



# LETTERS

the so-called gap by the wonderful response to the leadership of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. The Labour Party declaration that the next Labour government will take the UK out of the European Common Market is another winner for regaining national sovereignty. Add to these two basic ideas the increase in the struggle against pollution of the environment by the activities of the grasshopper multinational monopolies, the trade unions' opposition to the destruction of our UK basic industries and then ask why does Robert Gray want the Left to worry about 'strong residues of empire and chauvinism'.

M Turner, London

## NATIONALISM

I want to say something about nationalism which has been the subject of articles in *Marxism Today*. The idea has been put forward that the working class of my country must be offered some form of national pride to fill a gap in the politics of the Left.

Firstly perhaps our country's name could be clarified. During the course of his article, Robert Gray developed a strange habit of writing about Britain and British nationalism until he was mentioning Scotland, Ireland, and Wales when he immediately referred to the UK. This made me realise that my country is not Britain but the United Kingdom. It has probably been suggested before but it would certainly help towards a clear national identity if the use of Britain and British was abolished. The workers of Wales, Scotland and England could then be known as Welsh in the UK, Scot in the UK and English in the UK. The Irish are Irish wherever they are, aren't they!

Robert Gray has a false idea of the feelings of ordinary people when he says that, about the crisis of confidence that followed Suez — 'Ordinary people felt a sense of drift, disintegration, and decline.' I can't help wondering where he gained this information. As an ordinary person remembering the period immediately following the Suez War it did not make any difference whatsoever to my feelings as a worker with a family and economic problems to solve. I do have a sense of national loss when I read or hear about cuts in the education of our children and cuts in the National Health Service. I positively bristle at the mention of American nuclear weapons to be hidden in my lovely countryside, or Japanese industrialists taking over our factories. Therefore the working people of the UK have already begun to fill

win the next general election then this trend will continue. The problem is that there has been very little education from the Left and TINA (There Is No Alternative) has become the end product on the working class analysis. In education the Communist Party is streets ahead of the Labour Party and we must work for an even greater lead to be taken here. It may be that if the summer riots of 1981 and 82 continue into the middle of the decade then we could forge a rebellion. If this is to be the case then the CP must take the lead. Finally, as a Christian, I am aware of the need for a Christian-Socialist lead. The strict morality of Socialism is a very important point to get across.

Tom Moore, Bromley

## TRAINING

I welcome John Fairley's lucid and accurate article 'The Great Training Robbery' (November issue), and agree with his account of NTI and his criticisms of the labour movement response. I was rather surprised, however, that he failed to mention that the Communist Party is doing precisely what he demands: it has published a statement on NTI, showing it to be part of anti working class government strategy, and is developing policy on training.

The power and influence of the MSC has grown massively, with virtually no democratic control or accountability, under the orders of this government. It is the failure on the part of the labour movement to recognise and analyse the role and function of MSC as an institution that is one of the root causes of the current confusion; some still give uncritical approval ('it's better than nothing') and others shut their eyes and hope it will go away, thus deserting vast numbers of young people, and freely abdicating hard won rights.

NTI as it stands is a prong of the Tebbit attack on trade union power and influence. What we need is a clear understanding of the terms on which this, or any other scheme is acceptable, and a vigorous campaign for the achievement of those terms.

Susannah Lash, Liverpool

## PROSPECTS

Stuart Hall's article (November issue) is interesting but it may be a little over pessimistic. Mr Foot is the least popular of the three main party leaders, just as Mrs Thatcher was before the 1979 general election. The underlying trend, that is what the young people are saying, is definitely leftward. If, as seems likely, the Conservatives

## POLAND

In his review of my book *Poland: A Crisis for Socialism*, Dennis Ogden implied the need for more damning criticism of Solidarity. Some of his comments seem to suggest that it was essentially a negative, destructive force actively 'destabilising' Polish society. The issue is obviously of central importance for an understanding and assessment of the decision to impose martial law.

There is no denying the strengthening of the 'radical' trend in the autumn of 1981, but that has to be set in the context of the growing awareness of the authorities' preparations for military rule. That suggested that the government was abandoning the road of compromise and agreement. It provided the political context for naive talk of a provisional government and of a general strike which was to be the union's response to armed repression.

There were persistent attempts to reach agreement. In fact, by the end of November 1981 *Trybuna Ludu* reported practically no strikes in industry following determined appeals by the Solidarity leadership to end all actions that could harm the economy. There was certainly not 'an escalating strike campaign'.

The fundamental issue in Poland's crisis was and is the deep gulf of distrust created by years of lies, incompetence and brutality from the authorities. That could only have been overcome if the PUWP had relaxed its absolute monopoly of power and allowed a democratisation of society. It could never be overcome by condemnations of 'radicals', still less by martial law.

Martin Myant, Glasgow

We welcome your letters for the February issue. They should be no longer than 200 words and arrive at the office not later than Friday, 7 January.