

# STRIKE AGAINST THE POLL TAX!

## workers power

British section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International

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# MILLIONS SAY:

# We won't

**MILLIONS OF ordinary people have not paid the Poll Tax. Even the millionaire press has been forced to admit the truth: mass non-payment is a reality. The councils have borrowed a record £1.9 billion to cover the cost. In Birmingham over 50% of the population has not paid a penny.**

But the Tories are fighting back, aided and abetted by local councils.

They are booking up time in the magistrates' courts, preparing to mete out conveyor belt justice to thousands of non-payers at a time. They are preparing to steal the money from those who cannot or will not pay, taking it out of our wages and benefits and they are hiring bailiffs to raid our homes.

Meanwhile councils are pushing through deep cuts in jobs and services. They have started to sack teachers and close nurseries due to lack of cash. Council workers who collect the Tax are being made to work longer hours for little money. And capped councils have only just started the even greater cuts they will need to comply with Tory law.

With an estimated 10 to 14 million non-payers the potential is there to smash the tax and sink the Tory gov-



ernment.

Already strikes have broken out against the effects of the tax and capping. Eight

hundred Bamsley teachers walked out for a day in June followed by teachers in Avon. Further strikes are planned

# pay!

throughout the poll-capped boroughs. Council workers from Greenwich to Glasgow have taken action against the new working conditions under the tax.

In Hackney parents have occupied one of three nurseries threatened with closure due to the cuts.

What we need now is mass active resistance to the tax. Every court must be picketed. Council workers taking action over new conditions must escalate their action, refusing to collect the tax itself. Where they come for the tax through "wage arrestment"—stealing money out of our wage packets and salary cheques—we must respond with strike action

until it is stopped.

Every man and woman eligible to pay the tax should burn their bills and paying-in books now and prepare for action.

To link up the struggles we need general strike action. We cannot rely on the slumbering fat cats who run the unions to call it. We have to build for it ourselves.

Every point of resistance to the Poll Tax has to be seen as the potential spark for a blaze of mass strike action. Workers striking against wage arrestment, teachers striking against job losses, face fines and sequestration under the anti-union laws the moment their action can be proved "politi-

cal" or "secondary" action.

Parents occupying nurseries, pickets outside courts, demos called to protect working class from the bailiffs, will inevitably be treated to the police brutality meted out in Trafalgar Square on 31 March.

If millions of workers sit at home fuming at the injustice of it all, but doing nothing, we are finished. If millions of workers answer the call to strike action Thatcher is finished.

The crunch is coming in the Poll Tax fight. Let's crunch the Tories:

- Strike against the Poll Tax!

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## IN brief

● A well known Labour front bench economics spokesman, who has opted to remain nameless, was recently asked where socialism had gone in the latest version of the Policy Review. He replied, "From now on socialism is what Peter Mandelson says it is". The fate of socialism is obviously in good hands. Mandelson, Labour's publicity manager, is the grandson of Herbert Morrison, who in the old days answered a similar question with the quip that socialism was "what a Labour government does".

● The Irish war took a new twist last month. Not only is there panic in British ranks about the IRA's latest military campaign. There's a whiff of mutiny in the air. Two soldiers from the Royal Hampshire Regiment serving in the Six Counties decided they'd had enough and staged a rooftop protest at a barracks in Derry. Both men were immediately put behind bars. Not, we hasten to add, at Strangeways.

● The bosses have every right to be worried about inflationary wage settlements. After all Britain's managers achieved an 18% increase this year taking their average salary up to £325,000 a year. Directors are pushing for parity having slipped back to a headline average of £139,000. Lord Rayner, the Thatcherite boss of Marks and Spencer, whose 46% rise took him to £619,916 quite rightly called on workers to start "cooling it" on their pay demands.

● The staff at Murdoch's tribunes of sex, lies and bingo were unrepentant when the Press Council reprimanded them for their gay baiting use of the word "poofster". But lest anyone think that the Sun is the only rag spewing forth such insults *The People* is now defending itself for using "poof". Its editor's case rests on his belief that it is legitimate to attack gays for their sexuality. *The People* is of course a Maxwell paper. And Maxwell has the gall to call himself a socialist.

● US firepower is lethal, as the Panamanians found to their cost last December. But it is not always accurate. In the invasion the US forces managed to kill nine of their own troops and wound another 200. This dirty imperialist onslaught resulted in more medals being dished out than there were troops. Obviously someone forgot to discount those awarded to the soldiers shot by their own side.

● Every time there is a health dispute bureaucrats, echoed by many on the left, plead that all out action is impossible because of the need for emergency cover. Such arguments did not deter 7,000 Greek doctors who went on all out strike to improve their wages. They get £400 a month and decided enough was enough. British health workers would do well to follow their example.

● We hear a lot about the "terrorism" of the Palestine Liberation Organisation. Less well publicised are the brutal actions of the Israeli state. A sampler of their everyday terror against the Palestinians was a recent attack on a maternity clinic. They fired tear gas bombs into it, seriously injuring 66 babies—all to make the world safe for democracy!

Ignorance has intensified the bigotry and prejudice facing by all people with AIDS, and gay men in particular. Dr Helen Ward explains why Channel Four has made the fight against ignorance more difficult and why health workers were right to boycott the recent AIDS conference in San Francisco.

# Dispatching disinformation

IN JUNE Channel Four's *Dispatches* programme broadcast *The AIDS Catch*. The programme has led to a storm of protest from the gay community. The Terrence Higgins Trust is to take the programme's makers to the Broadcasting Complaints Authority. The lesbian and gay press has published a number of scathing reviews. The programme *Right to Reply* was dominated by criticisms of the programme.

There are very good reasons for these protests. The programme came dangerously close to promoting ideas that underpinned earlier talk of a gay plague, and the belief that this disease was God's retribution for "unnatural acts".

This attitude has not disappeared, and continues to result in discrimination against people with HIV and AIDS. The continuing reference in the press to the innocent victims of AIDS deliberately creates the impression that there is a guilty person, whose chosen actions were responsible for them getting the disease. That person is "guilty" of being gay.

## Ignorance

There is a lot that we don't know about AIDS. But there is one thing we do know. AIDS can occur in anyone. You do not have to be gay, have injected drugs or be malnourished for the disease to develop.

The ideas propagated in *Dispatches* challenged this view. They originate with a Californian molecular biologist, Peter Duesberg. He argues that "AIDS is not and cannot be an infectious disease". He challenges the accepted wisdom of the AIDS industry, and believes that the opposition he meets to his views has more to do with the vested interests of the scientists and pharmaceutical companies than to a real scientific refutation.

He is right to point out how much money and how many careers are invested in the "HIV hypothesis" as he calls it, and the conservatism this produces in response to any radical challenge to their theories and in particular their profitable drug treatments. But he is wrong to take up the extreme opposite view and deny any link between HIV and AIDS.

The programme stated: "Essentially a person who has no risk factors is not going to get AIDS."

Duesberg defends this on the grounds that AIDS is a syndrome caused by a complex of assaults on the immune system, resulting from drug taking and other behaviour. Thus he describes the social and sexual revolution in the 1960s and 1970s in the USA, which led to gay men flocking to New York, going to bath houses, having multiple sexual partners and taking lots of different drugs as the source of the problem. According to Duesberg the effect of such new behaviour

was not known then, but it is now manifested in the form of AIDS.

Of course he cannot deny the strong association between HIV and AIDS, but he argues that HIV is not the cause of AIDS. He says it is merely a marker for risk behaviour. HIV itself is regarded as a virus which at worst causes a temporary glandular fever type illness and then remains in the body without doing any harm.

The holes in Duesberg's arguments are gaping. How does he explain the many people with AIDS who do not fit into his risk groups? Or the men who may have got HIV through sex, and then developed AIDS, but have only had one or two partners and never taken drugs? Or the children who have HIV from blood transfusions or from their mothers? Some may be secretly snorting or jacking up in the playground, but surely that cannot explain the majority of these cases.

The most obvious criticism of the whole position argued in the programme is that it cannot explain the epidemic of AIDS and HIV in Central Africa where heterosexual activity, not drug use or homosexuality, is the primary risk. Duesberg and his allies cannot explain this at all. They prefer to move the goal posts.

African Slim disease, which is now considered to be AIDS and is associated with HIV infection, is regarded by Duesberg as something different. He explains the immune suppression witnessed in Africa as due to malnutrition combined with common infections like malaria and diarrhoeal diseases.

If he were correct, it seems strange that there has been an increase in this immune suppression along with the increasing proportion of people with HIV in

Central Africa. You would also expect this condition to have been present for a much longer time, and the tendency for it to affect young sexually active adults in the first instance, rather than the very young and the very old, goes against any previously experienced pattern of malaria or diarrhoeal disease.

There definitely is something new going on in Africa which Duesberg has to explain—AIDS is devastating some communities and threatens to lead to an absolute decline in population in some countries. Duesberg cannot explain this and therefore devoted only a couple of sentences in the whole programme to this continent.

**AIDS can occur in anyone. You do not have to be gay, have injected drugs or be malnourished for the disease to develop.**

But back to his home ground—has he got a stronger argument when he points to the fact that the predicted massive epidemic of AIDS amongst heterosexuals in the USA and the UK has not happened?

The programme argued: "HIV is not behaving like a newly introduced sexually transmitted virus which would be expected to spread like wildfire."

Here the programme quoted the results of a study at St Mary's Hospital London into HIV infection amongst prostitute women. In fact the evidence of this study works against Duesberg's argument.

The project has been working

with prostitute women in London since 1985. In that time over 250 of these women have been screened for HIV, and only three have been found to be positive. Two of these women were infected through sharing needles and one through sex with a boyfriend with HIV.

The *Dispatches* programme quoted this information as though it proves that HIV is not behaving like a normal infection. It implied that a normal sexually transmitted infection would spread rapidly across this sexually active population, but this is simply not true.

In the St Mary's study the prostitute women also have very low levels of gonorrhoea, genital herpes and other "normal" infections. This doesn't lead people to suggest that gonorrhoea is not sexually transmitted. Rather it points to just how safely these women have sex. Having multiple partners does not automatically mean you get lots of infections, so long as you use condoms consistently or engage in forms of sexual activity that do not involve an exchange of bodily fluids.

## Risk

In fact other sexually transmitted infections have behaved similarly to HIV in the sense that they did not spread "like wildfire". Hepatitis B and syphilis were very common amongst groups of gay men in London in the early 1980s, but remained relatively uncommon in prostitute women and in other groups of heterosexuals having a lot of partners.

But none of this means that AIDS should be thought of as restricted to gay men and drug users. In this Duesberg and the programme are not only wrong, they are very irresponsible. HIV can be transmitted to anyone, and they may go on to develop AIDS. The fastest growing group of people getting HIV in the USA is women infected through sex with HIV positive men.

These women need not be drug users, prostitutes or indulge in any particular risk behaviour to develop AIDS. And to suggest that they do is to increase the stigmatisation which they already face.

We are a long way from knowing all the answers about AIDS. We do not know why some people with HIV remain healthy for a decade whilst others get ill and die within a couple of years. It is likely that there are other factors which will trigger disease in people with HIV—other illness or infection, and possibly drug use and malnutrition will be found to contribute to the development of illness in some people. More research is needed, but until we can be sure of what exact combination of factors leads to AIDS we should not promote complacency by suggesting that this disease only strikes those who put themselves at risk.

Ignorance and prejudice have been major factors promoting the spread of AIDS. Homophobia and anti-gay bigotry have been strengthened as a result. And the spectre of a massive heterosexual epidemic has been used to increase fear of sex and deepen guilt generally, as part of the current moral reaction. All of this will only increase the risk of sexually transmitted diseases as people refuse to talk about sex and avoid confronting issues around safer sex and changing sexual practices. But it is no help to suggest that this threat was just manufactured and in fact there is no risk to people as long as they are not gays or junkies.

This can only intensify ignorance and bigotry. Unfortunately, the disinformation in the Channel Four programme will strengthen, not retard this trend. ■

## Conference boycott

**DISCRIMINATION AGAINST people with HIV or AIDS, or against those thought to be at risk of HIV, seriously damages the struggle to limit the epidemic.**

The World Health Organisation has repeatedly, albeit largely ineffectively, argued that states should not introduce laws which increase such discrimination. But the USA now has immigration restrictions which forbid the entry of people with HIV into the country except in special circumstances with specific permission. Getting this permission means telling the US embassy that you have HIV and would like to visit the USA for a limited period of time.

Such immigration restrictions can only serve to increase discrimination and harassment particularly of gay men, drug users and black Africans seeking to travel to the USA. They will be stopped at the border and searched for evidence of HIV infection—to see if they are carrying any drugs used in the treatment of AIDS. The Sixth International Conference on AIDS took place in San

Francisco last month. In protest against the USA's reactionary immigration measures a number of people and organisations have boycotted the conference. This boycott, supported by the International Red Cross, the European Community Health Ministers and the British Medical Association, amongst others, was designed to put pressure on the US government to lift these regulations.

About twelve thousand scientists, health workers and activists attended the multi-million pound event to discuss and debate progress in the field of fighting HIV and AIDS.

It is essential that such protests are made. However, lifting restrictions on people with HIV will not solve the problem of harassment by US Immigration.

They have a battery of other restrictions which can be used to stop, intimidate and discriminate against blacks, communists and others entering the USA. There needs to be a fight to get rid of all immigration controls. ■



## EDITORIAL

# Don't mourn the death of Stalinism

THE BOSSES cannot conceal their delight over the return of capitalism to East Germany. Communism is dead. History has ended.

The bosses' papers are ramming home the message in every country. Marxism has failed. It is an outmoded doctrine, an aberration of the nineteenth century.

But it is not communism or Marxism which lies in ruins together with the Iron Curtain. It is a monstrous parody of communism—the rule of a privileged bureaucracy which has disguised itself with the trappings of revolutionary socialism all the better to maintain its power.

Only one thing was inevitable about Stalinism: its demise. The Soviet bureaucracy triumphed due to the isolation and backwardness of the first workers' state. But it owed its privileges to the collective property established after a workers' revolution in October 1917.

For six decades the Stalinists' political dictatorship preserved the centralised planning system but in a bureaucratic form. Under the impact of the Cold War it even spread those bureaucratic property relations to Eastern Europe.

Yet as workers' democracy evaporated the new social system became an engine running out of petrol. Eventually it was bound to come to a halt. It was destined to fall either to a real workers' revolution or to a social counter-revolution by the imperialist bosses. What is happening now confirms everything Trotskyists have said about the Stalinist states.

Despite this, however, there are many in the workers movement who secretly mourn the demise of Stalinism. From Berlin to Beijing they can see nothing but counter-revolution in the mass movements which have rocked Stalinism to its foundations.

Stalinism was bad, but capitalism is even worse, they explain to bewildered visitors from the workers movement in the Eastern bloc. There are those who will not hear a word of criticism against Irish Republicanism but who look at the national aspirations of the Lithuanians and grind their teeth. There are those who would rather the Soviet workers stick with the devil they know than plunge the USSR into revolutionary turmoil.

To them we say: don't mourn the death of Stalinism—make sure it is succeeded by real workers' power and socialism.

Nothing in the present situation makes capitalist restoration inevitable. Even in Germany, where the exceptional circumstance of a pre-existing German bourgeoisie has allowed the capitalists to buy peaceful restoration, social peace is not guaranteed forever. And in the whole of Eastern Europe, USSR and China marketisation will mean misery for a majority of the workers. This will throw up one opportunity after another for the revolutionary termination of Stalinist rule.

Far from ending, history is beginning again for the workers and youth of the Stalinist countries. The millions who have taken to the streets in search of real democracy and real freedom will find that only real socialism can provide them.

Only the abolition of hunger, poverty, homelessness and ignorance can provide the foundations for the new life so many young East European and Russian workers want. Only the creation of a state run by and for workers can guarantee real democracy. And only the abolition of the profit system can guarantee this for the vast majority of the world's population.

The revolutionary situations in the Stalinist states have mirrored elements of every previous revolution: the self-sacrifice, the naivety, the con-

fused admixture of progressive and reactionary sentiments. But unlike every previous revolution in history these are revolutions where the price of defeat for the revolutionary class will not simply be the survival of the old order. It will be the return of an even older, capitalist order.

Does that mean the workers should lie down and wait for a more convenient moment to wipe out bureaucratic rule? That moment will never come. Stalinism's mortal crisis will always and everywhere open up the workers to new illusions and thereby the possibility of the triumph of capitalist restoration.

And just as revolutionaries cannot summon up a revolutionary crisis from nowhere, neither can they command one to disappear because they are not ready to greet it.

Nine months ago East German workers believed Stalinism would go on forever. Today they believe restoration will solve everything. In nine months time they will be confronted with the evidence that capitalism means mass unemployment and second class citizenship in a united Germany.

From the Oder-Neisse eastwards the task for workers is to defend state property and centralised planning. Even in their bureaucratized form they remain obstacles to capitalist exploitation. Purged of bureaucracy they can become the instruments of the transition to socialism.

But the only sure defence of those gains, the only way of saving them from the grasp of the capitalists, is revolution. ■

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## OPERATION RESCUE

# A bigots' picket

THE ANTI-ABORTION organisation Operation Rescue (OR) is now established in Britain. Committed to "non-violent direct action" involving occupations and blockades of clinics, they aim to physically prevent abortions being carried out.

This can lead to intimidation of patients, invasion of clinics and the destruction of vital equipment.

OR has been active in the USA for the last ten years. It now has branches worldwide, including Britain for the last 18 months. Their director, crazed priest James Morrow, is clear as to the movement's aims:

"Our tactic is to have so many people standing in the doorways that the place cannot function."

Morris does not recognise the '67 Abortion Act giving women limited legal rights to abortion.

"No parliament or civil authority has the authority from God to enact an Abortion Act. All authority comes from God."

His targets in London have been the Marie Stopes Clinics in Cricklewood, Kilburn, Streatham and Brixton. OR's tactics involve giving out their literature with glossy

photos of aborted fetuses and holding up models of twelve week old fetuses to women entering the clinic for abortions in the hope of changing their minds. When OR can't get at the women they pray and sing hymns in the road holding up glossy pictures of the Virgin Mary. In Stockport they managed to enter a clinic, and carried out a "sit-in". The same thing happened in Birmingham where they chained themselves to equipment in the clinic.

When the police have been called in they offer passive resistance, proud to be seen as martyrs. They believe civil disobedience is the only way they will achieve their aims. There have already been over one hundred arrests of members of OR.

OR's claim to be non-violent is utter hypocrisy. Harassment and intimidation is violence. Ultimately they are prepared to drag women from the operating table and risk those women's lives, which they see as less valuable than the foetus. Fr Morrow attacked a clinic manager while she was escorting a patient into a clinic. The manager happened to be pregnant herself!



A few beads short of a rosary!

If the methods of their American counterparts are anything to go by, OR will not stop at their existing tactics.

In the USA OR consists of many right wing organisations such as the Ku Klux Klan. Attacks on clinics, workers and patients have been more extreme than in Britain—and has included firebombing. One bigot even pulled a gun on patient escorts. Of course, it's not just the abortion clinics targeted for attack in the USA, but also the family planning clinics. Not only do they believe that abortion is murder but also any form of contraception

is wrong. Defence committees have been set up by clinic workers and local activists. They organised demonstrations and public meetings to mobilise the local communities appealing to the tradition of the civil rights and liberation movements. At the end of the day it is working class, poor and black women who will suffer.

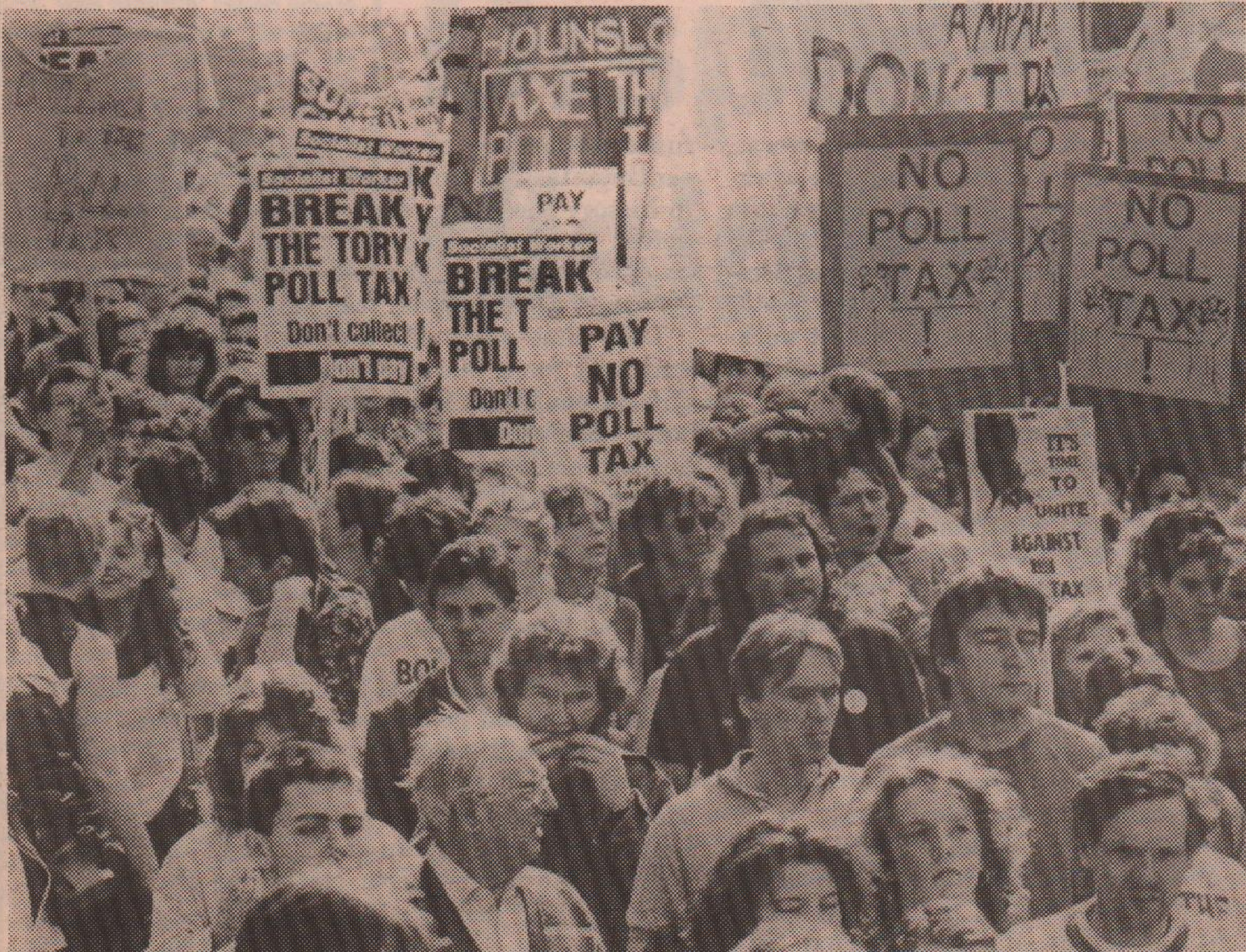
NAC and STAC are well aware of the existence of OR in Britain. However they are not prepared to organise or mobilise their members against them. They argue that the women entering the clinics for abortions do not want to be har-

assed going in or out, therefore they will not want pro-choice activists there to defend them. They also don't want to take part in joint actions with men. Even the SWP/RCP appear reluctant to mobilise their members or supporters.

But this is a class issue affecting both women and men. At the Brixton Clinic there is only a small group of pro-abortionists prepared to confront these bigots; members of Workers Power, Red Action, the DAM and some individuals. We need to extend this to get these bigots off our streets and away from the clinics. ■



Between 10 and 14 million people are now involved in non-payment. If that figure is to hold up and not go down over the summer the anti-Poll Tax movement has to face reality. **Colin Lloyd** explains some of the illusions current in the Poll Tax movement and outlines a strategy to win.



# The way to win

## "Mass non payment can win"

Whilst mass non-payment is the bedrock of the campaign, it cannot win on its own. A passive civil disobedience campaign will not beat the Tories unless they too are prepared to be passive.

But they aren't. They are on the offensive. They have devised a draconian system of wage and benefit arrestment to recover the tax from non-payers. Every batch of cases they force through the courts will result in thousands of arrestment orders.

To stop these we need strike action. Unless strikes are called in benefit offices and in every workplace where wages are arrested it will be a case of "Can't pay, have paid!". So the idea that mass non payment can win on its own is a dangerous illusion.

## "The system can't cope with mass civil disobedience"

On the face of it councils confront enormous problems implementing the Poll Tax. On current performances the magistrates will be hard pressed to cope with the volume of cases. The Poll Tax offices in the councils will be faced with a similar nightmare.

Birmingham currently faces the possibility of having to take 300,000 to court. In the capped councils everything has had to be done twice. In Lambeth the council's unelected officers have seized control from the councillors under a special government provision.

But a slide into chaos this summer will not beat the tax. Out-

side the context of mass action it could have the effect of turning the workers who have paid against the non-payers, council tenants against council workers.

And if the present legal system and council bureaucracy proves inadequate the Tories are prepared to take extraordinary measures to do the job: special sittings of courts, emergency legislation in Parliament, government commissioners sent in to run councils.

It is a fatal illusion to rely on the chaos and delay caused by non-payment to beat the tax. We need strike action to do that.

## "Workers are striking against the Poll Tax"

Time and again in the left press and at anti-Poll Tax meetings we hear the current teachers' strikes and strikes by council workers described as strikes against the Poll Tax.

Of course the majority of the workers involved in action are dead against the Poll Tax. But the action is focused on the effects of the Poll Tax. Barnsley teachers struck against redundancies imposed by capping. Greenwich housing workers struck because the new conditions and pay involved in collecting the tax were intolerable.

It sounds radical to say these are strikes against the tax itself, but it is dangerous. The moment teachers are reinstated, or wage and conditions demands are met the struggle will be demobilised.

The point is to turn these existing struggles into ones against the Tax itself, something that

won't happen without a political argument with the workers and the unions involved.

Turning the anger into strike action remains the key task for workers affected by the cuts, workers who have to implement the tax, and those whose work-mates' wages are pilfered to make them pay the tax.

## "We are beating the bailiffs"

In Scotland the bailiffs have been in operation for months, carrying out valuation and sale of non-payers' property. Despite the much publicised existence of "Tax Busters"—CB radio equipped squads aimed at stopping the bailiffs—these sales are taking place.

For every celebrated success in stopping a bailiff there has been at least another unsuccessful attempt.

This is because the leadership of then Scottish Anti-Poll Tax Federation will not adopt the necessary tactics. The Federation leadership talks constantly about "peaceful protest" and "human blockades". But to stop the bailiffs organised and disciplined working class violence is necessary. The bailiffs are backed by the police who will not hesitate to break the heads of those who offer more than passive "civil disobedience".

That is why we need a network of workers' defence teams to defend every Poll Tax demo and picket.

## "We are winning"

Despite the numbers currently

# A wasted opportunity

TWELVE HUNDRED delegates, representing over 600 trade union organisations and workplace APTUs, met in Liverpool at a conference called by the Anti-Poll Tax Federation on 23 June.

But the potential of the conference was squandered. This was due to the bureaucratic manoeuvring of the *Militant* supporters who lead the Federation, and the total unwillingness of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) to challenge the direction of the campaign.

The conference heard speaker after speaker describe the action that has been organised by teachers, council workers, factory workers. But it was barely allowed to discuss a strategy that could unite the different sections of workers in struggle into a mass movement to smash the Poll Tax.

There was general agreement with a policy of strike action in support of non-payment and non-collection; strikes against wage-arrestment and in support of non-collection were urged. The conference called for a day of action across local government against Poll Tax capping.

But a motion from Birmingham AEU 4 branch which outlined the need for mass, general strike action, for councils of action, for workers' defence against police and bailiffs, was heavily defeated.

Instead the conference endorsed a pathetic statement from the Federation's national committee. It called for "peaceful human blockades" against the bailiffs and special conferences for trade unionists. And instead of preparing the anti-Poll Tax movement for a campaign to win mass strike action it un-

veiled the Federation's master strategy to beat the tax: "A people's march against the Poll Tax".

The Greenwich strikers told the conference "we need to fight the Poll Tax trench by trench". But as one Birmingham AEU delegate and *Workers Power* supporter replied: "I think trench warfare is a very bloody and costly way to fight. We should hit them with the A-Bomb—the general strike!"

Any possibility of debating out the issues, or even of working out concrete collaboration between rank and file delegates in the same union, was excluded by the format and chairing of the conference.

But the absence of debate was not only due to this. The SWP once again refused to challenge the Federation leadership in open conference. *Militant* voted for every one of the SWP's resolutions in the cheerful knowledge that they represented no alternative strategy or threat to their misleadership.

When the truce broke down it was not over politics or strategy but over whether to call a national demo outside the Tory Party conference in October. The Federation leadership, fearing it will again be implicated in "mindless violence" if more than a few hundred anti-Poll Tax protesters ever gather in a public place, opposed this and defeated it on a show of hands.

The conference was yet another squandered opportunity to mobilise action in the workplace. It showed the forces are there to fight for that action. But once again they are hamstrung by their centrist and reformist politics. ■

involved in non-payment, victory is far from certain. The numbers involved in non-payment are not reflected in numbers involved in the APTUs. Millions of workers have adopted the attitude—let's wait and see what happens if we don't pay.

If the initial battles result in effective fines, wage arrestments and even jail sentences for protesters; if police and bailiffs are allowed to invade workers' homes and sell off their furniture, the level of mass non-payment could drop rapidly. That is why we need a fighting strategy now, not a couple of hundred marchers trudging through the cornfields of England and Scotland in October.

We need to link workers' action with non-payment through delegate councils of action. Delegates from every workplace and every estate could co-ordinate an active fight against Tory attempts to make the tax work. No one should rest content with the current state of the town—based Federations. They remain unrepresentative activists' groups. They should be transformed into delegate bodies to co-ordinate the action.

## "General strike—pie in the sky!"

That is the response of most workers to the idea that we need mass strike action to beat the Poll Tax. But if non-payment alone can't win, what can? Many would argue: non-payment backed up by workers' action.

But when has the Tory government been prepared to give in to

workers' action? It was prepared to spend billions, bring in the most vicious laws, mobilise the police as a national force, use the anti-union laws to defeat the miners.

Faced with strikes against wage and benefit arrestment, it is not likely that Thatcher will simply scuttle her flagship and stand on deck while it sinks. She will launch her powerful armoury of police, courts and anti-union laws, sequestering the funds and fining the unions and individuals involved. She will mobilise the police to smash demos and pickets against magistrates' courts and bailiffs at the first sign that they are successful.

That is why we have to prepare for mass strike action. Because it will be needed to avoid yet another crushing defeat.

Is it impossible? Can it be done in the face of opposition from the union leaders? The anger is simmering away amongst large sections of workers. If that anger is given a focus by a strike, a police attack, a jail sentence, then it is possible that workers would respond to the call for mass strike action. Over 200,000 responded to the call for the London demo when Kinnoch and the TUC had expressly condemned the organisers!

It can be done, and the Poll Tax can be beaten, if the APTUs are turned into an army of agitators for a fighting strategy now:

- Don't pay, don't collect
- Strike to defend non-payment and non-collection
- For a general strike to smash the Poll Tax!



# Oil workers organise

NORTH SEA oil workers have reached a crucial stage in their campaign to win union recognition and improvements in offshore safety.

Since early May thousands of platform workers have imposed a ban on routine overtime and have worked to contract in response to a call from the Offshore Industry Liaison Committee (OILC). This action on at least 24 platforms has come in spite of attempts by Shell and BP to buy off long-brewing discontent with an imposed 11.6% pay package.

Recent leaks to the OILC office in Aberdeen should strengthen the resolve of the "bears" (as offshore workers are known). Confidential memos show that Shell was about to apply to the Department of Energy for a delay in carrying out vital safety work including the installation of an emergency shutdown which was made mandatory in the wake of the Piper Alpha disaster!

A number of OILC activists now believe that a swift escalation of the action is needed. Some are arguing strongly for an all-out one-day strike including catering workers.

OILC chair Ronnie McDonald fears that the bosses would retaliate with a lock out offshore. This would pose the need for an unprecedented wave of sustained platform occupations.

The oil bosses may soon make an example of OILC activists under the latest anti-union laws which make them personally liable for the bosses' losses in the event of unofficial action.

To date, union officials have been content to tolerate the OILC. They have, however, shrunk from giving an open lead to the fight, hiding behind the anti-union laws. In the meantime new subscriptions flow into union coffers without the members having any real representation.

The OILC is at a crossroads. Sooner rather than later it will have to confront the need for an all out strike, without the backing of the

full-time bureaucrats. As the prospect grows of an indefinite strike in the Norwegian sector of the North Sea the potential power of the long down-trodden "bears" continues to grow. When they do use their industrial muscle, they will need the support, financial and industrial, of organised workers throughout Scotland and the rest of Britain.

● The OILC has issued a call for a 24 hour stoppage throughout the British sector as a day of remembrance for the 167 victims of the Piper Alpha disaster who perished on 6 July 1988 as a result of Occidental Petroleum's drive for profit.■

## JACOBS Bosses take the biscuit

BY G R McCOLL

MORE THAN 1,500 production workers at the Jacobs biscuit plant in Liverpool are in the fifth week of an indefinite strike against management's attacks on jobs and working conditions.

The strike involves a workforce which is more than 75% women part timers. Management provoked the stoppage by sending 400 workers home without pay for implementing an overtime ban. Their sisters and brothers swiftly walked out the gate after them.

The workers had agreed the ban after the plant's new bosses, the French-based multinational BSN, had demanded the scrapping of a no compulsory redundancy agreement and a sharp cut in tea and toilet breaks as the price for a 9.6% average pay rise.

The strike is now official after workers reaffirmed their original decision to walk out by a thumping 83% majority. There is a 24 hour picket rota. Members of the Irish TGWU at Jacobs' other plant in Dublin have agreed not to touch production bound for Britain.

Senior steward, Owen Scanlon, said to *Workers Power*:

"The spirit and determination of the women has been very impressive. The management wrongly assumed that they could walk all over them just because they were women."■

Donations etc to:  
GMB Branch 84 strike fund  
c/o Mr Simpson  
GMB, 99 Edge Lane  
Liverpool, L7 2PE

## BRITISH RAIL Fight the restructuring!

BY A WEST MIDLANDS  
NUR MEMBER

FOLLOWING ON from the NUR's shameful sell-out over our recent pay negotiations the British Railways (BR) Board are now pressing home their advantage by bringing forward proposals for a major "restructuring" of our conditions of work.

In all major departments the board's proposals represent a blatant undermining of the national Machinery of Negotiation which there was action to defend last year. Proposals include "performance related" pay, compulsory weekend working at standard rates of pay, a reduction of the maximum rostered turn to twelve hours (!), the scrapping of all allowances for motor vehicle driving, bad weather working etc, the scrapping of extra pay for bank or public holiday working, mandatory pre-paid overtime working, the scrapping of weekly wages paid in cash, and a proposal to offer salaries to individuals on appointment or promotion "at the discretion of management". These come from the same managers who were responsible for the Clapham tragedy!

There should be no doubt that these BR proposals represent a massive attack on the already diminishing living standards of railway workers. They must be vigorously resisted.

A recent Birmingham mass meeting of the Permanent Way rank and file left an NUR National Executive member in no doubt as

to the strength of feeling that exists against these plans. But the NUR executive may well come to BR's rescue by calling limited and sectional action—if they call any at all. There can only be one response that stands a chance of making any impression on BR.

We must be building for indefinite strike action to bring the whole railway system to a halt—the only thing that will bring the British Railways Board crawling back on their knees, begging for a settlement.■

## Strike for the right to strike

BY CARDIFF WORKERS POWER

THE RIGHT to strike is being denied to two groups of Cardiff workers. One hundred and twenty-five trade unionists at Renold Power Transmission are out on all-out strike following a lock out. An immediate walk-out was followed by another all-out strike vote on 19 June. This proves the bosses only listen to action.

Meanwhile, at Companies House, CPSA and NUCPS members were continuing their fight to stop the incorporation of the National Front (NF) as a limited company. Back in March union action had blocked the fascists' application. But rather than call strike action there and then to force management to reject the NF's application as *Workers Power* supporters argued, the unions let management play for time. This

resulted in DTI boss Nicholas Ridley giving the fascists the all clear on 1 June. Both unions have agreed at their AGMs to hold an immediate protest strike if the Tories sided with the fascists. But then the High Court slapped an injunction on the unions, making any form of industrial action illegal under Labour's 1974 anti-union laws! The fascists, needless to say, were cock-a-hoop.

*Workers Power* supporters are arguing that the unions put this odious injunction to the test with an all-out indefinite strike action. The two disputes should be linked in a battle to defend the right to strike and as a first step to smashing the anti-union laws.■

Messages of support and donations to:  
Renold Strike Committee,  
c/o AEU Fitzalan Place, Cardiff



## SPOTLIGHT ON THE ECONOMY

### Taxing credibility

"THE BURDEN of tax has been shifted away from the top at the expense of those on middle and low incomes."

So notes the Labour Party's recent policy document, *Looking to the Future*, in surveying the effects of tax changes during the Thatcher years.

It has longed been recognised that the overall burden of taxation has increased under the Tories (from 34% to 37% of national income since 1979) because of the effects of increases in indirect tax such as VAT. The weight of this tax falls squarely on working class people.

But it has been assumed that the cuts in direct taxes have benefited all wage earners. This is not true. A married man on 75% of average earnings or less, is paying more direct tax than in 1979.

By contrast someone earning five times the average wage has seen their tax go down from 48% to 34% of their income.

One study concluded that "the majority of wage earners—not merely low paid—have seen little or no reduction in the burden of direct tax".

The Tories have been shameless in directing tax cuts at the bosses and wealthy. In the 1988 budget Lawson decided to reduce taxes by about £6 billion. He gave 40% of this to the top 5% of salary earners!

The Tories make a meal out of the fact that they have cut the basic rate of income tax to 25p in the pound. But much more significant has been the abolition of various higher bands of tax up to a ceiling of 60%. In 1988 the Tories lowered the top rate to 40% for incomes over £19,300.

As well as reducing income tax for the rich (Burton boss, Ralph Halpern, got back over £1,000 a week in the 1988 budget) the Tories have lowered the taxes on profits and unearned incomes. The standard rate of corporation tax was cut to 35%.

The 1985 budget alone resulted in tax relief of £12.8 billion for all companies.

Taxation under capitalism is a deduction from the surplus value generated out of the exploitation of the working class.

The bosses' state generally likes to keep government spending to a minimum but that which it cannot avoid it pays for out of taxes. It keeps taxes on profits as low as possible and takes most from the pay packets of the working class before they see it. Another, often hidden, chunk is extracted when they purchase goods and services.

For Marxists and for revolutionary socialists taxation under capitalism is just another way in which the bosses screw more from the workers. This is not always easy to see for the millions of wage earners.

At the moment the Poll Tax is proving an education to millions of such workers as they see the blatant reactionary logic of this tax which reduces taxation for the rich and boosts it for the rest of us. In other words tax is a class issue. It is a weapon in the hands of the bosses to shift wealth their way.

But it can also be a weapon to improve the conditions of life for working people at the expense of the obscene salaries of company directors, of the fat profits of companies which are made out of our sweat in the first place.

This is not how the Labour Party

sees it, however. Kinnock is not interested in undoing the injustices of the Thatcher years. As recently as the 1987 pre-election campaign Labour promised £6 billion worth of spending if elected, the money to come from simply reversing the tax changes of the Tory government.

Now even that pale pink promise has gone in an effort to prove that Labour is utterly loyal to the bosses.

*Looking to the Future* states: "Labour will restore fairness to our system of income tax by relating tax liability to the ability to pay". This boils down to reducing the basic rate further to 20% while boosting the top rate to 50% with a series of intermediate bands. The document tries to mollify the high earners by promising that "... all changes must be introduced gradually".

How will Labour expect to pay for any reforms when it gets into office? How will it find the cash to undo even some of the ravages that Thatcher has visited on us?

The answer is simple. Labour won't. Gone is the 1987 pledge to spend £6 billion by reversing tax cuts. Even that was pathetic compared to the £90 billion a year made in company profits. £6 billion was the costs of beating the miners and before that of taking back the Malvinas. £6 billion is the loose change of the City, unaccounted for in fraud investigations!

But now even this pathetic sum is too much! Instead Labour will not commit itself to spending anything until "the country can afford it". Labour will instead rely on steady economic growth and hope to improve tax revenues at the current rates.

Those looking to Labour to replace the Tories at the next election may well wonder why it is so impossible to do more than tinker at the margins with the tax system. Why can we not reverse the injustices of the last ten years? Why not make the bosses pay at least what they were paying then?

If "ability to pay" really is Labour's criteria then let them hit those with huge fortunes and profits, land and inherited wealth. Who can it possibly put off? The top 5% of salary earners, the grotesquely over-rewarded directors? How many votes do they have compared to the millions who would stand to benefit? Why not go back to the promises before the 1974 election when even Dennis Healy threatened to squeeze the rich until the pips squeaked?

A minimum indication of any kind of workers' government is its willingness to make inroads into the power and wealth of the bosses and to call upon and lean on the workers' organisations to push it through.

A real workers' government would go further than imposing a swingeing wealth tax on the bosses. If it wanted to put an end to the inevitable attempts at avoidance and sabotage of collection it would be forced, as part of its general drive against capitalism, to place the whole financial system itself into the hands of the working class through nationalising all the banks and finance houses.

In 1982 Labour's programme insisted that a "strategy for economic recovery must entail a challenge to the power of the City". Today at his breakfast business briefings that piece of rhetoric must make John Smith squirm with embarrassment!■





TROTSKY

# The national question and the USSR

*In the years before his death Lenin waged a determined struggle against great Russian chauvinism and in defence of the rights of the minority nationalities within the Soviet state. Arthur Merton demonstrates that on this question, as on others, it was Leon Trotsky who remained faithful to revolutionary communism and continued Lenin's struggle in the face of Stalin's counter-revolution.*

**B**Y THE end of the civil war the young Soviet state had extended across the great bulk of the former Tsarist empire. Bolshevik policy had won over the great mass of peasants not only in Russia but in most of the nations the Tsar had formerly enslaved.

This triumph for the Bolsheviks was testimony to their fidelity to the revolutionary democratic policy of respecting the right of the oppressed nations to self-determination.

None of this removed the national question from the agenda in the young Soviet Union. Lenin recognised, particularly in the case of Georgia, great Russian chauvinist tendencies within the developing Russian party bureaucracy.

In 1923 Trotsky entered the struggle against this reactionary trend.

His concern was that the re-emergence of great Russian chauvinism would strengthen centrifugal tendencies within the union. The instance of Georgia had heightened his concern.

It had been necessary in 1921 for the Red Army to "forcefully Sovietise" Georgia, to overthrow the Mensheviks there and block imperialism's line of advance into the Caucasus. Lenin and Trotsky defended this action on the grounds that the salvation of the revolution as a whole was the supreme law. In temporary and exceptional circumstances it was necessary to negate the right to self-determination.

However, for both men the corollary of this action was the need to pay careful attention to the national feelings of the Georgians once the defence of the revolution had been secured. Examples of great Russian chauvinism should, Trotsky insisted, be treated "as strikebreaking and treason" and be punished accordingly. This was a direct attack on the policy of Stalin who took the use of repression in Georgia to be the norm, not the exception, in dealing with the nationalities.

In 1927 Stalin triumphed over

Trotsky's Left Opposition. Part of Stalin's political counter-revolution was his trampling of the feelings and rights of the nationalities. His own homeland, Georgia, was not spared the general fate of the nationalities—they became once again the victims of national oppression. This time the oppressor was not the Tsar but the bureaucracy of a now degenerated workers' state.

In *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky analysed the Soviet Union under the reactionary rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy. He recognised that the counter-revolution had permeated every aspect of life in the workers' state. The bureaucracy represented "autocratic Russification". The equality of the nationalities was a fiction.

The counter-revolution gave the national question a new significance. Through the systematic oppression of the nationalities in the interests of bureaucratic centralism Stalin was fanning the flames of nationalism. He was driving the subject peoples away from communism and towards the bourgeoisie, who posed as the defenders of the nation against the Russian oppressor. As in every other sphere of life he was undermining the very foundations of the workers' state.

Once Trotsky became convinced that the USSR could only advance if a new, political revolution overthrew the bureaucracy, he was obliged to turn again to the implications of the national question. Writing on the Ukrainian national question in 1939 he explained that national sentiments were bound to develop under Stalin's bureaucratic rule. The question now posed was how to direct them towards a progressive outcome.

Trotsky provided a model programme for the revolutionary solution to the national question by defending, unambiguously, the right to self-determination for the Ukraine. Moreover, since it was clear to him that the masses favoured separation from the USSR,

he argued that the Fourth International should advocate the exercise of this right and that the Ukraine should break with the Kremlin:

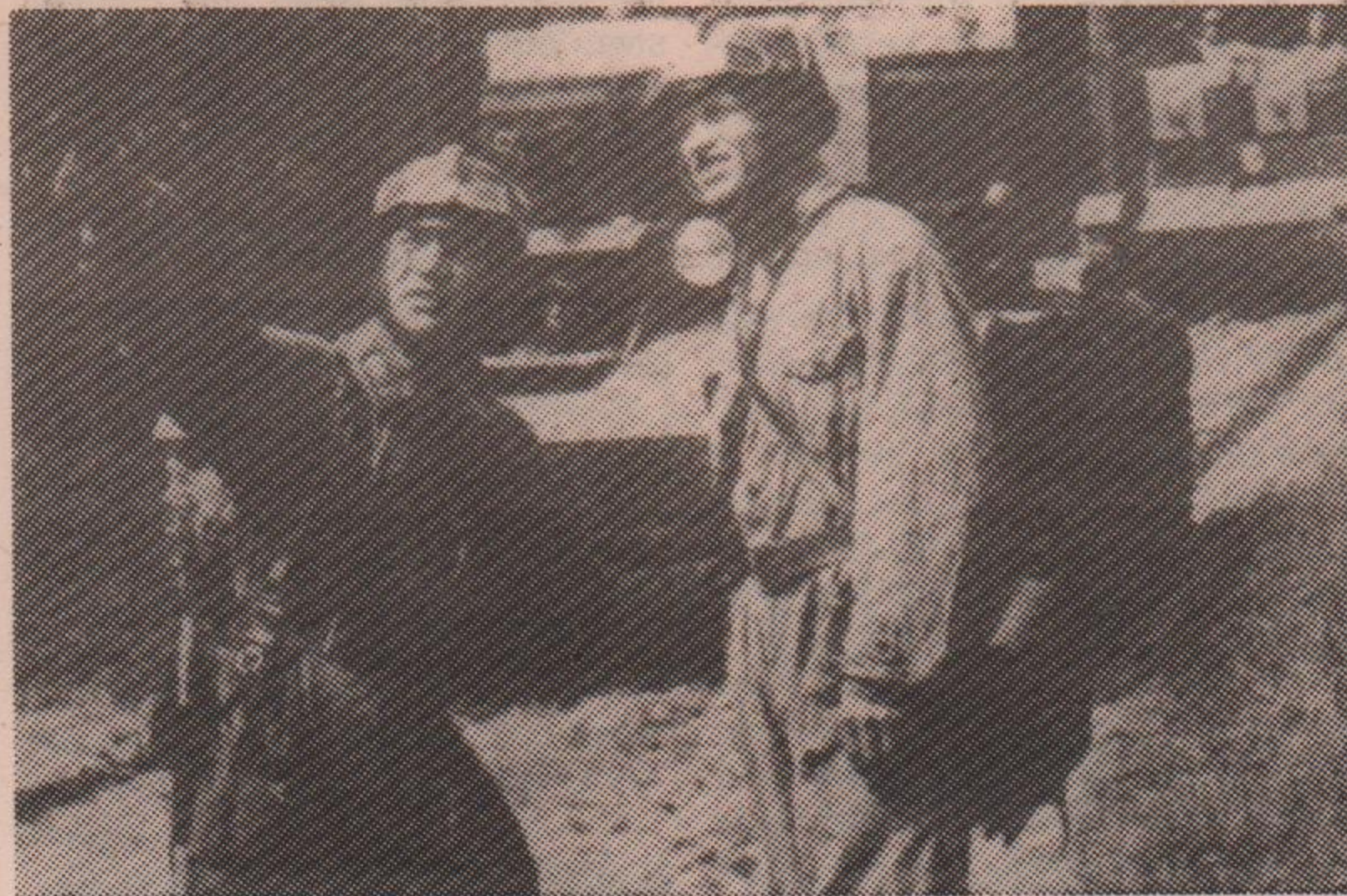
"The slogan of an independent Ukraine, advanced in time by the proletarian vanguard will lead to the unavoidable stratification of the petit bourgeoisie and render it easier for its lower tiers to ally themselves with the proletariat. Only thus is it possible to prepare the proletarian revolution."

There were a few sectarians hovering around the Fourth International, like Hugo Oehler, who denounced this policy as an abandonment of the defence of the USSR and its planned economy. His criticisms anticipate those of today's sectarians—like the Spartacists—on Lithuania. Self-determination, they cry, means counter-revolution. Better to side with the Stalinist bureaucracy than put in jeopardy the planned property relations. Trotsky had little time for such a scholastic approach to the living struggle.

He explained that the content revolutionaries must give to the right to self-determination in the context of a workers' state was necessarily a proletarian one. He argued for an independent soviet (genuine workers' council) Ukraine. In doing so Trotsky combined the political revolutionary demands for the overthrow of the Stalinists with the democratic struggle for state independence. But even this, Trotsky recognised, would threaten the USSR's centralised plan. So what was Trotsky's response?

"An economic plan is not the holy of holies. If national sections within the federation, despite the unified plan, are pulling in opposite directions, it means the plan does not satisfy them... Moreover, it is impermissible to forget that the plunder and arbitrary rule of the bureaucracy constitute an important integral part of the current economic plan, and exact a heavy toll from the Ukraine."

The Ukraine had to be given the right to determine her own plan, to establish her own relations with the USSR and indeed the west. The Ukraine had to be freed from the yoke of the Kremlin in order to do these things:



The fruits of the Stalin-Hitler Pact: Red Army invading Poland, 1939

"There is no other name for this than state independence."

Instead of counterposing this to the tasks of either the political revolution or the defence of the USSR, in the way that Oehler and his Spartacist followers do, Trotsky explained the inter-relationship of such tasks. The political revolution itself, never mind the fight for national rights, was an enormous risk to the defence of the USSR, a "danger from the standpoint of defence".

"What to do? Had our critic really thought out the problem, he would have replied that such a danger is an inescapable historical risk which cannot be avoided,

for under the rule of the Bonapartist bureaucracy the USSR is doomed. The very same reasoning equally and wholly applies to the revolutionary national uprising which represents nothing else but a single segment of the political revolution."

And we should recall that the dominant forces within the Ukrainian nationalists at this time were bourgeois. Trotsky's policy was designed to counter their influence. To do this he argued it was impermissible to side with the bureaucracy against the Ukraine.

**"But we should fall into crude self delusion if we conceitedly suppose that we have already solved the national question. Actually great power chauvinism is often hidden under this complacency..."**  
Trotsky 1923

This method retains its relevance to today's national struggles. It applies directly to Lithuania and could well apply to other nations soon. We cannot entrust the fate of the USSR to the bureaucracy whose rule has led to these moves towards disintegration.

Against this position the Spartacists would argue that Trotsky in fact changed his position during the factional struggle inside the North American Socialist Workers Party in 1939-40. In this struggle an opposition, led by Max Shachtman, argued that the Stalin-Hitler pact, the Red Army's occupation of Poland and invasion of Finland all proved that it was no longer a workers' state and that defence was no longer applicable. They cited the violation of Poland and Finland's national rights as evidence.

It is undeniably the case that Trotsky recognised that the national rights of Poland and Fin-

land took second place to the defence of the USSR. But the conditions that led him to this conclusion, as well as the tactical proposals he made, had nothing in common with the strategic bloc with the bureaucracy advocated by today's Oehlerites.

Both actions by the Red Army took place in the context of a developing world war. Only a fool would argue that Lithuania's demand for independence today poses the same threat to the USSR as existed in 1939-40. Stalin invaded first Poland and later Finland in order to advance the borders of the USSR in the face of the growing threat from the Nazis (who invaded west-

ern Poland themselves in September 1939).

However, even this defensive, strategic manoeuvre was condemned by Trotsky. He refused to hail the entry of the Red Army into these countries because, unlike the invasion of Georgia in 1921, they represented the counter-revolutionary designs of the Moscow bureaucrats. On Poland he argued that:

"... the Stalinist invasion is nothing but a symmetrical supplement of the Hitlerite operations."

And this was despite the fact that, in order to hold Poland, Stalin had been obliged to forcefully Sovietise the country. This, said Trotsky, would strengthen illusions "concerning the possibility of replacing the proletarian revolution by bureaucratic manoeuvres... This evil by far outweighs the progressive content of Stalinist reforms in Poland."

The task of destroying the Kremlin bureaucracy remained on the immediate agenda, notwithstanding the efforts of revolutionaries to utilise the nationalisations and land reforms enacted by the Stalinists as openings for the rallying of independent workers' action.

In no sense did Trotsky support the USSR's invasion of Poland. When it happened he realised the need to take the reality of the occupation as his new point of departure. In Finland he used the same method. He opposed the invasion, but advocated tactics to relate to the war once it began. In Finland the development of the Second world War posed the problem of the national question more acutely. As Hitler was attempting to get control of the Baltic, Stalin's invasion of Finland was necessary to secure the north west flank of the USSR.

Trotsky explained that this entire situation was the fruit of Stalin's reactionary foreign policy. The world revolution was subordinated to the diplomatic needs of the Moscow rulers. In no sense could revolutionaries excuse, support or hail such actions. However, the new situation was one of world war, and, just as the "defence" of Serbia in the First World War was subordinated to a general policy of defeatism in the imperialist countries. So the independence of Finland, once the invasion was launched, had to be subordinated to the defence of the USSR.

Nevertheless Trotsky retained a position of proletarian independence. There was no question of any strategic bloc with the Stalinists. While a military united front was both possible and necessary the bureaucracy still had to be overthrown. This could be done by dissociating the revolutionary policy from Moscow's military-bureaucratic manoeuvres completely.

Today we are not on the threshold of a world war, nor are we in its opening phase. To invoke Trotsky's tactical compromises of this period in the name of defence of the USSR bears no relation to reality. The principal obstacle to the defence of the USSR today is the fragmenting bureaucracy, scurrying hither and thither to please the imperialists.

The powerful forces of nationalism that are emerging can only be given a revolutionary impetus by the timely fight for independent workers' council states where the masses express a desire for separation.

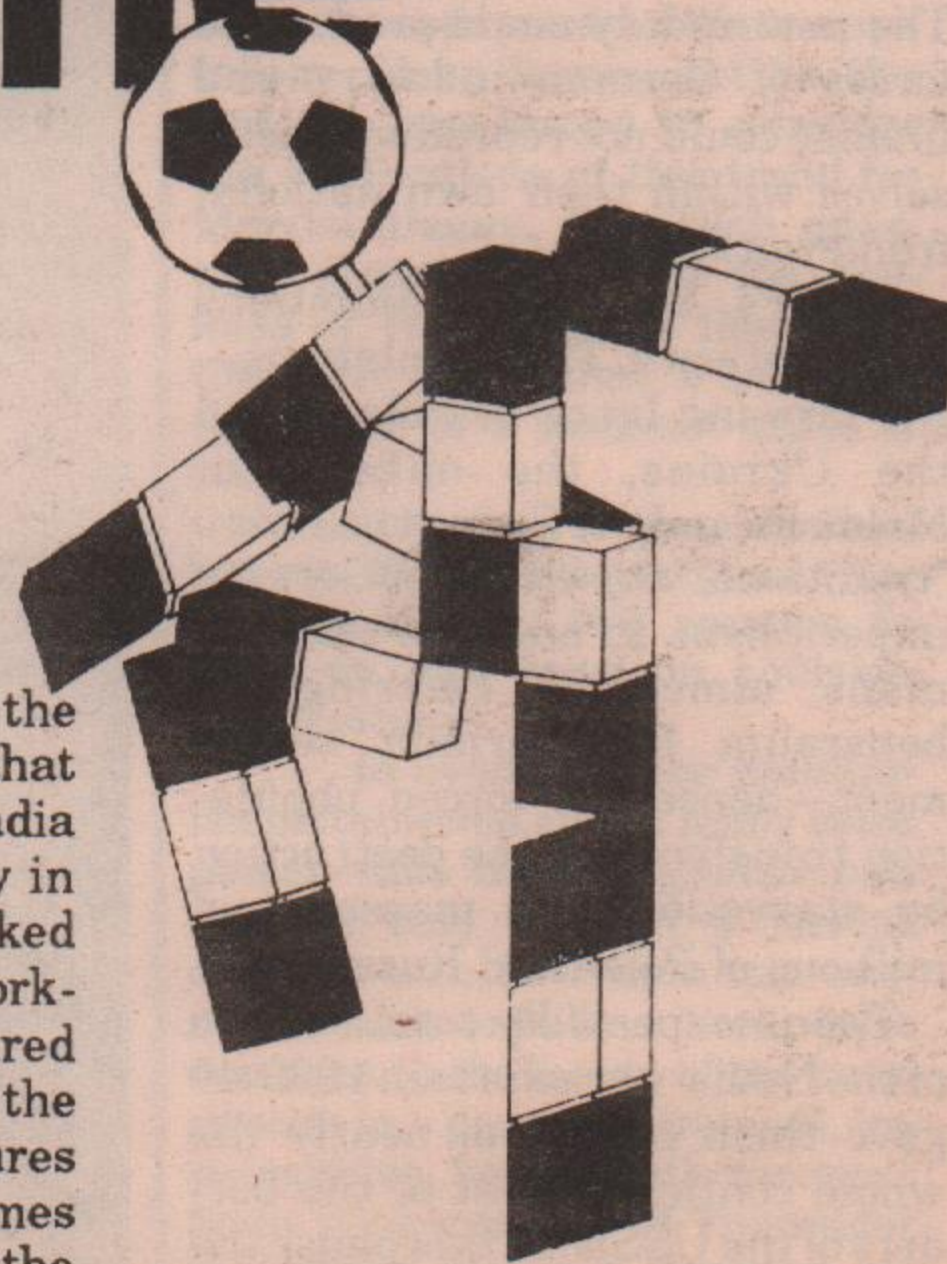
To abandon such a slogan in the interests of defending the USSR is to abandon Trotsky's real position on the national question and its role in the political revolution in the workers' states and opt, voluntarily, to go down with the sinking ship of Stalinism. ■



BY WORKERS POWER  
FOOTBALL SUPPORTERS

## WORLD CUP, ITALIA '90

# Big business invades the pitch



**F**OOTBALL HAS dominated the television screens of the nation for the past month. As passionate football fans we are not complaining about this. The World Cup gives us the rare opportunity to see the breathtaking skills of the world's greatest players.

Even the irritating commentaries and analyses from the BBC and ITV can't spoil our enjoyment. Jimmy "let's sell Fulham to the property speculators" Hill and the whole gang of professional pundits, can all be dealt with by a timely flick of the volume knob.

There is, however, one notable and disturbing aspect to the whole of Italia '90 that has emerged over the last month. The World Cup, along with football in general, is losing its claim to be the "people's game".

Of course, there was always an element of mythology in this claim. Football clubs have long been run by capitalists. Over the last decade sponsorship, live TV coverage and massive inflation in the transfer market have all commercialised the game enormously.

Nevertheless, the followers of the game all over the world are, predominantly, workers. This World Cup has revealed that football's ruling elite are out to change this.

In Italy itself the role of big capitalism in football is glaring. Company Directors, like Fiat's chairman Gianni Agnelli, have turned football clubs into their personal playthings. The Manchester United boardroom saga last season shows that British clubs are going the same way.

The Italian club Juventus belongs to Agnelli. And to increase its money making capacity he has just bought Roberto Baggio for a record

fee of nearly £8 million, with an additional £4 million going to the player. The fans of his old club, Fiorentina, staged a spirited demonstration against this, but ultimately had no say in the matter at all.

The money pumped into the World Cup this year, a staggering £4,000 million, is likewise designed to enhance the attractiveness of the game to the bosses. The plan was to renovate the stadia and the surrounding services. To make things easier for the fans? Well, given that crowds of 50,000 have been paying gate receipts of £1.5-2 million per game we doubt it.

Tickets cost around £30 per head (for a seat miles away from the pitch). If you followed a single team from game one to the final it would cost you £210—and this is for cheap seats! These are prices for the middle classes and the bosses, prices designed to squeeze out the

working class.

More sickening still was the sacrifice of working class lives that took place in order to get the stadia and the approach roads ready in time. When the World Cup kicked off in Milan 24 construction workers were dead and 600 lay injured as a result of the rush to finish the construction work. These figures represent a casualty rate 15 times higher than the average for the Italian construction industry as a whole. Meanwhile the citizens of Turin, Genoa, Florence, Naples and other cities have been obliged to live amidst building sites and closed roads.

Bottom of everybody's priorities are the people who the game is supposed to be for—the fans. The English fans, thanks to Tory warnings about hooligan elements, have been treated like prisoners of war. No transport was laid on to take people back from the ground in

Sardinia, even though matches were starting late to meet the demands of world television. No food or drink was available at the stadium in Cagliari. Armed police, helicopters, dogs and rigorous body searches provided more talking points than the games against either Ireland or Egypt.

On top of this in between matches the Tories, who have refused to meet the Football Supporters' Association (FSA) to dis-

cuss potential problems, did nothing to request official help for fans to find accommodation, get match day and ticket information, advise on problems etc. To its credit the FSA organised an "embassy" to meet these needs. But it is working against the odds. If fans are treated in this way, systematically, is it any surprise that violence breaks out occasionally?

To crown it all the World Cup in 1994 will take place in the USA a country with no real soccer traditions. It is not chauvinist to point out that this is an outrage. It is aimed at further removing the game from the fans. The USA will turn the game into a televised extravaganza paid for by sponsorship, advertising and ludicrously over-priced tickets. This is the whole basis of televised sport in the USA.

There has already been talk from Joao Havelange, president of football's international governing body, FIFA, of the game being played in four quarters rather than two halves. This is deliberately aimed at fitting in with the TV network advertising schedule.

The signs of this trend are already evident in Italy. The stadia are now comfortable enough for the bourgeoisie. Repression is containing the "unruly" fans. And money is the prime consideration. Most ridiculous of all is FIFA's ruling that footballers must maintain a dignified appearance for ninety minutes by keeping their shirts tucked in and their socks rolled up! Despite the heat, the sweat of exertion and the cramps that come from hard fought games footballers must remain good "adverts" for their sponsors.

Mind you, if these rules had been taken seriously the great Italian player, Franco Baresi, would have put paid to Italy's chances right from the start! ■

### STATEMENT

## THE SOVIET WORKERS' TOUR, THE NTS AND THE UDM

**YURI BUDCHENKO**, a representative of the independent Kuzbass Workers' Union of the USSR, has been speaking in Britain at a number of labour movement meetings and workplaces. The tour was organised by the Campaign for Solidarity with Workers in the Eastern Bloc (CSWEB).

After nine very successful days of the tour Yuri Budchenko informed CSWEB that unless the rest of the tour was organised jointly with Mr George Miller, a British representative of the "National Workers' Union" (NTS), he would no longer collaborate with CSWEB.

His ostensible reason for placing such a condition was that the CSWEB press statement (see page 15) broke the terms of a previous agreement that CSWEB would collaborate with the NTS. There was never any such agreement.

As the CSWEB press statement explains, the campaign will not collaborate with Miller. Despite its name the NTS is not a workers' organisation. It is an open agent of the capitalist class. It has links with the scab union, the Union of Democratic Mineworkers (UDM) and is using those links to smear the NUM in the eyes of Soviet miners.

At a meeting with Yuri Budchenko on the evening of 26 June, to which he brought Mr Miller, CSWEB representatives, including Workers Power members, explained that under no circumstances would we work with the NTS. Yuri Budchenko made a decision at that point to end his commitments to our tour and went off with Mr Miller.

His action will severely damage the possibility of building labour movement solidarity in this country with the independent Soviet trade unions. Miller had already begun to undermine CSWEB's work. On 26 June Yuri was due to address a number of meetings. Without informing us he disappeared for the day.

Subsequently we learnt that Miller had organised a meeting for him with Roy Lynk of the UDM. At no point prior to 26 June had Yuri said he intended to visit the UDM. His decision appears to have been taken during a meeting he had with Miller on the previous day.

The meeting with the UDM meant that regardless of the conditions laid down for collaboration by Yuri, CSWEB had no choice but to call off all other meetings of the tour in any case. Workers Power unreservedly condemns his

decision to establish links with the scab union.

Throughout the tour Yuri had been able to meet a wide section of British workers. Oil workers of the Offshore Industry Liaison Committee had donated £500 to the Kuzbass union. Health workers, postal workers, miners, civil servants and construction workers had all engaged in a fruitful dialogue with him about the difficulties facing the emerging workers' movement. Pledges of support for the Kuzbass workers and for a further tour of Soviet miners had been made by a number of organisations.

Despite extensive political disagreements with Yuri, particularly on the question of the market and capitalism, Workers Power had at no point argued that CSWEB should place any limitations on what Yuri could say, or who he could see. The tour was thoroughly democratic and he had a completely free rein, except for our insistence that there should be no links with the UDM.

The links established during the tour and the gains made are now jeopardised by his decision to collaborate with the agents of the class enemy. At best he is guilty of a misplaced commitment to pluralism. However we cannot

condone that pluralism when it extends to building links with the likes of the UDM.

We recognise that Yuri Budchenko cannot be equated with the Kuzbass Workers' Union and agreed, in CSWEB, that the money so far collected in the tour should still be forwarded to that union. Furthermore, Workers Power has offered Yuri the right to reply to our criticisms in the next issue of this paper.

Our condemnation of Yuri's decision to see the UDM and break his commitments to our tour does not blind us to the responsibility of the left in this country for allowing the Soviet workers' movement to fall into the hands of the bosses, the scabs and the arch right wing, anti-communist sections of the British labour movement.

The NUM has, through Scargill's actions, distanced itself from the real miners' unions in the USSR by pledging allegiance to the "official" stooge unions. Such loyalty to the bureaucracy will have the effect of confusing Soviet miners and cause them to see the NUM as the problem.

Keresley miners attempted to offset this by meeting with Yuri and establishing links. But they were the honourable exception.

Scargill's opposition to recognising the independent unions is opening the door to Lynk.

Likewise the attitude of the Socialist Workers Party proved unhelpful, to say the least. They collaborated with CSWEB in the early stages of organising the tour, but withdrew, without giving a clear political reason why, at the last minute on the request of people within the newly formed Socialist Party in the USSR.

Their withdrawal meant that the possibility of Yuri being able to meet a wider number of rank and file miners—something that could have been a very important counterweight to the influence of Miller and his friends in the UDM—was dashed.

This sort of sectarianism, helps the right wing and hinders the Soviet workers from discovering where their class interests really lie. For this reason we remain committed to building solidarity with the workers of the Eastern Bloc and the USSR so that they can learn, in practice, that their real allies are to be found amongst rank and file workers in the international labour movement.

Workers Power Editorial Board  
27.6.90



**N**ATIONALSOCIALISM was a regime of extreme crisis. In the 1930s it reduced unemployment to zero through temporary means such as militarisation. But by 1938 the signs of impending economic crisis were clear. The state faced the prospect of bankruptcy. Without breaking free of the restraints imposed on Germany by the Allies after the First World War, Hitler's regime would have faced a social explosion. No anti-Semitic demagoguery could have avoided this.

The only way out—the way that Nazism had always envisaged—was a massive expansion of territory, the acquisition of *lebensraum* (living space). The principal steps were the Anschluss with Austria (March 1938), the gaining of the Czech borderlands in October of the same year and less than one year later the attempts to get the Polish corridor and Danzig by similar coercion.

This led directly to war against Britain and France. Hitler had hoped for a settlement with these

understanding. German imperialism's particularly concentrated military brutality was a product of both its economic dynamism as a "young capitalism", and at the same time a result of its exclusion from a share of the spoils in the division of the world from the 1880s onwards.

One attempt to rectify this—the First World War—not only was a failure but despoiled Germany of its existing colonies and even its own national territory. Reparation and disarmament merely crammed down the lid on the pressure cooker. The new and dynamic productive forces of German industry and finance could not reproduce themselves within their own national framework.

Hitler's territorial ambitions were eastward. These ambitions—the farming lands of Poland and the Ukraine, the oilfields of Moldavia and the Caucasus—were "traditional" objectives for German imperialism. In addition the Germans aimed at clearing *lebensraum* for German settlement—hence the forced population transfers and the destruction by starvation and massacre of millions of Poles and Russians.

The unexpectedly total success of the Nazis' war efforts in 1939-40 gave them control of nearly the whole continent west of the borders of the USSR. In this phase the rounding up of the Jews in Germany proper and their transfer to concentration camps began. Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, was appointed Reich Commissioner for the strengthening of "Germandom" and put in charge of the deportation and re-settlement of the Jews.

Although Hitler, in his infamous speech to the Reichstag of 30 January 1939, had talked of "the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe", no trace has been found of an actual plan or order to do this in that period. Rather there appear to have been plans either to create a "reservation" for Jews in Eastern Europe, or later to drive them across the Urals into Asia. Of course these proposals were themselves semi-genocidal, as was the alternative—deportation of all European Jews to Madagascar. Some Nazi officials even considered deals with the British and the Zionists to deport Jews to Palestine.

The Nazis' immediate objectives were a "Jew free" Germany and Europe. After the occupation of Poland some three million Jews came under Nazi rule. The first mass pogroms were carried out by the SS during the clearance of the new German Province of Warthegau in Western Poland.

*The massacre of six million Jews in the Second World War was one of the most terrible in the twentieth century. But was this caused simply by the maniacal anti-Semitism of the Nazi regime? Or does it have its roots in the anti-Semitism of the imperialist epoch. The genocide is understood as a result of the nature of German fascism and its war aims.*



### DEATH TOLL IN THE CAMPS

Auschwitz ...	2,000,000
Belzec .....	600,000
Chelmno .....	340,000
Majdanek ...	1,380,000
Sobibór .....	250,000
Treblinka .....	800,000

powers that would leave him free to attack the USSR. His attack on France was necessitated by the fact that such a power could not be left intact at the rear.

It was the war in the east—first against Poland, and then from 22 June 1941 against the USSR—that set in train the events that led to the destruction of between five and six million of the Jewish people of Europe. Bourgeois historians in general and Zionist influenced historians in particular try to present the Holocaust as simply the step by step carrying through of a pre-ordained plan.

Bourgeois historians wish to unload onto the person of Hitler or onto the Nazi elite the whole responsibility for the genocide. This is very convenient. It excuses capitalism and imperialism as systems.

But the holocaust—horrific and unparalleled as it is as an act of policy by a modern bourgeois state—is not exempt from historical materialist analysis and un-

## THE HOLOCAUST

90,000 Poles and Jews were brutally driven out by the SS Einsatzgruppen (Special Forces). The rest of Poland became a province of ghettos, concentration and eventually death camps. In Warsaw and Lublin huge ghettos were founded to which the Jews of Germany, Holland and other western occupied zones were gradually sent.

The preparation for the mass

destruction of Jews was, however, part of the plans for the invasion of Russia. The Einsatzgruppen had the clear task of eliminating Jews in the areas behind the advancing Wehrmacht. With the rapid advance after the 22 June 1941 surprise attack they fanned out, encouraging local peasants in Lithuania and the Ukraine to carry out "spontaneous" pogroms against the Jews. Whilst some did occur and

the Lithuanian and Ukrainian nationalist forces did participate in them, this was not enough for the Nazis. The Einsatzgruppen soon resorted to mass killings themselves. The most infamous of these occurred in September outside Kiev. 33,771 of the Jews of the city were brought to the ravine of Babi Yar. A witness recalled:

"... they found themselves on the narrow ground above the precipice, twenty to twenty-five metres in height and on the opposite side there were the Germans' machine guns. The killed, wounded and half-alive people fell down and were smashed there. Then the next hundred were brought, and everything repeated again. The policemen took the children by the legs and threw them down alive into the Yar."

But every major town and village witnessed its own massacre. So horrific were they that they began to take their toll on the nerves of their perpetrators. For this reason a method of mass murder which was "less gruelling" for the Nazi henchmen was sought. The answer was found in special lorries capable of gassing eighty people at once with the vehicles' own carbon monoxide fumes.

Nearly two million Jews perished at the hands of the Einsatzgruppen, the Wehrmacht and the Ukrainian and Lithuanian militias. But an unexpected military fact forced the Nazis to go one step further. Disastrous as the Soviet defeats in the summer and autumn of 1941 were, they did not

## Hitler comes to power

**BEFORE 1914** fanatics like Hitler were a tiny isolated minority. It was the First World War and Germany's defeat that created a real mass base for these ideas. Hitler and countless other soldiers were roused to a patriotic frenzy by the out-break of war and its first victorious years. But the collapse of 1918 and the failed revolution of 1918-19 had an electrifying effect on whole strata of the population. The subsequent "robber peace" imposed on Germany by the victorious powers at Versailles crippled the economy with massive reparations.

When the second volume of *Mein Kampf* was published in 1926 the Nazi party was only 17,000 strong. In the elections of 1928 it gained a foothold in the Reichstag with twelve seats. But it was only the massive crisis of 1929 that launched the Nazis into a force strong enough to decide the fate of Germany. By 1932 industrial pro-

duction sank to 58% of its 1928 figure. With three million unemployed and mass bankruptcies for the petit bourgeoisie the Nazi stormtroopers (SA) launched their anti-communist, anti-socialist and anti-Semitic attacks. On 1 January 1930 SA members killed eight Jews, the first Jewish victims of the Nazi era.

In the elections of September 1930 Nazi votes shot up to over six million and their seats in Reichstag to 107.

In the next elections of 1932 the Nazis increased this to 230. By this time unemployment had swollen to 5.6 million.

But the ability of the Nazis to come to power in May 1933 was not due to an inevitable rise of anti-Semitism. The reason for Hitler's triumph lay in the mortal fear of the German ruling classes that a proletarian revolution was imminent.

Leon Trotsky alone explained

the nature of fascism and its role for big capital. He defined fascism as a movement of the enraged and desperate petit bourgeoisie in the service of the big bourgeoisie. Anti-Semitism was important in mobilising the petit bourgeoisie but not self-sufficient. It had to be allied to fear of the proletariat as well. Why does it fear the latter? Firstly it fears its impending "fall" into this class, its loss of status, income and the pitiful remnants of its ownership of the means of production. Secondly it fears the collective strength of the proletarian organisations, parties, trade unions.

Hitler mobilised this fear and loathing as a battering ram against the workers' organisations, but even so its victory was not guaranteed. As Trotsky insisted:

"fascism comes only when the working class shows complete incapacity to take into its own hands the fate of society."

The reason that they were able to defeat the millions strong Social Democratic Party and Communist Party was that neither party provided decisive leadership in the crisis years between 1929 and 1932 despite the manifest bankruptcy of capitalism; neither were willing to unite in action to fight off the Nazi terror squads.

Once in power fascism's task was to pulverise the workers' organisations and this is precisely what it did. The SA—swollen to 400,000 members and four times the size of the army—were given police powers and weapons which they used to round up communists, social democrats and trade unionists. The first concentration camps at Dachau and Oranienburg opened their gates. Within ten days 15,000 had been arrested. The working class vanguard was broken-backed; the way was clear for a murderous assault on all the exploited and oppressed. ■



most brutal events of the  
of one man? **Mike Evans**  
de must also be



**UST**

## “The socialism of idiots”

THE NAZI Party was steeped in anti-Semitism from its birth. Its founding programme of 1920 stated: “None but members of the Nation may be citizens of the state. None but those of German blood, whatever their creed, may be members of the Nation. No Jew therefore may be a member of the Nation.”

But this party itself was heir to a whole generation of anti-Semitic agitation in Austria and Southern Germany that developed in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Based on a vulgarised application of Darwinism to human history, anti-Semitism was a sub-species of the general upsurge of racism that accompanied the birth of the imperialist epoch.

The carve-up of Africa and the jostling for colonies in Asia were justified by all the imperialist powers with the claim that they had a higher civilisation; the peoples they ruled therefore represented a lower race. Liberal racism saw this as mainly a cultural question to be resolved in the long run by the civilising mission of the Imperialists. This ideology was naturally most prevalent amongst the powers, like Britain and France who had acquired extensive colonial possessions before the conflict for them became intense. Amongst the weaker imperialist powers, racist ideology took on more frenzied forms as their colonial aspirations were thwarted.

And this is where anti-Semitism performed a real function. A conspiracy of Jews “explained” how the Germanic people—the purest example of the Indo-Aryan “race”—could find itself surpassed by more “mongrelised” and bastardised peoples such as the English and the French.

Imperialist rulers in the 1890s and early 1900s also had another task: to counter the massive growth of socialism. Here again, in countries where Marxism was most highly developed, anti-Semitism played a crucial role. Germany and Austria both had huge, formally

as everywhere else, lead to a lightning victory. The Nazi and Wehrmacht chiefs had confidently expected total victory before the winter set in, but the Nazi advance was halted outside Moscow in December. Now the Germans had to face a long drawn out war of attrition. All resources, all food stores had to be concentrated on this. Clearly there was no hope of simply driving the Jews into the steppes of central Asia. The Nazis had neither the desire nor the logistical resources to keep them alive. At Wannsee in the Berlin suburbs a conference planned the setting up of a series of death camps: Auschwitz, Birkenau, Chelmno, Majdanek, Belzec, Sobibór and Treblinka. Auschwitz, the largest, stood at the hub of a railway network to which cattle-wagons crammed with men, women and children trundled from all over the Nazi empire.

The Jewish people were the main victims of Hitler, in that he sought their physical annihilation and succeeded in destroying 67% of European Jewry, nearly six million in all. But not all those that perished were Jewish. Some 220,000 Gypsies, one third of Europe's total population, died. In addition substantial numbers of “useless” Soviet prisoners of war, homosexuals and “racially useless” persons were included.

The numbers of Slav “sub-humans” destroyed, not in death camps but by fire, pestilence, famine and the sword, exceeds even the six million Jews. The conclusion we can draw from this is that the fate of the Jews was inextricably tied up with the destiny of the whole socialist workers' movement and the fate of all other racially oppressed peoples. ■

Marxist parties.

As consistently democratic parties they attracted to their ranks a portion of the Jewish intelligentsia. Certain leaders like Paul Singer in the German Social Democracies and Victor Adler in the Austrian were Jews.

Above all Marx was a Jew. Marxism with its internationalism, its proclamation that the working class had no fatherland was attacked by the anti-Semites as the embodiment of the cosmopolitan Jewish spirit.

### Ideologists

Here the anti-Semitic ideologists could link the international labour movement to international finance capital in the form of prominent bankers like the Rothschilds. Here anti-Semitism was, in the words of Frederick Engels and August Bebel, “the socialism of idiots”. It was the “socialism” not only of idiots but in particular that of the petit bourgeoisie.

The small farmer in heavy debt to the banks, the small shopkeeper under constant pressure from the competition of the great co-operative department stores, the state employees deprived of career promotion, all looked with envious eyes at the prominent and successful Jews—deliberately singled out by anti-Semitic propaganda.

It was precisely this petit bourgeois strata that was being stirred up by the new nationalist, chauvinist and imperialist propaganda. Anti-Semitism appeared to supply the answer to their own social frustration.

But before 1914 the bulk of the petit bourgeoisie of Central and Western Europe had no need to resort to the anti-Semitic parties. Anti-Semitism only gained a minority influence amongst this strata, particularly in those cities that experienced the immigration of large numbers of poor Jews fleeing persecution and pogroms in Tsarist Russia.

While anti-Semitism alone cannot explain the victory of fascism in Germany it did play an important role in the years 1934-39. Having come to power with promises to the ruined petit bourgeois and the millions of unemployed to make a revolution—even a “socialist” revolution—the Nazis could at first offer very little.

### Enactments

Throughout the 1930s Hitler kept up a series of enactments which deprived the Jewish bourgeoisie of their businesses and which drove Jewish lawyers, civil servants, teachers and doctors from their professions. This mini-expropriation had to satisfy the deluded “socialist” aspirations of the petit bourgeois just as huge ill-paid public works projects had to satisfy the unemployed. The waves of anti-Semitic measures such as the Nuremberg Laws of September 1935 were usually related to the necessity to placate the social tensions developing in the mass base of the Nazi party.

Looking at modern fascist movements in Eastern and Western Europe it is clear that fascism needs anti-Semitism to provide it with a spurious “revolutionary” explanation for the ills and evils spawned by capitalism in crisis. At the same time it looks to other oppressed immigrant peoples to re-focus the hatred of the petit bourgeoisie and the lumpenproletariat upon. The present “diluted” forms of anti-Semitism and general racism are so because of the relative stability of capitalism. Any return to the crises of the inter-war years can thus reproduce the barbarities of Nazism. The only way to remove this threat is to remove its source—imperialist capitalism. ■

IN DEFENCE OF  
MARXISM



## A peaceful counter- revolution?

THE GDR is the first workers' state to collapse back into capitalism. Since it may not be the last, we are forced to consider the implications of this trend for Marxist theory. One such question, already posed by the enemies of Trotskyism is this: does the GDR prove that a peaceful overthrow of a workers' state is possible?

If the answer is yes, and we believe it must be at least for Eastern Europe, this appears to bring us into head on collision with Trotsky:

“... to overthrow the proletarian dictatorship and to really seize power—this the bourgeoisie can achieve only through a violent overturn... how then can anyone assume or believe that power can pass to the hands of the bourgeoisie in a peaceful, tranquil, imperceptible, bureaucratic manner? Such a conception of Thermidor is nothing else but inverted reformism.”

But Marxism would be no science if the answer to every question lay in the sayings of the masters. A better guide is to follow their method, even where it leads us to different conclusions. We must always be aware that judgements are made about concrete circumstances at particular periods. As Trotsky himself said, “experience is the supreme criterion of human reason”.

We have established elsewhere in this issue (see page 13) that from July the state property in East Germany will be subordinated to the law of value.

The “special bodies of armed men” are defending, and will defend, the restorationist measures of this government. Whilst the army and police forces will doubtless be purged, and reduced before being integrated into the Federal Police and the Bundeswehr, it has not proved necessary nor will it prove necessary, to smash them by means of pro-capitalist “armed uprising” or invasion from the west. The Soviet armed forces have not defended, and will not defend, the planned property relations.

Whilst we hope for and expect protracted resistance by East German workers to the effects of restoration there has been no generalised resistance to restoration itself, let alone a civil war.

In short, restoration has been, and unification can be, carried out without a “violent overturn”. The secret as to how this was possible lies in the manner in which capitalism was overthrown in the GDR.

In the years 1948-51 the GDR Stalinists bureaucratically abolished capitalism. The working class played no part, having been repressed and straight-jacketed in the early post-war years.

In place of capitalism they erected an ugly and alienating edifice of bureaucratic planning; a centralised command economy that treated the working class—in whose name the Stalinists claimed to rule—as just one more object to be costed and directed, just one more input to be computed.

Once Gorbachev removed the prop supporting the bureaucracy, the rush to abandon the country and throw off the whole existing system could not be held in check.

To those who thought that the Stalinists had to defend the planned property relations, Trotsky answered long ago: the Stalinists owe no permanent alle-

glance to the post-capitalist property relations. Rather than being an expression of these relations they are a parasite upon them.

For us, as for Trotsky, the only historic force for defending the planned property relations and for utilising them to construct the classless and stateless order of communism, is the working class. So why has it deserted “its own” property relations?

Simply, the reason the working class could not and did not use the state machinery to defend the planned property was they did not recognise it as “theirs”. In the case of the state machine they were 100% correct. In the case of the existing results of bureaucratic planning they were also correct not to identify with the graft and inefficiency.

But they were and are wrong to abandon instruments that excluded capitalist exploitation and the bourgeoisie, and which now they will have to recreate after the hard struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie again.

Events in East Germany show the possibility of restoration without violent civil war. They do not, however, show that an evolutionary reform process can imperceptibly carry a society backwards into capitalism. No! A qualitative leap—a counter-revolution—must occur such as has occurred in the GDR in 1990.

A recognition of current reality does not falsify the predictions or the programme of Trotsky. Trotsky's categorical statement on the impossibility of a peaceful as well as a gradual overthrow of a workers' state was made in 1929, when he still characterised the Stalinist ruling faction as bureaucratic centrist and insisted the Soviet state could still be reformed.

In 1936, having analysed the bureaucratic political counter-revolution (the passing of political power out of the proletariat's hands) he envisaged a different possibility. Trotsky referred to the USSR's new constitution as a “step backward from the dictatorship of the proletariat toward a bourgeois political regime”.

Trotsky notes that “the soviets are destroyed” and the municipal and parliamentary institutions “have nothing in common with the soviets as the fighting organisations of the toiling masses”. The “ruling position of the proletariat” in the state is liquidated *de jure* as well as *de facto*. The proletariat's only road to socialism lies through political revolution, through civil war against the bureaucracy.

But here he adds a prediction full of foresight:

“In reality the new constitution seals the dictatorship of the privileged strata of Soviet society over the producing masses, thereby making the peaceful dying away of the state an impossibility, and opens up for the bureaucracy ‘legal’ roads for the economic counter-revolution, that is the restoration of capitalism by means of a ‘cold stroke’.”

Trotsky does not at all deny that a counter-revolution is necessary to restore capitalism, but he envisages its prime internal agent as the bureaucracy. He sees the possibility that this could be done legally, “coldly” without insurrection, by the very state machine then in existence.

Events in Eastern Germany have brilliantly if tragically confirmed Trotsky's theoretical prognosis. ■



# THE LONGEST WAR

## What kind of support?

THE CARLTON Club bomb has once again demonstrated the ability of the IRA to strike at the British ruling class at play. Not since Brighton in 1984 have the IRA come so close to damaging leading Tory figures.

This attack follows hard on the heels of earlier blows against army personnel in Holland and Germany, in London and Lichfield. We are witnessing the most sustained British mainland campaign by the IRA since 1974-75.

As usual these attacks have produced a spate of banner headlines on the themes of murderers, helpless victims, bastards, psychopaths etc. British soldiers on the other hand are described as true innocents. Their heartbroken families and friends are pictured and interviewed.

Britain's propaganda machine has indeed been working overtime to obliterate the bad effects of the "unsafe verdicts" (frame-ups) in the cases of the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six.

In this rotten task they have the total support of the Labour front bench. The Labour leaders have never deviated from their bi-partisan approach to the Irish war. They are faithful servants of British imperialism all the way. Aspirants to high office, like Labour MP Paul Boateng, are eager to prove their credentials in this matter, especially when one of the barracks is in his constituency.

"This is a vile and murderous outrage on a totally unsuspecting community. The vile perpetrators must be caught and quickly."

When in the same month two Belfast men were killed by loyalist gunmen and in Portadown loyalists threw a blast bomb into an old peoples' home, when evidence emerges of the army's systematic death squads, the voices of outrage are nowhere to be heard on this side of the Irish Sea.

British workers who are not gung-ho patriots like Kinnock or Boateng still find it hard to interpret events connected with Ireland. Here a number of points need to be made.

Firstly, it is impossible to take a position based on outrage at violence, bloodshed and suffering—unless one is a consistent and total pacifist. The republican movement, the IRA and Sinn Fein represent a mass movement in Northern Ireland struggling to throw Britain and its armed forces out. Their justification for their armed struggle is that the Six Counties were carved out of a united Ireland in 1921, against the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the Irish people.

This statelet was designed to put the nationalist population into a 40% permanent minority and to ensure a monopoly of power to the protestant Unionist forces. The statelet has been maintained solely by armed forces and political and social discrimination.

The Catholic nationalist minority daily face repression, not only from the army, the RUC and the Ulster Defence Regiment, but also from the unofficial armed thugs of the UDA and its associated death squads. Against this naked armed repression that has existed from

the states' foundation, the republican armed struggle is justified even in formal democratic terms.

In the armed conflict going on between the IRA and the British army/RUC the former are pursuing a goal which is in itself progressive: to expel British imperialism's state forces from Ireland and to allow the will of the Irish people as a whole to be expressed on the question of national unity, free of coercion or veto from the protestant minority. The military victory of the IRA if it were possible would thus be progressive—that of the British army completely reactionary.

It is the duty of British revolutionaries, and indeed all British workers and sincere democrats, to assist in achieving these progressive objectives. For communists and worker militants, however, this must be done by class struggle methods. That is, we seek to bring about the withdrawal of British troops via mass working class action through the unions, the Labour Party, street demonstrations and, when it becomes possible, by strike action.

We support as legitimate the IRA's struggle for its fundamental objective against "our own" imperialist army, irrespective of the means they use. In this sense and this sense only is our support given unconditionally—we do not make our support conditional upon their using a strategy and tactics such as we would use, namely, proletarian ones.

Does this mean that we are obliged to give political support to the political and military strategy of the IRA or advocate the tactics which make up that strategy? Not at all. The strategy of the republicans is to subordinate political mass struggle to a continuous, if desultory, campaign of urban and rural guerilla warfare.

This strategy is unable to achieve its stated objective—to force the British to withdraw their troops for the following reasons.

Militarily the IRA cannot "inflict sufficient casualties to produce war weariness" either in the British army or population. Even civilian bombing campaigns in Britain have failed to do this. Civilian populations do not panic and call for peace as a result of being subjected to bombing.

If the population of Britain, Germany and Japan did not do so in the years 1940-45 it is sheer fantasy to imagine that even a massive increase in civilian casualties either in Northern Ireland or in Britain will break imperialism's will. The USA was driven out of Vietnam not only by a full scale war (constant field operations etc) but by a mass peace movement and social strife at home. No conceivable escalation or prolongation that the IRA is remotely capable of will force the British to withdraw.

We revolutionary communists have an alternative strategy which can achieve national freedom and unity. It involves the leading role of the working class, via mass action, bringing into the struggle the whole Irish working class North and South, and building a revolutionary party in these mass struggles. ■

The preferred candidate of the Peruvian bosses was defeated by the people's choice. But Julio Prieto of Poder Obrero (Peru) explains that the Peruvian left's support for Fujimori will soon rebound upon the workers and peasants.

## PERU Fujimori: a lesser evil?



Cuzco market: will Fujimori alleviate this poverty?

MARIO VARGAS Llosa is once again to be found in the Reading Room of the British Museum. The famous novelist and failed Peruvian Presidential candidate, having made a brief sortie into the shanty towns of Lima, is back home—in Knightsbridge!

Meanwhile Alberto Fujimori moves into the Peruvian Presidential Palace on 28 July, having won the June second round election with the highest proportion of the popular vote ever received—56.6%.

The whole election revolved around the deep economic and political crisis afflicting Peru and the programmes being offered to solve it by the presidential candidates.

Hyperinflation has gripped the Peruvian economy since the end of 1988, with a current annual inflation rate of 2200%. Living standards of the masses have collapsed while the economy has shrunk. The foreign debt, on which Peru has defaulted, stands at over \$20 billion. In addition to this economic chaos, the guerrilla war with Sendero Luminoso has claimed 17,000 lives in the last ten years.

Vargas Llosa's programme of "shock stabilisation" involving wholesale privatisation of state industry, slashing of food subsidies and massive price rises in public services was the one favoured by the imperialists and big business in Peru.

However, it became increasingly apparent what this would mean to both the masses and the smaller businesses. With the example of Collor's Brazil before them, there were increasing defections from Vargas Llosa's camp.

Fujimori's enormous surge in support came in the weeks prior to the first round and carried him through to victory in the second. Fujimori's criticisms of "shock" programmes, his promises to "restore" the economy gradually and to "protect" the poorest, and his opposition to wholesale closure and privatisation of state industries won him increasing backing.

Owners of small businesses, fearful of the impact of the neoliberal onslaught on subsidies, state protection and the unfettered competition of the imperialist monopolies, turned away from Vargas Llosa's FREDEMO. Organisations such as APEMIPE, the Association of Small and Medium

Sized Businesses, and even sections of CONACO, ADEX and CONFIEP, representing merchants and exporters as well as private entrepreneurs, could be found supporting Fujimori. Maximo San Roman, the leader of the small business organisation was one of Fujimori's vice-Presidential candidates; he is also a member of FREDEMO!

Fujimori's campaign also concentrated on winning the urban and rural masses. His attacks on Vargas Llosa's lack of concern for the poor hit home in the first round.

The contrast between Fujimori, coming from an immigrant minority, and Vargas Llosa representing the pro-European elite, was also important in winning votes in a country where the Indian-mixed race majority have often been treated as second class citizens.

Fujimori's victory was also aided by the collapse of the left and its inability to win over any significant sections of the masses outside its traditional trade union base. The United Left (IU), once the second political force in the country showed itself unwilling to lead any real struggles against the government's attacks on the masses.

### Strikes

Despite the undoubted combativity of the Peruvian masses over the last period, demonstrated in numerous general strikes, the IU stuck steadfastly to electoral cretinism. It blocked the organisation of a general strike in the most favourable situation when the fury of the masses against the austerity measures of September 1988 broke out in widespread riots and looting.

It turned the National Popular Assembly (ANP), which had the potential to become a forum of the most militant rank and file sectors against the government, into a bureaucratic adjunct of the IU and CGTP, the Stalinist dominated trade union organisation.

Its policy of class collaboration was most dramatically shown in relation to the repression of Sendero Luminoso. When Sendero organised an "armed strike" on 3 December 1989, the IU participated with the most reactionary forces in a demonstration against terrorism.

Mohme, a banker and a vice-Presidential candidate of the IU, congratulated the President of the

Republic for imposing a state of emergency!

It is little wonder then that the IU entered this election with its most right wing programme yet, which included a commitment to pay back the foreign debt and abandoning calls for nationalisation. Having been soundly trounced in the first round, this bunch of dyed in the wool reformists proceeded to encourage workers to vote for Fujimori as the "lesser evil".

While not endorsing his candidature as an organisation, leading figures made their policy clear. Thus Ricardo Letts, the ANP's President, openly gave support to Fujimori, calling him a colleague entrepreneur and argued for a revision of the "socialising" tradition of the left!

In contrast Poder Obrero (PO—the Peruvian section of the LRCI) correctly extended critical support to the reformist workers' parties inside the IU but not to their bourgeois components. PO appealed to the masses to break with the latter. But in the second round, faced with a choice between two openly bourgeois candidates, PO campaigned for spoiled ballots and blank votes.

Given the intractable crisis in Peru and the enormous debt owed to the imperialists, Fujimori's policies will differ from Vargas Llosa's only in detail and timing. The President elect has already given a commitment to mending fences with the IMF and the international banks.

The weakness of his "party", Cambio 90, having only 32 deputies in a 180 member chamber, means that Fujimori will be dependent on making deals with both the APRA and FREDEMO.

The idea of a "National Unity Government" has already become central to Cambio 90's existence. This pact will involve an all-party onslaught on the already pitiful living standards of the masses.

The lessons of the last period must be learnt. In particular the bankruptcy of reformism and guerillism and their inability to defend the working class and poor peasantry, let alone lead the workers to power.

For this a revolutionary, proletarian party must be built in Peru, a Trotskyist party. Poder Obrero and the LRCI are committed to building such a Trotskyist party in Peru. ■



**G**ORBACHEV'S LAW banning strikes is totally ignored by the Soviet workers. A law banning insults to the Soviet President is abused daily on the Soviet streets. The Lithuanian government declared its independence from the USSR and three months of threats and a partial blockade have not reduced them to submission. Several other republics including Russia have now declared that their republican laws are above those of the USSR as a whole. But all this is only a fraction of the President's problems.

On Mayday the Confederation of Labour of the USSR, the first mass independent union organisation since the 1920s, was founded in Novokuznetsk in Siberia. On 11 June an independent miners' union, linking all the USSR's coalfields, was founded at Donetsk in the Ukraine. It declared its outright opposition to the government's planned price rises and threatened another massive strike.

### Opposition

Premier Nikolai Ryzhkov's price reform package ran into opposition from all sides. In the parliament it was denounced by conservatives and radicals alike. It made too many concessions to the market for the former and too few to the latter.

Having been defied and defeated by the radical marketeers Ryzhkov also threatened to resign. Clearly his government is not long for this world. Government figures freely admit that neither Gorbachev nor Ryzhkov have a "democratic mandate" to impose price rises or austerity measures that might include unemployment and factory closures.

There are only two real power sources in the USSR today. The vast obstructive bulk of the bureaucracy with its stranglehold on the state administration, the army and the KGB; and the new forces of nationalists, proto-parties like the Democratic Union, the Constitutional Democrats, the Social Democrats and the Confederation of Labour.

### Yeltsin

The latter have the power of a mass base which support them against conservative rivals or against CPSU candidates. Boris Yeltsin, now President of the Russian Federation, is the unofficial head of this force. He voices its major aspirations whilst being careful not to subordinate himself to them. He is a demagogic, would-be Bonaparte who calls simultaneously for more radical market reforms and for them to be made in such a way as not to injure ordinary workers.

He inflames Russian chauvinism but at the same time supports Lithuania's resistance to Gorbachev. At the moment nearly all the myriad leaderships of the "democratic forces" distrust Yeltsin profoundly but feel obliged to support him.

He clearly has generated passionate mass illusions amongst the politically inactive or unorganised masses. These illusions have been inflamed by the crude attempts of the bureaucracy to slander and discredit him. The masses clearly regard any abuse from their boorish and incompetent rulers as accolades.

The chaos and disintegration of the Soviet economy is a product of the action and inaction of both warring wings of the bureaucracy. The marketising measures such as self-financing of the enter-

## USSR

*In the three months since Gorbachev assumed the USSR Presidency his authority has been eroded rather than enhanced. Mike Evans analyses the balance of forces within the ruling caste and outlines the danger of the workers' movement lining up behind one side or the other*

# Between chaos and crisis



Time running out for Gorbachev?

prises, disrupt the plan. Their incompleteness and the obstruction of the conservatives disrupts the "rationality" of the market—the operation of the law of value. In the USSR today neither plan nor market are fully directing the economy.

Gorbachev and Ryzhkov's project was always utopian—a rotten

nical assistance from the west as well as consumer goods the Soviet economy cannot produce. But they remain a minority, even a small minority, within a bureaucracy terrified for its jobs and privileges.

The conservatives, headed by figures such as Yegor Ligachev, Boris Gidasov and the newly

tive machine of the state.

They still have a monopoly of armed might too. In their ranks sit the stone faced Marshals of the Soviet Union, increasingly alarmed at the cuts proposed in military spending, at their loss of prestige and at the roll back in Eastern Europe.

But their great weakness lies in the fact that the conservatives have little base in society. An attempt to create a trade union base through the United Front of Toilers in Leningrad in 1989 failed to gain influence beyond professors, factory directors, administrators and their toadies. It is merely a union of managers and foremen.

### Resignation

In short, the conservatives have no social base with which to mobilise popular forces on their behalf. At the moment, whilst the upsurge of mass struggle continues to grow any *coup d'état* would be either a miserable fiasco or lead to the terrible gamble of civil war. The time may of course come when the conservative bureaucracy says "better a terrible end than endless terror". But present circumstances act against this.

They too know the dire economic crisis of the USSR and the necessity of scaling down commitments and shunning western imperialist aid. In short they have no alternative to Gorbachev. That is why he can threaten them with his resignation. They dare not accept it. If Ligachev were president and general secretary tomorrow he would face vastly more opposition than Gorbachev does.

The use of economic and military repression would set the USSR alight from end to end—not only from the nationalities but also from the big battalions of the Russian and Ukrainian proletariat.

The 28th Party Congress,

MP, appealed for the miners not to strike—he urged them to give "a years grace to Yeltsin". He got the approval of the miners of the Russian Federation but not those of the Ukraine, where an old-style bureaucrat still reigns.

Gorbachev and Yeltsin ceremoniously shook hands on the podium of the Russian Federation Party Congress and Moscow is buzzing with rumours of a pact between the two presidents. Related to this are rumours that Gorbachev's advisers are drawing up a new radical marketising programme for implementation after the summer. They intend to turn to the EC for support. Certainly Germany and France are already pressuring for a massive programme of consumer goods, aid, loans, managerial and technical know-how.

A moment of decision is approaching for all the forces of Soviet society. Gorbachev must decide for or against a radical market solution—an Eastern European style run for restoration. The conservatives must decide whether to bite the bullet and follow the Chinese road with the certainty that the repression they need will make Tiananmen Square seem like a tea party.

The new workers' movement has to decide whether to become at a stroke a 1989 Solidarnosc—a seller of price rises and unemployment, not a fighting trade union—for that is the inexorable logic of "giving a year for Yeltsin" and of supporting the market as a replacement for the plan.

### Independence

The alternative is for the workers' movement to deepen its hard won independence from the old bureaucratic structures by breaking free from Yeltsin and the restorationist forces gathered around him. This will be by far the hardest task since the marketeers have powerful and deep roots in the new trade unions.

But there is no alternative for the Confederation of Labour and the miners' union. If they act as the obedient tool of a Gorbachev-Yeltsin coalition government then, as the measures hit the working class, their roots as a fighting organisation of the class will wither whilst their leadership grows into a new western style bureaucracy.

The task of the hour in the USSR and internationally, is to build a revolutionary leadership committed to working class independence, to the complete overthrow of the bureaucratic rulers, and to opposition to capitalist restoration. ■

**A moment of decision is approaching for all the forces of Soviet society. Gorbachev must decide for or against a radical market solution**

compromise forced on the President by the balance of forces in the bureaucracy itself. The radical marketeers, like Abalkin, argue for a shock therapy strategy: the break up of the big state monopolies, the end of the authority of the ministries and of the central plan. For them this must occur at least alongside, if not before, the liberalisation of prices.

Most recognise this will require considerable financial and tech-

nical assistance from the west as well as consumer goods the Soviet economy cannot produce. But they remain a minority, even a small minority, within a bureaucracy terrified for its jobs and privileges. The conservatives, headed by figures such as Yegor Ligachev, Boris Gidasov and the newly

which opens on 2 July, will see the conservatives in the majority. But, if he is prepared to use it, Gorbachev has a counter weight—an alliance with Yeltsin to carry through a radical market reform programme. Gorbachev's presidential powers and Yeltsin's credit with the masses can be used to win support for the same programme.

At the miners' founding congress Nikolai Travkin, a radical





# the LRCI

## NEWS FROM THE SECTIONS

### INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT RESOLUTION

## Romanian counter-revolutionary riots

1. The train of events which led to the abortive putsch of 14 June was started by the provocative attack by the Interior Ministry Police force on the dwindling band of student demonstrators in University Square. While these students were undoubtedly under the influence of right wing and counter-revolutionary elements, as long as their demonstrations remained peaceful, revolutionaries would have given no support to police actions against them and would have condemned the Stalinist provocation committed against them on the Wednesday morning. The erosion of certain democratic rights (e.g. access to media, freedom of opposition parties' press) and attempted restoration of the NSF's bureaucratic regime allowed the counter-revolutionary NLP and NPP to lead the urban petit bourgeois of Bucharest in a counter-revolutionary direction.

2. The abortive putsch of the 13-14 June in Bucharest in Romania, where right wing demonstrators attacked government buildings and attempted to seize the TV station represented a clear attempt by counter-revolutionary elements to oust the National Salvation Front government. In these circumstances the LRCI would have sided with the forces loyal to the NSF government in the same way that the Bolsheviks fought alongside Kerensky against Kornilov i.e. this does not involve giving political support to the National Salvation Front government.

3. The events of Wednesday night and Thursday morning revealed that the NSF, a Stalinist dominated government has yet to consolidate its hold over the repressive state apparatus following the December revolution. The army, either because sections of the officer corps were sympathetic with the right wing parties or because they were unwilling to be used in support of an Interior Ministry/police provocation, failed to come to the aid of the Government which was under violent attack, a situation that further emboldened the counter-revolutionary elements. It was in this situation that Iliescu, to preserve his government, was forced to appeal to the workers, especially the miners, to come onto the streets of Bucharest to defend the regime.

4. The response of the miners as well as workers in and around Bucharest clearly demonstrates the continued popular support for the NSF government which is seen as having won a democratic mandate from the people. It is also evidence of the continued mobilising capacity of the RCP/NSF machine which remains largely intact although camouflaged. It also shows the deep hostility to what was perceived as an attempt by the students/National Liberal Party/Peasant Party elements to overthrow the results of those elections. In these circumstances the task of revolutionaries was twofold. Firstly to help mobilise the workers to smash any counter-revolutionary attempt to seize power. Secondly to prevent the Stalinists of the NSF from using these events to erode the democratic freedoms won in the revolution by proceeding to re-establish a Stalinist dictatorship.

5. Therefore we fight for:

- Workers' committees to be formed in all factories and workplaces to defend the gains of the revolution.
- No to a national guard under NSF discipline! For the immediate dissolution of the police forces and their replacement by an armed workers' militia.
- For workers' and peasants' inspection commissions to purge all those corrupt and criminal elements from the former regime and to expose counter-revolutionary plotters.
- Rank and file soldiers committees in the army. For the removal of all army officers implicated in supporting the counter-revolutionary events of 14-15. For the election of officers.
- The defence of democratic liberties in the factories and on the streets.
- The right to demonstrate, produce leaflets, hold public meetings, produce opposition newspapers. No to NSF party control of the media! For workers' commissions to determine access to media.
- Only the workers' organisations have the right to abrogate these rights should these freedoms be used to directly mobilise for armed counter-revolution aimed at restoring capitalism.
- For a political revolution against the NSF bureaucracy and for a revolutionary (Trotskyist) workers' party

6. The response of the Iliescu government and the workers' movement to the events of 13-14 has led the imperialists to immediately rally to the defence of their agents inside Romania—the Peasant and Liberal Parties. The international workers' movement must denounce the US/EC led attempts at an imperialist blockade of Romania for what it is, a hypocritical attempt to reverse the election results which were not to the liking of the imperialists.

- Down with EC/US trade boycotts and aid bans
- For immediate aid without strings to Romania

17.6.90

**The LRCI**  
ArbeiterInnenstandpunkt (Austria), Gruppe Arbeitermacht (Germany),  
Irish Workers Group, Poder Obrero (Peru), Pouvoir Ouvrier (France),  
Workers Power Group (Britain)

Poder Obrero-OCIR (Bolivia) is in the process of discussions with the LRCI with the aim of becoming an affiliated section. The Revolutionary Trotskyist Tendency (USA) has fraternal relations with the LRCI.

## ROMANIA

# Why we won't condemn the miners

The actions of the miners in defence of the government in Bucharest have shocked many of the left. **Mark Abram** explains why revolutionaries must defend the NSF against right wing forces. The LRCI column contains our resolution on these events.

SECTIONS OF the British left have been quick to follow the bosses' press and condemn the miners' repression of anti-government demonstrators in Bucharest in mid-June.

At first sight it seems so obvious: student demonstrators anxious about the consolidation of a crypto-Stalinist regime take to the streets for "more democracy" (*Socialist Organiser*). The "conned miners" (*Socialist Worker*) whipped up into a frenzy by the National Salvation Front's (NSF) "nonsensical fantasy" (*Workers Press*) of a threatened coup, are bussed in and led by Securitate agents to kill and intimidate oppositionists.

What really happened? And, for those who care to get beyond knee-jerk phobic comments when confronted with Stalinism, what should our attitude have been?

Student hunger strikers had been occupying a part of University Square since 22 April. After the 20 May elections their demands had focused quite narrowly upon the desire to see an independent TV station launched. In a country so long starved of any trustworthy source of information this demand had a powerful resonance.

### Democratic gains

In fact, contrary to *Socialist Worker's* beliefs, the post-election government had not torn up all its pre-election promises. Indeed the NSF was sensitive to the fact that if it were to get imperialist aid for its capitalist restorationist programme it had to be careful of reversing all the democratic gains.

In particular on 1 June the Ministry of Culture announced that it was ending its control over the press. Opposition papers were free to operate unrestricted and according to their own resources. On 11 June representatives of the hunger strikers and the NSF met to discuss the student demands. The government agreed to back the claim in parliament and the students agreed to end their protest.

At this point an entirely different group of demonstrators entered the scene, organised by the People's Alliance, the 16-21 December Association and the Anti-Totalitarian Romanian Front.

They insisted on the mass media being present to discuss demands to get rid of certain NSF figures. When this was rejected they left and attacked government buildings and police units. Under this pressure the hunger strikers themselves went back on their decision to clear the square.

During the 12 June the number of demonstrators in the Square grew, and the NSF decided to clear them early the next morning.

There seems to be absolutely no justification for this action of the NSF. The level of violence from the demonstrators was not at that point a serious threat. The

violence by the NSF forces and the scale of arrests (263) should be condemned.

After this, however, events moved on. By late morning on 13 June the People's Alliance and their allies had gathered in strength in University Square, and in the afternoon they attacked the police units and set buses on fire. In the evening the TV station was invaded, the staff attacked and broadcasts interrupted.

In quick succession the Interior Ministry was stormed, weapons were stolen and eventually the building was set on fire. The same fate befell the police HQ, the Romanian Information Bureau. The crowds ransacked the Central Army House. Finally, it was reported that the demonstrators opened fire on troop units with the stolen weapons.

Was this a coup and what should revolutionaries attitude be to these events?

A planned coup attempt seems unlikely. But there was a disorganised and opportunistic putsch. Driven on by their own early successes, having chosen their buildings carefully and got hold of ammunition and weapons to supplement the Molotov cocktails, the reactionary forces then recognised that units of the police and army were less than enthusiastic about putting them down.

In their fevered imagination the demonstrators—led by groups linked to the National Peasants Party—believed themselves to be re-running the December revolution against Ceaucescu.

For *Socialist Organiser* to argue that these forces were not "consciously pro-rightist" but "influenced by the broadly liberal opposition" is naïve at best. And if the National Landlords' Party of Campeanu and the National Exiled Millionaires Party of Ratiu are "broadly liberal" then David Owen is a socialist.

Since the election these parties have agitated daily in their papers to undermine the legitimacy of the election results. Campeanu said the elections "were a fraud that put one party in power". NPP supporter and prominent poet Doina Cornea denounced universal suffrage because it produced the wrong result! Even Edwina Currie revealed that on election night NPP leaders bitterly complained that the results proved that the peasants (!) should be deprived of the vote!

These forces, who either instigated or took advantage of the events on the 13 June, are profoundly undemocratic and are no more a guardian of democracy than the NSF. Moreover, their social programme is for a more rapid move to the market than the NSF.

But the NSF was elected by the overwhelming bulk of the working class and peasants. When the miners responded to the NSF government's desperate plea to plug the gaps left by the police they were not stupid or duped. They

were following their class instincts that told them that this government has improved their wages and put food in the shops whereas the NLP wants to put them out of work.

In no sense would revolutionaries argue that the NSF is "our" government. However, we are obliged to fight alongside it, arms in hand, when it is threatened from the right. Given the level of violence that flared in Bucharest and given the determination of the counter-revolutionaries to press home their attack, a military bloc with forces loyal to the NSF was necessary, even though in the course of such a bloc we would fight for independent workers' militia and no reliance on the NSF.

Revolutionaries need to state honestly that the right wing threat could not be put down without some physical force. We do not have to condone excesses, especially those motivated by prejudices against minorities, to accept the necessity of violence in such a situation.

To respond by bemoaning the violence as though it is inherently wrong, is a capitulation to pacifism at best, bourgeois public opinion at worst.

### Question

Those who rail against the mob should answer the question clearly. Were they in favour of pushing on the demonstrators to the end? Did they want to see Iliescu flee from the palace in a helicopter chased by NPP and NLP supporters backed by benevolent or passive sectors of the armed forces?

Is this the road to liberation for the workers of Romania?

Many on the left have shown that they have not got the stomach to face up to these issues. The LRCI, on the other hand, does not flinch from striking the necessary blocs with, whilst in no way giving any political support to, the NSF government.

The illusions of the working class in Iliescu must be broken in the next months before the NSF leads them onto the rocks of price liberalisation and unemployment. The support which the workers, and not only the miners, showed for defending "the government reveals how strong these illusions are. The prejudices of many workers against minorities were also clear. To break the workers from these positions requires the independent organisation of the working class and the building of a revolutionary leadership.

Nearly a million workers are already in a non-NSF independent trade union federation; some trade union leaders refused to heed the NSF's call to come to Bucharest.

But until a revolutionary Trotskyist party can win over the vanguard of the working class no support can be given to any attempts to unseat it by putsches, or worse, from the right. ■



**W**E ARE witnesses to an event unique in history: the restoration of capitalism to a country where it was overthrown forty years ago. Nor is this event a unique aberration. The countries of Eastern Europe are queuing to join East Germany on this road. How has this come about?

After the fall of the Honecker government in the face of mass mobilisations in Berlin, Dresden and Leipzig, after the total failure of Egon Krenz to stabilise the rule of a discredited Stalinist bureaucracy and after Gorbachev made it clear that no rescue could be expected from the Soviet armed forces, Hans Modrow decided that he might as well offer to oversee the process of capitalist restoration himself.

His caretaker government removed restrictions on foreign investment and prepared the ground for converting state owned companies into private enterprises. But it could not achieve much, unelected as it was, tainted with the past, suspected by the Christian Democratic West German government.

### Fusion

Already in early February the Kohl administration in West Germany had decided to push fast towards economic fusion with the east rather than awaiting a slow process of political unification. In this he was ahead of the professional bankers and economic administrators who, like the head of the Bundesbank (West Germany's equivalent to the Bank of England) dismissed such plans then as "fantastic". Why was Kohl so determined?

The answer lies in the unique relationship between the GDR and West Germany. Germany is a country artificially divided. Once the Berlin Wall tumbled the population fled in their tens of thousands to the west.

The increasing social strain on West Germany's housing pool, job market and the benefit system demanded swift action to stabilise the economic situation in the east and begin the job of ironing out the economic unevenness on a capitalist basis.

All Kohl needed was a GDR government willing to do this. Kohl promised 1:1 convertibility—the biggest election bribe in history—and this sidelined the Social Democrats. The landslide victory for the Christian Democrats (CDU) in the 18 March elections fulfilled his wildest dreams. Now to prevent any active opposition from the reformist workers' party he inveigled the new Social Democratic Party into the government. This government, representing the electoral wishes of the vast majority of the East German workers, was the best vehicle for implementing the restoration of capitalism and forestalling resistance.

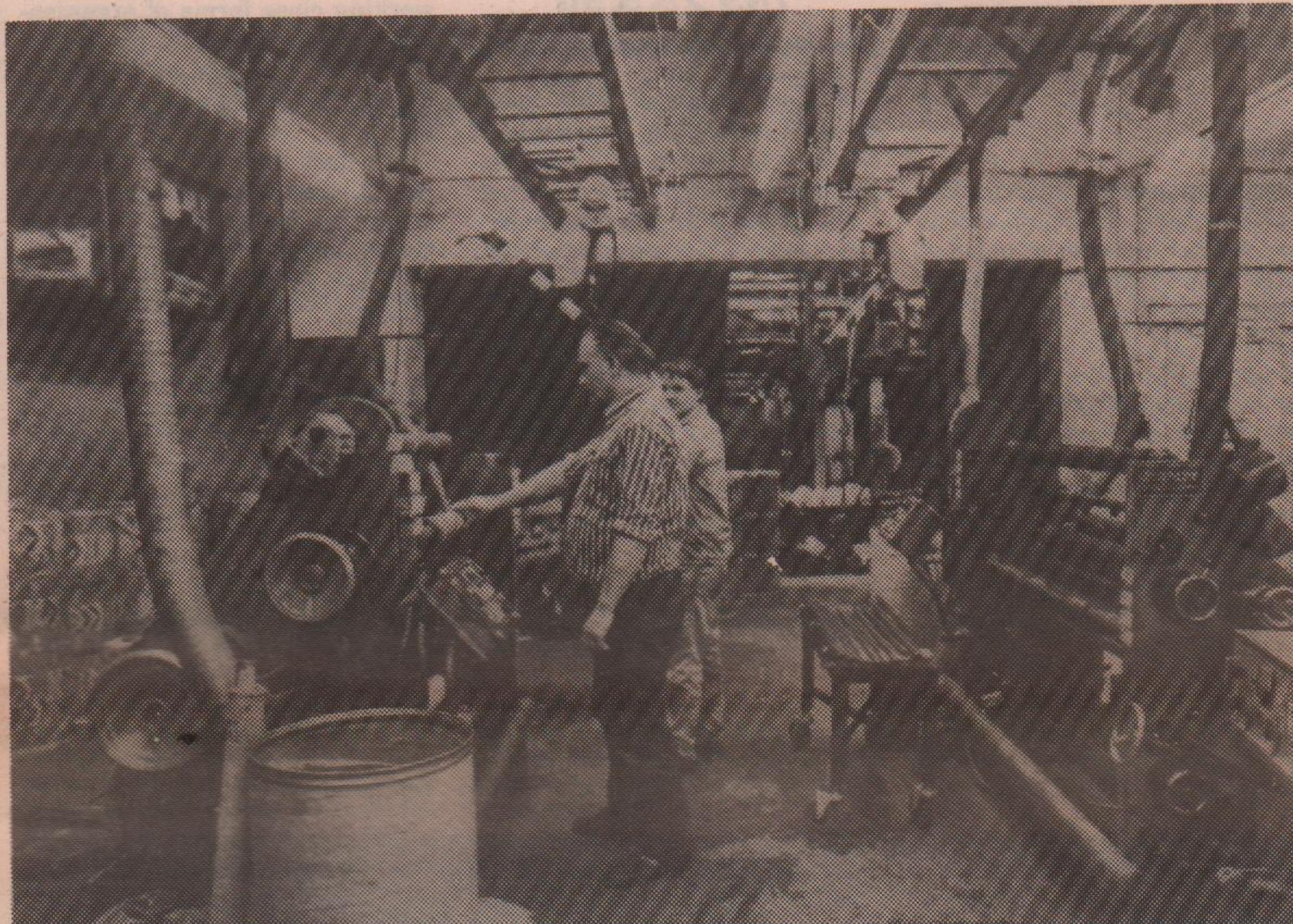
Between March and mid-May the treaty on economic fusion was put together. The terms of currency conversion proved the greatest sticking point, embracing the combined questions of wage levels, the value of personal savings, industrial costs and debts. But Kohl was prepared—even to the chagrin of his economic chiefs—to be generous in order to secure a quick solution.

The six chapters and 38 articles of the treaty amount to a charter of capitalist restoration. The first two chapters lay down the terms of currency union which involve "respect for private property, free competition and a general freedom of movement for workers, capital, goods and services". The Bundesbank will determine mone-

When the East German government embarked on its latest Five Year Plan in 1986 few among them could have expected that by the end of the five years in 1990 planning itself would be broken backed; capitalism would once again rule triumphant in Dresden, Leipzig and Berlin's Alexanderplatz. **Mark Abram** explains how it happened.

## EAST GERMANY

# Capitalism restored



Antiquated and undercapitalised factory in East Germany

tary policy for the whole of Germany and the West German mark will be the sole currency for both parts.

### Law

All West German labour and welfare law now applies to the east, and the taxation system has been substantially harmonised. Importantly, a general clause is included in the first chapter which renders null and void any remaining GDR law which contradicts the provisions of the treaty.

Other chapters outline a social market capitalist economy in which the only remaining elements of government regulation affecting the east will be some price support, import controls on certain agricultural produce, plus government regulation of the privatisation (and closure) of industry.

Naturally, the job of privatising some 8,000 state owned enterprises will take time. To date only 170 out of these have even been prepared for privatisation by being turned into state-owned joint stock companies. The new institution—the Treuhandanstalt—is set to become the biggest de-nationalisation agency in history.

But as of 2 July these state owned companies will be state capitalist trusts. As the treaty makes clear, from that day all subsidies for industry will end and market forces will prevail for goods and services except for public transport, rent and energy costs. Enterprises will no longer take their orders from the plan nor will the old planning

ministries determine the allocation of resources or fix prices. There is no longer a state monopoly of foreign trade.

Who are to be the beneficiaries of this capitalist restoration? Of course, there will be some space for East German entrepreneurial capital to grow. Last February some 10,000-15,000 small firms, only expropriated in 1972, were returned to their owners. But the real winners will be the powerful West German industrial and financial giants. The Economist Intelligence Unit reported that although some firms will be bought by employees, most will be "effectively annexed by massive West German investment".

Europe's largest insurance company (Allianz of Munich) has already gobbled up 49% of the GDR's state monopoly insurance system. It will no doubt get even more when the restrictions are removed. West Germany's three big banks open their doors on 2 July and will dominate immediately.

### Sweep

In industry the story is the same with the huge car, chemical and engineering monopolies set to make a clean sweep as they take advantage of re-building the GDR's infrastructure and displace grossly uncompetitive factories. The consequences of this for manufacturing will be dramatic and immediate. As the CDU Economics Minister, Gerhard Pohl said in late May:

"A quarter to a third of enterprises will survive in the market

place... a fifth or more will have to reckon with bankruptcy. Around a half will have difficulty but are worth restructuring."

### Jobs

The effects on output and jobs is already being felt in this ruthless process of capitalist concentration and destruction. In February output was 5-6% down on the previous year. No one dare guess the level to which the GDR's economy may plummet this year.

As to jobs, official unemployment stood at 14,000 in March, although its true rate may have been five times that. The official figures for May reveal a figure of 100,000; this is a 50% jump over April. Conservative estimates put the number of unemployed by the end of the year at 400,000. Some reports suggest that there may be two and a half to three million unemployed at some point in 1991 if the job creation schemes in services turn out to be a mirage.

This figure in turn will be affected by the numbers that continue to migrate to the west. In January alone in excess of 30,000 upped and left. And there is no guarantee that this flood of economic refugees will be stemmed by the economic union. The currency conversion at 1:1 for wages will still leave the relative purchasing power of workers in the GDR at about half that of their western brothers and sisters. The marginal gain they will make on their savings conversion is not likely to deter skilled workers from continuing to

seek better pay in the west.

Conscious of the dangers that mass unemployment, increased social inequality and insecurity could hold, Kohl is not planning a vicious austerity package like that of the Mazowiecki government in Poland. He is trying to restore a united imperialist power, not produce an impoverished semi-colony subordinate to foreign imperialism.

For these reasons while we can expect a wave of isolated and bitter struggles over the next months and years as a result of restoration, it would be an error to predict that they will generalise spontaneously to conflicts of general strike proportions, still less civil war. The effects of continued migration undermining class cohesion, access to previously denied goods and services, alongside a small but perceptible gradual improvement in wages for a majority of those in work, will tend to undercut struggles. The unknown social consequences of restoration on a mass of unemployed, allied to their resentment at being kept at arms length from the consumer dream, may well, however, spark some of the bitterest defensive battles of the new dawn. In the absence of a fighting class leadership there is an added danger that the forces of the far right can grow.

### Rent

The Kohl government is using the accumulated surpluses of the imperialist West Germany to defuse class conflict. For example, it has agreed a timetable for phasing out subsidies on rent, food and transport which will coincide with adjustments to wage levels. The full cost to the West German exchequer of capitalist restoration in the east could be £600-£1,000 billion over ten years!

But the German bourgeoisie is banking on the fact that there is much in the way of profits to be made, and in the process tax revenues, to offset against the inflationary consequences of an expansionary state budget and short term capacity constraints in industry. They hope too that the lowered expectations of GDR workers and a bigger labour market will have a depressive effect on wage levels throughout the whole country.

Political union is likely this year. Whatever article (23 or 146) of the Basic Law of West Germany is used to effect this union the administrative complications and the putting in place of the necessary local institutions could be done in time for all German elections in December. But now it matters little when and how this will be achieved.

The task for revolutionary socialists today is to take the lead in mounting resistance to the triumph of capitalism. The labour movement must be won to a renewed struggle: over trade union rights, over social welfare facilities, over wage levels, over abortion and maternity rights and over democratic rights. A new vanguard of the working class, across the whole of Germany, must be forged in united struggle. We must prevent the bosses from sowing disunity amongst the working class. No new Berlin Wall of chauvinism and resentment must be allowed to arise. A united working class, drawing on the best traditions of the revolutionary German labour movement, is a more powerful working class than German capitalism has ever had to face. It is up to this class to ensure that the bosses' victory is a short-lived and hollow one. ■

● Is peaceful restoration possible? See page 9.



# THE RCP AND THE POLL TAX

BY MARK ABRAM

**T**HE ORIGINS of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) lie in the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). When they broke from that organisation in the mid-1970s they were rightly critical of the SWP's economism. The political method that they replaced it with, however, was no better.

The RCP argue that only those struggles which lead workers into immediate conflict with the capitalist state are political. This position is no advance on economism; in fact it is the mirror image of it.

In practice its narrow definition of politics leads the RCP, to abstain from the living class struggle on both the economic and political fronts. The real problem for revolutionaries is how to break the grip that reformism has on millions of workers. This requires an active intervention into the strikes, campaigns and movements that workers participate in.

At the outset many of these struggles will set themselves very limited economic or political objectives. Our task is to extend these objectives, to direct the workers involved towards revolutionary solutions to their problems, to organise them for the tasks of revolution.

## Fronts

None of this is to the taste of the RCP. They prefer to create a world of their own, a make-believe labour movement free from reformist warts and pure in its revolutionary consciousness. Thus, the members of the RCP engage in building a series of party fronts—Workers Against Racism, the Irish Freedom Movement, the Red Front—composed of themselves and their closest supporters.

Each of these fronts are counterposed to existing mass organisations and campaigns. Each are an excuse for abstention from the class struggle. On Ireland, for example, the Irish Freedom Movement boycotted the Time to Go march last August and staged their own instead. They refused to fight for an anti-imperialist perspective amongst the forces mobilised by Time to Go, preferring to leave them to the misleadership of the reformists.

Such abstentionism is the norm for the RCP. In the great miners' strike, for example, while the RCP were initially tempted to view this narrow "economic" struggle as worthy of their attention (largely because their petit bourgeois fantasies about "preparing for power" were spurred on by the picket line

# Living Marxism or living struggles

clashes) they made it a point of honour to set down conditions for their "support".

Chief amongst these was that the miners not on strike be excused for their scabbing. Elaborate arguments, justifying the treachery of the Notts scabs, took pride of place in the RCP's paper, *The Next Step* (TNS). Abstract arguments for socialism were advanced as an alternative to demands of the miners to keep pits open.

## Doomed

After 19 weeks the RCP decided to call it a day in this momentous class battle. An article entitled "Three wasted months" appeared in their June 1984 paper explaining that the failure of the NUM to respond to the pleas of the RCP meant the strike was doomed. They packed up their short-lived front organisation—The Miners' Next Step—and left the field, declaring their own new campaign against Enoch Powell's proposals for an Embryology Bill, to be the absolute priority for them and the working class!

Countless other examples of this anti-working class approach to real struggles can be found in the RCP's practice. The most glaring example today is their attitude to the anti-

**"The Poll Tax was not an issue around which we could build revolutionary opposition to the Tories."  
TNS 25.5.90**

Poll Tax struggle. This mass struggle, involving thousands of workers, is treated with lofty disdain by the RCP.

On the eve of the Battle of Trafalgar Square TNS announced that the RCP would not be participating in the anti-Poll Tax struggle. As they later explained, they have stood aside from intervening in the local APTUs because the "poll tax was not an issue around which we could build revolutionary opposition to the Tories." (TNS 25.5.90)

This is more a statement of the RCP's bankruptcy than an indication of anything inherent in the anti-Poll Tax campaign itself. The RCP tell us that because the middle class and sections of the bosses oppose the Poll Tax then the broad and diffuse nature of the opposition "cannot clarify class interests". The fact of Tory opposition to the

tax is of course a sign of the crisis of the ruling class, which we welcome and seek to exploit. How do we exploit this crisis? By intervening in the community organisations based on estates in working class areas and winning them to a clear strategy to defeat the tax.

By winning the working class component of the campaign (i.e. the overwhelming majority) to working class forms of organisation and action a real possibility could, and still can, be created to defeat the Tories and smash the tax.

The fact that such a direction would leave the middle class elements behind is their problem; their support is neither necessary for victory nor a condition of the struggle.

## Smokescreens

To cover their tracks the RCP have to throw up smokescreens and even tell barefaced lies.

They say that the left "has found itself trailing behind middle class campaigners". They give no evidence for this assertion quite simply because it is a lie. The SWP and Militant are both set against a strategic alliance with the middle class. Their real errors and the real problems they cause for the campaign are to be found in the

inadequate tactics they argue for inside the working class.

The RCP deceitfully state:

"The left has never attempted to organise a campaign of collective defiance; in particular it has refused to ensure that the tax could never be implemented."

This ignores the APTUs' genuine attempt to use non-payment as a way of overcoming atomisation and an individual response to the threats of the state.

It is fair to argue that Militant in particular have obstructed a campaign to win workers to non-implementation, fixated as they are on the self-sufficiency of mass non-payment. But many on the left, including Workers Power, have fought inside the mass movement (unlike the RCP) for organised mass non-implementation. There is nothing in the character of the struggle that has prevented that attempt being made.

For a brief period after the Trafalgar Square demonstration the RCP, caught unawares by the strength of feeling against the Poll Tax amongst workers, got excited by the scale of the fighting that took place.

Their excitement soon died away, for it centred on the fighting itself, not on the issue that had actually detonated the explosion of anger when the police attacked the march. Once again they inform us that a fight against the policy identified by Thatcher as her "flagship", the policy that constitutes a generalised attack on the entire working class, the policy that led to real divisions in the ruling class, cannot become political.

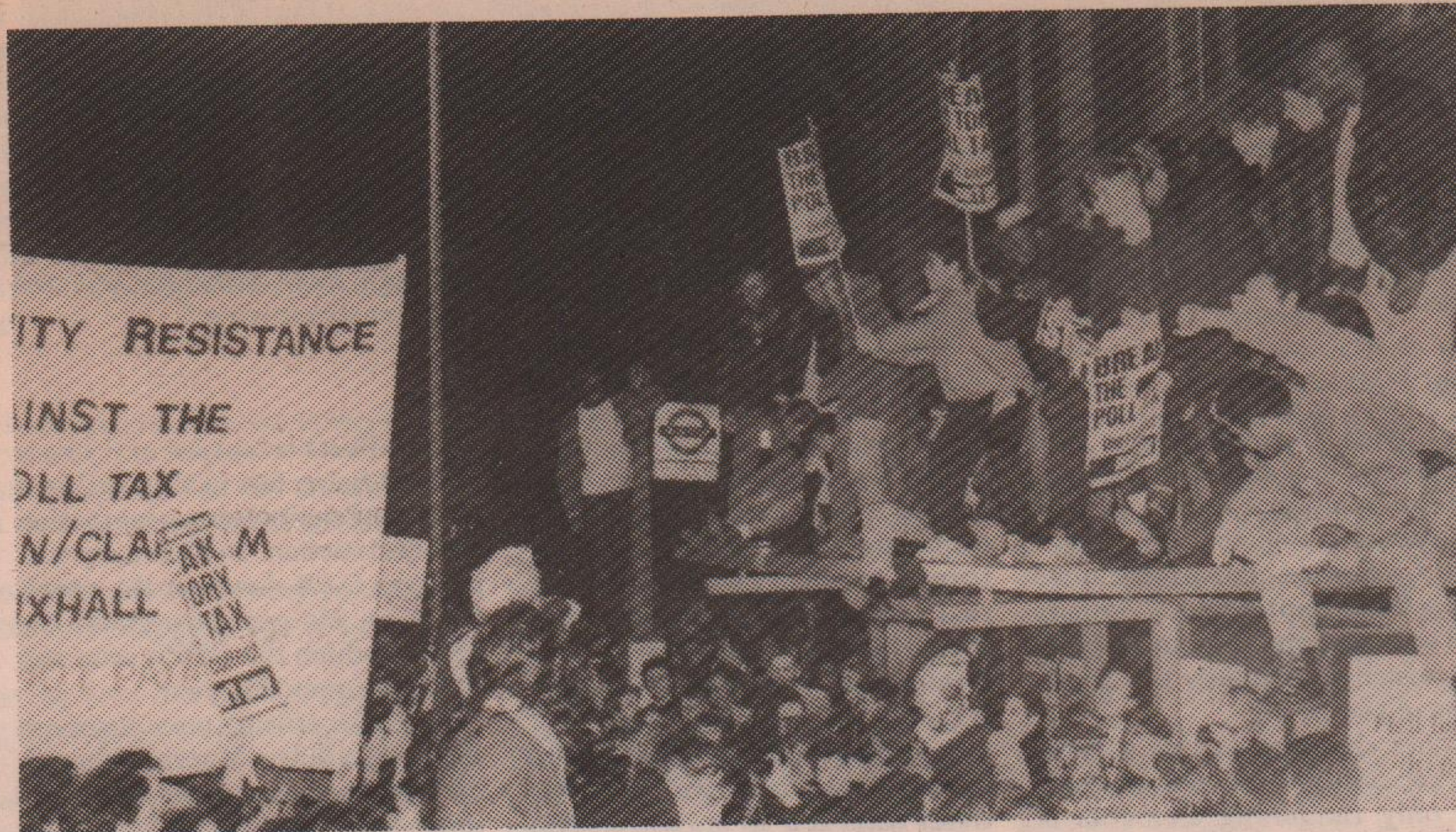
## Enlightenment

Having stood aside from the main concerns of the mass of class conscious reformist workers in this campaign the RCP have the audacity to state:

"We need to demonstrate the relevance of Marxist politics to the problems of today."

They intend to do this by turning their back on the working class and setting as their aim the generation of a new "enlightenment". We can all forget the relevance of our narrow and grubby little struggles thrown up by the real world. Instead we must sit back and be enlightened by the RCP's glossy magazine, *Living Marxism*, with its perceptive and profoundly relevant Marxist insights into the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle phenomenon.

Despite their propensity for inflated self-publicity the only thing the RCP have demonstrated in their attitude to the anger of millions of workers directed against the Poll Tax is the utter irrelevance of their sectarian politics. ■



## INTERNATIONAL TROTSKYIST COMMITTEE

# Lies and slander

LAST MONTH *Workers Power* published a warning to the left about one of our former supporters, Chris Brind. As a result we have been subjected to an attack in *Fighting Worker*, the paper of a group in the USA, the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL).

The RWL is a sympathising section of the International Trotskyist Committee. Its British section, the Revolutionary Internationalist League (RIL), has recently recruited Brind to its ranks. They have echoed the RWL's attack in a leaflet distributed at the recent Trade Union anti-Poll Tax conference. Serious readers of our paper could be excused for asking, why

are we bothering to draw attention to this attack? The reason is, quite simply, that the lies spread by the RWL, if left unanswered, may lead an unsuspecting few to believe them.

The RWL accuse us of being sectarian, of treating the struggle for lesbian and gay rights as a recruiting manoeuvre, of refusing to fight homophobia inside our own ranks and inside the labour movement, of slandering Chris Brind and physically intimidating him and of bureaucratically driving him out of our organisation, in a bid to avoid a political fight with him.

Phew! This charge sheet, from a group that has refused to answer

any of our published criticisms of their politics in the past, is pretty extensive. We can only be thankful that they stopped short of exposing our pact with Satan and ritual sacrifice of newborn babies.

The RWL's lies serve one purpose. They want to use this whole unsavoury incident to conduct an unprincipled attack on us. Lacking the ability to respond to us politically they have seized on the ravings of an ex-member as a means of striking a blow at us. Truth has become the first casualty, proletarian morality the second.

The facts of the case are quite simple. Chris Brind has stolen a word processor that was the collec-

tive property of our organisation. The RIL admit this, the RWL gloss over it by suggesting it is a "personal dispute".

If the RWL and the RIL instruct their new found recruit to give us it back that will be the end of the matter. If they do not they are harbouring a thief. And everybody should know that.

On their accusations we pose one simple demand—substantiate them. Give us the evidence to prove that we have refused to fight homophobia; that our lesbian and gay work is sectarian; that we are in the business of physically intimidating people. And please enlighten us as to the "political issues Brind fought over and is still fighting over". The truth is that not one of these fantastic attacks can be proved.

To make such accusations without substantiating any of them is, in reality, slander. We, on the other hand, make one accusation against

Brind—that he is a thief—and have offered the RIL evidence to prove this. That is not slander.

Chris Brind waged no political fight inside Workers Power. Rather than being driven out of our organisation repeated efforts were made to prevent him from resigning.

In the struggle against Section 28 he, along with our other comrades, conducted an intervention that nobody expressed disagreement with, least of all Brind. And far from refusing to develop a fight against homophobia internally or externally we have a proud record of struggle on the issue, one that is documented internally and externally.

The RWL are not the slightest bit interested in any of this. They simply want a stick to beat us with. It won't work. The RWL and the RIL have exposed themselves as unprincipled manoeuvrers. For that at least we can be grateful. ■



# Soft on Stalinism?

Dear Comrades,  
Nick Stone's review of Angela Davis' biography in the last issue of *Workers Power* was a good exposition of the limits of her nationalist politics. However, two points were missed.

Her collapse into Stalinism did not merely place "severe limitations on her development". It negated her earlier militant contribution to the black struggle in particular and the class struggle in general. As a loyal Stalinist Davis has to take responsibility for the miserable and treacherous politics of the CP(USA) which have led it to sabotage or steer to defeat numerous struggles in the USA over a long period.

Thus, her conversion to support for Jesse Jackson was no overnight development. It was rooted in the CP's long history of popular frontism. In the past this had even led it to voluntarily liquidate itself in the interests of helping Stalin's wartime alliance with the US imperialist bourgeoisie. While Davis wasn't around when this happened, as a leading member of the CP she was well aware of such events and defended them.

The second problem with the review was that it contained a glaring factual error. Nick Stone refers to the "... racist union bureaucrats such as Walter Reuther, head of the AFL-CIO". Reuther was certainly a bureaucrat, an anti-communist and a proponent of various aspects of post-World War Two "business unionism".

However, he was never the leader of the AFL-CIO. At the time discussed in the review he was the leader of the United Auto Workers (UAW), which had temporarily

disaffiliated from the national union confederation, then led by the arch-right winger, cold warrior and thinly disguised racist, George Meany.

The UAW itself had a relatively progressive record of anti-racism, reflecting in part the massive black workforce in the US car industry. Reuther himself had personally campaigned to win black workers at Ford's giant River Rouge plant near Detroit, to the UAW in the

1930s and 1940s (when he was still sympathetic to, if not actually a member of, the Socialist Party).

Ofcourse Reuther's anti-racism, like his politics in general, were bureaucratic. He retained control of his union in part by keeping militant black workers out of the leadership. This provoked opposition from black caucuses in the car plants. He was also guilty of numerous betrayals of the struggles of car workers, black and



white. Even so he was one of the very few bureaucrats who was willing to associate himself with the early civil rights movement in the Southern states.

Lastly, Reuther died in a plane crash in 1967, prior to Davis actually joining the CP and bending her efforts to the fruitless cultivation of alliances with the union tops.

None of this should detract from the general usefulness of the review as a critique of Davis' nationalism. Nor am I trying to excuse Reuther in any way. But accuracy on details is important to strengthen Workers Power's correct arguments and win new adherents to Trotskyism from the ranks of the black working class in the USA.

Communist greetings  
G R McColl

## NTS MINERS CSWEB statement

On Tuesday 12 June two miners from the USSR, Sergei Masalovich and Nikolai Terokhin, addressed the conference of the Union of Democratic Mineworkers (UDM) in Weymouth.

The *Daily Mirror* of 13 June gave a front page spread to the speeches of these two men. The *Mirror* used these speeches as part of its witch-hunt against Arthur Scargill and the NUM.

The Campaign for Solidarity with Workers in the Eastern Bloc (CSWEB) wants to make it clear to all British workers that, contrary to the report in the *Mirror*, the two Soviet miners who addressed the UDM are neither representatives of that country's independent mine-workers' organisations, nor officials of those organisations.

The two men are individuals, over in this country as members of the "National Workers' Union" (NTS). The NTS is an extreme right-wing organisation which, between 1941

and 1944, actively collaborated with and fought alongside the Nazis.

The two Soviet miners were brought to this country by Mr George Miller, a representative of the right-wing NTS in Britain.

CSWEB will not collaborate with the NTS. We call on all genuine labour movement bodies not to have anything to do with the NTS. CSWEB's aim is to build solidarity with the independent workers' organisations now emerging in the Eastern Bloc, not to give a platform to extreme right-wing organisations that have pro-fascist histories.

On the very day that Masalovich and Terokhin addressed the UDM, delegates from every Soviet coal-field assembled in Donetsk, to establish an independent miners' union. Masalovich and Terokhin have no right, nor any authority, to speak on its behalf.

The *Daily Mirror* wishes to persecute Scargill and the NUM. It does this as part of its campaign against

all forms of class struggle militancy inside the labour movement.

If Soviet miners do want to discuss the finances of the 1984/85 strike, they must do so directly with the NUM itself. Mr Robert Maxwell and Mr Lynk of the UDM have no right whatsoever to demand anything of the NUM or interfere in its internal affairs. Mr Masalovich and Mr Terokhin have no authority to make accusations against the NUM on anybody's behalf. They are merely two right-wing individuals. ■

Affiliate to the Campaign for Solidarity with Workers in the Eastern Bloc.

£10 (large organisations)  
£5 (small organisations & individual members)

CSWEB, 56 Kevan House, Wyndham Road, London SE5

## workers power

Fighting Fund

£19,338

THIS MONTH'S total of £457 takes our grand total to £19,338. We are using the money to fund the renovation of our office, the LRCI's work in Eastern Europe and the maintenance of our paper. We need it urgently, so keep sending the money in.

A special thanks this month to one reader in Leicester who gave us £300. Thanks also to readers in Chesterfield (£25), Cardiff (£85), Leicester (£20) and Reading (£27).

## Meetings this month

Debates with **Socialist Organiser**

*The crisis of Stalinism and the tasks of revolutionaries*

**GLASGOW:**  
Tuesday 3 July 7-30  
City Halls

**MANCHESTER:**  
Thursday 5 July 7-30  
Town Hall

**BIRMINGHAM:**

Thursday 19 July 7-30  
New Imperial Hotel  
Temple Street

**Central London:**

Public Meeting  
*South Africa*  
Friday 13 July 7-30  
Conway Hall,  
Red Lion Square  
Nr Holborn tube

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# WHERE WE STAND

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# Workers power

British section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International

## Teachers strike as...

# TORIES SAVAGE SCHOOLS

**THE TORIES** are running a multi-million pound advertising campaign to recruit more teachers. At the same time their Poll Tax capping means teachers are being sacked due to lack of cash.

Councils are being forced to freeze vacancies and close nurseries. At the same time an official inquiry named staff shortages and lack of nursery provision as key factors in the death of Wandsworth toddler Stephanie Fox.

That is the crazy logic of the profit system.

The 21 tax-capped Councils have to make huge cuts to meet spending targets imposed by Tory Poll Tax supremo, Patten. In Barnsley they have cut the Music Centre, sacking 22 staff and depriving the area's children and youth of musical instrument teaching. Music lessons will once again become the privilege of those who can pay. And there are seventy-odd more sackings in the pipeline.

When Barnsley NUT members voted for a one day protest strike the union refused to sanction official action. That did not stop 800 of the council's 1000 NUT members walking out and picketing.

In Bristol thousands of teachers, parents and students marched in protest at threatened cuts and redun-

dancies during a one day teachers' strike. And strike action is planned in other tax-capped boroughs.

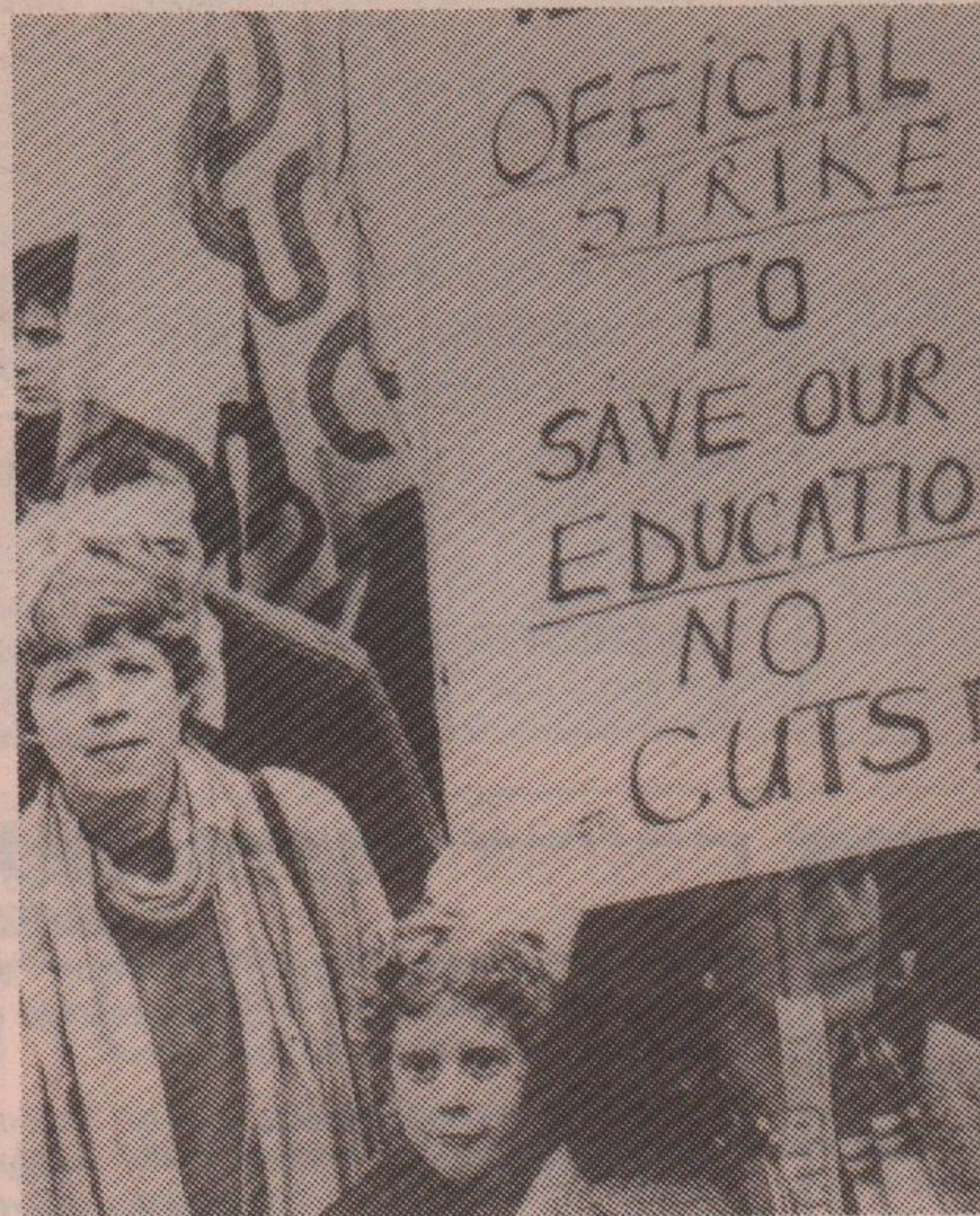
It is not just teachers' jobs at stake. It is the education and future of a generation of working class children. First to go in the education cuts will be the services councils provide on top of schools and colleges, like nurseries.

In Derbyshire capping has forced the council to abandon plans to renovate Victorian schools. Children will be forced to continue using nineteenth century outside lavatories into the twenty-first century.

The education cuts put teachers and other education workers on the front line of resistance to tax-capping. If they can resist the sackings and closures they will encourage council workers all over Britain to resist as well.

Unfortunately the union leaderships are putting big obstacles in the path of serious resistance.

Not only did the NUT leadership refuse to make the Barnsley strike official, they stopped a strike in Notting-



ham after a ballot for action. They are insisting the law requires postal ballots for action when school-based ballots are perfectly legal.

Worst of all the NUT leadership is blatantly refusing to implement its union conference policy which called for national action in response to compulsory redundancies.

Teachers in every area should be mobilising now to

demand that the NUT Executive organises a national ballot for strike action until every redundancy notice is withdrawn.

The NUT salaries conference in October, and the July conference called by STA/CDFU must become the rank and file organising focus for national strike action—with the bureaucrats if possible, against them if necessary.■

## INSIDE

- Romanian riots
- AIDS and misinformation
- Trotsky on the national question

## Plight of Soviet Jews

**THERE ARE** nearly two million Jews living in the Soviet Union. More than half of them have applied to leave.

This attempted exodus is a response to the rise of anti-Semitism in the USSR. Vicious attacks on Jews are on the increase, including the burning to death of student Irina Rosenfeld on 31 March. The convulsions wracking Soviet society have caused many to look for radical political answers. The growth of the rabidly anti-Semitic and fascist Pamyat movement is just one reflection of the way in which old and dangerous prejudices are rising to the surface once more.

The official tolerance of this anti-Semitic activity and the refusal of the police and KGB to clamp down on the fascists has given free rein to the reactionaries. Dark threats and rumours of pogroms abound. The clear aim of the anti-Semitic demagogues is to drive Jews from the USSR.

Far from organising a militant challenge to the anti-Semites, international Zionist organisations are encouraging Jews to flee from persecution. Their aim is to secure mass emigration to Israel. In this they appear to be succeeding. They are supported in this by the USA, who have long raised the plight of Soviet Jewry as evidence of "human rights violations". This is utter hypocrisy. The USA has cynically imposed immigration quotas on Jews.

It is the duty of the labour movement to oppose immigration controls in the imperialist lands and to demand the right of entry to Soviet Jews and all workers fleeing political or economic oppression. We are for the free right of emigration of Soviet Jews to the west.

But why are the US imperialists so keen on Soviet Jews

settling in Israel? The Zionist state desperately needs a large influx of Jewish immigrants to colonise the occupied territories seized in 1967, to undermine the burgeoning revolt of the Palestinian workers and youth. This project represents a violation of the democratic and national rights of the Palestinians.

We therefore oppose the forcible settlement of Jews on Palestinian land, and oppose the systematic discrimination of the Zionist authorities whereby Jewish settlers are guaranteed land rights and job security whilst the Arab population are denied exactly these rights.

The terrible irony is that hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews fleeing oppression in the USSR will find themselves pawns in a deadly imperialist game in occupied Palestine.

A nation which oppresses another can never itself be free. Far from being a refuge, Israel and its territorial outposts are a death trap for the Jewish people who will not be able to suppress the Palestinian's justified national revolt indefinitely.

The real answer to anti-Semitism is neither to flee it, nor to transfer the yoke of oppression to another long suffering and dispossessed people. Soviet Jews must stand and fight the fascists and the ideologists of Great Russian chauvinism. Linked to the resurgent independent Soviet workers' movement, Jews must fight for physical defence against terror and pogroms, and for a united offensive to smash fascist and organised racist groups.

Jewish workers, intellectuals and youth must take their rightful place in the struggle for a political revolution in the USSR, as they did in the Bolshevik revolution of 1917.■

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