Fight for their future!

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Trade Union News
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with national speakers
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Inside your Xmas holiday Special issue of
Socialist Outlook:
• China: a capitalist road?
• Poland: fight for abortion rights
• UCH: a victory in hospitals fight
Next issue JANUARY 13, 1993
Best New Year wishes to all our readers -
and to socialists and anti-imperialists in
struggle throughout the world
1992: a year of world crisis

1992 saw the capitalist world unable to break out of sharp economic recession, and slide towards slump. No major capitalist country has been able to break free of recession and relaunch sustained economic growth.

The net result is that the toll of unemployment and social misery for the working class has only increased.

The present crisis is a bitter, but utterly predictable, conclusion to the Thatcher-Reagan years. The popularity of free market is at its lowest ebb for a decade.

At the same time, there is no resolution in sight for the crisis in eastern Europe and the ex-Soviet Union. The attempt to restore capitalism has plunged these states into economic and political turmoil, with no obvious way out. Without massive growth in the world capitalist economy, the investment the capitalist world will be making in its relatively cheap privatisation in the former eastern bloc will not be forthcoming.

The attempt to restore capitalism has dissolved the planning system, and succeeded only in catastrophically reducing production levels and creating social anarchy. There is a grave danger, as the article in this issue on Poland points out, of hastily authoritarian governments emerging as a result.

Two years after the Gulf war, Pax Americana has nothing for the peoples of the third world. Millions continue to starve, and suffer from the effects of IMF and World Bank "restructuring" projects as crisis and recession are recycled from the advanced capitalist world.

The Rio summit did nothing for the environment except demonstrate the utter cynicism of the advanced nations, especially the US, towards dealing with the crisis which will, unless tackled, lead the planet to catastrophe.

Famine in Africa and the apparently unending war in Yugoslavia are vivid symbols of where the so-called 'new world order' has led. US intervention in Somalia, aimed primarily at combating Islamic fundamentalism in the region rather than defending aid convoys, is indicative of the free hand which the US currently enjoys in organizing military intervention worldwide.

All this an be summed up in one phrase: capitalism is leading the planet to catastrophe. The case for socialism has never been stronger; it is the only hope for humanity. But what prospects does the force fighting for socialism now have?

Everywhere the working class is fighting defensive battles in difficult situation. But 1992 has shown the ability of the working class to remodelise.

The year started with mass pay strikes in Germany. A general strike movement against austerity measures followed in Greece. A massive protest strike movement then developed in Italy. And finally, in the UK, the British labour movement mobilised in huge numbers — in defence of the miners.

We should be sure that the working class will fight; but the effectiveness of that fight will depend on the ability of the working class to build a viable political perspective and a leadership committed to reorganising society on a socialist basis.

In the 1930s Trotsky said that the crisis of humanity could be reduced to the crisis of working class leadership. Ever since then that phrase has been met with derision by those in the labour movement opposed to revolutionary socialism. That derision is especially ill-placed today.

It could not be more obvious that in the emerging political conflicts in Russia, authoritarian right-wing government will be result unless a powerful left wing alternative is built. It is equally obvious that in Germany politics will veer sharply to the right, with a large, unorganized fascist surge, the forces of the left can act as the backbone of resistance. The examples could be multiplied endlessly.

World capitalism is a very long way from stabilising itself and preparing the basis for another boom. Every fightback, every workers' struggle is important. But unless a movement for revolutionary social change is built out of such struggles, in Britain and internationally, barbarism awaits us.

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**Mad Harry has Noël of an ordre**

**By Jack Dobermann**

*IT WAS CHRISTMAS morning, Crisp, frosty — and a little hung-over, according to one of our readers. "Mad Harry" Sloan was clocking in at the Sixtus Battery. In the distance he heard bells and excited shrieks of discovery — as the local community turned out to see the video clips of a few videos from their neighbours.*

*"I was stood up for breakfast, he climbed the wall to approach from the rear entrance. Sloan put his key in the lock. The door crashed open; he realised he hadn't turned the key — even the lock was knackered.*

*"At that moment Sloan heard a click but saw nothing. Bulb gone again? Or no money in the meter?"*

*He moved inside, allowed the door to close behind him. In the half-light he stumbled over a large parcel and fell tangled in the passegeway. He heard a sound."

*It was the sleeping form of Bill Peters, the wireless sales agent, obviously too exhaused even to open the door and go home that day before the Christmas ho-ho ho's devoted to the fact that he had whipped himself to old copies of the Financial Times supplement rather than do the usual tramp out to barnstorming outfit.*

*Sloan made up his way the narrow creating stairs, but it seemed him it was that he was. Creasing. Only 43, but working himself into a early grave, he thought, his debrisuous good health is now visibly ravaged by the weakly fumelling up the paper."

*One of the local tramps nodded against walls lined with pile-up invoices from a host of suppliers past and present.*

*One item for off-limits equipment — had become such a favourite with the staff that they had framed it two years earlier as a present for business with the less fond "Sloane" Lowe. Unpaid but frequently admired (like me, or that old casserole is at the bottom of the plate there)."*

*Lowe's office on the top floor, valued for its views of the local winds blowing by a wall near the park.*

*Sloan reached the landing, now almost completely in the dark, for the correct key, and then opened the door to the Outdoor production area. He coughed as the heavy smell of the previous day's dry in his mouth. Gaudieux's consumption floated out to grab him by the front."*

*He climbed over the abandoned hulk of the previous laser printer — kept 'just in case' — and stepped out of the door to the layout room. His feet were already beginning to slick to the carpet. He was entering the Spraymount Zone, where unused aerated glue had formed a permanent tatty layer underfoot.*

*No more Spraymount now, he thought, remembering the crisis finance meeting the day before. It had been a grim affair. More economies had to be made, Sloan had been told."

*"Spraymount doesn't grow on trees, you know. The Fund-raising committee decided we'd have to find a cheaper glue," "Tomorrow" Lowe had said.*

*"One of our regular comades said her kids made some lovely cakes at school using flour and water paste — and you can get a big bag of flour for less than a quid. So here is your new recipe for the next three issues," Lowe had said, handing over a bag of Spillers flour.*

*While Sloan had spluttered, lost for words, the next cutback was announced: "We're using too many sheets of paper. You can print fewer pages if you put the laser printer. Paper doesn't grow on trees, you know."

*Sloan had turned in disbelief and gone for an early lunch: but this had been spoiled by other members of the paper staff — who hadn't been paid since the summer — lining up pathetically at the window of the bar, watching him and looking their lips hungrily as he went to eat.*

*In the end five of them shared his burger, bought some chips and he didn't have to split at the cup of coffee. It was getting ridiculous. Earlier in the week he had stepped in the afternoon, to find editor 'Fillm' Limmo [see a column inch, and fill it] in a grumpy mood."

*The man whose relentless sideways-driving put the 'dead' in deadlines was watching a computed screen flicker and seize as office junior Kaye Kendall tattered erratically on a bicycle-dynamic*.

*"Why can't you keep a regular rhythm going? Frankly, this is useless," he rasped through a Gaudieux as the red-faced Kaye paused for her fourth cigarette since coffee. "But I've been pedalling for over an hour. Surely it must be somebody else's turn now."

*She hesitated they her design was as she forced her feet round on the converted bike.*

*Ignoring her, Limmo had picked up the cracked balleiste phone on his desk and laboriously dialled 'Tomorrow's' office.*

*"Are you sure we can't afford to buy one photograph for this bloody issue?" she asked.*

*Here are producing a rail industries special and all we've got to Illustrate it is a 5-year old picture of Jimmy Kincaid, a tube ticket and a creased ripped copy of the Synd's*.

*"No, we can't use a picture of the Tory Transport Secretary — no reader need even rise him and anyway our reference books are all from 1989, and nobody here can remember the name to begin with," "Limmo made no headway. There would be no new photos, and the embarrassing weekly picked line of unsigned photos would continue each week outside the 'Outlook' office. As a matter of strategy Sloan reached for a spoon to mix up the flour and wait at the phone rang.*

*"Hello, comrade, season's greetings and all that jazz. Just ringing to wish you well," said a relaxed, well-worn and slightly irredentist voice in the background. The sound of laugher, and the popping of champagne corks. There was no recognising the sound of food and generous freely-opened presents sur- rounding the mystery caller.*

*"Who are you?" he asked.*

*"I'm the spirit of compassionate readers present," said the voice. "We're all celebrating the fact that we can find extra cash for every- thing else at Christmas, but not a brass farthing for you. I can't get you a word on the paper. I thought I'd ring up and patronise you with kind press."

*"But it's all a mess — you're going to get that bloody picture of Jimmy Kincaid on every page if you don't send us some cash," gasped Harry in frustrated anguish. "Surely a few quid wouldn't hurt; why do you have a trip round? Send us some money...

*"Now, now, don't get hysterical. We think the paper is yours. Some of you seem to sell a few. Oh, sorry, lunch is starting, must dash. Have a nice Christmas.""

*There was a click and the dialling tone. It was too bad to be true."

*Harry suddenly woke up; he had dozed off again after a long night with the Sociaislists. He looked at his watch. December 14. How much of the dream had been real? Only you can say whether it is true.*

*If you support us, send a Christmas donation. Now. How about C20?*

*Give the resources, and we'll give you a lovely Socialists Christmas card.*

*And that's an investment for Christmas yet to come!"
After TUC 'recovery day' wash-out...

Fight for a day of real action!

By Bill Sutcliffe
BE HONEST now. Did you even notice the TUC's 'na-
tional recovery day' on December 9? Thought not.
As you will no doubt not be aware, December 9— a date
selected to tie with the Edin-
burgh SC summit— was the
centrepiece of the TUC's so-
called Campaign for Jobs and
Recovery, launched in the wake
of the coal crisis broke last
October. Trade unions were
asked to use their leverage
and put the case for investment and job
creation.
Few could be bothered to
waste time on such a pointless
task, and most of the 100,000
nail-biting TUC's argu-
ment will presumably be
pulped.
There was no industrial ac-
tion anywhere, although there
were at least rallies in
Manchester, Oxford and
Swansea. By contrast, a service
for recovery at Southwark
cathedral attracted 350.

Crash of Titans
Norman Willis met John
Major. Such was the TUC
general secretary's negotiat-
ing prowess that on December 10
the government announced it
was scrapping state funding
for union bal-
lots.
The absolute high-spot of
December 9 was
NUM leader Ar-
thur Scargill's
repetition of ear-
lier calls for the TUC to or-
ganise a national day of action,
"with millions of people out on
the streets", if the Tories do not
deliver on their promise.
Scargill made his demand at a
conference held in the TUC's
Congress House headquarters,
repeating remarks made out-
side the TUC's special general
union meeting in Doncaster
last month.

This time he got implicit
backing from TGWU transport
workers chief Bill Morris,
predominantly under the influence of
rank-and-file pressure, who
noted the need for "far more ac-
tive and wide-ranging measures
than the under-
powered ones that have already
been announced."
The idea of a day of action
must be pushed by activists in
all unions branches and trade
councils, who should also argue for
strike action on the day
wherever possible.

We say: miners
must act!

THE CLOCK is ticking relentlessly towards the
closure of the first ten pits—and many NUM
members are understandably reluctant to call for a
strike ballot they might lose.
But it is clear that unless the miners take the lead,
there will be no major eruptions of a spontaneous
general strike to save them. There is a real danger that
thousands of jobs will be lost without any
time being waged in the coalfields.
Nobody likes to risk losing a ballot but the demoralisa-
tion that will spread from the closure of the 10 pits could
make it impossible to fight for the others.
It would be better to fight now for occupation of the
threatened pits, and for supporting strike action, than pas-
tively to blame the TUC and other unions for defeat, or
lament in years to come the fact that we fought was a
waste.

New threat from Smith's review
Right wing aim knife at Labour's roots

By Dave Ossel
THE LABOUR party links with the trade union movement—cur-
cently under consideration by a labour movement review group—are
under attack as never before.
The only well-organised faction
within its leadership is determined
to terminate Labour's role as, in Lenin's phrase, "the political arm of
the trade union bureaucracy" and
transform it into a potential coalition partner for the Liberal
Democrats.
While they face resistance from the centre and left and the majority of
the trade union leadership, such a historically unprecedented project is
even being counteracted by
a demonstration of Labour's deep ideological
roots.
Neil Kinnock defiantly
promised "one member, one vote" (OMV) — a
slogan for heavily driven union
influence—in the Labour Party
throughout its leadership.
The idea was effectively
rejected by conference in both 1984 and 1981.
Significantly, it was the only major
issue on which he never got his way.
Negotiation talks have not dis-
appeared, its standard bearers in-
clude shadow home secretary
Tony Blair, shadow chancellor Gordon
Brown, Kinnock himself— still on the
national executive committee—and
new MPs like Peter Mandelson
and Tony Wright.
The rest of the party's leadership
has long lost the habit of strategic
thinking, giving the Kinnocks a con-
 vincing political weight in excess of
their actual ability by virtue of
their union round a common project.
Although likely to proceed with
treme caution, John Smith is obviously
well-disposed to their case. The battle
is unlikely to be decisively resolved
until the other side of the next
election.

Internal labour movement tensions
can be clearly seen in the review
group's deliberations. Big unions, in-
cluding GMB, Rail Maritime and
Transport, the National Union of
Public Employees and Manufacturing
Company Workers are putting forward
"no say, no pay" bottom line. They are
followed by MPs Claire Short and John
Prescott, who realise that unions offer
Labour an indispensable mass base.
While Blair also sits on the group,
his position is most likely vacated by
the hard left alternative AEU, repres-
sented by Nigel Harris, operating on
its own agenda of institutionalised
company unionism. Just as the TUC
membership is negotiable, so are his
links with Labour.
Recommendations include shak-
ing the overall union conference block
vote from 90 to 70 per cent, as agreed
at last year's party conference. While
this should eventually reduce further
to 50 per cent, there is a need to
"preserve the balance of the party"
and avoid any future constituency
left resurgence in control.
The words are not merely in the
original.
The suggestion is that MPs and
MEPs, and possibly endorsed
candidates, have a 20 per cent block
vote as a "third force".

The report adds: "Consideration
of the balance of voting does not take
the balance of decision but must be made
alongside an understanding of the im-
lications of establishing the National
Policy Forum."
In other words, now Labour Party
conference no longer has real policy
making power. It can't hurt to make it
a little bit more democratic.
Constituency and union delegates
would effectively get mini-block votes
proportional to the size of their local
party or their union's affiliation respec-
tively. Theoretically, this is good news
for left, but the concession will now
mean little.

The real controversy is over push-
ing OMV to its logical conclusion, by
making political-deal paying trade
unionists "registered supporters".
It is proposed that candidate selec-
tion should be based on an electoral
college of members and registered
supporters resident in constituency,
with OMV in each division. This sys-
tem would end collective union branch
input into the process and should be
opposed.
The leadership and deputy leader-
ship elections were to be conducted
through an electoral college of MPs,
members and unionists, again with
OMV operating within each section.
This would give the bourgeoisie a
limited chance to push candidates
of its choice to the rank and
file.
The working group is set to meet
again at least once this month to finalise
the draft. It will be considered by
the January NEC and resubmitted at
1993 conference.

But it is vital for the left to realise
that this is not the end of the story.

OMV supporters are clearly in it for
the long haul.

TGWU cuts
lifeline

The Transport and General
Workers' Union is to slash projected
financial support for the Labour
Party by over £500,000 a year.
It will also withdraw backing from
at least a dozen of its 38 sponsored
MPs.
The move is a sure sign of
Transport House disquiet with the
party's current moves to reduce
trade union influence in all areas of
work and indicts the growing gap
between the two wings of the movement.
Is China going down the capitalist road?

By Paul Clarke

THREE YEARS after Tiananmen Square, China still remains an economic and political model for sections of the international Left. As opposed to the failure of perestroika in the ex-Soviet Union, economically at least ‘market socialism’ in China seems to be a success. For others, Deng’s ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’ is advancing rapidly towards capitalism. What is the truth of these opposite claims?

The short answer is that while China remains a non-capitalist country, important parts of the economy have been ‘marketised’, and domestic and foreign capitalist penetration is growing. While every section of the ruling-bureaucracy remains committed to a hard-authoritarian style of rule, important political battles over the future course of the country are taking place behind closed doors, although part of the scope of these battles was revealed at the recent 14th Communist Party Congress.

But most important Deng Xiaoping himself is committed to a thorough marketisation, which taken to its logical conclusion would result in the restoration of capitalism. His view was set out at the CCP conference in the keynote speech by party secretary Jiang Zemin. And Deng is doing everything possible to ensure that the political succession is in the hands of those loyal to him.

Agriculture

In the 1980s China had the fastest growing economy of any major nation, averaging 7.4 per cent growth each year, and a GDP growth of 12 per cent in 1992. This was based above all on the reform of agricultural production, part of the ‘Four Modernisations’ charted when Deng replaced Hua Guofeng as party chairman in 1978. Under these reforms the huge peasant communes established by Mao Zedong in the 1950s and 1960s were abolished, and agricultural production put in the hands of individual peasant producers or small co-operatives. This did not amount to a full privatisation, since up to two thirds of production had to be sold to the state at negotiated prices.

Nonetheless peasants were allowed access for part of their product to deregulated markets in the cities. Very quickly, market-based farming units were expanded, and a class of richer peasant farmers or kulaks emerged, employing agricultural labourers. With class differentiation came a big growth of income inequality, and the beginnings of the accumulation of private capital.

The abolition of the peasant commune, and the consequent explosion of agricultural production, exploded many popular myths about the superiority of the collective organisation of the peasant economy. Penducled collectivisation, and the madcap schemes imposed on the commune during the late 1950s ‘Great Leap Forward’ was intensely unpopular, low living standards and poor social and welfare services combined to disrupt incentives to the peasants to develop production.

But the growth in agriculture did not at all solve the basic economic questions facing China. The country’s rulers aimed at rapid economic growth, and a qualitative industrialisation process which would put the country on the road to becoming an advanced industrial nation.

Backwardness

What stood in the way of this was the backwardness of industry, and all the inefficiencies, waste and corruption associated with bureaucratic rule. In 1988 official statistics stated that 30 per cent of enterprises were running at a loss. In addition, Mao’s cultural revolution dislocated economic development from roughly the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s; China lost a decade to anarchy and stagnation. Stark statistics about Chinese economic growth cover up the realities of the poor quality of production and do not translate directly into rising living standards, especially in the towns and cities.

In addition, rationalisation of production in the countryside led to a drift of ‘surplus’ labourers to the towns, boosting unemployment rates. China’s population growth, small in percentage compared with India, but huge in real terms, constantly uses up increased production.

The basic answer to this from the Deng camp, vigorously promoted by the now-disgraced party secretary Zhao Ziyang, was to promote marketisation of industry. This has combined encouraging investment from foreign private capital especially in coastal ‘special economic zones’, a drive to ‘rationalise’ production at the expense of the workers, and allowing the establishment of private businesses.

The most important aspect of this is the drive to ‘smash the iron rice bowl’. Since the 1949, the industrial working class (400 million people now live in big cities and towns) has won important social gains, especially in employment. Workers were used to jobs for life, and a labour regime which, while often harsh by Western standards, was at least stable. This went hand-in-hand with education and health care and other welfare services, at least for most industrial workers and their families.

Redundant

The new drive to smash up this system involves attempts to make millions of workers redundant, and allowing enterprises to go bankrupt. Spontaneous worker resistance led to a slowing of this process, but not to its reversal.

The new drive to smash up this system involves attempts to make millions of workers redundant, and allowing enterprises to go bankrupt. Spontaneous worker resistance led to a slowing of this process, but not to its reversal.

For the moment however the overwhelming majority of industrial production remains in the hands of the state. The private sector is above all in the commercial and distribution sector, with at least 400,000 private businesses, but not in basic industry. But the eventual aim seems to be to develop joint-stock companies in a gradual privatisation process. Stock markets have been established in Shanghai and Shenzhen, with about $11 billion worth of shares bought so far.

Class differences are now emerging in the big cities as well as the countryside. Private commercial activities have created a new affluent layer, with increasing access to all the goodies of Western capitalist consumerism. Corruption among party officials is endemic, allowing many to become wealthy, and some enormously rich. Business millionaires are being created for the first time.

This contrasts with the growing army of unemployed, now tens of millions strong, and the pressure on living standards of many industrial workers. The Tiananmen events in 1989 showed that the central party leadership would not tolerate any challenge to the political monopoly of the Communist Party, an organisation of 50 million people. The backbone of the bureaucracy’s rule in the loyalty of the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA), an institution which has been consistently privileged in access to resources for ever more modern weapons.

Deng’s protege Zhao Ziyang fell in 1989, not only because the bureaucracy needed a scapegoat, but because Zhao appeared to hint publicly at concessions to the student movement, a line he almost certainly pushed in the leading echelons of the party.

But far from allowing political liberalisation to go hand-in-hand with marketisation, the party leadership is set on a resolutely authoritarian model, stifling its system of political surveillance and repression, right down to street and community level.

Divisions

If ‘authoritarian marketisation’ is the unanimous course of the party leadership, there are certainly differences on where this marketisation is headed. The real lines of political division are unknowable, because of the secrecy of the bureaucracy’s internal debates.
Socialist Outlook

Failures behind Indian clashes

The OUTBREAK of communalist violence in India after the destruction of the mosque at Ayodhya cast a spotlight on the growth of the Hindu fundamentalist Bharatiya Janata Party. This extreme reaction- ary organisation, its building of a mass base and the failure of two traditions—the bourgeois nationalism of the Congress Party, and that of the two major communist parties, the CPI and the CPI(M).

Mass support for the BJP is just one aspect of communalist politics dividing the country; the other key struggle is the prolonged Sikh insurgency in the Punjab.

The social basis of communalism is the mass poverty of the country. This in turn is a reflection of the failure of the whole tradition of bourgeois nationalism. It is historically represented by the Congress party and the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, to make any socialist changes on the large scale needed to move India towards becoming an industrialised country.

Under successive Congress governments, for three decades attempts were made to bolster Indian industry by a 'capitalist' approach. A big state economic sector, combined with aid from the Soviet Union, succeeded in developing some heavy industry in the region. Nothing of this scale needed to move India towards becoming an industrialised country.

The absence of the buyback and reform left the hundreds of thousands of Indian villagers in dire poverty, worsened by the massive population growth. Without any social security structure, the pressure on peasants to have large families to provide for the future is relentless.

Bureaucracy crushed opposition in Tinianmen Square

But a number of indications emerged at the October 14th Congress, and their background is in the Tiananmen events of 1989. Faced with the student revolt, and the wavering of the Zhao Ziyang faction, Deng was forced to appeal to veteran party 'nationals', especially in the leadership of the PLA, to win support for his political role. Indeed, for nearly two weeks in May 1989, the CCP leadership seemed paralysed in face of the student upsurge—an indication of the political struggle over whether to crush the student movement.

Aghast

These events brought especially Long March veteran Yang Shangkun, now state president, and his brother, general Yang Baibing, to the fore. Deng was also forced to enlist support from the ancient veterans of the Central Advisory Commission to his side.

Many of these members of this over 80% Stalinist club are probably aghast at the thought of drifting towards capitalism, and demand the party's Advisory role, the Commission had been used as a platform by 87-year-old Chen Yun—an advocate of central economic planning and often regarded as Deng's most powerful rival.

At the 14th Congress Deng had the Central Advisory Commission abolished, leaving the party's elders politically advised and powerless. At the same time, Yang Shangkun was forced out of the political arena and his brother lost his position of general secretary of the Central Military Council and director of the PLA. In these two moves, potential sources of conservative opposition to Deng were thwarted.

Purge

Although the PLA was rewarded by the promotion of CMC vice-chair Liu Huaqiu to the politbureau, officer loyal to the Yang brothers (or suspected of) was being demoted throughout the PLA in the biggest military purge for a decade.

However, despite the congress rhetoric being staunch Dengist, the overall outcome of changing 50 per cent of the members of the central Commit- tee is not so clear. Vice-chairman Tian Jufan, who attacked the concept of spe- cial economic zones in a widely dis- tributed document, retained his place on the politbureau, as did other leading 'nationals'.

Now many of these differences within the bureaucracy could indeed be issues of tempo, and not of fundamental direction. But as in every post-capitalist state, marketisation and the drift towards capitalism poses enormous questions for the bureaucracy. While some sections see a future for themselves and their influence and wealth within capitalism, others see it as a direct threat. As a united front, the bureaucracy cannot survive capitalist restoration.

The influx of foreign capital, often from expatriate Chinese, is indeed a powerful factor for capitalist restoration. In 1990 alone foreign investment was $6 billion. The special economic zones, which in effect exchange cheap labour for foreign capital, inevitably create a layer of comprador elements inside and outside the bureaucracy. These people are emerging bourgeoisie based on their links with foreign capital, and their role as middlemen, fixers, and organisers of foreign production.

This is a big factor in the growing regional conflicts inside the bureaucracy. Deng has been fighting hard, especially through his well-publicised national tour, to win the allegiance of party barons in the coastal areas where the special economic zones are located. The new politbureau includes representatives from Guangdong, Tianjin and Shanghai, reflecting the increased power of the regions.

Restoration

These are among the factors which make Deng's political project of 'authoritarian marketisation' utopian and will certainly lead to massive political explosions in the coming years. Different sections of the bureaucracy will fight among themselves.

Workers will resist the smashing of the iron rice bowl, as class differences widen in the cities and the countryside. And sections of the new middle class, not directly linked to the bureaucracy will demand the right to influence political events through democratisation, just as they have against the succession of de facto military governments in Thailand. This is an explosive mixture.

While China will not face the emergence of the national question on the same scale as the ex-Soviet Union, continued resistance to Han Chinese national repression in Tibet and the huge province of Xinjiang (which borders Kazakhstan) will be an additional destabilising factor.

But above all there is in China the process of formation of an indigenous bourgeoisie, whose interests of course lie in the restoration of capitalism per se, and not in the maintenance of a capitalist sector within a statist economy.

Red flags

During the 1989 Tiananmen protests the students marched under the red flag and sang the 'Internationale'. For the most part, the statements of the students themselves rejected any attempt to link the demand for democracy to restoring capitalism.

It is hard to make judgements about the consciousness of opponents of the regime and young people today. However numerous disillusion and recent exiles, including socialists, speak of wholesale rejection of the party by the young, and near-universal cynicism about 'socialism', identified with the regime. It is not obvious that the next wave of student protestors will march under the red flag.

If these accounts of the attitude of young people are true, it is of course the direct result of the Tiananmen massacre and the spectacle of a self-proclaimed 'Communist' party which criminalises the market, is minded in corruption and represses any dissent. A democratic socialist alternative in China faces a long march before it becomes any kind of significant force.

Deng's political project of 'authoritarian marketisation' is utopian and will certainly lead to massive political explosions in the coming years. Different sections of the bureaucracy will fight among themselves.
Polish left defends abortion rights

Gill McGrath reports from Bialystok

TODAY in Poland, legally there is a right to abortion, or more or less on demand.

But under the present right-wing/liberal government coalition this right has been increasingly limited by cuts in the national health service as well as a new Medical Code of Ethics, hastily and unconstitutionally drawn up in defiance of the law by a minority group of doctors.

The Code forbids a doctor to perform an abortion except where the woman's life is in danger. Although it has been opposed by many members of the profession, it has been used to intimidate doctors into refraining from abortions.

The most powerful opposition to abortion rights however comes from the Catholic Church. Gaming that 'life begins at conception, it calls abortion the 'sin of murder'. This is also the position of the most powerful party in the Polish parliament, the National Christian Union (GCS), as well as some other parties.

The result of the on-the-ground activities of the anti-abortionists has been to push through to its present voting stage a Bill which would criminalise all abortions unless the woman's life was in danger.

The penalty for performing the abortion, either by the woman herself or a doctor, would be up to two years in prison. Attempted abortions resulting in the death of the foetus and the woman herself would be punishable by up to 15 years imprisonment.

Ban on coil

Pre-natal tests will be banned, together with forms of contraception which will mean abortion, such as the coil (IUC) and some forms of contraceptive pills. This draconian law will be voted on either at the end of this year or the beginning of 1993.

The Polish Parliament is facing a situation not seen before. Do the majority of Polish people want abortion outlawed? Not according to all the opinion polls, the latest of which shows a 70 per cent against criminalisation, twenty-one per cent for any form of restriction on abortion.

The fact that the Bill is opposed by the vast majority is precisely why the Catholic Church and right wing are fiercely and loudly opposed to a referendum. Both prime minister Hanna Suchocka and president Lech Walesa are opposing abortion and a referendum.

One reason for their opposition to a referendum is the danger that it would split the hard line government coalition between the Catholic fundamentalists of the National Christian Union, and liberals within the Democratic Union (which includes the Solidarity intelligentsia).

Abortion is not the only area where democracy is under threat. Economic guru Bacewicz, architect of the privatisation and austerity drive, recently stated that authoritarian rule was the best way to impose his policies.

The right to strike is under threat. Riot police were used earlier this year to disperse farmers from the militant peasant union Self Defence. The big wave of strikes this summer was denounced by the government as 'illegal', and calls were made for wide-reaching anti-strike laws.

Together with the campaign against abortion and other democratic rights, there is also aLabour campaign to demand that TV and radio respect Christian values and not offend religious values.

The Committee for a Referendum on abortion rights was set up earlier this year, the initiative of newly formed social democratic party, the Union of Labour. The committee, which is backed by most of the left, and by a section of the Liberal and peasant parties, aims to gain the half-million signatures necessary to force a referendum.

Campaign co-ordinating committees have sprung up in many regions including Lodz, Kielce, Gdansk, Poznan, Bialystok and elsewhere.

What future for LPS?

By Chris Brooks

The smallest yet Annual General Meeting of Labour Party Socialists met in Sheffield on 5 December.

Founded as the Labour Party wing of the Socialist Movement, LPS successfully drew together a section of the Labour Left for united action around party conferences.

But the launch this summer of a Network for supporters of the Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs has posed questions for the future of LPS. Its gatherings are now mainly composed of supporters of Socialist Outlook, Labour Briefing and Socialist Organiser.

The Network however drew over 500 to its first conference, posing the question of why LPS should continue to exist.

Some of the major supporters at the LPS AGM argued for the LPS to prioritise building the Network, on the grounds that its groups develop by it will be possible for the 'old LPS' to wither away.

The Network focus debates on Europe and the pills crisis which were carried by the numerical majority of Socialist organiser supporters in the AGM.

A motion calling for a United Socialist Europe was defeated, and one stating that the AGM was opposed to a united capitalist Europe was passed.

A resolution calling for a one-day general strike to support the miners to prepare a general strike to check out the Tories was also defeated.

Victory against hospital cuts

Two, three, many UCHs?

By Harry Sloan

The first hospital 'work-in' of the 1990s – to save threatened beds at London's University College Hospital – has produced an important victory.

The action – given official support by both COHSE and (eventually) NUPE – was a direct challenge to management plans to close surgical beds as part of their draconian package of spending cuts.

So damaging were the cuts that consultants and other medics joined forces with nurses, support staff, patients and relatives in a powerful alliance against management.

Staff belied in favour of strike action, but management's emergency cover, and focused their efforts on keeping the theatres open and treating patients.

After five days, management conceded to union pressure and withdrew their closure plans.

This victory for militant action should certainly encourage hospital staff everywhere to fight back against a rising tide of cuts, closures and redundancies.

But the Socialist Workers Party is doing health workers no favours by trumpeting the UCH fight as the only way to win.

The occupation arose out of an extraordinary combination of factors – the harshness of the cuts; the division between management and patients; the immediacy of the closure threat; the recent militant activity of staff in UCH and the nearby Middlesex Hospital; and the official support from the main health unions (especially COHSE), which immediately made the action official and has encouraged its branches to fight for jobs and services).

Unusually, even NUPE gave official backing.

However, desirable occupations might be, SWP members in leading positions in other hospitals know full well that without this kind of combination of circumstances it is unlikely that an occupation can be achieved: even strikes can be hard to get.

Health workers, like other trade unionists, can be frightened of the consequences of going on strike, especially when over 20,000 jobs are already under threat in London's hospitals.

This is why the SWP are so wrong to sound at those who carry out broader campaign work inside and outside the hospitals, designed to raise militancy and resistance among health workers and demonstrate the huge potential support they would win if they took action.

Indeed the SWP draw precisely the wrong lessons from UCH, falsely claiming that the action was carried out against the will of union bureaucrats, and then insisting that only such action, and only at rank and file level, can win.

This leads them effectively in the ultra-left line of a general strike from below – while SWP activists fail to use this kind of combination to raise demands for concerted action within the health unions.

Far from attempting to head off rank and file militancy, COHSE is now embarking upon a campaign to stoke up anger among health workers against the Tory 1.5 per cent pay limit.

The combination of pay and cuts has been key to previous battles in the NHS, notably the 1988 strike wave.

Leaflets and stickers calling on nurses and support staff to 'bust the pay freeze' are being distributed by COHSE in London, urging branches to submit pay claims above the limit in support for action.

NALGO, too, has voted to challenge the 1.5 per cent limit in the NHS, and to ballot for action if necessary.

The slogan of 'two, three, many UCHs' may seem over-ambitious, but consistent campaign work inside the hospitals and health unions could yet make it a reality.
Right diagnosis, but the wrong treatment

The Left and Europe

By The Tribune group of Labour MPs

Reviewed by Dave Osler

The Left and Europe, a new pamphlet from the Tribune group of Labour MPs, is a serious contribution to the socialist debate on Maastricht. It rightly comes down hard against ratification, recognising that "The central driving force behind Maastricht is the competitive single market. Price, currency and interest rates would tend to dominate, together with tight restrictions on public borrowing and debt, almost regardless of the consequences for employment, growth and redistribution." Furthermore, it argues that the treaty's "over-aim of a fully united capitalist Europe, may result in a renegotiation of the basis on which it should operate." This position is echoed by the newspaper Socialist Organiser, which opposes Maastricht but argues: "We are against a united Europe being capitalist, but not against a capitalist Europe being united." Chimeras

But the concrete reality is that the 'socialist' Europe will mean a united capitalist Europe, on terms socially unacceptable, to all but the most extreme and isolationist Socialists, including the Social Chapter, which is perhaps only a good deal as the European bourgeoisie will ever offer. Left responses must start from a right opposition to the EC project and promote the need for a Europe based on full employment, equality for women, guaranteed welfare rights and controlling the ecological crisis. This could only mean a socialist interest rates recently hit 24 per cent, conclusively demonstrates.

Yet it is readily apparent the authors see no alternative to following the logic of capital accumulation: "If the UK were to opt out of monetary union at a time when the other eleven members of the EC seem determined to proceed with it, this would make the UK significantly less attractive to foreign investors, with damaging effects on our already weak economy.

Monetary union, would eliminate currency exchange costs; exchange rate uncertainty and currency speculation against an incoming Labour government. Nevertheless, consequent restrictions on national macroeconomic policy could see rocketing unemployment, it warned. Where the right puts forward free markets, the left must counter with the need for social cohesion through Euro Keynesianism. It is argued"

"If we support monetary union the inevitable logic is to argue for a much larger centralised European budget and/or other automatic redistributive mechanisms, as well as highly interventionist regional and industrial policies. Without these monetary union could be a reactionary step."

Capping

Banning budget deficits above three per cent of gross domestic product, or national governmental debt above 60 per cent of GDP, would create "state-capping" by 1990. This would inevitably push a large part of the welfare state that would defacto be cut. Under current proposals, the future EC budget would be under 2 per cent of total community expenditure. The authors call for at least a 10 per cent increase.

European socialists, parties, it is argued, should agree a programme which backs "keynesian policies for redistribution and incorporates specific measures to counter regional imbalances, including a larger EC budget and the redistribution of wasteful farming subsidies to industrial and infrastructure investment."

The argument grossly overstates the radicalism of European social democracy. Labour is a long way from such policies at home, never mind within the EC. Spain's PSE is effectively Thatcherite, while the French socialists dare not jeopardise the agricultural vote. Ultimately, The Left and Europe is an unconvincing critique of the euro project. But it is not enough to speak out against the symptoms: the only socialist starting point can be treating the disease itself.

The Left and Europe is available from Peter Hain, House of Commons, London SW1, price £2.

Kinnock: by the right, quick march

Out of the Jaws of Victory: Inside Kinnock's Labour Party

Published by Verso

By Richard Helfferich and Mike Marqusee

Reviewed by Pete Firmin

Written by two supporters of Labour Briefing, this book does not hide its partisanship. It shows how Neil Kinnock became the leader of the Labour Party and when Labour was in power. The book then goes on to portray the failure of the Callaghan government.

Whether Kinnock was attacking Labour's policy on the anti-union laws or unilaterality, ensuring support for the Gulf War, curbing democracy in the party or purging it of 'unreliables', a common method emerges. Rather than launch an immediate assault, he would bide his time, line up the votes, and get the odd letter supporting his policy before moving in for the kill. In the soft left and their recurring "resignations", their desire to cling on to front bench posts and their refusal to challenge Kinnock on policies they supposedly held dear came in for close scrutiny and condemnation.

Kinnock's use of party employees as personal staff shows how the decision-making process on Labour's elected bodies was effectively circumvented. The general election defeats of 1983 (leading to Kinnock's own election as leader) 1987 and 1992 are analysed; the 1992 defeat, rather than representing the crowning glory of Kinnock's 'achievements', was the consequence of years spent ditching votes, or not being sufficiently active to defeat Labour from the Tories.

Borrow or buy this book. Whether or not you were there during the Kinnock years, it gives a well-researched insight into what was happening in the higher echelons of the movement.

The problem is what it does say and where its emphasis lies. Because of its deliberate concentration on the Labour right rather than the Labour left, the analysis becomes somewhat one-sided.

New realism cannot be properly explained without much fuller reference to the struggles against Tory policies of the eighties and how they were defeated, and how this strengthened the hand of both the Tories and the right of the labour movement.

Otherwise one could draw the conclusion that if only the left were as good at manoeuvring as Kinnock, everything would have been different.
US troops bring Somalia no hope of peace

'OPERATION Restore Hope' – the bitterly ironic cover name for last week's US-led multinational military takeover of famine-ravished Somalia – owes more to hardline imperialism than humanitarian intervention.

No one on the left should be fooled by US president George Bush's mocking words that the $6,000 troops set to occupy the country by Christmas are “doing God's work”. The roadblock that a mere handful of Somali government soldiers 

The official justification for the invasion is that up to 80 per cent of aid is being boosted by Somali warlords and the armed forces are needed to ensure that the relief gets through to the dying. But aid workers on the spot argue this is simply untrue, and that real losses, at under 10 per cent, are easily sustainable.

The United States is cynically acting to secure its military position in a country strategically located near the Gulf states, the Indian Ocean and Egypt, now on the brink of Islamic revolution.

If it does not opt for permanent occupation, its long-term goal will be to re-establish the sort of puppet government it enjoyed under the brutal regime of Siad Barre, which changed alignments from the USSR to the US almost overnight in 1977.

Overthrown in 1990, Barre still nurses hopes of a comeback, although there are a number of other leaders who would be happy to act as US stooges.

There are no signs that the invasion has yet speeded up supplies of aid to the interior, where there are at least 300 deaths a day, and two million human beings desperately need food, medicine, seeds and tools.

Yet the shortages have not been caused by natural disasters. Somalia has escaped the worst of Africa's drought. A year ago the country grew enough food to meet everybody's needs, and even today food is being exported to Kenya and Mozambique.

Given the almost complete absence of a working class, let alone an organised labour movement, in

Regal power failure

By Mick Woods
1992 was to have been the 40th anniversary of the 'second Elthampton age, already an epoch of peace and plenty under a popular monarchy. Instead the institution of the monarchy itself is in the deepest crisis in living memory, as the capitalist economy they live in goes into slope.

White rule wherever there is a colony is impossible. Now there is the only person to have some of a 'wise hertiage the speed with which the press and public have turned on them could almost make you feel sorry for them. Almost.

It is therefore surprising that so few people in the labour movement have given a lot of thought or priority to this question, and the impact it could have on the fabric of British society. It is not a peripheral question.

The queen is head of state, parliament is answerable to her, not the people. The monarch has enormous power, especially in time of crisis. The use of regal power to throw out Gough Whiteman's Australian government in 1975 shows the residual strength of the monarchy. The monarch is also head of the established church, a revolting enough concept at the best of times, especially ironic when her daughter is forced to stand across the border to enjoy the more liberal and humane norms the Church of Scotland endorses towards divorce. The Church of England should be disestablished and its state funding be abolished.

When I spoke to Socialist Outlook's editor about the coming constitutional crisis, he indicated that the whole issue bored me senseless, and he failed to see its relevance. This is dangerously far from the attitude of Lawin and Trotter, who feel the whole lot shot – and thrown down a well for good measure.

Irrespective of whether they quote the chief set, or pay their council tax, the monarchy is a reactionary feudal institution. Its survival reflects the weakness of a bourgeoisie of the bourgeoisie at the time of the 1978 revolution. It is clear that they have outlived their time.

There are other who write out the whole lot shot – and thrown down a well for good measure.

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