WORKERS' LIBERTY

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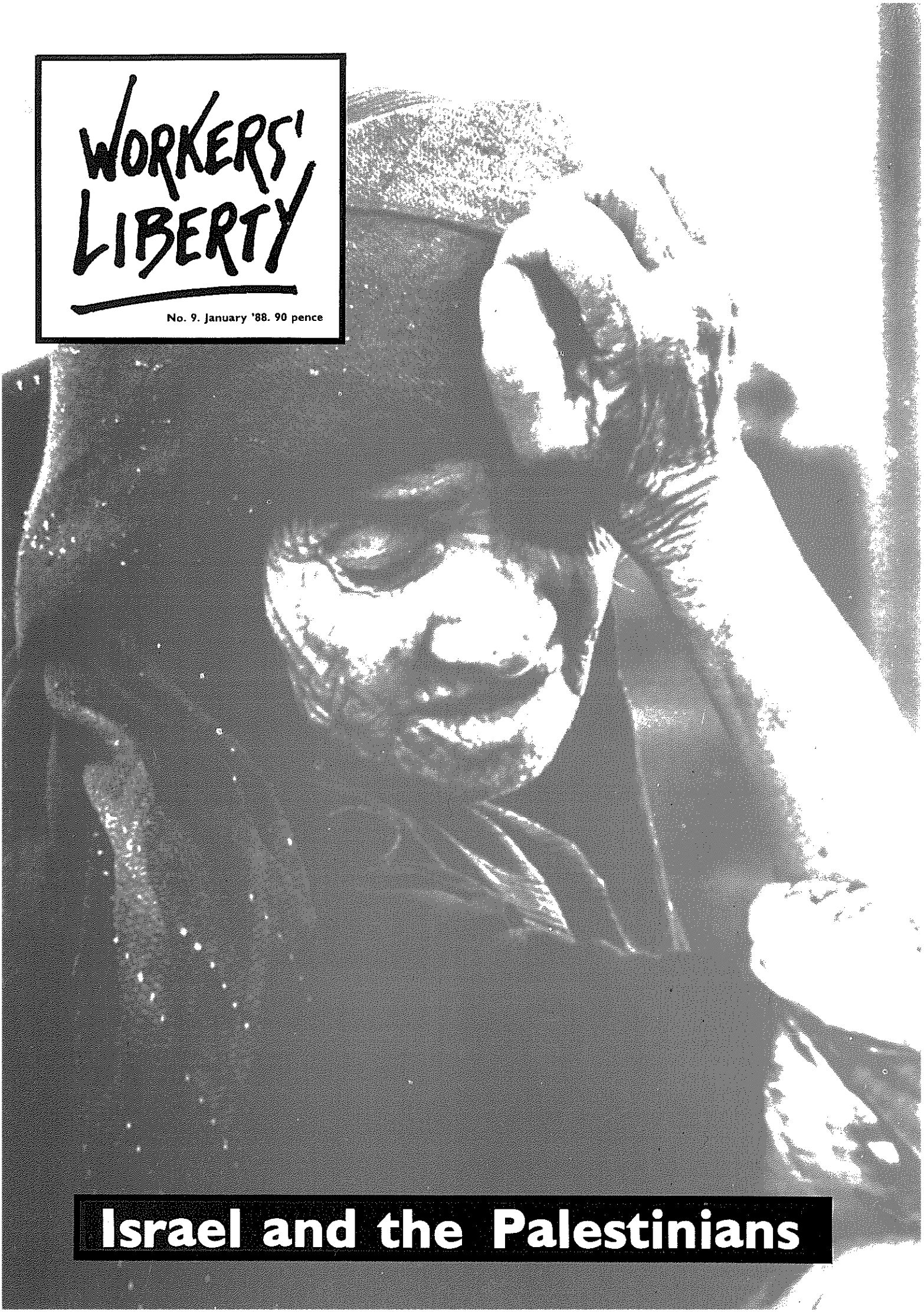

Israel and the Palestinians

WORKERS' LIBERTY

The emancipation of the working class is also the emancipation of all human beings without distinction of sex or race.

Karl Marx

Letter to readers

Marxists need to fight the class struggle on all three fronts — economic, political, and ideological. All too often we have failed on the ideological front, and nowhere worse than on the question of national conflicts.

In situations like Ireland and Palestine, the left has habitually collapsed into just echoing the nationalism of the oppressed (Catholics or Arabs), or blandly declaring that 'socialism is the answer' — or pretending that nationalism, if intense enough, will automatically produce socialism. We lose the ideological battle by failing even to face the facts.

In this issue of *Workers' Liberty* we print two articles by Leon Trotsky never before published in English which propose a different approach to the national question, that of consistent democracy. We also carry coverage of events in Israel and the occupied territories, and a speech by Tony Benn on Ireland, with a response.

The Establishment is arguing that the stock market crash of last October was an aberration, a temporary foul-up of the internal workings of Stock Exchanges. A special section of the issue argues the contrary — that the crash had profound roots, and is likely to have great repercussions.

Our debate section, 'Forum', has contributions on Scottish nationalism, movies, South Africa, and permanent revolution. The debates will continue in our next issue, together with articles we have had to hold over this time — a further instalment of Zbigniew Kowalewski's account of Solidarnosc in 1980-1 (in this issue we have an analysis by him of the recent Polish referendum), and a reply to Geoff Bell and Rayner Lysaght on Ireland.

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EDITORIAL

3
Palestine: two nations, two states

5
Nurses: starting a fightback

5
Afghanistan: Will the USSR pull out?

SURVEY

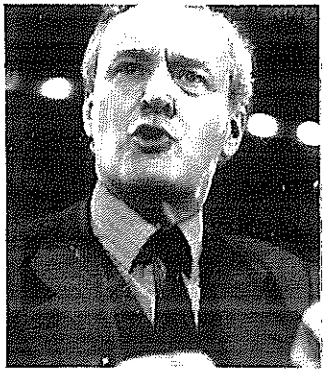
6
West Bank and Gaza: **Keeping Israel occupied**

7
Women workers: **Union Maids**

8
New Zealand: **Labour Thatcherites**

8
South Africa: **Civil war in Natal**

FEATURES



10
Tony Benn on Ireland after Enniskillen

12
Israel at the crossroads: articles from **the Other Israel**

15
Sean Matgamna on the lies the left tells itself about Ireland

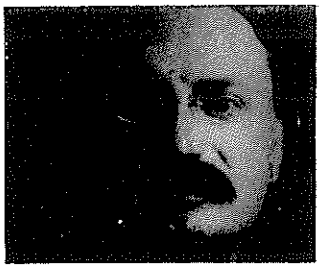
17
Zbigniew Kowalewski on Poland after the referendum

20
The nation Stalin deported. **Stan Crooke** tells the story of the Crimean Tatars

22
Clive Bradley looks at Tory attacks on lesbian and gay rights

24
Crash, bang, slump? **Paul Demuth** reports from London and New York on the Crash of '87

29
Martin Thomas on the growth of the world-wide casino economy in the 1980s



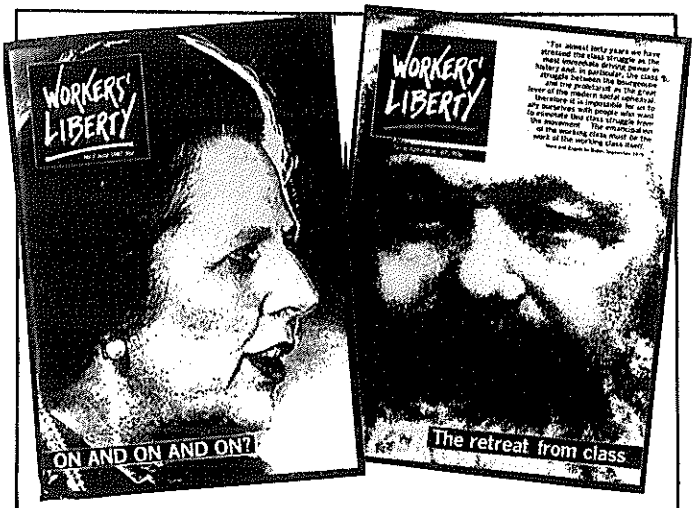
31
Trotsky on the national question. Two previously untranslated articles

FORUM

36
The Scottish Assembly, Movies, South African unions, Permanent Revolution

REVIEWS

39
Europe without America, Lessons from revolutions, Ireland and Britain, Community architecture, Pauline Kael, Costs of Empire, The real Lenin, Mr Moto, The red suffragette



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EDITORIAL

Palestine: two nations, two states

The insurgent Palestinian Arabs in Gaza and the West Bank are now teaching the people of Israel that Karl Marx was right when he wrote that "a nation which enslaves another can never itself be free".

Israel's victory in the Six Day War of June 1967 recreated pre-1948 Palestine, but under Jewish control and with the West Bank and Gaza as 'occupied territories'. The Arabs there have been treated as a conquered people. For over 20 years Israel has held the Arabs of the West Bank and Gaza under a brutal colonial-style regime of the iron fist.

It is no use arguing, as apologists for Israel do, that there are worse and more brutal regimes in the Middle East than the Israeli administration in the occupied territories. That is no excuse. Jewish colonists, aiming ultimately to displace the Arabs and expand the Jewish-majority area, have been allowed to settle there, and, since the victory of Likud ten years ago, encouraged. Arab leaders have been systematically deported by the government — and some of them assassinated by Israeli chauvinists — in a deliberate policy of beheading the Palestinian Arab nation. Reprisals have been taken against the civilian population. Arab children who dare throw stones at the occupying army risk being shot dead.

For a very long time this policy worked. The Arabs remained mostly quiescent and cowed. Resistance was sporadic and easily controlled. Within Israel and in the West Bank settlements, the poison of Jewish chauvinism and racism spread in the Jewish population. The victory of the Likud coalition in 1977 shifted the Israeli polity to the right. Open racists like Rabbi Meir Kehane, who advocates the expulsion of one and a half million Arabs from the occupied territories, moved in from the outer lunatic fringes of Israeli political life to become a power in the Knesset (parliament). Today opinion polls show that Kehane has the support of five per cent of Israelis.

Jewish religious fundamentalism is burgeoning in parallel to the rise of Muslim fundamentalism.

Even before the upsurge in Gaza and the West Bank, Israeli society had been polarising between those willing to follow Begin, Shamir, Sharon or Kehane, and those who held to a different hope for what Israel should be. A quarter of a million people demonstrated in 1982 against the massacre of Palestinian refugees by Lebanese Christians in Sabra and Chatila camps, in areas controlled by the Israeli army. The British equivalent would be six million people on the streets.

Yet those who want to get Israel out of its chauvinist trajectory have been caught in the logic of recent Israeli history. This is symbolised by the Labour Party. Labour now wants to hold peace talks with the Arabs and find a way out of the occupied territories, but it is locked into a coalition with Likud, which wants nothing of the sort. One consequence of the Arab upsurge may be to break the coalition.

The uprising in the occupied territories is the most important political development in the area since the rise of the Palestine Liberation Organisation in the aftermath of the 1967 war. It is the third stage of Palestinian response to their defeat in the Jewish-Arab war of 1948.

For the first 20 years the Palestinian Arabs were stunned and dispersed. They looked to the Arab governments, rather than to themselves, for redress. The Arab defeat in 1967 freed them and led the PLO to a far more active and independent policy. They combined international political campaigning with small-scale military or terrorist action against Israel. They set up bases first in Jordan, then in Lebanon.

They were massacred and driven out of both bases — in Lebanon, partly by Israel. The third stage of the Palestinian Arab response is the stage of mass resistance in the occupied territories themselves.

The signs are that the movement which began in December started locally and spontaneously, and was not part of a thought-out strategy by the PLO or anyone else. It started in response to the intolerable social and political conditions in the territories. The brutality with which the Israelis have responded can only inflame the revolt.

In mid-January Israeli soldiers, throwing tear gas, using guns, and wielding batons, invaded the Al Aqsa and Dome of the Rock mosques — the two most holy Muslim places outside Mecca. This was either a deliberate act calculated to boost Muslim fundamentalism (in the past Israel has done this in the occupied territories), or an act of the most brutally inept stupidity.

The degree of violence necessary to crush the revolt will probably be unacceptable to many in Israel, not to speak of international public opinion. It is the sort of situation Britain faced in Northern Ireland after 1970 — except that the overwhelming majority in the occupied territories are against Israel, and only a minority in Northern Ireland were against Britain. Yet in 18 years it has proved politically impossible for Britain to mobilise the degree of physical violence necessary to crush the IRA. Israel, too, may find it politically impossible to sustain the brutal war against the people of the occupied territories.

This crisis may bring the polarisation within Israel to a head. The options are limited. Already there is a small but important movement among youth in the Israeli army to refuse to serve in the occupied territories. The de facto recognition of Israel by the PLO puts pressure on realistic Israelis to reach a settlement while it is still possible. The coalition is publicly split over demands for a peace conference.

Israel is at a crossroads of its history comparable to that of 40 years ago. Continued occupation of the West Bank can only lead to a choice between two alternatives. Either Israel abandons its commitment to a Jewish national state, annexes the occupied territories, and grants full citizenship rights to the Arabs there — and it won't — or it becomes committed to indefinite rule by force over a large mass of oppressed Arabs. The second alternative could, if it lasted for decades, lead to a large-scale transformation of Israeli society into one in which the Jewish citizens were heavily dependent on the exploitation of the labour of Arab helots. To compare Israel to South Africa today is an ignorant or malicious libel — Israel still rests fundamentally on a *Jewish* working class — but after such a transformation it would become something not too far from South Africa.

These are the choices which the grassfire of Palestinian Arab revolt in the occupied territories brings the people of Israel up against sharply.

The only policy compatible with the long-term survival of Israel is one of peace with the Palestinian Arabs and the surrounding Arab peoples. That means recognition of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian Arabs, by way of the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories and negotiations with the PLO for the setting-up of an Arab Palestinian state side-by-side with Israel. It means mutual recognition of Israel and the Palestinian Arabs. It means two states for the two Palestinian nations, Jewish and Arab.

It is true that such a settlement does not depend on Israel alone. The Palestinian Arabs are today the oppressed, but the war that has shaped the last 40 years was launched in 1948 by the Arab states — with armies led by British officers — to destroy the new Jewish state. Israel is mainly surrounded by hostile Arab states. The PLO's recognition of Israel's right to exist is by no means clear and unambiguous. If Israel were to just get out of the occupied territories without a general political settlement, then there is no doubt that the territories would be used as military or terrorist bases against Israel.

But it cannot follow that Israel has a right to continue repressing the Palestinian Arabs. The solution is not indefinite Israeli occupation which deprives the Palestinian Arabs of their basic rights of self-control and self-direction. The solution is a peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinian Arabs.

Israel should get out of the occupied territories, and agree to the setting-up of an independent Palestinian Arab state there. That is the programme on which Arab and Jewish workers can begin to unite, to fight for a Socialist United States of the Middle East with the right of self-determination for all nationalities in the region.

Nurses

Starting a fight back

The beginning of industrial action by the nurses, in January 1988, could be a turning point in relations between the working class and the Tory government.

It could be a signal to the rest of the labour movement. Dismay at the cuts in the Health Service, support for increased spending on it, and public sympathy with health workers and nurses, are high. In the 1960s, when militant trade unionism had barely begun to develop in the Health Service, solidarity with nurses spurred dockers and other workers to strike. The resistance in the NHS now could be the spark that we have needed so badly since the defeat of the miners' strike.

Everyone knows that the NHS is in a terrible state, and that the Tories are now having to patch it up with

periodic injections of cash. The Tories claim that they have spent more on the NHS than any previous government, but they ignore the factors — improved but expensive medical techniques which keep patients alive longer, and a more elderly population — which undermine their figures. Everyone knows from personal experience than the NHS is a mess.

Everyone also knows that nurses and other health workers are badly paid for long, arduous hours. If the Tories want to take on the nurses, they may not be taking on industrial muscle, but they will be taking on a broad range of support.

In 1982 the health workers' pay campaign failed to win its full claim because of timid trade union leadership and the lack of sufficiently determined solidarity action. Since then, miners, printers, and other workers have gone down to defeat due to the total lack of solidarity organised from the top of the trade union movement.

Now the labour movement needs to throw its full weight behind the nurses and the NHS fightback. Other lessons of the past can help. In the 1982 health workers' action, a rank and file grouping, 'Health Workers for the Full Claim', played a significant role in organising militants across the health service. Such groups — only bigger — need to be built now, and not only in health unions. A *rank and file movement* is a vital component that the labour movement currently lacks.

1988 must be the year the Tories dread — when workers unite to defend themselves. We must make the current NHS crisis the beginning of the Tories' end.

Afghanistan

Will the USSR pull out?

In the eight years since they invaded Afghanistan in December 1979, the Russian army and air force have made war on the peoples of Afghanistan — a typical war of colonial conquest, using weapons and tactics that the Americans used in Vietnam and the Nazis in occupied Europe.

They have bombed villages in reprisal for guerilla activity, they have destroyed crops, and they have rounded up groups of hostile people. Over four million Afghans — nearly a quarter of the population — have fled across the border to Pakistan and Iran. Yet the USSR has no secure control of Afghanistan. The recent siege of the town of Khost by anti-USSR forces shows how weak the USSR's grip is on the country.

Now Russian government ministers talk openly about getting out of Afghanistan. But will they? They say that it depends on being able to set up a stable 'neutral' regime there before they leave. One idea which has been floating about for nearly a decade is to bring back the king who was overthrown by a military coup in 1974.

Gorbachev wants to get out and put an end to the haemorrhaging of the USSR's resources. He needs to muster resources for his drive to modernise the USSR's economy. But the USSR cannot afford to be seen to be driven out, to be scuttling.

One reason the USSR went into Afghanistan was to stop a client regime being overthrown. The alternative was to unnerve its other clients, in Africa for example. To get out without appearing to scuttle, the USSR needs a neutralist settlement. It may be difficult to get.

The rural people of Afghanistan normally bear arms. They have never relinquished their independence to any national government, Afghan or foreign. They have been at war for ten years, at first against the Stalinist-led military regime which took power by way of an army/airforce coup in April 1978, and then against the Russian invaders. Muslim fundamentalism is very strong among them. Iran has influence.

If the Afghans defeat the Russians, and in effect force them out, will they accept a 'neutralist' regime friendly to the USSR? Even if some of them would accept, who would impose it? The old Afghan state machine was already on the point of collapse before the USSR's invasion: what's left of it now?

The Afghan groups are notoriously divided among themselves. What unity is possible in support of a 'neutralist' solution?

Despite all this, the USSR can be driven out. The USSR may even be so desperate to get out that it will opt for a figleaf 'settlement' that will collapse soon after the 'Red' Army goes.

However the story of the Russian invasion of Afghanistan ends, it will have been a very important watershed for the would-be Trotskyist movement. In 1980 many people calling themselves Trotskyists welcomed the Russian presence in Afghanistan! The USSR was 'going to the aid of a revolution', gasped one of the most influential organisations, the Socialist Workers' Party of the USA. Those who didn't welcome the invasion mostly refused to call on the USSR to withdraw.

This phase lasted for a year or so, and then most groups quietly changed their line. The British *Militant* group is a notable exception, still supporting the 'Red' Army in its civilising war against most of the people of Afghanistan. What will they say now if the USSR gives Afghanistan back to the Afghans? Denounce the bureaucracy for betraying the revolution?

One thing none of the groups will do seriously is discuss their own zig-zags on the question. They should!

West Bank and Gaza

Keeping Israel occupied

Foreign Office man David Mellor's outrage that a 14-year old boy could be arrested for throwing a stone he didn't throw probably doesn't extend to what happens on the streets of Brixton. But his outrage at what the Israeli authorities have been doing in the Gaza Strip — one of the parts of Palestine occupied by Israel in 1967 — is a sign of the times.

He described Jabaliya refugee camp, home to 50,000 Palestinians, as "an affront to civilised values". Civilised or not, it is a symbol of the appalling reality of military occupation — the reality that has driven the oppressed Palestinians to revolt.

Palestine Liberation Organisation leader Yasser Arafat has called it "a people's uprising". Certainly the revolt — rioting, strikes, protests — centring in Gaza but extending into the West Bank and Israel itself — is the biggest wave of resistance to Israeli occupation probably ever, and certainly since 1982. At the time of writing, 24 Arab men, women and children have been killed by Israeli 'security' services, and 200 have been injured.

As we go to press, four Palestinians have been deported by Israel — in contravention of international law. Deportations and the threat of them have fired further protests.

Israeli repression has not only been too much for the British government to stomach; widespread condemnation has come from all quarters, including Israel's supposedly rock-solid support amongst American Jewry. It raises the question: might Israel be forced out of the occupied territories? As the 'Jerusalem Post' commented, "the inhabitants of the territories (have) realised their collective power to change events, despite the lack of formal organisation" What might the future hold?

The disturbances began in Gaza on December 9, supposedly following a road accident in which four Palestinians were killed by an Israeli truck, allegedly in retaliation for an Israeli death in Gaza City. It was only a spark, of course, and the flames spread rapidly. Strikes (closure of businesses) have covered Gaza; in the West Bank protests have also been intense.

The Israeli army has nearly doubled its presence on the West Bank (particularly in the towns of Hebron, Nablus and Tulkarm) and tripled them in the Gaza Strip, according to its Chief of Staff. It has more troops deployed than it originally used to seize the territories during the 'Six Day War' of 1967.

Inside pre-'67 Israel, too, there were widespread protests during a "Peace Day" strike — particularly in the towns of Jaffa, Shfaram and Umm El-Fahm.

The Israeli authorities have shown little willingness to compromise; both Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin (the latter a 'Labour' politician, the former with a far-right history going back to pre-Israel days) have reiterated the "iron fist" policy. Shamir, denouncing his American critics, firmly said: "It is impossible to dictate to someone from afar how to defend oneself against anarchy, riots, attacks on the state, its citizens, its peace and security."

Former Labour Prime Minister Shimon Peres (Labour and the far right Likud Party worked out an elaborate job-share after the last election in which they swapped the premiership half-way through term) voiced the idea of a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Gaza (and only Gaza) to an American audience only to insist that he had been "taken out of context" when Likud acused him of defeatism.

The current crisis in the occupied territories is not new. There has been an escalating cycle of violence for several years. In 1985, the Jerusalem Post's military correspondent described the situation in the West Bank and Gaza as "something horribly reminiscent of Lebanon". And Israeli tacticians do fear yet another bloody embroilment.

It was Peres as Prime Minister who stepped up repression, particularly against student, trade union and other activists too closely identified with the PLO. In 1985, the two nations were described by one expert as "marching towards civil war".

The revolt, and publicity about it, has focused on Gaza, often ignored when the occupation is discussed. The conditions in Jabaliya refugee camp — a hideous slum — have hit world headlines. People are beginning to see that dispossessed Palestian youth consider that they have have nothing to lose.

Gaza was seized by Israel, like the West Bank, in June 1967. Before that it was run by Egyptian military authorities — who were no kinder to the Palestinians than the Israelis have been. Political parties were banned. Gazans, officially "stateless", depended for passports on Egyptian government permits.

Before 1957, 70% of Palestinians in Gaza depended upon the United Nations Relief Work Agency for their main source of income. Things haven't improved much since. It is reported to be one of the most densely populated areas of the world — with 460,000 Palestinians living there today. 80,000 people before 1948 were joined by 160-180,000 refugees from Israel when it was founded.

Gaza was a base for Palestinian guerrillas after Israeli occupation began in 1967. It was even admitted by top Israeli soldiers like Moshe Dayan that int he late 'sixties the guerrillas controlled Gaza by night. Then General Ariel Sharon changed that with his "pacification" plan in 1971 in which hundreds of guerrillas were captured and killed.

Gazan Palestinians face the creeping annexation of their land experienced on the West Bank. By 1983, 319 of the total land area of Gaza had been confiscated for purposes of Israeli settlement. Israel claims to confiscate only "state" land — meaning land never privately registered under the Ottoman land code.

The Middle East Research and Information Project (no. 136-7) describes the reality of the situation:

"Palestinian owners are frequently notified of confiscation by the arrival of a bulldozer, under military guard, to rip up vines and trees, or by a new barbed-wire fence surrounding their property. Most of the land that has been confiscated is along the seashore...The Israeli planners see this coastline, with its miles of undeveloped beaches, as a major tourist asset for the future." (p.11).

Political organisation is much weaker in Gaza than the West Bank, and trade union organisation virtually non-existent. A rise of Islamic fundamentalist groups to rival the more secular nationalist PLO has been much noted in recent years.

But the fundamentalists' real support is hard to gauge. The current wave of resistance does not seem to be fundamentalist-inspired.

That there would be this kind of explosion was inevitable. Israel has built up 20 years of hatred and resentment by its occupation and the repressive tactics it has necessarily used. Can Israel control the situation?

Many Israelis are speaking out against occupation. 160 army reservists, including a Jerusalem councillor, three majors and five captains, issued a statement that they would "refuse to take part in suppressing the uprising and insurrection". They went on, "the uprising...and its brutal suppression...graphically illustrates the price of occupation." They said they could "no longer bear the burden of shared responsibility for this moral and political deterioration."

But the overwhelming drift of Israeli public opinion is to the right. The fascist KACH party of Meir Kahane continues to grow; and Kahane's frequent claim that he "only says what others believe" is probably true even of members of the government.

If a solution is to come from the present uprising, it will depend upon outside solidarity. Israel should be made to get out of the occupied territories and allow the formation there of a fully independent Palestinian state.

Clive Bradley

Women workers

Union maids

Over the past eight years there has been a massive growth in women's employment, in particular part-time work for women.

The Manpower Services Commission annual report for 1986-7 shows that a staggering 42% of new jobs created went to part-time women compared to only 8.6% to men working full-time. Indeed over the past two years the only type of employment (other than self-employed) which has expanded has been part-time women's work, mainly in the service sector.

Part-time workers face particular problems. They are often excluded from employers' pension and sick pay schemes and have restricted access to overtime, bonuses, etc.

They are also extremely under-unionised. Overall women's unionisation is only 60% of that of men — considerably less for part-timers. The bulk of NUPE's membership is women working part time in jobs such as hospital cleaning and school meals. But women in the rag trade, hotels and catering, contract cleaning, are generally non-unionised.

All sorts of factors contribute to this. Women might work in small groups — maybe 3 or 4 women office cleaners for instance. Or childcare commitments may make real participation in a union very difficult. Decisively, there is a feeling that unions are 'not for us' — union meetings a night for the lads in the pub, unions as having nothing to say about the needs and problems of women workers.

This picture has on the whole been true. But the past year or so has witnessed a positive scramble by the GMB and the TGWU to recruit hitherto untapped sources of union members — CP schemes, young people, part-time workers.

Both the GMB and the TGWU have suffered massive drops in membership over the past eight years. From a membership of nearly one million in 1979, the GMB now has only 870,000 members, whereas the TGWU lost a huge 29% between 1979 and 1985. It is clear that the new orientation towards non-traditional workers has less to do with a road to Damascus flash of enlightment than with a desperate need to boost flagging membership. As John Edmonds, general secretary of the GMB said, "without more women members, we don't have a future." Edmonds reckons that by the 1990s the union will have to recruit three women for every man to achieve any growth in membership.

This underlies the GMB's launch of its 'Flare' campaign — a campaign with a 'corporate image' designed to appeal to part-timers, women, blacks and youth. The campaign was launched with a questionnaire, geared around the individual rights of workers, representation at tribunals and the like, hoping to show that union membership can be of real relevance to people's working lives.

All very fine on paper but how does the reality match up? In the Midlands it seems that real attempts have been made to reach in particular women employed in the hotel and catering sector. But generally it remains a paper campaign, any impetus being dependent on the personal commitment of individual regional officials.

A similar picture emerges with the TGWU's 'Link-up' campaign. The TGWU has a federal structure which again means the initiative is left up to individual regions. Region 6, the north-west, has a record of attempting to reach these groups which pre-dates the initiative of 'Link-up', and seems to have attempted to continue this. But in the Midlands the 'campaign' remains a pile of glossy lealets in the union offices.

Both the TGWU and the GMB have attempted to improve the representation of women within union structures. The TGWU now insists that each region

sends at least one woman delegate to TUC congress, and the GMB reserves ten of its executive places for women.

NUPE has recently attempted to increase involvement of its women members. In Dudley lunchtime union meetings were organised for women school cleaners and dinner ladies. Education has been geared to developing women to take on higher positions. Transport to meetings and creche provision are now real issues.

Other unions too are finding they have to become more responsive to the needs of women workers. Civil Service unions in Cardiff have launched a campaign for workplace cervical cancer screenings and the SOGAT branch in Manchester has experimented with providing cancer screening for its women members.

The typical worker in Britain is no longer the white, male car worker or docker but the part-time woman cleaner or sewing machinist. For unions like the GMB and TGWU, recruiting women is a question of survival. It remains to be seen how far these unions can meet the needs of the women part-timers they are so desperate to court.

Lynn Fergusson

New Zealand

Labour Thatcherites

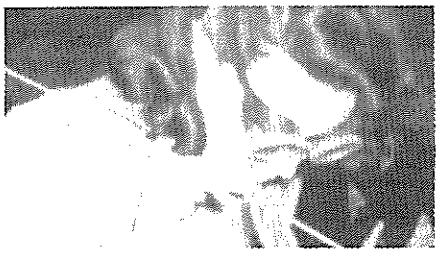
Labour's Minister for Finance Roger Douglas introduced sweeping changes to the New Zealand economy on 17 December.

Waiting until after Parliament had adjourned for Christmas, Douglas announced that: a new flat rate of personal income tax; a 50% cut in tariffs; privatisation of $14 billion worth of assets; the end of the government monopoly over telecommunications and a slashing of company tax.

Not only had Douglas failed to allow a Parliamentary debate on the proposals he didn't even bother to consult the Labour Caucus. Caucus was only told of the details an hour before the announcement was made.

Douglas and Prime Minister Lange have overseen three years of probably the purest free-market policies in the world. These new changes continue the trend established in both New Zealand and Australia of Labour parties doing what the Conservatives have only talked of doing.

Since 1984 Douglas and Lange have floated the dollar, replaced centralised wage fixing with a system close to the American style of plant-level bargaining, privatised several of the government's key assets including 25% of the national carrier, Air New Zealand, and lifted the huge subsidies and industry protection that was a feature of the predominantly



agricultural economy.

Douglas also introduced the extremely regressive Goods and Services Tax. Similar to VAT, it has no exemptions and was set at 10% when introduced in October 1986.

As in Australia, the New Zealand Labour government has neutralised the Opposition parties by implementing the policies they were too nervous to introduce. But they have also disoriented the labour movement.

The peak union Federation of Labour which is dominated by pro-Soviet officials, refused to criticise Lange's government in the early days because of its stand on US warships. The result has been a government acting openly against the interests of workers and the thousands of small farmers and a labour movement that has been disarmed. Douglas, himself a millionaire, has been more interested in creating the environment for profit creation and speculation, and in so doing has created two New Zealands, like Thatcher's two Britains.

Douglas refutes these claims with the classic myth of social-democracy. "I've always stressed that the interests of business and the interests of workers are one and the same. They both go together, need one another, therefore what they've got to do is get together, build a bigger cake..."

The reality in New Zealand though is that he cake is being distributed in very uneven slices.

Tony Brown

South Africa

Natal's civil war

"At 22.30 there was a loud bang at our door and we heard men claim that they were the police. The men demanded that I open the door. They said that they had come looking for *qabane* — a reference to 'comrade'.

At this time, my yard was thick with Inkatha men: there could have been well over 100 about the area of my house. The men were heavily armed with assegais, spears, bush knives and sticks.

One of the leaders insisted: We want to know why he did not come to join Inkatha at our meeting.

Perceiving that there was no alternative, Bhekabantu and I decided to wage a fight. I grabbed a stick, but the Inkatha mob said: 'No, old man, we don't want you, we want your son.'

We heard members of the mob exclaim: 'We must burn the house', and thereafter unsuccessfully attempt to get petrol from a car. In all the confusion Bhekabantu managed to slip out the back door of the house.

As my niece Mnandi later recounted, Bhekabantu entered her house in an effort to hide from the mob. Moments later, the mob broke the windows to Mnandi's house and smashed down the doors. They entered the house and repeatedly stabbed Bhekabantu.

After killing him they pulled him from the bed and dragged him outside where he was left for dead."

Willi Mpulo, who told this story, lives in Sweetwaters, outside Pietermaritzburg, Natal. His story is tragic but typical.

In the first week of 1988 over 35 people died in fighting in and around Pietermaritzburg, as vigilantes from Chief Buthelezi's conservative tribal movement Inkatha battled with trade unionists and radicals from the United Democratic Front for control of the townships.

The origins of the present conflict go back to Kwa Mashu schools boycott in 1980, when Inkatha mobilised vigilante gangs called Amabutho against the radical students.

In 1985 the violence really started to escalate. In August there was a consumer boycott of white shops in and around Pietermaritzburg in solidarity with the workers sacked by the British multi-national BTR. It led to open conflict between the independent workers' movement on the one hand and conservative black business interests and Inkatha on the other.

After August violent and murderous attacks on trade union organisers became a regular occurrence in Natal.

August 1985 also witnessed student demonstrations and boycotts to protest at the murder by unkown assailants of lawyer and UDF activist Victoria Mxenge. Mare and Hamilton in their study 'An appetite for power' tell the story.

"The boycotts and marches which began on 5 August were initially composed mostly of students and scholars but they began to draw a number of unemployed youths, looters and opportunists in their wake. The targets of people's anger, which at first appeared to be obvious 'symbols of the system' such as policemen, policemen's houses and administrative and school buildings, soon changed to shops, businesses and trading stores. Looting and arson occurred throughout the week in Umlazi, Kwa Mashu and the squatter town of Inanda.

By 7 August an estimated 1000 Indians had fled Inanda to seek safety in the Indian township of Phoenix after their homes and stores had been attacked and looted. According to Sitas, by 8 August 'a racial "psychosis", aggravated

by the media's coverage of events, reminiscent of 1949 was gripping both Inanda and Phoenix'. Indeed the media made much of the hostility of Africans towards Indians and failed to give due weight to the burning of African-owned shops in Inanda or the fact that most of the people killed in the area were African.

From 7 August Inkatha vigilantes mobilised to protect businesses and property in the townships and to flush-out and punish not only looters and criminals but large numbers of scholars, students and UDF activists and leaders. In the process many innocent bystanders were hurt, killed or left homeless.

The week of violence left progressive politial organisations generally, and even Inkatha itself, with glaring gaps in their ability to control or direct events or their supporters' responses to those events. Inkatha may have been better at predicting events than others. Buthelezi and other Inkatha leaders had frequently warned of the wrath that would be unleashed by their supporters against those disrupting schooling or destroying property in KwaZulu."

It seems that Buthelezi used the role played by his vigilantes in restoring order to the Durban townships to boost his support and increase his connections with conservatives in the Indian community.

The August 1985 battles also saw the emergence of brutal township warlords inside Inkatha. They had a certain degree of autonomy from Buthelezi and could say things that Buthelezi could not get away with. A taste of just how 'peaceful', 'non-violent' and 'legitimate' is this side of Inkatha is given by this outburst by KwaZulu MP and Inkatha Central Committee member Thomas Shabulule:

"With this pistol I will leave hundreds of UDF supporters dead on the battlfield. I long for the day when there will be open war between Inkatha and the UDF. It will prove who is who in the political battle." That open war is now taking place in and around Pietermaritzburg.

Buthelezi's movement has historically been quite weak in this area. It can boast no more than 5,000 members in an area of over half a million people. The independent unions and progressive township organisations have built up a base in the area, partly as a result of the BTR strike. They have been helped by the modern urban and industrial environment, which has loosened traditional tribal loyalties.

The immediate spark to the recent killings was an attempt by Inkatha in September to gain ground in Pietermaritzburg by launching a recruitment drive in the Edendale area.

Their approach was "sign this card or I'll kill you". A chief said in an Edendale Church meeting that everyone had to join Inkatha and "woe unto them" who did not. Within 24 hours a mother and her son who refused to join Inkatha were killed.

Since September the violence has escalated. Community groups and trade unions have formed self-defence groups to defend themselves from Inkatha vigilantes. Mpopomeni, the township base of the BTR strikers, is like a fortress. Parts of Edendale controlled by UDF and COSATU people have been renamed Angola and Moscow. Inkatha-controlled districts are no-go areas for the left.

Buthelezi's Inkatha movement is difficult to define precisely. Buthelezi poses as a leader of the 'liberation movement', yet at the same time he is boss of an ethnically based political party and ruler of a bantustan.

He preaches black unity and liberation yet can be viciously anti-Indian in his speeches. Some of his supporters go in

Buthelezi

for tirades against Xhosa speakers and all other 'Africans' who are not Zulu. Buthelezi strikes a popular pose as a 'friend of the people' yet is a bitter enemy of the workers' movement.

Inkatha has many of the attributes of a fascist movement — terror, populism, ethnic exclusivism and murderous hostility to the labour movement. It even has a military-style training camp for the Inkatha Youth Brigade, who provide a substantial part of the Amabutho or vigilantes, and a labour front, UWUSA, dedicated to undermining and physically attacking COSATU and other independent unions.

Perhaps the best description of Buthelezi's potential historic function for South African capitalism was provided by the *Financial Mail* when they nominated him 'Man of the Year' in 1985.

"History...is made by individuals. And the question is: who can deliver SA to a new era of conciliation and relative harmony? (We use the adjective 'relative' advisedly; it would be naive to believe that anything short of a smoking ruin would satisfy many of those now fomenting violence. They will have to be put down)...

"One name comes easily to mind ...and it is that of Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi...a man of compromise...he eschews violence...against disinvestment...against consumer boycotts...an unabashed free marketeer."

To play that kind of role Buthelezi needs to break out of Natal and establish himself as a *national* political figure. To do so Buthelezi needs to drive out any opposition to him in his base of Natal.

Buthelezi's movement presents great problems for socialists. Despite coercion the movement obviously has *mass* working class support. Many ordinary COSATU members still maintain an Inkatha link though they reject Inkatha's tame union, UWUSA.

Inkatha's main power base comes from control of the structure of the KawZulu bantustan. Buthelezi identifies himself and his movement with a long tradition of Zulu nationalism, stretching back to an earlier and different version of Inkatha in the 1930s, the Bambatha rebellion of 1906 and the prolonged resistance of the Zulu kingdom to colonialism in the 19th century.

This tradition of resistance and the powerful symbols derived from it, provide an important element in Inkatha's ability to mobilise. Zulu nationalism has real and deep roots.

Buthelezi has enhanced his status at a national and international level through his links with liberal and not so liberal forces in the white establishment in Natal. The KwaZulu/Natal Indaba represents an attempt by Buthelezi to further pursue these links with an agenda that includes the future possibility of some form of multi-racial federal regional government for Natal.

While the first priority for the liberation movement is obvoiously self-defence against Inkatha's vigilantes, a broader discussion is needed on the political strategy for winning away Inkatha's working class base. This discussion has started. Some people in COSATU and the UDF, on the right and on the left, had raised the question of participation in the Indaba and maybe in local government structures as a way of exposing Buthelezi and providing a platform for working class demands and an opportunity to reach the base of Inkatha. Others believe that at the moment the focus can only be on self-defence and basic anti-Inkatha propaganda and education of the base.

And some rule out any challenge to Inkatha by way of apartheid or bantustan structures on principle, as such involvement would mean collaborating with the structures of oppression.

The last argument seems the weakest. Historically the Marxist movement has always rejected such moralistic boycott arguments. For instance, Lenin argued for participation in the Tsar's pseudo-parliament, the Duma, after the defeat of the 1905 revolution in Russia.

Is a tactical reorientation away from 'boycott on principle' the way to respond to the decline of the township struggles that have swept South Africa since 1984 and to the particular problem of Inkatha in Natal?

Anne Mack

Ireland after Eniskillen

By Tony Benn MP

Many people were shocked by what happened at Eniskillen; but also by the response to it. For a while we were told it was not possible to discuss the question of Ireland. Ken Livingstone was given the full media treatment. I know what it's like. The media used this treatment to avoid discussing the issues. They didn't want to discuss Ireland — they wanted to discuss Ken Livingstone.

Another purpose of this treatment is to distract people's attention from the long historical background, without which it is quite impossible to understand what has happened. If we're going to make progress — and I think we are — we must excavate some of the background to the struggle.

One of the things missing in modern British politics is the radical tradition that goes back to before the birth of socialism; the opposition to militarism, the opposition to imperialism, the opposition to the dictatorship of the mind. This is readily apparent when discussing the 'Irish Question', as it is called.

In 1892 my grandfather stood as a Liberal and a Home Ruler against the Tory President of the Local Government Board, as it was then called — the Nicholas Ridley of the day. In response the Tory, Ritchie, said:

"To vote against the government of the day would be a vote for civil war, for anarchy". That was in 1892. And when the London County Council was set up the Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt refused it control of the police on the grounds of "Irish terrorism".

This argument has gone on and on. At the time of the Black and Tans in the '20s, my father moved an amendment to the King's Speech condemning the coalition government for having handed over to the military authorities an unrestricted discretion in the definition of punishment of offences and frustrating the prospects of an agreed settlement to the problem of Irish self-government.

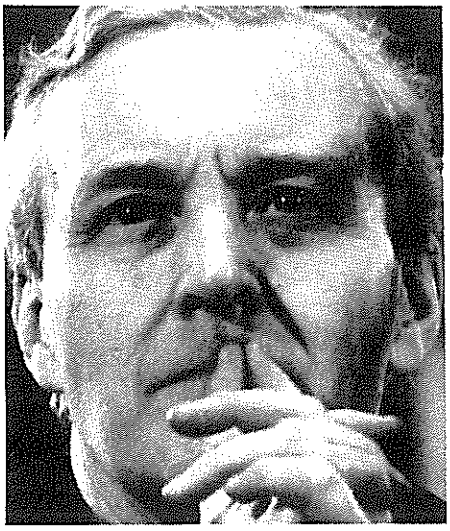
I think that it's important to root this in history. Those who forget history are condemned to repeat the mistakes of history.

The continued British occupation of Ireland takes away the liberties of the British people as well as those of the Irish people — their rights to live a full life in independence and unity. We therefore have a common interest in finding a way to end this mutual tragedy as soon as possible.

Public opinion in Britain is well ahead of the political leadership on this matter as on so many others. Millions of people realise that if there is ever to be peace there must be a negotiated settlement to the war — after the decision to withdraw has been taken. The violence in Northern Ireland indicates the urgency for a negotiated settlement.

The partition of Ireland was itself the product of a British Government policy of the ballot and the bullet under which the Black and Tans were sent in to undermine the clear majority vote for Irish independence after the First World War — a policy opposed by Labour then as it should be now.

Since then there has been a succession of failures. The dispatch of British troops in 1969 failed, so did detention without trial, power-sharing, Diplock Courts,



strip-searching, direct rule, use of CS gas and plastic bullets and the Anglo-Irish deal — these have all failed in their purpose as recent events have shown.

Meanwhile Northern Ireland has been used as a testing ground for methods of control which have been used on the mainland at the expense of our civil liberties.

The question we have to face is not whether, but when, how soon and under what conditions British withdrawal takes place. The starting point must therefore be the setting of a fixed date for that withdrawal to which we would adhere and for discussions to begin with everyone in the North to work out what will happen once Britain has withdrawn.

That is why the Campaign Group of Labour MPs has decided to present a Bill in the House of Commons to terminate British jurisdiction in Northern Ireland, to campaign around that Bill with working people in both our countries so we can all liberate ourselves to build a decent and fair society in Britain and Ireland.

That's a summary of our position. Now let's look at some of the objections we will face when advocating this view.

The first problem is that there is a basic contradiction in the position of those who say we were there because we are involved and it is part of the UK.

There's an awful lot of ignorance in Britain about Ireland, encouraged by the media. And it's an awful thing to say but when there's no violence, there is no discussion — when there is violence, you can't discuss it. If anyone tries, they're greeted with a yawn or a broad sigh.

Another argument used by Labour people is the argument about democracy. That the republican movement in the North is a denial of democracy. Of course, the reality is that Lloyd George denied the democratic vote by the use of enforced partition.

There has been no vote and none is contemplated, in which the Irish people as a whole would be involved — or the British people for that matter.

We are told that there should be no talks with republican leaders, but everyone knows that even the Conservatives have had talks with republican leaders. A recent PLP meeting was designed to be a drum head court martial to deal with Mr Ken Livingstone. Yet Clive Soley, our former front bench spokesperson met Sinn Fein, Merlyn Rees met Sinn Fein. We are misled into assuming that there have never been talks — it's an important point to make.

Then there is the argument that you cannot talk to terrorists. The word 'terrorists' is a term of abuse to describe those with whom you disagree. According to Mrs Thatcher the ANC are terrorists. According to President Reagan the Contras are freedom fighters. According to the British Establishment the people in Afghanistan are freedom fighters. Our history has it that the Free French in World War II who blew up restaurants with German soldiers were freedom fighters. The term doesn't stand up as an argument.

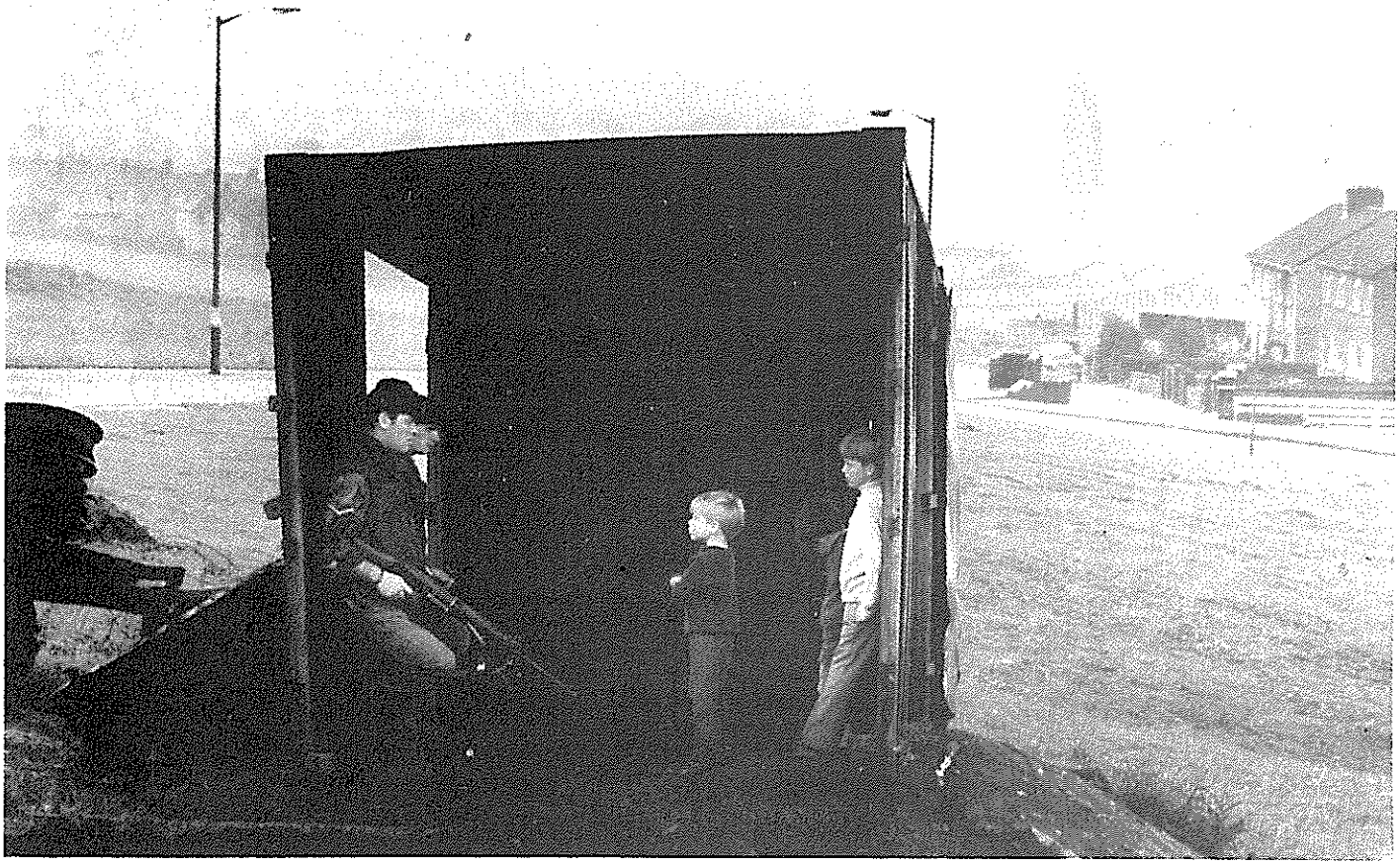
If you want to get rid of violence you have to deal with the political problem that underpins it. To argue that anyone who wants to hold talks with republicans is stimulating violence is to speak an absolute untruth. That is doing the opposite of what has to be done — to seek a political solution.

They've even come up with a new Oath of Loyalty. This sort of thing goes back to 1681 — there's a long, long history which we have to expose and understand.

When they say it's impossible to dispose of the Protestants who don't want unity they forget that in World War II Winston Churchill offered Dublin unity without consulting Stormont. A Tory PM went much further than Ken Livingstone in saying to Dublin, "You can have the North, provided you enter the war."

Without the presence of British troops everyone in the North would be able to face the problems more easily in the light of their own situations.

The other argument is that Dublin



doesn't want unity. But, of course, partition creates two states whose structures depend on the border. The politics based on the border lie at the root of many of the problems which face Ireland.

Then there's the argument that there would be bloodshed if Britain withdrew. The fact is that there has been bloodshed for many centuries. When the troops went in in 1969 there was a proposal from Dublin that a UN peace-keeping force be sent in.

I've believed for a long time that Mrs Thatcher's interests are the same as those of the British Establishment when Carson could threaten a revolt. She wouldn't spend £1 billion a year on that basis. The reason is that with the present Irish constitution you'd have a non-aligned Irish state. But if the Republic joined NATO tomorrow the British would be out much sooner, because that would be an adequate substitute for the British army there now.

Then we come to the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which I voted against. It was a fraudulent agreement which pretended to be all things to all people. It hinted that it recognised an all-Irish dimension and at the same time recognised the veto. My opinion is that although I opposed it and think it won't work it confirms the recognition by this government of a special position there.

But also, it was done to win the support of the US and the EEC to the partition of Ireland and the fact that this was thought to be necessary is an indication of the weakness of Britain's international position. I think the deal will soon be shunted into the long list of failures on Ireland.

Now I come to the position of the Labour Party itself on Ireland and right back at the beginning we had a position of outright opposition. After the war we got dragged into a bipartisan position on Ireland. Many efforts were made to drag us out of that position and we did make a move towards a break with bipartisanship and now with support for the Anglo-Irish Agreement we're back in a bipartisan posture.

> 'Then there's the argument that there would be bloodshed if Britain withdrew. The fact is that there has been bloodshed for many centuries.'

It is time for us to renew the campaign for British withdrawal. We've always been told you can't raise the Irish question because it is difficult and divisive, but if we had adopted a clear position a long time ago we would have made some real progress.

We must remember that Northern Ireland has been a testing ground for weapons and methods of repression that we've seen employed in the UK. About ten years ago Time magazine had an interview with a British officer who said that all British soldiers must be brought here to prepare them for what must be done on the mainland.

The military's minds are now on the instruments of domestic control. We saw that in the miners' strike. It is only when this is made clear to people that we will make progress.

What we need now is a clear decision to withdraw. Some want this done immediately. Personally I think we need to set a date and adhere to it. The Bill we are going to propose is based on the Palestine Act of 1947. That is the only precedent, where a British government unilaterally decided to terminate its interest in Palestine. There was a date fixed and it was adhered to. The terms of the Bill are based on those of 1947, designed by the best parliamentary draughtsmen of the time to be most appropriate for the protection of British servicemen during withdrawal.

I don't doubt for a moment that there would be problems in pursuing such a course. But I think that is what we should go for. I think the reaction would in general be a positive one, but if there were peace-keeping problems the one army in the world least equipped to deal with them would be the British Army whose withdrawal we would be announcing.

In campaigning for this we should see it as a joint enterprise. We are campaigning for the liberation of Ireland/Britain and of Britain/Ireland. We should get away from the bloodshed which has characterised our relationship and move to one of cooperation for the development of a decent society there and here.

I'm absolutely certain that whatever the reaction of the media and the Establishment that before the end of this century we shall see that withdrawal take place.

Tony Benn gave the LCI Miriam James Memorial Lecture.

September '87

Israel at the crossroads

A growing number of Israeli citizens face a status quo which they feel is untenable. Palestinian opposition to the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is on the rise; violent demonstrations take place daily; Israeli soldiers and settlers are attacked in various parts of the occupied territories; an Israeli army officer was shot to death, in broad daylight, on Gaza's main street (and Israeli officials admitted the action to have been "daring" and "audacious").

In Israel itself, the Arab citizens outspokenly express their unwillingness to remain second-class citizens. On June 24, declared to be "Equality Day", practically the entire Arab population of Israel participated in a general strike, demanding the redress of several pressing abuses. The strike call was endorsed by the entire Arab political leadership, ranging from the Progressive List for Peace and the Communist Party to the Arab members of the Israeli Labor Party.

Despite the government's attempts to stop the strike, the number of strike-breakers was negligible. (In the government's favour, it must be mentioned that, unlike during the "Day of the Land" strike in 1976, no army units were sent into Arab villages, and thus, violence and bloodshed were avoided.)

Confronted with this upsurge the State of Israel finds itself faced with the urgent necessity of coming to terms with its situation in the Middle East, with its Arab neighbours, with its own Arab citizens. Not all Israelis are, as yet, ready for this; some, unwilling to face the implications of this process, seek refuge in extremism.

For many years, Rabbi Meir Kahane held the dubious distinction of being the only Israeli politician to openly advocate the expulsion of the Arabs from Israel and the occupied territories. Other political leaders, even those of the extreme right, shied away from publicly endorsing such ideas.

In July 1987, this situation changed drastically; two respectable members of the Israeli establishment openly voiced their support for the "transfer" of the Arabs. One of them was Major-General (res) Rehavam Ze-evi, a veteran of the prestigious pre-state "Palmach" militia, a personal friend of many of Israel's political and economic leaders, and the curator of the Tel-Aviv municipal museum. The second new champion of "transfer" is Michael Dekel, Deputy Defence Minister in the National Unity Government, a member in good standing of the Likud block, and a close associate of Prime Minister Shamir.

The racist statements of Ze-evi and Dekel aroused angry reactions in the press; a demonstration was held in front of Dekel's house; several motions of no confidence in the government were presented in the Knesset. However, the Israeli Labor Party — which, in the past has precipitated cabinet crises over trifles — chose to make no more than token protests against Dekel's statement. Defence Minister Rabin, who has the legal right to fire his deputy, refrained from doing so.

Dekel's own party contented itself by stating that the "transfer" is "Dekel's private idea".

Simultaneously with these developments, in various places local racists have made attempts to implement the "transfer" in practice: in Ramat-Amidar, a suburb of Tel-Aviv, a mob broke into an apartment, wounded the Arab inhabitants and set the apartment on fire; in Petach-Tikva, the slogan "Arabs Out" was painted on a car belonging to an Arab inhabitant of the town; in the resort of Netanyah, thugs assaulted the members of an Oriental Jewish family who spoke Arabic...

Clearly the racists have no chance for long-term success; in the second half of the twentieth century, their course can only lead Israel to national suicide. More and more Israelis come to realise that their future can only be safeguarded through peace and coexistence. Anti-racist demonstrators take to the streets of the Israeli cities. The Anti-Peace Law, forbidding Israelis to meet PLO representatives is again and again openly defied. A group of Labor doves met PLO officials with the party leadership turning a blind eye. Even the Likud is no longer monolithic.

While Michael Dekel made his infamous proposal, his Likud colleague, Minister Moshe Arens, placed in charge of Arab Affairs, startled the Israeli public in quite a different way: Arens declared his support for returning the villagers of Iqrit and Bir'am, in the Gallilee, to the villages from which they were uprooted nearly forty years ago. Though hedged with various unpalatable conditions, Arens' proposal was more than any previous government offered to these villagers.

The struggle for Israel's future is on. At all levels, Israeli society is becoming divided and polarised. In the coming period, the vital forces of this society will be put to the test.

Adam Keller

As well as the Israeli government which shoots and bludgeons Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza, there is another Israel. We reproduce excerpts from 'The Other Israel', produced by the Israeli Committee for Israeli-Palestinian peace.

No peace till independent Arab state

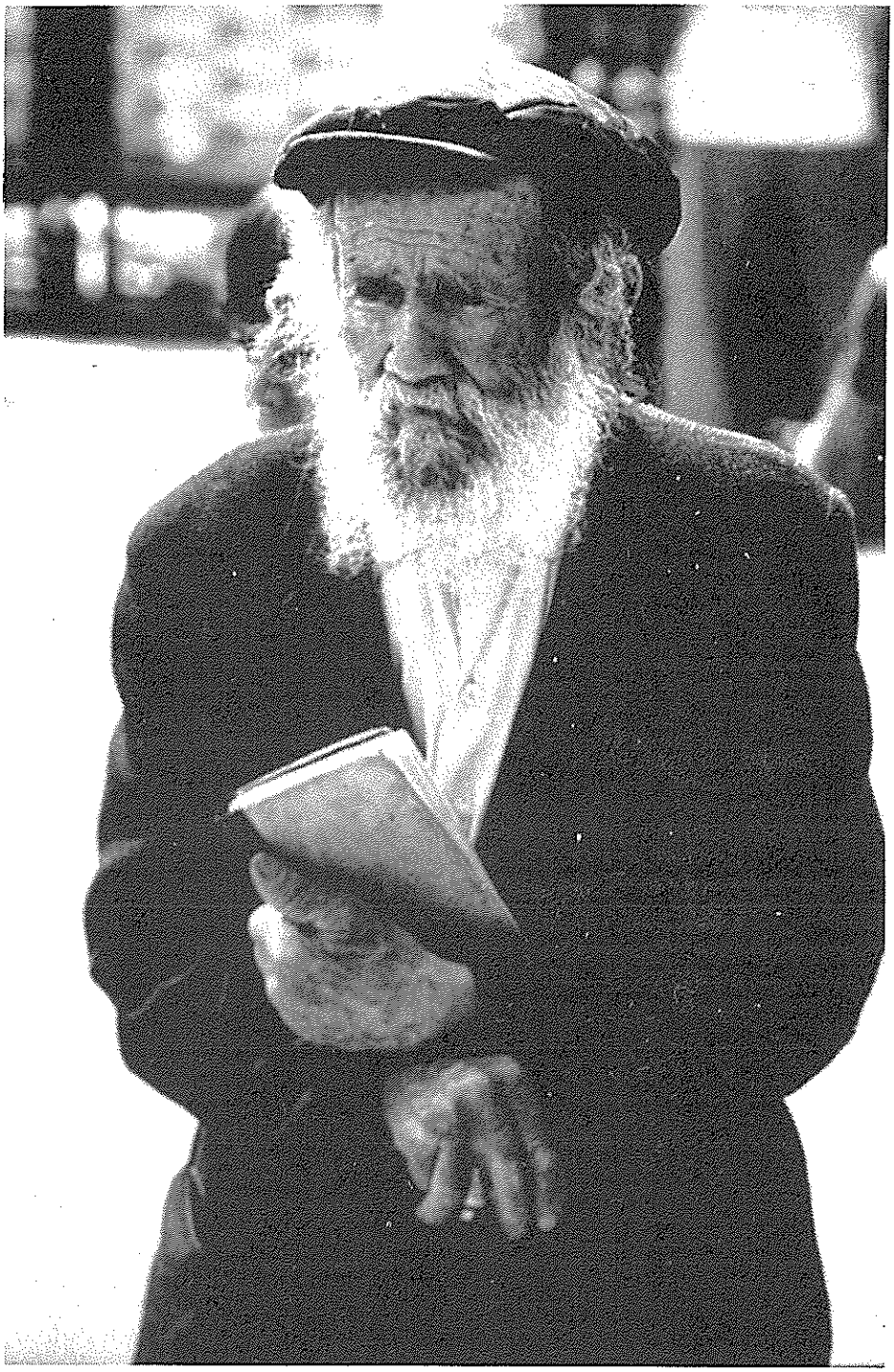
On November 29, 1987 the executive of the Progressive List for Peace met in the Arab village of Ara (in the Galilee) and adopted the following resolution:

Forty years ago on this day the UN General Assembly decided upon the establishment of two states, a Jewish one and an Arab one, in this land.

The state of Israel was created. The Palestinian state, whose creation was decided upon as well, did not yet arise. It left a gaping void; a void which is filled by wars, bloodshed, hatred and racism. Therefore, this day was declared to be the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, and as such it is commemorated by many people around the world.

We say; no peace or quiet are possible, nor will we have any future in this land, until the Arab Palestinian people is allowed to exercise its right to self-determination and to create its own independent state beside the state of Israel.

We, members of the PLP executive, call upon all those who oppose occupation and annexation, racism and discrimination; upon the leaderships of Mapam, Ratz and Hadash; and upon all peace movements and peace seekers, organised and unorganised — to cooperate in an uncompromising struggle for Israeli-Palestinian peace and for full equality to all citizens of Israel. This struggle must be carried out at all levels and in all places, in the Knesset and in the street, in each and every part of Israeli society.



November '87

From Amman to Gaza

On November 8, the leaders of the Arab states met in Amman, capital of Jordan. The summit's most important result was a definite warming up of the Arab world's relations with Egypt.

This was expressed in a resolution permitting Arab states to renew their diplomatic relations with Cairo, broken off after Camp David. By November 19, the tenth anniversary of President Sadat's memorable visit to Israel, many Arab states have already taken advantage of this possibility.

The renewal of diplomatic ties constitutes a de facto recognition of the Israeli-Egyptian peace; countries like Jordan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia have sent their ambassadors to Cairo, knowing full well that, in the same city, the Israeli flag flies above the Israeli embassy.

Both the outcome of the Amman summit and Yasser Arafat's statements at Geneva and Moscow clearly show that Israel can now achieve peace with the Arab world, and in particular with the Palestinians; but no lasting peace is possible as long as Israel maintains its military rule over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Neither Israel's existing peace with Egypt, nor any incipient relations with other Arab states, can long endure while a million and a half Palestinians stay under Israeli occupation and while the Palestinian refugees stay in their camps, with no hope for the future.

Until due consideration is given to the national rights and aspirations of the Palestinians, they will remain a focus of discontent and rebellion throughout the Middle East, threatening any status quo which disinherits them.

In recent weeks, public attention centred, in particular, on the Gaza Strip — an area which provides an extreme example of the Palestinian plight. It is a narrow strip of land, hemmed in between Israel and Egypt, between the desert and the sea. In 1948 hundreds of thousands of refugees, uprooted from their homes in what became the State of Israel, were added to Gaza's original population. Due also to a high birth-rate, the Gaza Strip

Demands of the Arab general strike

The demands were formulated in a meeting held at the town of Sefaram in the Gallilee, on June 6, in which practically the entire leadership of citizens participated: Arab Knesset Members, Mayors, trade unionists, and many others. They included the cessation of the destruction of Arab houses declared "illegal' by the government; the granting of official recognition to several Arab villages which, at present are not recognised by the government and thus receive no water or electricity; the building of new schools in the Arab sector, where no less than 1400 new classrooms are needed to create adequate conditions for study; the re-definition of the curriculum in the Arab schools, to reflect the Arab population's national and cultural identity; emergency funding for the Arab municipalities, whose debts now reach 50 million Israeli Shekels (about $30 million), and equalisation, within a reasonable time, between the budgets granted to Arab municipalities and those given to Jewish municipalities of comparable size.

Contact The Other Israel, PO. Box 956, Tel-Aviv 61008, Israel. Readers in Britain, France and Belgium can subscribe through Jacqueline Groberty,. BP 343-16, 75767 Paris Cedex 16, France.

A message from Yassir Arafat

"We insist on convening this International Conference under the auspices of the United Nations and on the basis of international legality as well as of the international resolutions approved by the United Nations relevant to the Palestinian cause on the Middle East Crisis, and the resolutions of the Security Council including resolutions 242 and 338, in order to put an end ot the Israeli occupation in Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and other occupied Arab territories (...) (thus placing) the Palestinian reality (...) in positive interaction with contemporary international reality." *(Quoted from the UN's English translation of the speech which Arafat delivered at the NGO meeting on September 7).*

On November 7 Arafat met in Moscow with a delegation of the Israeli Communist Party, through whom he passed on the following message to the people of Israel:

"The people of Israel must be made to know that you can't simply eliminate five million Palestinians and ignore their national rights, just like you can't get rid of Israel. We must strive for a just solution, for the good of both peoples, and live in peace.

I am striving for a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Failure to find such a solution could lead to a local war, which could well escalate into a world war and a nuclear holocaust that would wipe out the human race.

The PLO accepts all the decisions of the UN concerning the conflict, including Resolution 242, an acceptance which we have announced publicly at international conferences. The PLO perceives all these conditions as part of an all-inclusive package, which it accepts in toto, as opposed to the government of Israel which accepts only one decision and rejects all the others. That is a deception." *(Quoted from the Jerusalem Post, 9 November 1987).*

became the world's most densely populated area, a concentration of poverty and misery. Since being occupied by Israel in 1967, the Gaza Strip turned into a reservoir of cheap labour for the Israeli economy, tens of thousands of its inhabitants commuting each morning to work in the Israeli cities.

A growing number of the Gaza inhabitants turn, in their misery, to Muslim fundamentalism. In the 1970s and early 1980s, the Israeli authorities encouraged this trend, hoping that a clash between religious zealots and secular nationalists would weaken the Palestinian cause. But in recent years, the religious movement grew and its members started to carry out attacks on Israelis. Belatedly, the Israeli army made strong efforts to suppress it. The Islamic university of Gaza was invaded by soldiers; deportation orders were issued against religious leaders; dozens of Muslim activists were rounded up and imprisoned.

In June, six Muslim fundamentalists succeeded in escaping from the Gaza prison, which was rather embarrassing for the authorities. On October 1, one of the escapees was caught at an army check point; he and two other Palestinians were shot to death. The official statement claimed that the Palestinians were "killed while trying to escape"; detailed research by Israeli journalists exposed contradictions in the government's line, pointing to the possibiilty that they were shot down in cold blood (Koteret Rashit, October 14, 1987).

Another incident occured a week later, on October 8. As described in the official communique, Israeli security forces encountered a suspicious car on a Gaza street; there ensued a battle in which were killed two escaped prisoners, one other Palestinian, and an Israeli security service (Shabak) agent. The other Shabak agents then chased a fourth Palestinian, who — as in the previous incident — was "killed while trying to escape".

Following these two incidents, there was a debate among factions in the military government, regarding whether or not the dead Palestinians' homes should be demolished. Such demolitions, decreeed by a military governor without trial, are a normal procedure against "terrorists". Some officials argued that in this case death was punishment enough, and that demolition of the houses would cause riots. At last, however, the hard-liners won. At the end of October the houses were destroyed, leaving the families homeless. Several days of widespread rioting did follow.

Despite all this, the Islamic movement continues to spread among the Gazans, its members drawing inspiration from the newly-created martyrs.

The situation in the overcrowded Gaza Strip became exacerbated through the introduction of Israeli settlers; a third of the meagre Gaza Strip was declared "State Lands", set aside for the use of present and future Jewish settlers. Small in numbers, but well organised, armed and financed by the Israeli government, the settlers have set up vigilante groups. On November 9, settler vigilantes assaulted a demonstration of schoolgirls at Dir-el-Balah, south of Gaza; 17-year old Intisar al-Atar was shot dead. The settlers' leadership immediately started mobilising its considerable political lobby, in order to stop investigation of the girl's killing.

These events gave rise to a public controversy in Israel; a heated debate took place in the Knesset, and in Tel-Aviv's main street peace demonstrators had a violent confrontation with racist hoodlums.

Taken together, the killing in Gaza and the summit in Amman point out the two courses which are open to the citizens of Israel; the road of occupation and oppression, leading to an endless cycle of fear and hate, violence and bloodshed — or the renunciation of territorial aggrandisement, clearing the way for peaceful coexistence between Israel and its neighbours.
Adam Keller

P.S. After the above was written, events seemed to underline the sharpness of the dilemma.

On November 26, a single Palestinian fighter, riding a primitive glider, succeeded in penetrating the ground and air defences of Israel's northern border; he carried out a one-man raid on an Israeli army camp, and killed six Israeli soldiers before being killed himself.

The attack created an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty along Israel's northern border, where previously the inhabitants were led to believe that the Lebanon War had insured "Peace for the Galilee". On the other side of the border, Palestinian refugees tensely prepared for retaliatory air raids.

Tension was increased by the cruel murder of two workers in a Jerusalem supermarket. The police immediately announced that "the murder was probably committed by nationalist Arabs", and all Arab workers of the supermarket were detained, apparently on no other grounds than their nationality.

These were far from propitious conditions for peace activities. Nevertheless, the "Stop the Occupation" movement did hold a long-planned demonstration. On November 29, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, several kilometres of the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway were lined by Israeli and Palestinian demonstrators, all united behind the slogan "Israel and Palestine — two states for two peoples."

Ireland: lies the left tells itself

By Sean Matgamna

Elsewhere in this magazine we print a recent speech by Tony Benn on Ireland.

Benn is deservedly one of the most respected voices on the left. Apart, perhaps, from his proposal that UN troops should replace the British in Northern Ireland, his views on Ireland are typical of the left — typically wrongheaded.

Tony Benn rightly says that the media burkes discussion of the issue. But so does the left — we stifle ourselves with ideological lies. The politics of the conventional left on Ireland can only be sustained if it tells itself ideological lies, if it refrains from looking reality squarely in the face, and if it refuses to think things through. The main ideological lies the left tells itself are worth enumerating.

Lie no.1: **Southern Ireland is a neo-colony, and Northern Ireland is "British-occupied".**

The 26 Counties is fully independent politically. You cannot be more independent than southern Ireland was during World War 2, when it remained neutral despite Britain's desperate need of Irish ports. (Britain had given up its military bases in the South as late as 1938). And Ireland's refusal to join NATO also shows that it is politically independent.

Northern Ireland is an artificial unit. But the majority of the people in it want Britain there. Opinion polls show that the big majority of the people of the whole island want Britain there.

Northern Ireland has been part of the English or British state since the 12th century — earlier than the union of the Scottish and English crowns, and five and a half centuries before the Act of Union between England and Scotland. The majority of the people there consider themselves British.

Partition brought many injustices for the Catholic minority, but even so, the relationship of Northern Ireland to Britain is not one of a colony seized by an alien power.

Lie no.2: **Ireland is a single unit.** Ireland is one island, but plainly not one people. A minority of one million define themselves as different from the rest of the Irish, and as British. They form the compact majority in north-east Ulster. They have been manipulated by British ruling-class politicians playing 'the Orange card', but they have their own identity or sub-identity and their own concerns.

Lie no.3: **It is just bigotry and irrationality and the desire to lord it over the Catholics which motivate the Protestants in refusing to go into a united Ireland.**

The Protestants are guilty of bigotry and irrationality, and they have lorded it over the Catholics. But it is perfectly reasonable for a minority not to want to submerge itself. The 26 County state is a heavily Catholic-confessional state. In the last five years, majorities there have voted to write a ban on abortion into the constitution, and not to allow divorce. This means banning those whose religion allows divorce (Protestants, Jews) from having it because the religion of the majority does not allow it.

Lie no.4: **The Protestants reject Irish unity because they want to preserve economic privilege over the Catholics in Northern Ireland.**

In decades of mass poverty and unemployment an informal system grew up in the Six County state of reserving certain jobs for Protestants and discriminating against Catholics. Fear that in a united Ireland they would lose the protection such discrimination gives them is a consideration with Protestant workers.

Now socialists oppose such discrimination. We advocate a trade union campaign against it. But class-conscious Protestant workers can and do oppose discrimination while still feeling different from the rest of the Irish and fearing a united Ireland. Defence of privileges is not the only consideration for Protestant workers in opposing a united Ireland, or even the main one. Preservation of their own felt identity and tradition, and refusal to submit to an alien majority, are central.

Socialists should reject the approach embodied in the so-called MacBride Principles, of campaigning to get US States and companies to disinvest from Northern Ireland unless there is full and immediate equality. Disinvestment will not help Northern Ireland workers, Catholic or Protestant. The demand for an immediate expulsion of large numbers of Protestants from their jobs — which is what it comes down to — can only deepen divisions and poison relations between sections of the working class even further.

Socialists should instead demand that the root of job discrimination be cut by a campaign for shorter working hours and public works to create more jobs.

Lie no.5: **The matter is a straight one of majority rights. The majority wants independence and unity, and that's it.**

Apply that argument to the old United Kingdom when Ireland was still part of it! The majority was heavily against Home Rule for Ireland. For democrats and socialists that did not exhaust the question — because the Irish claimed, and therefore had, a distinct identity, separate from the majority. They rebelled in the name of an identity which they considered higher than the UK majority. Self-determination meant that the Irish minority in the UK had the right to secede.

The minority within Ireland has rights too. Consistent democrats concern themselves with minorities and minority rights as well as majorities. Ireland is a single entity only in a geographical sense. Geography is not politics. James Connolly said it very well: 'Ireland without her people means nothing to me'.

It is no sort of progress to free half a million Northern Catholics from oppression by making one million Protestants into a minority which is, or feels, oppressed.

Lie no.6: **The Orange veto on change is something granted to them by the British state.** The Orange veto is ultimately dependent on the power of the Orangeists on the ground. And for a dozen years, too, the Catholics have had a veto on any return to a Protestant home-rule government in Belfast. That veto too is a matter of the power of the Catholics to resist.

Lie no.7: **Britain needs to rule Northern Ireland for economic reasons.**

Economically, Northern Ireland is a drain on British capitalism, to the tune of about £1.5 billion a year. British capitalism has more profitable relations with the independent South than with Northern Ireland. And in no way does Britain's military presence in Northern Ireland help British capitalists' profit-making in the South.

Southern Ireland is one of Western Europe's weaker capitalisms. But it is not a colony. It is ruled by the Irish capitalists. And of some 900 foreign-owned companies in southern Ireland, over 300 are US-owned, 130 West German, and only 200 or so British.

Lie no.8: **Britain needs to hold on to Northern Ireland for military reasons.**

Militarily, control of Ireland has been irreplaceable for Britain in the past. Northern Ireland bases were very important in World War 2. The British government considered invading southern Ireland to gain port facilities, and so did the US in 1943-4. But all that has changed in the era of intercontinental ballistic missiles.

NATO would like to have Ireland in. But partition was the reason why the 26 Counties stayed out! When he was Irish Foreign Minister back in 1949, at the beginning of NATO, Sean MacBride offered — so says his then party and Cabinet colleague, the socialist Dr Noel Browne — to bring southern Ireland into NATO in return for the creation of a federal link between the Six and Twenty-Six Counties.

Partition, or British control of the

North has cost NATO the participation of southern Ireland. Partition frustrates the overall military considerations of the Western Alliance, it does not help them. That is one reason why the US wants to end it.

Lie no.9: **That because the present Six Counties is an artificial entity, and the borders were drawn to engineer a Protestant majority, *no* natural Protestant state is possible.** When the partition of Ireland was being discussed, one option was an area of four counties. The proportion of Protestants would have been much bigger, and the Catholic minority much smaller.

Today, a Protestant state is possible. It is what would emerge from a civil war.

Lie no.10: **Troops out without a political settlement will lead to a United Ireland.** No, it won't! It will inevitably lead to sectarian civil war and bloody repartition. On a number of occasions the Northern Protestants have shown themselves willing to fight rather than let themselves become a minority in a Catholic Ireland.

After a sectarian civil war the Protestant area would be smaller, but it would exist. Eamonn De Valera and other Republicans long ago abjured the idea of trying to unite Ireland by force, because they recognised that it could not work. It would result not in the removal of the Border, but in shifting it a bit north and east — and making it permanent.

Lie no.11: **If British troops withdraw without a political settlement, then the Protestants won't fight. If there is a civil war, it will be a small, controllable one. The Catholics will win.**

The Protestants fought all-Ireland Home Rule, and won their fall-back position of Partition. They allowed the disbanding of the 'B-Specials' — to be replaced by the UDR. They allowed the abolition of Belfast Home Rule — to be replaced by direct rule by the British state, which they regard as theirs. They fought the 1973 power-sharing agreement, which included tentative links with Dublin through a Council of Ireland, and in May 1974 they organised a powerful general strike which defeated the government in which Tony Benn was a Cabinet Minister.

Even today, despite the Anglo-Irish Agreement which they detest, the Protestants still think that the British state is their state. Threaten to put them as a permanent minority in an all-Ireland Catholic-controlled state, and they will certainly resist, guns in hand.

Lie no.12: **Civil war can be avoided or minimised by the British troops disarming the Ulster Defence Regiment and the Ulster Defence Association before they leave.**

Such disarming would pitch the British Army into full-scale war with the Protestants. The British withdrawal would be very slow and bloody, if it ever came at all.

Lie no.13: **Troops out will lead to self-determination for the people of Ireland as a whole.**

In real political terms 'Ireland as a whole' does not exist. Ireland is divided in two — though it is not a division that coincides with the Border. Apart from the half-million Catholics artificially entrapped within the Six Counties, all the rest of the Irish have 'self-determination'. The people of the 26 Counties are independent, and the one million Northern Protestants are part of the British state, where they want to be.

Troops out without a political settlement would lead the Protestants, abandoned by Britain, expelled from the UK, to seek their own self-determination *against the rest of the Irish*, and to set about carving it out, weapons in hand. Troops out without a political settlement could generate only *Protestant* self-determination! The ensuing civil war and repartition would allow some Catholics in the border areas to go into a 26 County state, but that would be small compensation for a sectarian civil war like those in Sri Lanka and Lebanon.

Lie no.14: **Britain has no rights in Ireland, therefore the British left has no right even to discuss Ireland.**

A million Irish people insist that they are British. Therefore, the 'principle' does not hold. In any case, Britain is in Ireland. For the left to impose a self-denying ordinance on itself will not change that. And the argument is a fake, because it is used to favour Sinn Fein's Catholic Irish nationalism against other equally Irish — and even equally Republican — alternatives. Standing open-mouthed, lighted candle in hand, before the altars of Catholic Irish nationalism, the left simply excludes itself from rational discussion.

Lie no.15: **Sinn Fein is not only a Republican, but also a socialist organisation.**

There is a current of political activists in Sinn Fein who would be at home in, say, *Socialist Action* or *Briefing* in Britain. They sometimes talk to the British left. But they are not the bedrock Sinn Fein. Look at how quickly Sinn Fein dropped its commitment to a woman's right to choose on abortion.

Sinn Fein's 'socialism' is for the future. Right now it is concerned with 'the national struggle'. Because Sinn Fein is drawn exclusively from the Catholic community, and does not even try to reach out to Protestants, it is not a Republican organisation in Wolfe Tone's sense. Tone aspired to unite Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter under the common name of Irish.

Lie no.16: **Socialism is the answer.**

The answer to what? Many on the left have recoiled, and now do not seem to know whether they are for 'Troops Out' or not. *Socialist Worker*, for example, is very coy these days, confining itself to vapidities like 'Socialism is the only answer'. Yes, socialism is the only answer to the chaos and cruelty of capitalism, which underlie the tensions in Ireland — but only the working class can make socialism, and the Irish working class cannot make socialism while it remains grievously divided by the national/communal conflict. Socialists need answers to that conflict, and collective ownership of the means of production is not in itself an answer.

Even if the working class could take power despite its crippling divisions, once in power it would still need a policy for dealing with the divisions in the Irish people. Such a policy could only be that of the Bolsheviks for dealing with national and communal divisions: consistent democracy.

There are many other ideological lies the left tells itself, but these are the main ones. The result is that the left's policy on Ireland has no grip on reality.

The first thing British socialists must do is *understand* the Irish-British question. We must stop telling ourselves ideological lies, and look at reality squarely. Otherwise we will never change it.

The Bill for withdrawal which Tony Benn is putting to Parliament is modelled on the Bill for withdrawal from Palestine. When the British state abdicated in Palestine, Jews and Arabs set about making war on each other, vying to control roads, hills, and towns. A similar thing would happen in Ireland.

We must stop making a fetish out of the single slogan 'Troops Out'. 'Troops Out' is only one part of a settlement. On its own, without the rest of the settlement, it would bring disaster.

It would achieve none of the desirable things its socialist advocates want, and it would inevitably lead to something worse than exists in Ireland now. After sectarian civil war would come repartition and great bitterness between the two resulting Irish states, within which the forces of reaction and religious bigotry would surely have been much strengthened.

The only way out is through the creation of a free united Ireland, within which the Protestant-majority areas would have regional autonomy. Ties of some confederal sort between that united Ireland and Britain would give further guarantees to the Protestants that this solution aimed to do away with the oppression of the Northern Catholics, but not to replace it by making the Protestants a new oppressed minority.

The programme of a federal united Ireland is not a magic solution to be presented to Westminster and Dublin — but it is the only solid basis on which a united Catholic-Protestant workers' movement can be built and can give answers to the national and communal conflicts which are torturing Ireland.

Solidarnosc protest against the referendum

Solidarnosc after the referendum

On 29 November, Poland voted in a referendum on the government's market-oriented economic reforms.
The first question asked: 'Are you for the full realisation of the programme of radical cure for the economy submitted to Parliament that aims for a clear improvement in living conditions, being aware that this will mean going through a difficult two to three year period of rapid change?' The second was: 'Do you declare yourself in favour of the Polish model for the deep democratisation of political life, the aim of which is to strengthen self-government, to broaden citizens' rights, and to increase their participation in running the country?'
What they meant was this: the government was planning to increase prices drastically. To avoid rebellion, it tried to tie the price rises to liberal reform and to get a referendum vote in favour of the package.
In the event, 60-odd per cent of voters said 'Yes' to each question, but, with a lot of people not voting, that made less than the 50 per cent of the whole electorate which the government wanted.
The banned Solidarnosc trade union movement had called for a boycott of the referendum.
Here ZBIGNIEW KOWALEWSKI, a former leader of the left wing of Solidarnosc now living in exile, analyses the background to the referendum and the current position of Solidarnosc.

THE JARUZELSKI regime wants to begin the so-called second stage of the economic reform, which it proposed after the semi-official recognition of the failure of the first stage, launched after December 1981.

It wants to introduce market mechanisms into the economy on a very broad scale. The beginning of this, according to the regime, is necessarily a substantial sacrifice by the population — big price rises on essentials.

But even some official institutions have expressed reservations on this programme. In particular, the Social and Economic Commission of the Parliament has expressed the opinion that the conditions for such measures now are extremely unfavourable. It points to the danger of negative reactions from the workers and the population in general.

The Commission for Economic Reform — a group of economists chosen by the regime — had a stormy discussion on the programme. Many economists criticised the plan as inadequately worked out.

So there is a negative reaction to the regime's project even in the circles closest to it. And the groups I have mentioned are not the most conservative sectors of the bureaucracy. They are supporters of market-oriented economic reform who are warning the regime that the social situation is unfavourable for such reform.

Through the referendum the regime wanted to get a stamp of approval from society. It said that if the people would accept sacrifices, the reforms would not only get Poland out of its economic crisis but

cure all the effects of the crisis within three or four years. If the sacrifices were not accepted, then redressment would take longer — ten years or so. It was blackmail.

The regime was also trying to win the favours of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund — who, indeed, seem very enthusiastic about the government's programme.

Solidarnosc's leaders are also in favour of market-oriented economic reform. But they called for a boycott of the referendum. The regime tried to use this situation to say: 'We are trying to carry out a reform very similar to what the Solidarnosc leaders have been calling for. But they call for a boycott. These are not serious people. They are just troublemakers and demagogues'.

The Solidarnosc leaders called for a boycott for two reasons. First: the government's programme meant, in the first place, big price rises — and only that! It meant a big cut in living standards, and there is a large part of the population in Poland which is on the margins of poverty. It is one thing for the leaders of Solidarnosc to make declarations in favour of market economic reform, and another thing to suffer a big attack on the living standards of the working class. Against that, there was a clear class reaction. Solidarnosc is a workers' movement, after all.

The second reason is that the Solidarnosc leaders have a position that a market-oriented economic reform is desirable, but it is *unrealisable* under the present political system. Real political democratisation has to come before economic reform.

It is good that Solidarnosc called for a boycott. But the Solidarnosc leaders have made a lot of propaganda in favour of market-oriented economic reforms, and that may have limited the scope of the boycott.

Support for market-oriented economic reforms exists not only among Solidarnosc's leaders but also in the rank and file. A whole series of sociological studies done in recent years have shown that — and the sociological institutes in Poland have had real autonomy for some time. They do real objective research.

According to them, the sectors which oppose the bureaucracy most strongly and most clearly support Solidarnosc are skilled workers in large-scale industry, technicians, and specialists with university education.

In this social base there is also strong support for market-oriented economic reforms. But support for egalitarian demands is weaker than in the worse-off sections of the working class. These more highly-qualified workers tend to support pay differentials and the idea that better, more qualified workers should have better wages.

They feel that they could achieve a high level of productivity, but they are blocked by the economic situation, the condition of the industrial plant, and so on. The sociologists call it an aspiration to 'meritocracy' in these sectors.

But the demand for a market-oriented economic reform from these workers is not necessarily very serious. It is very contradictory when those workers demand the elimination of superfluous workers in the factories and uneconomic factories but — as the sociological studies found — they absolutely oppose unemployment. The sociologists reckon that all the talk about market economics is a way of using economic language to express political opposition, and should not be taken at face value.

But the most fundamental reason for workers supporting market economics is that the economic system in Poland and elsewhere in Eastern Europe is seen today by the workers as a system in ruins. It is identified it as 'the planned economy', so workers see this as the bankruptcy of 'the planned economy'. They do not see any positive example of a planned economy anywhere in the world, so workers turn to what seems to be more rational and more productive and to give a higher standard of living — the Western market economies.

Jaruzelski casts his vote

For socialists in the West and in the East, it is very important to understand this. In the past, the 'planned economy' of the Soviet Union was a positive reference for large sections of the working class in the West. In Poland today, the workers see that 'planned economy' as finished — bankrupt everywhere.

This was true in 1980-1, on a smaller scale than today; but we must not see it through ideological spectacles. In 1981 I came across workers' councils in many factories with programmes where point 1 said 'The enterprise should be autonomous and work for profit', and point 2, that the output of the enterprise should be determined by social need!

It's difficult to know exactly how Polish workers see the Western market economies. My impressions are limited. But it seems that there are big illusions.

An average Polish worker sees Western capitalism as West Germany, France, Britain, or the US, not Bolivia. Its main attraction is political democracy — pluralism, trade-union freedom, and so on. Polish workers also see a much higher level of mass consumption in the Western market economies. The difference in levels of consumption is bigger than the difference in general level of industrial development. The Polish workers are absolutely right about this: there is permanent under-investment in the consumer goods industries, the quality of the goods is very bad, and the poverty has got worse in recent years with the economic crisis.

Polish workers distrust the information they get from the official press about unemployment and so on in the West. Such propaganda is discredited, because the official press has always said the same thing about mass unemployment in the West, even when there was in fact relatively full employment. When Poles began to travel to the West, following the liberalisation in the late '50s, the official line was discredited in their eyes by what they saw for themselves.

Polish workers are beginning to become aware that there really is mass unemployment in the West now, but the awareness lags behind the reality. Many Polish workers have travelled to the West to try to find work and have been disillusioned.

There is a minority in the Solidarnosc leadership which does not support market-oriented economic reforms. Over the last year or so a 'syndicalist' current has re-emerged. These are worker-leaders of Solidarnosc, including leaders from 1980-1, who have the following position: Perhaps market-oriented economic reforms would be a good thing, but that's an abstraction. We can't do anything about it anyway. If there is economic reform in Poland, it will be carried out in the interests of the regime and not of a socially useful economic revival. We should not get involved. We can only discuss economic reforms usefully when there is democracy. Solidarnosc's job today is not to advocate economic reforms but to defend the immediate material interests of the workers.

This 'syndicalist' current exists in a scattered form, but sections of it have begun to express themselves collectively at a national level since September 1986, in particular in a letter signed by 21 former members of the national leadership of Solidarnosc. They spoke of a danger of Solidarnosc losing its working-class base through its passivity on workers' immediate material demands.

The 'syndicalist' current also identifies itself with the international workers' movement. It says that the current leadership, with its passivity on workers' immediate material demands, prejudices Solidarnosc's legitimacy in relation to the international trade union movement.

So this is a current which expresses an

elementary workers' class-consciousness. It is highly aware of something which is also noted in the sociologists' studies, that the lack of a sliding scale of wages [automatic wage rises in line with the cost of living] is the most explosive factor in Polish society today.

Members of this current argue that since martial law Solidarnosc's activity has tended to centre on the promotion of independent culture — the independent press and publishing and so on — activities chiefly concerning intellectuals. The workers in Solidarnosc have been reduced to the position of passive consumers of this independent culture.

They say that Solidarnosc is not recruiting enough among young workers, and this is a worry shared by much wider sections of Solidarnosc. Youth — mostly non-working-class youth — are a major source of political activity in Poland today, but mostly outside Solidarnosc, in the pacifist/ecologist movement Peace and Freedom. This movement is much more visible on the streets than Solidarnosc.

The socialist or Marxist left in Solidarnosc is very weak today. In 1983-4 we first saw a sort of left regroupment in Solidarnosc — a current which identified itself more or less with social democracy, or, more precisely, the old Polish Socialist Party, traditionally the dominant force in the Polish workers' movement.

In the same period, 1983-4, a very limited current also emerged further to the left, identifying itself with the revolutionary left.

The 'social-democratic' current then moved to the right, but now it seems to be moving back to the left, identifying with the Polish workers' movement of the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century — a period when Polish social democracy was much more left-wing and militant than it later became. This current is represented primarily by the group which publishes the journal 'Robotnik' ('Worker').

The revolutionary left current has had a very severe crisis in the last year, and is much more limited now. But it still exists.

The left in the West needs to have a clear position on the nature of a movement like Solidarnosc as a whole. It is a workers' movement. It should be supported irrespective of the ideological declarations of its leaders or even of its activists. At every major political turning-point, this working-class character of the movement makes its mark — as over the referendum, for example.

The left in the West needs to understand that all the ideological confusions that exist in movements like Solidarnosc are the product of Stalinism. They are the product of the bankruptcy of what is called 'actually existing socialism', in a world where there is no positive socialist alternative to be seen by those who mobilise against the bureaucratic regime.

We must not centre our analysis on the economic reform projects supported by Solidarnosc's leaders and forget the Polish revolution of 1980-1.

Crimean Tatars demonstrate in Red Square

The nation Stalin deported

The Crimean Tatar nation was deported en masse by Stalin in 1944. Forty-three years later, the Crimean Tatars are still fighting for their rights. Stan Crooke looks at their history.

In late July Crimean Tatars organised demonstrations in Moscow's Red Square. They were demanding the right to return to their original homeland in the Crimean peninsula. Their community was forcibly uprooted by Stalin in 1944, and deported to Central Asia, Kazakhstan, and the Urals.

The Crimean Tatars were annexed into the Russian Empire of Catherine II in 1783. Before then they had had an ambiguous relationship, half-vassal, half-independent, with the Turkish Ottoman Empire. Then numbering some 500,000, they were subjected to particularly brutal policies of Russification in the nineteenth century.

During the Crimean war, Tatars living on the coast were removed and 'resettled' inland. After the war, Tsar Alexander II declared, "It is not appropriate to oppose the overt or covert exodus of the Tatars... This voluntary emigration should be considered as a beneficial action calculated to free the territory from this unwanted population". By the end of the century the Crimean Tatar population had fallen below 300,000.

This repression helped stimulate the Crimean Tatar national identity. Fearful of an alliance between the aroused Tatars and the Pan-Turkic movement, the Tsarist regime responded by further repression in the opening years of this century. The Tatar organisation Vatan was declared illegal, Tsarist police agents spied on Tatar religious and educational activities, and Tatar newspapers were heavily censored or closed down.

In the years following the October Revolution of 1917, the Crimea was occupied by counter-revolutionary armies. Tatar newspapers were banned, printing presses seized, and Tatar schools closed.

The defeat of the counter-revolutionary armies by the Red Army paved the way for the declaration of the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) in October 1921, as an integral part of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic. Lenin had expressed his hopes for it two years earlier: "May the tiny Crimean Republic become one of the torches which cast the light of proletarian revolution onto the East".

In the early months of the Crimean ASSR, there were terrible food shortages, but conditions soon improved. Output increased. The autonomy granted by the decree of 1921 was put into practice by the Crimean Bolshevik administration, headed by the Crimean Tatar Veli Ibrahimov. The former repression of Crimean Tatar national culture was ended.

From the late '20s Stalinism brought back the Tsarist repression of national minorities. Ibrahimov was removed from his post, accused of 'indigenous nationalism', and executed in May 1928. Thousands of other Crimean Tatars were to share his fate.

Tens of thousands were deported under Stalin's policy of forced collectivisation of agriculture. The famine resulting from this policy cost thousands more lives in the early 1930s. A new wave of purges began in 1935, in the name of 'struggle against the nationalism of the native bourgeoisie', and was further intensified after Stalin's speech of December 1936 in which he denounced the 'indigenous nationalism' of the Crimea and declared the Crimean Tatars too few in number to have any right to autonomy.

The Tatar Latin alphabet (itself introduced only in 1928) was replaced by the Russian Cyrillic alphabet in 1938, in the full knowledge that this could not express all the sounds of the Crimean Tatars' language. Crimean Tatar books were withdrawn from circulation. By 1938 the number of surviving Tatar-language newspapers had fallen to nine, from 23 just three years earlier.

The impact of such policies on the size of the Crimean Tatar population is difficult to estimate. In 1917, after growth in the opening decades of the century, the Crimean Tatars numbered 320,000. The population further increased in the 1920s, partly through indigenous growth, partly through immigration. By 1941, however, the Crimean Tatar population had fallen to about 250,000, which would suggest that Stalin's policies had already claimed some 100,000 victims by 1941.

In October 1941 the Nazis invaded the Crimea and soon occupied the entire peninsula. Hitler advocated deportation of the entire population — Russians and Ukrainians as well as Tatars — and the repopulation of the Crimea by Germans from South Tirol. This would 'solve' the problem of the South Tirol — an object of dispute with Italy — and create a 'fortress state' populated by reliable Germans in a strategically important area.

It wasn't done — partly because it would have disrupted Crimean industry and agriculture, which were being plundered for the German war effort, and partly because it would have alienated the Turkish government and pan-Turkic sentiment at a time when the Nazis were attempting to secure Turkish backing.

The Nazis even made some limited concessions to the Crimean Tatars. They were allowed a certain religious freedom, and Crimean Tatar schools and theatres were allowed to reopen. 'Muslim Committees' were also created, and efforts were made to recruit Crimean Tatars into military

units.

This policy was very limited, and had small success in winning Crimean Tatar support for the Nazis. As the Nazis gave up hope of backing from Turkey, they stepped up repression in the Crimea. Crimean Tatars were shipped off to Germany to work in war industries, censorship of Crimean Tatar publications was increased, and Crimean Tatar villages were destroyed in order to deny Soviet partisans access to them.

The Crimean Tatars fought back. According to a 1973 issue of the samizdat journal 'Chronicle of Current Affairs', 53,000 Crimean Tatars fought in the Red Army, and 12,000 in the Soviet partisans. 30,000 Crimean Tatars died fighting the Nazis.

By the spring of 1944 the Crimean peninsula had been reconquered by the Russian Army. Then, beginning on the night of 17-18 May, the entire Crimean Tatar population was deported and scattered across Soviet Central Asia, Kazakhstan, and the Urals. What had been planned first by the Tsars and then by Hitler but never carried out, was now achieved by Stalin — a Crimea devoid of Crimean Tatars.

Some 100,000 Crimean Tatars, 40% of the population, died in the course of the deportation and the first year of 'resettlement'. This was over three times as many as had been killed by the fascists during the war.

No-one was spared the deportation, neither the old nor the young, neither Tatar Communists nor Tatars who had been in partisan units. Tatars still serving in the Russian Army were deported on demobilisation.

An 'Open Letter in Defence of Crimean Tatars', circulating in Moscow in 1969, describes the journey into 'resettlement'.

"This was the journey of slow death in railway carriages for cattle, stuffed full of people like sponges. The journey lasted three or four weeks and passed through the burning summer steppes of Kazakhstan. They transported the red partisans of the Crimea, the fighters of the Bolshevik underground, Soviet and party activists, but invalids and old men as well. The other men were fighting the fascists at the front, and exile awaited them at the end of the war...

"The Crimean Tatars were taken to reservations in the Urals, Kazakhstan, and — principally — Uzbekistan. That is how the Tatars found themselves in this area. The deportation was completed, but the destruction of the people had only begun".

The Crimean Tatars were not the only national minority to meet this fate. The Volga Germans, the Karachai, the Kalmyks, the Balkars, the Chechens, and the Ingushi were all likewise uprooted and deported.

The long-standing Great-Russian fear of the Crimean Tatars possibly allying with Turkey was compounded in this period by the USSR's more hostile attitude towards Turkey from late 1944 onwards. In March 1945 the USSR renounced the Turco-Soviet treaty of neutrality of 1925, and in July 1945 it raised the question of the 'return' of the Turkish provinces of Kars and Ardahan which, according to Soviet foreign minister Molotov, had been "ceded to Turkey at the end of the First World War at a moment when the Russians' weakness left them with no alternative to acceding to Turkish demands".

The mass deportations and the death of 100,000 people were nothing to do with any supposed 'collective guilt' on the part of the Crimean Tatars, but were the result of Stalinism's contempt for the rights of national minorities and its great-power foreign policies.

Having physically removed the Crimean Tatar community and scattered it across Soviet Central Asia, the Kremlin set about

Stalin

denying that it had ever existed and wiping out every vestige of its former presence in the Crimea. In October 1944, "all inhabited districts, rivers and mountains of which the names are of Tatar, Greek or German origin" were re-named.

The Crimean Tatars faced discrimination even in the 'resettlement' areas. The 'Appeal of the Crimean Tatar people to the 23rd Congress of the CPSU' complained: "People with higher education, qualified specialists, could work only as unskilled workers. We were not permitted to work in party, soviet or administrative organs, in transport or on the railways, in organs of popular education, in enterprises with defence contracts, in the militia, in the State Bank, etc."

Crimean Tatars were expelled from the Communist Party and others banned from joining it, especially those who supported the Crimean Tatars' campaign for restoration of their homeland.

In the 1950s some minor concessions were made. In 1954 some of the restrictions on Tatars in Uzbekistan were lifted. In 1956 they were allowed to leave the 'resettlement' areas (but not to return to the Crimea). In 1957 they were allowed to begin publication of a Crimean Tatar language newspaper.

Such concessions, and Khrushchev's speech to the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956, encouraged further campaigning by the Crimean Tatars. In 1957 a petition with 14,000 names was sent to the Central Committee of the CPSU. In 1958, petitions with 12,000 and 16,000 signatures were sent to the Central Committee. Further petitions with between 10,000 and 18,000 signatures, demanding rehabilitation, restoration of lost property, and the right of return to the Crimea, were submitted in 1959, 1961, and 1964.

At the same time Crimean Tatar committees were established in the towns and villages to which the Crimean Tatars had been exiled, in order to coordinate the campaigning and organise education of Tatar youth in their language and culture. Delegations were repeatedly sent to Moscow to present the petitions and lobby members of the government. Despite arrests and expulsions from Moscow, by mid-1967 over 400 Crimean Tatars were resident there as official representatives of their community.

Threats to demonstrate publicly in Red Square resulted in a meeting with the government in July 1967. In September 1967 a decree officially withdrew the Stalinist accusations that the Tatars had collaborated with the Nazis, but avoided any commitment to redress. The Crimean Tatars continued to campaign. In the months following the September 1967 decree, some 10,000 attempted to resettle in the Crimea. They were barred, expelled, or forced out by discrimination and repression.

Leading Crimean Tatar campaigners, such as Reshat Dzhemilyov, one of the leaders of the most recent demonstrations in Moscow, linked up with the broader Soviet dissident movement and won support from such people as Sakharov and Grigorenko. Lobbying of government ministers continued in Moscow, and demonstrations were organised in the Tatars' places of exile.

The Crimean Tatars also began to regain their national culture. A textbook for the study of the Crimean Tatar language was produced, and several collections of Crimean Tatar literature published. A department for the publication of Crimean Tatar literature was set up in the Tashkent Gafur Gulam publishing house.

Repression continued. Crimean Tatar leaders such as Dzhelimov faced repeated trials and prison sentences for 'anti-Soviet activities'. Demonstrations were broken up, and mass arrests made.

But the recent demonstrations in Moscow shows that the Crimean Tatars' 43-year struggle for restoration of their rights continues. For Gorbachev to continue his predecessors' policies of repression will expose the limits of his liberalisation. To make concessions will encourage further activity by the Crimean Tatars and the hundred other oppressed national minorities of the Soviet Union.

Socialists can only welcome this dilemma now faced by Gorbachev and his colleagues, and give full support to the just demands of the oppressed nationalities imprisoned in the Soviet Union.

Back into the

Clive Bradley analyses the Tories' new attack on lesbians and gay men. They want to ban council 'positive images' policies and council money for lesbian and gay centres.

A climate of bigotry on the one side and fear on the other is rapidly developing, threatening to reverse all the gains made over the last two decades by lesbians and gay men.

A last-minute Tory amendment to the Local Government Bill will ban the 'promotion' of homosexuality by local authorities. This is aimed primarily at the 'positive images' policies of some Labour councils; but its implications go much further. Outrageously, until the last minute, the Parliamentary Labour Party failed to oppose this move. It is now safely through the House of Commons and on its way to the Lords.

Since the 1967 Sexual Offences Act legalised consenting sex between most male adults, things have changed a lot. Perhaps a good measure of change is the portrayal of homosexual men and women in the media — and take soaps, for example. Both 'Brookside' and 'EastEnders' have openly gay couples amongst their main characters; from across the Atlantic, 'Dynasty' has a prominent gay man. Not only are they there: they are not particularly stereotyped.

Lesbian women are fewer and further between (although there is 'Prisoner in Cell Block H'). But ten — or even five — years ago, such portrayals would have been very unlikely, at least in prime-time viewing. The images of homosexual people were all utterly negative — mincing twits, predatory dykes, and so on.

Of course those images never left us. What was significant was that attempts were being made to offer different images.

And what is significant now is that everyone is in retreat. 'EastEnders' has ducked out of certain scenes of personal intimacy between Colin and Barry (nothing smutty — just kissing); and now rumour has it that Barry is going to go straight.

If Clause 28 gets to be law, worse will be to come. For certain, the Tory right will not be satisfied with it alone. During the Parliamentary debate, when an arson attack on the offices of London's 'Capital Gay' was mentioned, backbench Tories voiced their support for it.

What has been causing the change? The AIDS panic has had something to do with it, of course. When AIDS first burst upon the British public, gay men bore the brunt of the hysteria — as workmates, nurses, firemen, publicans, all reacted with ignorant fear.

The government and BBC AIDS campaigns cleared the air a bit, stressing the vulnerability of everyone to the AIDS virus ("AIDS isn't prejudiced" — i.e. even if you are). But only a bit: prejudice is hard to reason with.

For AIDS to have provided the cover for an anti-homosexual mood, the bigotry had to exist already. And exist it does.

The 1967 law made it legal for two men over 21 to have sex — provided they are not in the armed forces, not in Northern Ireland, and are 'in private' — which means no-one else is in the house.

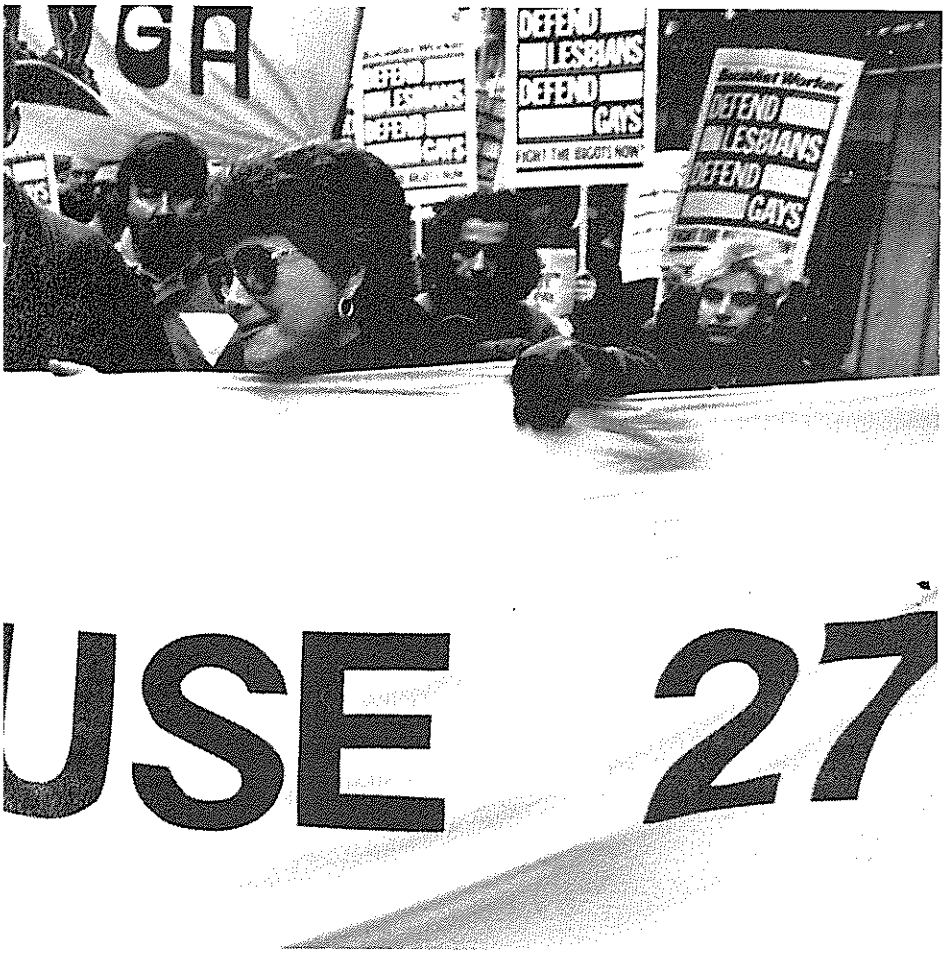
In fact, therefore, male homosexuality is only legal in special circumstances; men still get arrested for kissing or even holding hands in public ("gross indecency", "outraging public decency" and so on).

Lesbian sex has an age of consent of 16, and is illegal in public places — but in general lesbianism is not recognised in law.

Before 1967, life was very bad indeed for homosexual men. Fear of discovery was exacerbated by fear of imprisonment. The police could burst into people's bedrooms and arrest them. Nowadays they just burst into people's pubs. Police raids on lesbian and gay venues are not uncommon. Moreover, the police are never shy about making a point. Those raiding London's Vauxhall Tavern in 1986 ostensibly looking for drunken people (in a pub!) were wearing plastic gloves...so as not to catch any nasty diseases (something they were unlikely to do unless they either had sex with the men they arrested, or cut open their veins and drank the blood).

It's not only the police, of course. The

e closet?



USE 27

Photo: Ian Swindale.

lesbian and gay disco at South London's Dome recently moved because of regular attacks on people as they were leaving by gangs armed with bicycle chains.

Discrimination is widespread. According to common law, it is not illegal to sack someone for sexual orientation. And especially in professions connected with children, such sackings are not uncommon. Lesbians and gay men are widely imagined to have insatiable appetites and an uncontrollable ability to 'corrupt' the young.

This belief, of course, underlies Clause 28. It is supposed that 'positive images' in schools 'encourage' young people to be homosexual, 'corrupt' them and so on. Sometimes from the way tabloids portray the issue, you would imagine that lessons were being given in various precise sexual activities.

The basic idea is simply to show homosexuality as an equally valid, alternative way of living.

In and of itself this is a purely liberal notion. Rejection of it is rejection of the idea that homosexual men and women are *equally human*. Homosexual desire is *human* desire; the experience of it does not make a person 'less than human'. Homosexual relationships are as much relationships between two human beings as heterosexual: they can be as loving, unloving, caring, uncaring, satisfying, frustrating, fulfilling or unbearable as heterosexual relationships.

It is worth mentioning that it was the Nazis, motivated by the view that homosexuality was 'less than human', who rounded up all the homosexuals and put them in concentration camps — where 250,000 died wearing their symbol, a pink triangle.

Underlying or accompanying the 'less than human' perception of homosexuality is a 'less than natural' one. Nature being identified with procreation, all sex for its own sake (that is any sex anyone actually enjoys and isn't purely functional) is 'unnatural'. In fact, part of the essence of our humanity is precisely the capacity to enjoy sex independently of the instinctive urge to make babies.

The teaching in school that homosexual people are equally human is surely essential in any civilised society. It might help reduce the number of thugs outside The Dome on a Saturday night.

But does it 'make young people homosexual'? Nobody really knows what makes people homosexual — or, for that matter, what makes people heterosexual. There are a wide variety of social and psychological theories. It is widely accepted that almost everyone is capable in more than the biological sense of 'same-sex activity'. Large numbers of people — over half the population according to some studies — have had a homosexual experience at one time in their lives (and homosexuality is, of course, widely believed to be 'a phase' in adolescence).

About 10% identify themselves as homosexual, although an unkown and depressingly large number try to hide it — or 'stay in the closet'. This self-identification is not common to all societies at all times. Many societies accept homosexual *activity* as normal, but have no conception of a homosexual *identity*. Such an identity only emerged in Britain in the last century. Its existence, in Britain and elsewhere, seems to be connected to the development of capitalism.

In the USA, whole areas of cities (San Francisco, Detroit) became 'gay suburbs', providing a base for a powerful gay movement that emerged in the 'sixties. In Britain there is less of a movement — but a wide range of clubs, pubs, newspapers, organisations and so on.

People can *choose* whether or not to identify with all that. But can they choose their innermost sexual feelings? In so far as they can, it is to *suppress* feelings they don't want — or rather, that society tells them not to have.

If a 'positive image' was all it took to determine a young person's sexuality, there would be no homosexuals, as heterosexuality has, up to now, had a monopoly on 'positive images'.

What such images can do is help produce a less bigotted society; they can help young people actually feel free to be what and who they are, whatever and whoever it is. Rather than be screwed up, unhappy, even suicidal young lesbians and young gay men could at least have the chance of feeling, from the beginning, normal.

Clause 28 want to take that chance away. It would make all openness about sexuality impossible. Is a gay teacher answering probing questions from his or her students 'promoting homosexuality'? Is a student Lesbian and Gay Society, funded by a college (and therefore by a local authority) 'promoting' homosexuality?

Local-authority-funded Lesbian and Gay Centres of course could be for the chop. The rest? — it will be up to the interpretation of the Courts. And what will that mean? In 1983, an enlightened gentleman, Lord Lane, Lord Chief Justice, commented usefully:

"The men who, by today's jargon are described as gay, are not gay, they are homosexual and/or buggers and it is a pity they are not called that."

Lord Lane, one presumes, is a self-confessed, practising heterosexual.

Bang, crash, slump?

Will the stock market crash of 1987 lead to the slump and trade wars of 1988 or 1989? Paul Demuth reports from New York and London on why share prices crashed, and what it means for economic prospects.

One thing about Mammon is it is never short of cliches and hyperbole. Since 19 October, when world stock markets crashed (it instantly became "Black Monday") the pages of the *Wall Street Journal* have been brimming with extraordinary contributions to the English language.

Bears have been climbing the walls (of the pits in the Chicago futures exchange), New York has achieved "meltdown", it is generally considered "not a time to go gunslinging". Panic stricken share traders have been "cleaning the blood off their hands" after days spent "shovelling $100 bills down a mineshaft".

It certainly was fairly serious. By Guy Fawkes night, the Dow Jones Industrial Index, the most frequently used indictator of US share prices, had fallen by 27%. While the half-expected wave of bankruptcies among securities firms had so far failed to materialise, a lot of people had lost a lot of money. 'Yuppies' in Manhattan and Docklands had lost their jobs, amidst much gleeful crowing from a press which for the past few years has often seen its main function as catering to their every need and prejudice.

The imbalances which form the backdrop to the stock market crisis have their roots in the politics pursued in the major capitalist countries since the recession of 1979-81 and the subsequent recovery. In the United States the Reagan administration's determination to re-arm while simultaneously cutting taxes has led to a huge federal budget deficit, currently at $148 billion (for the fiscal year which ended in September).

The relatively high interest rates needed to attract money from abroad to cover the deficit pushed up the value of the dollar, making it difficult for American exporters to sell their products abroad and cheapening imports so that demand from US consumers soared. The US current account deficit jumped from $40.8 billion to $117.7 billion between 1983 and 1985, while the dollar effective exchange rate (Bank of England measure) rose by almost 13 per cent.

At the same time, the other major capitalist countries pursued tight monetary and fiscal policies. Calculations by the OECD and the IMF showed that between 1981 and 1984, there was an expansionary "fiscal impulse" in the US worth 3 per cent of Gross National Product, while in West Germany there was a contractionary impulse worth 0.9 per cent of GNP and in Japan there was a contractionary impulse worth 0.6 per cent of GNP.

The result was a world economic recovery characterised by booming demand in the US, which sucked in imports, leading to huge trade surpluses among its major competitors. Total real domestic demand in the US grew by 5 per cent in 1983, 8.5 per cent in 1984, slowing to 2.8 per cent in 1985. By contrast, the figures for Japan were 1.8 per cent, 3.8 per cent and 3.7 per cent in each year and for West Germany 2 per cent, 2 per cent and 1.4 per cent (OECD figures). Over the period, the West Germany trade surplus more than trebled, from $4.1 billion to $13.1 billion, while the Japanese surplus more than doubled from $20.8 billion to $49.3 billion.

> 'By Guy Fawkes night the Dow Jones index, the most frequently used indicator of US share prices, had fallen by 27%'

By 1985, most economists in and out of the major capitalist governments considered the trade, fiscal and foreign exchange rate imbalances to be unsustainable. The US, where households have a relatively low tendency to save rather than consume, was having to finance its budget deficit with huge inflows of money from Japan, where there is a large savings surplus. The US became a net debtor for the first time in decades. The fear was that foreign investors would eventually lose confidence in the over-inflated US dollar and sell out, sending the dollar into 'free-fall' and plunging the world into recession.

In September 1985, the finance ministers of Britain, West Germany, Japan and France, agreed their central banks should start selling dollars and the US agreed to co-operate by reducing interest rates. In a move that has been the centre of controversy ever since, it was also agreed that Japan and West Germany should opt for expansionary fiscal measures so their economies could take up what the US Government is fond of calling "the burden of growth".

The short-term monetary measures did have an immediate effect. Between the end of December 1984 and 2 October this year (that is, before the sharp fall in the dollar which came after the stock market crash), the Bank of England effective dollar exchange rate index fell by almost 30 per cent while the yen index rose by 23 per cent and the Deutschmark index by 11 per cent. The interest rate on three-month US Treasury bills, which peaked at 9.66 per cent during 1983, fell to a low of 5.55 per cent at the beginning of May this year.

The agreement was apparently so successful that by January this year the finance ministers decided that the process had gone far enough and agreed a programme to stabilise the dollar.

But what the financial markets wanted to see was the dollar adjustment having an effect on the US trade deficit and firm action from Washington on the budget deficit. On this front, matters were much less encouraging. The US trade deficit actually widened from $124 billion in 1985 to $147 billion last year. At the time of the August trade figures which immediately preceded the stock market crash, it was running at $152.5 billion over 12 months.

The expansion of other economies to take up the slack from the US has been a long-drawn-out process. The Japanese government has generally won the approval of the US for introducing public spending increases and tax changes, but the gradual nature of a two-part programme of tax cuts introduced by the West Germany government and its reluctance to cut interest rates substantially has come in for widespread criticism from the other major capitalist countries (including Britain).

The recovery from recession may have been accompanied by yawning trade and fiscal imbalances, but recovery it still was, and this has been reflected in corporate profits, which have been rising strongly since the early 1980s. In the UK, for example, return on capital employed in large industrial companies improved from 13.6 per cent in 1980 to 17.9 per cent last year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(according to a Bank of England survey).

Buoyed up by booming profits, at least since 1982-3, the end of the high inflation of the 1970s and confidence in the fiscal and monetary rectitude of the right wing governments in power, share prices have been moving strongly ahead since the mid to late 1970s. The rises have been particularly marked in Britain and Japan. According to figures compiled by 'The Economist', the market capitalisation of the UK stock market has risen from around 35 per cent of Gross Domestic Product in 1976 to around 80 per cent in 1986. The Japanese market has swollen from about 30 per cent of GDP to around 80 per cent. By contrast, although the main market indices have been moving strongly ahead on Wall Street the market capitalisation of the US stock market has stayed relatively stable at between 50-60 per cent of GDP.

Booming share prices and worries over the future of world economic growth form the backdrop to the events on stock markets since "Black Monday" on 19 October. But to explain why the crash occurred just then means leaving the heights of economic policy and plumbing the depths of the psychology of greed and fear which rules the world's bourses.

In the most immediate sense, there were two triggers to the stock market crash. One was provided by the US trade deficit. Share prices on Wall Street began to fall sharply in the week before "Black Monday" when the US government announced an August trade deficit of $15.68 billion, hardly a significant fall from July's record $16.47 billion. The markets decided the foreign exchange rate agreements were not working.

The second trigger was provided by US Treasury Secretary James Baker, a man whose flamboyant style (he likes to wander around the Treasury Deparment in cowboy boots) had already given him a reputation for making injudicious comments. On the Friday before the crash, Baker accused the West German government of violating its agreement to keep interest rates low under the Louvre Accord. This was read as a signal that the international agreement might fall apart and that Baker and the US Federal Reserve might be prepared to see the dollar move sharply downwards.

A third factor was more esoteric, but possibly more fundamental. While share prices had been heading upwards, if erratically, since the summer, the underlying worries about the economy had been more pronounced in the world's bond markets, which had been weak over a three-month period.

The result of the weakness in bond markets was that the 'yield gap' between bonds and equities (shares in companies) had been increasing. The yield on a stock measures the income on the stock (the interest in the case of bonds, the dividend paid by the companies in the case of shares) against the price. So as prices fall, yields rise. Bonds always yield more than shares. But rising equity prices and falling bond prices had opened up the 'yield gap' to the point where the slightest knock to confidence could spark off a mass exit from equities into bonds (which is precisely what has happened since the crash).

Whatever the mix of these factors, the result was dramatic. Shares on Wall Street lost $500 billion on Black Monday as the Dow Jones Industrial Index fell by 22.6 per cent in a single session. In London, where the doom and gloom had been bottled up since the previous Thursday, as markets had been closed on the Friday because of storm damage, the Financial Times 100 share index fell by almost 250 points (its previous largest one-day fall was 56 points). Tokyo, now the world's largest stock market, held up rather well. It suffered only its sixth largest daily fall.

In both London and Wall Street, the falls in the market quickly developed into all-out panic, which has now given way to fear as prices stabilise to some extent. The fall in the stock market was quickly followed by a slump in the dollar, which only staged a (fragile) recovery when President Reagan declared he thought it had fallen far enough.

'The basic figures of the crash are dramatic. If stock markets are compared with their world highs on 26 August last year, by 7 November the US market had fallen by 24 per cent, the UK by 20 per cent, and the Japanese by 9 per cent. The immediate reaction of leaders of the capitalist countries to the crash was to declare that "the economic fundamentals are sound". Their counterparts said exactly the same after the stock market crash in 1929.'

The bare figures of the crash are dramatic. If stock markets are compared with their world highs on 26 August last year, by 7 November, the US market had fallen by 24 per cent, the UK by 20 per cent, the Japanese by 9 per cent (these figures use the broadly-based Financial Times, Goldman Sachs and Wood Mackenzie actuaries indices rather than the more usual market indicators. The main indices have fallen even further as they concentrate on the shares of the largest companies, which are much more widely traded).

The immediate reaction of leaders of the capitalist countries to the crash was to declare that "the economic fundamentals are sound". Their counterparts said exactly the same after the stock market crash in 1929, which later turned into a catastrophic slump. Share traders, who had been boning up on the events of 1929, were quick to spot the coincidence.

The major fear is that the fall in share values could of itself at best reduce economic growth, especially in the US, at worst produce a recession. This is because of the 'wealth effect'. People with a stake in the equity market feel that they are worse off, so they cut spending and save more, which will cut demand in the economy. Some US economists are predicting only 1 per cent growth in the US economy next year as a result of the wealth effect, while the Bank of England has said it expects a wash-on effect in this country.

To counter the recessionary threat (and in a more immediate sense to calm the financial markets) interest rates have been reduced in the major capitalist countries since the crash. This has risks attached, particularly for the US, which has lost the ability to raise interest rates to support the dollar.

But the economic imbalances still remain and will remain even if the White House agree details with Congress on its deal to cut the US budget deficit by more than $70 billion over the next two years. The longer the US trade deficit remains big, the greater will be the pressure for protectionist legislation against Japanese and German imports. A round of protectionism could quickly tilt faltering economic growth over the edge into outright recession.

Dithering over the deficit and the threat of protectionism could easily lead to another and even more dramatic crash on Wall Street. Traders have been nervously noting that in 1929 initial falls were followed by a period when share prices rose only to fall even further.

The threat of recession is, as usual, leaving those who can least afford to suffer the most to fear. If massive budget cuts are made in the US then, barring enormous tax increases which the Reagan administration would find unacceptable, it will be people who receive welfare benefits who will stand to lose most. Even tax increases are more likely to come through regressive tax increases (a sales tax, for example) than through income tax rises, which the 'supply side' economists in the White House will argue would lessen incentives and promote recession.

An even more dramatic effect could be felt by debt-ridden Third World countries. A fall in world interest rates will lessen the debt load to some extent, but the benefit could be more than wiped out by the loss of export markets which they need to produce the foreign exchange to cover their interest payments. A sharp fall in US imports from the Third World could have drastic effects in South America and move the global crisis on to a different plane — the threat of large-scale default by Brazil or Mexico and the consequent collapse of one or more US banks. The scenario would be likely to produce a crash on world bourses which would make October's falls look like a mere correction of over-inflated share prices.

Behind the jargon

FUNDAMENTALLY, all the operations of Wall Street and City are based on the efforts of working capitalists to get *cash* in return for a promise of a share in their future profits.

Wealthy people give their cash to working capitalists, who can then use it to build factories, buy machines, employ workers, and so on, or to the government. In return the working capitalists, or the government, give the wealthy people bits of paper.

These bits of paper may be entitlements to a fixed rate of interest on the cash — 5 per cent a year, or 10 per cent a year, or whatever. Then they are called **BONDS**. Bonds usually also carry a promise to repay the original cash after a fixed number of years. The Government sells lots of bonds (British Government bonds are also called **GILT-EDGED** stock, and for short-term cash the Government sells **TREASURY BILLS**, which are IOUs repayable, usually, in three months). But capitalist companies sell bonds, too.

Usually capitalist companies do not want to tie themselves to fixed payments in the future, so they sell **SHARES**, or **EQUITIES**, instead of bonds. These bits of paper entitle the holder to a portion, or **DIVIDEND**, of the future profits of the working capitalist's business; but the dividend is not a fixed percentage. It is decided by the company each year.

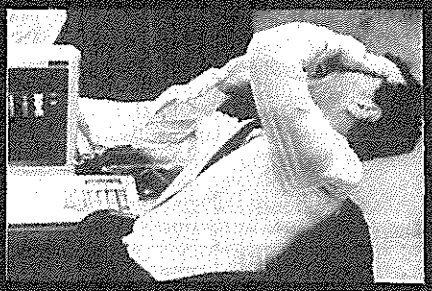
Shares also generally give the shareholder a say in the business. Big shareholders can, and sometimes do, overrule the managers who actually run the business.

When people buy shares, the company never pays back the cash. But wealthy people think it is worthwhile buying shares because of the dividends — and because they reckon they can probably sell the shares to a third person for as much as, or more than, the original price. Share prices go up and down because of two basic factors — the level of dividends, and the general prospects of the company (which influence the price that will be offered for the shares in a takeover). There is also a third factor: if wealthy people *think* that the price of a company's shares will go up, then they will try to buy those shares, and so, by the workings of supply and demand, the price of the shares *will* go up. Within limits, rises and falls in share prices can be self-propelling.

Bond prices can go up and down, too. Suppose a £100 bond is issued at a time when the going rate of interest is 5 per cent. A year later, the going rate is 10 per cent. Suppose, too, that it is a long-term bond — the repayment date for it is many years away. Then the £100 bond — at 5 per cent — will bring the owner just the same gain as a £50 bond issued the second year, at 10 per cent. One is as good as the other. So if the holder of the bond with a face value of £100 sells it, one year on, no-one will pay him or her more than £50 for it.

As this example shows, the price of long-term bonds goes up when the rate of interest falls, and goes down when the rate of interest rises.

So bond and share prices go up and down quite a lot; and people can make big gains by buying when they are cheap and selling when they are dear. That's what the City and Wall Street are all about. They are the arenas in which the moneyed classes carve up among themselves the profits they have screwed out of the working class (and, besides, a chunk of taxpayers' money, through the interest which the Government pays on its bonds) — and try to swindle each other in the process.



It is of no interest to the working class which millionaire strikes lucky and which gets swindled. But the City and Wall Street do affect the wider capitalist economy. Capitalism, after all, is ruled by profit, so the carving-up of profit is important to it. Capitalism produces nothing if not for ready cash or acceptable credit; and the City and Wall Street are where the wealthy and the big capitalist companies find cash and credit.

A crash in share and bond prices, and a rise in the rate of interest, makes it more difficult for businesses and wealthy individuals to get cash or credit. It thus cuts back investment and individual spending. That means a slump in demand, therefore a slump in profits and in employment.

The City and Wall Street are also arenas where the contradiction between capitalism's international reach and its division into national economies works itself out. In the **FOREIGN EXCHANGE** markets, people sell dollars for deutschmarks, or yens for pounds, and so on. They can make gains from that, too. One dollar was worth over 250 yen in February 1985, and is only 130 yen now. So if an American millionaire changed $1 million into yen in February 1985, and changes it back into dollars today, he will have nearly $2 million.

EURODOLLARS are dollars held in banks outside the US (mostly in London). **EUROBONDS** are bonds issued in exchange for Eurodollars (or Euroyen, or whatever).

Governments can influence what happens in these financial arenas. The rate of interest is pushed down if the Government prints a lot of pounds or dollars, and up if the Government holds back the supply of new cash.

A Government is said to have a *tight*, or *contractionary*, **MONETARY POLICY**, if it is going for a high rate of interest and trying to make cash and credit hard to get. The opposite is a *lax*, or *expansionary* monetary policy, when the rate of interest is low and cash and credit are easy to get.

A Government's **FISCAL POLICY** is its policy on the balance between its spending and the taxes it gets in. If the budget **DEFICIT** — the gap between spending and tax revenue — is big, then fiscal policy is said to be expansionary; if it is small, or there is a surplus of tax revenue over spending, the policy is said to be contractionary. Usually, though not always, an expansionary fiscal policy goes together with an expansionary monetary policy, and a contractionary fiscal policy with a contractionary monetary policy.

The rate of interest also affects the **BALANCE OF PAYMENTS**. If the rate of interest is 9 per cent in the US and 3½ per cent in West Germany, then — all other things being equal — wealthy people will take their wealth out of Germany and put into a US bank or buy US bonds. (All other things usually aren't equal. At present, for example, the wealthy classes fear that the dollar's value will fall further, so they prefer to have their money in German bonds or bank deposits even though the rate of interest is lower).

Such flows of money in search of higher interest rates or currencies which are increasing in value make up the **CAPITAL ACCOUNT** of the **BALANCE OF PAYMENTS**. The other side of it is the **CURRENT ACCOUNT** — the flows of money due to trade (imports and exports), interest, profit or dividends going abroad or coming in, and so on. So the trade balance is part of the current account, which in turn is part of the balance of payments.

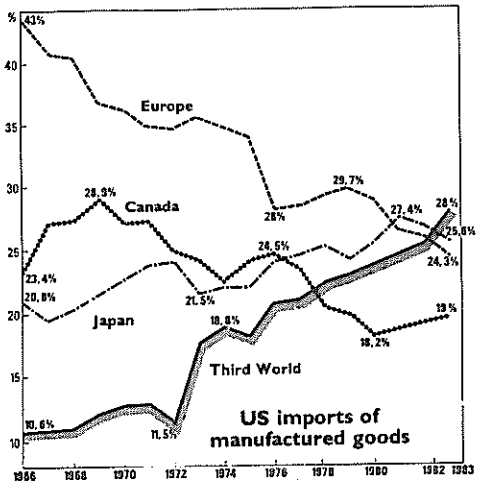
Countries have problems if there is a big deficit on their balance of payments — that is, if there is much more foreign money going out than comes in. Their reserves of foreign currency can be wiped out, and then they have to try to buy currencies on the foreign exchange markets, which — by supply-and-demand — drives down the value of their own currency.

1950-68: long boom

From 1950 to the late '60s, capitalism had its greatest-ever period of growth. Under US domination, the world had fairly free trade and a good supply of credit as the US pumped out dollars. Industries like cars grew and spread enormously. World trade grew at 8.5% per year, output at 5% per year. But the boom undermined US supremacy. Japanese and West European capitalisms, pushed forward by US investment and not burdened by military spending as huge as the US's, grew fastest.

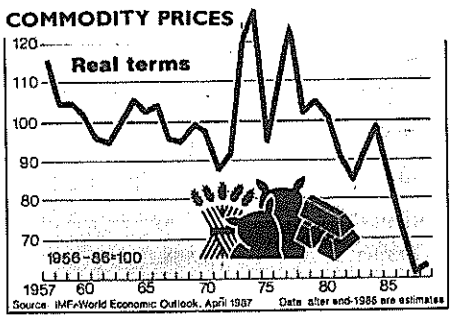
1968-71: the dollar no longer king

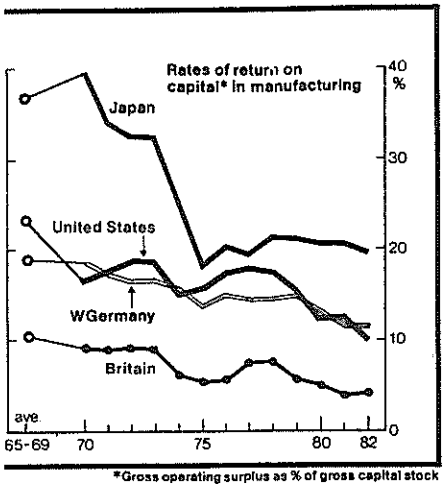
Spending on the Vietnam war finally made the US unable to maintain its guarantee of the dollar's value. The orderly, regulated post-war framework began to break down into chaotic cut-throat competition and speculation.



1970s: oil crash and bank lending boom

The balance of forces had been turning not only against the US, but also against the old capitalist metropolises as a whole. Third World countries had won independence and were developing their own capitalisms, fast. This change was signalled in 1973, when oil exporting countries managed to triple the price of oil and grab a much bigger share of oil profits for themselves. The price rise tipped sickly world capitalism into a slump. But the oil cash was channelled through the international banks into loans to quickly-expanding Third World manufacturing powers.





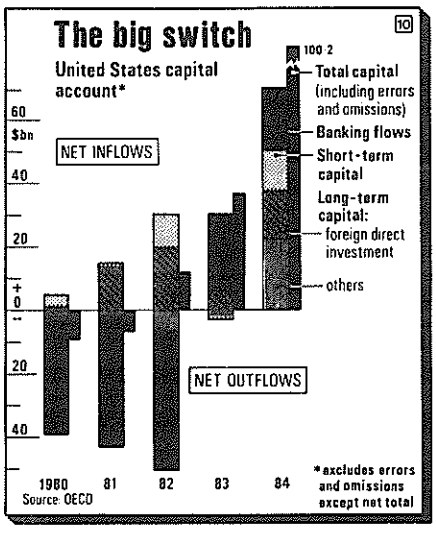
*Gross operating surplus as % of gross capital stock

1979-82: the first world-wide slump

Profit rates had been drifting downwards for many years, as new investment failed to produce the same returns as older, more labour-intensive forms. Capitalism slumped again in 1979-82. The vast expansion of financial connections between countries in the '70s made this the first really global slump ever. Eastern bloc countries like Poland, heavily in debt to the international banks, were pulled in too.

1982: debt crisis

Reduced demand for their exports from the slump-hit advanced economies, and higher interest rates, made Third World countries unable to keep up payments on the money they had borrowed in the '70s. In 1982, Mexico declared itself unable to pay, and the debt crisis has raged ever since, bringing vicious IMF austerity plans to many countries. Falling prices for the raw materials which are still their basic exports have made the squeeze still tighter for many poor countries.

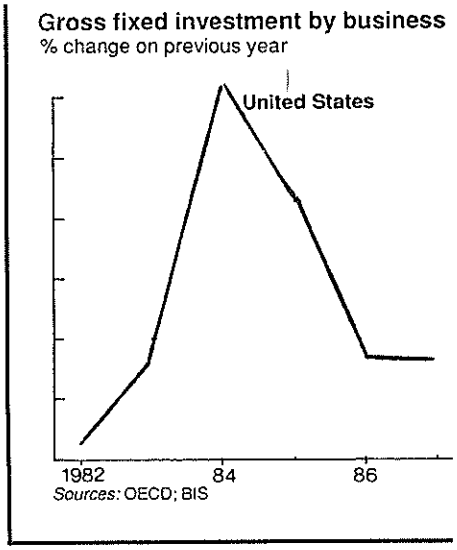


1983-7: the US spends, spends, spends

The big capitalist governments decided to 'sweat out' the 1979-82 slump, and used it for a fairly successful assault on workers' organisations. Since 1983 profit rates have risen again. The US has had a sort of boom, with high military spending and consumer credit. The huge amount the US spent on imports from Pacific Rim countries has brought it a big trade deficit, but this has been balanced by a tremendous flow of investment into the US.

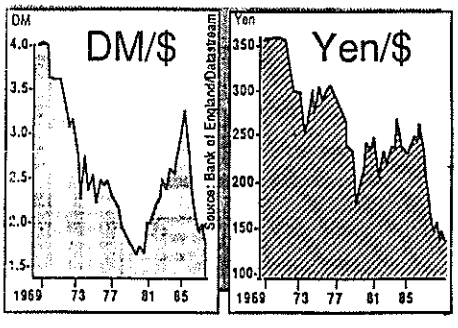
1986: Big Bang

In the 1980s international capital has become more and more fluid and mobile. London's 'Big Bang', in October 1986, epitomised this trend. Share prices boomed; up to February 1985 the dollar rose higher and higher as money flooded into the US. But then the dollar slid, without this mending the US's trade deficit; and investment fell off in the US.



19 October 1987: share prices crash.

The bubble burst on 19 October last year. In a few weeks some $1,000 billion was wiped off share prices in the US, and similar amounts elsewhere.



Into the unknown

Since last October the dollar has slid fast, and one possibility now is a catastrophic loss of confidence in what is still the only approximation to world money. Trade wars, a slump in demand in the US, and sudden worsening of the Third World debt crisis are other possible routes to slump. The hectic chaos of modern international finance is taking its revenge on those who have profited from it.

The global gambling den

Martin Thomas looks at the growth of a world-wide casino economy in the 1980s.

PRODUCTION, consumption and investment in capitalism are limited not by social need but by effective demand — by the number of buyers with cash, or an accepted substitute for cash, in their hands. Thus credit makes capitalism grow quicker. It makes it more flexible.

At the same time, credit nurtures speculation, risky ventures, and enterprises based on over-optimistic hopes of an industrial boom continuing. When an industrial boom slows down, and new investment in machinery and buildings dries up at the end of a business cycle, the credit boom may be able to 'overshoot' and continue for a while through its own momentum. But all dividends, interest and other gains eventually have to be paid out of the profits of productive enterprise. The credit boom has to end sometime — and its very flexibility may make that end a crash.

Since the 1930s capitalist governments have developed methods for controlling credit within their own economies which can smooth out such potential crashes. By reducing interest rates and printing more money, and undertaking public works, they can offset a shrinking of credit caused by the free market.

Behind the Great Crash of 1987, however, lies the fact that in the 1980s the world capitalist system has moved into uncharted waters. Various forms of *international* credit, only minimally controllable by national governments, have expanded hugely. As with credit generally, this expansion has given capitalism more flexibility — and a greater risk of sudden slumps.

International bank lending shrank from $336 billion in 1981 to $127 billion in 1983 because of the Third World debt crisis. But since 1983 it has expanded again, to $624 billion in 1986.

The volume of bonds (bits of paper carrying a fixed rate of interest, and, usually, a repayment date) issued by governments and companies outside their own countries rose from $44 billion in 1981 to $220 billion in 1986. International *share* issues rose from $0.2 billion in 1984 (they hardly existed before then) to $7.5 billion in 1986 and $17.7 billion in 1987.

The amount of foreign exchange trading — trading dollars for deutschmarks, pounds for yen, francs for dollars, and so on — was most recently estimated at $200 billion a *day*, in 1986. In 1970 it was less than $10 billion a day.

Just how huge these figures are can be gauged by comparing them with the US's reserves of gold and foreign currencies, which total about $170 billion.

Vast sums of money fly around the world at great speed in search of the best return. The gains or losses from having wealth in the right or wrong form can be huge. In 1987, for example, *before* the Crash, a British millionaire with his money in US government long-term bonds would have lost 47% of it. If he had the money in UK shares instead, he would have gained 44%.

In 1986 his possibilities ranged from losing 3% in UK government bonds to gaining 76% in French shares; in 1985, from losing 30% in the same French share market to gaining 55% in German shares.

The *Economist* magazine summed up the changes since the late '60s — changes which have accelerated dramatically in the 1980s — in these words: **"Capital mobility has transformed the monetary system, turning it from a series of official negotiated agreements into a 24-hour private, global market".**

Dollars held in London and other banking centres outside the US totalled $2,400 billion in 1985, and doubtless more today. Those dollars can be, and are, swapped into yen or deutschmarks, or used to buy shares anywhere in the world, at a moment's notice. Compare that vast mass of paper money with the US's gold reserves of about $130 billion! The gold reserves cover hardly more than 5% of the credit money. In 1971 the US's gold reserves covered 32% of foreign dollar holdings.

A long history led up to this situation. It is, briefly, as follows. After World War 2 the US was master of the world capitalist economy. It established a system based on the dollar being world money — money which any country would accept in payment for goods — the US guaranteeing the dollar with gold at $35 an ounce, and the exchange rates for other currencies be-

ing fixed unless a government devalued in crisis. Trade became fairly free, but international capital movements were comparatively restricted, except for the flow of US dollars invested world-wide and especially in Western Europe.

In the late 1940s this system caused severe difficulties because countries other than the US did not have enough dollars. The difficulties were eased by Marshall Aid and the Korean War. A lot of dollars flowed out of the US, in aid and military spending.

In the late 1960s the Vietnam war redoubled that flow of dollars to the point where the system broke down. The US could no longer effectively cover its dollars with gold. There was a risk that capitalists world-wide would decide that they no longer wanted dollars. The dollar would crash, and international trade would be left without any form of money acceptable to all sellers except gold.

The US abandoned its fixed rate of $35 to one ounce of gold, and exchange rates were set free to be decided by the market. Into this fluid situation the oil price rises of 1973 injected vast amounts of spare cash — the new income of the oil states. International bank lending increased explosively as the banks took the oil states' money and lent it on to Third World governments. This expansion of credit, yet again, made capitalism more flexible but more risky: many Third World economies expanded fast in the 1970s only to crash after 1982 when their export markets in the US dried up and interest rates rose.

International bank lending shrank again. But once the system had learned to go international, it could not be squeezed back into the bottle of national economies. On the contrary: in the 1980s one banking centre after another, seeking a bigger share of profitable business, has scrapped its government controls on international capital movements.

The modern global market in credit rests on a very delicate balance. The US government has to be just free and easy enough about printing dollars to keep the US economy from slumping and to provide international trade with enough dollars for its work, but not so free and easy that wealthy people around the world decide that the dollar is sliding downwards so badly that they had better swap their wealth from dollars to something else.

In recent years that delicate balance has been maintained by nothing better than fantastic coincidence. Since 1983 spending by the US government, US companies, and US consumers has boomed. The flow of credit *within* the US economy has increased dramatically. This has meant the US importing far more than it exports. The trade deficit — the excess of imports over exports — has risen from $67 billion in 1983 to $150 billion in 1987.

If that were the end of the story, then the US would face disastrous choices. If it tried to pay for the imports by releasing gold and foreign currencies from its reserves, then those reserves would run out within a year. So it would have to print vast numbers of dollars — thus risking a loss of confidence in the dollar and a decline in its value which the printing presses could not even keep up with — or engineer a drastic slump in the US to reduce imports. That drastic slump would pull the whole world economy down, just as the spending boom after 1983 pulled it up. The third choice would be to try to mend the trade deficit by strict import controls or tariffs. Some US politicians have toyed with this idea. But most of them know that strong protectionist measures by the US would inevitably bring retaliation from the EEC and Japan, and stifle world trade, dragging every national economy down. They would have particularly severe effects on debt-burdened Third World states which depend on exporting to the US in order to pay the banks — and thus, indirectly, on the US's own banks.

The US has been saved from these dilemmas by a huge flow of capital into the US, more or less balancing the trade deficit. British, Dutch, Japanese and Canadian capitalists have set up factories in the US, taken over US companies, and bought US shares and bonds, at a fantastic rate. Within a few years US capitalism has been transformed from being the capitalism with the greatest excess of its own assets abroad over foreigners' assets in its home economy — the world's biggest creditor — into the world's biggest debtor. (There are some arguments about the precise figures of this transformation, but its general size and direction are beyond dispute).

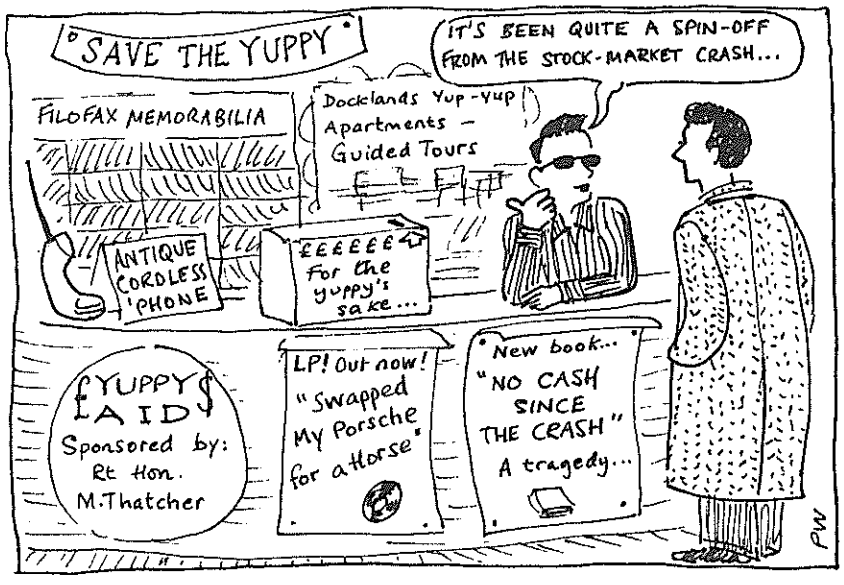
But foreign capitalists will not go on buying US assets forever. Japanese capitalists who lost billions by putting their money in US government bonds in 1987 will not carry on taking such punishment forever. British, Dutch and Japanese capitalists got a return of only 5% or 6% on their productive investments in 1986. They may reckon that such low returns are worth suffering for the sake of establishing themselves in the world's biggest market safe from the problems of protectionism and exchange-rate risk which they would have if they only exported to the US. But only up to a point! And when investment, industrial production, and profits in the US turn downwards — as they did in 1986, though there was probably some recovery in 1987 before the crash — then the limit where it ceases to be worthwhile for foreign capitalists to invest in the US comes nearer.

And besides, the increased foreign investment in the US means a new burden for the US balance of payments, since the foreign capitalists have to be paid interest, profits, and dividends — currently about $70 billion a year.

Alarmed by the stock market crash, the US government is now trying to bring the US economy down from its risky position in a slow and controlled way, by a gradual and limited decline in the dollar's value and a moderate recession in the US economy. No-one knows whether it will succeed or whether the whole dizzy structure of international credit will collapse.

But some things are clear. Capitalism is as much a system of chaos as ever. It is a casino economy where blind market forces and hitches in the trading of specialised bits of paper can suddenly and unpredictably ruin the livelihoods and lives of millions. It sacrifices people to the pursuit of profit.

Reformist programmes of national economic management have less and less grip on modern capitalism, dominated as it is by the international credit business. Any government attempting any control over its economy short of complete confiscation of the credit system can quickly be made a mere cork on the waters of the international flow and counter-flow of wealth. The debate in the Labour Party over whether to have exchange controls or only some tax incentives for British financiers to invest in British production is a debate between two forms of control equally inadequate to cope with the new regime of internationally mobile capital. Socialists need a programme both bolder and more international than ever before.



Trotsky on the national question

Two articles, first time in English

The national struggle and the unity of the proletariat

Marxism has a long tradition on the national question, nowadays largely distorted. Workers' Liberty sees the restoration of the Marxist tradition on this issue as one of its tasks. These two articles by Leon Trotsky have been translated into English for the first time by Stan Crooke.

The full extent of the wretched helplessness of the Third Duma has been revealed only now, when in the course of its work the Duma has come up against the major issues.

"Peasant land-organisation" — but long live the nobleman-landowner! "Equality before the court" — but long live the landowner justice of the peace! "Inviolability of the person" — but under the condition of an increase in the number of gendarmes — and, moreover: provided that there is no note of being of Jewish origin in one's "identity" passport.

On the national question the Duma emerges more than on any other issue as

the heiress of the autocracy of the epoch of disintegration.

In this massive country, alight with cunning and violence, where there live side-by-side more than a hundred nationalities which developing capitalism snatches into its whirlpool, Tsarist power, in its struggle for self-preservation, has done everything in its power to confuse, complicate, shatter and weaken the democratic and revolutionary class struggle of the masses by means of national baiting. In the Caucasus the government has incited the dark and fanatical Tartars against the revolutionary proletariat and the Armenian lower middle-class opposition.

Over a long period of time it has stirred up the Lettish peasants in the Baltic region against landowners whom it regarded as unreliable — the German barons. In the Western provinces — Byelorussian and Ukrainian peasants against Polish landowners. In Finland — the only recently aroused Finnish workers against the liberal Swedish bourgeoisie.

Everywhere and in all places it has incited the popular masses against Jews — in pursuit of the same goals for which it sought to favour the Jews in the epoch of the Polish uprisings, in order to be able to rely upon them in the struggle against the rebellious Polish shlachty*. It has combined vile social demagogy with abominable national baiting.

But arousing the masses is always dangerous for those in power. The workers' Zubatovshchina** dissolved into a powerful strike movement. The peasant struggle grew into an agrarian uprising in which the Lettish peasantry was one of the most militant detachments. Finnish workers as a whole rose up into the ranks of social democracy. But, on the other hand, yesterday's enemies of the autocracy became its friends. At the time when the native nobility rallied to counter-revolutionary organisations, the Baltic barons, accompanied by military expeditions, shot and hanged Lettish peasants, and Polish nationalists slaughtered worker-revolutionaries.

The Narodovtsy***, the party of an "independent Poland", supported the slogan of a "Great Russia" by the time of the Third Duma. At the time when the dark Persian-Tartar masses in the Caucausus, the former army of Armenian pogroms, awaken to conscious life, the Armenian bourgeoisie, together with the entire intelligentsia, crosses over into the camp of law and order. At their November congress in Grodno the representatives of the Jewish bourgeoisie proclaim the necessity of disavowing broad political "ideals" in the name of everyday "practical work". Finally, in the current fateful hour for Finland, the Finnish bourgeoisie displays a readiness to make all manner of concessions to Tsarism as a reliable defence against the Finnish proletariat.

Such is the colossal work of the revolution — it wrenched the millions-strong working masses who had sunk into spiritual slavery from out of political darkness, it raised them above their local, professional and national standpoints and prejudices, it allowed them to sense and exercise the revolutionary forces being unleashed within them — and thereby forced the bourgeois and landowners' groups of differing national origins, yesterday still oppositional, liberal, radical, separatist, revolutionary, to become the friends of one leadership — *firm, central, state power.*

But in that period when the bourgeoisie of all nations of Russia discards into the litter bin the sweeping demands of national autonomy or national independence and is agreeable to paying any price for the protection of Tsarism, the latter again introduces national divisions into its midst. It cannot satisfy the demands of bourgeois development by means of far-reaching reforms, and indeed the bourgeoisie itself fears this more than fire — there remains to Tsarism only a re-dividing of the bourgeoisie, separating out from it a privileged layer, protecting it at the expense of the rest, and basing itself upon it. *Russia for the Russians!*

Here is the slogan of the domestic policies of counter-revolution. Protecting the scanty domestic market where possible for "national" Great Russian capital, imposing all possible restrictions on the Jewish bourgeoisie, passing over Polish capital in the distribution of government commercial orders, keeping administrative, judicial and officers' positions open only for the sons of the Russian nobility and the Great Russian bourgeoisie — this means thereby tying the latter more firmly to Stolypin's state order. *Russia for the Russians!*

The Octobrists, the recently created national party, and the pogromist-clerical-police unions of the extreme Right now likewise live off this idea as well. Thus how pitifully and helplessly there echoed in the Duma the speeches of the Cadet Rodichev, who demanded equal rights for Jews — in the name of the equal value of all people and in the interests of the re-education of district inspectors. These appeals are all the more impotent given that the Cadet Party itself, which declaims about the equal value of people and picks up the votes of the Jewish bourgeoisie, at the same time preaches a nationalistic sermon of Slavophilia and, through its right wing in the shape of Struve and his associates, openly descends to anti-semitism.

Nationalism and chauvinism — in foreign policies, just as in domestic policies as well! From this there now live and breathe the entire ruling and propertied classes of Russia — from his majesty's own "responsible opposition" to his majesty's own irresponsible pogromists.

What conclusion does there then follow from this?

The bourgeoisie of the dominant nation *does not want* equality of national rights.

The bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation *is not able to fight* for equality of rights. The national question, like the question of the creation of free conditions of life and development for all peoples inhabiting Russia falls with its entire weight to the proletariat. To you, workers of Russia!

It was not the proletariat who built this monstrous state. It does not take any responsibility for it. It does not take upon itself, in the manner of liberalism, any obligations with respect to "Great Russia". For workers the Russian Empire is alien fetters placed upon them by history, and, together with this, the arena of their class struggle. We stand here, on this ground sown by crimes, it was not us who created it, not us who chose it, it was given us as a brutal fact — we who wish to cleanse it of blood and filth and make it fit for the peaceful cohabitation of peoples.

This task is enormous, but its enormity is not frightening. Because the national question for the proletariat is only part of its overall historical task. For the worker, in all places and at all times, national oppression turns into class oppression, and every act of violence against the nation inflicts its first and its most cruel wound on the worker. Not only Jewish, Polish, Lettish, Ukrainian or Georgian workers feel and know this and are convinced of it anew every day, but also Russian workers. Because that selfsame government, by those selfsame methods by which it oppresses and tormets Jews and Poles, *as "inorodtsky"*****, torments and oppresses you, *as workers.*

The revolution bequeathed to the bourgeoisie the curse of national hatred and national rivalry; to us it bequeathed the unity of proletarian tasks and the means of struggle. In the flames of revolution the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party embraced Polish and Lettish Social-Democracy, the Ukrainian Union "Spilka" and the General Jewish Workers' Union (the "Bund"). In our ranks there were not a few arguments about the most suitable form of unification of national organisations — and these arguments will probably continue to crop up on more than one occasion; there was a moment, in 1903, when the Bund left the Party because of disagreements on this question. But in the epoch of the revolution both sides — both Party and Bund — said to each other: one form of organisation may be better, the other worse; but above all organisational *forms* stands the necessity of the *unity* of class organisation.

We counterpose this unity of the proletariat without distinction of race, nation, creed and language to the nationalist baiting and pogromist sermon of the parties of reaction, in this unity lying the guarantee of our victories.

Translation notes:
* "shlachty" — Polish nobility; Russian transliteration of the Polish word in the original.
** "Zubatovshchina" — yellow, fake, "trade union" movement set up by the government, under the control of Zubatov.
*** "Narodovtsy" — Polish nationalists.
**** "inorodtsy" — expression denoting members of non-Russian peoples living on Russian soil.

Once Again: The Education of Youth and the National Question

(Pravda, no.95, 1 May 1923)

'A' is a member of the Komsomol, (Young Communists), a capable and dedicated young revolutionary. Fought in the Red Army as a volunteer; suffers some deficiencies, however, in aspects of Marxist education and political experience.

'B' s a slightly more serious comrade.

A. Of course it is impossible to object to the resolution of the XII Congress on the national question. But, nevertheless, the question was posed artificially. For us, communists, the national question is not so acutely significant.

B. Is that so? You did indeed say just now that you agree with the resolution of the XII Congress? But, at the same time, the basic meaning of this resolution consists in the fact that it is not a matter of the national question for communists, but that communists are for the resolution of the national question as a constituent part of the more general question of man's living arrangements on earth.

If you have liberated yourself in a circle of self-education with the help of the methods of Marxism from this or that national prejudice, then this is, of course, very good, and a great step forward in your personal development. In this sphere, however, the task of the ruling party is slightly broader: by means of state institutions and other institutions directed by the Party it is necessary to provide the millions-strong masses of different races with the possibility of finding real and living satisfaction of their national interests and needs, and thereby provide them with the possibility of liberating themselves from national antagonisms and prejudices — not on the scale of a Marxist circle but on the scale of the historical experience of peoples.

There is therefore an irreconcilable contradiction between your formal acknowledgement of the resolution and your statement that for us, communists, the national question does not possess great significance: you thereby show that you do not acknowledge the resolution, i.e. speaking frankly, purely comradely without the intention of saying anything offensive — you do not understand its political meaning.

A. Then you have misunderstood me.

B. Hmmm.

A. I merely wished to say that for us, communists, the class question possesses an incomparably greater significance than the national one. Consequently, it is necessary to keep a sense of proportion. At the same time, I fear that the national question has recently concerned us excessively at the expense of the class question.

B. Perhaps I have thereby again misunderstood you. But in my opinion, with this new statement you make a new and even bigger mistake in principle. All our politics — in the economic sphere, in state construction, in the national question, in the diplomatic sphere — are class politics. They are dictated by the historical interests of the proletariat, which fights for the complete liberation of humanity from all forms of oppression. Our attitude to the national question, the measures taken by us to solve the national question are a constituent part of our class position, and nothing secondary to it or opposed to it.

You say that the class criterion is the main thing for us. This is quite true, but only inasmuch as this really is a class criterion, that is, inasmuch as it includes answers to all basic questions of historical development, including the national question also. Class criterion minus national question is not class criterion, but merely the stump of it, inevitably drawing closer to shopfloor sectionalism, to trade-unionism, etc.

A. In your opinion, then, it turns out that a concern for the resolution of the national question, i.e. for forms of cohabitation of national groups and national minorities with each other, is as important a question for us as the preservation of the power of the working class or the dictatorship of the Communist Party as well! From here it is a small step to sliding into complete opportunism i.e. to the subordination of revolutionary tasks to the interests of accommodation between peoples.

B. I have a feeling, a premonition, that today it falls to me to be amongst the "deviationists"...But I shall nevertheless try, my young friend, to defend my point of view. Indeed, the entire question as it now confronts us, if it is formulated politically, means for us: *how i.e. by what measures, by what methods of activity, by what approach, to maintain and strengthen the power of the working class on a territory where there live side-by-side many nationalities* in which the central Great-Russian core, which earlier played a Great-Power role, constitutes less than half the entire population of the Union.

Precisely in the process of development of the proletarian dictatorship, by the course of our entire state construction and our everyday struggle for the preservation and consolidation of workers' power, we have found ourselves at the present moment moved more forcefully than ever before to take up the national question in all its living reality, in its everyday state, economic, cultural and vital concreteness.

And here, when the party as a whole begins to pose the question thus — and to pose it differently is not possible — you (and not you alone, unfortunately) declare with a naive doctrinairism: the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat is more important than the national question. But it is indeed precisely in the name of the dictatorship of the proletariat that we are now also practically penetrating the national question — and will continue to penetrate it for a long time to come. What sense does your opposition have? Only those who do not understand the meaning of "the national moments in the state and party construction" can pose the question in such a manner. And already, in every case, all nihilists and indifferent people on the national question gladly snatch at such a formulation. To turn one's back on the needs and interests of the formerly oppressed small nations, especially the backward peasant ones, is a very simple and not in the least troublesome affair, especially if in such a manner a lazy indifference can be cloaked by general phrases about internationalism, about the dictatorship of the Communist Party being more important than all and any national questions...

A. As you please. But by posing the question thus you improperly, in my opinion, bend the stick in the direction of the backward peasant outlying regions, and thereby risk inflicting the greatest damage on the proletarian centres on which our party and Soviet power are based. Either I do not understand anything, or you do indeed deviate towards the backward predominantly peasant nationalities.

B. Well, well, well. You and I have finally agreed on my peasantophile deviation. And it was exactly this which I expected, because all phenomena in the world, including political mistakes, possess their own logic..."A deviation towards the backward peasant masses" — but have you heard what the XII Congress said concerning this?

A. Concerning what?

B. Concerning the mutual relations between the proletariat and the peasantry: about the smychka (link or bond between workers and peasants, industry and agriculture — trans).

A. Smychka? What's the smychka doing here? I am in agreement with the XII Congress as a whole. The smychka between the proletariat and the peasantry is the basis of everything. The question of the

smychka is the question of our revolution. Whoever is against the smychka, he...

B. Okay, okay. But don't you think that the dictatorship of the working class and of our party stands higher for us than the peasant question, and therefore than the question of the smychka?

A. That is, how?

B. Well, very simply. We, the Communist Party, the vanguard of the proletariat, cannot subordinate our social-revolutionary goals to either the prejudices or the interests of the peasantry, a petty-bourgeois class in its tendencies. It is indeed, thus, my left-wing friend?

A. But, permit me, this is a sophism, this is a quite different matter and does not relate to the question. The smyckha is the basis, the smychka is the foundation. Comraded Lenin wrote that without the smychka with the peasantry we will not arrive at socialism; moreover, without the achievement of the economic smychka and the guarantee of the political symchka, Soviet power will inevitably collapse.

B. So that is that. Therefore — you will agree, please — it is absurd, politically illiterate, to *counterpose* the smychka with the peasantry to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Of course, the dictatorship of the proletariat is the basic idea of our programme, the basic criterion of our state and economic construction. But the entire essence of the matter lies in the fact that precisely this very dictatorship is inconceivable without defined mutual relations with the peasantry. If the smychka with the peasantry is detached from the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, then for the present historical period, the result is a bare form, an empty and vacuous abstraction.

A. I do not object, but what relation has this...?

B. The clearest, the most direct. In our Soviet Union the smychka with the peasantry of course presupposes a smychka not only with the Great Russian peasantry. Our non-Great Russian peasantry is more numerous, and it is split into many national groups. For these national groups each state, political, economic question is refracted through the prism of their native language, their national-economic and everyday peculiarities, their national distrust founded on past experiences. Language, speech, is the most basic, the most widely embracing, the most profoundly penetrating means of smychka between individual and individual, and therefore between class and class. If in our conditions the question of proletarian revolution is, as you acknowledge, above all the question of the mutual relations between the proletariat and the peasantry, then this latter question is over half way to being the question of the mutual relations between the most advanced and influential Great Russian proletariat and the peasant masses of other nationalities, formerly mercilessly oppressed and still mindful of all insults levelled against them. Your misfortune, my friend, lies in the fact that all your would-be radical arguments, which are nihilistic in essence and not thought through to their conclusion, are destructive not only in the national question, but also in the basic question of the smychka between the worker and the muzhik.

A. But, permit me, there were moments when our troops entered Georgia, and drove out from there the imperialist Menshevik-agents without first consulting the population, thereby clearly breaching the principle of self-determination. And there was a moment when our troops advanced on Warsaw...

B. Of course, there were these moments, and I remember them very clearly and do not in the lest disavow them. But there were also — not moments, but an entire period when we took away all surplus produce from the peasants, and sometimes also the essential produce, with the help of armed force, not halting before the most extreme measures.

A. What do you thereby want to say?

B. The very thing which I said. The revolution not only took, with weapons in its hands, the surplus from the peasnats but also introduced a military regime in the factories and the plants. If we had not done this at that certain most acute and serious period, then we would have perished. But if we should wish to carry out these measures in conditions when they are not demanded by iron and unavoidable necessity, then we would perish even more surely. This, of course, also relates to our policies in the national question.

At a certain moment revolutionary self-preservation demanded the blow against Tiflis and the march on Warsaw. We would have been wretched cowards and traitors to the revolution (which includes both the peasant question and the national question) if we had halted before the vacuous and empty fetish of the national "principle", because there was quite clearly no real national self-determination in Georgia with the Mensheviks: Anglo-French imperialism dominated there unchecked, and this gradually subjected to itself the Caucasus and threatened us from the South.

In the national question, as too in all other questions, for us it is not a matter of juridical abstractions but of real interests and relations. Our military incursion in the Caucasus can be justified and is justified in the eyes of workers insofar as it struck a blow against imperialism and created the conditions for genuine and real self-determination of the Caucasian nationalities. If the popular masses of the Transcaucasus had evaluated our military interference as usurpation and if this had been our fault, then it would thereby have turned into the greatest crime — not against an abstract national "principle", but against the interests of the revolution.

Here there is a complete analogy with our peasant policies. The Razverstka (tax in kind which the village as a whole, rather than individual peasants, was responsible for raising — trans.) was very terrible. But the peasantry excuses it, insofar as it is convinced that the circumstances allow only this means for Soviet power to go over to its basic task: the universal easing of life for workers, including the peasantry as well.

A. But you nevertheless cannot deny that the class principle stands higher for us than the principle of national self-determination! This is really ABC.

B. The rule of abstract "principles", my dear friend, is always the last refuge for those who have become confused in the material world. I have already told you that the class principle, if it is understood not idealistically but in a Marxist manner, does not exclude but on the contrary embraces national self-determination. But the latter we again understand not as a supra-historical principle (in the manner of the Kantian categorical imperative) but as the totality of the real, material, living conditions, providing the masses of the oppressed nationalities with the possibility of straightening up their backs, rising up, learning, developing, joining world culture. For us, as Marxists, it must be indisputable that only consistent, i.e. revolutionary carrying-out of the class "principle" can guarantee maximum realisation of the "principle" of national self-determination.

A. But did not you yourself have really to say in explanation of our Transcaucasian intervention that revolutionary defence stands higher for us than the national principle?

B. Probably, I had to, even certainly. But in what conditions and in what sense? In the struggle against the imperialists and the Mensheviks, who transform national self-determination into a metaphysical absolute — insofar as it is turned against the revolution (they themselves of course, trample national self-determination underfoot). We replied "woe to the heroes" of the Second International, we replied that the interests of defence of the revolution stand higher for us than juridical fetishes, that the actual interests of the oppressed, of the weak nationalities are dearer to us than to anyone else.

A. And the maintenance of Red troops in the Caucasus, in Turkestan, in the Ukraine...? Perhaps this is not a breach of national self-determination? Perhaps this is not a contradiction? And perhaps it is not to be explained by the fact that the revolution stands higher for us than the national question?

B. When the native labouring masses understand (and when we, with all our strength, facilitate for them such an understanding) that these troops are on their territory for the sole purpose of guaranteeing their inviolability by imperialism — then there is no contradiction

here. When these troops do not permit any insult against the national feelings of the native masses but on the contrary pay purely fraternal attention to them — then there is no contradiction here. Finally, when the Byelorussian proletariat does everything it can in order to help the more backward national elements of the Union participate consciously and independently in the construction of the Red Army — in order that they can defend themselves above all by their own strength — then there must also thereby disappear even the shadow of a contradiction between our national programme and our practice. The resolution of all these questions depends not on our good will alone; but it is necessary that we show the maximum of good will for their genuine resolution in a proletarian manner...I remember that two years ago I read the speeches of one former general who had been in the service of Soviet power about how the Georgians were terrible chauvinists, how little they understood Muscovite internationalism, and how many Red troops were required for action against Georgian, Azerbaidjhan and every other Caucasian nationalism. It is quite obvious that the old, coarse, Great-Powerism was merely being masked in the case of this general by a new terminology.

And there is no point in concealing the sin: this general is not an exception. In the Soviet apparatus, including the military apparatus, such tendencies are strong in the highest degree — and not only in the case of former generals. And if they were to gain the upper hand, then the contradiction between our programme and policies would inevitably lead to a catastrophe.

We therefore also posed the national question point blank, in order to eliminate such a threat through exerting the entire strength of the party.

A. Accepted. But how do you nevertheless explain the fact that those very comrades who are completely imbued with the importance of the smychka with the peasantry adopt at the same time, as I also do, a much more reserved position in relation to the national question, regarding this question as exaggerated and pregnant with the threat of bending the stick towards the backward outskirts?

B. How do I explain such a contradiction? Logically it is explained by the fact that not all people are consistent in their conclusions. But a logical explanation is insufficient for us. A political explanation consists in the fact that in our party the leading role is played by (and in the immediate future cannot be other than played by) the Great Russian core, which, on the basis of the experience of these five years, has thoroughly thought through and felt its way through the question of the mutual relations between the Great Russian proletariat and the Great Russian peasantry. By the method of simple analogy we extend these relationships to our entire Soviet Union, forgetting, or inadequately learning, that on the periphery there live other national groups with a different history, with a different level of development, and, above all, with accumulted insults.

The bulk of the Great Russian core of the party has still been insufficiently permeated by the national aspect of the question about the smychka, and all the more by the full extent of the national question. And from here there emerge the contradictions of which you speak — sometimes naive, sometimes absurd, sometimes flagrant. And this is why there is no exaggeration in the decisions of the XII Congress on the national question. On the contrary, they answer the most profound and vital necessity. And we will not only have to carry them out but also develop them further.

A. If the Communists of the Great Russian centre carry out the correct policies in Great Russia, then surely in the other parts of our Union there are Communists who carry out the same work in a different national situation. Here it is only a natural and unavoidable division of labour. In this matter the Great Russian Communists must and will fight with Great Power chauvinism, and the Communists of other nationalities with their own local nationalism, principally directed against the Russians.

B. In your words there is only part of the truth, and sometimes part of the truth leads to completely wrong conclusions. Our party is not at all a federation of national communist groups with a division of labour according to their national characteristic. Such a reorganisation of the party would be dangerous in the utmost.

A. But I am not at all proposing it...

B. Of course you are not proposing it. But the development of your thoughts can lead to such a conclusion. You insist that Great Russian Communists have to fight with Great Power nationalism, Ukrainian Communists with Ukrainian nationalism. This is reminiscent of the formula of the Spartacists at the beginning of the war; "the main enemy is in the home camp". But there it was a case of the struggle of the proletarian vanguard against its imperialist bourgeoisie, its militaristic state. This slogan possessed a profound revolutionary content there. Of course, German revolutionaries had to fight with Hohenzollern imperialism, not unmask French militarism etc.

However, it would be a complete distortion of perspectives to transfer this principle to the constituent parts of the state in the Soviet Union, because with us there is one army, one diplomacy and, what is most important of all, one centralised party. It is quite correct that fighting against Georgian nationalism can best be done by Georgian Communists. But this is a question of tact, not principle. The matter basically consists in clearly understanding the historical roots of the Great Power offensive nationalism of the Great Russians, and of the defensive nationalism of the small nations. It is necessary to make clear to oneself the real proportions between these historical factors, and this clarification must be the same in the head of both the Great Russian, and the Georgian, and the Ukrainian, because these very proportions do not depend on a subjective local or national approach but answer — must answer — the actual relationship of historical forces.

The Azerbaidjhan Communist working in Baku or the Muslim countryside, the Great Russian Communist working in Ivanovo-Voznesensk, must possess the same conception in the national question.

And this same conception must consist in the same relation to Great Russian and Muslim nationalism. In relation to the former — merciless struggle, a firm rebuff, especially in all those cases when it appears administratively-governmentally. In relation to the latter, patient, attentive, painstaking, educational work. If a Communist in a locality were to keep his eyes shut to the full extent of the national question and were to begin to fight against nationalism (or, not infrequently, against what appears to him to be nationalism) by limited and simplified methods, by impatient denial, defamation, stigmatisation, etc., then perhaps he will gather round himself active, revolutionary, "left", young elements who are subjectively dedicated to internationalism, but he will never provide us with a firm and serious smychka with the native peasant mass.

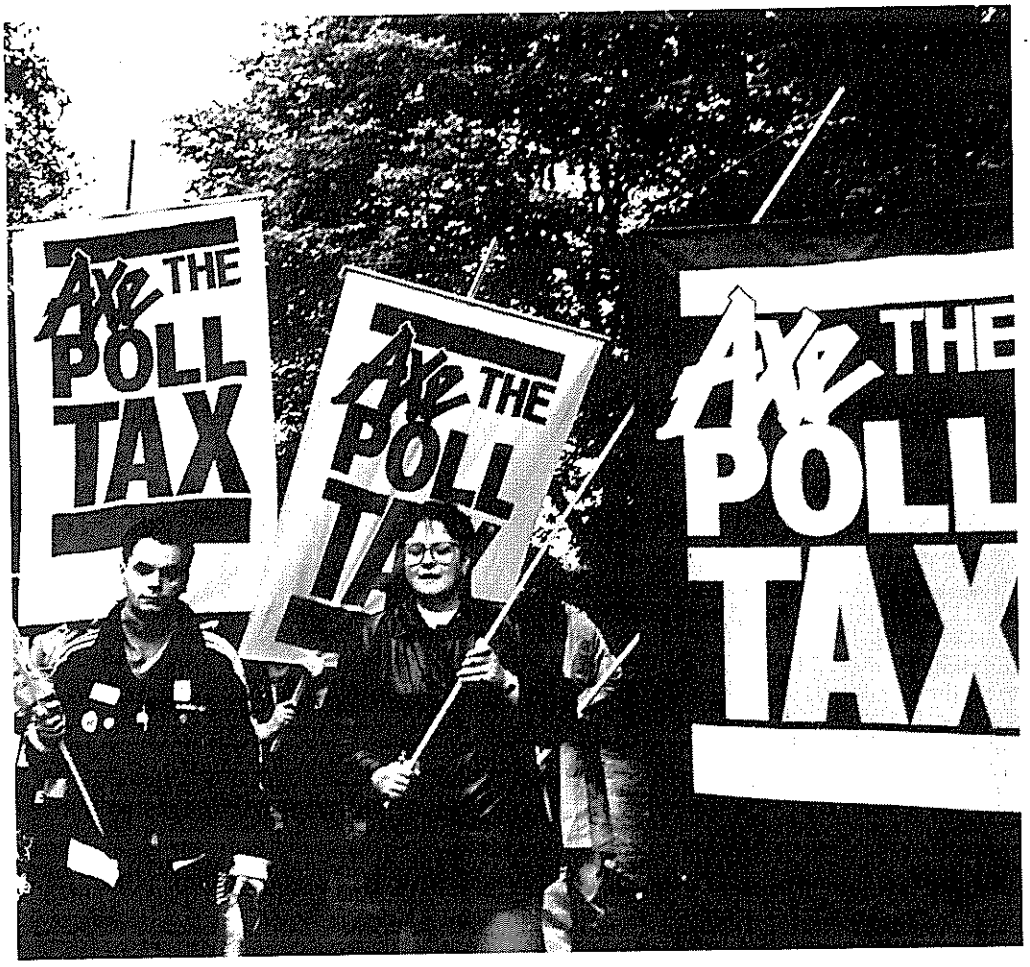
A. But it is the very "lefts" who insist in the outlying republics on the most revolutionary, the most energetic resolution of the agrarian question. And this is surely the main bridge to our peasantry?

B. Indisputably, the agrarian question, above all in the sense of the liquidation of any remnants of feudal relations, must be resolved everywhere and in all places. Now already possessing a stable Union-state, we can carry out this resolution of the land question with all the necessary determination. Of course, the resolution of the land question is the most capital task of the revolution...But the liquidation of landed proprietorship is a single act. But that which we call the national question is a very drawn-out process. The national question does not disappear after the land revolution. On the contrary it then merely advances centre-stage. And the responsibility for any shortcomings, inadequacies, injustices, inattention, coarseness towards the native masses will — and not by chance — be associated in their heads with Moscow. It is therefore necessary for Moscow, as the centre of our state Union, to be the permanent initiator and motor of active policies, permeated through and through with fraternal attention to all nationalities which are joining the Soviet Union. To speak in this case of exaggerations means truly to understand nothing.

A. There is a lot of truth in what you say, but...

B. You know what? Read through the resolution of the XII Congress after our conversation. And then, on occasion, we shall perhaps have a talk again.

Scottish Assembly call is divisive



Ian McCalman reproaches socialists who condemn as diversionary the current calls for a Scottish Assembly with engaging in "rather abstract" considerations. But surely the person engaging in such considerations is Ian McCalman himself.

After all, current debate about a Scottish Assembly does not revolve around Engels and Lenin, nor Nairn and MacDiarmid nor a "sub-culture of resistance to Anglicisations"

Moreover, the fact that the likes of Tom Nairn or Hugh MacDiarmid are scarcely, if at all, referred to in debate about a Scottish Assembly is not necessarily a bad thing.

For Nairn (to whose politics Ian McCalman gives over one-third of his article) it is nationalism, not class struggle, which is the driving force of history. Marx, unlike Nairn, got it all wrong. The British state can cope with class struggle, but not with (neo-) nationalisms. Hence, declares Nairn, the "grave-digger" of this state will not be the proletariat but the "peripheral bourgeois neo-nationalisms".

That Nairn, on the basis of this reasoning, should call for independence for the "country" (sic) of "Protestant Ulster" (sic) is the least of his failings. To refer merely to possible "limitations" on the part of Nairn's politics is therefore something of an understatement, albeit an understandable one if one wishes to pass off Nairn's nationalist fantasies as a brave new innovation in socialist thought.

Equally unattractive is the prospect of a dialogue with the political legacy of Hugh MacDiarmid, whom Nairn and McCalman proffer as the standard-bearer of a resurgent Scottish identity in the 1920s.

MacDiarmid first toyed with fascism ("Hitler's Nazis wear their socialism with precisely the difference which post-socialist Scottish nationalists must adopt. Class consciousness is anathema to them, and in contradiction to it they must set up the principle of race-consciousness,") before finally opting for Stalinism (he made it a point of honour to rejoin the Communist Party in 1956, *after* the invasion of Hungary).

Ian McCalman implicitly admits the lack of relevance of his article to current debate about a Scottish Assembly when he writes that the issue "*should be* placed" within the broader context of a federal United Kingdom. Perhaps it should be. Or perhaps not. But the point is that the actual, real, existing debate, such as it is, about a Scottish Assembly is not in any way an aspect of debate about a federal Britain.

Ian McCalman would do better to follow his own advice when he writes that socialists should "proceed from the actual unfolding of events rather than the imposition of cut and dried schema". Viewed in such a light, the diversionary nature of calls for an Assembly become much clearer.

Is there a "deeply felt demand within one part of the UK — Scotland — for a greater degree of self-government"? Yes and no. This "demand" is in fact so "deep" that even its own supporters admit that it rates something like number 101 in the list of priorities of Scottish workers, and emerges only once every four years and then but weakly, after a Tory victory in a general election. It is therefore hardly a matter of "advising Scottish workers to restrain their claims on this score."

The Labour Party's policy of support for a Scottish Assembly (which continues to meet with considerable opposition and indifference within the labour movement) is certainly not the expression of some deep demand for self-government, beating in the heart of the Scottish proletarian masses.

The policy was adopted by the Labour Party in Scotland in 1974 (after nearly half a century of almost continuous indifference and outright opposition to the call for Home Rule) on the instructions of Walworth Road, as it was believed that this constituted the best way to turn the then growing tide of support for the SNP.

Thus the call for a Scottish Assembly does not flow out of "the actual unfolding of events" in the class struggle. On the contrary, it is an alternative to class struggle politics. As Nairn himself, in a rare moment of lucidity, puts it: "Had the class struggle accelerated politically at the same time (as the onset of the post-war slump), it is doubtful if Scottish and other neo-nationalist movements would have made such headway."

The call for an Assembly is itself an attempt to replace relating to the "actual unfolding of events" with the imposition of a "cut and dried scheme"; the Assembly is posed as the alternative to defiance of Tory attacks on local authorities, the alternative to non-compliance with the poll-tax, the alternative to the case of industrial action to defend jobs and living standards, etc., etc.

In the current context (the real, existing one, as opposed to the imaginary one into which Ian McCalman believes the question of an Assembly "should be placed") the calls for a Scottish Assembly clearly do represent a diversion, both in terms of being "potentially divisive" and of boosting nationalism, and also in that they fail to relate to the actual unfolding of events — minor differences apart it is not as if workers in Scotland are going to face qualitatively different attacks from the Tories from workers anywhere else.

Indeed, it is not merely a matter of calls for a Scottish Assembly being "potentially" divisive or "potentially" boosting nationalism. The extent to which the language of Scottish nationalism has *already* entered the 'discourse of the left' should be strikingly apparent.

To raise the idea of a federal framework for Britain and Ireland — North and South — is not without value (though not necessarily correct). But it is a exercise in self-delusion to seek to chime in with the current calls for a Scottish Assembly whilst arguing that what you 'really' mean is a federal republic a la Engels, the smashing of the bourgeois state a

la Lenin, or the creation of a constituent assembly a la Revolutionary Democratic Group and, in an article of 1983, Ian McCalman.

The most appropriate analogy for such an approach can be found in the debate over British entry into the Common Market in the late 60s/early 70s.

Workers' Fight, to which McCalman refers, pointed out that the left who argued against British membership were like a boy with a tin whistle on the last night of the Proms, thinking that if he chimes in with the first few bars of 'Land of Hope and Glory' he can switch over to the 'Internationale' and have the band follow suit. Of course, the boy's tin whistle is simply drowned by the band.

Ian McCalman pursues the same approach, even if the instrument with which he toys is the bagpipes and the tune which he is striking up is 'Oh, Flower of Scotland': declare oneself in favour of a Scottish Assembly in order to join in the general hubbub, and then, somehow, somewhere, revert to a more proletarian repertoire at a later date.

It did not work in the debate about Common Market membership. And it won't work now in the debate about a Scottish Assembly either.

Stan Crooke

Romanticising Old Movies

'Raiders of the Lost Ark', which I watched for the sixth time when it was on TV recently, provoked me into thinking about Belinda Weaver's article on films (WL 8), and convinced me that I disagree with her. It seems to me there are loads of good films around these days.

Belinda's argument is that film making has degenerated, so that today most films are bad. In the past, film making was an industry — out for profit — but 'they also wanted to make movies. They loved the world of movie making.' Today, megabucks have taken over. It's profit before quality all down the line, so that we get 'the kind of films... which aren't even entertainment, much less art.' Movies are made to a money-spinning formula, so, among other things, there is a glut of sequels. We get unconvincing plots, bad acting, and 'lowest common denominator films'.

Far be it from me to rush to the defence of today's film makers. But there are a number of problems with Belinda's account. I would question, first of all the somewhat romantic view she has of films and film makers in the past. As Belinda describes it, you would think that up until the last decade or so, films were on the whole pretty good, and their corruption by entrepreneurial greed happened just lately. Is she serious? Of course, there were plenty of excellent films made before 1960, 1970, or whenever Belinda would date the decline. But the overwhelming majority was rubbish. A good portion of the films made in Belinda's golden age, for example, were unspeakably awful Westerns — made to a formula far more primitive than anything you could see today (and at least as reactionary), with sub-literate scripts and acting so bad that your average dog could do better (and occasionally did — witness various generations of Lassie).

People went just as much to see glamorous but talentless stars as they do today. Take Audie Murphy — not too glamorous to look at, I dare say, and an actor who never seemed to realise that it helps to change the tone of your voice now and then... But he had been the most decorated war hero of World War Two, and so was prime star material. Or Alan Ladd, who never learned how to create a facial expression, but was nevertheless considered so lucrative a business proposition that they would go to the length of digging holes for his leading ladies to stand in to disguise his diminutive height.

The list of formula-made drivel is endless, running often into sequels in comparison with whose number 'Jaws' is a mere infant. So I think it's untrue to suggest that in the past larger film audiences forced film makers to make better films. I'm not sure that the reverse isn't true: films on the whole were *worse* before the advent of TV.

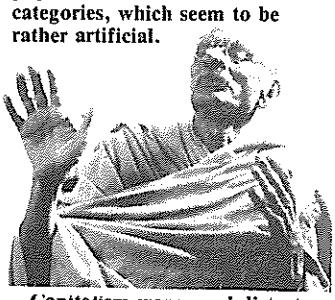
Belinda mentions the effects of TV and video only to dismiss them. She insists that the basic reason people don't go to the cinema is that they 'have just got browned off with movies'. But I think there's a lot more to it.

TV had a major effect on film and cinema. Forced to compete with the box, film makers made less cheap 'B' films. In fact, nowadays, no one makes 'B' films at all. Once the movies had declined as the basic form of mass entertainment, films became fewer and more expensive. They also became more sophisticated. An audience reared on TV wants more from cinema. This doesn't necessarily mean that the films are better or worse; it means that they reflect the society they are made in — and society's changes. You might prefer 'Dracula' or 'Frankenstein' to 'Evil Dead 2', but 'Dracula' simply is not frightening to today's audiences. (I say 'Dracula', although both 'Dracula' and 'Frankenstein' had a fair few sequels, it might be added). *Times* have changed, technology has advanced, and films have changed with the times. It seems to me that a very big part of the reason films cost so much to make these days is precisely that their audiences are so sophisticated and so hard to please. Belinda's picture of manipulated morons is too simplistic.

Videos, by the way, completely contradict one of her main assertions. If it's the *films* people don't like, why are so many videos hired out each year? The answer I think is not very mysterious. Cinemas are too expensive for most people to be able to visit them very often. Videos are cheap. If cinemas were cheaper, people might go more. I certainly would. As it happens, despite the cost, audiences are increasing at the moment.

Which brings me back to 'Raiders of the Lost Ark'. After six viewings, I still think this is pretty excellent stuff, better written, better acted and more gripping than many older 'adventure' movies. So for that matter are plenty of 'formula' films. 'Aliens', for example, is a classic masterpiece of tension and excitement. (Nor is Sci Fi a recent bandwagon — it's just that Sci Fi films are *immeasurably* better now than the naive Cold War pap that was churned out in the 1950s).

And Belinda ignores a growing field of films which are neither megabuck blockbusters, nor 'art' films. 'My Beautiful Laundrette', for example, and other films of its type, have proved extremely popular and fall outside Belinda's categories, which seem to be rather artificial.



Capitalism warps and distorts film making according to the needs of money-making, like it distorts everything else. It has *always* done so, and it always will. Films today are a commodity, but they always have been (and so, for that matter are novels, poetry books, etc). But given the limitations that capitalism imposes upon films, I can see no evidence that today they are deteriorating. Of course this whole argument is very subjective. Of course a lot of films *are* rubbish. I'm just not sure that Belinda is right about what is rubbish, or why.

Edward Ellis

Don't give up on COSATU

An article in Workers' Liberty no. 9 by a South African socialist active in the unions made a number of claims with which we take issue.

First, the claim that "the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU) represents the only hope for the growth of the non-Stalinists to place socialism firmly on the agenda" is both unsubstantiated and unlikely to be true.

Our knowledge of NACTU is limited but we know it is a loose federation which includes many unions which are far more conservative and bureaucratic than any union in COSATU, and that it is held together in part by a black consciousness ideology which falls short of COSATU's principle of non-racialism.

NACTU unions have been involved in a much smaller number of disputes than COSATU unions. NACTU claims to organise at least a third of the workers in the independent labour movement yet it is doubtful if NACTU unions have been involved in more than 10% of the industrial action in 1987 — the year of the largest strike wave in South African history.

It may be possible for socialists in NACTU to organise themselves and grow but it would be equally possible for socialists in NACTU to be drawn into an ill-defined, right-wing "anti-Stalinism".

Second, the claim that the COSATU left are "paralysed and incapable of leading a socialist struggle" seems to us to be a half-truth which ignores the real advances made by socialists in COSATU, as for example, the fusion of MAWU, MICWU, NAAWU, UMMAWOSA and MALWUSA to create a powerful, militant and explicitly socialist metal union, NUMSA.

The fact that socialists in COSATU have suffered certain setbacks in the recent period is no reason to write them off. The real issue is not to counterpose the NACTU left favourably to the COSATU left but to organise the trade union left generally so that

it can act as a coherent force. We have been given no reason to believe that this should be done under a NACTU rather than a COSATU banner.

Whilst COSATU represents and organises the large majority of workers in South Africa, especially in the key mining, metal and automobile sectors then a perspective for socialism which ignores COSATU amounts to a perspective for socialism without the working class.

Third, we have a problem with the comrade's analysis of Stalinism. He writes that a workers' party would be impossible because "the Stalinists would eliminate the leadership of a workers' party", that "they are not going to tolerate any opposition to their claims to monopoly control", that the Stalinists dominate completely and that "Anything that is not within the framework of the two-stage theory of revolution is regarded as counter-revolutionary".

In this analysis there seems to be a far too blanket identification of the ANC wing of the liberation movement with "Stalinism", a lack of precision about what Stalinism is (it certainly can't be identified with the two-stage revolution as such) and a danger that in the name of "anti-Stalinism" the left might find itself drawn into an unprincipled alliance with the right, at the expense of its own socialist independence.

This analysis also implies that the whole of the leadership of COSATU is made up of one undifferentiated Stalinist bloc.

Anti-Stalinism is too negative a slogan to provide the basis for a positive alternative based around non-racial, democratic socialism.

For far too long the South African left has defined itself reactively by being "anti-Stalinist", and "anti-ANC" rather than by developing its own viewpoint and agenda and in the end inadvertently mirroring the Stalinists.

We agree with the writer that socialists in South Africa need their own programme but we do not believe that a combination of anti-Stalinism, dismissal fo the COSATU left and a celebration of NACTU provides a coherent starting point.

Bob Fine
Tom Rigby
Clive Bradley

Permanent revolution is not so limited

Clive Bradley's article "From Permanent Revolution to Permanent Confusion" in Workers' Liberty no. 7 was an excellent indictment of the theoretical abuse handed out in the name of Trotsky since his death in 1940. However, in exposing the confusion of latter-day "Trotskyism" I think Clive has been too quick to consign Permanent Revolution to the history books.

1917 vindicated the theory of Permanent Revolution as applied to Russia, and the Comintern's disastrous directions to the Chinese Communist Party in the late 1920s proved that Trotsky's estimation of the peasantry was correct. This is fine, but Clive gets caught by these specific events into thinking that Permanent Revolution has a limited application.

I think Trotsky developed Permanent Revolution as a *general* theory applicable to *specific* conditions. Essentially it was Marxism in action. A way to refute those who claimed that Marxism was about fixed, unbreakable stages, and were therefore prepared to contain working class power in the interests of other classes.

Trotsky introduced the national question to Permanent Revolution only when it was necessary, as it obviously was when the colonies began to struggle for independence in a serious way. But this wasn't, as Clive says, a limited extension of Permanent Revolution to cover extra suitable cases for the theory. It was an adaption of Permanent Revolution, of Marxism itself, to the practical problems posed for the proletariat by new conditions.

"Even in its generalised version," Clive says, "the theory relates to a limited range of situations"(1)

I disagree. In his desire to highlight the glaring errors of much of the left, I think Clive has lost sight of the continued relevance of Permanent Revolution.

Clive Bradley seems to be setting limits to the theory around the question of the peasantry, with a limited extension to national and democratic questions. Only one of these questions aplies to Argentina so Permanent Revolution must be meaningless here.

In applying Permanent Revolution to Argentina, it strikes me that Trotsky would stress the importance of working class leadership in the campaign for democracy, but place no limits or stages on how far the working class might go. For Trotsky the crux would be that the working class would form the axis for any justified political demand. They would not be dictated to by some mish-mash encorporating elements like the Kuomintang, shouting about American imperialism.

Permanent Revolution has a continued relevance; it can be updated, but not in the way that *ersatz* Trotskyism has performed this task. Clive himself pinpoints its continued relevance when he quotes Trotsky:

"The socialist revoluton begins on the national arena, it unfolds on the international arena, and it is completed on the world arena...it attains completion only in the final victory of the new society on our planet"(2)

This brilliant attack on "socialism in one country" combined with the importance of proletarian leadership in the revolutionary upsurge, are the central pivots of Permanent Revolution.

For international socialists the uneven development of nations is a crucial mobilising factor. Permanent Revolution was Trotsky's way of clarifying the link between Marxism and the uneven development of the world. It didn't matter, except in a strategic sense, whether the country was advanced or backward. Permanent Revolution was a necessary theoretical development because socialists inside and outside of Russia (including leading Bolsheviks) were waiting for the train of industrial, bourgeois development, before they were prepared to take action in favour of a workers' revolution.

It was the working class seizure of power that was crucial to Permanent Revolution. Lenin himself came to recognise this and was effectively carrying through the policy of Permanent Revolution in the April Theses. There was no need for Trotsky to argue that Permanent Revolution applied to advanced countries because no Marxist had developed a theoretical justification for denying the possiblity of proletarian revolution in such circumstances (although some were already working against it in practice). To argue that Permanent Revolution applies only to backward countries is as negative, restrictive and undialectic as arguing that Marxism only applies to advanced countries. Unlike Marx, Trotsky and Lenin had to face the practical problem of a small, highly motivated proletariat in a sea of peasantry — hence Permanent Revolution — Marxism in practice.

Trotsky puts Permanent Revolution straight on this matter when he says:

"Neither in India, nor in England is it possible to build an independent socialist society. Both of them will have to enter as parts of a higher whole. Upon this, and only upon this rests the unshakeable foundation of Marxist Internationalism"(3)

In the *Transitional Programme* Trotsky's arguments against sectarianism in the labour movement, and in support of a strategy to win over the petty-bourgeoisie, small traders, etc., were no less part of Permanent Revolution than his arguments in favour of an independent working class strategy in the colonies. And this approach is no less relevant today.

We still live in a world where the law of uneven development operates. The specific features of that uneven development may have changed but we still start from the specific and branch out to the general. We start where the working class struggle starts. We have learned, as Trotsky learned, that the specific conditions are central to determining the policy of the working class and its revolutionary leadership. We must also learn, as many "Trotskyists" have not, that the specific conditions change and with them change our tactics and strategy.

In Ireland this must mean that the first step towards working class leadership is working class unity, and that this will not come through the politics of Sinn Fein or by ignoring the Protestant working class. In South Africa, it means supporting the further, and hopefully, political development of the trade union movement under COSATU, rather than paying unquestioning homage to the ANC. The growing demand for a workers' charter might prove a major stepping stone in this respect.

In Palestine it means recognising that Jews and Arabs represent two nations and that working class unity will not develop without a solution that recognises the national rights of the two communities in Palestine.

These, in brief, represent the continuation of the spirit of Trotsky's Permanent Revolution. A strategy for working class power that starts by facing reality square in the face. A strategy that will not be fully vindicated until, as Trotsky says, "the final victory of the new society on our entire planet."(4)

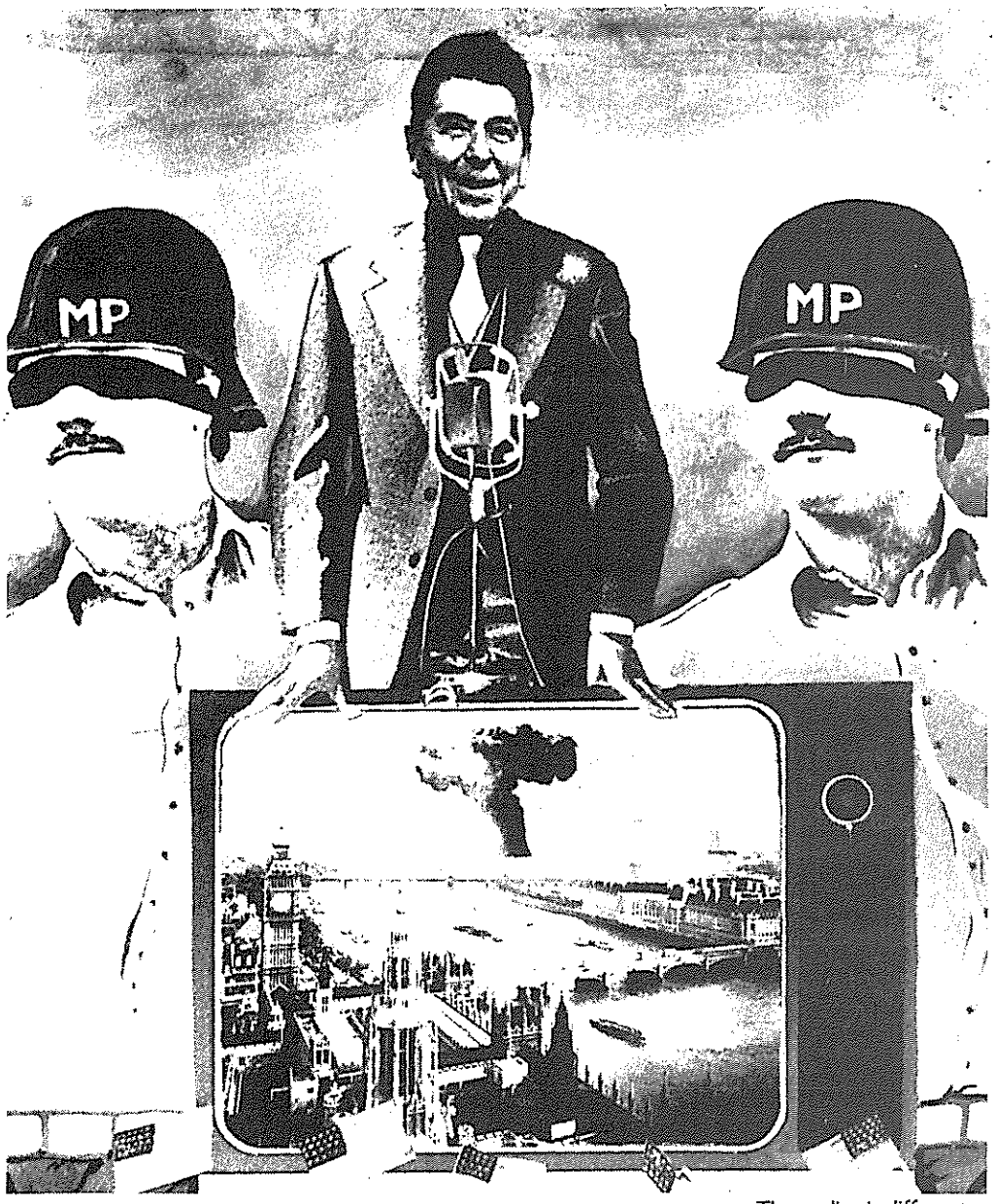
Liam Conway

NOTES

1. 'From Permanent Revolution to Permanent Confusion'. Clive Bradley, Workers' Liberty no. 7, p.26.
2. The Permanent Revolution, Leon Trotsky. p.155.
3. The Permanent Revolution, p26.
4. Op cit. p.155.

Europe without America

Martin Thomas reviews
Europe Without America? The Crisis in Atlantic Relations by John Palmer, published by Oxford University Press at 14.95.



The reality is different

In 1977 and again in 1980 the US government took measures to curb European steel imports.

In 1987 the EEC tried to get an American-Japanese deal on semiconductor trade ruled illegal. Simultaneously the US was doubling import duties on Japanese goods because it said Japan was cheating on that same deal.

Over recent years the US and the EEC have had a running battle about farm trade. They have also had conflicts over European exports of machine tools, telecom trade, and state subsidies for the European Airbus.

Such squabbles, John Palmer argues, are not superficial. They reflect a slow but profound breakdown of the old Atlantic solidarity of the big Western capitalist powers.

US-European tension goes back a long way. In the oil crisis of 1973-4, the US bitterly denounced Europe's efforts to keep friendly relations with the Arab states, while West European capitalists complained that the big US oil companies were coining profits from the crisis at their expense. Since then the EEC has consistently distanced itself from the US's strong pro-Israeli stand, advocating recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

The EEC has also developed a distinct foreign policy on Central America, preferring to negotiate with the Sandinista government in Nicaragua rather than support the Contras.

West European, and particularly West German, capitalists have defied US attempts to limit their trade with Eastern Europe and the USSR. West Germany has even negotiated terms whereby East German goods epxorted to West Germany can be treated inside the EEC as EEC products.

While Western Europe looks east, the US increasingly looks west. Pacific trade is now more important than Atlantic trade. This shift is symbolised by the dominance of California business interests in Reagan's entourage.

The world in which you could speak of 'imperialism' as an unanimous blob is disappearing. Like it or not, Western Europe will increasingly be independent from the US.

The question, then, is what sort of Western Europe will it be. "A xenophobic and militarist Europe would make the world an even more unstable and dangerous place to live in. On the other hand, a Europe which broke free from the chariot wheels of nuclear militarism and helped demonstrate new ways to master economic, political and social problems could make an immense contribution to world freedom and peace". Palmer argues that we should fight for a Socialist United States of Europe, overthrowing both Western capitalists and Eastern bureaucrats.

This book raises important questions, too often ignored by the British left in favour of an insular nationalism ("Britain Out of the EEC!"). It has, I think, two weaknesses.

Palmer often does not seem sure who he is and whom he is talking to. Some of the time he writes as the European editor of that respectable bourgeois paper, the Guardian, giving advice to the capitalist rulers of Europe on how best to make a go of the EEC. Other times he is clearly writing as a revolutionary socialist. In substantial parts of the book it is difficult to know.

And where Palmer does express himself clearly as a revolutionary socialist, the forces he looks to are hardly adequate to the task. His main hope is in the West German Greens and the European Nuclear Disarmament movement. But such groups cannot substitute for coherent Marxist organisation in the task of fighting for an internationalist workers' strategy.

May '68

Lessons from revolutions

Clive Bradley reviews *'Revolutionary Rehearsals'* published by Bookmarks.

The Socialist Workers' Party have recently been having quite an educational drive, producing pamphlets and books on a wide range of subjects. This book, dealing with recent revolutionary upheavals in France, Chile, Portugal, Iran and Poland, is useful educationally.

"Revolutionary Rehearsals" provides straightforward narratives of events, all very readable, plus basic strategic conclusions. They show how in France in 1968 the general strike posed enormous revolutionary possibilities, lost because of the weakness of the revolutionary left and the policy of the Communist Party (although this seems to me to be underplayed). In Chile a social explosion, lacking clear direction, was led into the disaster of September 1973 by the Popular Unity government. In Portugal in 1974-5, after the fall of the dictatorship there were real possibilities of working class power. In Iran, workers' councils existed in 1979, but an 'Islamic' counter-revolution took place under the name of 'anti-imperialism'. (The SWP could do well to re-learn some of the lessons in Maryam Poya's essay as they cheer on Khomeini in the Gulf War).

Colin Barker's article on Poland (a condensed version of his book, 'Festival of the Oppressed') is probably the best of them — the clearest and most succinct.

Yet running through the collection is an inevitable weakness: the lesson, of course, is the need for revolutionary parties. But there is only the most general indication of what such parties would *say* and *do*. There is little discussion of the far left organisations.

In Iran, for example, Poya complains that the revolutionary socialists were "too small and too weakly rooted in the working class movement" to affect events, "however formally correct their policies". But to be even "formally" correct is better than to be wrong. Most of the revolutionary left groups were wrong. And we have to learn from that.

Of course, it would be bad if basic narrative was pushed out in favour of abstruse discussions about small groups' tactics: but the SWP's lack of interest in politics beyond the generalities is symptomatic of an apolitical view of what a 'revolutionary party' is.

Celtic fan or elder statesman?

Stan Crooke reviews *'Ireland — the Case for British Disengagement'* by Conor Foley.

It's a safe bet that any work on Ireland which opens with the proposition that the problems of Ireland "defy simplistic analysis" and do not allow for "ready-made solutions" is going to offer a simplistic analysis and a couple of ready-made solutions.

The truth of this is confirmed once again by the pamphlet 'Ireland — The Case for British Disengagement', jointly produced by the National Organisation of Labour Students and the Labour Committee on Ireland and written by Conor Foley in a style reminiscent of a Celtic football fan masquerading as an elder statesman.

"Ireland is the greatest moral and political challenge for us in this country," declares the author bombastically. "How we react... probes our objectivity, our principles and our values. It throws into question the very basis of our vision of the future."

Foley begins his pamphlet with a litany of the undemocratic features of Northern Ireland and their consequences. Partition has made Northern Ireland "the most peripheral and underdeveloped part of the UK economy," and has "retarded institutional secularisation and social progression" (sic). Northern Ireland, concludes the sage, "is not internally viable without external support."

Like a shame-faced British patriot, Foley then bewails the sullying of Britain's reputation as a result of its role in Ireland — its record "runs counter to the whole philosophy of liberty, equality, justice and peace on which we would like to see our society being based."

He is equally concerned about the pennies in the British taxpayer's pocket, bemoaning "the cost to the British people of our government's policy...we are injecting an estimated $1,000 millions a year."

His eyes still tear-stained at the cost of "our" spending in Ireland, Foley is grief-stricken anew at the sight of the Irish constitution being trampled underfoot: "In defiance of the Irish constitution, Dublin has agreed to recognise partition in an international treaty".

Foley's concern for preserving the sanctity of a constitution which not only denies women the right to have an abortion but also bans them from even thinking about having one, may go down well at Parkhead on a Saturday afternoon when he salutes the Irish tricolour, but will gain him rather less admiration in socialist circles.

But make no mistake about it, Foley knows a problem when he sees one. And the problem he sees in Ireland is called partition. He might offer only a simplistic analysis of the origins of partition, and an analysis of why it continues which is not so much simplistic as straight-forwardly wrong, but he nonetheless knows that scrapping partition is the solution.

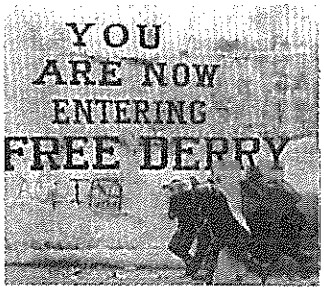
Though Foley refrains from sloganising lest it cut across his unsuccessful efforts to produce an oeuvre of statesmanlike vision, his ideas could easily be summed up in a few slogans: "Troops Out Pretty Soon!", "Unconditional British Withdrawal — With Strings!", "No to Unity by Consent, No to Forcing Protestants into a United Ireland!", "For the Right of the Irish People to Self-Determination, to be Achieved by a British Government!".

Withdrawal of troops from Northern Ireland, writes Foley, "should not be undertaken lightly." It should be "only one part of a process of disengagement". And there is "little point in elevating the time period for this process into a major principle".

Foley also argues that the disbanding and disarming of the UDR and RUC by the British state must be part of the 'process of disengagement'. This will make it a rather long-term and bloody affair.

With regard to the Protestant community, Foley simply looks both ways at once. There is "no question of unity by consent", he writes, at the same time as declaring that his "strategy" for British disengagement "does not amount to forcing Protestants into a united Ireland."

But who will unite Ireland? Not the Southern Irish government, which has "neither the capacity nor the willingness to forcibly annex it (Northern Ireland)". Not the Protestant community, given its commitment



to "the supremacist manifestations and institutions of Northern Ireland." And not the Catholic community in the North either, given its numerical weakness.

Thus it falls to Britain to unite Ireland! Foley demands of Britain that it dismantle the repressive state apparatus in the North, that it disband and disarm the RUC and UDR, that it restructure "economic, administrative and legal links", and that it "make clear" to the Protestant community that it has "no option" but to accept unification.

Thus does Foley's Irish nationalism once again fuse with his British nationalism. As an Irish nationalist he offers a simplistic analysis of Ireland. As a British nationalist he rejects the possibility of the Irish being able to unite themselves, and advocates instead that Britain does the job for them.

Does Foley regard civil war and repartition as real possibilities under certain conditions of British withdrawal? He replies with a clear "yo" or, alternatively, an equally clear "nes".

In one place he declares that "a loyalist insurrection would have no realisable objective" and that the Loyalists could not "mobilise mass support for a campaign doomed to failure."

Elsewhere he mentions the possibility of "a massive increase in sectarian violence, spiralling in all probability into prolonged civil war."

But every cloud has its silver lining, and so too does civil war in Ireland. "In the event of any Unionist Unilateral Declaration of Independence," writes Foley, the IRA "could expect a considerable boost in morale" (!). The Republican movement has sense enough to realise that civil war and UDI would be a disaster for the people it represents. How sad

that the same cannot be said of the armchair chief-of-staff Conor Foley, at a safe distance in his Parkhead bunker.

Whoever stuck a pen in Foley's hand has a lot to answer for.

People's power without politics?

Neil Stonelake reviews *'Community Architecture'* by Nick Wates and Charles Knevvit, Penguin, £4.95.

Architects have been a profession only since 1937. Until this date, anyone could practice as an architect if they had the wherewithal to buy a name plate and business letterheads.

The period in which architecture came to dominate working class people's lives can be dated from 1948 and the growth of centralised corporate planning. The huge growth of building in the post-war period — public and private — housed many workers who had previously lived in overcrowded and insanitary slums. It also led to the growth of huge, impersonal high-rise estates where tower blocks stand like tombstones on the land where close-knit working class communities once lived.

This book describes a movement which attempts to eradicate some of the features which have blighted the new estates — vandalism, premature dereliction, crime and squalor — by involving the people who are to live in the houses in the design and construction of them. In the authors' words

"...the environment works better if the people who live, work and play in it are actively involved in its creation and management".

This is a laudable sentiment and one which, on a much wider scale, revolutionary socialists have always agreed with. However, at this point the approach taken by the community architecture movement starts to go badly wrong.

The authors emphasize the apolitical nature of the community architecture movement. Small groups of people working on isolated schemes may well produce beneficial results on a piecemeal level, but without challenging the economic basis of housing provision there is no likelihood that it will develop into an alternative to costly, jerrybuilt private housing or vast, depersonalised estates. In short, while economic power lies in the hands of a few, houses will remain a commodity and so will the people that live in them.

The alliances that the authors form are very revealing. While their arguments rest on organisation from below, they resort to a weird popular front of Liberals, ecologists, bishops and (last but not least) Prince Charles.

Indeed, the 'Windsor boy's' patronage of the community architecture movement excites the authors a great deal. Ironically, they rely on the heir to the throne to lead a movement which is based on the idea of rank and file activity.

Many of the authors' points on the faults of modern architecture are valid. In this they represent a new strand of thought which rejects the classical functionalism of Le Corbusier for the prescriptions of modern academics such as Alice Coleman (whose book 'Utopia on Trial' has clearly been a major influence on them).

But their politics are a kind of woolly liberalism, based on the works of E.E. ('Small is Beautiful') Schumacher. Their lack of an overall political strategy and their willingness to court the liberal bourgeoisie (or in the case of HRH, the liberal aristocracy) weakens the authors' case by diffusing the movement into a collection of well intentioned individuals.

Their own Utopia is on trial, and the verdict is 'not proven'.

With the boring bits cut out

Belinda Weaver reviews *'State of the Art'* by Pauline Kael.

You don't have to know a lot about movies to enjoy Pauline Kael's film reviews. She isn't one for the casual namedrop of some obscure film-maker, and you don't have to have seen every film ever made just to get started on her latest review.

Her latest book, 'State of the Art', is the seventh of her collections. Like the rest, it's very readable. Her style is easy; she uses no big words where simple ones would do. She's out to inform, not impress. She can even be slangy.

It's like talk rather than writing, though it's talk with all the boring bits cut out. Her reviews are often complex, full of ideas, but it's all so clearly put that the ideas can be easily understood.

All of Kael's earlier collections had titles with a slight sexual tinge — 'I Lost it at the Movies', 'When the Lights Go Down', 'Reeling', and so on. But in her latest book she breaks with that. "It seemed time for a change; this has not been a period for anything like "Grand Passions".

"I hope that 'State of the Art' will sound ominous and sweeping and just slightly clinical. In the last few years, the term has been applied to movies as the highest praise for their up-to-the-minute special effects or their sound or animation; it has been used to celebrate just about all the technological skills that go into a production. But what I try to get at...is the state of the art of moviemaking."

Kael has been reviewing films for the 'New Yorker' for almost thirty years. She is respected and feared in the film world.

What makes her readable and welcome is her readiness to puncture pretension of any kind, her championing of film-makers trying to make good films in a market obsessed with commercialism, and her ruthless attacks on the overblown mediocrity of many Hollywood movies today.

She is sharp but she isn't spiteful. There's usually plenty of evidence to back up her more unwelcome (to the film producers) comments.

Kael takes pains over her work. So many reviewers dash off their columns with little thought. Reading them, one often wonders whether they sat through the films at all. Kael is passionately interested in the movies.

She pounces on any ray of hope, and enthusiastically promotes promising actors and directors. Even when you don't agree, her reviews are worthwhile. They're stimulating because they are considered; they take a point of view. And they're funny too.

After Sylvester Stallone had built up John Travolta's physique for the abysmal 'Stayin' Alive', Kael queried the need for change. "Dancers don't need big body builders' muscles. What would they do with them — lift ten-ton ballerinas?"

Who gained from the Empire?

Rhodri Evans reviews *'Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire: The Political Economy of British Imperialism, 1860-1912'*, by Lance E. Davis and Robert A. Huttenback, with Susan Gray Davis. Cambridge University Press.

The Empire cost Britain — overall — at least as much as it paid. But the income from Empire went mostly to lords, landowners, bankers and London merchants, while the costs were born by industrialists and merchants outside London.

The authors draw these conclusions from vast and painstaking research in official archives and company records.

It was, they show, mainly the gentry, and London bankers and merchants, who invested in colonial business and drew gain from it. The costs of that gain were large, and paid mostly by the industrial and commercial middle class.

Administration was relatively cheap. At the height of the Empire, the whole staff of the Colonial Office and the India Office, in Britain and the colonies, totalled only 5,400. But military spending was heavy. Britain had to support an army of 120,000 men in its colonies, and the biggest navy in the world. Considerable sums were also spent on subsidising loans raised by colonial administrations.

The British taxpayer paid. Britain was the most heavily taxed country in the world, and the middle class paid most.

GREETING FROM THE MOTHERLAND.

Taxes raised in India did pay for both the British regiments in India and the Indian Army, even when it was used in Iran, Afghanistan, or Africa. But the military cost of British rule in India was greater than that. A great part of Britain's huge navy and network of military bases was meant to defend Britain's position in India and the routes between Britain and India.

Other colonies did not even pay as India did. In reply to an appeal for money towards the costs of the Imperial Navy, Canada self-righteously explained that it was already paying for one Fisheries Protection boat on the Great Lakes and would soon be launching one on the Pacific coast!

The returns from investment in the colonies were not that big anyway. The authors establish that from 1885 to 1912 investments in the Empire were less profitable than investments at home or in other countries. From 1860 to 1884 higher profits were made in the Empire — probably because of pioneers' advantage in countries newly opened up to capitalist enterprise — but overall the colonies were not the honeypot of high profits that some capitalist politicians thought they were.

The book contains much other information. It analyses in detail how much the wealthy classes of Britain invested abroad, and where. It surveys the debates of major Chambers of Commerce on questions concerning the Empire, and their effect or otherwise on Government policy.

It does not look at the costs and benefits of Empire for the colonies. It gives a strong indication, however, that the imperial connection *benefitted* the ruling classes of Britain's settler states, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. These countries — Australia and New Zealand in particular — were able to run by far the highest levels of public expenditure per head in the world, with almost no burden of military costs, and had good free access to British markets while they raised high tariffs on British exports.

India, on the other hand, must have suffered severely from British rule. Public spending there by the British administration was very low, and the military costs to Britain of its world-power role brought no benefit to India.

The authors argue that their research explodes 'economic determinist' theories that the expansion of Empire was due to a search for big profits, and they see Lenin as the main representative of those exploded theories. In contrast, they quote approvingly from an assessment of British revenues from India written by Marx in 1857.

"Individuals gain largely by the English connection with India... But against all this a very large offset is to be made. The military and naval expenses... on the whole, this dominion... threaten[s] to cost quite as much as it can ever be expected to come to".

The attack on Lenin is, I think, misplaced. Probably Lenin assumed that profits on enterprises in the colonies were higher than profits elsewhere. But he certainly did not see the creation, maintenance and expansion of colonial empires as a policy coolly decided upon by ruling classes as a result of cost-benefit calculations.

Replying to the argument that *"raw materials 'could be' obtained in the open market without a 'costly and dangerous' colonial policy"*, Lenin wrote that this ignored *"the principal feature of the latest stage of capitalism: monopolies. The free market is becoming more and more a thing of the past; monopolist syndicates and trusts are restricting it with every passing day"*. In the abstract, an 'imperialism of free trade' might have been more profitable; nevertheless, a world of monopolies, cartels, protectionism, colonialism and militarism had developed from the old capitalism of small enterprises, and no amount of cost-benefit calculations could turn the clock back. Such was Lenin's argument.

This book should, however, explode one sort of 'Leninism' — the sort which bases itself on a few phrases and sentences from Lenin's pamphlet 'Imperialism' to picture the development of world capitalism as a matter of rich countries plundering poor ones, or even to label the working classes of the advanced capitalist countries as privileged co-exploiters of the Third World.

In 'Finance Capital', the major study on which Lenin based his pamphlet, Rudolf Hilferding argued that imperialism brought attacks on the living standards of workers in the more developed countries through tariffs, higher taxes, and the threat of war. Davis, Huttenback and Davis confirm this view.

The real Lenin

Gerry Bates reviews *'Leninism Under Lenin'* by Marcel Liebman. Merlin Press.

Many socialists must have scoured libraries and bookshops for a good biography of Lenin. Unfortunately there isn't one.

The books by Adam Ulam and David Shub are too hostile to give a clear picture. Tony Cliff's book is too concerned to take bits and pieces from Lenin's ideas to justify the current politics of Cliff and *Socialist Worker*. Krupskaya's 'Memories of Lenin' and Trotsky's 'On Lenin' are well worth reading, but fragmentary. Moshe Lewin's 'Lenin's Last Struggle' is essential reading, but covers only the final years of Lenin's life.

'Leninism Under Lenin' — published in 1975, but recently reprinted — is not a biography, but it is the best comprehensive survey available of Lenin's politics.

"In its struggle for power", so Liebman quotes Lenin, "the proletariat has no other weapon but organisation". Lenin was always concerned to *organise*. But 'Leninist' organisation was never a matter of sticking rigidly and dogmatically, irrespective of circumstances, to stereotyped formulas.

In his early struggle around the time of 'What Is To Be Done?' (1902), Lenin was concerned to create, from the scattered Marxist groups in Russia, a *party* which could operate coherently in conditions of great repression. Lenin thus argued for "bureaucracy versus democracy", "centralism versus autonomism", and "a complete dictatorship of the editorial board", in terms so sharp as to make it obvious that he was not laying down general rules for Marxist organisation in all conditions.

In fact the centralism of the Russian Marxists, and later of the Bolshevik faction, was always very feeble organisationally. That is why Lenin was impatient with people who moaned about the dangers of excessive centralism. But as soon as the outbreak of revolution in 1905 made a broad and democratic party possible, Lenin was vigorously on the side of such a party against the conservatism of some old Bolshevik 'committee-men'.

After the 1905 revolution was defeated, conditions became much more difficult again. The Bolshevik faction had 46,000 members in 1907. Only two years later, in 1909, it had just six local committees left in the whole of Russia. According to Trotsky, "The people whom Lenin could reach by correspondence or by an agent numbered about 30 or 40 at most".

Lenin's focus changed again, to what Liebman calls 'Leninist sectarianism'. With an untiring series of bitter polemics against both ultra-lefts (those who wanted to reject the very limited openings for legal activity) and opportunists (those who wanted to abandon the beleaguered underground party in favour of some broad legal organisation, and those who wanted to conciliate all the factions), Lenin battled to keep an organised nucleus going with a clear line. Liebman comments, probably rightly, that Stalinism later (in different times and circumstances) drew on the excesses and exaggerations in those bitter polemics to give 'Leninist' authority to its way of arguing against 'deviations'.

In 1917 Lenin's organisational formula changed again. The Bolsheviks became a mass movement again, growing from 20,000 members in February 1917 to at least 240,000 in October. And more: the party was substantially re-made in those hectic months. In April Lenin had to fight most of the 'old Bolshevik' leaders to

get the slogan of 'All Power to the Soviets' adopted. The Central Committee elected at the Bolsheviks' Sixth Congress in July 1917 included in its 21 members no fewer than 9 who had previously led major political battles or faction fights against Lenin within the Russian Marxist movement.

No fixed organisational formula defined Bolshevism, but only the relentless struggle to build a party geared to revolution and not drowned by the petty pressures of day-to-day activity.

Liebman also reviews Lenin's developing strategy for the Russian revolution, showing how it converged with Trotsky's idea of 'permanent revolution'. A long section looks at the period between the 1917 revolution and Lenin's removal from activity by illness in 1922. How did the Bolsheviks move from the liber-

tarian ideals of Lenin's 1917 pamphlet 'State and Revolution' to the harsh one-party state of 1922?

Liebman rejects the idea that Leninism led directly into or was loyally continued by Stalinism. Even the harshest measures of 1917-22 were measures of a genuine revolutionary workers' party trying to maintain a bridgehead for the world revolution in terrible conditions, not the tyranny of a bureaucracy alien to the working class.

Undoubtedly Stalinism was able to build on some of the desperate measures of 1917-22. In hindsight some of the Bolshevik leaders of that time, such as Trotsky, argued that some of those measures had been mistakes. But even with hindsight, we cannot say that the Bolsheviks were wrong to do what they could to sustain the revolutionary regime in bad conditions, while they hoped and worked for aid from revolutions in more advanced countries, rather than giving up in graceful and idealistic defeat.

Liebman identifies a marked change of tone in Lenin's writings from the time of the Brest-Litovsky treaty, signed between revolutionary Russia and Germany in March 1918. The joyous libertarianism of the first months of the revolution gave way to a grim determination to hold on in adverse conditions.

The SRs — who were openly counter-revolutionary — and the Mensheviks — who were wavering — were banned in June 1918, as the civil war gathered force. But when Martov, with a policy of critical support for the Soviet government against the counter-revolution, won a secure majority in the Menshevik leadership in October 1918, the Mensheviks were legalised again. They operated as a legal, if harassed, opposition throughout the worst days of the civil war in 1919.

In early 1920, with the civil war apparently more or less won, the Bolsheviks abolished the death penalty and restricted the powers of the Cheka. These measures were soon reversed in a new emergency, the Polish invasion of March 1920.

But it was not until early 1921 that the Mensheviks were banned again. The civil war had been won, but the relaxing of the war effort revealed an economy in ruins. 1921 was a year of famine, when millions starved to death and cannibalism reappeared in parts of the USSR. In February 1921 the hungry workers of Petrograd struck; in March the sailors of Kronstadt rose against the government, and the Bolsheviks banned factions within their own party. Help from workers' revolutions in Western Europe was clearly a more distant prospect than the Bolsheviks had hoped in 1917-20, and Lenin and Trotsky were urging the Western Communist Parties to adopt a more long-term policy of 'winning the masses'.

Those were terrible days. The emergency measures taken then were never to be reversed. But they did not derive from any drive by Lenin to create a police state.

At exactly the same time Lenin was arguing forcefully for the independence of the trade unions from the workers' state. Although many strikes were roughly dealt with, the Bolsheviks never banned strikes. In January 1922 Lenin even pressed for the unions to build up strike funds.

Liebman's concluding chapter is disappointing. He criticises Lenin's ideas on bourgeois democracy, on reformism, and on socialist democracy, but without much effort to probe beneath the apparent contradictions between Lenin's polemical phrases on these questions at different times. The final section, on Lenin and dialectics, verges on mysticism. But the book is well worth reading.

A taste of China in the 1930s

Bryan Edmands reviews *'Thank you Mr Moto'* by John P. Marquand, published by Souvenir Press Ltd., 1987, 287 pages, £8.95 hardback.

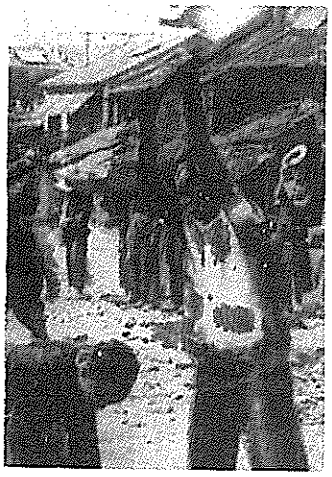
Set in Peking in the mid-30s this is an interesting and in places gripping 'Boy's Own' tale of intrigue, espionage and an inevitable romance.

The background is Northern China ostensibly ruled by the brutal bourgeois nationalist party of Chiang Kai-Chek — the 'Kuomintang' — though in many areas torn by conflict between rival gangster warlords and their armies.

Japan — since the turn of the century, a growing capitalist power — had been casting an imperialist empire-building eye over its larger neighbour; securing for itself Manchuria (North Eastern province of China) in the early '30s, and threatening further southwards.

Enter Mr Moto — honourable secret agent of the Japanese Emperor — into the still seemingly untroubled world of the older imperialist robbers: of parties, clubs, and a whole round of stultifying social engagements.

Quickly, he, together with Tom Nelson, an expatriate American lawyer 'gone native', and Eleanor Joyce, a beautiful, clever and mysterious American traveller, get mixed up in an ambitious plot to take control of Peking and facilitate the plans of



Kuomintang murder communists

an aggressive, expansionist faction of the Japanese ruling class.

Mr Moto, serving the more conservative-traditionalist faction behind the Emperor, intervenes...Tom Nelson is thrown together with Eleanor Joyce, staying one step ahead of murder, until...

This is the second of the Mr Moto series written in the 1930s and republished here after 50 years. Suprisingly, I liked the book.

Given the time and conditions in which it was written, and the setting, I would have expected, firstly, that it would have been more overtly racist and sexist — though of course a certain amount of stereotyping is not avoided. Secondly, the story-line is quite sophisticated and well placed — Tom Nelson's fatalistic philosophy is quite cleverly ruptured by the more positive actions of Eleanor Joyce. And finally the inimitable Mr Moto figure, around whom the plot revolves yet never concentrates upon. Here we have an unchauvinistic and fairly positive depiction of an Eastern character, who apparently became one of the author's most popular creations, catching the imagination of the American public of the time.

For a good, exciting, easy going read that transports you to an exotic and suspense filled world of the 1930s, I recommend it.

The red suffragette

From back page

to affiliate to the Labour Party. Lenin called this attitude 'infantile ultra-leftism', and tried to educate the world communist movement against being impatient and seeking revolution above the existing consciousness of the workers.

But this was a matter not of Sylvia being 'disturbed', but of her lack of experience and the British labour movement's lack of theoretical tradition. Her political environment had been dominated by the Fabians, who saw the bourgeois state as a means of bringing a more orderly way of life to the working class. Britain's main Marxist group, the Social Democratic Federation (later British Socialist Party), combined a sectarian socialism with nationalism. The BSP split on the question of the war in 1916, with its longstanding leader, Henry Hyndman, supporting the war.

After Eleanor Marx's suicide in 1898, there was almost no-one left in the British labour movement with a real understanding of Marxism, and the Fabians were left to dominate. No wonder that Sylvia's ideas were raw. Romero, however, suggests that Sylvia's communism was merely the moralistic radicalism of one who adopts the most extreme positions on worthy issues.

On her release from prison, Sylvia was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. She lost her battle in the British communist movement against affiliation to the Labour Party. She returned to peace campaigning, created a storm by having an illegitimate child (in her mid-40s!), and became involved in anti-fascist activity.

When the Italian fascists invaded Ethiopia in 1935, she threw herself into building support for Ethiopia. Soon she was an enthralled personal follower of the exiled emperor Haile Selassie. All the rest of her life — she died in Ethiopia in 1961 — she would be a devotee of the authoritarian Ethiopian monarchy.

It is a sad and tragic story. Romero is not equipped to tell it properly, let alone explain the paradoxes of Sylvia's life. The book abounds in ignorant errors, big and small, about the world Sylvia lived and worked in. Because Romero does not understand that world, she relies on a few crude psychological explain-alls — a sort of long-distance psychoanalysis for five year olds.

Sylvia Pankhurst, whose paper was by far the best of the revolutionary socialist papers published in Britain during World War 1, deserves better.

The Red Suffragette

Ruth Cockroft reviews *Sylvia Pankhurst: Portrait of a Radical* **by Patricia W Romero. Yale University Press.**

Sylvia Pankhurst is a neglected figure in the history of the British left. Therefore Romero's book is all the more disappointing for failing to catch the mood of militant labour in Britain in the early years of this century.

Sylvia Pankhurst was a member of the famous family of women's suffrage campaigners. But whereas her mother Emmeline and sister Christobel moved to the right — from the Independent Labour Party to the Tory Party — during their campaign for votes for women, Sylvia stayed on the left. During World War 1 she moved to the revolutionary left.

Her response to the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 was to become involved, like the best activists of the time, in the communist movement. She had been imprisoned and starved to the point of exhaustion. She had been through a bitter personal split in her family in order to fight for votes for *all* women and men over 21 rather than the 'votes for ladies' (votes for some women of property) advocated by her sister and mother. Why did she spend the last three decades of her life as an uncritical supporter of Haile Selassie, the feudal monarch of Ethiopia?

Romero's explanations are far from convincing. To her, Sylvia was simply an intransigent and uncompromising radical throughout her political career. Apparently she was also searching for a father figure. She found her father figure first in Keir Hardie, with whom she had a long love affair, then in Lenin, and finally in Haile Selassie.

Romero reduces Sylvia's remaining a socialist when her family moved rightwards to jealousy of her sister and feelings of rejection by her mother. And she comments: *"Sylvia Pankhurst was self-centred, opinionated, impulsive, obsessive, highly-strung, and single-minded in whatever cause she made her own".*

Sylvia Pankhurst

Romero's lack of understanding of Sylvia Pankhurst is not simply a dislike of Sylvia. Throughout the book there is a distaste for the labour movement, and an impressive ignorance of the issues facing the labour movement at the time.

Romero lays a dead hand on the living characters, the real political issues, and the stark choices as they appeared to socialists then. She does not penetrate Sylvia's world. She is alien and even hostile to it.

Sylvia began to move away from her mother's and sister's WSPU because it was willing to settle for votes for some women on a property qualification rather than votes for all. This position increasingly cut the suffragette movement loose from the mass base of the developing labour movement, which supported votes for all women.

In 1913 Sylvia spoke with the East London Labour MP George Lansbury in favour of strikers, thus defying Christobel's ruling that forbade appearances with men. She was bitter about the WSPU's orientation to *"attracting the support of wealthy Conservatives opposed to labour views"*. But Romero sees the WSPU's break from the labour movement merely as a move to influence individual MPs of a different political coloration.

Sylvia built women's suffrage organisations in the East End. They agitated for votes for all, and produced a paper, 'The Dreadnought', which had a wide appeal among dockers' wives and women who worked in the sweatshops of the East End. This East London Federation organised the defence of its own meetings, and was seen by its opponents as *"athletic Amazons armed with broomsticks"*. On one occasion when Poplar Council refused meeting facilities to the Federation, it was stoned, and missiles were thrown at police trying to enter the building.

Sylvia used her fame as a suffragette to gain publicity on other issues. 'The Dreadnought' — renamed 'The Workers' Dreadnought' after World War 1 began — carried articles on the threatened civil war in Ireland. It printed vigorous anti-war propaganda.

Romero comments: *"Sylvia... frequently asked for her poor readership of supporters to deny themselves what meagre rations they had to support her paper and the federation. This custom had been practised by the WSPU and its mainly middle-class supporters, but it was hardly practised in the East End. The fact that Sylvia could and did make such requests shows a comparison between her stated aims to aid the downtrodden and her interest in sustaining her own organisation"*. But the working-class women of East London did sustain the paper and the East London Federation, seeing them as their own.

The Labour Party in Parliament supported World War 1 (Keir Hardie was a hesitating exception to its general attitude, but he died in 1915). Sylvia continued to call for peace. She tried to prevent anti-semitic attacks on the Jewish community in the East End. She established cut-price restaurants and child-care facilities, while linking this effort to demands for equal pay for women. Romero sees this as a "feminist economic approach", but quite clearly Sylvia was motivated by socialist ideas of nationalisation and democratic planning.

Romero is most bewildered by Sylvia's support for the Bolsheviks. In 1919 Sylvia was arrested on the grounds that articles in 'Workers' Dreadnought' had incited mutiny. At her trial she quoted extensively from Marx and Engels, and was jailed once again.

Romero describes Sylvia as *"a disturbed woman by this stage, filled with utopian dreaming and illusions"*.

But Sylvia knew what she was doing. Her boundless enthusiasm for the Soviet (workers' council) system did lead her to believe that socialists should not work within a bourgeois parliament, and that the Communist Party should not try

Turn to page 43