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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

COMMUNITY CARE
ANTI-POLL TAX STRUGGLE
LOCAL DEMOCRACY SPLITS IN
SWEDEN AND NEW ZEALAND

MORE

ANTI-POLL TAX

COUNCILLORS

SUSPENDED

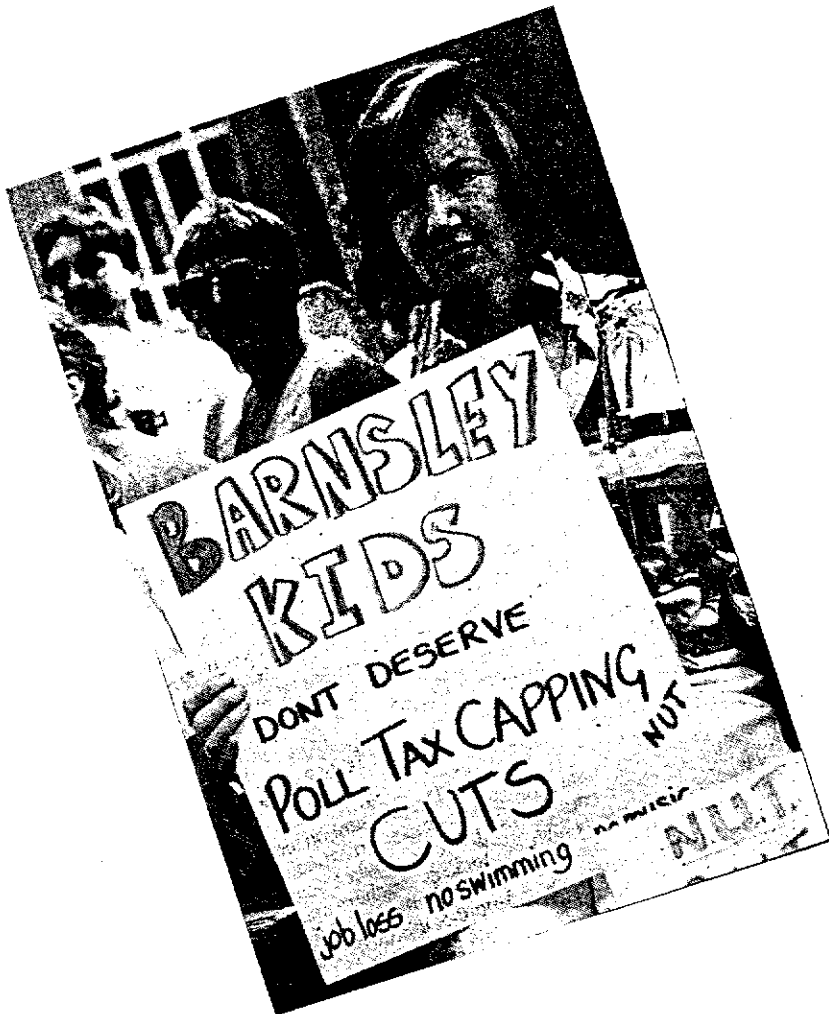


FIGHT

KINNOCK'S

ATTACKS

THATCHER FACES THE STORM



THERE HAS been no slow down this summer in the Poll Tax attacks on non-payers and the onslaught on jobs and services. The Law Lords decision that Poll Tax capping was here to stay undermines all those who think that the Government will suddenly produce a buoyant economy and reverse the cuts just before the election. The Chancellor, John Major, has demanded savage cuts in public spending next year. He has already started one of the toughest public spending rounds in recent memory with the demand that Government departments cut their bids by an unprecedented £15 billion.

Yet public expenditure is rising as the working class fight and win pay disputes that increase wages at or above inflation. What Major is proposing is not just cuts but the destruction of services and the further misery of working class communities and all those on low incomes.

But resistance is becoming more widespread and bitter. The number of non-payers has reached the magnificent figure of

14 million people. This figure shows that the more Thatcher goes for the throat of workers and their families the more they resist. And this resistance has created all sorts of crises for the Government, compounded by the shattering of the old relationships in Europe;

by the political revolution, the re-unification of Germany and the developments towards the European market.

Already Thatcher has had to make six cabinet reshuffles. The Tories have been forced to shelve plans to remove the 'right to remain silent'. The release of the Guildford Four and the quashing of the convictions of the Maguire family, the release of the Winchester Three and the continued incarceration of the Birmingham Six have destroyed faith in the British judiciary.

They have been prevented from privatising the housing estates under the 'Housing Action Trusts' because of the mobilisation of the communities. They have withdrawn the introduction of the Community Care Bill (see the article in this month's Socialist Voice).

Everywhere people are resisting the Poll Tax. There are many struggles around the courts as non-payers clog up the processing of summonses and fights against the closures of services and loss of jobs are spreading.

Amidst all this commotion Thatcher is faced with a dilemma that increases every day: when to call the next General Election? The Tories would lose an election now, but to delay increases the possibilities of the Government being brought down and if they are to lose then a smooth transition is what they want. The longer they delay the more widespread will be the demonstrations, riots, strikes and occupations now becoming a regular occurrence.

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The Community Care Bill - A Victory Against Privatisation

As the opposition becomes more widespread so the attack by Kinnock increases, everywhere councillors are being suspended and not just councillors (see the back of this issue of Socialist Voice). According to the Guardian of 4th August the 29 suspended councillors in Liverpool discussed the setting up of an Independent Labour Group. According to this report the suggestion was rejected by Militant and others.

But some kind of rupture is coming in the Labour Party. By suspending councillors Kinnock reduces them to individuals and removes the right they have on council committees, more than this it hinders them from fighting for the policies they were elected on.

Public meetings should be held all over the country to decide how the fight against Kinnock and those who wish to make the communities and council workers pay for Thatcher's crisis should develop. Defend all councillors suspended, organise against the witchhunt!

As we report in this issue, following the break up of many stalinist one-party dictatorships and the destruction of their parties it is now the turn of Social Democracy. In New Zealand and closer home in Sweden Social Democracy is in great crisis and is losing its grip on the working class. In both countries important and substantial currents have broken from Social Democracy.

The demise of stalinism has weakened its partner in crime. Kinnock's answer to this is to look forward to a Labour Government which is based on a Labour Party which has been rid of members with principles or compassion. He needs a party that can be used to carry out his anti-working class policies.

A Labour Government would be extremely unstable because it would have to continue where the Tories left off with no support from the vast majority of the population for such policies.

Not to wage an all out battle against the right wing leadership and take whatever measures are necessary to maintain a principled struggle against the Poll Tax would be to accept Kinnock's plans.

We need a fighting alliance with all those forces inside and outside of the Labour Party which are prepared to fight the Poll Tax in which a leadership is built that can take the responsibilities of uniting with the non-payment campaign and establish a unity in struggle with the tenant's organisations, council workers and all those fighting and facing cuts and job losses.

The Government has been forced to shelve its Community Care Bill until 1993 - after the General Election.

The Bill, due to be introduced in April 1991, has been withdrawn because of the massive resistance to the Poll Tax.

In parliament and the media the Labour Party are screaming that the Government has deserted the elderly and disabled.

In fact the Tory Bill represents nothing more than cheap care and enforced privatisation.

Celia Jones, a care worker and NUPE steward in a Manchester City Council disabled residents home, reports on the implications of the Bill.

AT PRESENT, care of the elderly and disabled is financed from government social security funds and local rates (now the Poll Tax). It is a well known fact that government grants for funding these services have been shrinking for some years placing a greater financial burden on local authorities. Under the proposed Community Care Bill government money will only be provided if local authorities push the disabled and elderly into the community. For many, those who need 24 hour care, the Government has decided that it will cost too much to place them into the community. Money will be provided to continue the running of residential homes for these people on condition that they are run by private trusts - that is; on condition that they are PRIVATISED. Homes which decide to remain under local authority control will be denied funding.

In Manchester, for example, residents and workers in homes for the elderly and disabled are being told they have no choice but to be run by a trust. The local authorities, with the support of the public employees union NUPE and others, see these homes as a headache that they want to get rid of. Four residential homes for the elderly have already been closed because they did not meet the

'required standard' set by the Government for them to be run by a trust. Eight others are under threat of closure. £85 million is needed to bring them up to 'required standard'. The banks see them as a bad investment and will only provide the money if they are privatised.

The situation is; if the elderly and disabled can manage with minimum care, decided by the local authorities according to budget restraints, they will be forced into the community. For many it will mean becoming prisoners in their own homes. If they require 24 hour care they will be forced to live in privatised residential homes.

The real reason the Labour leaders are screaming is becoming clear. For the next two years care of the elderly and disabled will remain under local authority control and will have to be financed from continually shrinking budgets. The councils will continue to cut local services and will face the rising tide of the powerful movement against the Tory policies they are implementing.

The Government's retreat is a victory for the anti-Poll Tax movement and testimony to its strength. The time is ripe for the fight for good and proper care for our elderly and disabled - and this must be an integral part of the anti-Poll Tax struggle. A programme of care must be and can be developed by the unions consulting the elderly, the disabled, their families and the workers who care for them - an independent programme based on the needs of the communities and not in the interests of Thatcher's Government and big business.

SCHOOL OCCUPATION

Voice Socialist

AGAINST THE POLL TAX

ON JULY 2ND parents of sixty children at Crawford Primary School in Camberwell occupied their school and began to teach their children themselves. They had been forced into this action because their children had been sent home from school every day since Easter. A letter had been sent out by headteacher, Dick Vesotzky, telling the parents not to bother bringing their children to school until September.

The crisis was provoked by two teachers handing in their notice at Christmas to leave at Easter. Their posts were not filled.

The parents action forced the management of the school to find the money necessary to pay a temporary teacher for the children until the end of term. The parents took another step forward by sending a pledge to Southwark Council, written in consultation with a lawyer, for the Council to fulfill its legal obligation to educate the children in the Borough. Education Director, Gordon Mott and Education Committee Chair Councillor John McTernan both refused to sign it! Their response was; *"The situation would not be helped by signing the undertaking. We are aware of our legal obligations and we are working hard to discharge them."*

THE COUNCILS have been thrown into an ungovernable crisis over the Poll Tax. Councils, the local arm of central government, are finding it impossible to collect the Poll Tax and at the same time, as a result of this tremendous opposition, are closing down or threatening to close down, sell off or cut back services essential to working class people.

The councils are in a state of semi-paralysis because of 14 million non-payers. The courts, the police, the bailiffs and the councils, both Labour and Tory, have found it increasingly difficult to intimidate people into paying.

Socialist Voice has always said that services and jobs will be cut because of the implementation of the Poll Tax. The best way to defend jobs and services is by uniting with the non-payment movement. This united movement could take up the defence of services and jobs in a far stronger way and compel the councils, especially Labour, to maintain services at their pre-Poll Tax level and insist the tens of billions stolen from local government by Thatcher be returned.

This fight against the Poll Tax is developing, with successful struggles in Scotland against the bailiffs and against closures. But the Scottish are now being joined by the working class south of the border. There have been disputes in Sheffield, Barnsley, Kirklees, Middleton, Leicester, Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester, London and Southampton, to name but a few. Bailiffs in Scotland held a press conference complaining of daily intimidation in the same week that bailiffs' premises in Northampton were severely damaged by a petrol bomb attack.

As well as an attack on the people unable to pay and on services and jobs, the Poll Tax has become Thatcher's way of having another go at workers and their families who live in council house accommodation.

This is happening in every town and city because the councils, including Labour, are using rent rises to cover for loss of income from central government and blaming it on the non-payment campaign. But the real reason rents 'have to' rise is because they refuse to defy the Government, who place restrictions on Labour councils use of rent money, and who have held back tens of billions in rate support grant.

The best way to prevent these huge rent rises is by the anti-Poll Tax unions forming a united front with council tenants, tenants associations and other community groups in organising a rent strike.

NO POLL TAX

KEVIN BULMAN

KEEP THE PRESSURE ON THE COURTS

FRANK FITZMAURICE

ANTI-POLL TAX demonstrations are being planned for Monday 30th July and seven other dates as Knowsley begins proceedings to bring an estimated 10,000 people to court. Meetings have been held in Kirkby, Huyton and Cantril Farm where groups already exist. A new group has been formed in Whiston at a meeting of 25 people.

There was a huge and successful anti-Poll Tax demonstration in Chester mid-July with the banners of Broughton British Aerospace workers prominent in the mobilisation.

Warrington Anti-Poll Tax Union has been waging a bitter battle in the courts in the last few weeks over the right to an individual hearing. After a successful rally at the first court session, where protesters were able to delay proceedings, the following session herded defendants into the court up to ten at a time threatening them with contempt if they spoke in their own defence; a denial of all natural justice. At the third session protesters turned up, en masse, and forced the court to restore individual hearings even though the right to speak in ones own defence was still severely restricted. The Union is correctly challenging the mass hearings in a higher court but is to be congratulated for regaining the right to individual hearing by mass pressure as 'natural justice' is usually the first casualty when the interests of the state are threatened.

Anti-Poll Tax Unions facing similar court actions can take a warning from these events in Warrington and take heart that mass action can defend our rights.

Court cases are being heard outside of the town where people live. This new tactic is obviously being used to cut down the number of people attending their own court hearings and to prevent opposition demonstrations. People not turning up will be fined in absence.

It is vital to go to court and for anti-Poll Tax groups to organise to get people there.

ISL P E R S P E C T I V E S

FOR SOCIALISM WITH DEMOCRACY

THE INTERNATIONAL Socialist League this month publishes its perspectives document. The content has come out of a close connection with many struggles of workers in which we have found ourselves able to give leadership to or aid leaders in their fight against the Tories and the trade union and Labour bureaucrats. We ask all workers who have become acquainted with us and our methods to read the perspectives and discuss with us the future for the working class in Britain. We are convinced it is a bright future, with enormous possibilities almost upon us.

The international situation is dominating all our lives. We are living at a new level of international class struggle being propelled by the political revolution and the reunification of Germany. It has reached a level worldwide that is comparable to the situation at the ends of the two world wars. Revolutionary explosions have taken place continually since the end of the second world war. But we are witnessing the explosion of the masses simultaneously in the workers' states, Latin America and Africa; simultaneously east and west, third world and first. This is the world situation in which the British working class is struggling.

We want purposeful discussion. The situation in Britain is urgent. Thatcher has a programme - privatise and destroy services, jobs and communities. The Labour and trade union leadership hope that the working class will not actively protest; only use the method of the ballot box. But no person will stand still and see their families living conditions crushed, their children discarded and the elderly forced out of their homes onto the streets.

How do we carry forward the struggle against the hated government and establish in this struggle a fighting unity of millions? We think the perspective document is optimistic and shows a way forward. We are heading for revolutionary explosions in this country and we need to build a new leadership that is not based on careerism or on individualism but is based on those who fearlessly and uncompromisingly want to give leadership to the movement of our class.

The situation is urgent in another sense. The revolutionary upsurge has created a tidal wave that is on its way to Britain - and British capitalism is like a rotten wharf. But what happens in the first instance will be dependent upon constructing a leadership within the working class that can direct a real struggle against the Government - one not based on scepticism.

This government is lurching from crisis to crisis and we need and can put an end to it by uniting around the anti-Poll Tax struggle. Read our perspectives, discuss with our members, if you agree with what we say and how we fight then join us.

For a copy of the perspectives SEND 20p + 18p for P&P to:

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WHAT FUTURE BRITAIN

IN THE CURRENT world economic crisis, Labour and Social Democratic parties have been distinguished by the fact that they have betrayed the workers whom they represent. Where they have been in government, in countries such as Spain, France, Sweden, Australia and New Zealand, they have reduced workers wages, cut social benefits, reduced or abolished essential services and privatised public assets. Where they are not in government, but still represent the mass of workers, such as in Britain or Germany, their behaviour has been cowardly craven and they have left no doubt that their behaviour in office would differ little from that of the conservatives.

In the 1930's when this happened there were massive swings by the workers to the left. Communist Parties ceased to be isolated sects and became foci of resistance to the attacks by capitalist governments on the workers. Today, the downfall of stalinism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe means that stalinism now has no powers of attraction. Communist Parties have become either social democratic parties or have remained isolated sects.

Except in Latin America trotskyist parties have not filled the void either. Mostly, they and other marxist groups have also remained isolated sects.

In this situation moves to form alternative mass based workers' parties possess a certain attraction. The Communist Party of Australia has dissolved itself into a New Left Party, which possesses all the defects of the Australian Labour Party without its mass base. Other left parties formed by former Labour MP's are in states of suspended animation. Last May Swedish social democrats formed a new party called Workers' List.

New Zealand, with 3.2 million people, has produced the most successful breakaway party to date, the New Labour Party. It was formed in Christchurch at a public meeting of 700 hundred people on May 1st 1989. The principal speaker at the meeting was one of the local MP's, Jim Anderton, MP for the ultra safe seat of Sydenham, a party member for 26 years and a former president of the Labour Party for five years. The founding conference of the Party, with 450 delegates from all over New Zealand, was held in June 1989, with a further conference in June 1990. The New Labour

George Petersen, a former Labour member of the Australian New South Wales Parliament of twenty years standing, now a member of the Australian section of the IWL, reports on the break up of the New Zealand Labour Party and points to the future for Social Democracy worldwide.

Party claims to have 6,000 members, compared with 7,000 for the Labour Party, which is down from 100,000 in 1984. In October 1990 it will contest the General Elections with candidates for all 93 general seats. In the four Maori seats it will support the candidates of a Maori party.

The public policy of the party, as adopted at these conferences, supports the following objectives:

- * Full employment,
- * No more sales of public assets,
- * Election by proportional representation,
- * Totally free education,
- * Social security for all,
- * Affordable, satisfactory accommodation for everybody,
- * Environment protection and sustainable use of resources.

The party brochure describes the policy as the alternative to the inhuman policies of free market fanatics, a commitment to accountability, the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and socialism.

During 1990 Anderton made a flying visit to Australia and addressed meetings in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. He addressed a meeting of about 200 hundred people at the Trades Hall in Sydney on July 12th, under the chairmanship of Jim Percy, general secretary of the Democratic Socialist Party - formerly the 'trotskyist' Socialist Workers' Party and now a pro-Gorbachov left party...

Anderton opened his address by giving a comprehensive rundown of the way in which, over the past six years, the Labour Government has betrayed every one of its commitments. Anderton strongly condemned the austerity policies inaugurated in New Zealand under the name of "Rogernomics" but warned that it was not an isolated phenomenon. "It is significant", Anderton said, "that Palmer, the Labour Prime Minister of New Zealand has been praised by New South Wales Liberal Premier Grenier. Also his government has been praised by the previous Prime Minister, Muldoon. There is now a high level of mistrust for the whole political process itself. If you vote National

you will get a National Party Government. If you vote Labour you will get a National Party Government. Unemployment is now officially 115,000, or 11.3% (Australia 7.6%). Unofficially unemployment is nearer 250,000. Economic growth has averaged 7% over the past five years (Australia 3%). The foreign debt has increased in six years from \$16 billion to \$50 billion. Real wages have declined 40%.

The announced Labour policy of abolishing charges for medical prescriptions have been ignored. Instead they have been increased 400%. University fees are now \$1250 a year - not free as promised. Instead of abolishing charges for overseas students they are now \$10,000 a year.

The 1980 election manifesto said that there would be no asset sales. Instead the Labour government have sold off the government banks, printing offices, telecommunications (opposed by 97% of the people), shipping, forests, airlines, petrol industry and insurance companies and they are now trying to sell off the railways, the steel industry, the electricity corporation and the post office.

Educational, health and post office services and maintenance are all being slashed with workers in these essential services being sacked. A thousand post offices have been closed. The classic monetarist, high interest rate, high monetary values policy has resulted in the devastation of local industry. With high interest rates, up to 26% a year, the housing construction industry is in ruins.

The one growth industry in New Zealand is the building of prisons. New Zealand has the highest imprisonment rate in the western world because of mass unemployment for 15 years, nine years under Muldoon and the Nationals, six years under Labour.

Only in the aspect of foreign policy, the banning of nuclear warships from New Zealand harbours, is there evidence of radical policy. This is due to the strong level of support built up for this programme in the New Zealand community. It is a pointer to how a radical Labour Party could build support for other radical policies if it had the will to do so. In fact it is so radical a policy that New Zealand has decided not to export

UNDER LABOUR???

it. When Lange was Prime Minister he refused to receive the Foreign Minister of the Sandanista Nicaraguan Government for fear of further offending the North Americans. This is a ridiculous stance because he (Anderton) found by experience that people in the US and Canada applauded Labour policy on the issue of nuclear weapons in American warships.

Similarly Labour has given defacto support to the racist government of Fiji whilst mounting platitudes of opposition to the equally racist government of South Africa.

ATTITUDES OF UNION LEADERS

The leaders of the New Zealand Council of Trades Unions say they support Labour because the National Party is worse. Whilst this may be true, the National Party would have never got away with a quarter of what the Labour Party did.

Anderton said that his relation to the trades unions was very good. There are a number of union leaders in the leadership of the New Labour Party and rank and file members are disillusioned with the Labour Party. Whilst a number of unions have disaffiliated from the Labour Party none have actually affiliated with the New Labour Party.

WHY ANDERTON LEFT THE LABOUR PARTY

In December 1988 Anderton was thrown out of the Parliamentary Caucus, when he refused to vote in parliament for the sale of state assets on the grounds that the Caucus decision was contrary to Labour policy as approved by the Party and presented as Labour policy at the 1987 elections. He appealed to the New Zealand Council of the Party who found in his favour. He was then allowed back into the Caucus but he was stripped of all his committee memberships and all official positions within the Parliamentary Party.

In his five year presidency of the Party he had known all the MP's and had been responsible for selecting a number of them, in opposition to more conservative members of the Party leadership. In his opposition to the policies of the Party leadership he started with 16 colleagues out of 56. This soon dwindled to ten. Then one of the ten pleaded that he had a marginal seat and three more dropped by the way leaving him with six.

Then he made a speech opposing government policy and was threatened with expulsion and he was left with one, Helen Clark, the darling of the left in many ways. Anderton had been responsible for having her selected for a safe Labour seat against considerable opposition. She made a statement saying that if she had come this far she was not going to 'go down in a hail of bullets.' She is now Deputy Prime Minister.

He left the Caucus in May 1989 because the betrayal by the Labour Government was so deep and so wide that people kept asking him why he stayed in the Caucus.

The Party has many Maori members. There are eight Maori election candidates, six of the eight being women. This excludes the four Maori seats where they are supporting the candidates of the Maori Party, Mana Motuhake. Of their 93 election candidates over 40 are women - the Party has a rule that 50% of all official positions must be filled by women, this applies right from the top to the bottom of the Party...

The great weakness of New Labour policies is that there appears to be little recognition of the fact that New Zealand's economic crisis is part of a world crisis of capitalism. Prior to World War II New Zealand had the highest

living standard in the world, based on a highly efficient agriculture and a guaranteed British market. The Labour Government from 1935 to 1949 marked the institution of a welfare state which has been surpassed by few other capitalist nations.

The entry of Britain into the Common Market and the decline of agricultural prices relative to those of industrial goods have reduced considerably New Zealand's real export income. With a smaller industrial base than Australia this combination of events has had disastrous effects on the economy. In common with other Labour and Social Democratic governments the only answer which the New Zealand Labour Party found was to place the burden of the capitalist crisis on the backs of the workers. Inevitably they take measures to make the economic situation worse in order to improve the profits of the ruling class. It is to Anderton's great credit that he seeks to reverse this situation by placing the burden of the economic crisis on the backs of the

rich. Whether he will get away with it, whether he will be defeated or whether he will succumb to the pressures remains to be seen...

We have to be thankful for the fact that what appears to be a party capable of achieving a mass base in the near future has emerged and that that party is calling for implementation of the Labour Party's stated policies. Any success which it achieves will be a powerful blow at both the capitalist class and the political parties which serve it

WHO SPEAKS FOR US?

After six years of betrayal and neglect, New Zealanders are looking for new answers to unemployment and falling living standards. We desperately need an alternative to the elected dictatorship this Government has become. In 1990 only one political party offers an alternative to the inhuman policies of the free-market fanatics.

THE NEW LABOUR PARTY

NLP NEW LABOUR PARTY

THE ALTERNATIVE

The New Labour Party is estimated, in the opinion polls, to have 6-7% of the vote. Anderton is confident of being elected himself along with, perhaps, three or four others to provide a real opposition to National Party policies. It will be a condition of election to office that any successful candidate must accept the leadership of the Party, as elected by conference and either carry out party policies or be expelled...

The New Labour Party also advocates that all American and other foreign bases should be demilitarised and closed down...

WORKERS' LIST

IN MARCH the Swedish Social Democratic Government led by Ingvar Carlsson received a decisive vote of repudiation - being forced to resign amidst huge strikes and mobilisations against a proposed two year wage freeze and strike ban. Carlsson managed to muster enough support to form a new government, mainly thanks to an off the record agreement with the Liberals, but the polls show that the Social Democratic Party's popularity has fallen to the lowest point in history. Little over 30% of the population give it their support today.

The process of the breaking away from the traditional trade union and political leadership has found its expression for the past three years in the emergence of an independent trade union current known as the "Rebellion of Dalarna" - Dalarna is a mining, steel and wood industry region North East of the capital Stockholm, where a workers' leadership which confronted the national leadership of the unions has emerged.

The strikes and mobilisations against the Government's austerity plans in March, which united the students, teachers, railworkers and health workers posed the need to confront the offensive of the bourgeoisie as a whole, in the political as well as economic - solely trade union - field. In answer to this need and pressure from the rank and file twenty well known leaders of the "Rebellion of Dalarna" called for a new party which adopted the name; "Workers' List".

Workers' List expresses the total rejection of the traditional apparatus and takes up the demands of the masses which capitalism is unable to answer. It is an expression of a new will to struggle initiated in the big strikes and mobilisations of 1989 and a true revolution in the consciousness of the people as a result of these developments. The revolutionary events in Eastern Europe have been a fundamental factor in this process. The fall of the stalinist apparatuses which had seemed indestructible for decades has struck the consciousness of Swedish workers giving them an example of how to defeat the bureaucracy. Since, the breaking up of and

breaking away from social democracy has accelerated.

Only a few weeks after the call for the formation of Workers' List, at the beginning of the year, independent polls indicated that the new current had the support of 1% of the electorate. A new poll in March showed that the Workers' List had by then 4% of the votes and that 26% of voters considered the possibility of giving their support to

and international solidarity with the exploited and the oppressed.

Following the example of our sister organisation, Convergencia Socialista in Brazil, who demand that the Workers' Party, in which they are integrated, be the Party of the workers and the peoples mobilisations, the Socialist League wants to build the Workers' List in the social and trade union struggles. This orientation was clear, for



The first, historic, congress of Workers' List.

the new organisation. This explosive support continues even now.

Workers' List is organised in 80-90% of Swedish municipalities including the most important ones. At present it has a membership of 2,000.

The left is divided about the emergence of Workers' List and their attitudes to it. The Communist Party, some Maoist groups and the Trotskyist sectors linked to Ernest Mandel's USec, remain outside the new organisation and do not recognise the importance of the break from social democracy.

In stark comparison, the two trotskist organisations affiliated to the International Workers' League - Fourth International; the International Group and the Socialist League gave their wholehearted support to the Workers' List. The Socialist League have been responsible for the formation of more than half the committees of Workers' List in Stockholm. The adherence of the Socialist League to the newly founded party was based on a confidence in fundamental programmatic points supported by the List; against the Government's austerity plan and right wing policies, against racism, against environmental destruction and for national

example, when the Socialist League, under the banner of the Workers' List, was able to organise a significant solidarity movement with the strike of Saab workers in the city of Sodertalje, 30km from the capital.

The significance of the birth of Workers' List, which is an open political break from social democracy goes beyond Swedish frontiers. The treacherous leaders of Western European social democracy, like Felipe Gonzales of Spain and Neil Kinnock of Britain alongside the openly restorationist forces in Eastern Europe; Havel in Czechoslovakia, Modrow in Germany, Gonsz in Hungary and Iliescu in Romania, say that their model is the one of Swedish Social Democracy. The break away led by Workers' List tells workers in all these countries that social democracy is nothing more than a servant of the bourgeoisie - is not a solution for the workers. Workers' List shows that it is not only necessary but possible to build an alternative, independent of capitalism and the bureaucracies, and at great speed - for the time is ripe - rotten ripe.

Based on an article by Anita Larson; "The 'Paradise' in Crisis" which appeared in the May issue of International Courier.

SELF DETERMINATION FOR THE PEOPLE OF KOSOVO

FROM OUR INTERNATIONAL COURIER

To our comrades on the staff of the "Alternative":

In the light of the new developments now taking place in Yugoslavia, and in view of the fact that neither our organisation the International Worker's League - Fourth International, nor our publication "*The International Courier*" can stand by, unresponsive to these events, we enclose a declaration of support for the struggle of the people of Kosovo:

The International Worker's League - Fourth International expresses its complete and unconditional support for the struggle of the people of Kosovo for the right to self-determination. In this context, we also support the recent declaration of Independence promulgated by the Parliament of Kosovo.

We are prompted to this declaration by two considerations. The first is the inalienable right of all peoples to self determination. The second consists in the fact that this decisive step taken by the Parliament constitutes a necessary reply to the fraudulent, rigged referendum arranged at a week's notice by the Stalinist Serbian regime headed by Milosevic - a regime determined to strip the people of Kosovo of their remaining democratic rights by means of military intervention, genocide and the annihilation of all its former gains.

We therefore give notice, once again, of our support for the just struggle of the ethnic Albanian people, and place ourselves at the disposal of the Democratic Forum of Kosovo. We are prepared to help in any way we can in the work of disseminating information and organising campaigns in support of your cause.

For our part we will continue to denounce the repression to which you are being subjected and expound the reasons for your struggle.

In denouncing and combating the persecution unleashed by the present regime in Serbia we reiterate our conviction that a future Yugoslavia must be based on respect for the principles of self-determination for all the peoples of which it is composed.

THE UKRAINE AND SOVEREIGNTY

Dave Dunnico was in the Ukraine just one week before the declaration of sovereignty. Here he reports on the feelings and aspirations of the movement fighting for independence.

THE STREETS of Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, are alive with groups of people demanding one thing; independence from the USSR.

Every evening around the fountains of the 'Square of the October Revolution' nationalist papers, books and magazines are openly sold and leaflets handed out. Workers, and even soldiers, discuss their contents. Circles of people form; workers, soldiers and sailors. They argue whether their republic should become independent and debate what tactics should be used. Side by side different nationalist groups set up stalls - all share a common banner; the blue and yellow flag of a free Ukraine.

One young merchant seaman summed up simply the argument that rings true for many Ukrainians; "*Moscow takes more than they give. Our republic is rich, but its' people are poor... I'm Ukrainian not Russian.*"

It's an argument that has won 30% of the seats in their parliament, whilst other members support them, knowing re-election will largely depend on their stand on this issue.

An 80 year old woman told how during Thatcher's visit to the area she had made a placard in English asking for Britain to support the demand - "*...a militia man, he couldn't read english, he was scared of what it might say, so he beat me with a stick.*" The woman was under no illusions about the Tories though; "*...we are like Ireland - occupied*" she said. The merchant seaman added that they would become like Lithuania and soon be free.

As with other nationalist struggles the movement has its share of romantics. Chechenko, the 19th century poet, painter and nationalist is the apt icon for the moment. He was born into serfdom but died a free man. Many see his statue as a monument to their fight. Lenin, hyped up into a personality cult, is regarded by some to be a symbol of

Russian occupation. One of the many statues of him was defaced by youths who were arrested by police and later released by a crowd of supporters. But beneath the surface there's more than the simple 'gut reaction' against what Lenin, in their eyes, has come to represent. The old woman, who lived through the revolution, recounted Lenin's writing about how the "*...workers and peasants of each nationality have the right to independent decision.*" The nationalist movement is linking in with others in the Ukraine. A Green Party has been formed. Obviously the main issue is the aftermath of Chernobyl. "*Bring those guilty of the cover-up to trial*" demands one slogan. The black humour of a 'welcome to Kiev' poster - the city skyline against an atomic mushroom cloud - graphically shows another argument of the nationalists; "*Moscow doesn't care if we live or die.*"

Kiev is at the head of the nationalist movement. But they recognise that the muscle of a successful revolution lies a few hundred kilometres away (next door by soviet standards) in places like Donetsk and Gorvlika. These are the heartlands of the Ukraine's militant mineworkers. The latter area was central in the 1905 revolution. Today's workers recognise and continue this heritage. The 1989 strikes were based on economic demands and the desire for a union leadership that would fight for workers. The 1990 miners' strike added the demand for a government that would fight for workers.

Back in October Square, the young seafarer predicted that many miners would take up the call for a completely independent Ukraine. Some of the strike committee at Gorvlika's 'Lenin' pit had bigger ideas. They talked of a new 'October Revolution' - not just in the Ukraine - but all over the Soviet Union and beyond.

With the speed of events in the East both may have their revolution soon

BUILD THE MASS

Frank Fitzmaurice writes on the prospects for the building of a truly international workers' party in this, the fiftieth year since the assassination of Trotsky

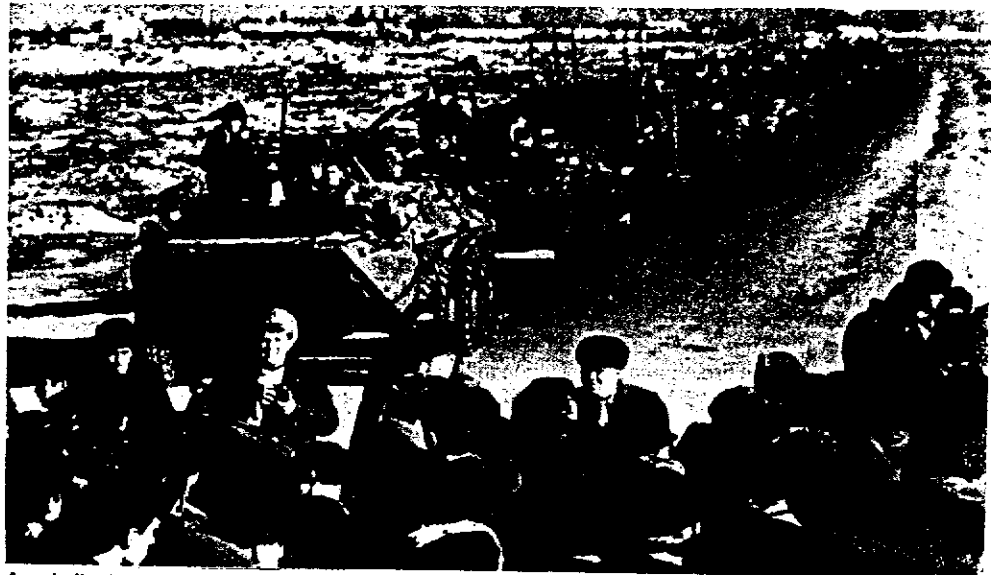
TODAY, FIFTY years after Trotsky's death, we are at a period in history where the contradictions have reached a point where they have broken down and destroyed completely, in a matter of months, relationships which have existed since the end of World War II.

The revolutionary wave which Trotsky had predicted would arise as a result of the war was contained by the agreements between stalinism and imperialism at the Pousdam and Yalta conferences. As a result imperialism retreated before the working class in the industrialised nations and the stalinists diffused revolutionary situations in Western Europe while the Red Army occupied territories it had liberated from the Nazis in Eastern Europe. These are the relationships which have now been swept away by the upsurge of the working classes in the political revolution in the East.

This present situation, due to its tumultuous and ever-changing appearance has led to a rash of impressionistic analyses, ranging from the crowing of the imperialists, like Thatcher, about the 'death of socialism' to, even sections of the Fourth International seeing the overturns by workers of stalinist dictatorships as 'great setbacks for the working class'.

Our tendency, the International Workers' League, sees these events in a very different light. First of all, stalinism, that is; the theory that socialism can be built in one country, has suffered a mortal blow as a world movement. The stalinist parties in Eastern Europe have almost all been thrown out and the present leadership in the Soviet Union, while still in power, is, in its great majority, openly restorationist - the leading 'progressive', Boris Yeltsin, has recently announced his intention of introducing the 'free market' to the Russian Federation. The Chinese bureaucracy, meanwhile, clings to power only by naked repression, with the full backing of imperialism, despite the few cosmetic sanctions. These events have come about because of the ceaseless upsurging of the masses since the Second World War. They have thrown counter revolutionary bureaucracies closer and closer into the arms of imperialism.

The October Revolution was a genuine democratic revolution; the Bolsheviks had a



Azerbaijanis block a column of Soviet tanks

majority in the Soviets and a mandate to take the power. The bureaucracy had to destroy both the Soviets and the Bolshevik Party before they could usurp that power. They have squandered their prestige with their endless treachery and are now consigned to the dustbin of history. As Trotsky stated; *"the laws of history are stronger than the bureaucracy."*

The other big question thrown up by these events is that of the 'free market', touted as cure for all ills and currently being worshipped by the Kinnockites, among others. Due to the treachery of the stalinists in working might and main to prevent revolutions going beyond the bounds of capitalist property relations and, where they could not manage this, encasing them in a rigid bureaucratic framework based on the Moscow model and ruthlessly crushing all aspirations of the masses to break out of this framework - to internationalise and make permanent the revolutionary process - due to this treachery, the 'free market' has had exceptionally favourable conditions to demonstrate its superiority in the last forty five years. What has been the result of this? In the first place this market is, of course, a world market and this world market is dominated by the big multinational countries and the world banks,

which all have their headquarters in the major industrial nations which reap the profits and in whose interests the decisions of these institutions are made (or rather, the interests of the possessing classes of these nations). This, of course, is the imperialism described by Lenin, with the only modification due to the fact that, faced with real danger of losing everything, the major imperialist nations have been able, until the recent past, to sustain some sort of co-operation, loyally assisted by the stalinists.

The results show the full horrors of the reality of the 'free market'. In about ten countries a majority of the population manages to sustain a fairly comfortable existence, although even here there are tremendous and growing inequalities, especially in the richest nation, the USA. This comprises about 13% of the total world population and even in these nations poverty is increasing even as great as wealth is flaunted.

Outside of these countries the rest of the world is almost devastated. The Latin American economies are crushed by the external debt, hundreds of thousands of children starve to death each year and an ecological disaster threatens the rain forests of the Amazon Basin because of multinationals!

4TH INTERNATIONAL

exploitation and land hunger by dispossessed peasants. Africa shares these problems, with its vast mineral resources in the hands of the multinationals and its agriculture destroyed in many areas by the cash crops of these same multinationals. Africa's countries are ravaged by terrorist armies funded by the US and South Africa and like Latin America the price of their natural resources, mineral and agricultural, is kept at rock bottom by this savage repression, an essential component of the operation of the 'free market' in favour of the multinationals and the imperialist nations through the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

The sub-continent of India has been unable to utilise the 'free market' to shake off its tremendous burden of colonial poverty, while in South East Asia, Vietnam and Cambodia were devastated and defoliated and in Indonesia half a million people; suspected communists, were slaughtered. All these genocidal crimes to attempt to secure a dirt cheap market in raw materials and a super exploited labour force which the 'free market' demands.

Of course this super exploitation and the foul criminal acts which enforced it engendered immense struggle and many victories were won in face of the stalinist treachery, leaving imperialism greatly weakened in trying to extend its rule over the planet and the masses uncowed and combative.

The third factor which has to be assessed is the question of leadership of the masses. The lack of a leadership, independent of the

capitalists and the bureaucracies, has been and continues to be the main overhead cost of the present revolutionary upsurge. This weakness was shown clearly at the turn of last year when the Forum movement, an independent movement which was gaining mass influence in the East German revolution opposed the demand for re-unification and was swept aside by the revolution, becoming marginalised. This weakness has also allowed 'free market' leaderships to gain control, for example, in Poland and Hungary, and for Thatcher, of all people, to be touted as a role model. The exposure of these countries, burdened as they are with massive foreign debts, to direct competition of the powerful Western economies will precipitate them into a 'Latin American' situation of poverty and semi-starvation. To try to submit workers who have overthrown dictatorships to these conditions means building up massive confrontations where workers will rapidly learn the lessons of the 'free market' already known to their comrades in the exploited countries of the world. At the same time the workers in the Soviet Union are increasingly coming to the realisation that they must face the restorationist bureaucracy as defenders of the October Revolution and are rediscovering history in the process.

The crux of the problem facing the masses worldwide thus boils down to the question of leadership, as Trotsky always proclaimed, and the instrument he founded for continuing the fight to build this leadership was, and is, the Fourth International. The IWL has, under

the leadership of Naheul Moreno, carried out a principled struggle within the Fourth International for internationalism and workers' democracy which is now bearing fruit, with the existence of sections in several countries in Latin America with the beginnings of mass influence.

This is not a coincidence, but shows two things clearly. That struggles today are increasingly of the type which place workers firmly in the vanguard and the policies of the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International can be the basis for the leadership of these struggles.

These conditions which pertain in Latin America most sharply are now spreading to many other areas of the world very rapidly and pose very favourable conditions for building the Fourth International as a mass party.

All these factors together; the demise of stalinism, the movement of workers to the vanguard of the struggle against imperialism and its' puppets and the existence of a tendency of the Fourth International with a principled history and the beginnings of mass influence show that with a determined struggle the mass party of the working class, democratic and internationalist, can be built to defeat imperialism.

On the 50th anniversary of Trotsky's death a very favourable situation is opening up. The state power behind the mountain of lies that buries the truth about October is crumbling. The role model for national revolutionary movements of a one party bureaucratic state apparatus is discredited and workers are moving into struggles all over the globe. This gives the opportunity to dig out the truth about the October Revolution and the fight of the Left Opposition and the Fourth International to keep its principles alive. We can now make it shine out as it is, the great democratic workers' revolution which dealt imperialism a blow from which it never recovered and opened, as Lenin said; *"the fight to the death."*

This fight can now be brought to a conclusion with 'October's' in many countries. This is the real meaning of events in Eastern Europe.



Trotsky leaves in 1928 for his third Siberian exile, this time in remote Alma-Ata.

Widening the Witch-Hunt

JOSEPH McBANE, Labour Party member in Merseyside

ONE OF THE main points put forward in the Liverpool Labour Party manifesto in the recent local elections was NO RENT RISES - and, along with other left positions, such as, active opposition to the Poll Tax, this was District Labour Party policy - the DLP being the sovereign body of the Liverpool Labour Party.

As reported in the June issue of Socialist Voice, the Labour Party National Executive Committee suspended 15 Liverpool Councillors for voting to oppose the Poll Tax. This led to the right gaining control of the Labour Group. Subsequently the right attempted to raise the rents by £3 per week.

This was defeated as the suspended councillors, 14 other Broad Left councillors and the Liberals (playing political games) voted against, although the right are again putting forward a rent rise to full council on 8th August. The Labour Party NEC, at its meeting of 25th July, voted to suspend these further 14 councillors meaning that 29 of the 67 Labour councillors on Liverpool City Council are now suspended.

Kinnock commented that Liverpool people were; *"sick and tired of posturing by people who flouted their responsibilities and obligations."* The DLP policies that these 29 councillors have upheld led to 11 gains in Liverpool in May - the best results for Labour in the whole country. This all leaves the Council (99 seats) split very evenly into three groups and has provoked the Liberals into offers of a pact with the Labour right in Liverpool which has so far been publically vigorously refused.

The right in Liverpool will continue to try to push through cuts in jobs and services and will again soon put forward a rent rise to the full Council. According to a recent letter from a residential home worker in Liverpool the right are now preparing proposals to sell off old people's homes to a housing association - Liverpool Housing Trust.

The writer doubts very much whether the level of care needed if this happens will be adequate and feels a campaign should be built which could include unions, residents and their families. It is also clear, since the ex-leader Keva Coombes' interviews with the press, that parks and gardens will be put out to tender as soon as possible. He, and possibly others, now face the prospect of

surcharging and even being barred from public office for *"fiddling the figures"* and *"lying in office"*. The City Council held on to the parks and gardens work despite, quote from Coombe's; *"the private sector bid being cheaper than ours... we said they wouldn't do the job to as good a standard... that was just a lie."*

The 49 ex-Labour councillors in rate-capped Liverpool were surcharged and barred from public office for five years but under vastly different circumstances.

Equally important, the NEC meeting also suspended the DLP and the Women's Council and took a decision to proscribe - ban - Socialist Organiser. It is therefore no longer 'legal' in the Labour Party to sell SO or to help produce it. (see accompanying article for SO's statement and comments.) SO have already decided to campaign between now and the Labour Party conference in October for a vote to rescind the NEC's decision by referring back the relevant section of the NEC's report.

The attempt to ban SO will concern more than just the SO. It is an extension of the witch-hunt beyond the boundaries and demarcation lines set up when Militant were banned. The argument used to ban Militant was supposed to be a 'special case', something unique - a one off purge. Many at the time argued that it would not end there - now the left in the Labour Party must consider again where it might end - and others on the left should do likewise.

It is most likely that conference will reaffirm the NEC's decision. Then every group and paper on the left of the Party should feel at risk - while the right will continue to caucus, organise and plot at will. Labour Briefing, Labour Party Socialists, Campaign Group News, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, Socialist Outlook, Socialist Action, Workers Power, Women for Socialism, in fact all campaigning groups should now see, if they haven't previously, the risk of being banned if the present precedent is established.

A further consequence of the Field 'dossier' was the suspension, again at the NEC meeting of the 25th July ('the night of the long knives') of eight Birkenhead DLP members, supposedly for their Militant connections. The eight are: Gerry and Julia McKinlay.

Tommy and Joan Baugh, Steve Bimson, Dave Clark, Chris Stonehouse and Carl Mitchelson. A joint statement commented; *"The NEC witch-hunters have relied solely on the accusations of Frank Field's supporters and people not even in the Labour Party."*

What future for the Labour left in Liverpool? It depends on what they do.

They should form a Merseyside campaign against the witch hunts to fight the expulsions, suspensions and the banning of SO throughout Merseyside. The DLP should continue to operate normally and campaign to force the NEC to rescind the measures they have taken.

This approach will either force the NEC to back down or they will come up to Merseyside and expel the whole party membership.

With major issues such as compulsory redundancies only a matter of months away there is even the possibility of splitting the NEC backed - right 'leadership' group.

Statement by Labour Party Socialists - 24th July

1. The newspaper have not been told of the charges made against them.
2. There is to be no hearing of the case, and therefore no evidence can be presented, or witness cross examined.
3. No notice has been given of the NEC's case, and it is therefore not possible for the defendants to bring evidence or advance argument.
4. The NEC have published documents on this case which are grossly libellous and inaccurate and no opportunity will present itself within the Labour Party's structures to challenge these crude assertions.

These breaches of natural justice are extremely serious for a progressive party which purports to favour the extension of civil liberties. Lord Gifford QC has stated that it is easier to obtain justice before the British courts than it is to obtain such justice before the NEC.