blush on her far from motherly countenance.

The British press and television picked out banners among the Polish crowd saying *"Commies out"* and *"You can have Lenin, give us our shipyard"*. It would be a little foolish to place too much weight on this as indicating the future road of struggle in Poland. It does not take much to write one or two posters. The sight of them among a crowd does not tell us the extent of support.

Certainly there is contradiction in the movement against bureaucratic repression and in Poland reactionary catholicism is at work. But the alliance of Walesa and the Catholic church which dominated the Solidarity leadership has been suffering exposure. His compromising and vacillating policies have brought him into conflict with a young generation of fighters. A new leadership is coming forward which thoroughly distrusts him. *"I am looked upon as a rabbit"*, he confessed.

In Poland, as in all the deformed workers states, material circumstances drive workers both against capitalist "free enterprise" and against the bureaucrats.

What does the free market economy offer to Polish workers? Mrs Thatcher, it was reported, got her own taste of it. She bought fruit for a few hundred zlotys at the state market and then went to buy dried mushrooms at a private stall and found herself unable to raise the enormous free price.

Commodities outside of state controlled prices are already luxuries for the workers of these states and the increase of the free market is fuelling inflation.

In no way are Polish workers going to obtain any aid from the demagogy of capitalist spokeswomen like Thatcher. On the contrary, they will find a unity of capitalist and bureaucrat against their struggle for living conditions and employment. For the capitalist multi-nationals are looking for rich pickings in the bureaucrat's economic

reforms. Thatcher's job is to dictate the best terms.

Her greatest friends are among the bureaucrats themselves. The recently appointed Polish Prime Minister, Mieczyslaw Rakowski, was reported in the "Observer" as saying *"I would like to be the best pupil in her class"*. The government has a programme of selling state holdings, changing the law to make redundancies possible, reducing sick leave benefit and ending growth in the real incomes of pensioners.

Poland's Minister of Industry - also recently appointed - is Mieczyslaw Wilczek, a member of the Communist Party and the owner of a factory worth one million pounds. Like other leading stalinist bureaucrats he lives in luxury. He has his country mansion, with swimming pool, tennis court and pet peacocks. He is not just a bureaucrat, but a capitalist in his own right. The "Independent" describes him as *"a successful private businessman, a party member and the model for what the Polish Government calls the "new style" of leadership"*.

He is a fervent supporter of the closing down of the Lenin shipyard. He declared that *"if I had closed down a small insignificant factory, no one would have noticed. I wanted to show that the government was doing what a government is meant to do."* Wilczek would get on famously with Thatcher whom he, no doubt admires for her war against the British working class, particularly the miners.



# Political Revolution or Disintegration

Bill Hunter

The question: **Which will prevail; capitalism or socialism?**, was originally posed by Lenin in relation to the Soviet Union, following the introduction of the New Economic Policy in 1921. The Bolsheviks had been compelled to make a retreat from "War Communism" and the direct distribution of goods.

It was because of the dangers in the New Economic Policy that he posed his question. He declared that the free market; the creation of "Nepmen" - the fixers and small producers; the concessions to the peasantry; the payment of higher salaries to attract specialists and managers: all were retreats forced on the Soviet state. He saw that small capitalism and its ideology would be created "*hourly and daily*".

The predominance of socialist tendencies over these capitalist tendencies was guaranteed by the measures of the state. On the side of socialism was the state planning and state monopoly of foreign trade. This state was controlled by a principled internationalist Bolshevik Party, part of a Communist International. That was decisive for Lenin.

Today, there is talk among leaders of the Soviet Union that they are introducing a new NEP. The context is fundamentally different. Today, there is no Bolshevik Party in the Soviet Union and the Communist Party is an instrument for cynical bureaucrats, hostile to Lenin's perspective of Socialism in every country.

The present leaders were pushed forward inside the bureaucratic elite and trained by those who destroyed the Bolshevik Party, and slandered, tortured and murdered Soviet communists. They were born politically in privilege, in cynical opportunism in relation to the workers movement; they were weaned in counter revolution. They themselves helped organise and carry out the repressions in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

The dangers from imperialism are in many ways greater than in 1921. *Which will prevail?* cannot be posed now in terms of the socialist state of the Soviet Union versus world capitalism. The struggle against the penetration of world capitalism is also a struggle by the Soviet working class against that bureaucratic state itself.

In defining the Soviet Union, Trotsky pointed out the dual character of the Soviet state which rested on a contradiction between socialist forms of production and capitalist distribution. That contradiction came out of the isolation of the Soviet Union. Stalinism extended capitalist distribution with the enormous growth of privileges and ine-

qualities of the bureaucratic elite. It defended those privileges with state repression.

The expansion of the area of deformed workers states could not ease the contradiction. The property overturns came into being through parties which were corroded by stalinist doctrine, particularly the nationalism of the theory of "Socialism in One Country", and by stalinist opportunism. Even in the revolutionary overturns their counter revolutionary tendencies were shown in their liquidation of principled internationalist opposition.

The dominant bureaucracies moved empirically in defence of their own privileges. There could be no socialist planning over the so-called socialist third of the world. In fact, the post war period has seen severe conflicts between these states, military clashes on the borders and even outright war between them, as in the case of Vietnam and China.

The separation of this bureaucratic strata from the working class, its hostility to workers democracy, now drive it willy nilly to alliances with imperialists both against the workers at home and revolutionary movements abroad.

The price paid for the criminal anti-working class degeneration of stalinism is enormous. That is very clearly shown in the way the national struggles are developing. **If there is an outburst of national antagonisms between Azerbaijanis and Armenians, between Serbs and Albanians, between Hungarians and Rumanians, then that is the pay-off for the bureaucratic suppression of national culture.** It is also the pay-off for the cynical and reactionary way, stalinism, in order to repress opposition, encouraged backward antagonisms. Today that practice continues, as in defence of their power and privilege, bureaucrats demagogically encourage national antagonisms.

Whichever way he turns Gorbachev must very quickly institute the military suppression of national discontent. But he has no possibility of holding down a dictatorship like Stalin's. There can only be a period of explosions and struggle in the Soviet Union.

This bureaucracy is doomed. The historic question of Lenin as to who will prevail, now looms up in the form it was posed by Trotsky: "*Will the bureaucrat devour the workers state or will the working class clean up the bureaucrat?*"

The greatest battles are being waged now to decide the fate of the Soviet Union. Will the Soviet state disintegrate? That is the prospect if the working class, the force for socialist development does not destroy this bureaucracy. It is the prospect that Trotsky

foresaw coming out of the collapse of the soviet regime.

*"The bond of compulsion between the trusts and the factories within them would fall away. The more successful enterprises would succeed in coming out on the road of independence. They might convert themselves into stock companies, or they might find some other transitional form of property - one, for example, in which the workers should participate in the profits. The collective farms would disintegrate at the same time and far more easily."*

The issue before the Soviet working class is that of creating organisation and leadership which will remove the bureaucracy and recreate that Bolshevik internationalism and workers initiative, which Lenin saw as the guarantee of the victory of socialism.

Here is the great task for which the trotskyist movement, in all its difficult struggles, has prepared. The bureaucracy will be replaced by a new socialist power. Whatever the contradictions in the movement of workers and nationalities against stalinism there are great compulsions towards internationalism and great possibilities for the creation of principled leaderships.

The world wide movement of the working masses and oppressed peoples against imperialist capital and bureaucratic leaderships is the guarantee of victory. The working class in the Soviet Union is on the threshold of once again being linked organisationally with the movement of the oppressed in the imperialist dominated countries.

The International Workers League (Fourth International) is summoned to the great task which Trotsky foresaw. It has already proved in countries of Latin America, that trotskyism on a principled international basis can turn to the tasks of the mass movement and build mass connections under conditions of struggle.

Let the "kremlinologists" speculate about which bureaucrats stand for what and analyse their statements to find which are the most "progressive" leaders. It is not even what bureaucrats may wish that is decisive, it is the reality of the situation that will determine developments. **There can be no simple evolutionary road either to capitalism or socialism.** The dismantling of the conquests of the Russian revolution in state control and guaranteed employment cannot take place peaceably, without revolutionary developments and the crushing of the working class, nor without continuous crises and panic turns of the bureaucracy. In that crucible we will create a new the Soviet section of world trotskyism.

# Salute the Intifada!

Martin Ralph

Permanent self-sacrificing struggle and the Intifada have become known as one and the same thing. The Palestinians remain unshaken even under the iron fist of the Zionist army of occupation. In the past year they have been gassed, shot at, imprisoned, tortured and killed - yet they clearly proclaim to the Zionists and the world "we are not frightened, you cannot frighten us, we will fight until the end".

In honouring the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people we include in this issue a report on the slow death camp of Ansar 3. It is a reminder of what the Zionists mean when they say they will not tolerate disobedience in the occupied territories.

The resistance on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip accelerated the proclamation of the Palestinian State by the Palestine Liberation Organisation. The demand for the independent state does not, of course, solve the problem, since as yet, it is but a symbolic acknowledgement of the struggle.

Yet this demand does point to the fact there can be no solution that does not include and satisfy the programme of the Intifada. This is the crisis that affects all the main and ultra-reactionary groups and parties in Israel.

All those who want justice for the Palestinians should take the demands Intifada as their own. "We are the ones fighting on the front line. We are the ones who should shape the policies of our leaders outside" one Palestinian said (quoted in the Observer). All labour movement organisations in Britain take note, this applies to you as well.

This is why we also include in this issue the operation of Histadrut. To oppose the military fist means also to break from all its supporting organisations.

The results of the elections and the difficulties of forming a stable government in Israel are based on the central problem of how to repress and destroy the year long uprising. The move to the right is a response itself to the uprising and the political leaders are there representing the interests and prejudices of those who live in Israel and who can only see peace through repression..

## The Apartheid Histadrut

The Histadrut is an integral part of the iron fist. It seeks to profit out of the repression of Palestinians. It is the Israeli Trade Union Federation and peculiarly, the second largest employer in Israel. It owns factories which produce cannons and mortars, night fighting equipment and army communications. One of its companies, the Solel

Bonch has built over one quarter of the West Bank's settlements.

It is not surprising that it operates Apartheid measures against Palestinian workers. Those who work in Israel find that they have no choice but to remain in Israel as illegal immigrants for each week they work. Possibly 50,000 workers sleep in Tel Aviv each night. Their pay is a half to a third of an Israeli worker.

The Histadrut thrives on this inequality and repression collecting 1% union dues from each worker. It polices the workers for the employers and is part of the military machine which represses them at home.

The majority of the labour movement in Britain support the Histadrut or at the very least are silent about this organisation. The Histadrut makes direct connections with South Africa. It trains Buthelezi's Inkatha 'union' leaders and maintains trading links with Apartheid.

It remains the duty of all in the labour movement to break links with Israel and this means breaking the cosy links with the Israeli Labour party, the Histadrut and disbanding the Trade Union friends of Israel. We cannot support the heroic struggle or condemn the atrocities in Ansar 3 without demanding the labour movement in Britain show more solidarity than just a set of words in 'fine' resolutions. Their attempt to appear impartial by inviting the oppressor to meetings together with the oppressed must be challenged.

**\* Break all links with Zionism**

## Ansar 3: Zionist Concentration Camp

Socialist Voice has always spoken out against the mass repression of the Palestinians by the racist Israeli state. Here we reproduce part of a report from members of the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament, after a visit to the Ansar 3 detention camp on 4th July 1988.

Ansar 3 is a concentration camp where Israel interns the supporters of the Intifada. It is a place of slow death. We should let the report speak for itself, highlighting of course that this is the official, Israeli version of the living conditions in the camp.

"the detention of Palestinians in Ansar 3 camp is against the international convention which prohibits the transfer of prisoners outside the occupied territories.

"It is necessary to remember that this camp is used for the detention of the prisoners of the Intifada.

"In this area the weather is very hot and could rise to 50 degrees or more and during the day and during the night it is bitterly cold.

"The imprisonment is a cruel punishment for those arrested in the Intifada."

The group were shown around the camp and they made the following observations:

"Of the 2,717 prisoners 2,398 are detained without trial. The camp has had 5,000 prisoners from 16 to 70 years old.

One prisoner, Salim Yousef Suleiman is 69 and in prison with his son.

"The identification is not by name it is by numbers. The social composition is a reproduction of Palestinian society. Many are workers, students, youth from the refugee camps, union activists, writers...

"Some of them have finished their detention sentence and are now held without reason. Some are accused of throwing stones. One of them, Abd-Al Rahman does not have a right hand. Dr. Al Sataar is accused of writing a leaflet last April but he was already in prison then.

"Some of them are receiving sentences of one to four years for throwing stones or molotov cocktails.

"An important percentage are disabled, retarded or have grave illnesses like parkinsons disease."

The report goes on to detail the horrific living conditions which remind you of the living conditions in the Nazi concentration camps.

"The prisoners are divided into smaller and smaller units. The smallest being about 30. Each group shares one tent.

"In the tents prisoners sleep on mattresses in rows. They are constantly exposed to snakes and insects including scorpions. The sanitary conditions are so bad that only the strong organisation and solidarity amongst

prisoners can prevent epidemics.

"Camps receive water in containers which are often not full. We saw a prisoner who had asked for water during the morning, by 12.30pm, in spite of it being very hot, he had not received it.

"Near the toilets the smell was vile and a cloud of insects was ever present. A metal box with a hole in the top was used as a toilet for 250 prisoners.

"Despite the intense heat prisoners are allowed a shower just once every ten days and only for 3 to 4 minutes.

"One piece of soap is issued for each tent.

"Because of these living conditions there is often mass infection.

"The administration of the camp supplies eight razor blades for communal use. This aggravates the spread of disease and infection.

"After being arrested they are given a thick pair of trousers and a shirt without buttons. It is impossible to repair the clothes or wash them in the camp. It is prohibited to go without a shirt so they have to wash them in the tent at night in secret.

"There is no clinic in the camp. The commander of the camp had asked for one to be built but had received no answer.

"There were four paramedics and one doctor but the prisoners said that the visits were infrequent and that the treatment is superficial, based on pain killers."

# End the Liquidation of the Kurdish People

Peter Money

The Iraqi government is pursuing a course of genocide against the Kurdish people, with barbaric attacks on defenceless women and children using mustard gas, a weapon banned by the Geneva convention after the first world war.

Reports in the Independent of 22nd November, give vivid accounts of an Iraqi chemical weapons air attack on the Bassay Gorge, 20 miles south of the Turkish border and north of the Iraqi town of Amadiyah.

The eye-witness accounts were from young Kurdish peshmerga guerrilla fighters who were on patrol in the mountains over-looking the gorge. They reported that between six to eight Iraqi Sukhoi jets bombarded several thousand Kurds, most of them women and children, in the valley below.

Ramazan Mohammad, a nineteen year old peshmerga, described the scene: "Bombs were dropped. My first sensation was the smell, like burnt polythene plastic or sponge. Then there was yellowish smoke. Five to ten minutes later

I noticed people started dropping... They would first cover both eyes with their hands, shake uncontrollably and then scream extremely loud. Five to ten minutes later they would drop and they went into convulsion. Their whole body trembled and then they went still. The aerial bombardment lasted one hour."

After four to five hours the peshmerga went down into the gorge. Mohammad continued: "There must have been 3,000 bodies and thousands of animals, all dead. The dead had a film over their eyes and out of their nose and from the sides of their mouth there was a horrible slime coming out. The skin was peeling and bubbling up. There were also survivors crying. There were some children sobbing. They were terribly disfig-

ured."

## Three Thousand Bodies

Fariz Taha, 17, told what happened next: "We waited for nightfall. We had binoculars and I saw soldiers with gas masks, thousands of them, entering the gorge. They all had masks and gloves. From my hiding place I saw them dragging bodies into groups and setting fire to them. I saw over hundred



Iraqi Kurdish refugees escaping the terror of chemical warfare

fires."

This latest attempt to wipe out the Kurdish population represents the most devastating reported use of chemical weapons by Iraq since as many as 5,000 Kurds were killed in the Iranian-occupied town of Halabja in March in the closing months of the Gulf War. Iraq has consistently denied using chemical weapons against its Kurdish citizens during its summer campaign against the peshmerga.

These atrocities by the Iraqi regime show that the peace agreement between Iran and Iraq was a peace not for the exploited and oppressed people of these countries but a peace in the interests of imperialism.

The capitalist nations having made their profit throughout the war by supplying arms and are now looking forward to the forecast

business boom in the Gulf region.

The war between Iran and Iraq was of great importance for imperialism. Firstly, it halted the spread of the Iranian revolution, which, despite the nature of its government, represented a major threat to imperialism in the Middle East. Secondly, it provided a source of profit to the capitalist arms manufacturers and thirdly, it tied the Arab bourgeoisie, particularly the Iraqi, even closer to imperialism.

But, having exhausted the revolutionary fighters of Iran, who made incredible sacrifices to defend their revolution, the imperialists are now looking for a 'peaceful' exploitation of the region. The first 'requirement' for this 'peace' is the destruction of the Kurdish resistance.

During the Iranian revolution the Kurds were the foremost supporters of the Iranian masses against the Shah. They were attacked by the reactionary mullahs because they threatened their bourgeois class interests.

Today the Kurdish resistance represents the continuation of the revolutionary spirit of the Iranian revolution. Alongside the struggle of the Palestinian people

the Kurds represent a mighty threat to the interests of imperialism and the reactionary Arab bourgeoisie in the Middle East. The same genocidal policies are used against the Kurds and the Palestinians.

The resistance of the Kurds is also a threat to the Soviet bureaucracy. Their policy of greater co-operation with imperialism and for 'joint policing' of the world will include repression of the Kurds within Soviet borders. Just as Gorbachev is sending troops to Armenia to crush the demands for national rights there, the Kurds can expect the same treatment in Soviet Kurdistan.

We call on the Trade Union and Labour movement to demand an end to the physical liquidation of the Kurdish people.

# Tories Step-Up Repression of Irish Struggle

John Owen

Going side by side with their attempts to physically annihilate those engaged in armed struggle against the British occupation of Ireland the Tories are attempting to muzzle all and any one who wishes to express anything other than the official version of the "troubles".

This has taken the form of a massive attack on the civil liberties of the people of the north of Ireland and workers in Britain. The recent round of attacks started with the removal of the right to silence. This was quickly followed by the ban on broadcasting the opinion of anyone who stood for the right of the Irish people to struggle for their rights as a nation - what the Tories call terrorism.

The real purpose is to terrorize Irish organizations like the Irish in Britain Representation Group and trade-unions and political parties, in an attempt to force them to keep quiet about Ireland.

Under a new Bill, which is based on the Drugs Trafficking Offences Act, any organization that the police suspect of providing funds for terrorism, can have its funds frozen, and if found guilty it can have its assets seized. An idea of how broad the definition of suspect organizations can be was given by the Tory Daily Telegraph which commented "Some hotels and pubs are little more than fronts for the IRA fund-raising". So if pubs can be classed as suspect because they have an Irish clientele, what chance has a trade-union or political party?

On top of this, another new "measure" is the requirement that anyone standing for election in the north of Ireland will have to sign a declaration renouncing violence. This is precisely the same condition as that which has kept Nelson Mandela behind bars for over twenty years.

The Prevention of Terrorism Act which was brought in by a Labour Government has become a permanent feature of British law. The PTA has been used to terrorize the Irish population since its introduction in 1974.

Since then hundreds of thousands of Irish people leaving or visiting Britain have been held or questioned by the Special Branch without any charges being made, without the detainee having any access to a lawyer. The number of prosecutions that has resulted has been infinitesimal.

It is the PTA which has been extended to make it an offence to raise money for a "terrorist" organisation. Douglas Hurd has said that this is aimed at stopping racketeering using such methods as black market tax exemption vouchers or extortion from tradesmen and businesses. But these things are already illegal, no new laws are required to stop these activities.

The sensitivity of the British State over their crimes in relation to Irish people, has led to them banning a song by the Irish group 'The Pogues', entitled "Birmingham 6/ Streets of Sorrow". This is because the song dares to criticize the frame-up of 6 people, whose

only crime was that they were Irish and living in Birmingham, at the time of an IRA pub-bombing in 1974.

The reaction of the shadow spokesperson for north of Ireland, Kevin MacNamara was to denounce Thatcher's speech which said in times of war, it was necessary to suspend a part of one's own civil liberties, in order to defeat the enemy. He protested that to declare a war existed would boost the national liberation struggle. There speaks the voice of the Labour party in Britain, who complain in Parliament against Peter Wright's book but support the repression, by any means, of the republican movement.

However much the Tories try it cannot prevent the growing unity over class issues between British and Irish workers, be it the destruction of the NHS, privatisation of the education system or civil and political freedoms. The tasks of workers and youth in Britain is to clear out the chauvinist leaders that presently leads the working class and to fight for true Internationalism, that is to live by the Marxist principle that workers in Britain have a duty to stop British repression in Ireland

## British Barbarism in Durham

Ed Barbor

**Last month, Martina Anderson, sentenced to life imprisonment on conspiracy charges for her alleged involvement in the Brighton bombing, underwent an operation to scrape out her womb after evidence of gynaecological problems, undoubtedly resulting from the hundreds of strip/internal searches she has been subjected to since her imprisonment.**

**Only twenty minutes later she was forced to walk from her hospital bed to a prison van which took her back to Durham Prison while she was still bleeding and under the influence of anaesthetic. Until she got back to her cell she was allowed no clothing but a paper gown and was not even given a blanket to wrap around herself.**

**A picket on Saturday 19th November supported by the Irish Freedom Movement, the Women and Ireland Network and other activists protested loudly at the gates of Durham Jail at this inhuman, degrading, sexist and racist treatment of Irish prisoners.**

**Strip searching is not used for security reasons but is a method used to humiliate and break the spirit of the Irish female prisoners of war. Socialist Voice unconditionally supports the struggle of the Irish working class fighting for national independence against the British occupation forces.**

**As part of this struggle workers in Britain should campaign against the injustice of a system which incriminates people because they are Irish and demand an end to strip searching.**

# Support the Nurses

The nurses have found out just how callous the present Government is. Their desire to break up the National Health Service is the reason for their implacable hostility to the nurses and the action they are taking.

The trade union bureaucrats of the National Union of Public Employees and the Confederation of Health Service Employees are doing all in their power to stop the rising tide of militancy amongst the nurses.

As one COHSE leader said on radio in November, "does the Government not realise that it is throwing away a golden opportunity by not going to ACAS", he added in desperate tones "we are holding the nurses back from taking action."

As the recent national shop stewards conference in Manchester showed, with over forty areas represented, the vast majority of nurses want to see a nationally co-ordinated mobilisation. The meeting called for national action in all regions on the 6th December. The meeting

was informed that NUPE had sent instructions demanding that only eight delegates, approved by head office, be sent to the lobby in London on the 6th.

Clearly the bureaucracy are keener to curb the anger of the nurses and the immense support in the communities for their struggle than to build a campaign against this government.

New leaderships are emerging and will continue to emerge in the fight and they must be given every support possible.

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Socialist Voice interviewed Steve Parry, a Nupe shop steward at Prestwich hospital in Manchester. Steve is a second year student training to be a psychiatric nurse. Nurses at Prestwich hospital were on strike in November.

Q. "What are the main issues in the nurses dispute?"

S.P. "Grades came out in October. We'd been promised, after a wave of activity from February through to April, that... they were going to look carefully at peoples jobs and actually pay people for the job they were doing... you got people like Charge nurses put on F grades and Nursing Assistants put

on A grades which is a huge insult to both of those two particular groups of people. The Charge Nurses actually run the wards... they are extremely responsible people. Nursing Assistants, they said, were always under continuous supervision, which is nonsense. Effectively the Nursing Assistants got something like an 8% rise, so this 17.9% that they're talking about across the board is a load of rubbish. In my hospital there's 370 odd Nursing Assistants, three of them got B grades... how can they say that these people are continually being supervised when they're working nights on wards where theres no qualified staff with them except by phone.



Q. "Are there many differences between now and March?"

S.P. "The level of anger and frustration was there but it wasn't so strong in the spring. The level of anger is now huge... Most people consider working to grade as a more justifiable form of action. It's very difficult to get nurses to strike. I've been on strike for three weeks and the problem that you face is, its not like locking the factory gates... you do have to care for your patients because the cover is so low. You're in there as often as not. In fact in three weeks I don't think I took more than round about thirty five to forty hours strike action. Last spring when we were... talking about strike action... we looked at the... levels we would need for emergency care. If we wanted to go on strike we needed twelve more nurses to get up to emergency care."

Q. "What's the situation with the Royal College of Nursing?"

"In Springfield hospital, North Manchester, two of the most active strike committee members a month ago were in the RCN. There's people still flooding from them across the country."

Q. "What are the basic demands of the campaign?"

S.P. "... We want 17.9% for all. We want to kill the re-grading and expose it as the con that it is."

Q. "So do you want to go back to your old grades?"

S.P. "NO. We want it done properly... where they're not concerned about the budget, they're concerned about the jobs people are doing."

Q. "What's behind the drive for cut-backs in the NHS?"

S.P. "I really don't think they could sell off the NHS... but they're certainly attempting to turn it into a second rate service. The moral inside the NHS is absolutely rotten.

We're running to stand still. The resources in terms off staff is too low. The whole thing is being totally dictated by money problems. There isn't enough."

Q. "What are the emerging differences between the national and regional/local leaderships?"

S.P. "They're holding us back from action because

they're totally terrified of whats going on. People at rank and file level are taking action for themselves, working out what they should be doing. I am really quite annoyed with the way COHSE, especially, have reacted regionally and nationally... There were two official strikes in this area; Springfield and Prestwich. We never got any support... direction or guidance from our regional officers. They positively do not want a strike. They did everything they could to end the strike. They're behaving in the way you expect trade union bureaucrats to behave but I've never seen such classic examples. Normally they pay lip service, this time they're not even doing that, they're ignoring the damn thing... It took the branch officials at Prestwich 10 days to get back in control and even then they haven't done it properly. They decided to hold a mass meeting, but it was a very secret meeting, hardly anybody new about it. I think they put the notices in the public lavatories in Whitefield or something! Out of that 'mass meeting' 56 voted to go back, 40 voted to stay out. There's a lot of anger in the COHSE membership."

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