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FREE NO. 32

COUNTER INFORMATION

October/ November/December 1991

THE PARTY'S OVER...

... But the fight goes on

The overthrow of Gorbachev by a KGB-backed junta in August was an event which met with fierce resistance. With the KGB chief and his eight-strong Emergency Committee still in power, Moscow's streets played host to 200,000 demonstrators chanting 'The fascist junta shall not pass', and tens upon tens of thousands of people joined similar demonstrations across Russia and the rest of Soviet Europe. Coalminers struck in Vorkuta and the Kuznetsk Basin, factory workers walked out in Leningrad, and the leaders of the coup might well have had to deal with a countrywide strike using troops which were becoming increasingly stropky. Talk of 'civil war' was widespread.

THE COUP DEFEATED

Once 'demagogue' and ex-Politburo member Yeltsin had had his 15 minutes of bravery and displays of resistance ensured Gorbachev's return to the Kremlin, successive days brought purges of the KGB and army and the outright suspension of the hated 'Communist' Party. Workers returned to work, and it seemed that nearly everyone was happy, from Orthodox priests to the leaderships of various political parties, from Yeltsin to Kinnock and Major.

Meanwhile, as the political 'federalisation' and even break-up of the country becomes a reality, the economic hardship which has grown steadily worse since 1985 is continuing to bite.

WHAT PERESTROIKA?

For five years 'economic reform' has been at the top of the rulers' agenda, priority number one for politicians, economists and businessmen alike. However, the rudimentary changes and sundry economic experiments of the early Gorbachev years achieved little, the 1988 Law on Co-operatives merely gave the small business sector over to the mafia, and even the various plans for 'full marketisation' put forward in 1990-91 have yet to be seriously implemented.

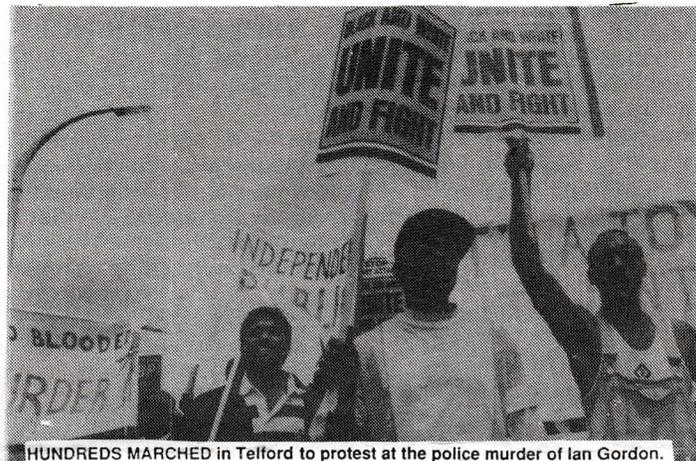
Above all, the rulers need a successful labour policy. Of increased 'exploitation'. Only once they have convinced Western and Far Eastern investors that they can keep order internally will they be able to receive the financial and technical help they need. In practice, though, this is far easier said than done. Beginning with the successful coalminers' strike two years ago, mass strikes, especially in the energy sector, have made the rulers think twice about restructuring industry in the way they need to. Numerous pieces of employment legislation have already bitten the dust, such as projects to reorganise and increase differentials, introduce 'work brigades' and encourage participation. Perhaps most significantly of all, the rulers have clearly been dragging their feet on the matter of unemployment, even though their economic advisers have long been advocating its introduction on a mass scale.

In the middle of another pit strike this April, Gorbachev and Yeltsin started to get their fingers out, signing a 'peace pact' between themselves and backing Prime Minister Pavlov's 'anti-crisis measures' which included the possible use of troops to break strikes. Within a month Gorbachev was talking to the leaders of the 'Group of Seven' leading industrial nations about integrating the then USSR into the world economy.

FEAR OF THE WORKERS

By mounting a coup, old guard bosses in the KGB and the Party probably hoped to show foreign investors what they wanted to see, namely that a Moscow government could keep order. But they definitely wanted to give workers a foretaste of what they could expect if they resisted too much in the future. The fear was that the coming austerity measures might provoke a workers' revolt that would wipe away the most conservative of the bureaucrats once and for all, particularly at 'provincial' level.

Yeltsin's victory and the break-up of the old Union mean that from now on the factions in charge will play a much slyer game than those played under Stalin, Brezhnev or even Gorbachev so far. If widespread workers' resistance to coming attacks is a certainty, we can only hope that workers will develop the autonomy and confidence to defeat the slimy but vicious new types of manager and their astute political counterparts. The tremendous courage of those who defied the junta and faced down the tanks in Moscow has already set a great example for the struggles to come.



HUNDREDS MARCHED in Telford to protest at the police murder of Ian Gordon.

REVENGE THROUGH RIOTS

"If the Police were setting out to recreate the riots of 1981, they are going the right way about it", said a Telford resident on August 14th. A month later this prophecy seemed even nearer the mark.

In Telford, Shropshire, Ian Gordon had been shot dead after being hunted for 4 hours. Bystanders told the police that the airpistol was unloaded. Riots & protests followed uniting blacks, Asians & whites against the Police killing Gordon, whose psychiatric history was known to them. "They wanted to kill a nigger to teach us a lesson" - after years of harassment and used the disturbances to try out riot gear including helicopters with searchlights.

More riots broke out from 30th August in the Ely estate of Cardiff. 500 black & white youths mobilised to fight police with stones & petrol bombs, determined to drive out a hated shopkeeper who used extreme

security measures in his shop.. Within a day, riot police were battling with the "Blackbird Leys Masses" & other locals in a south Oxford housing estate known for stunt driving expensive stolen cars. Locals previously unsympathetic to the well-organised gang, criticised the heavy handed police action.

Less publicised mini-riots also took place in Southmead, Bristol in July & September & in Chapeltown, Leeds, against a videotaping police surveillance operation. In Hands-worth, Birmingham on 2nd September, 300 youths looted shops after a localised power-cut. "Everyone was just helping themselves" to videocameras, said a powerless shopkeeper.

The most violent action took place in Tyneside. The death of 2 'ramraiders' in a 125 mph police car chase led to riots in the Meadowell Estate in North Shields. Fed up with the "Fatty
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A WORLD TO WIN



SON OF ET GO HOME

A new Government slave labour scheme starts in October. Employment Action pays benefit plus £10 & doesn't even pretend to offer training.

Even the TUC are calling for a boycott. Let's make sure opposition from workers and claimants causes EA to be an even bigger flop than the Employment Training (ET) schemes.

GENERAL STRIKE

Grassroots workers organisations in Italy are preparing for a general strike this autumn. This self-organised action is to oppose privatisation of services and the cuts in pensions, healthcare, and wages backed by the Government, industry and the official trade unions. Info: CIB Unicobas, via Conegliano 13, 00182 Roma, Italy.

HOT CHILE

Strikes have been breaking out throughout the Chilean mining industry, the world's largest copper producer. Following a strike at Chuquicamata in July, El Teniente and El Indio miners started an indefinite strike on August 1st to secure real increases in wages in a fast-expanding industry. Workers' direct action involved marching on the Presidential Palace to make demands and picketing the Chilean Copper Corporation's offices in Santiago.

COLOMBIA

Tens of thousands of peasants blocked the main motorway in South Colombia on 25 August protesting against rural poverty.

CHINA

A report in March by the state controlled All China Federation of Trade Unions reveals nationwide unrest among Chinese workers. Despite the repression following the Tiananmen Square massacre in June 1989 at least 80,000 workers - in all but 4 of China's 30 provinces, regions and principal cities - held strikes and other protests between then and December '90. The protests are mainly against the failure of state and semi private firms "to guarantee basic living conditions."

EIRE

On 20 March the office of the national co-ordinator in charge of implementing government policy on AIDS was occupied by ACT UP (Aids coalition to Unleash Power) in protest at lack of government action on Aids. Info: Workers Solidarity

ATTICA WE REMEMBER

As prisoners go to trial for their part in the British Prison Revolt of 1990, we remember the 20th anniversary of the Attica Uprising, when prisoners, after the murder of George Jackson, took and held D Yard for four days. 39 were murdered by the National Guard. Many who took part are still serving punitive sentences.



JOHN PEROTTI AN APPEAL FOR HELP

In 1988 John Perotti was framed on a stabbing charge of another prisoner. John, a jailhouse lawyer and IWW union organiser, was originally jailed 17 years ago for the non-violent theft of \$7 and has continually had more time added to his sentence because of his prison activism - organising a prisoners union and tying the prisonrats up in lawsuits, some of them successful. Recently John played a major role in having the use of high-pressure hoses on prisoners made unlawful.

At the time of the stabbing John was locked in isolation, where he has spent most of his sentence. Despite this he was charged with the stabbing and railroaded through court, tried in leg-irons and handcuffs, surrounded by armed guards. He was sentenced to another 12 to 15 years, despite the fact that another prisoner confessed in open court.

John lost his first, free, appeal. He desperately needs funds to fight against this vicious victimisation. Please help.

CHEQUES/POs MADE PAYABLE TO COUNTER INFORMATION [JPDF], WRITE; JOHN PEROTTI, MANCI A167712, POB 1368, MANSFIELD, OHIO 44901, USA

RUN MARTIN, RUN

Martin Foran has escaped. Martin, framed twice by the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad, has suffered severe health problems since hungerstriking against his first wrongful imprisonment in 1978. Jailed again in 1984 his health deteriorated. Medical help was denied until Martin took a screw hostage. Eventually a colostomy was performed but deliberately botched. Shortly after, he was beaten up by 4 screws. Later he developed heart trouble and cancer of the eye. He was sentenced to another 6 years for the hostage taking.

On June 4, Martin was allowed a



two-day 'humanitarian' parole to visit a hospital. He kept on walking. Good luck Martin.

UPDATES; LONDON ABC, BM HURRICANE, LONDON WC1 3XX.

BEATEN BY THE LAW

Sara Thornton was sentenced to Life for killing her brutal abusive husband. Joseph McGrail was given 2 years suspended for killing his alcoholic wife. Sara started a hungerstrike to protest the disparity.

In Britain 40% of women who kill their partners are sentenced to Life, compared to 25% of men who do the same. Many men, like the Royal Marine who murdered his wife and baby daughter with a shotgun, walk free.

Sara, like other women who kill their abusers, commit a cardinal crime of threatening the status quo by breaking a stereotype; women are expected to passively accept violence within relationships. There are thousands of women like Sara in prison. The courts give the green light to the violent oppression of women.

FOR INFO CONTACT; WOMEN AGAINST RAPE, KINGS CROSS WOMENS CENTRE, LONDON.

FREE THE THREE

After the police-provoked uprising on the Broadwater Farm housing estate in London, the police had to find someone to take the rap for the killing of a colleague. Eventually they got three; Winston Silcott, Engin Raghup and Mark Braithwaite. All were sentenced to Life- Silcott on the basis of a statement which he never made. Braithwaite, a known claustrophobic, was held in a tiny cell until he assented to the police

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Squad' (CID) a furious riot broke out with the Meadowell a 'no go' area for 5 hours.. What was portrayed as senseless destruction was much more selective according to the views of alienated youth: a demolished youth centre had excluded them & few other facilities had escaped Council cuts. The trouble spread to Gateshead, Byker & then on 11th September in Ellswick, Benwell & Scotswood with 500 youths involved in a running battle with riot police, torching buildings: "We had them well pinned down, well fucked. It was good fun I lobbed two

allegations. Raghup is very compliant to authority figures and has a very low, borderline, IQ

This is the Tottenham 3, more victims of repressive and racist police, FREE THEM NOW JUSTICE FOR THE TOTTENHAM THREE, WOOD GREEN CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH ROAD, LONDON N22

I.D. FIX

Robert Taylor is serving 12 years for a robbery he did not commit. The only evidence against him was an ID parade which was obviously rigged. While Robert is of mixed race & 6ft tall, all the witnesses to the robbery described a white man about 5ft 7ins tall. Yet he was put on parade along with 4 black men. Witnesses were told who to pick out of the parade by a detective constable. Robert was finally framed after having been acquitted 18 times since 1980!

Letters of support: Robert Taylor 468 HMP Garth, North Wing, Ulmes walton Lane Leyland, Lance PR5 3NE.

JUDGE & JURY

Paddy Murphy was convicted by a Diplock (no jury) court in Belfast in 1990 for allegedly possessing explosives & conspiracy to cause explosions and sentenced to 5 years. A convinced *anarchist*, Paddy stood up for his beliefs and suffered state repression as a result. Letters of support: Pdraig Murphy A2837H-Block 2 C Wing HMP Magilligan, Co. Derry. For more info: Belfast ABC PO Box 148, Belfast.

bricks over their shields, right on top of them" (Willy, 19 year old Scotswood rioter).

Suspicion is rife that the Government have exploited the renewed threat of riot for pre-election purposes. The riots were gut responses from youth determined to get revenge for police persecution or defend their territory. They were not revolutionary acts or without some dubious actions. such as the stoning of firefighters. As a trendy Newcastle Labour MP put it, "many of the young people involved seem to be so outcast from society that they do not fear detection or imprisonment".



Amnesty for all non-payers!

The numbers not paying the hated poll tax are growing - and that's official.

GOVERNMENT statistics reveal that one in three in England and Wales had paid nothing towards this year's poll tax by the end of June. Councils' income is 9% down on this time last year. (Guardian 14/9)

In Scotland, the 15% of this year's tax collected by 31 July was less than half the amount they should have by this date. (Scotsman 23/8)

Anti poll tax groups throughout Britain are demanding that all poll tax debts be written off. We can make this a reality by making this a tax which is impossible to collect.

By mid September around 70 people in England and Wales had been imprisoned, for up to 3 months. Tory Tunbridge Wells Council jailed 77 year old disabled Dora Coull. Labour St. Helens sent down 72 year old Bill Jones - he has one leg and is desperately ill from angina and diabetes.

But the jailings are a futile attempt to intimidate a mass movement. Most non-payers summonsed to appear at the committal proceedings, which can order imprisonment, are just not turning up. In Leeds 90% of those summonsed have not attended. While it's important for APT groups to organise legal support at the committals, for those determined not to pay refusing to attend is usually the best tactic. If you're not in court your case can't be heard and you can't be sentenced to prison. The most the magistrates can do is issue an arrest warrant (either with or without bail) to bring you to a later committal.

And the police are none too happy about enforcing such warrants. In Warrington, the Cheshire Police are refusing to act on arrest warrants issued against non-payers who haven't showed at committal proceedings.

London Fight the Poll Tax report that up to mid September they know of no arrests in London following non-attendance at committal hearings. In Leeds non-attenders have been issued with warrants with bail. But unless they are physically handed to the person named, they have no need to turn up in court.

BOP THE BAILLIFS! SOCK THE SHERIFFS!

* Crowds, 500 and 200 strong, successfully stopped 2 pointings in Cambuslang/Rutherglen, Glasgow in late August/early September.

* Strathclyde Council announced on 17 September that no auctioneers would agree to do warrant sales for the poll tax.

* In Midlothian sheriff officers called in police twice to get into non-payers' homes in August. There were 3 arrests at Mayfield, but good local APT organisation ensured nothing was pointed.

* Lothian Social Workers have refused to co-operate with "means enquiries" into non-payers menaced with warrant sales.

* When Parkinson and Hamer Auctions of Bury attempted a sale for Madagans Baillifs angry protestors gathered outside while others made dummy bids inside. The auction manager later discovered that his house had lost a heated argument with a molotov

* Demonstrators occupied Tottenham Job centre/dole office on 17 July to oppose Haringey council's decision to deduct poll tax from non-paying claimants' Income Support. They called on the dole workers to refuse to carry out this work.

* 1 July Protestors occupied the Baillifs' offices in Leeds, Bristol, and Reigate, Surrey, while the legal robbers were besieged by pickets in Liverpool, Redditch, and Manchester.

The anti poll tax resistance is potentially striking at the heart of capitalist rule. Inequality and exploitation is ultimately only maintained by fear of the police and prison. But when enough of us stand together the authorities are afraid of us....Let's make the whole country a "no go" area for arrests and jailings of non-payers!

Councils pursuing non-payers claim to be "protecting services". But it is the poll tax system itself, whereby central government keeps down business rates and cuts grants to local government, which is designed to slash and privatise local services.

Opposition to the cuts has yet to reach the required level of widespread all out strikes and occupations. But resistance does exist. 900 Council housing and treasury workers in Liverpool were still on strike against compulsory redundancies in mid September. In Glasgow on 11 September 300 Buildings and Works workers invaded the District Council chambers, angry at the Labour Council's plans for lay-offs and privatisation.

The cuts connection shows that the poll tax cannot be regarded as a 'single issue'. The anti poll tax struggle is successful because of its mass involvement and grass-roots organisation, its reliance on direct action, its independence from political parties. These lessons need to be applied in other struggles.

Many in the anti poll tax movement see the potential for wider working class self-organisation. For example "Proposals for a Solidarity Network in Haringey", backed by Tottenham Against the Poll Tax, states: "Why should we have to start from scratch on each issue?Having experienced the APT struggle we should not be prepared to allow ourselves to be forced back into marginalisation, ideology or waiting for the next 'single issue' to arise.....A Network of people throughout the borough, committed to supporting and initiating struggles, solidarity, mutual aid and communication is essential in order to breakdown the isolation of individuals, active groups, specific struggles and neighbourhoods."



30 non-payers carried out a people's pointing at the homes of Lothian Regional Councillors Begg and Geddes on 9 June.

TEAR DOWN THE WALLS!

* 7 September: protestors besieged jails in Gateshead, Bristol, Lincoln and Canterbury to support all imprisoned for defending our demonstrations and for refusing to pay. Armley (Leeds), Pentonville (London) and Ford (Sussex) are among the several other prisons recently picketed.

* The public gallery erupted as Bristol magistrates threatened non-payers with jail in August. The 3 magistrates had to flee the court.

* Prisoners in Preston jail staged a 1 day hunger strike in solidarity with 73 year old Harry Cunliffe, sent down by Accrington Council.

* 17 July: Michael Conway was found not guilty of violent disorder at last year's Trafalgar Square demo. The Southwark crown court jury agreed that he hurled rocks at the police to protect the crowd from police baton charges.

BE THERE!

5 Oct. Scottish APT Action Conference, Grangemouth. 031 229 9552.

12 Oct. National Poll Tax Prisoners Support Conference, Birmingham. 021 565 4217.

19 Oct. National demo - Free all poll tax prisoners - write off all poll tax debts. Assemble 1pm Caledonian Park, Market Rd., London N7. March to Trafalgar Square. 071 738 7586.

26/27 Oct. National Anti Poll Tax

conference, Manchester Town Hall. 061 707 1584.

CONTACT!

Lothian Hot Line 031 557 1595
Yorkshire 3D, 2 Lunley Walk, Leeds 4. 0532 623822
Clwyd APT Fed., PO Box 462, Rhyl, Clwyd, Wales. 0978 843401.

Trafalgar Square Defendants Campaign, c/o Brixton Law Centre, 506 Brixton Rd., London SW9. 071 738 7586.

The plague of nationalism

The military conflict between Serbian controlled forces & the breakaway republic of Croatia demonstrates the bankruptcy of nationalism.

Escalating from the Chetnik (Serbian fascist) stronghold of Krajina, Serbian militias resisted incorporation into an independent Croatia. The Yugoslav Peoples Army was reorganised after the success of 50,000 Slovene Territorial Defence Forces in asserting their independence in June. Controlled by a Communist Party in the Army, & allied to the Socialist Party in Serbia, the Army intervened increasingly to back up the territorial gains in Croatia.

Despite propaganda to present themselves as innocent victims, Croatian nationalism has contributed to its own losses. Auxiliary forces such as the HOS,

& the Black Legion are fascist forces, equally bent on ethnic hatred & subjugating minorities. The association of the Government & militias with the Ustashe, Nazi backed, republic of 1941-45 fanned the serbo-croat war. With 4 areas of Bosnia-Herzegovina declaring autonomous Serbian areas, the conflict is set to involve the muslim & Croat populations in a conflict reminiscent of Lebanon.

The ineffective ceasefire attempts of the European Community raised the possibility of endorsing French proposals for military intervention. Border conflicts have intensified with thousands of refugees in Hungary & alarm over the persecution of Hungarians in Serbian occupied territory. With Kosovo still under military occupation & thousands of Albanians interned, conflict

could involve the destitute Albanian 'democracy'. The Macedonian independence vote in September threatens to involve Bulgaria & Greece if Army intervention eventually occurs.

Demonstrations of mothers in Belgrade, Zagreb & Sarajevo (Bosnia) in August posed a challenge to Military recruitment. Macedonia & Bosnia refused to co-operate with conscription and desertions escalated. Yet this hasn't halted the carnage in Croatia. With the economy in severe crisis, strikes had threatened the State Capitalist policies of Milosovic in Serbia up to March 1991. Any possible revolt against their nationalist rulers by impoverished workers is unlikely for the moment.

For info on the history of conflict: see Yugoslavery, £2 from BM Blob WC1N 3XX.

GULF FALLOUT

There have been further media revelations of US complicity in sabotaging the revolt in southern Iraq & reinforcing control by treacherous Kurdish Parties in the north. With Turkish military action against the neo-stalinist PKK guerillas across the Iraq border it is crucial to understand the wider conflict in "no war but the class war terms: -For more info. get WORKERS SCUD, 70p from Box 15, 138 Kingsland High St., London E.8 & 10 Days THAT SHOOK IRAQ SAE from BMCat, London WC1N 3XX.

BONEHEADS OUT

Muirhouse, Edinburgh. 17 September. 120 people attended an anti-racist meeting to organise solidarity with a local black woman & her family who were suffering harassment from fascist British National Party boneheads.

Parks for the People!



Gentrification at the end of a truncheon is meeting community resistance on both sides of the USA.

On 27 May, in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, New York, police deliberately provoked a night of rioting by brutally assaulting two people around Tompkins Square Park. The park, a centre for cultural and political activity and a refuge for over 150 homeless people, was also the scene of rioting in 1988 and 1990.

On 3 June, using the previous week's clashes as an excuse, over 400 riot cops invaded the park, closing it off indefinitely and evicting the homeless. The area has been under police occupation ever since and much of the park is now demolished. Its destruction is part of an ongoing campaign to force out

the politically active working class community of the Lower East Side to make room for the rich. Local residents have responded to the occupation with direct action and daily demonstrations and vigils involving thousands of people.

People's Park in Berkeley, California has served a similar role to Tompkins Square Park for over 20 years. It was created originally by the local community and has had to be physically defended from the authorities on many occasions.

Now the University of Berkeley is attempting to start the destruction of the park for good by building volleyball courts over part of it. Even before building commenced, the plans were met with an occupation of the city chambers and the prevention of ground-breaking

ceremonies by large numbers of people.

The start of building work on 31 July sparked off 4 nights of rioting. Hundreds have now been arrested or injured but protests have continued with sit-ins and direct action. On 7 September protestors pulled up the surface of the courts and tore down the surrounding fences, leading to a further 4 arrests.

Info.- The Shadow, NY

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