

# Workers power

British section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International

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# Smash the Asylum Bill!

**HAVE YOU** noticed how caring the bosses are when it comes to the plight of the poor and hungry—as long as they are thousands of miles away. They have always got a few pounds to spare for a mercy flight to the starving children of Africa. John Major sent in British troops to provide “safe havens” for the Kurds. Jeffrey Archer organised the mega-concert to “help the Kurds”.

The same Jeffrey Archer told television audiences in Britain that the “millions of refugees” threatening to pour into Britain should have the door firmly slammed in their face. Because when the starving turn up to look for work in Britain, when gassed and tortured Kurds arrive seeking political asylum, it is a different story. Our “caring” bosses are revealed for what they are—racist hypocrites.

Herded into detention centres, subjected to humiliating tests and searches, black people are labelled “economic migrants” or “bogus asylum seekers”. Many are swiftly deported, along with hundreds of black residents of Britain every year who are the victims of the racist immigration and nationality laws.

In Hong Kong, which Britain owns and rules, tens of thousands of Vietnamese refugees are about to be deported by force. Formerly pitied as “victims of communism”, the boat people are now labelled “economic migrants” and will be forced at gunpoint to return.

This is the reality behind the bosses' hypocritical concern for the victims of Third World poverty and oppression.

Now, with unemployment growing and the Tories' electoral support declining, the race card is being played. The Tories' new Asylum Bill includes:

- “fast track” processing of asylum applications, i.e. faster deportations
- compulsory fingerprinting of all asylum seekers
- bigger fines for airlines carrying passengers without valid travel documents
- immigration checks at foreign airports as well as on arrival in Britain

The Tories claim that the Asylum Bill will sort out the genuine refugees from thousands of others who they claim are “economic migrants”.

They are being supported, with minor quibbles, by the Labour leaders.

And, as always when the respectable racists of Westminster clear their throats for a debate on immigration, the Bill is going through against a background of increased racist attacks.

Workers must act now to stop the new Asylum Bill.

In the first place it is a racist excuse to limit the right of asylum. Capitalism's wars and dictatorships create millions of genuine refugees from political terror and torture every year. The collapse and fragmentation of the Stalinist states have created even more. If the criteria for asylum was to show your torture marks, millions would still be eligible for entry.

It is nothing new for imperialist countries to turn away hundreds of



Turkish and Kurdish groups demonstrate for refugee rights

thousands faced with slaughter. Britain and the USA turned away boatloads of Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany in the 1930s on the grounds that they too were “economic migrants”.

But the Asylum Bill is just another brick in the wall of racist laws that systematically discriminate against black people. Virtually all immigration from Britain's former colonies was stopped by successive immigration and nationality laws. Over a million white South Africans, many of whom have never lived here, have the automatic right to “return” to

Britain. But the millions of black people, whose parents were forced to work and fight for the British Empire, are deemed to be “aliens”.

“There is no room: look at the housing shortage, look at unemployment, look at the crowded roads and trains” say the supporters of the immigration laws. But it is not black people or immigration that cause unemployment or overcrowding. The real blame lies with the bosses.

It is Tory cuts that have reduced council house building to zero and given the green light to rack-renting

landlords. Even now tens of thousands of council homes lie empty because councils cannot afford to maintain them.

It is the relentless quest for profits which drives the employers to put thousands on the dole every week. It is decades of underfunding that has reduced the transport system to chaos.

If society was run in the interests of working people and their families there would be enough houses, jobs and a decent transport system. The claim that Britain is too small to take any more people is a lie. There is only one kind of person Britain has too many of—parasitic bosses who live on the labour of others.

That is why we say: Stop the Asylum Bill! Smash all immigration controls! Against the rising tide of racist attacks the labour movement must support black people's right to self-defence and begin to put its resources into organising that defence.

The bosses' money is free to roam the world's stock markets. Labour should be free to move wherever there is work. Immigration was good enough for the bosses when they needed to undermine workers' wages during the 1950s economic boom.

Now we should not let them scapegoat black people as the cause of their economic crisis. ■

# Smash all immigration laws!



ON 10 NOVEMBER over 4,000 anti-fascists and anti-racists marched through East London. The fascist British National Party (BNP) regard the area as "their manor". The demonstration, called by Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) showed these scum how wrong they are.

AFA has waged a long campaign in the East End of London against the BNP, after the fascists decided it was a priority area for their "rights for whites" campaign. Over a two year period AFA has put out thousands of leaflets and posters, organised meetings, pickets of the fascist paper sales at Brick Lane, rallies, a 10,000 strong carnival and the 10 November national demonstration against racist attacks.

As well as this activity AFA has shown a willingness to put "no platform for fascists" into practice through a series of direct actions against the BNP.

This work has put the fascists on the defensive. Despite their much publicised attack on an anti-racist march in Bermondsey last August, they did not dare put in an appearance on 10 November. The streets belonged to the anti-fascists, and the message to the BNP was loud and clear. There's no room for them and their racist filth in working class areas.

However, the success of the march should not lull anyone into a false sense of security. Despite AFA's orientation to the labour movement there were nothing like enough trade union banners and delegations on the march. Those that were

## ANTI FASCIST ACTION Build a national campaign!

there were mainly local. It is vital, in the months ahead, that AFA consolidates its support in the workers' movement and builds it further, with speakers to union

branches, workplaces and stewards' committees a priority.

Groups of local Asian youth joined the march as it went past their estates. But the Asian community

in the Bethnal Green area has still not been won to supporting AFA. More work needs to be done if the momentum of the march is to be maintained.



London: 4,000 marched on 10 November

## Tottenham 3 are innocent!

BY THE time you read this the Tottenham Three could be free. Then again, like the Birmingham Six, they may have to go through the farce of repeated appeal court hearings and vindictive prosecution stalling before their convictions are quashed.

Whatever happens it is the racist, ruling class justice system that is in the dock. No doubt it will once again be let off with a caution; praised like a petty crook for "owning up" to its mistakes.

But the story of the Tottenham Three shows why black people and working class youth in general can expect no justice until the whole system is scrapped.

- Winston Silcott, Mark Braithwaite and Engin Raghip were framed for the murder of PC Keith Blakelock during the Broadwater Farm uprising in 1985. The three have always claimed their innocence.
- To get the convictions and to punish the youth of the estate police pulled in literally hundreds of juveniles. They denied them access to a solicitor, took away their clothes, threatened and beat them into incriminating themselves and oth-

ers. Many of these cases were thrown out by the courts.

- But the police were desperate for a conviction. They colluded with press reporters to supply lurid pictures of Winston Silcott taken in custody.
- On the sole evidence of a 25 word statement Winston Silcott is alleged to have made in custody they secured his conviction and a life sentence.

Now new forensic tests have shown the "confession" to be a forgery and Silcott's case has been sent for appeal.

Mark Braithwaite suffers from claustrophobia and complained about it whilst in custody. The Home Office has decided that this too is grounds for being given leave to appeal.

Engin Raghip's case has been sent for appeal after a psychologist's report showed him to be "suggestible" and with a mental age of ten.

Detective Chief Superintendent Graham Melvin, the officer who supervised the dawn raids on Broadwater Farm and the fit-up of the Three, has been suspended from duty.

It is not only the lynch-mob convictions that are revealed as faulty, but

the whole appeal and police complaints procedure. In 1988 Lord Chief Justice Lane, the man who refused the first Birmingham Six appeal, summarily dismissed Winston Silcott's request for an appeal. In 1990 Graham Melvin was the subject of a Scotland Yard enquiry into the whole conduct of the murder case, with no results.

Behind its oak panelled, ceremonial and archaic façade the British justice system is a stinking cesspool of racism and class law. If you are the Marquess of Blandford or a business tycoon like Ernest Saunders you can speed up and down the motorways drunk without a licence or embezzle millions. The worst you can expect is a brief period of five star treatment at an open prison, with authorised trips to champagne parties while you're serving your sentence.

If you are black, Irish, young and working class—and in the wrong place when the police are desperate for a conviction—you can be banged away for decades in some hell-hole prison. You will be vilified in the gutter papers. In the end, if the conviction is quashed you will be told that your successful appeal is a triumph for British justice.

The release of the Tottenham Three is not a certainty. If the appeal court refuses to let them go there must be a massive and sustained protest until they walk free.

Not only that, the workers' movement should not rest until all the innocent victims of police frame-ups and class justice are free. ■

## Essex Girls are angry!

THE SUN, the *Star*, local radio stations and reactionary stand-up comedians have joined forces in a campaign against a bunch of seemingly brain-dead working class Tories. Cause for celebration? Not quite. Because the targets of this campaign are working class women, the so called Essex Girls.

No issue of a gutter paper is complete without a page of jokes about Essex Girl. The so-called "alternative" comedians' transition to television and the big time had made racist and sexist "humour" less popular. But with the Essex Girl jokes it's a case of bigoted comedians striking back. Remember that old Irish joke, that joke about black women? Substitute Essex Girl and it's respectable again.

Essex Girl's crime, in the minds of the tabloid journalists, is that (a) she sleeps around, (b) she is thick. Why then are we not faced with an avalanche of jokes about members of the royal family or Tory MPs?

The difference is, of course, that Essex Girl is working class. Pop sociologists coined the phrase Essex Man in the late 1980s to describe the phenomenon of Tory-voting, skilled and self-employed workers. In Essex and other areas of the south east sociologists noted that high income groups normally associated with the managerial and professional classes contained more and more skilled workers and self-employed.

But Essex Man never spawned a craze for crude and insulting jokes. Like "Loadsamoney" he became a symbol of the boom, of Thatcherism's achievements in buying off a section of the work-

ing class. It is clear that with an election looming, anti-fascists need to be prepared for a national campaign against the sixty fascist candidates of the BNP and the National Front (NF).

Because of the work AFA has done in London it is in a strong position to issue the call for a national conference of all groups prepared to fight the fascists. There should be an open planning meeting for such a conference, with groups like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Militant, local anti-fascist and anti-racist organisations and trade unions and Labour Party branches invited.

Those who argue "fascism is not a problem" need to be convinced that it is a growing force in certain desperate white working class communities. To those who say "state racism, not fascism is the main problem for black people" we agree.

We do not counterpose building an anti-fascist united front to campaigning against various forms of racism. But there is a specific need for an anti-fascist organisation, and it has specific tasks within the general struggle against racism: to mobilise thousands of workers and youth to physically crush the fascist organisations and counter their propaganda on the slum estates.

The potential for success is enormous and was demonstrated by the march itself. Every anti-fascist should join AFA, fight for affiliation in the labour movement and make sure the momentum from 10 November results in a national workers' united front committed to driving the fascists off the streets. ■

## Free Jennifer Saunders!

ON 7 November protesters picketed the Lord Chancellor to release Jennifer Saunders. Eighteen year old Jennifer Saunders was sent prison for six years on 20 September for consenting sex with two 17 year old women. She was convicted of indecent assault after it was claimed that she dressed as a boy to seduce them. The relationships were completely consensual.

Saunders protested that she only dressed as a boy at the women's request to disguise their lesbian relationship so that their family and friends would not find out. Indeed it was one of the girls' parents who reported Saunders to the police. Passing sentence Judge Jonathan Crabtree condemned Saunders for deception and said of the two women:

"I suppose that both would rather have been raped by some young man."

Crabtree's comments highlight the increasing discrimination faced by lesbians and gays in the courts as prosecutions for consenting sexual acts continue to increase. Last year eight gay men were imprisoned for consensual sado-masochistic for a total of 25 years. In recent years there have been record levels of conviction under the 1956 Sexual Offences Act as well as legislation which specifically discriminates against lesbians and gay men, such as Section 28 and Clause 25.

Parliamentary lobbying and publicity stunts will not end state bigotry. Trade unionists must rally to defend lesbians and gays and to demand that all laws that discriminate on the grounds of sexuality be repealed and for the immediate release of all prisoners convicted for consenting "sex crimes".

Free Jennifer Saunders now! ■



# EDITORIAL

# No to internment!

"THE IRA terrorists are better equipped, better resourced, better led, bolder and more secure against our penetration than at any time before. They are an absolutely formidable enemy." That was how a British "security source" described the state of the Irish war last month.

The British army is not known for paying backhanded compliments to the men and women it is trying to hunt down and kill. There was an open political purpose behind the bleak military balance sheet.

"If we don't intern, it's the long haul" the same source told the *Independent*.

It is clear that the army and RUC are determined to use the latest upsurge in violence to re-raise the call for internment.

Internment without trial was last introduced in Northern Ireland in 1971. At 4.00 am on Monday 9 August that year British soldiers charged into the nationalist ghettos to arrest those they suspected of republican activity. After they'd finished their work 339 Catholics and three Protestants were lifted and placed in Long Kesh internment camp. In all 2,185 internment orders were signed before internment was abolished in 1975.

Fourteen of the men arrested were subjected to sensory deprivation torture techniques by the British security services. They were made to stand against a wall for hours on end, hooded and subjected to constant, deafening white noise. Some were dropped blindfolded out of helicopters a few feet above the ground after being told they were flying hundreds of feet in the air.

The British government was forced to introduce internment in 1971 because it was losing control of the situation. What had begun in 1968 as a movement for Catholic civil rights had been transformed into a militant struggle for national liberation by the anti-unionist population, which gave mass support to the resurgent IRA.

Instead of quelling the nationalist revolt internment fuelled the flames. As nationalist youth clamoured to join the IRA it became clear that internment

had failed.

Its abolition was part of Labour's strategy of "Ulsterisation" of the conflict. A far greater emphasis was placed on the security role of the armed police and part time UDR. Labour was deliberately attempting to depict the IRA as no more than common criminals.

Why then are the security services pushing for its reintroduction?

The calls for internment come in the context of an impasse in the British and Southern Irish ruling classes' attempts to politically marginalise the republican movement. The farcical "talks about talks" ended when Paisley's loyalist bigots walked out. Having failed to pressure the British government to abandon the Anglo-Irish Agreement their walk out was a signal to their friends in the UDA and UVF to pile on the pressure.

This year has seen a marked rise in loyalist violence. Alongside their traditional random sectarian murders the loyalist paramilitaries have also begun to take out key republican political activists, including two Sinn Fein councillors.

The hand-wringing response of the government was to create a new RUC unit specialising in tracking down loyalist paramilitaries. They don't have far to look. The UDA, the main loyalist paramilitary organisation remains legal. The RUC's own ranks are deeply penetrated by UDA sympathisers. But the unit is unlikely to rumble any of these murderers. Its real function is as a sop to the constitutional nationalists and the Dublin government.

The media has used the rise in loyalist violence to depict the whole conflict in Northern Ireland as an endless cycle of tit-for-tat killings. This is a lie. The Provisionals' campaign is against the British occupation, the loyalist dominated security forces which support it and the loyalist death squads who form the unofficial arm of the RUC.

And it is a justified campaign that every British socialist should unconditionally support, notwithstanding our criticisms of the IRA's overall strategy.

There is no British solution to the problems of

Northern Ireland. The British presence itself is the main problem.

When a majority of the Irish people voted in 1918 for independence Britain cruelly partitioned the island, leaving the Catholic community of the North a beleaguered minority. Even the historic province of Ulster, which gives its name to so much of the loyalists' paraphernalia, had to be dismembered to ensure a permanent voting Protestant majority.

If internment is re-introduced then it will be just the icing on the cake of a whole system of repressive laws: the Prevention of Terrorism Act which allows suspects to be detained without charge and without access to a solicitor; the no-jury Diplock courts; the constant surveillance and harassment of the Northern anti-unionist population by armed troops and police; the ban on Sinn Fein in the media.

Not one of these measures of repression has forced the republican masses to give up their struggle in over twenty years.

There is one solution: get the British troops out immediately and leave the whole of Ireland's population to determine their own future free of outside interference. No party in parliament supports this demand, despite a consistent majority of the British population in opinion polls favouring withdrawal. But in contrast to that other thorny constitutional problem, the single currency, we are unlikely to find any ruling class politician offering us the chance of a referendum on troops out.

The debate in Westminster over jailing innocent men and women without trial will conveniently ignore the savage, anti-democratic nature of internment. It will focus only on the efficiency of such measures.

At present it is unlikely that the Tories will opt for internment (see *Class Struggle*—page 15). But if they do it will have to be met with a wave of mass protest in Britain and throughout the world. That is why we urgently need a working class based solidarity movement to place troop withdrawal on the political agenda and fight every aspect of Britain's unjust rule in Ireland. ■

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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, in order to win workers within those organisations away from reformism and to the revolutionary party.

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 councils of action, and workers' defence organisations.

The first victorious working class revolution, the October 1917 Revolution in Russia, established a workers' state. But Stalin and the bureaucracy destroyed workers' democracy and set about the reactionary and utopian project of building "socialism in one country". In the USSR, and the other degenerate workers' states that were established from above, capitalism was destroyed but the bureaucracy excluded the working class from power, blocking the road to democratic planning and socialism. The corrupt, parasitic bureaucratic caste has led these states to crisis and destruction. We are for the smashing of bureaucratic tyranny through proletarian political revolution and the establishment of workers' democracy. We oppose the restoration of capitalism and recognise that only workers' revolution can defend the post-

capitalist property relations. In times of war we unconditionally defend workers' states against imperialism.

Internationally Stalinist Communist Parties have consistently betrayed the working class. Their strategy of alliances with the bourgeoisie (popular fronts) and their stages theory of revolution have inflicted terrible defeats on the working class world-wide. These parties are reformist and their influence in the workers' movement must be defeated.

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 fight for labour movement support for black self-defence against racist and state attacks. 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!

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## STUDENTS

# Shut down the colleges!

**S**TUDENT ANGER is boiling over. In Lancaster University a rent strike against a £3 per week rise in campus rents escalated into a fully fledged occupation of the college senate room in mid-November. On 23 November police forcibly broke the occupation on behalf of college authorities.

At Wolverhampton Poly there was a similar pattern of protest, with a rent strike developing into a three night long occupation against rents of £50 a week.

And at Middlesex Poly students, who came back from the summer break to find 91 members of staff cut despite there being more students than ever before, have spread occupations across several sites.

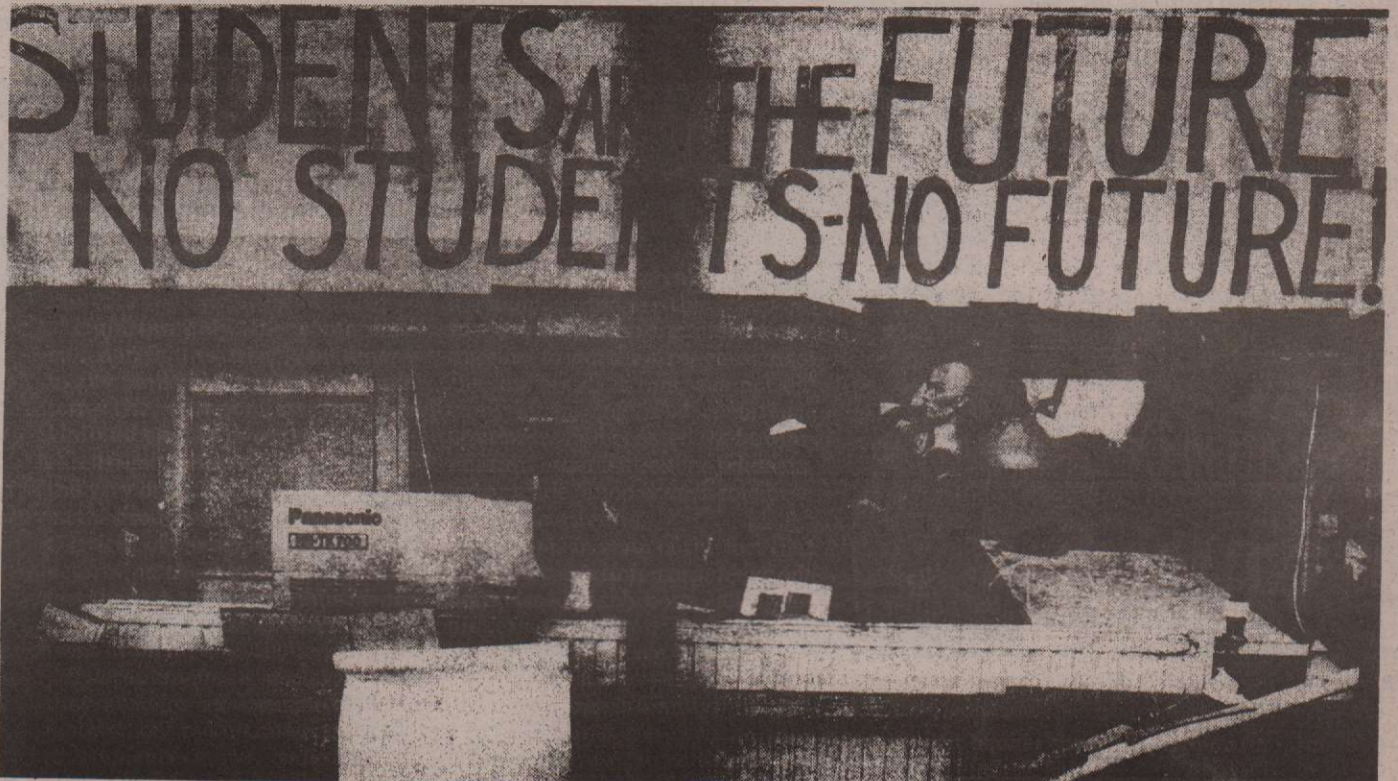
**Anger**

The anger is so deep that there is a real chance of getting united action from all 12,000 students. As even the Poly director has realised, "When you can't afford to eat you become dissatisfied with everything". As we go to press, there are emergency student union meetings taking place up and down the country with action sweeping higher education from Newcastle to Exeter.

Tory attacks on students are designed to drive working class youth out of education, leaving only the children of the well-off middle class and the bosses with the privilege to study. The unavailability of income support in the holidays, restrictions on housing benefit and holiday hardship allowance, massive cuts in funding and the absence of part-time work for thousands, has created a critical situation, with students facing an unprecedented intensity of poverty. No wonder the mood is so bitter and so militant. At Wolverhampton Poly the occupiers and activists were mainly first year students, that is those with the most to fight for and the least to lose.

**Fight**

The mood is there for a real fight. Students must make clear to the NUS leadership that they are not prepared to let them get away with yet another pointless tokenistic protest, such as one-off regional demos or letting off multi-coloured balloons. As occupations sprout up around the country we need to up the stakes.



Middlesex Poly occupation, November

*We need a national shutdown of further and higher education!*

If we are serious about smashing loans, and recovering grants, benefits and facilities robbed by the Tories, we need to fight now for an indefinite shutdown of every

college in the country through occupations, boycotts and pickets. Colleges currently in occupation shouldn't wait for the anger to peter out or for NUS to come to the rescue. They should send out representatives to other colleges calling on them

to hold emergency meetings immediately to vote for joining the action.

Students should link up with campus and college workers, who face massive cuts in wages and staffing levels and share a common enemy. Joint committees, democratically elected by rank and file students and workers rather than appointed from above by the NUS and trade union bureaucrats, should be set up to extend and deepen the action.

Where occupations are isolated they cannot last out against sheriffs and police for ever. But with a national campaign and a growing militant movement, students should be organising to defend occupations physically against attack.

Students must counter the argument that they should first wait until they have won public opinion to our side before taking direct action. The best way to win attention and respect is by demonstrating their seriousness and determination to all.

Above all students need to fight for an NUS leadership that is prepared to fight all the way. The mood is there: let's use it. ■

## workers power student societies

**WHAT WE FIGHT FOR**

- ★ **Mandatory grants without parental contribution at the level of the average industrial wage.**
- ★ **Full access to income support and housing benefit for students.**
- ★ **For a national shutdown of further and higher education to stop the cuts and break the loans scheme.**
- ★ **Build direct links with the unions and workers in struggle.**
- ★ **Transform NUS! Elect all union officials at UGM's. Pay them no more than the average grant of those they represent.**
- ★ **For complete financial independence from the college authorities and for an NUS closed shop in every college.**

## CIVIL SERVICE

# Pay and jobs attack

BEHIND MAJOR'S Citizen's Charter lurks a savage attack on public sector pay, jobs and negotiating rights. On 30 September the Treasury tore up their long term pay agreement covering 500,000 civil servants. The Tories followed this up on 18 November with their White Paper *Competing for Equality*.

All areas of the civil service will now be open to contracting out. Graham Mather of the Institute of Economic Affairs has argued that this should be used to slash civil service jobs to 10,000!

To aid the process the government plans to "market test" every civil service function. It wants to abolish re-

BY JEREMY DEWAR

dundancy payments for those workers unwilling to accept new terms and conditions.

Heralded as a breakthrough by the union chiefs in 1989, the long term pay agreement has seen civil servants' pay deteriorate. Many have become disillusioned with the deal. The Tories clearly feel they can now demand even more concessions.

The employers want to increase the amount of pay dependent on productivity gains (and therefore job cuts) from 3% to between 10 and 15% of the total wage bill.

This will mean even lower basic

pay for the vast majority and divisive bonuses for the few.

In addition every department and semi-privatised government agency will be empowered to break away from national pay bargaining imposing their own rates. HMSO, the first agency to use this option, has offered just 3.5% this year.

The union bureaucrats did not even have to present a claim as pay was negotiated away behind the membership's backs. But they are beginning to realise that this attack, along with the White Paper, also strikes at them as national negotiators!

A national CPSA and NUCPS strike against the ending of civil service

contracts for workers in the Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) was planned for 6 December.

The CPSA, NUCPS and IRSF have called a ballot for a one day London-wide strike on 31 January for a 23% increase in London weighting. NUCPS has also called a special pay conference for 6 February.

But civil servants should beware. At best the bureaucrats want to stage a protest hoping a future Labour government will bail them out—by cutting jobs and pay through agreed union channels!

Nevertheless, civil servants have the opportunity to force their leaders to go further than they would like. The rank and file pay conference called by CPSA Broad Left (BL) for 7 December could have laid the basis for that fight.

Typically, however, the Militant dominated BL leadership "deferred" this conference just one week after the BLAGM voted for it! At the conference activists and delegates from all the civil service unions could have

hammered out a clear strategy to wrest control of the pay campaign from the union leaders. Instead *Militant* has opted for business as usual.

The one day TEC strike should be spread to all departments threatened by the White Paper.

A campaign must be launched to turn to the one day London strike into a national strike against the Tory attacks on pay bargaining, and to build for an all-out strike linking this to the issue of contracting out. Cross-union strike committees need to be built in every office. A rank and file delegate conference is needed to fight for an alternative to the official sell-outs and the routinist BL leaders.

The NUCPS pay conference should become a joint conference of all civil servants. Civil servants should fight for:

- A 35 hour week.
- A minimum wage equal to the average industrial wage.
- Six weeks holiday.
- A flat rate, across the board pay rise.



ON 9 November one hundred union activists, mainly from NALGO, attended the Manchester conference of the Campaign for a Fighting Democratic Public Service Union. The campaign was set up, first in NALGO, to fight for rank and file control over the merger with COHSE and NUPE. The conference displayed how attitudes towards the merger are changing.

Previously most of the left within the unions believed that the three-way merger would, in principle, be a great step forward. As soon as the leaders mentioned the magic words "Public Service Union" the left were bewitched, welcoming the new union as long as it was democratic and prepared to fight. So the left has failed to warn the rank and file what the leaders are really up to and what to do about it.

Both the SWP and *Militant*, for example, hailed the merger moves on the basis that bigger is better. They failed to point out that it could lead to heightened competition

## PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS

# No merger!

BY DAVE BEECH

within the workplace between "super-unions", greater control by the leaders and therefore a greater block on unity in action. While COHSE's Assistant General Secretary, Colm O'Kane, talked openly about squeezing other unions out of the public sector, the centrist left failed to point to the fact that the merger proposal was being designed to protect the union bureaucrats rather than unite public sector workers.

But now the SWP are arguing that the merger has to be assessed

bearing in mind the strength of the Labour and trade union bureaucracy. They note that in the absence of struggle the merger is likely to be a bureaucratic affair. So they now say that whilst the Campaign should fight for as much rank and file control over the merger as possible, they may well have to argue for a vote against the merger when the final ballot is taken.

This, they rightly point out, is the most likely outcome and we

should therefore be preparing the membership for this. It means exposing the true aims of the bureaucrats is the urgent task of rank and file militants.

But hang on a minute! Can this be the same SWP that has booed and heckled *Workers Power* supporters for daring to say what the merger is really about? Yes it is. And they still haven't learnt their lesson. At the conference they voted against committing the campaign to the fight to unite all the workers in a workplace into one industrial

union. So when it comes to voting no to the merger, SWP members will be at a profound disadvantage.

Faced with a vote many members will be convinced that the bureaucrats are up to no good but will nonetheless seek unity with workers in the other unions. The SWP will have blocked a fight for real, non-bureaucratic unity in industrial unions even before it has started. They will be unable to point to any record of fighting for a principled alternative to the merger.

In examining the bureaucrats' plans in detail we need to look at the background to the merger. This will explain why *Workers Power* is alone on the left in opposing it.

The defeats of the 1980s left the entire union bureaucracy with the legacy of dwindling membership and falling dues. The bureaucracy's solution was and is to merge unions, creating vast super-associations with the organisational and financial back-up to cope with the changed climate of industrial relations. Unionisation drives, or actually combating the union busting employers and laws were of course right out.

An examination of the make-up of the unions is instructive. Currently membership stands at:

- TGWU: 1.1 million
- GMB: 800,000
- MSF: 700,000
- AEU: 650,000

If the AEU/EETPU merger goes ahead it will have over 900,000 members and the merged union of NUPE, COHSE and NALGO will have 1.6 million members. Around 60% of the trade union movement will be in these five unions.

In this situation the various constituent sections of the trade union bureaucracy are manoeuvring to ensure themselves a slice of the cake.

Connected to this is the notion of service unionism. This is not just a question of financial facilities such as cheap insurance and credit cards, but also the idea that better services come from the most professional full-time officers and apparatus. For the bureaucrats this means the bigger the organisation, the better. It doesn't matter if these organisations cannot fight for their members' interests.

The destruction of national collective bargaining and the proliferation of local agreements on wages and conditions lends further importance to this question. Together with the introduction of compulsory competitive tendering and opted out schools and hospitals, the public sector is being transformed. That is why the NUPE and NALGO leaders set out on the road to the super-union, and why COHSE soon became desperate to catch up and join in.

The bureaucrats will not be moved in any way by pious declarations about the merger being a good thing "in principle", but with more democracy. If the merger in any way jeopardised their privileged positions they would call it off without a second thought.

Clearly militants need to fight for the greatest possible democracy and for sectional autonomy if the merger goes ahead. But we need a rank and file movement that opposes the merger and counterposes to it the fight for uniting workers in industrial unions.

The building of joint shop stewards' committees and joint union mass meetings is the best possible step towards this, to organise a firm stand against the growing number of sweetheart deals by campaigning for strikes and occupations against the wave of cuts, redundancies and privatisations in the public sector.

That would be the best way to get the new fighting unions that we so desperately need.■

## LABOUR PARTY

# Fallowfield witch-hunt

GERALD KAUFMAN, fresh from mourning the anti-working class millionaire Robert Maxwell, has turned his attention to more parochial matters.

*Workers Power* supporters in Manchester's Fallowfield Ward Labour Party, part of Kaufman's constituency, have been targeted for expulsion by Labour's central bureaucracy.

Right wing councillors have tried various methods in their struggle against *Workers Power* supporters, and other rank and file party members who have voiced criticisms of the councillors' programme of cuts and job losses.

We were called racists for criticising a black councillor who voted through cuts.

This filthy accusation against consistent anti-racists was unanimously rejected by the ward's executive committee, which includes two black comrades. But then our membership was challenged. Regional Party officers ruled that we were *bona fide* members. So, the right wing decided to dispense with all organisational niceties and go for an old fashioned witch-hunt.

Gerald Kaufman told the Constituency Party that there were at least two *Workers Power* supporters in

Fallowfield ward, that he was worried they might appear in other wards and that the matter would be dealt with by Walworth Road. To make sure every angle was covered councillor Khan—the source of the racist slur—re-raised her allegation of intimidation by *Workers Power* supporters and claimed she had no faith in the ward executive because there were no Asians on it.

*Workers Power* supporters will have no truck with the right wing's attack on workers' democracy and will fight their witch-hunt. A Labour Party led by such right wingers will turn on its

BY MANCHESTER WORKERS POWER SUPPORTERS

working class supporters if it gets into office. That is why we will fight such people to the bitter end—and not betray our socialist principles for the sake of "unity" with them.

We support the right of all socialists, whatever group, tendency or organisation they support, to be inside the Labour Party.

And to all those in the party who say they oppose witch-hunts we say, stand up and be counted. Wherever a

ward or constituency is suspended, continue to meet. Whenever a member is expelled or suspended because of their socialist views, welcome them into the party with full rights.

The fight against Kinnock's witch-hunt today is part of the fight to stop him imposing his anti-working class programme if he wins the next election. No-one should abandon this fight for fear of being expelled.

A fight to the finish, even if we are expelled, is the best way of ensuring that a revolutionary alternative to Kinnock is built.■

## LEICESTER

# Defend Martin Levy!

BY IAN DUNCAN

MARTIN LEVY, a Duty Officer working for Leicester City Council (LCC), has been disciplined by his bosses.

He refused access to a designated secure area to the deputy leader of

the Labour dominated LCC. The small-minded councillor retaliated by sacking Martin.

He is now not working, has no

pay and is awaiting an industrial tribunal hearing.

Martin was acting in accordance with LCC policy by denying the councillor access to the secure area. The councillor carried no identification and no evidence of who he was. So, Martin has been disciplined simply for doing his job properly! City NALGO balloted for action to defend Martin and there was a 62% majority for a strike.

However a scheduled strike on 18 November was called off on instructions from NALGO's head office. This was after LCC got an injunction against the union, claiming that NALGO's reference to Martin being "dismissed" was incorrect and that technically he had been "demoted".

Martin Levy is not the first to be attacked by LCC in this way. Six workers at the Belgrave Community Workshop were sacked—only to find posts identical to their's advertised at lower rates of pay. More such attacks will follow, especially if Martin's case doesn't win. And to win it is vital that City NALGO goes ahead with strike action and develops this into a fight against the anti-union policies of LCC.■

Messages of support to:  
Leicester City NALGO  
City Council Buildings  
New Walk, Leicester

## BRITISH RAIL

# Strike to win!

THE BRITISH Railways Board is hoping to lumber staff with various restructuring packages. These may mean more money for some. But in the Signalling and Telecommunications department (S&T), the real meaning of restructuring is being made clear.

Without union agreement, BR is forcing through new individual contracts (which mean loss of conditions of service), flexible rostering (working at any time on 48 hours notice), erosion of enhanced rates for overtime and shift work, and a scheme for performance related pay.

The white collar union TSSA, whose members do not work shifts, has accepted the deal. But a sizeable number of RMT members in the S&T department have refused to buckle.

The big problem is the RMT lead-

BY AN RMT MEMBER

ership. It is negotiating with BR one department at a time, despite being instructed by the union AGM to launch a campaign and then ballot all staff over management's break with the 1956 negotiating machinery.

In March this year the leadership said this ballot should be for industrial action.

But as the open meeting on S&T restructuring on 7 November made clear, the leadership have no intention of carrying out union policy. They admit that negotiations have won nothing. Could Kinnock have been breathing down Knapp's neck, getting him to back off and wait for Labour?

Although the meeting rejected a resolution from the RMT Thames

Valley District Committee calling for the leadership to resign, there was real anger among activists in attendance. This must be turned into action. P-Way grades voted 3:1 in a ballot against their own restructuring. But the S&T grades began by rejecting similar proposals and management brought them in anyway. We need a national ballot of all BR staff, including ASLEF, where drivers face restructuring.

If the union leadership still refuses to pursue their own policy they must be replaced with a fighting leadership which is prepared to act. A vigorous campaign must be launched across the departments to fight restructuring on an industry-wide basis. The bosses must not be allowed to serve up the industry to the private market with a confused, demoralised and divided workforce.■



# INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY

The Independent Labour Party (ILP) was one of the founding constituent organisations of the British Labour Party from its inception as the Labour Representation Committee in 1900. At a specially convened delegate conference in Bradford in July 1932 the ILP disaffiliated from the Labour Party. Its aim was to build a socialist alternative to the Labour Party, replacing it as the majority party within the working class and in Parliament.

The new ILP had three MPs and 653 branches with a membership of almost 17,000. It had a working class base in the north and on the Clyde.

By 1935 the ILP was down to just over 4,300 members. It had lost the majority of its branches, including the whole Lancashire area.

Not surprisingly the demise of the ILP has been used time and again to prove the "futility" of trying to build a socialist alternative outside of the Labour Party. Not only dyed-in-the-wool reformists have used this argument, but so too have many on the left who claim to be in favour

of the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

Militant denounced Gerry Healy's followers for leaving the Labour Party in the mid-1960s on just this basis. Peter Taaffe declared:

"The history of the British Labour movement is rich in examples of costly hysterical walk-outs and childish 'left turns' by sects with claims to divine leadership. Marxists criticised the ILP in 1933 for breaking from the Labour Party at the wrong time and on the wrong issue."

Even today Militant, despite its intention to launch Scottish Labour Militant, continues to lambast the Liverpool Independent Labour Party for its "sectarianism" and for prematurely splitting from the Labour Party.

*Socialist Organiser*, on the other hand, thinks it is a question of principle to remain within the Labour Party at all costs in order to transform it. Week-in, week-out, it inveighs against those who are outside, or would consider leaving "the mass party of the working class".

Workers Power believes that the lessons of

the ILP split are very different to those that today's centrists would have us draw. In a series of two articles *John McKee* and *Keith Lawry* argue that the decline of the ILP did not result from the "impossibility" of building a mass revolutionary party outside of the Labour Party. Rather it resulted from the failure of the ILP to complete its leftward evolution from left reformism through centrism into a genuine communist organisation.

By failing to break from centrism it was incapable of developing a revolutionary programme and strategy which would have allowed it to combat both Labourism and Stalinism. In other words its failure lay in its politics. It did not result, automatically, from its decision to leave the Labour Party.

Only if it had armed itself with a revolutionary strategy could the ILP have built real roots in the British working class and at the same time played its part in building the new revolutionary international, the Fourth International of Leon Trotsky.

day, and sometimes all night, the tiny Maxton group in the House of Commons fought the measures against the unemployed. In so doing they daily exposed the treachery of the Labour government and were accordingly vilified by the leadership and the Parliamentary party.

## Criticism

A hundred members of the ILP parliamentary group protested Maxton's leadership and, led by Emanuel Shinwell, launched a campaign against him in the ILP. Maxton himself, while critical of ILP MPs who voted against party policy, had previously headed off party criticism of these MPs and even prevented the issue coming to a vote at the 1928 ILP conference. Now he was paying for his compromises.

The ILP, although divided on the question, endorsed Maxton's policy. The 1930 conference of the ILP held in Birmingham declared that it was "unreasonable" to ask ILP MPs to vote for proposals from the government which had not been "subject to discussions of the Parliamentary party, and in many instances did not comply with the programme authorised by the Labour Party conference". It went on to declare that the ILP was "an independent socialist organisation, making its distinctive contribution to Labour Party policy and having its distinctive position within the party". This question of to whom MPs were responsible, the party or the Parliamentary group was to become the crucial issue in the split.

For the Labour leadership this was a matter of principle on which they would not budge. This was because it struck at the heart of the fraud of Parliamentary democracy, at the "right" of the elected representatives to ignore their party and their electors in favour of doing the bidding of the capitalist class.

## Endorsed

The Parliamentary Labour Party immediately tightened up its Standing Orders. A member was allowed to abstain but under no circumstances could they vote against a decision agreed by the PLP. Instructions were issued that before candidates could be officially endorsed by Labour they had to sign a pledge to abide by these standing orders. Shortly afterwards an ILP candidate standing in East Renfrew had his endorsement refused. Announced on the eve of nomination day to do maximum damage, the ILP candidate went down to defeat.

In July 1931 the May Committee issued its final report calling for more attacks on the unemployed and massive reductions in public sector employees' salaries, including teachers, the armed forces and the police. The Cabinet was split. There was a financial crisis and a run on the pound. MacDonald announced to his Cabinet that he was dissolving the government and reappeared from his visit to the King at the head of a National Government made up of Tories and Liberals. Snowden and two other cabinet ministers joined him in the new government.

In the October election fought against the new National Government Labour went down to a crushing defeat, losing two million votes and being reduced from 289 MPs to 46! The ILP was also dragged down, reduced to a separate group of five MPs who had refused to take the "pledge" to PLP standing orders and therefore were not endorsed Labour candidates. The inevitable split was looming. ■

● To be continued.

# Lessons of the split

FROM THE earliest days of the Labour Party the ILP was regarded as the "socialist conscience" of a party dominated by the trade unions. Strongly influenced by pacifism and Christian socialism, the ILP held an apparently strong position within the Labour Party. Two thirds of the Labour MPs elected in 1924, the year of the first (minority) Labour government, belonged to the ILP. Even the Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Phillip Snowden, came from the ranks of the ILP.

By the mid-1920s the ILP was starting to move leftwards. The experience of the short-lived minority Labour government was still fresh in the minds of working class militants. This government had quickly abandoned the programme on which it was elected as a sop to the Liberals. In return for this treachery the Liberals' votes kept MacDonald in office.

## Loyalty

Emergency powers were used against striking transport workers, with the responsible cabinet minister, J R Clynes, declaring proudly that the Labour government had played the "part of a national government not a class government" in dealing with the strikers. The government also proved its loyalty to the British Empire, authorising the continued repression of nationalist revolts in the colonies.

These actions provoked unrest within the entire labour movement. A militant national rank and file organisation, the Minority Movement, led by the Communist Party drew in tens of thousands of ILP and Labour Party affiliated trade unionists. A group of ILP members, many of them elected as MPs from Clydeside, began to challenge the right-wing reformism of MacDonald, who held sway both in the ILP and the Labour Party. This group included James Maxton, John Wheatley, David Kirkwood, George Buchanan and Fenner Brockway.

By October 1925 the Maxton group had ousted MacDonald from the editorship of the ILP's monthly journal, *The Socialist Review*. At the 1926 annual conference James Maxton was elected chairman by an overwhelming majority.

Maxton's initial criticisms of the Labour leadership were mild. He accused them of a tendency to lose sight of the ultimate goal—socialism. In his acceptance speech in 1926 he showed that in no way had the left broken with the belief that socialism would come through parliamentary methods, but the MPs had to be "pressured" from outside so that they did not lose their way.

He declared:

"Political success for the Labour Party is a certainty, but political success is itself a poor end unless behind the Parliamentary majority there is a determined revolutionary socialist opinion."

Battle was joined with the Labour Party leadership over the question of programme. A series of policy documents were adopted by the ILP under the title "Socialism in our Time" and then pressed for at the Labour Party Conferences. The "Living Wage Plan" called for a minimum wage for every citizen to be a priority. This was to be combined with expanded social services and a national system of family allowances to be paid for by heavier taxation on high incomes. Other documents called for the nationalisation of banking and credit,

including the City and the Bank of England, a call for the removal of the Ministry of Health's ban on giving advice on birth control at maternity clinics and a proposal that Labour should vote against all military estimates.

There was little that was revolutionary about these documents. And apart from the military question, they were all in line with the La-

## PART ONE

bour Party's programme adopted in 1918, which included the famous Clause IV. But they were opposed root and branch by MacDonald and the Labour leadership.

MacDonald castigated these policies as "flashy utilities" which would

frighten off the electorate, and defeated them one by one at the 1927 and 1928 Labour Party conferences. The real "electorate" that the Labour leadership was fearful of frightening was the powerful bankers and manufacturers. The leadership knew only too well that any such reforms would have faced fierce resistance from major sections of British capitalism and therefore fought to keep them out of the party's programme.

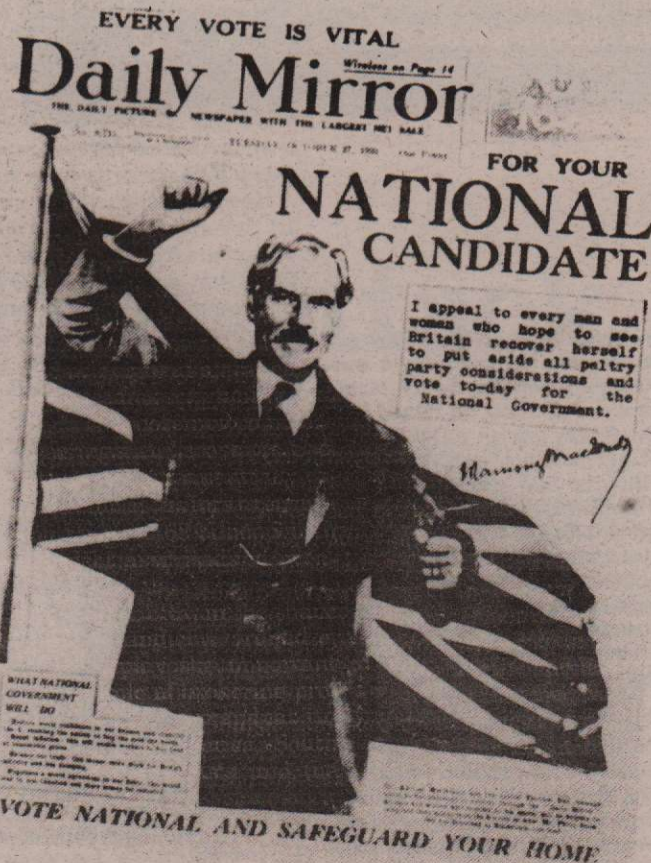
With the election of the 1929 minority Labour Government the differences between the ILP and the Labour Party leadership came to a head. The economic crisis that hit Britain in 1930 led to a dramatic rise in unemployment. By June 1930 unemployment reached 1.9 million, in December it had risen to 2.5 million, 20% of the workforce. The ILP demanded that the minimum measures approved at Labour Party conference, calling for scales of benefit for the unemployed, should be introduced as legislation. MacDonald refused and the ILP leadership declared it would vote against all measures which did not include them.

## Attacks

Worse was to follow. Under threats from the Tories and Liberals to bring down the government MacDonald set up the "May Committee" to report on means of cutting expenditure. The commission issued an interim report proposing a series of attacks on the unemployed. Benefits were to be reduced, limited to 26 weeks a year. In addition a series of measures, aimed at depriving married women and part-time workers of the dole, were proposed. The Labour government dutifully put these proposals forward to Parliament.

Maxton led the opposition to these measures.

By now the ILP in Parliament had effectively split, with the vast majority supporting MacDonald and denouncing the 17 strong Maxton group for threatening the government's survival. Day after



MacDonald joins hands with Tories and Liberals against Labour



**T**HE 200th anniversary of the French Revolution, the event which signalled the birth of bourgeois rule in Europe, was celebrated in 1989. This year marks another major anniversary—the bicentenary of the death of Mozart.

As you may have noticed, the modern ruling class is commemorating Mozart a lot more enthusiastically than it commemorated the bicentenary of its own revolution.

The reason is simple. For the modern bosses the French Revolution represents a moment when the masses had their say. Their historians now refer to it as an interlude of madness in an otherwise rational century. Individuals—poets, politicians, philosophers—came to the fore or were swept aside according to the needs of the mass struggle.

Mozart, on the other hand, represents the triumph of the individual, soaring above the petty concerns and political intrigues of his day to produce timeless masterpieces. This message is being hammered home to us in television programmes and colour supplement articles every week.

The orgy of Mozart worship reaches its climax on 5 December, with the rich and famous queuing up to attend exclusive bicentenary concerts and banquets. Is there anything for workers to celebrate other than a few hours extra overtime for members of the Musicians Union?

The answer is yes. First of all because the working class can't just reject bourgeois culture. We will have to build the classless culture of communist society on the foundations laid by capitalist society.

Secondly because behind the layers of ruling class myth Mozart's music represents a great conquest in humanity's struggle to understand itself. And far from being immune to the political upheavals of his time Mozart plunged consciously into political life and, within the bounds laid down by the time and place where he lived, was on the right side of the struggle.

Mozart's revolution in music consisted of the fact that, alongside his Viennese contemporary Joseph Haydn, he created a new musical language, known to musicians as the Classical Style. The previous style in western music, the Baroque, had begun to fall apart like the late feudal society that produced it. From about 1750 European music consisted of fragmented experiments at writing new forms of music, using new instrumental techniques, and exploring the implications of a recently discovered scientific system of musical keys, known as "equal temperament".

Mozart and Haydn synthesised these experiments into a new, coherent style. This musical style was designed to express the emotions of a new kind of human being; the free individual: the man who—according to Mozart's contemporary Rousseau—"is born free, but everywhere is in chains".

Mozart's operas leave behind forever the type of dramas where Greek gods meander through some mythical story demonstrating a moral lesson. In Mozart's operas all the classes of rising bourgeois society are represented. They fight each other, demonstrate their human frailty and capacity for selfless action. Clearly Mozart could not have a socialist understanding of class struggle—even early nineteenth century utopian socialism had yet to appear. But the day to day struggles and tensions between aristocrat, bourgeois, artisan and servant, dominate his operas.

As well as class, the other dominant theme in Mozart's operas is sex. Marriage for "love" was a product of the rise of the bourgeoisie, freeing itself from the feudal norm

On 5 December 1791 Mozart died. Two hundred years later Mozza-mania has gripped the cultural elites of capitalist society. **Paul Morris** explains what was revolutionary about Mozart's life and music.

# Behind the Mozart-mania

**"Marxism situates Mozart's work within the great sweep of the bourgeois revolution which changed economic life and the class structure of Europe radically during Mozart's lifetime"**

of arranged marriage. And this new notion of "individual sex-love" proved a rich source of inspiration for musicians, dramatists and novelists alike. In Mozart it's all there—jealousy, unfaithfulness, adolescent crushes, sexual violence, gender role swapping.

A mere glance at the plots of Mozart's operas illustrates the predominance the themes of class and sex: a woman is abducted from a harem; a servant tricks his master out of enjoying the feudal "right of first night" with his bride; two men trick their girlfriends by dressing up as Albanians to seduce them, only to find each falls for the wrong one; a cynical, aristocratic Don Juan goes to hell after seducing thousands of women, then the celebrating bourgeois moralists are ridiculed.

It is not only in his operas but in his instrumental works, especially the Piano Concertos, that Mozart employs this new language to express new and complex human emotions.

Traditional music history sees this achievement as an accident, the product of an exceptional individual in exceptional circumstances. Historical materialism does not have to deny Mozart's greatness, or to reduce its appreciation of Mozart to an understanding of the musical notes themselves (important though this is). Marxism situates Mozart's work within the great sweep of the bourgeois revolution which changed economic life and the class structure of Europe radically during Mozart's lifetime.

We can only understand Mozart if we situate him firmly within the ideological movement which accompanied the rising bourgeois revolution; the so-called Enlightenment. More precisely Mozart experienced the crisis of the Enlightenment and its political project of reform, faced with the reality of mass revolt after 1789.

The Enlightenment began as a movement in science and philosophy. The progressive thinkers of this movement were themselves part of the emergence of the bourgeoisie. This rising class needed

constant technical innovation to develop manufacture and commerce. To achieve this they had to free science and thought from the fetters imposed by backward religious feudalism, which had imprisoned Galileo for insisting the earth went round the sun.

But the Enlightenment inevitably became a political movement. It is a short step from blowing away traditional religious explanations of nature with rationalist arguments to doing the same thing to the bishops' explanations of class society.

Equality of the classes before the law, an end to privilege and religious discrimination, the removal of all legal and political obstacles to the accumulation of wealth by bankers, merchants and workshop owners—this was the political programme of the Enlightenment.

Being profound believers in the power of rationalism and scientific argument, the Enlightenment thinkers were convinced that their insights could be translated into action by reform. The rulers could be convinced by the power of argument. Revolution, for Enlightenment thinkers like Voltaire, was something vile and irrational. Instead they opted to change society by converting to progressive ideas some of the most powerful kings and aristocrats. Many Enlightenment thinkers became advisers to the so-called "enlightened absolutists", kings like Joseph II of Austria, who centralised feudal power and used it to carry through a bourgeois reform process against the old nobility.

But when one not-so-enlightened absolutist was overthrown in France in 1789 the crowned heads of Europe abandoned all their experiments with reforms to wage a holy war against revolutionary France. The Enlightenment dream was shattered.

Mozart was right at the centre of the Enlightened reform movement in the Austrian empire of the 1780s. He had good reason to be. When he set out to make his adult career as a composer and performer he found himself allocated to the lowest stratum of the feudal hierarchy—the status of a servant.

Made to live in, and wear the uniform of, the court of the Archbishop of Salzburg, Mozart described a typical dinner time:

"Our party consists of the two valets . . . Herr Zetti the confectioner, the two cooks, Ceccarelli, Brunetti and—my insignificant self. Note that the two valets sit at the top of the table but at least I have the honour of being placed above the cooks."

When Mozart's career began all musicians lived and worked like this, either in the service of church

or state. Their music was appropriated in a classically feudal way, becoming the property of their masters. Mozart and his contemporaries had to compose and perform according to the whims of their masters or the demands of state ceremony.

But alongside this decaying feudal world a new economy was growing up: the modern city with its bourgeois and petit bourgeois population. Mozart was the first composer to take the decisive step into this economy, becoming a freelance composer in Vienna in 1780, and remaining one until his death in 1791. He was able to sell his music on the market, through subscription concerts and commissions. Though much of the money still came from the nobility Mozart had moved into the world of petty commodity production. This gave him a new freedom to write what he wanted, and to address the urban, middle class audience through his music.

However the open market was a fickle source of income. By the end of the 1780s Mozart's music was going out of fashion. He had to squeeze his most sublime music into a series of weird and mysterious commissions: concertos for the basset horn and



the glass harmonica, a requiem mass for a deranged aristocrat, a musical drama for the most raucous lower class theatre in Vienna.

Mozart did not just make a personal transition from feudal to bourgeois society. In Vienna he became embroiled in the most radical bourgeois reform movement of the time—the Freemasons.

Today Freemasons' Lodges are a reactionary drinking club for corrupt coppers, businessmen, Labour and Tory politicians, judges and the odd monarch.

But in the Vienna of the 1780s

they were radical bourgeois political societies, where Enlightenment philosophy was mixed with mystic humanism, where middle class intellectuals like Mozart could rub shoulders with the Enlightened aristocrats who advised Emperor Joseph II.

Mozart didn't just join any old lodge. He joined the Masonic equivalent of the most extreme far left group imaginable—the True Harmony lodge, led by the philosopher Ignaz von Born. In Mozart's lodge and its offshoots were to be found some of the most radical political thinkers in the city. Johann Riesbeck, whose book on the German peasants was banned, Emmanuel Schikaneder, who translated Beaumarchais' revolutionary play, *The Marriage of Figaro*, into German, and Angelo Soliman, the freed black slave intellectual.

These lodges were dedicated specifically to supporting the enlightened reforms of Joseph II and fighting those who opposed them. But Joseph, despite legalising the Freemasons, remained suspicious of them. He placed them under the surveillance and control of the secret police.

When Joseph died, one year after the outbreak of revolution in France, his successor moved to outlaw Freemasonry altogether, fearing it would become the Austrian equivalent of the French Jacobin clubs. In response Mozart and Schikaneder wrote *The Magic Flute*, a thinly disguised piece of Masonic agitprop in defence of their doomed organisation.

Mozart was a product of the bourgeois revolution. He was a radical reformer who died as the reform process was shattered and reversed. His music is infused with the spirit of rationalist humanism. His operas are full of hatred and ridicule for class and sexual oppression. On top of all that he was undeniably an individual genius.

Is that something beyond Marxism's understanding, or something that Marxists deny the existence of? No. Under communism our aim will be to create the conditions that will offer the possibility for every human being to be as creative as the individuals we call geniuses today. As Trotsky wrote, in *Literature and Revolution*:

"[Under communism] the forms of life will become dynamically dramatic. The average human type will rise to the heights of an Aristotle, a Goethe, a Marx."

Once you hear Mozart's music free of prejudice, and understand his life free of bourgeois myths, you can see why Trotsky should have added to that list: "a Mozart" ■



**What is going on at Maastricht?**  
AT MAASTRICHT, and after, the European ministers are discussing the following questions:

- Should there be a single currency for the European Community (EC), replacing the current system of variable exchange rates?
- Who should control the European Central Bank that will oversee the single currency?
- Should majority voting on a Council of Ministers replace "inter-governmental co-operation" as the basis for deciding common policies on issues such as immigration, social welfare and investment?
- Should the European Parliament have a veto over any of these decisions?
- Should there be a common foreign and military policy at all?

All these have become immediate questions for the European bosses because of the progress towards a single market, due to be completed in December 1992. Having removed the so-called "non-tariff barriers" to trade (different safety standards etc) they are creating a market without a single form of money. Imagine having to use different currencies in different parts of your local market and you can see how inefficient this is.

Already the EC states have taken the first steps towards a single currency by tying their currencies together in the European Monetary System. But in the long run this points to a single currency. To administer a single currency you need a central bank. And that is where the problems begin for the Euro-capitalists.

Their march to 1992 was begun under the banner of Thatcherite neo-liberal economics. The Thatcherites embraced the single market project because it removed controls on profit-making at a national level but did not replace them with any supra-national controls. Thus at the beginning of the process it seemed like a Thatcherite dream come true; an opportunity to "roll back the state" all over Europe.

But the very existence of capitalist competition and the market calls forth the need for a state standing outside and above the economy. Even the most Thatcherite economic models pose the need for a "nightwatchman" state, guarding the private property of the capitalists and ensuring that contracts are honoured.

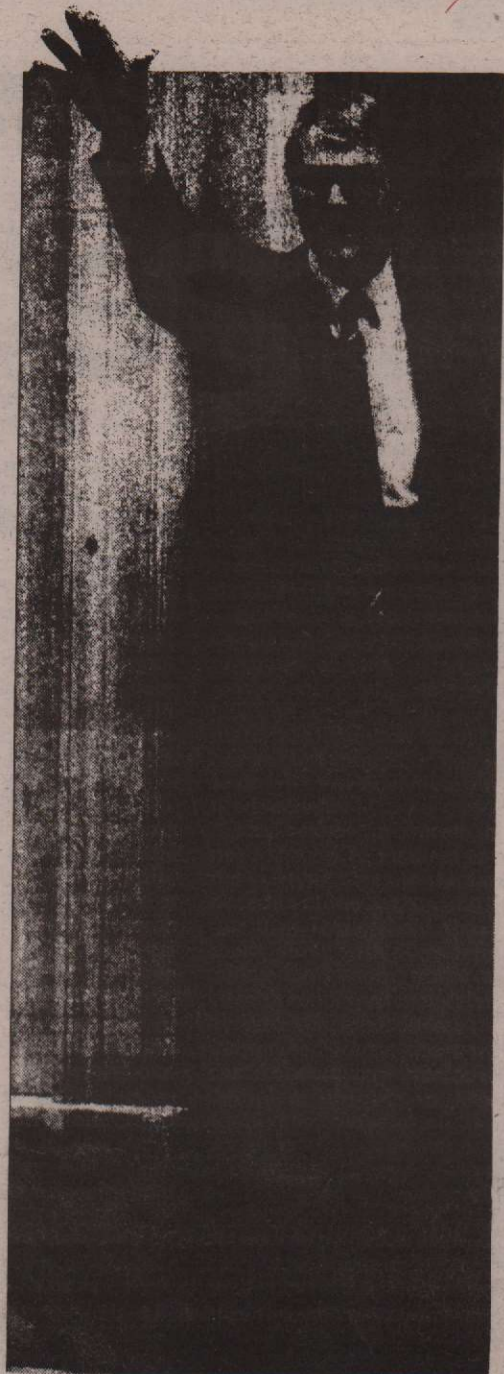
Thus the development of an integrated European economy is spontaneously creating the demand for supra-national forms of political control. In turn the question arises, who will control the supra-national state forms?

#### **Why are the Tories so wary of a single currency, central bank and majority voting?**

There are specific reasons why the political implications of the single market cause problems for a section of the British bosses.

When Britain was the main imperialist power it traded mainly with its empire and dependencies. After World War Two, when Britain was forced to open up its empire to US imperialism Britain still traded mainly with the USA and the commonwealth countries. But, with the development of the EC and the rise of a powerful European economy centred on Germany, Italy and France, patterns of trade shifted dramatically.

By 1989 52% of Britain's imports came from the EC and 50% of its exports went there. Clearly there are powerful impulses towards a pro-European policy for the bourgeoisie, particularly British manu-



# AS TORIES WRANGLE OVER MAASTRICHT

# Where is Europe going?

As we go to press, on the eve of the Maastricht conference, it is far from clear if he can save the Tories from a devastating split on Europe. **Colin Lloyd** asks: Maastricht, why the Tories are divided and what workers should do about post-1992

facturing and finance. Even *Mind*'s Arthur Daley now tells his gullible customers that "My word is my Eurobond"!

However, patterns of trade are not the only economic factor for the bosses. Britain has always been a major exporter of capital. Despite the changing pattern of export of goods towards Europe the export of capital is still enormously weighted towards the USA and the third world. An estimated 45% of the earnings of the top 200 companies on the FT index come from their North American subsidiaries.

Thus two factors are fuelling a ferocious rearward action against further European integration within the bosses' parties. First is the natural time lag between "being" and "consciousness" embodied in the Thatcher-Ridley-Tebbit faction of the Tory party. A generation of political leaders trained in the values of empire and the special relationship with America has proved ill suited for the task of carrying out a consistent policy in Europe. Secondly, there is the real material interest of a large section of British finance capitalists (such as Hanson, ICI etc) in preventing a united European market becoming a trading bloc competing with the USA.

This remains an unresolved contradiction at the centre of ruling class politics in Britain. Whilst the US-oriented multinationals may still predominate, the Euro-oriented manufacturing and financial bosses are a powerful lobby. Added to which it is the latter who provide jobs, it is the latter who were hit hard when Thatcher's refusal to enter the EMS led to sky-high interest rates, and consequently it is the latter whose support can be crucial at election time.

John Major's negotiating position at Maastricht—delay decision on the single currency but don't abandon the process of creating it, avoid every possible supra-national political control and keep things as

much as possible at the level of agreements between individual states—reflects this unresolved contradiction within British capitalism. But to believe that things can stay this way throughout the 1990s is to believe politics can lag behind economics forever, which it can't. Once reality starts to force the adoption of a decisive strategy within the Tory party it has the potential to blow that party into fragments. No wonder Major wants to put everything off into the future.

#### **Can the capitalists unite Europe?**

The unresolved argument within the British ruling class is only a sideshow compared to the central contradiction the European capitalists are having to face.

Throughout the imperialist epoch there has been a spontaneous impulse towards an international capitalist economy. The export of capital, the growth of world trade, mass migration to fill new labour markets; these have been the spontaneous results of the development of imperialist capitalism.

An international capitalist economy calls forth the need for international political controls. But the capitalist class remains essentially a national class. Not only that, the very same imperialist epoch which ushered in a truly world capitalism also massively increased the economic, political and military rivalry between the national capitalists. It forced them to rely on genocidal chauvinism against Jews and black people. For the right to impose political control on the world market the imperialists fought each other in two world wars.

Historically, the only way European economy has ever been united under a supra-national form of political control was under German imperialism's Third Reich, a regime of slave labour and plunder.

This contradiction between the international economy and the national form of its development is one of the most fundamental to the imperialist system. It was one Trotsky emphasised as early as 1915:

"The forces of production which capitalism has evolved have outgrown the limits of nation and state. The national state, the present political form, is too narrow for the exploitation of these productive forces. The natural tendency of our economic system, therefore, is to seek to break through the state boundaries." (*War and the International*)

In the same year, Lenin explored the implications of this contradiction:

"There is no doubt that the development [of imperialism] is going in the direction of a single world trust that will swallow up all enterprises and all states without exception. But the development is preceding at such a tempo, with such contradictions, conflicts and convulsions—not only economical but also political, national, etc—that before a single world trust will be reached, before the respective national finance capitals will have formed a world union of 'ultra-imperialism', imperialism will inevitably explode..." (Preface to Bukharin's *Imperialism and World Economy*)

Does that mean that capitalists cannot create a united Europe in today's conditions? Are they not capable of overcoming their differences in Europe precisely in order to compete better with the US and Japanese regional economic blocs?

This is exactly what the Delors Plan envisages: an eventual European Federation with common laws, common foreign policy, integrated military strategy, central economic direction, and a parliament able to veto the Council of Ministers on all major questions. The fact that the author of the Plan spent the week before Maastricht

haranguing the European Parliament about the sabotage of the Plan shows how far in reality the European bourgeoisie is from taking the first steps beyond its existence as a collection of national capitalist classes.

That is not to deny that the impulse towards economic integration will cease, even if a co-ordinated recession strikes the EC in the next few years.

As Lenin explained, that impulse arises out of the inner logic of capitalism itself. But the convulsive developments outside the EC will create new struggles between the national bourgeoisies.

Who will take advantage of the East European markets? Who will intervene to impose social stability in Yugoslavia? Which national bourgeoisie will control the central bank? Which bourgeoisie will suffer most from the need for "convergence" of the economies prior to the launch of the single currency? What happens if a co-ordinated recession hits Europe?

Whatever political agreements and even supra-national institutions the European bourgeoisie manages to create in the next period they will be partial and therefore dysfunctional to the development of a truly integrated European economy.

They will be fragile—whatever concessions the European bosses make to each other on majority voting it only needs one major national bourgeoisie to decide to "take its ball home" for the game to finish. With the political undergrowth of the capitalist jungle populated by the Le Pens, the Ridelys, and the Republikaner fascists of the united Germany it is far from unthinkable that a future economic crisis could propel a right wing anti-European party to power.

No, despite the progress on the single market, the national state remains a fetter on the spontaneous development of a European economy. It falls to the working



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tain what John Major will get,  
explains what is at stake at  
tical and economic unity after

allowed the Euro-capitalists like Delors to pose as paragons of internationalism.

Revolutionary Marxists take a different view. In 1974, during the referendum campaign on Britain's membership of the EC, we argued for abstention. We refused to join in the opportunist adaptation to chauvinism involved in the SWP's sudden switch from abstention to a "no vote". Today we have to argue that, in or out of the EC, in or out of the EMS, with or without majority voting, the main enemy of British workers is their own bosses. Their main allies are workers all over the world, and in particular in Europe.

We have to take every partial reform or progressive measure thrown up by the move to a single market and supra-national controls and fight to generalise the benefits. At the same time we have to resist every reactionary result, such as the drastic new immigration laws and the new police powers against "subversion" involved in the Trevi and Schengen agreements of the EC.

In practice that means it is urgent for workers across the EC to make practical links. Workers within international companies like Ford have to cope with severe management sanctions (instant dismissal) for membership of even national rank and file bodies like the old Ford Combine. Attempts at international combines across Europe have ended in failure. At the same time not only the multinational bosses but also the integrated national monopoly employers (steel, rail, coal) have firm co-operation mechanisms.

In contrast the trade union bureaucrats have only the rudiments of real international links. Chauvinist and national centred to the core, they have been unable to deliver real international solidarity in the major disputes of the 1980s. John Hughes, Ruskin College expert on the European trade union movement, recently admitted:

"A sense of direction and strategy seems slow to emerge. We do not even have—though it is now important to develop it—any comprehensive survey as to what individual trade unions, or industrial groupings of trade unions, are actually doing on the ground."

No wonder the hide-bound union bureaucrats greeted Delors' Social Charter as manna from heaven.

The Social Charter is a half hearted pot-pourri of reforms, drawn up by the Euro-capitalists and then watered down in vain attempt to get Britain to sign it (the British bosses, alone of the twelve, have refused to sign it). It

was not drawn up out of the kindness of the hearts of the European bosses, but for their own interests, to prevent what they call "social dumping". That is why the German bosses are so keen to offer British and Spanish workers, for instance, an equalisation of the law on temporary contracts, or longer holidays. It is to iron out what they see as an unfair advantage for rival capitalists, not out of concern for the workers' rights.

A united Europe is a progressive goal. But a capitalist united Europe is a utopia. Not only that; on the road to their united Europe the capitalists are seizing every opportunity to attack the workers.

The new immigration laws, fuelled by the rise of racism in the supposedly "internationalist" new Europe, are one example of the dangers the process holds.

After 1992 jobs and wages face a European wide onslaught from the bosses. This is the reality of their "internationalism".

Only the working class can really unite Europe, but to do that it will have to destroy the power of the nationally based capitalist classes and replace it with workers' power in every country. That way Europe's resources could be unleashed for the benefit of the whole of humanity, through a Socialist United States of Europe.

A workers' Europe would become a major provider of economic aid to developing countries. It would utilise the vast productive power on the European continent—the biggest and most productive economy in the world—to eradicate poverty within and outside what now constitutes the EC. It would remove the material cause of racism by abolishing the specific national interest of one set of workers over another, by allowing the free movement of working people across Europe and between Europe and the rest of the world.

The united workers' Europe is not just a dream for the future. Sowing the seeds of a united workers' struggle across Europe is fast becoming a life and death question for today's struggles. Rank and file workers must begin the painstaking process of building real unity in action across the borders of the EC countries. They have to start by drawing up their own charter for common goals in defence against capitalist attack. At present the Euro-capitalists are drawing ever more accurate common standards and measures of value. If workers want to fight for equal pay for equal work across the European multinationals they have to remedy the situation where nobody has a clue what this would be. Over and above defensive measures, rank and file militants need a common set of transitional demands aimed at the strategic goal of eradicating the power and wealth of the Euro-bosses for good.

Over seventy years ago revolutionary Marxism inscribed the goal of the united Europe on its banner. Trotsky's words from 1915 ring true today:

"A more or less complete economic unification of Europe, accomplished from above through an agreement between capitalist governments, is a utopia. Along this road matters cannot proceed beyond partial compromises and half measures. But this alone, an economic unification of Europe, such as would entail colossal advantages to both the producer and consumer and to the development of culture in general, is becoming a revolutionary task of the European proletariat... The United States of Europe represents first of all a form—the only conceivable form—of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Europe." (*The Peace Programme*)

## IN DEFENCE OF MARXISM



### Fascism: not a German disease

A RECENT front cover of the *Economist* magazine pictured a German skinhead with Nazi insignia shaped into his haircut. "They're back" was the magazine's message. And by "they" the media mean German fascists, stirring up old emotions about the Nazis and openly suggesting that fascism is the "natural" inclination of German people.

While every worker in Britain should be alarmed at the resurgence of fascism in Germany the idea that fascism is a specifically German disease needs to be fought against from the start. The scale of mobilisations against the neo-Nazis in Germany today, the appeals for international solidarity from the emerging German anti-fascist movement, and the appearance of Union Jacks on a recent Nazi march to Rudolf Hess' grave; all reveal the danger of equating fascism simply with German Nazism.

Fascist movements have existed in virtually every capitalist country where there has been a deep social and economic crisis. They have been at first tacitly, and then openly, encouraged by the same ruling class politicians who in ordinary times claim to be defenders of "democracy".

Faced with crisis and working class resistance the capitalists have several lines of defence. First there is the parliamentary Punch-and-Judy show and the misleadership of the workers' parties. When these means prove insufficient to contain working class militancy the bosses call on the army, the police and the courts, as they did in Britain during the miners' strike of 1984-85. And if these mechanisms of rule prove incapable of defeating a working class upsurge the bosses can resort to government by decree and military dictatorship. The Turkish coup of 1980 was an example of this way out for the bosses, and it was applauded by all of the major European imperialists as a means of "restoring order".

But fascism differs from all of these methods of capitalist rule. Fascism is the last line of defence when all others fail. It is the means for inflicting the most devastating physical and political defeat on the working class and its organisations. Essentially it involves mobilising a mass movement, bigger and more powerful than any police state, against the workers on a daily basis. The fascist gangs, when the ruling class license them to enter the struggle for power, carry out daily attacks on the workers' meetings, printing presses, organisations and homes. And, as happened in Germany and Italy, the police allow this to happen and even assist the fascists.

The fascist mass movement is recruited from the middle classes impoverished by the crisis—small shopkeepers, office clerks, right wing students—and also from the poorest and most desperate sections of the working class.

If the working class fails to take state power in a revolutionary crisis, but retains its organisational and political strength against the bosses, then masses of desperate people can be won towards the apparently "radical" policies of the fascists as a solution to the crisis that the working class have failed to resolve.

Indeed the fascists, as they did in both Italy and Germany in the 1920s and 1930s, rally these mass forces with demagogic pledges to help the "little man" earn an honest crust. And they make these people feel significant and powerful with their flag waving public parades, their military regalia and street battles against "the reds",

the Jews and the foreigners.

In other words masses of people, sometimes even workers, lose hope in the working class' ability to resolve the crisis. So they turn to what Trotsky rightly called, the parties of "counter-revolutionary despair"—the fascists.

In Germany today the failure of "socialism" and the acquiescence of the leadership of the workers' movement in the destruction of jobs and services in the east, is the material foundation for the growth of neo-Nazi groups. It has nothing to do with any specifically German tendencies.

The bosses in Britain did not need to turn to fascism to defeat the working class in the turbulent decades of the 1920s and 1930s. Our own leaders did the job for them, along with state repression during the general strike and the later unemployed struggles. And, despite the misleadership of the Communist Party, the workers of East London were able to inflict a decisive defeat on Mosley's blackshirt movement at Cable Street in 1936 (see WP 147).

In Italy and Germany the bosses faced enormous mass movements of communist workers. The occupation of the factories in Italy in 1920 was the cue for the Italian bosses to turn to Mussolini. Growing economic crisis, and the rise of a mass communist workers' movement under Stalinist leadership forced the German bosses to turn to Hitler. And in both cases the leaders of the workers' movement had failed to lead the masses to the seizure of power at the decisive moments.

It was the relative strength of British imperialism, the plunder from colonies like India and Egypt, which meant there was no fascist triumph. It was not some innate British quality of fairness and democracy. Indeed sections of our "democratic" ruling class, including King Edward VIII were openly sympathetic to the Nazis. Churchill was a great admirer of Mussolini, and the *Daily Mail* carried the headline "Hurrah for the Blackshirts" in response to Mosley's movement.

Nor was fascism in Britain kept at bay as a result of the quality of the leadership of the British workers' movement, despite the heroism shown by the rank and file at Cable Street.

As well as being the centre of fascist power, Germany has also been a centre of working class socialism. The Socialist International had its strongest section in the German SPD. Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s the German Communist Party mobilised millions of workers in the struggle for a new society.

Under Nazi rule thousands of heroic working class people conducted the underground battle against fascism, amongst them the German Trotskyists. Meanwhile the British government encouraged Hitler and the English soccer team gave him the Nazi salute.

Fascism is a capitalist disease, not the preserve of any nationality. It can and does march under the Union Jack as well as the swastika.

Fascism's anti-democratic, anti-working class essence is what we need to point to. And the method of dealing with it is to fight fire with fire; "force with force", as the German revolutionary Clara Zetkin argued in the Communist International as early as 1923. Fascism must be smashed. The working class must prove itself stronger in battle if it is to destroy fascism's mass appeal. ■

● Now turn to page 13



Italian Fiat workers: rank and file links are vital



**I**N THE divided Stalinist leadership of China, a faction around Deng Xiaoping, who favours a move away from centralised planning, is gaining the upper hand. An important sign of this is that his latest protégé, the former Shanghai leader Zhu Rongji, is expected to be elected to the Politburo at the forthcoming Central Committee meeting.

A serious change of policy is being forced on the more conservative faction. The short term measures that were taken to re-establish political control after the Tiananmen massacre cannot be sustained for much longer.

Brutal military repression was not enough to re-establish the control of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership. To placate working class anger there has been a general wage increase of 13% in the last eighteen months. The threat of mass unemployment has been reduced by maintaining subsidies to state industry. As a result of these measures there has been a 13.4% increase in production.

Given China's rising balance of trade surplus (totalling some US \$18 billion in the current year) it would be easy to conclude that the economy had been brought back under control and was responding well to the hand of firm leadership. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The increase in industrial production has simply resulted in increased stockpiling. Most industrial output is of "means of production". Without a coherent and balanced programme of industrial investment, greater output cannot be transformed into new productive capacity. Under these conditions the increased wages and production subsidies will prove to be a source of inflationary pressure.

### Disguise

The export figures also disguise the true position. They include output from the Special Economic Zones (SEZs), such as Shen Zhen near Hong Kong, which to all intents and purposes are not part of the Chinese economy at all. Profits on materials from China which are processed in the SEZs, or on semi-finished components from abroad which are re-exported, do not contribute to China's foreign currency reserves. They are repatriated abroad.

The rising cost of subsidies and wages are the immediate cause of the policy changes. A longer term, but ultimately more important, factor is the increasing obsolescence of capacity that was installed in the first Five Year Plan, forty years ago.

To prepare the ground for a change of economic strategy, the government has been drawing attention to the losses now being made in industry. Beijing Radio announced on 29 October that more than 30% of China's large and medium sized industrial plants—3,582 in all—made a combined loss of 11.8 billion Yuan (approximately US \$1 billion) in the first half of 1991.

The main reasons cited for these losses included arbitrary state taxation, overstaffing, increased bonus payments and management embezzlement (for which "many had been executed"). The conclusion to be drawn from such results was made clear in the *People's Daily* on the previous day: government administration must be separated from the actual functioning of enterprises.

The economic commentator, Yuan Baohua, explained that the government is unable to control and regulate the market at the macro-economic level because it interferes too much with plant management.

*After two years of repression aimed at the Democracy Movement, the Chinese Communist Party has signalled a change in economic policy. Peter Main explains the growing official campaign against "government interference".*



# Chinese road to market socialism



Above: victims of Tiananmen Square massacre  
Left: Deng Xiaoping—architect of Chinese market socialism

Its weakness in this regard had led over many years to a situation where "de-control is apt to cause chaos; control is apt to cause stagnation". As a brief description of the contradictions of the Stalinist planned economy, no Trotskyist could have put it better!

The Eighth Plan is likely to be endorsed by the Central Committee before the end of the year. It will mark a major turn away from centralised planning. The Chinese Stalinists, like what is left of their East European counterparts, no longer believe it can be made to work.

For them, the only alternative is to turn to the market. Mindful of the results of relinquishing central control altogether, they are looking for a method of keeping political control whilst still forcing industry to cut jobs and increase productivity.

Just like the Yugoslav Stalinists before them, their answer is market socialism—or the "planned commodity economy" as the Chinese version is called. This envisages:

"... establishing a standard and united market system, a vitalised and standard enterprise system and a macro-planned system, with finance, taxation, banking and for-

ign trade as the hub (and) economic, legal and administrative means as supporting elements."

This means that control of the economy is not to be achieved through production directives but by manipulating finance, credit and government controlled prices. The aim is to ensure that enterprises are forced by "market pressures" to take the decisions that the government wants.

### Proposal

A key proposal is to create a relatively autonomous layer of five industrial trusts. These will be huge conglomerates modelled on the Japanese multi-industrial *keiretsu* combines. Within the five main industrial sectors (petrochemical, non-ferrous, ship-building, coal/gas and steel/railways) the 100 most successful enterprises will be brought together to form these new trusts.

They will have preferential treatment with regard to funding and their managements will have greater autonomy in decision-making than other enterprises. Together, they are expected to account for 40% of gross industrial output. They will be expected to trade profit-

ably on the international market and even to develop their own overseas investment projects.

The thinking behind the new policy is clear enough. Internally, government pricing mechanisms and selective credit will be used to "rationalise" the industrial sector around the five major trusts, without allowing the sort of unplanned diversification that created bottlenecks and shortages during the previous market reforms. At the same time, hard currency from foreign trade and overseas investment will be used to import technology to modernise the economy.

In the countryside, government-controlled contract prices will ensure sufficient output of food grains whilst a free market in surplus produce will stimulate the rural economy as a whole. The policy also calls for the use of "intermediate technology" to absorb surplus labour freed by increased agricultural efficiency, and to develop facilities and infrastructure.

However the plan, like its predecessors in Eastern Europe, will soon prove to be a utopia. The very term "planned commodity economy" implies an awkward contradiction between politically motivated decisions and the operation of a free market.

When enterprise managements find that the very investment and production decisions that would allow accumulation are thwarted by centrally determined prices or allocation of materials they will look for ways to subvert this. They are likely to be supported by provincial authorities in many parts of China. A government deficit of more than US \$2.3 billion is expected this year. The government is blaming much of it on provinces withholding payment of taxes to Beijing.

If it proves possible to organise the new trusts, they will have to produce for the world market if they are to trade successfully. This means that they will distort the domestic economy, diverting materials, labour and scarce investment away from other sectors.

Any attempt to restrain this in

the interests of maintaining political or economic stability within China will reopen divisions within the bureaucracy. If they are allowed to retain hard currency they will use it within China, thus strengthening the role of currency speculators, black-marketiers and the rest of the so-called "entrepreneurial class".

The decision to turn to the market will strengthen the position of restorationist forces at every level in China. These are already strong in the coastal provinces and an improvement in their position will renew tensions between these provinces and Beijing. This is not just a question of traditional rivalries. Provinces like Guangdong and Fujian are already closely interrelated to the economies of Hong Kong and Taiwan. Researchers at Baring Securities calculate that 20% of Hong Kong's money supply is already circulating within Guangdong. With resources like that, enterprises and regional authorities are in a position to thumb their noses at Beijing's orders.

### Barbarous

The barbarous suppression of the Democracy Movement means that representatives of these "modernisers" are likely to gain a hearing in the working class. As the contradictions within the centralised economy are made worse by the consequences of marketisation we can expect the re-awakening workers' movement to be dominated by pro-restorationist forces.

However, as the working class fights to defend itself in the coming months and years, the contradiction between its interests and those of the restorationists will mount.

The task of revolutionaries will be to deepen those tensions by developing demands which take forward the masses' democratic aspirations and, at the same time, unmask the lie that capitalism can salvage China's economy. Only workers' political revolution, sweeping away bureaucrats and entrepreneurs alike, can do that. ■



USSR

# Yeltsin's big bang

**T**WO MONTHS after the coup Boris Yeltsin was confessing to the Russian Congress that his "victory of democracy and freedom" had not resolved any of the major problems facing the Russian Republic or the wider Union of Sovereign Republics (former USSR).

Events in the autonomous republic of Chechen-Ingushetia revealed the limits of Yeltsin's power. On 10 November Yeltsin decreed a state of emergency and sent in 650 interior ministry troops to the capital, Grozny.

They were immediately surrounded by large crowds supporting the Chechen leader, General Dzhokar Dudaev. The troops decided against carrying out the decisions of the Russian President and withdrew. The Russian Parliament overturned Yeltsin's state of emergency. "Tsar Boris", as some democrats call him, was forced to blame it all on his "evil counsellors", sacking his adviser on Chechen affairs.

Clearly, Yeltsin inherited Gorbachev's Bonapartist mantle in circumstances he had not foreseen. A complex and amorphous situation of dual power—or rather, as Trotsky said of the February to October period in 1917, of dual *powerlessness*—continues to exist, despite Yeltsin's "counter-coup" against the conservatives.

The August coup certainly put a predominant element of political power in the hands of Yeltsin and his clique. He used it to demolish the once mighty CPSU. The party put up virtually no resistance. It was a hollow shell. Even the bureaucratic caste had little further use for it. The process of marketising, "democratising" and giving a nationalist form to their power and privileges had already gone so far as to sideline the party as the crucial organ of bureaucratic power.

## Prerogatives

Yeltsin's second task was to destroy the prerogatives of the centre, the old USSR, subordinating all its institutions, the KGB, the army, the Union government, to his Russian Federation officials. This lunge for control over the power and resources of the old centre produced an immediate revolt against Yeltsin from the other republics. One after another, the republics, including the mighty Ukraine, declared their independence.

Imperialism too, which had applauded Yeltsin's defeat of the conservatives, rushed to protect and raise up the fallen Gorbachev. They did so for three reasons. Firstly, they had no desire at all to see the USSR's nuclear forces falling into the hands of a dozen or so potentially warring successor states. Secondly, they wanted a centrally coordinated club of debtors to ensure that the USSR's \$68 billion worth of foreign debt is serviced and (eventually) repaid.

Thirdly, the USSR, in the shape of Gorbachev and Shevardnadze, continues to play the important treacherous role of brokering pro-imperialist settlements and capitulations in Latin America, South Africa, South East Asia and the Middle East.

Whilst insisting on the detachment of the Baltic states, imperialism has shown little enthusiasm for turning the USSR into a gigan-

*After the failed coup in August, Boris Yeltsin seemed to hold all the cards. He appeared to have successfully seized power. But his recent complaint that "a paralysis of power has increased the chaos" indicates that the crisis of the USSR is far from over. Mike Evans explains why*

tic version of Yugoslavia. Hence Yeltsin—faced with a revolt of the republics against Russian "hegemony" and a firm shove from his imperialist mentors—was obliged to go along with Gorbachev's plans for an economic union and even a loose political confederation.

During the negotiations over economic union, in September and October a split developed in Yeltsin's own camp. Russian premier, Ivan Silaev, and Economics Minister, Evgeny Saburov, vigorously supported Gorbachev's plans for a union-wide economic entity with a common currency, central bank and central economics ministries to coordinate marketisation in at least twelve of the former republics.

This was opposed by Russian vice-president, Alexander Rutskoi. Rutskoi is a former general and top bureaucrat. He is a great Russian chauvinist who outlined a blueprint for a slavish Russia, including the Ukraine and Byelorussia.

Rutskoi has a vision of a future imperialist Russia and so is completely resistant to recognising any national rights in the Russian Federation. He advocates tough measures against the Chechens and against the Tartars of the region around Kazan.

At the same time he supports a go-it-alone economic policy, with marketising measures and a Russian "big bang" to create a new Russian hard currency which will then inevitably dominate the states of Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Yeltsin oscillated between these factions for over a month but in October the battle within the White House swung decisively in Rutskoi's favour. Yegor Timurovich Gaydar was called on to draft a new plan. The results of his handiwork were delivered to the Russian Congress of Deputies on 28 October by Yeltsin.

Yeltsin outlined a series of shock measures which he called a "reformist breakthrough". These measures include the freeing of

prices, privatisation of trade, industry and land, the putting of credit onto a commercial basis and the abolition of state control over foreign trade. Whilst Yeltsin talked of "social guarantees" for the most needy, including a minimum wage, a partial indexation of pensions and wages and free food distribution for the poorest, he made it clear that "we shall witness some decline in living standards" and that this would not be accomplished painlessly.

The central measure is to be a "one-stage leap to market prices" to be introduced without warning over the next month or so. From 1 November the Russian Republic stopped financing the central economic institutions of the union, including Gosplan and the industrial ministries. Yeltsin promised a 1992 budget which would be deficit-free—a measure that would require massive cuts in social spending.

## Promised

He promised a reform of the banking system to introduce "tough mechanisms against the uncontrollable emission of money and credits". This would lay the basis for a "real banking system, based on an effective currency". In other words, money will serve no longer simply as an accounting device but as a real measure of value and means of exchange. The central banks would be qualitatively changed from instruments of a planned economy to instruments of a strictly controlled supply of a fully convertible currency.

The effects of this programme will be either a hyper-inflationary upward spiral of the rouble or the shock introduction of a new currency that will render worthless at a stroke the workers' accumulated billions of roubles. In either case, the first act of marketising will be a historically unprecedented expropriation of the rural and urban

workers of the "fruits of their labour". This will be followed by the expropriation of the property of the bureaucratized workers' state by the members of the bureaucracy and the new capitalist class that has arisen from the black market. There will be a massive increase in unemployment as unprofitable factories and mines have their credit cut off and as the mechanism of the disintegrating plan is replaced by a largely non-existent market infrastructure.

Pro-capitalist journalists and politicians in the former USSR and in the west try to minimise the catastrophe by exaggerating the existing chaos. It is true that the historic stagnation of the bureaucratically mismanaged planned economy and the destructive market reforms of Gorbachev, have brought the economy to the verge of collapse.

From January to September the gross national product fell by 12%. The personal consumption of material goods and services fell by 17%. The number of unemployed is calculated at between two million (registered as seeking work) and ten million (all those without paid employment or pensions).

Economic statistics for the first nine months of the year show a disintegrating planned economy but one in which the market and the law of value are not yet the dominant force. But non-fulfilment of plan obligations increased 2.7 times in September over the average for the previous eight months. In other words, the disintegrative process has been enormously speeded up.

The events of October and November, the closure of the planning agencies and the industrial ministries and the breaking of economic links between the republics will lead to economic collapse.

Yeltsin is only too well aware of the enormous crisis that is approaching.



Scavenging for food in Russia—the shape of things to come

"We are all together in one team, and we are now going along a very narrow path on the edge of an abyss. One foot has already slipped. We need to make our way along this path as quickly as possible by means of radical reforms. We are constantly working in a high risk zone."

Either because he couldn't find a politically qualified fall-guy or, more likely, because he realises that he alone has the accumulated prestige to launch these measures, Yeltsin has taken on the job of Prime Minister. He has totally identified himself with the shock programme. Already prophecies of doom and disaster are filling the air-waves.

Whilst the working class retains its illusions that there is no alternative to Yeltsin's programme there are signs that the unions and the works' collectives are deeply worried about the impact of the Yeltsin programme. On 23 October 30-40,000 workers demonstrated in Moscow, and an undisclosed number in St. Petersburg, demanding full indexation of wages against price increases. Moscow Trade Union Federation Chairman, Mikhail Shmakov, said that if protests were not heeded, the only other weapon was to strike.

## Mobilised

On 24 October the hundreds of workers mobilised by the Russian Federation of Independent Trade Unions picketed the Supreme Soviet building demanding an end to wage restrictions, assurance that the minimum wage would cover the real socially necessary minimum income and the full indexation of wages and pensions.

Although mobilised around dangerous and self-defeating slogans such as "market wages for market prices", such events, as well as a rash of one-day strikes, indicate that the working class is becoming anxious and restive. There is widespread talk of an "explosion in the spring".

At present only a minority is prepared to fight. But the hammer blows of Yeltsin's programme have not yet begun to shatter his image. When they do, a number of things will be revealed. Firstly, his power has shallow roots. Will the army, the remains of the KGB and the Interior Ministry save him? Will the angry and restive troops fire on protesting workers and housewives? Will the republics come to his assistance or the imperialists bail him out?

No one is willing to give an affirmative answer to these questions. Yeltsin's own prestige is unlikely to prove as durable as that of a Lech Walesa.

The revolutionary situation in the USSR continues even under Yeltsin's counter-revolutionary government. Can the Russian workers transform this by their struggles into a real revolution?

## Illusions

This depends not only on shattering their illusions in Yeltsin, not only in replacing his supporters at the head of the unions and work collectives. It also means creating an alternative class-conscious leadership whose slogans are "Workers' democracy through workers' council power", "Defend the gains of October", "For a democratic workers' plan to solve the crisis".

Trotskyist, socialist and communist militants must bend all their efforts to helping the Russian workers to create a new revolutionary party to fight the restorationist regime, to smash the pro-capitalist bureaucracy and to re-establish the full political power of the working class. ■

● Now turn to page 14



## GREECE

# Mass struggles against austerity

Greece is once again in the grip of a strike wave and student occupation movement. **V N Gelis** reports.

**M**ITSOTAKIS' neo-Thatcherite government has unleashed a wave of attacks on the working class the like of which Greece has not experienced since World War Two. Whole cities are condemned to soup kitchens, young people face a life of unemployment, pensioners face state benefit cuts, farmers' subsidies are being axed. The massive restructuring demanded by the EC and the IMF is devastating the Greek economy and the lives of workers.

This Autumn has seen mass resistance from every sector of society. To meet this resistance, Mitsotakis has unleashed a wave of state terror. "You are the state", Mitsotakis told the police. He told the workers and students, "there is no such thing as rights"! These two statements encapsulate the philosophy of the New Democracy government.

The level of Mitsotakis' onslaught was bound to provoke mass resistance. He announced the closure of two large textile industries making 6,000 redundant in Lavrio, a town which in classical times led one of the first slave rebellions. That meant the virtual closure of the city. The workers occupied the town hall and erected a banner which

said: "Welcome to the city of unemployed".

The nature of the Greek economy means that the closure of one or two large factories in many cities will mean the end of any economic activity. As there is no social security it also means poverty and starvation, hence the reappearance of soup kitchens in Lavrio. No wonder workers have said enough is enough.

## Occupied

In Patras a state armaments factory, EVO, has been repeatedly occupied and defended by 24-hour strike committees. Its 3,000 strong workforce is faced with compulsory redundancies. Workers have repeatedly blockaded the motorways and railways into the town, alongside thousands more from the city and the schools. In one such act the workers brought out onto the streets an anti-aircraft gun to block the road.

In Kozani confronted with the closure of more factories workers occupied the public companies, electricity installations and telephone exchange.

In the hospitals sackings of staff and compulsory "redeployment" to

other parts of Greece led to riot police charging and fighting hospital workers inside the hospitals! The health workers' slogan was, "either we are all sacked or no one"!

Cuts in EC subsidies led to the largest demonstration and riot in post-war history in Iraklion, the

capital of Crete. Angry farmers blockaded the town hall with their tractors, occupied it while negotiations inside were going on and eventually burned it down. The use of extra riot police and helicopters to bombard the demo with gas canisters from above, was not enough to contain the anger. The riot squads eventually retreated, unable to smash the farmers.

In Athens, after a series of 24-hour strikes over the last three years, the building workers eventually erupted and in their thousands demanded "occupy the Ministry of Labour" for the first time.

Their Stalinist "leaders" formed a protective chain outside the Ministry after the workers chased away the riot police. It was only the Stalinists' insistence that the struggle was won that prevented the occupation. In the meantime extreme left opponents of the Stalinists have been expelled from the Union for supporting the move to occupy the Ministry.

In Athens, Thessalonika and

Patras the school students have shut down state education since the start of term, just as they did last year. Mitsotakis has tried to re-introduce the same reactionary laws as in 1990, when student occupations forced his Education Minister, Kontogianopoulos to resign. Large, militant and lively demos, expressing a mood of irreconcilable struggle against capitalism and its Stalinist boot-lickers, have repeatedly confronted the riot police, set up barricades and attempted to unite with the workers.

## Students

In Patras thousands of school students followed the workers onto the streets. This movement is not simply a movement against education cuts, or the introduction of a national curriculum which restores testing in the early years, but a movement which is expressing a cry of despair for the future: "We want an education, teachers, books, not passports to unemployment".

The capitalist media, alongside all the political parties have condemned the students, calling them "provocateurs", "rapists" and "hooligans".

In an attempt to break the student struggle Mitsotakis claimed that an occupation of Athens Polytechnic had taken place, sent in thousands of police and razed it to the ground. Since 1974 when the colonels' junta last broke its asylum, the Polytechnic has become synonymous with the struggle for social justice and equality. Mitsotakis' repetition of the colonels' attack aimed to frighten all those fighting back with the spectre of unrest. Many students now believe that the whole thing was a planned provocation, and are calling it "Mitsotakis' Reichstag Fire".

Throughout the strikes, city blockades, occupations and student demonstrations, the opposition parties have done everything in their power to keep the resistance isolated, uncoordinated and prone to defeat. During the building workers' demonstrations the Stalinists formed chains of officials alongside the police. During the farmers' demonstrations in Crete PASOK and KKE officials repeatedly instructed the farmers over the loudspeaker systems to disperse, to no avail. During the student occupations the opposition newspapers have peddled the same myth as government papers, that they are being run by anti-social elements.

## Breakdown

What is occurring is the breakdown of the traditional forms of control by the labour lieutenants of capital, mainly the KKE. The trade union federation in Patras has been forced to break ranks with the ESEE (Greece's TUC) condemning it for not "co-ordinating the workers' struggle against the government". A whole new generation of workers in struggle are coming into direct conflict with the remnants of Greek Stalinism.

Authoritarianism, hiding behind a parliamentary façade cannot be a solution to the present crisis shaking Greece. Though they are able to conclude deals in parliament with the Thatcherite's traditional leaders of the working class and the farmers (KKE, Synapsismos and PASOK) cannot make these deals stick. They are widely discredited: PASOK by its years of corruption in power; the two Stalinist remnants by the collapse of Stalinism in Eastern Europe and their inability to offer any answer except surrender to the Mitsotakis offensive.

The massive crisis of leadership can only be resolved by building a revolutionary workers' party. ■



Greek arms workers blockade motorway with products of their labour!

**Z**AMBIA'S FOUNDING father, Kenneth Kaunda, was swept from power in elections at the end of October. His United National Independence Party (UNIP) suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Movement for Multi Party Democracy (MMD), whose leader Frederick Chiluba has taken over the presidency.

UNIP and Kaunda had ruled the country since independence in 1964. For 18 of its 27 years of existence Zambia was a one-party state. Mounting internal protest and external pressure forced Kaunda to concede first to a multi-party system and then to a new constitution and elections. The scale of his defeat reflects the opposition to UNIP at all levels of society disenchanted in the context of increasingly desperate economic conditions.

Incoming President Chiluba, former leader of the Zambian Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and born-again Christian, promises sweeping reforms. But these will not bring relief to the poverty stricken masses. Chiluba intends to bow to the demands of the IMF for privatisation, cuts in subsidies and consequent price rises as part of a recovery programme.

"We must build a new work culture which is conducive to rebuilding our shattered economy", were his first words of warning to the trade unionists who have formed an important part of his support.

## Businessmen

Chiluba's cabinet is stuffed full of businessmen and lawyers as well as former members of Kaunda's ministries. The new gang will undoubtedly be as adept as the old at advising the masses to tighten their belts while lining their own pockets.

IMF and World Bank advisers are advocating similar policies world wide. More political democracy has

## ZAMBIA

# Poverty with a democratic face

BY LESLEY DAY

to be allowed as a way of winning the middle classes, and perhaps a layer of better paid workers, to support the new "liberalising" governments carry through their austerity drives.

A consideration of Zambia's history and current economic position suggests that any economic improvement will be severely limited. And only an extremely narrow layer of society could benefit. At present Zambian Consolidated Copper Mines is the source of 93% of foreign exchange earnings. Agriculture is at a low level of development. Total foreign debt stands at \$7 billion, making Zambia one of the world's most indebted nations for the size of its population. Capitalist solutions to these problems mean enormous attacks on the urban and rural masses.

The proponents of the new model of development blame the old one-party states for the economic chaos. What they forget is the more fundamental reason for lack of development and impoverishment: imperialist domination.

British imperialism has shamelessly exploited Zambia for a century as a source of cheap copper and cheap labour.

Zambia gained independence in 1964, inheriting huge problems of an economy dominated by copper

production, with a meagre infrastructure geared towards commercial interests in Smith's Rhodesia.

The early measures of Kaunda's government—hydro electric power, railways etc—were designed to reduce this dependence. But from the moment of the Smith regime's declaration of Rhodesian independence in 1965 "normal" conditions were ruled out.

## Sanctions

By mid-1976 the cost to Zambia of implementing UN sanctions against Rhodesia was enormous. The Smith regime closed borders, bombed railways and devastated areas in "hot pursuit" of guerilla fighters. Zambian support for Mozambican guerillas had similar costs.

Such pressures were the backdrop to the creation of the one-party state in 1972. "African Socialism" was a thin veneer for a government which centralised all power in the hands of a state and party bureaucracy in an attempt to hold together the fragile society and economy.

Kaunda tried to buy-off the miners and other urban workers through wage increases. But the mass of the rural and urban poor saw no improvement in their lot in the independent nation, either before or after the creation of the one-party state. The

nationalisation of the copper mines brought negative rewards. Tumbling copper prices in the mid-1970s dealt a body blow to the copper-centred Zambian economy.

While UNIP officials accrued privileges and wealth, poverty and indebtedness grew. Trade union protests grew stronger after Kaunda followed IMF orders and brought in a wage freeze and austerity package. Student protesters ended up in jail, and the University in Lusaka was shut down completely.

Food riots in 1990 sparked off further protests at all levels of society. Once Kaunda permitted the existence of political organisations, middle class and bourgeois elements were fast to take advantage of the mass discontent. Thus the MMD emerged as a coalition of forces with Chiluba tying the 300,000 strong trade union movement to the capitalist backers of the new "democratising" policies.

While Kaunda's one-party state brought misery for many, Chiluba's regime promises no better. In Zambia, as in the rest of the continent, the big imperialist countries will be happy to exploit raw materials and develop one or two prosperous regions as "areas for investment and markets. They will let the rest decay.

South African imperialism, having mercilessly destabilised its neighbour for two decades now seeks a new accommodation which leaves it firmly in charge. Trade and investment will be increasingly dominated by its concerns.

The prospects for Zambia, and for sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, in the next decade, look increasingly bleak. The workers' movement will have to forge an independent path, to break from the fake socialist rhetoric of the past and the neo-liberal capitalist ideologies of the present and create its own anti-imperialist, socialist alternative. ■



**B**ETWEEN 1 and 3 November a number of left wing and democratic organisations came together at an anti-fascist conference in Dresden. It was organised by autonomists (a loose movement of semi-anarchist youth oriented to squatting and "alternative" lifestyles), members of the United Left and other groupings from the so-called "undogmatic" (anti-party) left.

About 400 anti-fascists participated in the conference: autonomists, supporters of the SAG (linked to the SWP), Linkswende (linked to RCP), the SDAJ (left Stalinist youth), the Maoist "Volksfront", the Gruppe Arbeitermacht (LRCI), the PDS and a number of individual trade unionists. It could have been the first step towards building a workers' united front against the rise of racism and fascism in Germany. Given the weekly rise in brutal attacks on immigrants, the left, lesbians and gays, it is vitally necessary that such a united front be built.

Unfortunately, the conference ended in failure, a sorry testimony to the bankruptcy of the German left. The autonomists and the United Left, the two largest political currents present, argued against the very principle of unity in action on the grounds that it compromises the right of participating groups to determine their own policy. In effect these dismal sectarians strangled the anti-fascist workers' united front at birth.

The autonomists declared that they were for the struggle against fascism, but by their own methods and under their own leadership. To show what this meant in practice, their delegates boycotted the conference on 2 November and urged everyone else to join them in a demonstration called in protest against a fascist attack on a local youth club.

The fascists attacked it because it is frequently used for meetings of anti-fascists. The autonomists distinguished themselves by refusing to express solidarity with the youths and youth workers associated with the club because they had failed to defend themselves adequately in the past! The real reason they left the conference was that their leadership was challenged by supporters of the Gruppe Arbeitermacht and centrist groupings. They denounced the "domination" of the conference by relatively small organisations such as the SAG, the Linkswende and the Gruppe

## GERMAN ANTI-FASCIST CONFERENCE

The rise of neo-Nazi groups has spurred the German left and trade union movement into action. But whilst the trade union movement has begun to organise passive protests, the initiative in the anti-fascist movement lies with Germany's

"autonomists". Their politics led to a missed opportunity at the Dresden anti-fascist conference in November. **Martin Suchanek** of the Gruppe Arbeitermacht (German section of the LRCI) reports.

# Autonomous road to disaster

Arbeitermacht.

The autonomists' political shortsightedness meant that they refused to call on the organised working class to join the struggle against the fascists. But this was not entirely surprising. The conference organisers had boasted that no immigrant organisation, no trade union or trade union branch had been invited to attend.

This was in spite of the fact that regional trade union organisations had passed resolutions calling for pickets to defend immigrants' homes. While these were largely symbolic gestures—there was no militant workers/immigrant self-defence against the racists—they do demonstrate the willingness of many reformist workers to take action against racial violence.

A number of trade union branches have passed resolutions against the deportation of immigrants. Of course the vast majority of these workers have illusions (reinforced by the SPD and trade union bureaucracy) that fascism can be destroyed peacefully. But it is the task of the left to challenge these illusions, the better to win workers to militant action and drag their leadership with them. It is not the task of the left to issue silly, sectarian ultimatums to workers to the effect that they can join the fight against fascism when they break with the SPD.

The autonomists fear the prospect of ever-wider layers of the working class entering the struggle against fascism. It would make a nonsense of their claim to be the



Autonomist banner says "No platform for fascists"

## Really?

IN AN interview in the November issue of *Socialist Review* a member of the SAG reports:

"While the Nazis have been sending their cadre east to organise among the disaffected youth, the left have let this pass by. The SAG, a small organisation of around 150 members, has been the only organisation to attempt to build there."

Was this wishful thinking by the SAG members? Or was it an attempt by the editors of *Socialist Review* to simplify things for its readers? In either case we welcome the opportunity to set the record straight.

The Gruppe Arbeitermacht entered the PDS to become its Revolutionary Communist Faction. It published an open journal, *Arbeitermacht*, throughout this period. It left the PDS in October, as a stronger and better implanted organisation based in the former GDR. As the article above illustrates it is centrally involved in the fight against fascism in the united Germany. ■

vanguard of the struggle against fascism. The autonomists do not understand what fascism is. They characterise it as nothing more than a force whose aim is to atomise the

whole working class, forgetting that its distinctive characteristic is that it mobilises masses of lumpen-proletarians and petit bourgeois into fighting detachments in the serv-

ice of capital. It is hardly surprising therefore that the autonomists view many bourgeois forces as "fascist" or "quasi-fascist", and that they neglect the fight to win support from workers organised in social democratic parties and unions.

Although expressed in different terms, this method is of a piece with the Comintern's theory of "social fascism" during the so-called Third Period. Such a strategy, based on the rejection of workers' unity in action, does more harm to the anti-fascists than the fascists. It has two important flaws. Firstly, it subordinates the political struggle to the paramilitary struggle; this can only be successful where fascists are weak. Secondly, the working class is reduced to a spectator in the struggle against fascism.

This ultra-leftism expresses the opportunism at the core of the autonomists' politics. During the Gulf War a fraction split to "critically support" imperialism while the remainder uncritically supported Saddam. These petit bourgeois have no consistent method to offer the working class beyond anger and lifestylism. If they were involved in a common struggle with the mass working class organisations, not only would they fail to convince workers of the need for proletarian action, they would lose their own members to reformism. Their leadership knows and fears this. Behind their ultra-leftism lies an instinctive knowledge of their own political bankruptcy.

What is urgently needed in Germany is a real workers' united front against the fascists to:

- Build self-defence committees against racist and fascist attacks!
- Defend demonstrations and meetings!
- Stop the fascists marching!

## LRCI in Russia

ON 7 November in Moscow, the anniversary of the Russian Revolution, members of our international organisation, the League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI), participated in a demonstration against Yeltsin's drive for privatisation and against rising prices.

The demonstration was called by a number of left groups in Moscow including the Socialist Workers Union, an affiliate of the Workers' International to which the British WRP (*Workers Press*) belongs, and the Committee for Workers' Democracy which is linked to the British Militant group.

The demonstration started small, with a few dozen marchers, but gathered increasing numbers of Muscovites along the way. Police tried to bar the several hundred demonstrators from Red Square but were forced to back down. A rally took place which, on our comrades' estimates, grew to about a thousand people.

Meanwhile a rally of "democrats" outside the Lubyanka, called by Yeltsin



supporters in memory of the "victims of communism", managed to bring out only two thousand supporters, a fact reflecting the growing disillusion

with the policies of Yeltsin and his privatisation plans. Our comrades report, for example, that a recent meeting of representatives of the Lenin Comsomol factory, a car plant of 30-40,000 workers which produces the Moskvich, voted overwhelming to reject a proposal to privatise their plant. Yeltsin offered the workers 40% of the shares, with 60% being sold off to new capitalists. The workers replied they wanted the lot!

At the same time as the socialist rally in Red Square a motley crew of ageing Stalinists led by Nina Andrejeva, Pamyat supporters (a Russian fascist organisation) and a few monarchists, demonstrated outside Lenin's tomb. Slogans included demands to keep open the Lenin museum, to free the leaders of the August coup attempt, against Yeltsin's privatisation measures and calls to take measures against Jews and Freemasons who were the source of all Russia's ills!

In the midst of this unsavoury bunch marched none other than the

"Trotskyists" of the International Communist League (the Spartacists), who proceeded to share a platform with the Stalinists and Pamyat! Challenged by LRCI comrades about this scandalous "united front" with anti-Semites (anti-Jewish chants regularly punctuated the rally) the Spartacist leader justified his organisation's presence as being necessary to be with the "vanguard"!

LRCI members were selling copies of the Russian edition of the *Trotskyist Manifesto* which was translated and published thanks to contributions to the Dave Hughes Memorial Fund. A fitting tribute to our dead comrade who spent many an anniversary in Red Square having to watch the Stalinist bureaucrats who betrayed the Bolshevik revolution celebrate 7 November.

The first issue of an LRCI Russian journal, *Rabochaya Vlast*, is now being sold. It contains articles on the current situation in Russia, in defence of the October Revolution and LRCI statements on the attempted coup and its aftermath. Again this work has been made possible by the Dave Hughes Memorial fund. And we appeal to readers to keep sending donations to this fund so that we can carry on this vital work. ■

## Workers Press question answered

THE EDITORIAL of the 16 November issue of *Workers Press* posed "a question to our critics". It said:

"Workers Power has falsely claimed that our Soviet comrades issued leaflets that did not oppose privatisation. We reprinted the leaflets in English but Workers Power didn't correct their misreporting. Will our comrades' courageous actions, reported on page one, now shame them into doing so?"

Workers Power never claimed that the leaflets "did not oppose privatisation". This is a fabrication by *Workers Press*. We said, in a report from Moscow, that under the influence of the WRP's Simon Pirani, who was in Moscow at the time, the leaflets of the SWU, "refused to carry any slogans in defence of planning against Yeltsin..."

We challenge *Workers Press* to come up with a single quote from either leaflet which defends the planned property relations in the Soviet Union. If it cannot we demand they print an apology for accusations of "misreporting" against *Workers Power*. Can their members "shame" their editor into doing this? ■



# SWP wakes up to racism

"There does not appear to be any generalised increase in levels of racism within society as a whole. If anything the opposite seems to be the case." Pat Stack, "A Question of Race?", *Socialist Review*, June 1991

**B**y the SWP's national conference in November, the author of this staggeringly inaccurate assessment had woken up to reality. We are faced with increased racial attacks, a vile campaign in the bosses' press about the "threat" of a wave of immigrants after 1992, the Tories' Asylum Bill and increased fascist activity. The rising tide of racism can no longer be denied.

The basis for the SWP's argument in June was that integration has led to a decline in racism. As Stack put it:

"In Britain we live in a largely integrated society. Black and white children are educated side by side, live in the same areas, work or go to college together. The number of mixed marriages grows every year. The effect of this is to produce a society where black and white work and live together, and in the process many of the prejudices of previous generations are nullified or diminished. So the annual British Social Attitudes has shown consistent falls in racist attitudes and opinions."

There is a grain of truth in Stack's argument. But only a grain.

Racial hatred is not an innate feature of human consciousness, as racist ideologues and certain separatists would have us believe. It is caused by society. But it is not the simple absence of contact between different ethnic groups which creates racism, even at the level of individual attitudes. It is imperialism, with its poisonous national chauvinism, which is at the root of racism.

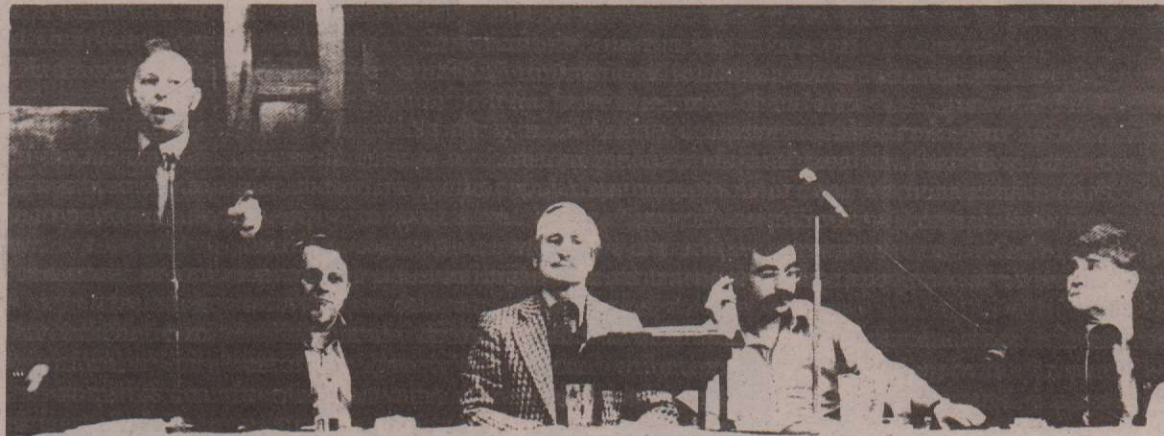
It is true that there are more mixed black and white workforces, mixed relationships and a high degree of popularity for black music, film stars and sports personalities amongst white youth. It is also true that the British Social Attitudes survey showed a decrease in the kind of racist opinions which fuelled the initial rise of racism in the late 1950s.

## Overstates

It is one thing to recognise that Britain has the advantage of a higher degree of integration than, for example the USA, though even here Stack overstates the levels of British integration. But it is completely wrong to imagine that this has an automatic effect on the "general level of racism in society as a whole".

In the first place social attitudes, what Marxists call "consciousness", change as a result of experience—and not only in a positive direction. The white worker working alongside a black worker in a car plant, happily reporting he is not a racist to the Attitudes survey, can become putty in the hands of the racists once redundancies are announced.

More importantly, racism is not just an attitude; it is not even primarily an attitude. It manifests itself in social relations. Take the example of a car plant again. Dur-



**Anti Nazi League  
CAMPAIGN CONFERENCE**

## ... but we don't need an ANL Mk II

ing the Ford strike of 1988 the unskilled gates at Dagenham were picketed mainly by black workers, and the skilled gates by white workers. That is because systematic job discrimination exists in capitalist society against black people. It is all very well for someone to say "I'm not racist" when they are guaranteed higher wages by a racist employment system.

The root of Stack's original argument was the SWP's economism. Economism imagines that the experience of workers in the workplace can, on its own, overcome the ruling class consciousness pumped into our brains each day. If only "black and white unite and fight" at an economic level, over jobs, housing, the poll tax, then racism can be overcome.

This argument has been explicit in the SWP's propaganda. After white residents of a Bermondsey estate joined the BNP in its attack on the 24 August anti-racist march, the SWP argued that the answer was to campaign against the Poll Tax in the area.

But on its own this is not enough. We have to campaign against racism by challenging racist ideas and practices, supporting the legitimate struggles of black workers and youth even where this alienates backward sections of white workers. That is why we campaign for labour movement support for black people's right to defend themselves against racist and police attack.

Blinded by its economic method *Socialist Review* managed to make one of the most inaccurate and misleading analyses of racism

for years. It left SWP members ill prepared for the events that were already going on and which worsened in the autumn.

In June Stack was pointing to the Tories' use of the race card for electoral purposes as being possible only "if things get really desperate". By November he was telling the SWP conference about "the Tories' increasing use of the race card, as in the Langbaugh by-election and with the Asylum Bill".

In June he asserted, with frightening complacency, that:

"The far right grouplets have not grown in any significant way. Despite their best efforts they have failed to gain any real footholds in many of the areas which they have targeted. They still remain on the margins, with no real influence."

By November SWP members were informed, with the benefit of hindsight, that:

"The BNP is now emerging as the most coherent force attempting to build a base. It is still a tiny organisation, but the experience from the rest of Europe shows how swiftly the Nazis can grow in certain circumstances."

## Absence

The absence of a mass socialist party able to take anti-racist and internationalist ideas into the heart of working class communities means—integration or no integration—that the capitalists' racist ideas can spread and take hold. We do not need to overstate the situation in order to prove this.

The Tories under Major have

made a real move to try to incorporate sections of the new black middle and upper class into their party, and win electoral support away from Labour. But at the same time they are tightening up controls on asylum and immigration in preparation for the single European Market. Patten tries to explain this to his hoped for black voters on the hypocritical grounds of preventing the growth of fascist groups (by keeping black people out!).

Meanwhile blacks are scapegoated for growing unemployment, bad housing and urban decay by the Tory far right, the press and in certain areas the BNP. As Stack himself now admits, if socialists do not provide the answers then "forces like the BNP, which blame unemployment and bad housing on black people, could get a foothold".

There is an obvious conclusion to be drawn from an accurate view of the present situation. Whilst not panicking about a general, national rise of fascism we have to organise to meet the threat where the disease is taking hold.

That means fighting for a workers' united front dedicated to denying the fascists a public platform. In June, and right up to the beginning of November, the SWP's false analysis led them to ignore this task.

In September a leading SWP supporter in East London, Sue Caldwell, wrote, uncontradicted in the letters page of *Socialist Review*, that "acquainting fascists' heads with the pavement" was just squadism.

Now the SWP has woken up to the problems of racism and fas-

cism. In the report of the SWP's conference discussion on racism, in *Socialist Worker* (23 November), Has from Rochdale claimed that the SWP wants "a united front with anyone prepared to fight the Nazis". If only this were the case!

Time after time the SWP has refused to act jointly with Anti-Fascist Action (AFA), even refraining from building and publicising the anti-racist Unity Carnival in September.

Eventually, under pressure from its members, the SWP sent a very large contingent on the AFA demonstration in East London on 10 November, having publicised it with thousands of leaflets and posters. But they did this in their usual sectarian fashion—refusing to mention AFA and claiming that they themselves had organised the march.

But just as they have switched their analysis of the threat of racism, so the SWP will be forced to switch in their response. At their conference Tony Cliff reminded delegates of the SWP's past record in building the Anti-Nazi League (ANL) in the 1970s. While a serious turn to anti-fascist and anti-racist activity by the SWP should be welcomed if and when it happens, an ANL mk II is not the solution.

## Resisted

Pat Stack, in the June issue of *Socialist Review*, deceitfully claimed that the ANL had aimed "to physically confront the Front whenever it tried to march". In fact, whilst the ANL did confront the National Front on numerous occasions, the SWP deliberately resisted attempts to commit the ANL to the slogan "No platform for fascists", for fear of alienating its alliance with celebrities and reformist politicians.

A disastrous practical expression of this refusal occurred when, in 1978, the SWP leaders of the ANL refused to redirect their second mass carnival to Brick Lane to stop a major fascist march. In the weeks before the fascist parade they denied all knowledge of the fascists' plans, despite having received several letters from Workers Power passing on reliable information that the fascists were planning to march.

Then at the Brockwell Park Carnival SWP leader Paul Holborow announced, "at this moment thousands of anti-fascists are defending Brick Lane". But there were only a few hundred. The ANL had betrayed the black population of the area for the sake of its alliance with left Labour politicians.

## Flip

The SWP should not flip over from indifference and sectarianism directly to an ANL mk II. Judging from the experience of the Gulf War, where the SWP acted as footsoldiers for the CND leaders and Stalinists, they will be content to do the same in the recently launched Anti-Racist Alliance.

Fronted by various left MPs, Stalinist bureaucrats and a member of Catholic Archbishop Basil Hume's entourage, the ARA contains all the ingredients for a passive cross-class alliance that will do nothing to fight either racism or fascism.

Instead, the SWP must commit its forces to real joint action against the Asylum Bill and immigration controls, against racial attacks and against the BNP fascists.

Members of the SWP who recognise the bankruptcy of an organisation that zig-zags continually between sectarian abstention, and opportunist lash-ups should draw the necessary conclusions: turn to Workers Power. ■



**B**ELIEVING THAT they had extracted a promise from Charles Haughey to retire early in 1992, leading Fianna Fáil circles were dismayed to see him canvas grass-roots support to stay on indefinitely.

His finance minister misjudged support for a no-confidence motion, allowing Haughey a significant respite. It also gave him the chance to sack six senior and junior ministers and re-allocate the spoils of office to loyal cronies.

The new finance minister, Bertie Ahearn, was greeted by Irish Congress of Trade Unions' (ICTU) chiefs as a true friend of the trade unions. He is a suave populist in Haughey's own mould. As he left his former Labour ministry, Ahearn unveiled a binding code of practice to restrict strikes in essential services, hatched in secret consultation with ICTU leaders.

And as he squared up to solving next year's massive budget deficit, the bourgeoisie expressed shock at his suggestion to borrow more from abroad and cut less from public spending. In fact it's a come-on to the union leaders to help them impose on their members at least a deferment of the next year's public sector wage increases negotiated ten months ago.

The continued hugger-mugger between Fianna Fáil and the union leaders is preparing a trap for the rank and file. A wage rise promised to the postal workers two years ago was won after limited national strike action, but only at the cost of making this year's agreed national wage increase conditional on agreeing a package to rationalise jobs and overtime.

#### Conned

Several other major groups such as Aer Lingus have equally been conned into foregoing the wage increases "to save jobs". By such steps the union leaders are setting up the mass of public sector workers for a sell-out.

And just as the ICTU collaborated in imposing the Industrial Relations Act, removing important immunities from strikers last year, they will block any opposition to the new code of practice which arose after a crippling national electricity strike in the spring.

In SIPTU, which accounts for over a quarter of the Republic's trade union members, and which has suppressed leadership elections and delegate conferences for a four year merger period, the bureaucracy has now decreed that branch committees may not pass resolutions on issues of social, political or national industrial mat-

## UNION LEADERS

# Break with Fianna Fáil!



ICTU's erstwhile 'lefts' leave Haughey's new headquarters, happy with their deal

ters.

Irish trade union branches already suffer severe limitations on the right to issue statements or affiliate to campaigns, far more than their British equivalents. This latest move, together with the sell-outs being prepared with Fianna Fáil, underline the urgency of building a rank and file fightback on a clear programme of opposition to class collaboration and for trade union democracy.

Meanwhile, agricultural capitalists are incensed at Haughey's silence on the EC Commission's plans to dismantle farm price supports. The Irish bourgeoisie overall, however, recognises the inefficiency of the CAP and is playing down the subsidy cuts in the

hope of diplomatically winning greater EC "cohesion" funds. They will trade acquiescence on the CAP for the dubious promises of extra billions of compensatory development aid to Ireland as a disadvantaged region.

Fianna Fáil has made such promises the lynchpin of its enthusiasm for European union for twenty years. But the EC paymasters are retreating week by week into ever more verbal commitments to Ireland, Spain, Portugal and Greece about 'cohesion', thus adding to the growing contradictions facing the Maastricht summit.

A uniquely reactionary initiative at Maastricht will be the attempt of the Irish state to establish a protocol of exemptions

from harmonisation of European social legislation in areas such as abortion rights.

The issue is being stirred up by the anti-abortion lobby—the same openly organised groups who campaign against the provision of condoms and against the repeal of the anti-gay sections of the 1861 Act which was demanded by the European Court four years ago.

#### Misery

The middle classes are wrestling in the media with the contradictions of a legal regime which by banning information about abortion, has done nothing to slacken the abortion trail to Britain, made unwanted pregnancy an even greater misery and politically alienated growing sections of youth and women. But little has been done to rebuild a fighting campaign among working class women and youth and students.

The National Youth Council conference adopted the call for freedom of information on all "pregnancy options", outraging the clerical handlers of several large youth organisations. And in the previous week the Dublin Trades Council quietly adopted a motion going far beyond any labour movement body in Ireland—but not revealing its stance!

The bureaucracy will move to suppress and disown this resolution. Militants must fight to make it a starting point for mobilising in the working class to abolish all restrictions on abortion information and to open up the road of struggle for women's right to control their own fertility, a right that cannot be upheld without free access to abortion on demand!■

**T**HE UPSURGE of random murders of Catholics by loyalist gangs and the IRA's stepped-up attacks on security personnel and economic targets has led to the sending in of more troops to Belfast, more UDR reserves called out on full time patrol, and an open campaign by security chiefs and unionists to make London re-introduce internment.

Northern Ireland Secretary, Peter Brooke, has been embarrassed by the public demands of the security forces to authorise the ultimate weapon of mass detention without charge or trial. But the opposition of the SDLP and the Catholic hierarchy confirm for the British that it is premature to take such a step as long as the Anglo-Irish Agreement is still making progress.

And it is making continued "progress"! Every new Anglo-Irish ministerial conference notches up new measures of repression. The latest, on 18 November, approved the Irish government's plans for new laws to remove all remaining loopholes in the provision to extradite republicans from the South. And protests at torture and arbitrary arrest by

# Crisis in anti-imperialist struggle

the RUC are systematically defused by diplomatic representations by Dublin "on behalf of" the Six County nationalists under the Agreement.

#### Excuse

Nevertheless the new scale of IRA attacks is widely seen among nationalists as giving an excuse for more and more barbaric loyalist reprisals as well as state repression, while achieving nothing for the oppressed nationalist communities.

Working class nationalist militants are confronted more sharply than ever with the stark fact that the IRA's use of armed force, as a strategy in itself, is undermining the possibility of mass resistance. The most conscious

sections of the nationalist working class must mobilise to force the republicans to subordinate their guerilla action to a strategy of mass political mobilisation. Failure to do so will leave their own communities prey to propaganda for a ceasefire on British and loyalist terms, through isolating the republican fighters.

The Irish News cites re-

ports of a growing independence of action between Sinn Féin and the IRA, with the guerillas stepping up their attacks without any regard to Sinn Féin's political tactics, increasingly regarded as feckless by the physical force strategists. These diverging tactics are but two sides of the same coin. Both must be challenged by anti-imperialists, workers and socialists.

## Sinn Fein banned

THE IWG condemns the campaign by leading Labour Party figure Ruairi Quinn and Labour councillors in Dublin Corporation which banned Sinn Féin from the Mansion House, which it has always used for its annual Ard Fheis. Trade union branches, especially where affiliated to Labour, and trades councils, must be won to openly condemning these councillors and to demanding the restoration of the democratic right of the republicans to hold their conference in this municipal centre.■

The twenty year struggle against British occupation is being undermined by the republican tactic of courting alliances with bourgeois nationalism, and the IRA's elevation of physical force into an independent strategy.

#### Confronted

Both must be confronted by the demands of nationalist workers, socialists and anti-imperialists, to take up instead a strategy of mobilising action-fronts of communities and organised workers in demonstrations, protests and strikes against all the concrete issues of repression, emergency laws, special courts, police and army harassment and for the release of prisoners.

By relying centrally on the

most oppressed and working class nationalists, this alternative would increasingly develop a class character. Those in struggle would expose in practice how the false nationalist friends, the SDLP, Fianna Fáil and the Catholic hierarchy, not only collaborate with the state and its use of repression, but actively defend the system which drives down and exploits the poor and the working class.

Such a strategy would be directly at odds with the republican tactic of courting respectability with the Catholic hierarchy and bourgeois nationalists. It would equally cut against elitist guerilla actions which do not directly advance and defend mass resistance.

A growing campaign would pose its own armed defensive needs, but it would have to develop its defence units entirely under the democratic control of the mass movement.

This is the only perspective in which armed anti-imperialist action can carry forward the struggle against British imperialism in Ireland instead of undermining the ability of the masses themselves to resist.■



# Workers power

British section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International

## INSIDE

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# YUGOSLAVIA Workers' revolution – the only answer



Croatian refugees after the surrender of Vukovar

**THE FALL** of Vukovar, after an 86 day siege, was greeted by outpourings of rage and hypocritical condemnations in the bosses' media. Tales of massacres and brutality, pictures of wrecked buildings and burnt out hospitals adorned every paper. Few dwelt on the British cluster bombs supplied to the Yugoslav army and used with devastating effect.

The message was clear; the Serbs were the villains and the Croats once again innocent victims. Margaret Thatcher appeared on Croatian TV calling for the west to intervene. It must "supply arms to the Croats" and "recognise Croatia and Slovenia's independence" she demanded.

Bombs for the Yugoslav airforce yesterday, anti-aircraft rockets for the Croats today. All good for the arms business—and for getting imperialisms' hands on Yugoslavia.

From the point of view of the working class, no war can be judged on the nature of a single event however horrible or brutal. War is a nightmare. It is full of massacres, the slaughter of women and children, the driving of thousands from their homes. But there are just wars, where peoples struggle to throw off their oppressors, and unjust wars; where two sets of oppressors slug it out using ordinary workers as mere pawns in their game.

In Yugoslavia there is a reactionary civil war. Both sides are fighting for reactionary goals; resorting to seizure of territory, forced expulsions of population and massacres. The siege of Vukovar itself started when Croatian police from the town attacked a nearby Serb village.

Whilst we support the right of minority communities of both sides

to defend themselves against arbitrary violence and pogroms workers should at present take no side in the war between Serbia and Croatia.

However, if imperialism intervenes militarily—no matter what atrocity it uses as its excuse—it will be with the aim of imposing a reactionary order of oppression and exploitation against what remains of the degenerate workers' state in Yugoslavia. In that case we must support Yugoslavia's right of self-defence.

Croatia and Slovenia have declared independence from Yugoslavia. But the borders, of what used to be the Croatian republic in Yugoslavia include areas with a Serbian majority.

### Denied

Slobodan Milosevic is leading a struggle for a greater Serbia, trying to link up Serbian dominated areas at the expense of the Croatian minority (and sometimes majority). President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia has consistently denied the right of autonomy or separation to the Serbs within Croatia.

The Yugoslav Army, the JNA, has increasingly played its own independent role. Milosevic and Tudjman have had at least two secret meetings to discuss "exchange of territories" i.e. a mutual

carve up of another republic—Bosnia-Herzegovina. Both times they have ended in failure. Meanwhile the army has been trying to establish itself as a "Yugoslavian force", even establishing its own party the SK-PJ. For the moment the army's goals coincide with Milosevic's, to weaken an independent Croatia in case it has to be given its independence. But Milosevic's goal of a "Greater Serbia" could well shatter this alliance.

Tudjman and Milosevic are not having it all their own way. Both face serious problems in their own republics.

The crushing defeats inflicted on the Croatian militias by the JNA, and Tudjman's failure to win EC aid, has undermined his government.

The semi-fascist Party of Rights (HSP) led by Dragoslav Paraga has been gaining ground at Tudjman's expense. Their 5,000 strong militia, renowned for its brutality and murders of Serbian villagers, openly wear the symbols of the World War Two fascist Ustase which was allied with Hitler. It is aided by an "international brigade" of European fascists, led by the French National Front but including British fascists as well.

Accusations that Tudjman's government failed to aid Vukovar because it was a stronghold of the HSP are widely believed. And

shortly after its fall Tudjman, fearful of a planned HSP coup, decided to strike first by arresting Paraga and moving against his party.

In Serbia there is an economic and social crisis. In March 700,000 were on strike in the metal and textile industries protesting about delays in being paid. In Sarajevo in November 20,000 workers—Muslims, Croats and Serbs—went on strike to demand wages owing from September.

Unlike in the Serbian enclaves of Croatia, the war is deeply unpopular in Serbia itself. The JNA is largely a conscript army and there has been massive opposition among reservists being called up.

They are not just unenthusiastic about fighting for a Greater Serbia: they can see the way the reservists are treated by the corrupt and incompetent General Staff. Raw conscripts are sent directly to the front, often led by reserve officers, while the generals sit in the rear. The length of time it took the JNA to crush Vukovar just reflects these problems.

### Reservists

In Serbia an estimated 50% of reservists have not responded to call up. In Belgrade it is as high as 85%. In the town of Kosieric, in east Serbia, 200 reservists called up from the area protested that only sons of workers and peasants were being sent to the front. They deposed the local government, elected their own reserve officer as the mayor and demanded the resignation of the Defence Minister. They held the town for two days before conceding to threats by the

army.

However the pacifist dominated peace movement is in growing disarray as the civil war intensifies. Simple calls for a "return to barracks" clearly do not address the genuine national and cultural grievances.

A leaflet distributed by LRCI comrades in Belgrade spelled out what is needed:

"A revolutionary proletarian answer to the war, or any serious anti-war movement, must take a position on the right to national self-determination... For an independent workers' republic of Croatia! Defend the independent state that the Croat masses want from every attempt at suppression by the JNA! At the same time full rights of self-determination for the Serbian majority areas of Slavonia and Krajina, either as an independent republic or in union with Serbia! This right must be defended against the Croat national guard!"

The leaflet, published in Serbo-Croat, also argued against the peace movement's calls on reservists to desert the JNA. It called on the reservists to organise within the army, to build rank and file soldiers committees. Serbian soldiers can and must build on the example of the reservists in Kosieric.

The leaflet ends by declaring: "This war is being led by two equally reactionary camps with equally reactionary methods and goals... A just peace will only be achieved by a revolution of the working masses that overthrows the war-mongers—the bourgeois and Stalinist leaders in Croatia and Serbia!"