

The LENINIST

Sinn Fein ban p3

Turkey p4-5

Poll tax p6

Employment Training p8

Build the communist alternative

AT THE beginning of his leadership bid, Benn said he would be satisfied if he won 20% of the vote. This was to admit defeat before battle was joined. Nonetheless, that he barely managed to get more than half of that shows that the Labour left has not only suffered a predictable defeat, it has also been marginalised.

This was demonstrated by the fact that the venom of the Labour right and the bosses' media was vented not on Benn and Heffer but poor old Ron Todd. He voted for the Kinnock-Hattersley nightmare ticket - but he dared to express his fears and doubts. For this he was subjected to the sort of hate campaign once reserved for the likes of Ken Livingstone, Derek Hatton and of course, Tony Benn.

The constitutional changes that the left secured in January 1981 - which shifted the centre of gravity away from MPs towards the trade unions and constituencies - and which took Benn within a hair's breadth of taking the deputy leadership in the October of that year, have in 1988 come to naught. All the years of manoeuvring, compromise and hard work by Labour leftists have been exposed as mere tinkering.

Blackpool definitively proves that the fundamental nature of the Labour Party has not changed. The Labour Party remains the party of the labour movement bureaucracy, politically what Lenin called the bourgeois party of the working class.

Some have tried for their own reasons to interpret Todd's 'cordless telephone' speech to the *Tribune* rally as a product of the parting of the ways between the Kinnock clique and the trade union bureaucracy (the RCP's leader, Frank Richards, even declares the Labour Party "dead"). This is not the case.

Todd cast his block vote for Kinnock and Hattersley, their *Aims and Values* document and their policy review statements. So did the overwhelming majority of union leaders. Indeed it has been union barons like the GMB's John Edmonds and the AEU's Bill Jordan who have taken the lead in pushing the Labour Party along the road of accepting the dubious virtues of the market, the active citizen and watered down Thatcherism. Most trade union bureaucrats - unlike Todd - have no fears and no doubts, except perhaps that the process has not gone far enough, quickly enough.

In the early 1980s many leftists joined the Labour Party to transform it into a socialist party of a new type - a socialist party which was committed to, and carried out, socialist measures (unlike every other Labourite type party in history). These people believed that victory for the left was just round the corner. Nowadays even Tony Benn - given to the most wildly optimistic statements - admits that the Labour left is in for a long

haul.

The days when Labour leftists could believe that the party would be theirs in one or two years time are over (for the moment). This is the significance of Blackpool. There is no light at the end of the tunnel anymore. More than that, whatever strains there may be in Kinnock's coalition, it is the left which has fragmented. It is directionless and demoralised. This year's conference was a watershed for the Labour left.

The Labour left has lost the little organisational cohesion it once possessed. It is now divided against itself. Besides the entrists such as *Militant*, *Workers Power* and *Socialist Action* - who hate each other - there exist 57 varieties of mainstream left reformism also at each others' throats.

In October 1981 almost every individual who considered themselves on the left of the Labour Party backed the Benn campaign. The conference that year was awash with 'Benn for deputy' badges. This year important left groups such as the Labour Coordinating Committee and *Tribune* considered backing Benn and Heffer equivalent to political madness. The only organised support the two could secure was from their own Campaign Group and the entrist cheerleaders. Not even the NUM voted for them.

Ideologically, the Labour left is increasingly eclectic, whimsical and wacky. It collects ideas and causes as if they were going out of fashion. Having no definite ideology means it bows before, and attempts to take on board, the most hairbrained and frankly reactionary demands from the feminists, the black separatists, the greens and just about anyone else. The material coming from the Chesterfield conference provides ample evidence of this. The same goes for many of the contributions from both the platform and the floor at Labour left fringe meetings at Blackpool.

So the mood in the Labour left has undergone a seachange. Its project of transforming the Labour Party is in ruins. This cannot be denied. Unfortunately, instead of drawing the hard programmatic conclusions, what most Labour leftists seem to be seeking are not answers but excuses. Excuses for not building the revolutionary party, excuses for staying in and working for the party of Kinnock, Hattersley, Edmonds, Hammond and Lynk.

The Labour left has sought solace for itself in the defeat the leadership suffered on the question of unilateralism. This is pathetic. Almost as pathetic as the bourgeois media's attempt to belittle Kinnock's victory at Blackpool. For instance, echoing Tory propaganda, Wheeler, the cartoonist of *The Independent*, portrayed Kinnock as having taken one step forward and two steps back in Blackpool (October 8 1988).

Clearly the reverse is the case.

Kinnock scored victories on a whole range of central questions. Not least in committing the Labour Party to the market, junking traditional state monopoly capitalist nationalisation, curbing the LPYS and embracing the European Community. That the TGWU's 1.25 million votes maintained the unilateralist position cannot honestly be seen as Kinnock being forced to take two steps back. A more accurate description would be that he took two steps forward and only one step back.

Even then Kinnock has insisted that he does not consider the 300,000 majority "conclusive" - and of course it is not. Kinnock and Co are searching for some sort of formulation to bridge the unilateralist and multilateralist stances for next year's Brighton conference. With such a fudge they hope to secure enough block votes to allow Labour to break from its commitment to defend British imperialism using only conventional weapons if it forms a government.

In this way Kinnock thinks Labour will come to be considered a safe, respectable, and sufficiently anti-working class party by bourgeois opinion - which in bourgeois society is the dominant ideology - and thus electable. Yet this Kinnock project of Thatcherisation has one main fault. Why should anyone vote for the Labour Party when they can vote for the real thing - the Tory Party? Benn has made this point ... and he's quite right.

Some suggest that the only hope for a Thatcherite Labour Party is if Mrs Thatcher or one of her closest colleagues makes a major blunder at home or abroad of Suez or Profumo proportions. Others say the Labour Party's fortunes will revive when Lawson's so-called 'economic boom' gives way to another downturn along the lines of 1974-5 (what we would call an oscillation between capitalism's cyclical general crises).

Consequently if a Kinnock led Labour Party were called upon by the monarch to form a government, it could well be to manage capitalism as it experiences a difficult economic or political crisis. And what would Kinnock do? Why, he would do what he promises. He would carry out, in broad terms, exactly the same policies as Thatcher. It will be Thatcherism with a Labour Party face.

That said, the chances are that the Tory Party will remain in office for some considerable time to come. As things stand it could, whether a Suez or Profumo type storm or an economic downturn arise, simply by coming up with a new leader.

Life is full of possibilities. Nevertheless, at the moment, Thatcher's Tories look set for a fourth general election victory. More, the fact of the matter is that the Tories are not only set for a

fourth term. It seems that the two party system which has characterised British politics throughout the 19th and 20th centuries has given way to a one party system. Not the sort of one party system we see in backward capitalist countries such as Tanzania or Kenya, where no other parties are allowed, rather the one party system as practised in Italy and Japan. In these countries there is a system of many parties but only one party is the governing party.

This means that the opposition parties look set to remain precisely that - in opposition. The slogan at the Tories' Brighton conference, 'Leading Britain into the nineties', should not therefore be taken as empty boasting. Nor should Thatcher's talk about Tory governments in the nineties "and beyond".

Having a one party system has definite advantages for a ruling class which is going through a painful readjustment. In Britain it enables it to pursue a long term and more single minded strategy than was possible with the swings and roundabouts of the Liberal-Tory and Labour-Tory two party system. Yet there are disadvantages. Not least, if things go wrong it will be more difficult to divert discontent into the dead end of parliamentary politics.

As every media pundit tells us, all major parties in Britain have embraced the Thatcherite ideology. Because of this, if a major plank of Thatcherism, such as the market, were seen to fail all the major political parties would be seen to have failed. The tendency would be that opposition would find expression outside parliament. This is of great importance for those of us who are fighting for socialism.

Before the last general election, labour movement bureaucrats countered demands for militant action by arguing that everything would be fine with the 'next Labour government'. It cannot be denied that many militants - whatever they thought of the policies of the 'next Labour government' - believed it was a possibility. These days, none of the opposition parties can seriously pose as an alternative government, not even the Labour Party. Now the only thing calls to wait for the 'next Labour government' provoke from the militant rank and file is mocking, disbelieving laughter.

Faced with a massive wave of popular protest the leadership of mainstream Labourism could suddenly find that it likes its left wing after all. Such a wave would almost certainly find its first expression in the form of left Labourism. And where the cold logic of the right would fail, the socialistic rhetoric of the left could divert a militant wave of mass discontent back into safe parliamentary channels. For communists this is precisely the danger presented by the Labour left.

The Labour left is loyal to the Labour Party, not the working class, and the Labour Party is loyal to capitalism. Labour has always had a left and a right. But the right is almost always in a heads we win, tails you lose situation. The Labour left can never score a decisive, let alone permanent, victory over the right. Indeed it does not really want to. Benn himself declared at Blackpool that Labour only wins when "left and right are united". The Labour left does not want to smash the right - it wants a happy marriage. Unfortunately for it, right and left Labourism will never live in peaceful harmony, there will always be rows, raised fists and unhappiness.

And because of British capitalism's desperate attempt to become competitive, because of the collapse of consensus politics, because the Labour Party is no longer the alternative party of government, because it is now a party of crisis, the endemic battle between its left and right will become ever more violent and fractious.

We make no secret about our aim of winning the loyalty of the militant working class. Nor do we conceal the fact that this can only be done by politically defeating the Labour Party, left and right. To do this will, of course, require all sorts of tactics, possibly including the tactic of critical support. But whatever the tactic, we have a single goal - to shatter all illusions militants have in the Labour Party, especially its left wing.

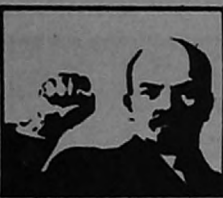
Hence we must never let the heat of these arguments obscure the fact that ultimately the relationship between the Labour left and right is symbiotic - they both need each other. This is the absolute and general law of Labourism.

So without for one moment falling into the sectarian mistake of dismissing what happens in the Labour Party as irrelevant, it is essential not to fall into the opposite mistake, the mistake of automatically lining up behind the Labour left in its altercations with the right.

The Labour right makes no bones about its desire to manage capitalism. The Labour left, on the other hand, says that it is out to build a socialist society. The problem is that it sees this happening through using the capitalist state machine and the Labour Party - a party that serves capitalism in and out of office (that might not be why Arthur Scargill joined the party but that is what it has always done).

What Blackpool poses to all honest partisans of the working class is not the need to rebuild the Labour left. No, what is posed is the necessity of building a genuine Communist Party, a genuine alternative not only to the Tories but to the capitalist system itself.

Jack Conrad



Fortnightly paper of the Leninists:
for a genuine Communist Party

RECENTLY, a couple of the more obscure publications of 'official communism' have been brought to my attention. For a change *The New Worker* (the paper of the New Communist Party) and *Communist* (the *samazdat* of the Straight Leftist faction of the CPGB) have something interesting in them. Readers who have ever picked up either of them will be surprised by this. So what do they contain of interest?

In *The New Worker* Eric Trevett, general secretary of the NCP, voices concern about Gorbachev's proposals on private agriculture and share ownership (October 7 1988). Heather Sanderson in *Communist* goes further. She attacks talk in the USSR of turning away from the class struggle in international relations and towards 'universal human values' (September 1988). Sanderson approvingly quotes none other than Yegor Ligachev (no longer No.2 in the Kremlin) to support her case. How revealing!

Of course, the criticisms are typically diplomatic (and in *Communist* plagiarised). Nevertheless when such sycophantic representatives of 'official communism' begin to question Gorbachev - in a mealy mouthed fashion, true - it is a sure sign that the disintegration of the world communist movement has reached a new stage.

That 'official communism' is in crisis is obvious. The picture is complicated yet the trends are clear. In many parties ossification is becoming fossilisation. On the fringes of the 'official' mainstream, though, we find movement of a sort. The Italian Communist Party and *Marxism Today* types are now barely distinguishable from old fashioned Fabianism and seem destined to go even further to the right. As to the numerous so-called 'pro-Soviet' splits, they are in danger of being ripped apart by the rise of Gorbachevism.

Gorbachev's 'innovations' have forced many to stand on their heads. Adherents of such organisations are brought up to believe that the CPSU is 'Marxism-Leninism'. For them every statement it makes carries religious weight. But now we have the 'official communist' equivalent of god disowning the ten commandments, his one and only son and the doctrine of the virgin birth.

Gorbachev has moved from criticising the *methods* used to collectivise agriculture to questioning collectivisation itself. He plans to lease out land on a fifty year basis - in effect restore capitalism in the countryside. In industry it is also proposed to turn to the market. This will see individual share ownership, an end to the state's monopoly on foreign trade and western monopolies with an 80% stake in Soviet based joint ventures - in which they will now appoint the managers and repatriate the profits.

This anti-socialist home policy finds its expression abroad. Gorbachev has deserted the Afghan revolution and proposes to sell others like pieces of real estate. He wants to junk speeches about the international class struggle along with Gromyko and intends to come to some sort of *permanent* peaceful coexistence with imperialism.

To justify this, Bukharin - once correctly denounced by the CPSU as the leader of a capitalist restorationist trend - has been rehabilitated and has been lauded in *Pravda* as a precursor of perestroika (true!).

The revisionism of the CPSU cannot be blamed on "ill-informed and deliberately misleading articles from the western press" for long. In the end the political prostitutes of 'pro-Soviet' 'official communism' will do their best to adapt to it, all the while pretending that nothing new or untoward has happened.

Of course, in the process ideological deformations become ever more crippling, any revolutionary flame that still burns finally flickers and dies, while the increasingly oddball membership dwindles to the point of disappearing. As we have said before: for the new to grow the old must die.

The Editor

Six month subscription rates: Britain and Ireland £5; Europe £8; Rest of World £10 (airmail £17.50). Annual subscription rates: Britain and Ireland £10, Institutions £20; Europe £16, Institutions £26; Rest of World £20 (airmail £35), Institutions £30 (airmail £45). Back copies: Issues 1-6 (theoretical journal) £1 each plus 25p p&p. All cheques payable to November Publications Ltd. Printed by: Morning Litho Printers Ltd. (TU), Unit 5 St Marks Industrial Est., 439 North Woolich Road, London E16 2BS. Published by: November Publications, BCM Box 928, London copyright November 1988 ISSN 0262-1649

LETTERS

Style

Style and content ... content and style. The two are obviously linked. John Walker in *The Leninist* No.69 writes "if we are serious about building a strong communist movement based on Marxism-Leninism, I'm afraid the style adopted by *The Leninist* is not going to achieve it".

There are shades of the past here. Just the same sort of thing was said of Lenin's *Iskra*. And of course, the Russian working class (led by *Iskra*) did not 'achieve' anything, did it comrade Walker?

Just compare *The Leninist* No.70 and *Marxism Today* for October. *The Leninist* has a style: serious and full discussion of the issues facing the class - Labourism, unemployment, Ireland. *Marxism Today*, on the other hand, is a kind of mishmash of designer politics, starting off with an incomprehensible soup of Trivial Pursuits.

But where is the content?

At least, where is the working class, revolutionary socialist content? It is supposed to be organ of the Communist Party of Great Britain. The content is best epitomised by the letter on page 40 in which three of the drafters of the revisionist *Facing up to the Future* say they were not consulted on the final draft and in fact have 'substantial disagreements'. So the crisis in the CPGB continues.

Steve Bailey
Kent

Brent Nalگو

The AGM of the beleaguered Brent Nalگو branch on October 25 illustrated the crisis of leadership that is hampering the fightback against the proposed cut of the Labour administration.

The SWP, which shares the leadership of the branch with various left Labourites, put forward four resolutions to this meeting. What was characteristic about these resolutions was that all called on the "national leadership" to do this/the "national leadership" to do that. They simply do not seem to have the ability to think independently of the national bureaucracy anymore, let alone act independently!

The AGM was blessed with the presence of Diane Abbott who told us "I'm not here to abuse Labour councillors", ie she advised us to simply lie back and take the cuts that the Labourites are doling out!

Diane scuttled away before any questions could be asked, although some Leninist comrades gave her a bit of an ear bashing from the floor.

What the AGM illustrated is that Brent Nalگو is still dominated by the politics of reactionary, petty bourgeois 'anti-racism' and 'anti-sexism', which are used to cow and divide the rank and file.

All notion of class has been ditched and therefore the membership have simply lost faith in the ability of the union to fight for their rights as workers. Their increasingly cynical attitude to the structures of their own union was illustrated by the fact that this important meeting could hardly muster enough members to make it quorate.

Bureaucratic mishandling of the general meetings always ensure that that most of the resolutions, including those putting forward a Leninist strategy for victory, are

not discussed. But we are determined to get our message to the rank and file of Brent Nalگو. The second issue of *Brent: Unite and Fight* will be out soon and we plan to ensure a wide distribution amongst the membership. For copies of this bulletin of Brent Nalگو Leninist supporters, send a stamped addressed envelop to BCM Box 928, London WCIN 3XX.

Dick Keogh
Brent

Reserve army

There was a time when, despite all the bureaucratic distortions, we could at least point to the elimination of unemployment from the Soviet economy as evidence of its superiority over the anarchy of capitalism.

Under Gorbachev, we can no longer be so sure. There are strands developing now amongst certain Soviet academics which openly advocate the reintroduction of unemployment to discipline the Soviet working class. Nikolai Shmelev, writing in the June 1987 issue of *Novy Mir* tells his readers that "... we will not close our eyes also to the economic damage from our parasitic assurance of a guaranteed job. The fact that we largely owe slack discipline, drunkenness, and slipshod work to over full employment, today seems clear to everyone. We need to discuss fearlessly and in a practical way what we might gain from a comparatively small reserve army of labour, not, of course, left entirely to the whim of fate by the state ... The real danger of losing work, and of going on to temporary benefit or of being obliged to work where you are sent, is a pretty good medicine for idleness, drunkenness and irresponsibility."

What contempt for the working class! And what a warning for Soviet workers!

Paul Watts
South London

Strange idea

Roy West makes a number of errors in his comments on Ireland (*The Leninist* No. 69), but most interesting of all is his definition of "individual terror" in relation to the liberation struggle of the IRA and Inla.

This is the hoary old charge that the likes of *Militant* and the *Morning Star* throw against the forces of the national liberation in the occupied Six Counties. It has a veneer of Marxist 'orthodoxy', but in reality is a cover of a chauvinist disdain for the 'messy' violence of the oppressed.

I remember the talk of 'individual terrorism' that flew about during the miners' Great Strike of '84/'85 when Shankland and Hancock were convicted for the 'murder' of the scab taxi driver Wilkie. Strange idea. Did these two young South Welsh miners simply decide one night, as a result of some perverse political logic, to declare an individual war on taxi drivers in the area? If this were the case, then one can talk about 'individual terrorism'.

In fact, the violence of these two brave South Wales boys was an organic part, an outcome of the

huge class confrontation that surrounded them. It was an integral part of the miners' strike, not an isolated action divorced from it.

Now, I don't know if Roy West and his co-thinkers have actually noticed, but there is a revolutionary situation engulfing the North of Ireland, a situation characterised by high levels of mobilisation of the masses, the refusal of the Catholic/republican minority to be ruled in the old way. Their support for the armed struggle flows from this. The IRA and Inla do not consist of isolated individuals any more than does Umkhonto we Sizwe or the Red Guards of 1917. Of course, individual volunteers pull the trigger, plant the bomb or launch the missile. But that is true of any army. How then are the armed actions of the IRA or Inla 'individual terrorism' please?

Frankly, such a definition smacks less of political analysis and far more of slander.

Ian Mahoney
London

Best wishes

Thank you for your support during the fight to keep our centre open. Unfortunately we were not successful and the occupation was evicted on Tuesday, September 13 by Camden's Labour Council after 16 months.

We have since found temporary premises at the address below, but we have had to change our name to Kings Cross Claimants' Union as we are now based in Islington.

We will, of course, be keeping up the campaigning work that got us evicted in the first place.

Best wishes for the future.

George Downton
Kings Cross Claimants Union (ex Camden Unemployed Action Centre)
c/o BUGS
11, Barnsbury Road
London N1 0SE
Tel: (01) 837 8078

Small correction

I read with great interest your analysis of the PPPS AGM and the machinations between the two factions on the management committee.

However, a small correction. One of the successful candidates George Wake is not a dissident CPGB member, he was expelled together with those PPPS management committee members who wilfully opposed CPGB Congress decisions.

However, what is more alarming in your objective report is the fact that both factions on the *Morning Star* management committee supported a nonentity like Wake, surely an indication of the desperate current state of the paper.

Alan Lewis
North London

Note: Letters have been shortened due to lack of space. For political security we have changed certain names, addresses and details.

WRITE OR RING

If you would like to reply to any of these letters, raise questions or comment on articles in *The Leninist* please write to The Editor, BCM Box 928, London WCIN 3XX. Or phone us on 01-431 3135.

Forging our chains

Sinn Fein and the IRA do not rely on good PR on Radio 1 and plenty of air-play on Channel 4 for their support, but on the active support of a people day to day confronted by British repression



As not seen on TV

BACK from their triumphant Brighton conference the Tories were ready to accelerate their reactionary offensive. After oh so bravely defying the IRA behind the iron cordon of police, marines and SAS assassins, Thatcher and her cabal returned to parliament with a fresh assault against Irish republicans up their sleeves.

There is little doubt that the radio and television ban against republicans and loyalists is in reality directed against those fighting against British imperialism, rather than Britain's unofficial auxiliaries in the UDA/UVF. The government has as good as admitted it, saving all its bile on this question for republicans.

The state also advances on other fronts: with the amendment to the Prevention of Terrorism Act proscribing the funding of 'terrorists', which can easily be read to cut off the funds to Irish political prisoners and their families through such organisations as Green Cross and the RSPA, just for starters; or with the withdrawal of the right to silence for those in police custody, something Britain has attempted to do in the past, but failed to get away with.

The 'chop logic' which the government has used to justify these attacks is farcical: the only arguments of the 'terrorists' is the bomb and the bullet - so we'll ban their spokespeople and supporters from our TV screens and radios! Or that old vulture, Lord Denning, coming out with the argument that the right to silence was fine in principle, but the problem is that people keep using it!

You see, if you support the struggle for Irish freedom, you're not allowed to say anything through the media, but to keep equally silent in the hands of the police is not permitted. Those Irish men and women who have in the past had their right to silence beaten out of them - for instance the Guildford Four or the Birmingham Six - have paid a heavy price for it.

Logic, though, hardly comes into it. What the state is doing is to raise the tide of reaction, giving it a legislative bite. Britain is trying to

create a 'Catch 22' to be used against Irish nationalists.

What will be the practical effect of this? In Ireland, it will hardly undermine the support of the republican movement. If anything, it will pour more petrol onto the fire of revolution in the North. Sinn Fein and the IRA do not rely on good PR on Radio 1 and plenty of air-play on Channel 4 for their support, but on the active support of a people day to day confronted by British repression.

Sinn Fein was able to sustain mass support from the late '60s to the mid '70s, when it was an illegal party. Nationalists in the Six Counties know who the real 'terrorists' are - the Crown Forces, and its 'political wing', the British government. Further imperialist terror proves this point and rightly strengthens the identification of the nationalist community with those waging war against their oppressors.

We certainly do not echo the words of the Labour Party leaders; that such measures only give the IRA credibility, that this is not the best way to handle the 'problem'. They are quick to point out that they hate the IRA just as much as the Tories, but it's just that they wouldn't deal with it quite the same way. The *Morning Star* has little more to say on the question than Roy Hattersley, criticising the media ban because it "will not halt the media campaign of the IRA" (October 20).

The job of communists is not to play the role of advisors or lawyers to the bourgeoisie, but to remove it. We must unequivocally state that the policy of the Labour opposition is every bit as reactionary as their Tory 'opponents'. We denounce this new legislation not because we think there are better ways to combat the armed struggle, but because we support the right of the Irish people to engage in just such a struggle for their rights.

It would be a mistake to look at the state's offensive as being nothing new. We should note most carefully what is happening and prepare ourselves to combat these attacks on the Irish people. That the government is now able to do

with this legislation compared with the past should not be taken lightly. It has strengthened the climate of reaction and anti-Irish bigotry. But we should fight back against this not only because we identify with the struggle of the Irish people, but because as Marx said, a nation that oppresses another forges its own chains. Precisely!

The withdrawal of the right of silence in the Six Counties will be soon extended to the rest of the British state. The new PTA will be used as much in Britain as in Ireland and a ban on Sinn Fein sets a precedent for a ban on those who merely sympathise with its democratic struggle in Britain.

Attacks on the rights of Irish nationalists are also attacks on the rights of workers in Britain. Look at the techniques used by the British state against striking miners or against black youth; they came straight from the streets of Belfast and Derry. How long will it be before blanket surveillance techniques, CS gas and plastic bullets come home?

Ireland has been Britain's training ground for repression. And this is exactly what the state's offensive in the Six Counties heralds for workers in Britain now. If today the government can introduce legislation banning the republican movement from our screens and confiscate its funds, then there is every reason to believe that this will apply to all enemies of the British state tomorrow.

Britain's imperialist heritage has weighed heavily on the combativeness of British workers. The workers in Britain are far more poorly equipped than those of Ireland to respond to the repression of 'their' state. Indeed, as the politics of the *Morning Star* indicate, they stand politically disarmed before such an assault. Most identify with the repression of 'their' state. And the majority of those who do not, like the *Morning Star* and its Communist Party of Britain, merely have technical objections.

The duty of communists is to break the hold of bourgeois ideology over British workers and to shatter the illusions held in the British state. Not to do so would not only be a betrayal of the struggle of the Irish people, but would also leave the British working class open to precisely the same attacks.

British imperialism is on the offensive. But it is also handing us an ideological weapon; that of highlighting the links between the struggle in Ireland, in Britain, and the enemy we both face. With unity imperialist repression can be defeated. But this in turn means taking on the British patriots of the Labour Party leaders and Labourite ginger groups such as Time to Go! which argues that British imperialism has some sort of legitimate role in Ireland. It has not. There was never a time when Britain should not have gone. We say British imperialist hands off Ireland!

Alan Merrick

The government is set to impose tough new restrictions on the rights of teachers to take strike action. A draft order from Kenneth Baker, the Education Secretary, will shift the body responsible for teachers from local education authorities to the individual schools' governing bodies. This is designed to remove the 'anomaly' whereby school governors are responsible for staffing decisions, but the local education authority remains the legal employer. By 'atomising' the employment units of teachers in this way down to individual schools, the Tories will dramatically curtail the teachers' legal ability to take solidarity action with colleagues in other schools. Typically however, the bureaucracy of the NUT has dithered failed to respond to the attacks. In effect, all it has done is whine about the provision in the draft order defining sympathetic action as illegal (which under Tory anti-trade union laws, it is) and to criticise the fact that the education authorities will remain financially responsible for the employment decisions of governing bodies which they will not control. But frankly, so what? What is the point of teachers defending the rights of education authorities when they should be defending their own rights. Rank and file teachers must lead the fightback against the attacks on their rights. And clearly, in order to defend our right to strike, we must break the bosses' laws.

That the government has lost the *Spycatcher* case in the House of Lords has done nothing but prompt it to once more move the goal posts. The new White Paper on the proposed update of the Official Secrets Act will close the loopholes which allowed the tedious Mr Wright's book to be published legally. Such censorious action is determined by the needs of capitalism today to clamp down, not on the likes of Wright, but on the working class, to determine exactly what we read, hear or see on our televisions. As capitalism decays, the capitalists must dig in at our expense, politically as well as economically - all, of course, in the 'national interest'. Unlike the *Morning Star* which cheered "Spycatcher beats Thatcher", we cannot rejoice in the Law Lords' decision. The fact is that, given the structure of current legislation, the Law Lords did not feel it judicious to maintain the ban on *Spycatcher*, that is all. The legal system is not our ally against the Tory government. It is as much an integral part of the bourgeois state as the government itself. And it is the state as a whole which is our enemy. Democratic rights are not advanced by this or any other section of the British state.



•Peter Wright: plotted against the Wilson government, burgled the Communist Party and was banned by Thatcher. We say there should be no 'official secrets'. The workers should be free to know everything

The sacking of four of the remaining 12 trade union members at the GCHQ intelligence centre in Cheltenham provoked a few token protests from the parliamentary Labour Party and TUC, but little more. Unless the government's crushing attacks on the unions at GCHQ are effectively fought, it will be used as a precedent to ban union organisation in other essential services. It is a breach that must be healed. Yet the TUC did not coordinate the spontaneous strike action that workers in London, Manchester and elsewhere took in defence of the GCHQ workers' rights; instead it has called for what it terms 'a day of protest' on November 7... when the TUC hopes anger will have cooled. Willis has been keen to underline the totally ineffective nature of this protest even before it happens. He assures the government that "in the present circumstances that cannot constitute a call for general strike action or forms of unlawful strike action". Thus, workers are being called on by the TUC to support the civil servants' one day strike on November 7 only with lunch-time meetings and rallies, or in other words, tokenism that is almost bound to flop. The TUC seems unable to learn from its own history. This timid November 7 protest is the first that the TUC has attempted since a series of protest days organised in the early 1980s which were without exception unsuccessful. Clearly, the TUC has accepted defeat even before the battle has been properly joined.

Onwards! Upwards!



Readers have responded well to our urgent call for donations over the past month or so: our £600 monthly fund for October stands at £632. This is excellent. At last we have a surplus. But as we pointed out in issue 69, the accumulated total shortfall from three months of failing to reach our monthly target was some £800. With this month's total, we have bitten into this sum by just £30. That leaves at least £770 still to find in addition to next-month's £600 fund. We desperately need to make good this gap. And we know our readers and sympathisers can do it. Come on, comrades! Well done on this months total, but no resting on our laurels in November. In fund-raising as in all things - ever onwards, ever upwards!

We will defeat the enemy!



The style and elegance of the bourgeoisie?

This is an edited translation of the speech given by comrade Emine Engin, a representative of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkey, to a rally in London on September 10 1988 – the 68th anniversary of the founding of the Party. The second half of her speech will appear in 'The Leninist' No.72

DEAR COMRADES, because he was unable, due to his duties, to be present at this meeting, comrade Yurukoglu gave the task of speaking at this September 10 meeting to myself and comrade Yalcin. He congratulates all comrades on September 10 and he particularly requested me to tell you this. Unfortunately, because of his illness comrade Yalcin will be unable to speak. He also congratulates all comrades on September 10. I myself congratulate all comrades on the 68th anniversary of the founding of our Party.

There is a tradition that has been started and been maintained by comrade Yurukoglu; that is, on September 10, to speak about the important topics of the day and to shed light on them. I will try and maintain this tradition in my speech. I will speak on three topics. First, on Gorbachev and Kutlu [now the general secretary of the 'official' United Communist Party of Turkey – called Yagci in the speech by the comrade – we have kept to his more commonly known name]. Second, on the situation in Turkey and third, on the importance of the Workers' Commissions.

These are the topics to which I want to draw the attention of our Party organisations.

Gorbachev and his colleagues are anti-Soviet

Comrades, there was a discussion that went on for several years. It was discussed as to whether or not *Iscinin Sesi* [the central organ of the CPT] was anti-Soviet. In opposition to

those who said we were anti-Soviet we replied that it was in fact they themselves who were really anti-Soviet.

The most reliable judge of arguments is practice, and practice has passed judgement on this discussion. I wish that in fact it had been us who had lost the debate. Unfortunately, however, we won it. The anti-Sovietism of our opponents has spread and, unfortunately, from within the Soviet Union itself.

We have a march which we have learned from the German working class. Most of us know it. The words of this march go as follows:

"A sound is marching around the world.

Do you hear it workers?

It is the sound of iron and steel factories.

Hired pens and microphones are calling for a crusade against the Soviet Union.

Workers, on their lips are the words 'country', 'nation', the national anthem.

This is the struggle of the ruling classes, against the world working class.

The hand that is raised against the Soviet Union, a dagger that is directed against the heart of the world revolution.

This struggle is against you, proletarian!"

These words must be a warning. The voices of Gorbachev and Kutlu have joined those of the owners of the iron and steel factories. On Gorbachev and Kutlu's lips too are country, nation, the national anthem, and they too are trying to strike a dagger into the heart of the world revolution.

They are waging a struggle of the ruling class against the world working class. This struggle is also against our section of the world working class. Comrades, this is why we want to touch upon this.

The hand raised against socialism

Gorbachev is carrying out various economic reforms in the Soviet Union. The majority of these are directed towards private property. In his own words, there is an attempt to revive "the approach of being an owner of property".

It is possible that in a socialist country such an approach can be used consciously for a temporary period. There is an example of this in history. In the NEP period, Lenin caused the proletarian dictatorship to use capitalism and, because he knows this, Gorbachev resorts to comparisons with NEP.

However, when we look closely we see that there is no basis for such a comparison. When Lenin introduced NEP he openly declared that this was a temporary backward step, that it carried serious dangers and that it was a necessary tactic. Gorbachev, however, is not introducing his reforms, which are much worse than NEP, as a tactic, whether good or bad.

He calls it *perestrioka*, that is 'reconstruction'. He is trying to construct a permanent structure on the basis of what Lenin called a bad but necessary and temporary tactic. In the Lenin period the proletarian dictatorship used capitalism. In the Gorbachev period capitalism is trying to use socialism as a cover.

When Lenin made the serious concessions in the economic sphere which are known as NEP he adopted measures to strengthen the control and hegemony of the working class in the political sphere. He stressed the right of the trade unions to strike. In order to preserve the working class nature of the Party, he conducted a purge of the Party. Gorbachev, however, with all his talk about democracy, for some reason does not even mention the right of trade unions to strike and leaves aside the strengthening of the working class nature

of the Party. He is now opposing making any distinction between worker and intellectual, etc.

Gorbachev's economic reforms are not being introduced as a temporary concession. Gorbachev is trying to abandon socialism and return to capitalism. In this respect he is raising his hand against the Soviet Union.

When we look at the political reforms the situation is even more clear. We see that this hand which is raised against the Soviet Union is a real dagger directed at the heart of the world revolution. Why?

As comrade Yurukoglu pointed out in his book *Living Socialism* the period of transition between capitalism and communism is nothing else but the dictatorship of the proletariat. Its heart is the dictatorship of the proletariat and this, the Soviet system, is precisely what Gorbachev is stabbing at.

A dagger directed against the heart of the world revolution

The democracy of the working class state is not a working class cover for bourgeois parliamentarianism. Working class democracy is not parliamentarianism, it is something else altogether. Parliamentarianism means the separation of the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. In other words it relies on the separation of forces. Before the bourgeoisie became reactionary, control was in the most part in the hands of the legislature. When it became reactionary – that is, in our epoch – control passed in practice and most times officially to the executive.

The root of the word parliamentarianism – parole – is the word 'to speak'. There is the distinction between those who speak and those who work. For this reason, even in the most democratic periods of the bourgeoisie, parliamentarianism always displays the hypocrisy which hides ugly deeds with fine words. Working class democracy, however, completely abolishes hypocrisy and makes no separation between legislature and executive. The executive authority is vested in the legislature.

Marx explained this very well when dealing with the Paris Commune: "The commune is not a parliament, it is a working organ; that is, it will be at one and the same time the executive and legislature".

The Soviet system which followed in the path of the Paris Commune was established as a system which also excluded hypocrisy and had nothing whatsoever to do with parliamentarianism. In the remains of Tsarist Russia and in the conditions of the economic and cultural backwardness of the country, it confronted many questions.

The mistakes which were made in subsequent years, far from solving these problems, aggravated them and made them permanent. The Soviet state became distorted and began to operate like a bourgeois parliamentarianist system excluding the people from active participation.

However, today we are witnessing a turning point which goes even beyond this. Instead of abolishing the distortions and correcting the deviations in the operations of the system, the aim is to radically change the system in its very foundations and to make these distortions official. With his political reforms Gorbachev is trying to return to bourgeois parliamentarianism.

The dagger is also directed against the CPSU

According to the system which is intended to be introduced and which is shamelessly being called 'new', the most authoritative organ meets once a year. And this organ, following the example of the United States, is being called a 'congress'. This 'congress' to be selected by the two chambers of the Supreme Soviet is the organ of "legislature and administration". There are executive organs attached to the soviets, the operation of which is separated from the legislature.

There is confusion in regard to the organs in the reform package because there is a lot of humming and hawing and playing with words because the system is being stabbed in its heart. Nevertheless this indicates matters are going in the direction of the 'separation of forces' which was mentioned between the lines in Gorbachev's speech to the 19th Party

Conference. For example; there is talk about "making a better separation of forces between representative and executive organs".

In the event, the legalist, legal magazines which are posing or representing themselves as Gorbachev in Turkey, while claiming to defend Gorbachev's reforms are in fact exposing the real face of these reforms. For example the *Gorus [View]* magazine states in its August edition that Gorbachev was proposing "a more authoritative and effective parliament". This is exactly what we want to say. We don't know about its "authority" and "effectiveness" but Gorbachev is proposing a parliament – this is exactly what is happening.

Following the October Revolution the bourgeois parliament which was called the Constituent Assembly was dispersed and all power was taken officially by the soviets. Now Gorbachev is using the slogan "all power to the soviets" in an attempt to hand over all power once again to a Constituent Assembly type of organisation – or more correctly, he is trying to turn the soviets into a Constituent Assembly. He is trying to plunge a dagger into the heart of the world revolution from the very fortress of the world revolution.

At this point it is necessary to ask a question: Why is it that Gorbachev, who is so enthralled with parliamentarianism, does not introduce a multi-party bourgeois parliamentarianism, basing himself on the fact that multi-partyism is an objective requirement in the Soviet Union from the point of view of socialism?

He does not introduce it because he first has the unhappy task of liquidating the CPSU. He may keep the one party system and then pass over to a multi-party system after having watered down Party norms, opened up the doors of the Party to anyone and everyone and caused the CPSU to stop being a communist party. But, for the moment, he is pursuing the tactic of creating a multi-party system within a single party. That is, together with the soviet system, the CPSU is also being stabbed.

The foreign policy of Gorbachev – flattery

Foreign policy is the continuation of domestic policy. Gorbachev, who is stabbing the Soviet Union, the fortress of world revolution, from within, is of course also going to try and stab the other contingents of the world revolution; and so it is. In order to explain this, let us look once again at the domestic situation, but from another point of view.

In his speech on September 10 last year, comrade Yurukoglu said that the struggle taking place in the Soviet Union was one between two wings of the bureaucracy – a struggle between old bureaucrats and modern bureaucrats, ie the technocrats.

He said that one side of the struggle was trying to win the support of the working class. When we look at the situation from the point of view of this evaluation by our comrade, we see the following scene; no wing of the bureaucracy has been able to win sufficient support from the working class.

Gorbachev was complaining about this at the 19th Conference. He spoke about how the peasants were showing a profound interest in perestroika and the intellectuals were welcoming it with enthusiasm, but coming to the workers he said only that they were participating with their labour.

In view of this situation, Gorbachev has on the one hand accelerated his attempts to create a bourgeoisie on which he could rely for support. This is the significance of the phrase which we mentioned when we spoke about economic reforms, "the approach of being an owner of property". With his political reforms he wants to introduce a system which will suit this new class which is being promoted. However, the gains/achievements of a great revolution which shook the world cannot be eliminated in one night, however corroded and weakened they have become. For this reason, Gorbachev is on the other hand relying on the world bourgeoisie as much as he can. And that is the essence of his foreign policy.

The following note appeared on the back cover of the Turkish edition of the book *Perestroika*:

"With his age, which can be considered very young for the Kremlin, his civilised appearance, his stylish dressing, his soft/refined behaviour and his elegant and attractive

wife Raisa, Mikhail Gorbachev immediately attracted the attention not only of the Soviet citizens, but also of world public opinion.

"This new leader who is quite different from that to which the Soviet Union is accustomed will no doubt do things to which it is unaccustomed.

"While the world was waiting with baited breath to see what he will do, he announced his policy of glasnost, or openness. This was followed by perestroika, or reconstruction. What were the aims of these policies? Where did the young (according to Soviet standards) leader want to go?

"There was great interest in this, in particular on the part of public opinion in the United States, the other superpower which confronts the Soviet Union. American publishers made a proposal to Mikhail Gorbachev; write a book and explain to the world what you want to do.

"Gorbachev accepted this proposal. In any case he could not have said no, there could not have been a better opportunity to explain his ideas to both his own people and the world.

"After having settled in his own mind what he was going to explain, Gorbachev disappeared for a time. There was a lot of speculation about what was happening in the Soviet Union and there were many rumours; it was claimed that Gorbachev was ill, that he had fallen from influence, that he was on holiday. But Gorbachev had withdrawn to a peaceful spot on the Black Sea coast and was dictating *Perestroika* to his secretaries.

"After *Perestroika* was born and the rough draft had been received by the American publishers, the world press and publishers in other countries sought it.

"With the publication of the book world public opinion learned what the leader of the Soviet Union, one of the two superpowers which influence the fate of the world, thought and wanted to do." (M Gorbachev, *Perestroika – New thinking for our country and the world*, Gunes Publications, Istanbul, 1988, pp249-50).

Look at this! As if the Soviet leaders up till now have been uncivilised where 'Gorby' is civilised! He dresses stylishly and his wife is very elegant. These are values which reflect bourgeois longings and aspirations, bourgeois pretensions. I am not saying that people should dress unstylishly or that they shouldn't be elegant, but to bring these things to the fore is nothing but 'bourgeoisdom'. A communist leader draws attention with stylish dress and an elegant wife!

Much more could be said. But what we particularly want to mention is this lack of character. The United States said 'write a book': Gorbachev did not decline, instead he retreated, wrote the book and passed the draft to these 'gentlemen'. What did the United States have to do with what the general secretary of the CPSU will write? What is the United States that it sees the rough draft first? In brief, this lack of honour has reached disgusting proportions. The honourable working class will defeat both capital and flatterers of capital like Gorbachev.

Kutlu's domestic policy – Gorbachevism

Kutlu is one pincer in Gorbachev's foreign policy of flattery. They bring out a magazine called *Yeni Acilim [New Opening]*; in truth they really are opening, not to the new but to the old. They explain their topics in this magazine with the following logic:

"The conditions for putting an end to imperialism in the world and capitalism in Turkey are far from having matured today. It would not be realistic to expect these conditions to mature in the near future. For this reason, as long as imperialism maintains the existence of capitalism on a world scale, it is necessary to guarantee peace. In the same way, as long as capitalism continues to exist in Turkey it is necessary to achieve democracy and guarantee it." (Zeki Dilem, *New Questions and New Approaches in Yeni Acilim*, No1, May 1988, p11).

In other words, the problems are not to be solved with revolution because the conditions for revolution do not exist. For this reason they say that instead of waiting idly we should strive to convert imperialism to peace and democracy. And how are they going to convert it? As follows:

"In conditions where the bourgeoisie maintains its existence and its power, the preservation of peace and achievement of democ-

racy mean to make the bourgeoisie accept them." (*Ibid*, p11).

This is what they say here, but in fact they don't even talk about "making the bourgeoisie accept" this, because in the same article they say: "the aim of the world without nuclear weapons and violence lies in the uniting of people from all classes" (*Ibid*, p9).

There is no need to make anybody accept anything. The bourgeoisie has accepted it in any case! But for the sake of argument let us say that they will make the bourgeoisie accept, or convince the bourgeoisie. Then we will have to ask the following question: Fine, friend, if you are so strong, why don't you make the revolution? Why are you trying to make these gentlemen accept things which are contrary to their own class nature?

In answer to this they say that the conditions for revolution do not exist. In that case, the following question must be asked: Fine, if the conditions for revolution are not ready, what then do the so-called 'hot-spots' in the world which you say you are going to eliminate along with imperialism represent? Are these not the points which represent 'the danger of revolution'?

Kutlu and his people think that they are fooling children. Their logic goes beyond simply being traitors. At the same time they are also a little bit stupid! On the one hand they say that they are strong and can make the bourgeoisie accept things which are contrary to its nature, on the other hand they put revolution on the shelf. On the one hand they work like a fire brigade to extinguish the world revolution, on the other hand they tell lies about the conditions for revolution not existing.

In the same magazine Kutlu's people say the following about Turkey: "It is not possible for democracy to be achieved without cooperation with the sections of the bourgeoisie which support democracy." (*Ibid*, p9).

This cannot be fitted even into arithmetic. Why do millions of people have to cooperate with a handful of men in order to gain democracy? Because the intention of Kutlu and his people is to lead the sheep to the wolves. That is why they are defending the idea of cooperation with the wolves. I should say that we gave an answer to them a long time ago. The idea that the sheep should go together with the wolves is something else altogether.

Kutlu and his people now have a completely different idea. This is something else that we read in the same magazine:

"What am I doing to renew myself? Am I trying to increase my general culture? Without general culture, democratic behaviour and habits and the culture of discussion will not be able to develop.

"Am I reading and seeking without let up? Is my mind open to the outside world? Am I able to follow the advances in science and technology? If I do not know about ancient Greek culture, how can I establish a bridge to the democracy of the present day? If I have not read Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Chekhov, Dickens and Balzac; if I do not follow philosophy, logic, history and sociology; if I do not concern myself with the history of my country, how can I contribute to 'making revolution'?"

"If I do not like Beethoven, if I do not go to art exhibitions and museums, if I sneer at those who have gone before; if, moreover, I do not like poetry then what torch am I going to carry?

"What am I going to bring to other people? Am I going to tell them to do without the pleasures in life? To become hermits? To deprive themselves of many things, not to use existing opportunities let alone try to expand them?" (Caylar Tufaz, *Are we able to renew ourselves?*, *Yeni Acilim*, No3, July 1988, p27).

The word 'revolution' here is a joke. 'If I do not know about ancient Greece then I don't deserve democracy, if I have not read this or that then how can I make revolution?' Perhaps they have not finished reading yet and that's why they have put the revolution onto the shelf?

We never denigrate the cultural treasury of mankind, but 'unfortunately' putting this treasury at the service of workers and working people is also a question of revolution. With these words, Kutlu's people confirm that they are counterrevolutionary bourgeois intellectuals. They left our Party and they are rapidly leaving the working class. We will intensify and are intensifying our struggle to accelerate this.

(To be continued)



POLL TAX

How not to fight

As it accepts the parameters and requirements of running the capitalist system, the Labour Party can never lead an effective fight against the poll tax. As an aspiring alternative party of government it does not feel able to pick and choose which laws not to obey. Workers need a real alternative

Strong mental images of fickle rodents and sinking ships spring to mind when one looks at the current state of the Eurocommunist CPGB. Nina Temple, the invisible Press and Publicity Officer has bowed out and Peter Carter's Industrial Organiser job is up for grabs, as is that of the Women's Organiser. The most wacko exit so far though is Dave Cook, ex-National Organiser and once front runner to replace McLennan as general secretary. Dave has now decided that the best thing he can do for the world revolution is to cycle to Australia for the next year or so. Our worries for the Antipodean insurrection notwithstanding, the consensus in The Leninist office is that we actually agree with him.

Mike Woods - Brent 'anti-cuts' councillor, rumoured Socialist Organiser sympathiser and, apparently, a closet fan of Pol Pot. Woods and his ilk in Brent claim to be in the forefront of the fight to defend jobs and services in the borough. Yet Woods recently amazed a Leisure Services Committee meeting he was attending by supporting the closure of borough libraries because "I don't give a toss about libraries - they are just elitist places ... you've got to be middle class to be able to read anyway"! Leninist comrades in Brent tell us that 'workers here haven't got a good word for the man'. We have: how about 'prat'?

Forget Acid. Trash those old Rap records. Super soaraway 7 Days, the clued in hipsters' notice board, has surely latched onto something big this time. Mongolian rock. "Are there any rock groups in Mongolia?" asks one Dugersurengiyn Ariunbold in the issue of October 22. We were stumped to be honest. But apparently there is a 'boom' in Mongolian rock and roll, although in true dialectical fashion, Ariunbold warns "it remains to be seen when there will be a change from quantity to quality". Which is probably a nice way of saying Mongolia now has an awful lot of crap pop groups - another triumph for glasnost?

Michael Dukakis may be on for a pasting in the US presidential elections, but at least his campaign workers can still raise a grin. A crowd of his supporters recently gathered to greet him at Burbank airport and almost all sported huge, bushy, and distinctly Dukakis-like false eyebrows. He must have been cheered up no end.

CLEARLY, the campaign against the poll tax has reached something of a crisis point. In Scotland, where poll tax registration forms actually began dropping through letter boxes in April of this year, the official fightback has more or less run out of steam after the Scottish TUC's '11th hour' flop on September 13.

The largest event of the day was an under 1,000 march in Glasgow organised by the Strathclyde Anti-Poll Tax Federation. But the STUC actually refused to provide speakers for this demonstration, presumably because of the heavy involvement of *Militant* in its organisation. Also, Labour controlled Strathclyde Regional Council, who claim to oppose the tax, sent a circular round further education colleges asking them to note the names of students who struck for the day.

In public, local Labour leaders posture against the tax, while in private they are busy setting up the 'snooping' apparatus designed to harass people who try to dodge payment. The refusal of the Labour Party to advocate an (illegal) boycott has left the field open for the Scottish National Party, which has grown quite rapidly - as could well be seen in the Govan by-election on November 11 - on the basis of its more militant opposition to the tax.

This is hardly surprising. The STUC and Labour Party north of the border have more or less conceded defeat in the aftermath of the September 13 fiasco.

As it accepts the parameters and requirements of running the capitalist system, the Labour Party can never lead an effective fight against the poll tax. As an aspiring alternative party of government it does not feel able to pick and choose which laws not to obey.

In the absence of any type of genuine fighting strategy and the pathetic performance of the 'feeble 49' Scottish Labour MPs, important sections of the Labour Party are retreating into narrow, petty bourgeois nationalism. A good showing, certainly a victory for Jim Sillars, the SNP's Govan candidate, will undoubtedly strengthen calls in the Labour Party in Scotland to abandon Westminster and turn to demands for separatism.

Such bankruptcy is not confined to Labourism. A recent report - *A Claim of Right for Scotland* - was given an uncritical, double paged treatment in the *Morning Star*. This miserable little document in fact underlines the extent to which the whole of the 'official' labour movement bureaucracy in Scotland has collapsed into nationalism.

A Claim for Scotland was drawn up by a steering committee of Scottish 'notables' invited to take part by the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly. John Henry, then Scottish

TUC deputy general secretary, and STUC general council member Pat Kelly of NUCPS were there, rubbing shoulders with the likes of Sir Robert Grieve, the veteran town planner, various Scottish bourgeois and (naturally), the clergy.

They concluded that Scotland is being "governed without consent", with policies that the people "show no sign of wanting", policies including most prominently the poll tax, of course.

Objectively, these type of arguments simply sow the seeds of division between workers in Scotland and their class brothers and sisters in England and Wales. The Tories won just ten of the Scottish seats out of the 72 available in 1987, against Labour's 50 (down to 49 with the resignation of Bruce Millan - off to become a European Commissioner in Brussels); the Liberals and Social Democrats nine and SNP's three. But so what? This was in the context of a *British* general election, fought between *British* political parties: the fact that the Tories did not do well in the traditionally Labourite area of Scotland should not be used to fragment the response of our class nationally against the Tories' attacks.

The nationalistic strategy of important elements of the Scottish labour bureaucracy in fact plays right into Thatcher's hands. It does not take a genius to work out why the Tories have decided to implement the poll tax in Scotland some three years ahead of the rest of the country. It was precisely in order to fracture the fightback to this deeply unpopular legislation.

And frankly, in the absence of a fighting alternative, so far they have succeeded. A narrow 'national' mentality has undoubtedly started to find a real resonance amongst quite wide sections of the Scottish population.

For example, at a large anti-poll tax meeting last year called by various Community Councils in Glasgow, the way forward for the fight was discussed. Apart from the heavy orientation of the resolutions adopted towards pressuring "the Scottish Labour MPs" to pull their fingers out and lead a fight, the main thrust of the meeting's strategy was the increasingly popular notion that the Tories have "no democratic mandate in Scotland", and therefore no right to impose the poll tax.

This is a dangerously divisive and passive idea that offers no way forward for the working class north of the border in their battle against poll tax. It is worth looking at this argument in a little more detail to see precisely why it is one that effectively demobilises the fightback rather focuses it.

The no mandate argument in effect is a cop out from organising strategies for action. No wonder therefore, that important sections

of the labour bureaucracy are retreating into promoting Scottish and Welsh nationalism: they have simply given up the perspective of defeating Thatcher on the all-Britain national terrain.

Frankly, the argument is irrelevant. Scottish Labourites and STUC windbags can bluster as much as they want about the Tories' lack of a mandate: the Tories however, will simply carry on ruling regardless and imposing their policies on the now demobilised Scottish working class.

The mandate point is a very 'British' one, anyway. It presumes that the Tories, or any other capitalist government, governs according to the niceties of parliamentary democracy and of fair play. But what mandate did the Tories have from the mining communities to send their thugs in blue in to occupy villages and terrorise miners and their families in the Great Strike of '84/'85? What mandate did the Tories have to abolish the GLC and now Ilea, given the fact that every opinion poll has shown that the majority of people in London opposed such a move?

Undoubtedly, the trends towards 'moderation' in terms of voting patterns are more pronounced amongst workers in England, especially its relatively well off and highly populated South East. But again we should not be over awed by the notion of bourgeois parliamentary democracy being some sort of perfect representative system. Periodic parliamentary elections are a snapshot of an atomised population. They only provide the most blurred picture of the relationship between various classes. More than that, it is worth mentioning that all the main parties in Britain (and that includes Scotland) are bourgeois parties, not least the Labour Party.

What communists are concerned with at the end of the day is leading the working class into war, not representing it in the hallowed chambers of the 'mother of parliaments' in Westminster. Workers are workers, wherever they are and whoever they vote for. The objective conditions under which they live and are forced to sell their labour power in order to survive time and time again propel them into action against the bosses and the bosses' state; not considerations of who they might have voted for in an election several years ago. This is why we have unbounded faith in the working class in England ... and Scotland and Wales.

Workers in Scotland should remember the miners' strike and ask themselves whether the fighting miners in Scotland could have won on their own? They needed the English miners in places like Yorkshire and Kent. And one of the reasons why the strike was lost was certainly the failure to win the majority of English miners in

Notts. These lessons need to be taken to the heart of the anti-poll tax campaign.

Unfortunately this has not been the case. We even have those who claim to be 'communists' - the Euro-Communist Party of Great Britain and its centrist *doppelganger*, the Communist Party of Britain - using the fight against the poll tax to poison the working class of Scotland with nationalism. Their retreat into this dismal perspective underlines the fact that they are organically tied to the crisis of Labourite social democracy and equally incapable of presenting a fighting alternative.

What is needed is a united response to a frontal attack on our class. This means uniting our forces, not dividing them along the lines of nationality. But not unity around the softest option, that is unity in our commitment to praying for the next Labour government (whenever that is going to be!) or limiting things to an individualistic protest action.

A winning strategy also means bypassing the likes of *Militant* who, in spite of their successes in building anti-poll tax organisations on the ground in Scotland, are intent on diverting any possible fightback into their hopeless quest to change the Labour Party. They editorialise in their September 16 issue, that "the Labour Party in Scotland should be leading that campaign not finding excuses for the Labour councils who are implementing the tax."

Fat chance. No, we need a fighting unity, in the here and now. If we wait for the likes of the Labour Party in Scotland, whose executive as we have seen decisively rejected the tactic of non-payment, then the battle is simply lost. We have to build our own, independent fighting organisations in order to take the battle forward.

Many individuals will respond to the demand for poll tax by simply sending the forms back or even by deliberately filling out the forms incorrectly. This type of isolated response, although it may initially be a mass phenomenon, cannot be sustained. Collective working class action is the key to channelling the anger of hundreds of thousands of workers against the government.

For such an undertaking, we need appropriate forms of organisation which can involve and activate masses of working class people. What we have pointed to is the need for committees, along the lines of the Miners' Support Groups during the Great Strike, which can act as focal points for resistance and the need for genuine communist leadership.

Under communist leadership, such committees will be militant working class bodies, aiming not simply, or even primarily, at a mass, illegal boycott tactic, but also for:

- Industrial action to beat the Tories' plans, including from council workers who are being asked to actually implement the tax.

- Mass demonstrations against the tax, at their core the organised working class but also the whole of the class.

- To make working class housing estates poll tax 'snooper free zones' using whatever tactics are necessary to achieve this.

If we wait until 1991 it will be too late. The battle in Scotland will be lost and workers there alienated from workers in other parts of the country who, they will reason, 'let us down'. Now is the time to build unity in the fight against poll tax. The Tories have deliberately decided to attack Scotland first - if we let the working class there fight alone then we will all go down to defeat!

Alec Long



Laboured Connolly

Austen Morgan, *James Connolly, a political biography*, Manchester University Press, 1988, pp244, £25.00.

OVER the years the legacy of James Connolly has been hotly debated. Everyone from the Irish TUC to Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams, from the Irish version of *Militant* to the Communist Party of Ireland claim him. And it must be said that all of these disparate forces could find something to bolster their claims in this book by Austen Morgan.

Why reformists, revolutionary nationalists and 'official communists' could find justification for their mythological version of Connolly is because Morgan paints this red revolutionary first with the insipid pink of Labourism and then the green of Irish nationalism.

Morgan's book definitely falls into the category of bourgeois historiography. On both sides of the Irish Sea similar people have hacked out works in order to gut the workers' movement in Ireland of its revolutionary traditions. He damns the revolutionary struggle for national liberation in Ireland as inescapably sectarian and divisive. For Morgan, socialism is about talk, not revolutionary action. Thus before 1916 Connolly was a good socialist, who although often politically confused, would be at home in the boring world of Labour committedness. This is the James Connolly the ICTU, *Irish Militant* and the CPI have invented.

Because of his impatience, Morgan argues that Connolly was unable to avoid falling under the spell of nationalism and sacrificing himself in a mad act of revolutionary suicide in Easter 1916. In so doing Morgan says Connolly turned his back on socialism. Morgan speculates that if Connolly had not been executed by a British firing squad he would not have gone on to become a great socialist leader. He would have been a Sinn Fein one (just like Gerry Adams).

In spite of himself though, Morgan cannot but admit Connolly's internationalism. He was not soft on green nationalism, he knew its limitations and devoted numerous articles exposing the anti-working class nature of Sinn Fein. In fact Connolly was first and foremost an international revolutionary.

Born in Scotland, he joined the Independent Labour Party but soon became hostile to its reformism. While working in the USA he was drawn to Daniel DeLeon's syndicalistic Socialist Labour Party. He broke with DeLeon because of his autocratic regime. Yet when he returned to Ireland in 1910, Connolly could be considered a DeLeonist. Whatever the problems of this ideology, it put him well to the left in the socialist movement as it then existed in Ireland. The same was true of the Second (Socialist) International,

dominated as it was by opportunism.

Connolly sided with the most revolutionary elements in the Second International. He saw the need for the working class movement in Ireland to be independent of the British labour movement but also develop the strongest fraternal links with the working class organised on a world scale.

Internationalism underpinned the Irish Socialist Republican Party of which Connolly was the leading member. The most important date in its calendar was not St Patrick's day, it was Commune Day (to mark the setting up of the Paris Commune in 1871, the world's first workers' government). The common cause of labour the world over was a constant theme in the propaganda work of Connolly and the ISRP. A report, quoted by Morgan, from a senior police officer who attended one of the ISRP's meetings confirmed that Connolly's message was far from being purely Irish. This dull inspector plod reported that the same sort of "mischievous twaddle can be heard any Sunday in Hyde Park, or on the Green in Glasgow." (p29).

The collapse of the Second International with the outbreak of World War I was an earth shattering experience for Connolly. The majority of its constituent parties sided with their own rulers but not Connolly. Although initially disorientated he soon found his footing. Along with Lenin, Luxemburg, Liebknecht and Rakhovsky and the internationalist left he, advocated turning the imperialist war into a war of revolution and liberation: neither the King nor Kaiser, but Ireland bellowed the defiant Connolly.

Morgan the Labourite is not able to grasp the significance of this. Indeed throughout his book he rubbishes all that was good about Connolly. True, Morgan's assessment stands in contrast to those green nationalists, reformists and 'official communists' who, in order to make Connolly safe, have iconised him. But neither approach is useful for those who aim to stand on the shoulders of this great revolutionary. We need an approach which recognises Connolly's virtues... but also his faults.

Connolly and Larkin were able to provide the inspiring and tireless leadership that enabled the working class in Ireland to move - if only momentarily - from being a class in itself towards being a class for itself. With the 1912 general strike in Dublin and the Easter 1916 rising Ireland stood in the front ranks of the world revolution.

Yet Connolly was not Ireland's Lenin. Easter 1916 could never have been Ireland's October and the reason can be seen in Connolly.

Where Lenin gave everything to the party, Connolly had a cavalier approach. He placed more faith in the trade unionism and was never even able to theorise about, let alone establish, a vanguard party such as the Bolsheviks.

Having no conception of a vanguard party and the need for it to be built on the basis of the most rigorous Marxist principles Connolly, for example, advocated an unprincipled unity of the Irish section of the ILP and his own ISRP. This was not a case of a tiny revolutionary nucleus joining the ranks of a mass reformist organisation in order to win a wider hearing. The Irish ILP was not particularly large. Neither was it a case of reformist workers being won to revolution. The differences were to be papered over not resolved. In this light it is clear that Connolly was a left centrist, not a consistent, scientific communist.

Communist parties are not built by ignoring differences but overcoming them through open ideological struggle. They are not built on the basis of what is acceptable to the rank and file, on the lowest common denominator. They are built from the top down, on the basis of the highest theory.

Connolly had no understanding of this and was therefore unable to transform the ISRP from a socialist debating club into a combat organisation let alone a party of a new type. Communists in Ireland must honour Connolly but follow the road of Lenin.

Kevin Sheahan

With friends like these...

M van Diepen, (ed), *The National Question in South Africa*, Zed Books, 1988, pp152, pbk £7.95

THIS book is a collection of essays largely by ANC activists. From a Leninist point of view, the two most interesting are those by leading members of the South African Communist Party, in particular the contributions by Joe Slovo - who is its general secretary - and Comrade Mzala. This short review will concentrate on the nature of the revolution in South Africa.

The revolution in South Africa is one against a colonialism of a special type. This we do not deny. But a feature of SACP statements and publications has been the tendency to vacillate between formally correct Marxist-Leninist, and centrist positions - the Mensheviks in Russia did the same. This can be seen if we compare the following quotations.

First, Comrade Mzala: "The consequence of organising the working class will be that the national democratic revolution will proceed *uninterruptedly* to socialism." (p 54).

That is a position we would ascribe to. But now let us hear what Mzala's general secretary has to say: "The winning of the objectives of the national democratic revolution will, in turn, lay the basis for a *steady advance* in the direction of deepening our national unity on all fronts, economic, political and cultural, and towards a socialist transformation." (p 151 - our emphasis)

This is centrism. It sees socialism emerging smoothly, through "national unity" rather than a continuation of the class struggle. There can be no excuse for such evasiveness: the necessity for the revolution to be *uninterrupted* is enshrined in the programme of the SACP.

A national liberation struggle that does not *uninterruptedly* go beyond democratic to socialist tasks can never free the masses from the chains of imperialism. Proletarian leadership and the fight for an *uninterrupted* revolution is essential. Zimbabwe is a perfect negative example of this, despite the undoubted dismantling of all formal racial discrimination.

Capitalism now has a stable environment and the position of the workers and rural masses has not improved in any real way: the legal minimum wage has been raised, but this has led to increased unemployment. How the imperialists would love to be able to impose a 'Zimbabwe' on South Africa!

The elevation of national liberation to an aim in itself - a stage which Slovo hints must be achieved

if the struggle for socialism is to begin - arises at least in part from a failure to place the national question in its class context.

Slovo disputes Stalin's statement that: "a nation is a historical category belonging to the epoch of rising capitalism" on the grounds that "the modern nation state is not always the creation of the bourgeoisie ... Most of the world's nation states emerged in the post-war period and it cannot be argued that they all had their origins in a new wave of rising capitalism." (p 144).

This is to confuse the nation state with the states which were formed on the basis of the boundaries drawn by 19th century colonialism. More importantly, Slovo ignores the fact that nations are not only a historical phenomena.

The reason why communists fight for the national liberation of the black masses in South Africa is because, under proletarian hegemony, it will be a step towards the World Union of Soviet Republics and communism. Already the development of the forces of production means that national boundaries are becoming more and more anachronistic and are hampering development. (This explains the EC's drive to create a single market from 1992. In this context, bourgeois elements are more progressive than 'communists' who oppose such changes on the grounds of 'national sovereignty'.)

Comrade Mzala's stressing of the necessity of winning working class hegemony in the national democratic revolution is therefore essential if South African communists are to be more than a party of Robert Mugabe's.

It is clear that the ideological differences between these leading South African comrades is profound. Centrist opportunism will have to be confronted in the sharpest possible way through open ideological struggle if their revolution is to succeed. This will have far reaching ramifications for the international outlook of the SACP.

The fact is that under the influence of the Gorbachev leadership in the Soviet Union, sections of the ANC - which is heavily influenced by the SACP - are moving away from the struggle for revolution and into the camp of reform. The strategy of armed insurrection has been abandoned in favour of "creating the right political situation", by which is meant deals with sections of the white establishment and negotiations. In line with this, some at the top of the ANC have actually made statements criticising the actions of Umkhonto we Sizwe - the armed wing of the liberation movement.

The ANC has already made

moves to water down its bourgeois democratic programme, the Freedom Charter. This shift to the right is creating all sorts of strains, in the ANC and the SACP. There are those who want to follow the Gorbachev line and seek out a reformist solution. Others are still determined to fight for revolution.

In a sense Slovo personifies the resulting confusion. He welcomes Gorbachev's line on the one hand, whilst on the other he has argued with the utmost diplomatic caution, in *African Communist*, that the Gorbachev line of abandoning the armed struggle in the world's "hot spots" should not be applied to South Africa. Such centrist toadying can be seen in Slovo finding the Gorbachevite proposals of Dr Gleb Starushenko, member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, a little hard to swallow.

Dr Starushenko suggested to the 1986 Soviet-African conference that in the post-apartheid period there should be a two-chamber parliament, the second possessing the right of minority veto, based on "equal representation of the four communities". The good doctor went on to advise giving the South African bourgeoisie "the guarantee that there will be no broad nationalisation of capitalist property" (*Weekly Mail*, January 9-15 1987).

Slovo's obvious criticism that such a veto would allow the most fundamental features of race domination to be perpetuated is, however, partially offset by the fact that he does not rule out such an arrangement altogether:

"We cannot, at this stage, allow ourselves to be diverted by speculations about future justifiable compromises in the interests of revolutionary advance." (p 150 - our emphasis)

But what about *unjustifiable* compromises such as giving the white supremacists a veto and leaving monopoly capital intact? That Slovo refuses to condemn Starushenko is, to say the least, cause for concern. By not opposing Starushenko openly, denouncing the Gorbachev trend for what it is - a bureaucratic trend which aims to transform itself into a capitalist class - Slovo gives these revisionist traitors revolutionary credentials they manifestly do not deserve.

The expression of polite, diplomatic disagreement with Soviet 'advisors' "whose pro-liberation intentions are not in dispute" (Slovo, p 149) are insufficient. To play down differences, or claim that they are mere questions of tactics, does the masses in South Africa a great disservice. The Leninist approach is to face up fully and honestly to problems rather than skate over them.

Lloyd Fresno

	6 months	1 year
Britain & Ireland	£5	£10
Europe	£8	£16
Rest of World	£10	£20

For more detailed rates see page two

I enclose a cheque/PO for £.... made out to November Publications

Please start my subscription with issue no....

I enclose a donation for £.... made out to November Publications

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Return to: Subscriptions, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX

ET: Preparing the fightback

THE TORIES have put a great many eggs into their £1.5bn Employment Training basket. Unlike the introduction of JTS, which had the Community Programme to fall back on in the event of its failure, ET has superseded and subsumed all previous adult 'training' schemes. In other words, in the event of ET's failure, those eggs could end up all over the faces of Thatcher and Co.

Indeed, despite the reactionary elation of the participants in the Tory Party conference, things are going none too well for this scheme. Since its inception on September 5 the Department of Employment's Training Agency (replacing the abortive Training Commission) has found it very difficult to dragoon the requisite number of unemployed workers onto this work-for-dole rip off.

To save face the government has not released a full breakdown of the national figures on ET. Looking at the little available information, who can blame it? The *Financial Times* of October 10 gives a few examples: in five weeks the South London based Inner City Training has only had 32 people referred to it for an ET scheme of 360 places. Fourteen of those dropped out within days. 'Springboard' (whatever that is) from Bristol has had three trainees for a 300 place scheme between September 5 and October 10. The *FT* gives many other examples in the same vein, but you get the idea.

It gets funnier: the paper reports that, "a shortage of trainees being referred to and staying with managers would lead to widespread financial difficulties for managers, many of whom have to keep their schemes 90% full to receive enough funding to remain viable." In all probability very few, if any, can claim anywhere near that 90% target. And many of the smaller training agencies may have their funding cut in the new year. A most inauspicious start, to be sure.

But while we can permit ourselves a supercilious sneer at the bosses' difficulties here, we can afford no complacency. You can be sure that they will fight to extricate themselves from this mess at workers' expense.

'Employment' Secretary Norman Fowler made this clear at the Tory Party conference. For Fowler, to be unemployed is to be "workshy". Therefore, measures to increase the level of harassment that the unemployed get are being proposed, such as increasing the number of 'scum-squad' members and other civil servants concerned with benefit 'fraud'. In addition, the emphasis on the ability to claim benefit will shift from being 'available for work' to being 'actively seeking work', extending the attacks on claimants seen last year in the con-trick 'availability for work' tests and Restart.

This is a cynical attempt to criminalise the unemployed. Claiming benefit for the Tories is not a right.

The government are putting it over as a crime in its attempt to drive the number of unemployed claiming benefit down. This will undoubtedly continue. Unless we want unemployed workers to be faced with the ultimatum of slave labour schemes or starvation we must organise a fightback now.

Social Security Secretary, John Moore, indicated that the government was going to reintroduce the equivalent of the means test. Ever concerned for the nation's morals, he asked the rhetorical question; "Is the hope of a council flat and a guaranteed income a factor in unmarried teenage pregnancy?" So single parent families can kiss their already virtually non-existent right to housing goodbye.

It is quite clear from both economic necessity on the part of the bosses and the pronouncements of the government that the sham 'voluntary' nature of ET and YTS are going to be toughened up to make them water-tight compulsory work-for-dole schemes. And this is just one weapon in the state's rapidly accumulating armoury of weapons directed against the unemployed and, indeed, therefore against all workers.

The fact that these schemes are an attack on *all* workers is backed up by the Training Commission's own figures. The *Employment Gazette* of June 1986, in a survey of employers, reported that "saving in labour costs" was a major factor in taking on YTS 'trainees' among nearly a third of them. The TC itself estimated 17% job substitution. A later survey by the same body found it to be up to 62% in workplaces with less than 100 workers (*Employment Gazette*, October 1987).

That's the bosses' figures, not ours. And remember that monitoring against this sort of thing will be far less 'stringent' on ET than on YTS - where it obviously has little effect. The same goes for health and safety, with figures of deaths and serious accidents on schemes speaking for themselves.

In the face of this, any serious opposition from the 'official' movement has been noticeable by its absence. The saccharine liberals of the 'Campaign for Work', *né* Hands Across Britain, mercifully seem to have shuffled back to the stripped-pine Islington flats and 'ye olde' vicarages from whence they came.

Both the Labour and TUC leaderships have paraded their anti-ET credentials at their two conferences. In practice this means little. A great many Labour controlled local councils will not take on ET 'trainees'. This was the case anyway. But there has been no attempt whatsoever to lead or initiate any kind of national resistance. It has been very much a case of various councils 'doing their little bit'.

No one could of course believe that this will have any effect at all on ET as a whole. The TUC fudge on ET would seem to be about as

effective, given Fowler's comment that the TUC's 'boycott' is having "no discernible effect". This is indeed true; the major spanner in the works for the bosses has been the tardy response of the unemployed, not trade union organised resistance.

But as we have argued, such spontaneous reactions to the assault on our class are insufficient. The Tories have the resolute leadership of Thatcher and the forces of the state which will ensure a swift and effective rejoinder to the uncooperative unemployed.

And now, the TUC is offering the government a 'deal' on ET, in a desperate attempt to get its feet under Training Agency tables. If the government accepts 'five principles' - that 'trainees' get the rate for the job, have full employee status, receive high quality training and trade union approval - the TUC will cooperate. Marvellous. But then it would hardly be ET, would it?

If the TUC was seriously committed to fighting for this, it would be a big step forward. But it is not. In reality, this shows the first tentative offer of the TUC to cooperate with ET after its congress resolution to boycott it.

To defeat this attack on our class as a whole - as Marx said, the wages of those in work are determined entirely by the reserve army of labour - we must develop organisational forms equipped with anti-capitalist politics. To announce this is simple. Its realisation will be somewhat more difficult. But this is no excuse for inaction.

We cannot afford to waste time sitting back calling on the trade union bureaucrats to take up our fight, as do the myriad shades of the left. Let them wait for the dull Labourite-grey to be raised in battle against the Tory foe. The task for communists is to fight to hoist the red flag of revolutionary resistance within the working class through our active leadership, in theory and in practice. Just so with the struggle against ET.

The government is only confident on this because their opposition, the working class, are so ill-equipped to take them on. The silly ineffectual stunt politics to which the Labour Party has reduced the campaign against the poll tax in Scotland is a case in point. And this is the best that the 'official' movement can offer. Think carefully, British leftists, do you *really* want the Labour and trade union leaders to take the lead in this fight? We are fighting for the removal of the dead hand of Labourism from the working class, not its strengthening.

In short, if you want anything doing, do it yourself. We should view the practical impotence of all sections of the Labour Party at the moment as an opportunity, not a block. It is an opportunity that we should seize with both hands, taking arguments to militants as to how they can organise to defeat the

government's 'training schemes'.

This is precisely what *The Leninist* is fighting for through the Unemployed Workers Charter. We are fighting for a united workers' offensive against ET. Great opportunities for constructing an alternative leadership in this period around this issue exist. We have a chance to give revolutionary politics mass, practical effect.

We kicked off the campaign against ET with a lobby of the TUC in September (see *The Leninist* issue 69). Some may ask, why bother, given your complete lack of faith or trust in the bureaucrats? One practical effect of building the lobby, though, was that it brought us into contact with rank and file militants with whom we were able to work. It gave us the ability to take our strategy for fighting the attacks on the unemployed to a wide audience. The politics and practice of the UWC began to become a focal point of resistance to unemployment. This now needs to be strengthened and extended in practice.

The fight must be developed on a number of fronts. Employed workers must organise in their workplaces to resist the introduction of work-for-dole 'trainees'. Where the initiative on this has come from rank and file militants, this has already had a measure of success. But this is clearly limited. Where ET 'trainees' are introduced into workplaces, it would clearly be impractical and potentially divisive to demand that they should be kicked out. We are therefore not in favour of the slogan 'Boycott ET' ... much more useful is the call to 'Smash ET' and, linked to this, 'into the union, off the dole and onto the payroll!'

Militant trade unionists must fight for those ET workers taken on to be immediately made permanent employees on full wages. Militants must take this fight to the rank and file, demanding a voice for the unemployed within the union. This struggle in turn provides a basis for organisation within the workplaces - and, where necessary, across sectional union divides - to practically combat the cheap labour ET.

There can be little doubt that when young unemployed workers begin to find themselves dragged into crap ET or YTS 'jobs' with suspect safety standards, no security, no rights and only an extra tenner on their benefit, rank and file leaders will begin to emerge among them. That is the danger for the bosses; in providing themselves with slave labour they begin to equip a potentially volatile section of the working class with the powerful weapon of the experience of collectivity and of organisation. This must and can be tapped into and given a national direction.

We should also look to the lessons of the past, in the shape of the National Unemployed Workers Movement. Our 'third front' must be the organisation of unemployed

workers against their drafting onto the government's schemes and all other attacks on their rights. In some respects, this presents a most daunting task, given that the state has atomised the unemployed, effectively marginalising them as a powerful social force. But with the escalation of the attacks on the unemployed many will be forced to fight just to survive. We must be there as the focus for this struggle as it emerges. To squander such a chance would be criminal.

Such a struggle demands a national focus, the ability to unite all the disparate struggles on the dole queues and in the workplaces into a whole. To this end the UWC along with trade union militants such as the T&G Community Programme Shop Stewards Combine are fighting for a national day of action against ET ('Workfare'). This has been provisionally called for June 15 next year.

That gives us plenty of time to develop the links and for the militants to pull out as much as possible on this working day - with demonstrations, occupations, and strikes throughout the country.

We are not aiming for a respectable TUC type 'day of action', the likes of which they have tried to fob us off with on such issues as the GCHQ, the NHS and so on. Instead of existing to behead any militant leadership, we are fighting to give it a voice, an organised force and a political direction. The day of action will be both the culmination of resistance to ET and the consolidation of a national base of well organised militants equipped with the politics and the organisation to put our class on the offensive.

To make this possible we are helping to organise a national conference of activists on this basis in late February in Manchester. This will provide an important opportunity to test the degree of effectiveness that our campaign has had to that point and give political direction to militants.

We don't doubt that many leftists will say that no fightback is possible. That we must wait for the TUC or the Labour Party to act. Of course, the life of alternately invoking the powers of bureaucrats and denouncing them is much easier than the path we are taking. But that is no more the answer than just forgetting the whole thing and dropping back into personal life.

We workers have no choice between fighting tooth and nail for our rights, or being smashed to our knees. In other words no choice at all. Those who are true partisans of our class have a duty to take their place in our ranks. The fightback is beginning.

Sean Quinn

The next issue of the UWC's paper *Unemployed Organiser* will be out soon, with more details on this campaign. Single copy 30p, bulk orders (five or more) 5p each. From: UWC, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX.