

Workers Power

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE WORKERS POWER GROUP

Inside: IRANIAN LEFT
LABOUR PARTY ★ A.N.L.
A.E.S. ★ IRELAND ★
ZIMBABWE ★ FORD ★

POLITICAL STATUS NOW! Get Britain out of Ireland!

Seven men in the Maze Prison, and three women in Armagh jail, are on hunger strike to the death. They are striking to win prisoner of war status from the British government whose Army has been at war with them for over 11 years.

Thatcher's government is prepared to let them die and for others to take their place. Its pretence that its IRA and INLA prisoners are ordinary criminals, is part and parcel of its war strategy. It intends to isolate those fighting to end Britain's rule in Ireland and criminalise them in the eyes of the workers in Northern Ireland, the 26 County Republic, and in Britain too.

The Tories are expecting a storm of demonstrations and protest in the Northern State. They are ready for the war to erupt on the streets of London and Birmingham again. But they hope that once they've ridden out this storm of protest, once the coffins are buried, they can settle back to administering Northern Ireland, against the wishes of the majority of Irish people, hand in hand with the murderous bigot Ian Paisley.

The Government has stated that it will discuss minor improvements in prison conditions with the droves of Archbishops and priests anxiously flocking to defuse the conflict. But it will not at present consider reintroducing prisoner of war status for the H-block men.

This was made abundantly clear by Minister of State Michael Allison when he arrogantly and contemptuously declared on 'World In Action': "We will not make any concessions to blackmail, and if they are fighting for a great issue of principle as they see it - political status - then they are banging their heads against a brick wall. But if they are in a muddled way saying 'We want better prison conditions - well that is a different story. I mean, we have done a great deal along those lines already.'" [Irish Times, 27/11/80]

These calculated and conscious war-mongers have at their service one of the most slavish presses in the world. The editors and leader writers have conspired to silence the voice of the H-block prisoners. The hired pens of Fleet Street showed how cheaply they could be bought when they declared in unison, before the hunger strike started, that the government had conceded to the H-block protest and was offering to permit the wearing of civilian clothes in Northern Ireland's jails. The Tories did nothing of the sort. They only offered a new issue of prison uniform of a 'more civilian type'.

But honest reporting is for nothing if the Fleet Street hacks can serve the Government and Army deceiving millions of workers into believing that the hunger strikers' hardships are of their own making.

The hunger strikers are receiving massive support throughout Ireland. There are now 140 local action committees throughout the 32 counties. Twenty thousand marched in Dublin



National H-block Committee, march in Dublin during November.

Picture: Derek Speirs (IFL/Report)

in support of the prisoners demands. The Irish Republic's Prime Minister Haughey's planned talks with Thatcher, and his long term policy of cooperation with the British Army, are under threat for a national Day of Action due on December 10th and a demonstration to the British Embassy on the 6th. In 1972, when a mass of demonstrations converged on the British Embassy in Dublin, it was no longer standing when they left!

Most ominous for Thatcher and Haughey, and encouraging for the hunger strikers, is the widespread support that Irish workers have given to the campaign in both the North and South. A half-day strike has already taken place in Derry. In Dublin, Tralee, Strabane and Tyrone, there have been strike in solidarity with the H-block men. In the last week of November three building sites in Dublin were closed as the workers left the jobs and marched on the British Embassy.

As the hunger strikers reach their deadly finale - unless the Tories can be forced to climb down - so the streets of Ireland will be thronged with thousands of their supporters, risking British troops and Protestant UDA assassination squads, in the six-county statelet in the North. We demand political status for the men of the H-blocks and the women of Armagh. We do this not because we have a liberal concern for the prison conditions of those men and women, we do so because the nationalist population in the North has been openly at war with Britain

for the last eleven years. There is no other explanation for the special torture chambers, special courts and special procedures through which these men and women were convicted. Their hell hole prison cells are the result of their refusal to be treated by an occupying army as anything other than prisoners of war. We refuse to allow the British Government to label these young men and women from the Catholic ghettos, who have been prepared to sacrifice their lives to defeat the British Army, as common criminals.

But we are not just calling on the British Government to treat its war captives kindly. In the war that is being waged in Ireland we are actually on the side of those fighting to defeat Britain's troops and drive them out of Ireland. Without a victory for those resistance forces the people of all-Ireland are not free to determine their own future. We work for the day when the doors of H-block and Armagh are flung wide open.

But we will fight to force the British Government to admit openly - to the workers of Ireland and Britain - that it is at war in Ireland and that the H-blocks are stuffed with its war captives. Such a climb down by the Tories - if forced out of them by mass action - can play a profoundly progressive role, not only in easing the misery of the Republican prisoners, but in demystifying the role of Britain in Ireland. It can serve to explode the claims of Labour and Tory alike that the British Army is in Ireland to keep the peace in the face of wanton common criminals.

The woolly liberals, whose signatures grace the Charter 80 campaign petitions pushed so eagerly by the SWP, have a completely different perspective. They refuse to recognise that there is a war going on and because they will not take sides in that war, they can only plead with the British authorities that they conduct their war with humanity and decency!! That is why Charter 80 does not call openly and unequivocally for Political Status for the Republican prisoners.

And should the war come again to the streets of London, should the Republicans renew their bombing campaign, then doubtless we won't see these ladies and gentlemen for dust in their scramble to loudly condemn violence - from "all sides" no doubt!

If the Republicans do re-open their bombing campaign it will be the responsibility of the Tory Government - the blood will be on their hands.

While we do not see a civilian bombing campaign as the best way to defeat the British Army at the present time we defend the right of the Republican forces to use what means they see fit to wage their war against the British government.

The deaths of the men and women on hunger strike can be stopped. Liberal petitions and late night vigils won't do that job. We must build, alongside our brothers and sisters in Ireland a campaign in the working class to force the Tories to grant political status. We need a campaign of demonstrations and rallies demanding Irish freedom such as British labour has never mounted before.

We must force the Labour and trade union leaders to break their silence and bi-partisanship with the Tories once and for all. We must win the workers organisations to active support, through strikes and the blacking of supplies to the Army, for Ireland's independence.

We print inside an appeal from the prisoners in the Long Kesh Cages to their allies, the English workers. Let us act now to prove the prisoners are right to see the working class as their natural allies in the fight against Thatcher and the British Army. Hasten the day that British workers can demonstrate with pride that they take no responsibility for and will actively oppose, Britain's army of occupation in Ireland!

AFTER LIVERPOOL...

General Strike will rout Tories' plans

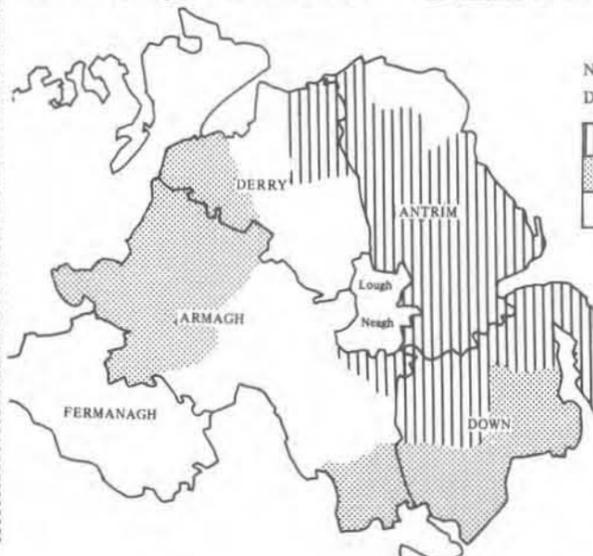
On November 29th, one of the biggest demonstrations against unemployment since the 1930s took place in Liverpool. As in the 1930s, it was protesting at unemployment levels already hundreds of thousands above the two million mark. The misery and deprivation that such statistics entail for working people, the threatening gloom that the recession causes in every working class home, are happily ignored by the Tory government. They are out to revitalise British capitalism at the expense of workers' jobs and wages. They are callous, calculating warriors for their class - the capitalist class.

The size of the march shows that workers are not prepared to sit back and accept the Tory onslaught on their livelihoods. But, after the march, the speeches and even the singing of the Red Flag, the question for militants is: What Now?

The march was organised by the Labour Party and led by a gaggle of its Parliamentary big-shots - Foot, Benn, Healey and Heffer. As befits such an occasion, these characters all put on their leftist garb. Even Healey joined in the chorus that was calling for the earliest possible removal of the Thatcher government. The boos that greeted him at first, evaporated and were replaced by cheers when he said of unemployment: "There is no way of stopping it until we get rid of Mrs Thatcher". What a brazen hypocrite! This is the man who, as Chancellor of the Exchequer under the Callaghan government, operated a policy of monetary control and public expenditure cuts, that helped keep unemployment over the one million mark. He is the man who placed the interests of the IMF before those of the working class in 1976, when he implemented the swingeing cuts that they demanded.

The "Lefts" spoke in a similar vein. From the platform Benn denounced "the evil virus...released to poison our whole social system", while Heffer called for "good radical socialist measures". But what these rousing words really meant was revealed by Foot's plea to "Prepare to destroy, at the ballot box, which is the only place they can be finally defeated, the party of unemployment". Now if unemployment can't be beaten while the Tories hold power, then what Healey, Foot and Benn are all saying is - "Hang on and don't do anything drastic until the next Labour government". It's like asking someone to keep drinking poison until the bottle's empty!

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NORTHERN IRELAND
DIVISION OF POPULATION
More than 55% Protestant
More than 55% Catholic
Roughly equal

on the Province and provoke another uprising from the Catholic minority. They permitted the strike to succeed and the Assembly to be destroyed so ending the last hopes of the SDLP for power sharing.

But once again the IRA proved incapable of taking advantage of this turn in events. Not seeing the struggle to free Ireland as part of its political programme a petit-bourgeois programme for a struggle for a workers state in Ireland the IRA have never seen the need to base their strategy for defeating the British on the organised strength of the industrial working class. . . North and South of the border. Inevitably they subordinate the tasks of building the strength of the oppressed and exploited masses to their own military campaign. After the collapse of power sharing they extended their bombing campaign to Britain a tactic which while perfectly legitimate in a war of national liberation could in fact play even less of a role in organising and defending the Catholic minority.

The British government used the excuse of the bombing campaign to introduce emergency legislation . . . The Prevention of Terrorism Act—which hit directly at Irish communities in Britain. Support from these communities, like the once active support of thousands in the North and South of Ireland diminished at this time into passive and silent protest, then to apathy and demoralisation. In the face of this demoralisation the British army, the RUC, the Irish army and Gardai were able to lock the Republican movement within a ring of steel around the island.

Despite the IRA's continuing military campaign and repeated predictions of another 'year of victory', the Labour Government of Wilson in 1976 felt strong enough to launch a new drive to isolate the IRA from the working class communities in the North. At the end of 1975 Merlyn Rees announced that from March 1976 political status would no longer be granted to those arrested. Just as Internment without trial had been abolished earlier, the British clearly intended to DEPOLITICISE the anti-imperialist war. They hoped that the new arsenal of repressive non-Jury courts, (the notorious Diplock courts) would enable them to continue with the lifting, framing and brutalising of nationalist youth drawn towards the IRA under the facade of 'Due Legal Process'.

The response of the republican movement and the Irish left to the withdrawal of the right to prisoner of war status was to wait for the action of the first prisoner convicted under the Diplock non-jury courts. The first such prisoner Kieran Nugent refused to wear prison clothes and was immediately put on a charge wearing only a blanket. During 1976 and 1977 Nugent was joined by other 'blanketmen' refusing to cooperate in any way with a prison regime that used 'special' courts and torture centres to indict them but which refused them the right to political 'Special Category' status. The men had no alternative but to embark on this protest or recognise the ruling of Merlyn Rees and agree to wear prison clothing.

That the initiative and stimulus for the campaign came from the prisoners themselves is underlined by the fact that the first organised protests outside were begun by groups of relatives (the Relatives Action Committees—RAC) who initially felt that the political movements were doing too little.

From the very start the Irish Workers Group (IWG) argued that the left and the Republican movements should have launched a campaign in support making its priority the organisation and involvement of workers and trade unionists. It was clear to the IWG that

relatives committees themselves could not lay the basis for the political fight to build an anti-imperialist united front of workers, socialists and republicans. The IWG warned of the clear dangers that building on such committees of relatives posed to the struggle for political status.

At conference after conference from 1976 onward the Irish left People's Democracy (PD) (Irish supporters of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International), the Socialist Workers Movement (in solidarity with the SWP UK), the League for a Workers Republic (LWR—Irish Section of the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI)) and the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) opposed the IWG resolutions calling for a redirection of the campaign, led by the RAC's, away from reliance upon marches, rallies and publicity stunts, to the building of worker based committees, linking up in a national United Front. The arguments against us ranged from the view that it was too early to bring workers, and the perspective of strike action, into the campaign—that it was necessary first to pull in the liberals and the churchmen—to the argument that it was too late to get workers involved! Indeed so powerful were these arguments all round that the one Trade Union based committee, formed to fight repression [the Trade Union Campaign Against Repression which brought workers out onto the streets of Derry and Belfast over the murder of a republican Trade Unionist by the RUC, was increasingly ignored and eventually dropped by the republicans and centrist left.

As the RAC campaign continued it was clear that its very strengths in appealing to individuals to come to protest rallies and marches organised every two or three months throughout the towns in the North was itself also a major weakness. As soon as the marches dispersed, or were prevented from getting to their destinations by the army or the RUC there was no power or force within the campaign to challenge the balance of forces.

Once again it was from within the prisons that some kind of impetus was given to the campaign. The non-cooperation blanket protest was inevitably met by brutality on the part of the prison officers. Prisoners were roughed up by the wardens. Often prisoners pots were emptied on their beds and floors. This is why the prisoners decided that rather than have the contents of their own chamber pots emptied over their heads and cells they had no alternative but to daub their own faeces over the walls and in that way foil the screws. This marked the beginning of the 'Dirty Protest' in March 1978. The left and the republicans failed to learn any lesson from this and the RAC campaign continued on into 1979 increasingly failing to break through to the anti-unionist masses and resorting ever more to humanitarian appeals for sympathy.

This drift to humanitarianism found full expression at the 1979 Green Briar conference which launched a 32 county wide smash H block campaign. The leading forces in the campaign explicitly rejected basing the campaign around the clear, unambiguous call for political status. Instead they built the campaign around 5 demands all of which could be interpreted and used by Churchmen and liberals as grounds to commence negotiating for improved prison conditions. The conference again rejected—in fact was not even allowed to see—an IWG resolution calling for a different direction for the campaign.

Leading speakers stated from the platform without contradiction that it was no longer political status that was being demanded. Rather than a turn to the working class it was

to be the liberal and clergy who were to be courted. The Catholic clerics, Fathers Fall and Murray, Bishop Daly and Cardinal O'Fiach were in direct link with sections of the smash H blocks national committee.

At the second conference of this body it was clear that many republicans, including the prisoners, were totally against a dilution of the issue to merely one of prison treatment—the PD group, trying as usual to stand on its head, claimed that as everyone knew it was 'political' it didn't matter what it was called! Again an IWG motion was rejected by the left and republicans all singing in tune that it was too late to mobilise workers. Even the Trade Union Sub (sic) Committee section of the campaign which was under PD and Sinn Fein control made not the slightest attempt to call for action from workers and build from there.

Eighteen months after coming into existence, the smash H blocks committee had got no nearer its goal. At its last Dublin conference it had even taken more active steps away from it, calling on the United Nations and American congressmen to do something to help!

Once again it was down to the prisoners themselves to teach the Irish left some lessons about decisive struggle and to initiate a new and massive stage of mass struggle. Explicitly claiming 'political status is our right', 7 prisoners in the H blocks started their hunger strike on Monday 27th October.

The response from nationalist workers throughout the North was swift and large. They demonstrated in Derry in their thousands on a half day strike on Wednesday, 13th November. They showed clearly that they had been waiting for a lead to use their class power against Britain's Hell Holes in Ireland. Northern anti-Unionist workers do not intend to allow either the prisoners to die, or, whatever their differences with the IRA, for the prisoners to be criminalised. They know that Mrs Thatcher, her Tory Government and the British ruling class want to destroy not only the IRA but everything they stand for in the eyes of the anti-Unionist workers. . . the right and legitimacy of the nationalist peoples to destroy the grip of British Imperialism in Ireland is why they defend the prisoners and have acted decisively to do so.

The IWG believe that the key to victory lies, as it always did, in the mobilisation of the majority of the Irish working class in a general strike. In order for this to be carried through correctly it will be necessary to build North and South, working class based Action Councils similar to the one that emerged in Derry in November. However the grip of the confused, woolly humanitarian tactic is very strong. Represented mainly by Sinn Fein, PD and Bernadette McAliskey whose muddled demagoguery, including calls to say the rosary, work against the mobilisation of the working class answer to political status, Diplock Courts and the British army in Ireland.

The issue of political status and the hunger strike throws into the melting pot all the arrangements brutally defended since 1922 by the British and Irish governments of partition. Victory by the British and Irish ruling classes will nail down the coffin lid of these arrangements on the body of the Irish proletariat for another generation or more. That is why the issue is one of burning urgency to republicans and socialists in Ireland. That is why British socialists who have far too long, with even less excuse, been ducking a fight on the issue within their own working class must act now.

From The Cages, an appeal to English workers

The unprecedented brutality and torture inflicted on the political prisoners in Armagh Gaol and in the H-Blocks has stripped the veneer of normality and respectability from the Northern Ireland statelet, once more exposing the naked face of sectarian hatred, state terror and military oppression, the face of British imperialism and its shadow of loyalist fanaticism.

Despite the long expectation of a hunger strike in the H-Blocks or Armagh, the reality has shocked us into a renewed awareness of the vicious conditions which have forced seven Irish Republicans to take this drastic step.

Four and three-quarter years of deprivation and suffering, nakedness, isolation, beatings, semi-starvation, living in dirt and filth, a soaked mattress their only furniture; four and three-quarter years of total denial of all rights and human necessities; all this as a direct result of their refusal to accept the Brit policy of criminalisation and their demand to be treated in the same way as their comrades here in the Cages of Long Kesh, where political status and recognition still exists for 200 Republican prisoners.

The only difference between the comrades in the Cages and those in the H-Blocks and Armagh is their date of capture, an unbelievably illogical basis for calling the former political and the latter criminal. But, of course, it is not the intention of the Brit Government to be logical but rather to defeat the anti-imperialist movement, and in so doing insure their interests in Ireland.

They have attempted to brand the struggle for national liberation and socialism as a criminal plot, through the medium of the prisoners. Our sisters in Armagh and our brothers in the H-Blocks have, by their heroic resistance, exposed this fallacy.

The hunger strike has been greeted by total support and solidarity within the Republican working class ghettos. Even the middle-class nationalists have been forced, in the face of mass mobilisation, to voice their disagreement with the Brit Government on this issue. The Loyalists, on the other hand, have united to back the stance of the right wing Thatcher Government.

The Republican working class has been, for the past 12 years, in open and active opposition to the British administration so alone, and even with the mass agitation on the streets of Belfast and Derry, we cannot hope to save the lives of our comrades on hunger strike. British Governments are not inclined to listen to the wishes of the Irish people.

We turn therefore to our ally, the working class in England, who do have the political power to force the Tories to stop their torture of political prisoners. This common resistance to the criminalisation of the national liberation struggle in Ireland will greatly increase the unity of the working class in our opposition to Imperialism.

With the assassination of Republican leaders by SAS and Loyalist terror gangs, open British Army intimidation in the ghettos and self-censorship of the media, which has greatly increased as a result of the contrived Loyalist hysteria, we appeal to the working class in the less dangerous (at least at present) arena of England to act, in any way you see fit, to save the lives of our seven comrades dying on hunger strike, and to end the torture of our 32 sisters on protest in Armagh Gaol and our 530 brothers in the H-Blocks.

Victory to the political prisoners. On to the Socialist Republic.

*In Solidarity
The Republican POWs,
The Cages, Long Kesh.*

A FOOT ON OUR NECK

unity and the need to stop Healey they trooped into the draft Foot Lobby. The PLP chose to advance its fake Left Wing and elect Foot. They did this to placate the majority of the union bureaucrats who would have been furious to have Healey rammed down their throats.

MORE BALONEY FROM O'MAHONEY.....

Even the 'Socialist Organisers' of the Benn Bandwagon have dutifully lowered their placards and their sights. 'Foot is probably secure for as long as he likes' observed SO lead-writer O'Mahoney. 'But still we stopped Healey! We beat back his drive to occupy one of the central positions of power in the Labour movement and to annex it for the Hard Right.' O'Mahoney trembles at the prospect that 'Healey as leader could have rallied the

right wing of the Parliamentary Party as a solid force to defy the party rank and file.' Healey could then 'roll back the gains for labour democracy before we got a chance to implement them.'

O'Mahoney is wrong. Foot will be harder to fight, especially for the middle-headed Socialist Organiser, than Healey would have been. Healey would have had ranged against him virtually all the constituency activists, and a good percentage, perhaps an outright majority of the Trade Union leaders. A head-on clash between the forces representing the 'membership', and the MPs would have posed the question of democracy much more sharply, much more dangerously for the MPs.

O'Mahoney consoles himself that Foot is only a stop gap 'The question is, whose interim leader—ours or the Right's. The nightmare of the Press will come true and Foot will be the Left's 'interim leader' if we drive relentlessly to put the MPs under the control of the labour movement and to re-arm the labour

movement with a real socialist alternative'. The key instrument for this alternative mentioned by O'Mahoney is . . . 'a new PLP'. Its programme 'broad support for the Socialist Organiser platform'. This is not the nightmare of the press but the day-dreams of an ex-Trotskyist.

Now Foot and the biggest bureaucrats will stitch up a 'solution' which will use rank and file 'participation' in the election of the labour leader in such a way as to render it no more than a camouflage for a PLP-TU dictatorship. The 'hard left' around the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and Socialist Organiser may think he is a foot in the door for democracy, but they will find he is a foot on its neck, before January 1981 is out.

As usual the class enemy has a sharper measure of the man. He is, says 'The Economist'—'a bourgeois demagogue. He is no George Lansbury or Nye Bevan but a wheeler-dealer who will blather and fudge.' The purpose of his demagoguery is to preserve the bourgeois order and institutions he loves so well, the boss-class Britain that he is a patriot for: 'I think there is a very deep ferment growing. When it will explode I do not know. But I want it to explode in a way which will make it possible to maintain democratic institutions in this country and that means that the agit-

ation outside this place (Parliament), has got to have its representation here. People outside have got to have some faith in what happens here.' (Guardian November 13th 1980)

Foot's threat to imitate Gladstone and barnstorm the country with protests against Thatcher (as well as his threat to form three ministries like the geriatric 19th Century Liberal before him) would have one clear aim—one he expresses well, 'We must channel the nations protest'. Yes indeed, along the safe channels of symbolic protest into the stagnant pond of the House of Commons.

The task of revolutionaries is far different. The real battles against the Tories will be waged in the factories and in the streets. They will be successful to the extent that they overflow Foot's channels. The struggle for democracy in the Labour Party can be at best only a reflection of this struggle. The fight must start from below. It must mean calling to account the Duffys, the Chapples, and the Ron Todds—not just on how they sell out on wages struggles, in the fight for jobs—but also on how they cast their block votes in the Labour Party. The real battle for democracy and fighting policies, must be centred in the trade unions.

DAVE STOCKING

'The Socialist Challenge' or a cure for capitalism?

Key Questions on the Alternative Economic Strategy

A TEN-YEAR IWC Pamphlet No. 49 INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

Nationalisation and the National Enterprise Board
in the hands of the
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Labour Party Discussion Series No. 2

SOCIALIST ECONOMIC STRATEGY

by Geoff Hodgson

FOR BRITAIN THE ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIC STRATEGY A LABOUR MOVEMENT RESPONSE TO THE ECONOMIC

a cure for capitalism?

By KEITH HASSELL

In 1935 Trotsky had this to say about the "De Man Plan" of the Belgian Labour Party (POB): "the plan reflects two facts: the pressure of the proletariat on the POB and the conservative character of this party" ("The Belgian Dispute and the De Man Plan", Writings, 1934-35 p213). The Alternative Economic Strategy (AES), the route map to socialism proposed by the Bennite wing of the Labour Party, is a direct descendant of the De Man Plan.

The De Man Plan (devised by Hendrik De Man, a leading member of the POB), was only one of several such social democratic recipes for ending the protracted world recession of the 1930's. Similar plans were drawn up by the Swiss, Norwegian, Dutch and Czech Socialist parties. In the USA the Roosevelt "New Deal" expressed the same attempt to hoist the national economy out of the mire of slump and stagnation.

When the De Man Plan was first adopted by the POB in December 1933, the European working class was in the political doldrums. Unemployment was soaring, workers were leaving the unions in droves, and, crucially, fascism had destroyed the organisations of the German working class, the vanguard of the European proletariat.

The De Man Plan became a rallying call for a demoralised working class. It also directly appealed to the national interests of the Belgian bourgeoisie, itself in need of a strengthened economy in the face of a menacing German imperialism. The POB's strategy was to implement a programme of "structural reforms". These were to include the nationalisation of the credit system, so as to take it out of the hands of "ruinous" finance capital and place it at the disposal of "patriotic" industrial capital. The plan proposed the nationalisation of key industries in the raw material and energy sectors thereby striking at what was thought to be at the heart of the recession - the control of the economy by monopolies.

This plan, even in its own terms, however, was not a programme for socialism: "the formation of this alliance (i.e. between the working class, middle class and national bourgeoisie - WP) implies that it be directed not against capitalism as a whole but rather against that which, within the capitalist system, constitutes the common enemy of the working class - proletariat or not: monopoly capital and most of all, finance capital." [H. De Man, "Theses de Pontigny", in P. Dodge ed., A Documentary Study of Hendrik De Man, p.304.]

But if it was to enlist the support of the Belgian working class, it had to be a plan which at least pointed the way to socialism. De Man called for

"a mixed economic system (a nationalised and private sector) which can be considered as transitional between the capitalist and socialist economies" [ibid. p.303]. Above all, it was not envisaged that the working class should play any independent role in this strategy. De Man explicitly ruled out industrial direct action as a means of implementing the plan: "In countries with political democracies, the action to be taken must be based exclusively on the use of legal and constitutional means for the attainment of a majority through persuasion." [ibid. p.304.]

In short, the plan was a strategy for state capitalism, a programme to "deceive the toilers", as Trotsky called it. It was a series of measures designed to reflate the national economy, centralise the operation of the key industries so as to better service the industrial bourgeoisie as a whole, and strengthen the national industrial bourgeoisie against foreign domination. It sought to enlist the support and co-operation of the working class through the promise of an end to unemployment in a future expanded economy.

The Alternative Economic Strategy, born while the Labour Party was in opposition after 1970, is very similar to the De Man plan. It is a complete package of economic, political and industrial proposals designed to bring about "that fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people and their families" which is ritualistically promised in every Labour Party Manifesto.

Britain's own De Man - Stuart Holland (now MP for Vauxhall) is the principal architect of the AES. His book, *The Socialist Challenge*, 1975, has increasingly served to unify the disparate elements of left reformism to be found in and on the periphery of the Labour Left. Holland's economics have been at least as important as Benn's political sophistry and oratory in re-assembling what passes as a credible and coherent challenge to the dominant Gaitskill/Wilson wing of British Labourism. The AES embodies an attempt to come to terms with the end of the post-war imperialist boom as it appeared in Britain.

The specifically British nature of the crisis is a crucial element in the AES: "Britain's economic and industrial crisis springs directly from this devastating trend to contraction whose symptoms are inflation and unemployment. And this problem must be completely distinguished from the present world recession although it is likely to be accelerated by it." [A Ten Year Industrial Strategy for Britain, Benn, Cripps and Morrell.]

The return of the Labour Party to opposition status at the same time as the recession of the early 70's was unfolding, led to the Bennites in the Labour Party to try to come to grips with the reasons for 'Britain's demise'. Like all reformists, Holland identifies the ills of British capitalism in the 1970's not with its 'inner essence' - the capitalist accumulation process - but with one particular (and necessary) feature of capitalism, namely multinational corporations. According to Holland, the British working class "do not grasp the fact that big private enterprise now dominates the heart of the industrial economy, and that its failure to generate investment, jobs and exports or sell goods at reasonable prices, underlie the problems of high unemployment, depreciated take-home pay, a national economy in debt abroad and soaring inflation in the shops". [Strategy for Socialism, Holland, p.5.]

Holland enlists various facts to back up his proposition. Whereas in 1950 the top 100 manufacturing firms in Britain were responsible for only a fifth of manufacturing output, in 1970 this had risen to a half, and is now in the region of two-thirds. Holland argues that this domination of the economy by monopolies renders the usual market mechanisms of capitalism useless. The stability of prices and expanded growth of the post-war boom in the 1950's and 1960's was dependant on fair competition which kept prices low and profits and investments high. In the late 1960's and 1970's however, monopoly domination is seen to erode competition, leading to price fixing at artificially high levels, which guarantees profit without a high investment programme. Lack of investment is then seen as a major reason for unemployment to increase. Through this analysis, Holland locates the crisis of British imperialism (high inflation and stagnant investment) in monopoly power.

Holland then formulates the AES as an attempt to get to grips with this problem. The solution is not simply "Keynesian", he argues. In the post-war boom Keynesian 'state intervention' in the capitalist economy consisted mainly of regulating demand. This method of organising the economy relied on a competitive pricing mechanism within and between nations which kept the allocation of resources and the distribution of profits and incomes in balance. But since this mechanism has broken down in the 1970's, the AES seeks to replace it with the state regulation of production, of supply. To overcome the 'distortions' of the market wrought by monopolies it is necessary to take into public ownership 'key sectors' of the profit-making monopolies.

Thus far, the AES has much in common with the De Man Plan. But there is an important difference in the AES - an extension of the plan which tries to come to terms with 45 years of experience by the working class of nationalisation and state intervention in the interests of capitalism.

The results have made the British working class understandably sceptical. In coal mining, nationalisation has brought a halving of the workforce; in BSC more than half the workforce sacked since 1967, and plants closed. Workers in many of the nationalised industries (like British Rail), are amongst the lowest paid workers of all.

As a result of this experience, the idea of nationalisation has been discredited in the minds of millions of workers. They have seen 'their' Labour government take over sectors of the economy, only to ruthlessly streamline them in the further interests of the capitalist class as a whole.

It is for this reason that Holland emphasises the need to nationalise profitable sectors of the economy in order to redeem the notion of public ownership. But more importantly, the need to legitimise nationalisation in the eyes of the working class has led the AES to incorporate the notion of 'genuine industrial democracy' or 'workers' control' as a central plank of its programme.

What this industrial democracy really means can be seen from the participation schemes, at Leyland, for example, that Benn has always been keen to espouse. In exchange for the right to be consulted by management, the trade unions in Leyland sacrificed their independent strength and participated in the closure of Standard Triumph in Speke. This is not workers' control - it is a form of class collaboration that leaves intact the bosses' right to manage production in their own interests. Benn himself is quite clear that participation offers a framework within which bosses and workers collaborate: "It would be quite possible to extend to labour at least the same generosity that capital receives. Labour has the capacity to succeed providing capital is available, but capital can't do without the goodwill of labour". [Arguments for Socialism, p.161]

Tied to this version of industrial democracy are the projected planning agreements between the Government, the bosses and the unions. They will tie the unions to carrying out agreements

struck with the bosses and the Government will necessarily be a means, by bringing the Union bureaucracy onto centre stage, of putting a rank and file that may take Benn's promise of workers' control too seriously.

Benn relies on the Trade Union bureaucracy as a vehicle for the implementation of his plan. He can not break with this layer of the union precisely because they are at the heart of its power within the Labour Party. As for democracy for the rank and file against those leaders, he has only this to say in *Arguments for Socialism*, p.174: "these things will come but they must be achieved without damaging the legitimacy of the Trade Union leaders".

Time and time again, Benn underlines his plan that, for him, 'workers' control' means the union leaders being locked into, and therefore taking responsibility for, the tripartite plan agreed with the government and the employers. "In Britain we have over a long period of time actually bred a quality of collective leadership within the trade union movement which is capable of assuming a leading role within the framework of democracy..." (*Arguments for Socialism*, p.162).

But while Benn does not challenge the bosses' grip on the workers' organisations, he clearly lays down no challenge to the authority of the capitalists either.

The Institute of Workers Control [IWC] Independent Labour Publications [ILP] Conference of Socialist Economists [CSE] that planning agreements be made compulsory. This is an expression of their intention of inroads into the rule of capital. Holland speaks in this vein at times. Benn, however, cannot afford to commit himself this far. On this question he remarks in *Arguments for Socialism*, p.160, "In this area you cannot have a blue print you need a bag of tools".

The AES calls for a massive increase in public expenditure as part of a reflationary strategy to halt and reverse the recession. The injection of credit would partly be used to expand investment programmes in industry and partly to expand employment in the public sector which would ease demand for goods and so boost production.

The AES strategists do not stop here, however. These measures would only lead to full employment and rising living standards, it's argued they were accompanied by other controls and additional controls would be necessary to the normal side effects of this reflationary strategy. One danger the Bennites envisage is that new demand in the economy would give rise to an increase in imports rather than stimulating British industrial production. Hence the need for import controls.

The AES strategists also envisage that full employment and rising profits would give rise to conflicts between bosses and workers over wages. The ensuing wages-prices battle would spark off a dangerous inflationary spiral. In this it follows there is a need for price and wage controls.

At a time when utopian panaceas, such as the AES serve to demobilise a working class and on the defensive, revolutionaries must expect utter falsity of such 'plans', the bankrupt assumptions which underpin the whole strategy.

Is the nature of 'the crisis' as Holland depicts it? To start with, multi-nationals and multinationalism are not a recent phenomenon. The fusion of industrial and banking capital across nation states and export of capital and its domination of world economies is a feature of the imperialist stage at least 70 years old. Price-fixing cartels are an inevitable product of the highest and last stage of world capitalism. Multi-nationals are therefore, a specific problem of British capitalism, an inbuilt feature of the capitalist world economy. The concentration and centralisation of capital, the overproduction of capital within the country, leads to the necessity to export it abroad. Subject other economies, less well-developed



Hendrik De Man (1885-1953). His plan was adopted at the Christmas, 1933 conference of the POB in Brussels.

ECONOMIC STRATEGY

its domination. This is part of the very nature of the capitalist production process - production for profit.

It is absurd for Holland to locate the specific features of British imperialist decay in the 1970's in the general features of world capitalism. The features which Holland says account for British capitalism's demise are the same as accounted for its rise and domination in the early part of this century. The power of finance capital and the multi-nationals, particularly US based, are what actually explains the domination and growth of West German and Japanese imperialism in the post-war period!

We have already noted how De Man's plan for Belgium was also constructed in opposition to monopoly power - in 1933; so Holland can hardly claim originality.

No, what Holland and the Bennites are really objecting to is the decline in the power of British imperialism relative to other, more resilient imperialisms like West Germany and Japan who share all the common monopolistic features of Britain - but to an even greater extent!

Holland's work is the vain cry of a petit-bourgeois economist who bemoans the demise of a hopelessly inefficient British capitalism in the face of more productive competitors.

The specific tempo and scale of British imperialist decay, which Holland observes but cannot explain, lies in other features of the post-war era. These include the hopelessly inept plant and machinery with which Britain emerged from World War II - which led it to be outstripped by the rapid regeneration of the industrial foundations of its rivals.

Part of the explanation is also to be found in the strength of the organised working class in Britain which has successfully resisted major defeats which the British ruling class are desperate to inflict on their working class as a necessary minimal condition for revitalising and restructuring British capital. Holland sees nothing of this. All advocates of the AES argue that the source of capitalist crises and their solution lies anywhere but in the nature of the production relations themselves. It can be 'unfair competition', 'lack of demand', but not in the system of production for profit itself. At the heart of the AES is the assumption that its pānopoly of measures can guarantee constant growth of profits, full employment and rising living standards for the working class.

Marxists, however, have always insisted that this is impossible. As firms invest more, so it is directed into new machinery. This is vital, since it is the only real way of ensuring sufficient increases in productivity, which is crucial if firms are to compete and survive. Investment, in general, leads to less workers being employed in productive industries. Between 1963 and 1977 as investment in manufacturing industry went up, there was a 14% reduction in employment in manufacture. In the 11 years up to 1976, the industry in Cleveland (N.E.England), received 14 times the average amount of investment for assisted areas. The bulk went to the chemical and metal industries. It was investment intended to create jobs and prosperity for the working class. The result? A net loss of 15,250 jobs in those industries! This is a graphic expression of how investment goes to boost profits at the expense of jobs.

Now it might be argued that as long as profits remain buoyant, then the loss of jobs in manufacture can be compensated for by an expansion of the public sector. This, of course, is true. But profits do not remain healthy. Why? Precisely because labour is the only source of value (ie profits) and as labour is constantly expelled from production, so the rate of profit, that is the return on investments over and above the capital required for the original investment and for the reinvestment necessary to maintain production, actually falls even though increased productivity may generate a greater mass of profits. Since it is the rate of profit which determines whether bosses will invest, less and less investment is forthcoming. As the crisis of profits accelerates, so there is renewed efforts by bosses to get less people to work harder. There is thus a stark choice at crucial moments in the cycle. Restore profitability or defend living standards for the mass of workers. There is no middle road. It is for this reason that all such 'strategies for socialism' - which fail to realise the fundamental incompatibility of profit and production to meet social need - degenerate into cynical trade-offs. Sacrifices now for the promise of a better future, or even more cynically in the case of some AES supporters (notably the CPGB) - material sacrifices now in return for greater 'industrial democracy', that is, more say for the working class as to where and how deep to cut its own throat!

As a strategy the AES is utopian in theory and whenever it is attempted in practice it falls foul of capitalist reality. The commitment to reform capitalism into socialism through the stabilising and expansion of profits means that when profits fall, then the bosses will be helped at the expense of living standards - temporarily of course!

This is exactly what happened under the Wilson Labour government after 1974 when the AES was ditched as the requirements of British industry demanded a doubling of unemployment and a slashing of the public expenditure programme.

Both the theory and practice of the AES are wrong and dangerous for the working class. We reject the whole strategy. As De Man insisted with regard to his plan, it must be "The Plan, the whole Plan, and nothing but the Plan". Equally some of the petit-bourgeois left apologists for Benn in the Conference for Socialist Economists [CSE] have declared: "The AES will stand or fall as a whole, any attempt to rely on only one element

such as increases in public spending or import controls alone - will almost certainly fail" ["The AES", London Working Group CSE, p.137]

Of course, Benn himself cannot afford to be so sharp as his ideological servants on this point. These servants have no power or responsibility. Benn may have both. Benn needs to be able to manoeuvre between the bosses and the working class. This alone accounts for his pragmatism against the rationalism of some of his followers.

Against Benn's 'real politik', revolutionaries must criticise the AES as a whole strategy and not as a series of isolated measures. It is potentially sterile to be drawn into a debate with AES advocates about the merits or demerits of isolated measures within the AES, advocating some, fetishising others.

Take the example of import controls. There has been much energy expended to prove or disprove their reactionary nature. The error of the critics of the AES on this score is that they extract the application of import controls from their context. They point out that import controls will lead to British workers paying higher prices for inferior home goods; that they will export unemployment and invite protectionist trade wars. But the defenders of the AES have had little difficulty in claiming that within the context of the overall strategy, these things will not occur. They claim that their investment programme will lead to lower priced British goods, that a series of preferential trade agreements with the "Third World" will actually increase employment abroad etc. In other words, once you have accepted the fundamental assumptions and premises that are rooted within the AES, then there is a certain (non-Marxist) internal coherence to their argument.

Nevertheless, it is very important to dwell on the nature of import controls for an altogether different reason. The CSE or IWC may well wish the AES to be taken as a whole, but the trade union bureaucrats like Duffy, Chapple, Jenkins and Evans do not. They do not bother themselves with waiting until a new Labour government is in power before advancing import controls as part of a remedy for the working class's ills. No. They demand of Thatcher now that she takes these measures as a utopian cure for unemployment. Revolutionaries have a duty to savagely criticise the political consequences of this policy. We do not see Duffy and Co arguing fiercely for widespread nationalisations of "key sectors" of industry, nor the call for compulsory planning agreements. We do, all too often, hear them call for import controls and acceptance of wage restraint - just as Duffy is now in Fords and in Leyland.

The period of transition to "socialism", that the AES envisages will be ushered in by a series of Parliamentary reforms. To convince workers of the possibility of this, Benn has attempted to refurbish the image of parliament, by proposing its strengthening against the Civil Service, and the abolition of the House of Lords, and the image of the PLP by making it marginally more accountable to the base of the Party. This would have the effect of strengthening workers' faith in Parliament, thereby discouraging them from taking independent extra-Parliamentary action. Benn has argued: "There are people inside active politics, of whom I am one, who have long felt uneasy, and who believe that the alienation of Parliament from the people constitutes a genuine cause for concern." [Arguments for Socialism p. 108]

He emphasises this point further by insisting: "Modern democracy requires a revitalisation and reformation of the philosophy of government enshrined in the idea of Parliament" [ibid. p. 111]. Rather than incite and lead the working class to struggle for their programme, Benn, Holland and company prefer to rely on a mixture of existing (but strengthened) democratic institutions and the good sense of the bourgeoisie.

Holland and Benn entertain grotesque illusions on this score. The bloody debacle that befell the Chilean working class in 1973 when



TGWU workers calling for only one part of the AES - import controls.



Above: STUART HOLLAND (Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report))
Right: TONY BENN (Photo: Laurie Sparham (IFL))



Pinochet and his generals put an abrupt end to this experiment in the peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism, is a lesson the whole working class must learn from. For Holland, however, the problem was not that Allende had parliamentary illusions and was fundamentally mistaken in not organising working class armed resistance to the army, but that "He didn't have a parliamentary majority, and was trying to rule by presidential decree." ["Harnessing and Transforming Capital" - Socialist Review No 14, 1979]

Holland has a touching faith in the bourgeoisie's attachment to democracy. The reactionary military dictatorships in Latin America will be democratised by enlightened capitalists gradually as they come to realise that "these regimes in being frequently nationalistic can very much restrict capital's freedom to allocate resources" [ibid. p.19]. All of which leads Holland to conclude "Thus, capitalism is not necessarily repressive as such at the political level" [ibid. p.19].

Even assuming that Holland is sincere, his Parliamentary schema for social change will guarantee, in advance, a bloody outcome for the working class, as the capitalists, ignoring legal niceties, use their entire arsenal - military and economic - against the working class.

Now, we are by no means dogmatic as to the forms which a revolutionary transformation of society can take, but we are firm on the steps that must be taken to ensure the consolidation and success of this challenge to capitalism. Let us imagine that the Bennites showed an iron determination to enforce, unilaterally, planning agreements upon the British bourgeoisie which seriously undermined their autonomy. What would the CBI do? We believe it reasonable to assume they would resist and withhold their capital. This might force widespread nationalisations. The CBI would collude with the army to bring an end to the regime. What then? Trotsky outlined an answer as early as 1925:

"Assuming for a moment that a Labour majority in Parliament may be returned in the next elections, which will proceed by legal methods to decree that the lands of the landlords shall be transformed without compensation to the farmers and to those chronically unemployed, that there shall be a high capital levy, and that the King, the House of Lords and some other indecent institutions must go. There is no doubt that the possessing classes will not yield without a fight, particularly when we remember that they have the entire mechanism of the police, the courts and the army and navy in their hands... Those who prepare to seize power must necessarily prepare also for all the consequences that will result from the inevitable opposition of the possessing classes. We must firmly grasp this fact: if a real workers government should come to power in England, even by the most extremely democratic means, civil war would be inevitable. The workers government would be obliged to put down the opposition of the privileged classes... a true workers government, i.e. the government which is entirely devoted to the interests of the proletariat, would thus be obliged to destroy the old governmental apparatus... and would oppose it with workers soviets for that purpose. This means that the democratic organs of the workers' government - if such a thing be at all possible - would lead to the necessity of opposing the strength of the revolutionary class to its opponent." [Leon Trotsky on Britain (Pathfinder) p.91-92]

Revolutionaries are prepared for this eventuality and only they can lead it to the finish. Benn and his supporters never even contemplate it.

Benn and Holland's AES is likely to increase in popularity as the dole queues grow, the services decline and wage levels slump. The majority of the working class will look to the Labour Party, and a future labour government as a source of salvation. Many thousands will look to the apparently radical solutions of the AES as a way out of the crisis. What are the tasks of revolutionaries faced with such a situation? Essentially they are threefold.

In the first place we must say loudly and clearly that the AES is a deception of the working class. The whole plan is an alternative economic

strategy for capitalism. It wants to secure working class cooperation for a state capitalist venture. The planning agreements, the industrial democracy, the strengthened parliament - all of these things leave all the levers of real economic and political power in the hands of the capitalist. In exposing the AES we also present our own plan to the workers - a plan based on mobilisation in action now, to defend every job, every service and workers' wages, regardless of the needs of capitalism.

Furthermore we fight for demands that directly challenge capitalist priorities and capitalist power. Workers' control can be used to veto and disrupt the plans of the bosses - but it does this without taking any responsibility for their system. In the struggle against unemployment we demand the immediate implementation of a programme of useful public works. Hospitals, schools, nurseries, welfare institutions - our society cries out for such things, yet the capitalists cut services and close schools.

The Bennites, of course, denounce our plan as unrealistic. Why? Because it ignores economic reality - capitalist reality! From the gradualist standpoint of Parliament an intransigent fight against capitalist reality may well seem far fetched. But from the point of view of a working class mobilised in defence of its vital interests then the realisation of our plan - of the obliteration of capitalism - becomes entirely possible.

But it is not enough for revolutionaries to tell workers, from the sidelines, that the AES is a dead end and Benn a false friend. We must intervene in their struggle so as to enable workers to see for themselves the full extent of Benn's pro-capitalism. Where workers take up add fight for aspects of the AES that do challenge, however mildly, the prerogatives of capital, for example in fighting for a particular nationalisation, then we would support that struggle, demand that Benn and Co do the same, and prove ourselves to be the most resolute fighters for working class interests. It is in the course of such struggles that we can really put Benn to the test - we are sure, and will always say so to the workers, that he will prove irresolute even in fighting for his own limited programme. But we do this, we advocate this unity in action with the Bennites on their own programme only when workers are mobilised around it, only when it serves working class interests, and only in the context of fighting at the same time for our own programme as the only real alternative to capitalism.

But our third and final task is to ensure that the proponents of the AES do not get off the hook. We will not allow these people to buy moral capital from the working class on the basis of socialist promissory notes for 1984. The working class cannot wait until then if it is to save itself from the relentless attacks of the Tories. Therefore we demand of Benn, Holland, Meacher and the rest that they join in and support all actions against the Tories now. We demand that they place the apparatus and finances of the Labour Party at the disposal of workers in struggle. We demand that they disrupt the workings of Parliament and do everything in their power, including advocacy of breaking the law which Parliamentary privilege enables them to do, to obstruct every piece of anti-working class legislation that the Tories seek to pass. It is on the basis of their preparedness to take such actions and not on their "arguments for socialism" that we will judge the advocates of the AES.

At the moment the variety of "lefts" (ranging from the Conference of Socialist Economists through to Tony Benn) who support the AES, serve to demobilise the existing struggle against the Tories, and defuse the future ones. The AES is rooted in a method that prefers to rely on the enlightened despotism of Sir Terence Beckett and his fellow leaders of the CBI, rather than the strength and vitality of the Gardner's workers. But that vitality forced the Hawker Siddely bosses to withdraw their redundancy notices - it showed that militant action can turn the tide on the bosses. It is that power that we look to as the one that can destroy capitalism.



Fedayeen: defending Khomeini not the revolution

by CHARLIE SHELL

Wars in general expose with unprecedented sharpness the weaknesses of self-proclaimed revolutionary organisations. As far as the war between Iran and Iraq is concerned, the political short-comings of the Iranian Left have been exposed with a vengeance. WORKERS POWER No 18 carried a detailed account of our understanding of the tasks facing revolutionaries during this war.

To briefly restate: in the war between Iran and Iraq we are not neutral. We favour the victory of Iran. This is not because we believe the Khomeini regime to be in any way progressive. The two regimes are both reactionary, bonapartist dictatorships. What we defend within Iran against the Iraqi invasion are the historically specified gains of the revolution.

That is, the overthrow of US imperialism's puppet and bastion of stability in the Gulf area, the Shah of Iran and the tremendous impetus this has given anti-imperialist movement in the region; the self organisation of the working class through its Shoras and strike committees, and the ability of the Iranian left to arm and organise itself. We recognise that victory for the Iraqis in the

present conflict would mean the rolling back of these gains, the establishment of Iraq as a new policeman of the gulf for US imperialism and the reimposition of a reliable imperialist-backed regime in Iran. But in carrying through the war we place no confidence in Khomeini. We call for independent mobilisations of the left, of the workers and peasants to drive out the Iraqi invasion. We use the war to propagandise for the overthrow of Khomeini and stand for the continuation of the Kurdish war of national independence. Only in this way, we would argue, can the Iraqi invasion be rolled back and the masses prepared to overthrow the Khomeini regime.

Thus our position does not flow from the nature of the regimes involved in the war, they are both reactionary. But the Khomeini regime

is forced to mobilise and arm the population against the counter-revolutionary intentions of the Iraqi invasion. Here we say to the Iranian masses we must fight alongside the Pasdaran and the Iranian army to drive out the Iraqis, but at all times you must defend your independent interests and prepare to overthrow Khomeini who is himself a wing of the counter-revolution. The Bolsheviks followed a similar course of action in relation to the attempt by the reactionary General Kornilov to overthrow the Kerensky government. Despite the fact that the would-be Bonaparte Kerensky was gaoling Bolsheviks and attempting to cripple the soviets, Lenin advocated a military united front against Kornilov. This didn't mean for one moment giving support to the Kerensky government, Lenin was clear what the united front meant.

"We are changing the form of our struggle against Kerensky. Without in the least, relaxing our hostility towards him, without taking back a single word said against him, without

renouncing the task of overthrowing him, we say we must take into account the present situation." (Lenin to the Central Committee of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP))

This method stands in sharp contrast to the positions adopted by sections of the Iranian left.

Of all the organisations of the Iranian left the Fedayeen (Organisation of Iranian Fedayeen/Guerrillas) have proved the most heroic defenders of democratic rights and hard won freedoms against both the Shah and the Khomeini regime. Alongside other left forces they defended the universities against Khomeini's savage 'Islamicisation' campaign. They have stood arms in hands with the Kurds against the murderous attacks meted out to the resistance fighters. While recognising the heroism of the Fedayeen fighters we have always pointed out this organisation's political weaknesses. At the centre of this is its view of the anti-imperialist democratic struggle as a distinct stage of the revolution. This analysis has led the Fedayeen in the course of the present war to virtually abandon its last remnants of political independence in relation to the Khomeini regime and thus turn its cadres into cannon fodder for the regime's war effort.

The Fedayeen (majority) have adopted a clear and unequivocal position in defence of the Islamic Republic. This is not a defence of the tangible gains of the Iranian revolution but a defence of the regime which throughout its existence has sought, to roll back those gains. In the November 1980 KAR (English Language bulletin of the Fedayeen) they argue:

ZIMBABWE

WILL MASSES PAY FOR MUGABE'S DEAL WITH IMPERIALISM?

By SUE THOMAS

The continuing strife between rival groups of guerrillas and party militants is a symptom, rather than a cause, of the crisis facing Zimbabwean society and its economy. With no prospects or role in the new society beyond eventual integration in the suburbs to keep them out of trouble, they have taken to settling what they see as the 'old scores' between ZANLA and ZIPRA.

A far more serious challenge to Mugabe's new order has come from the actions of workers and peasants in pursuit of their own immediate interests. Mugabe's accession to power last March was swiftly followed by a series of strikes for more pay, better conditions and for the sacking of racist supervisors. Kangai, the Minister of Labour, not only invoked the Industrial Conciliation and Emergency Powers Act of the old regime to get the workers back to work. He also sent in the police to escort scabs into the Wankie coal mine and used the Rhodesian African Rifles to maintain essential services there. Despite this crackdown, strikes have continued to break out, involving wide sections of workers.

Meanwhile, dispossessed peasants, labourers and war refugees have squatted on white held land (for instance on Lord Salisbury's 29,000 acre farm in Mamia land) and clashed with government agents over re-settlement. Having fought for, and voted for, ZANU on the basis of its slogan 'Let us recover our land' the squatters are not prepared to accept the government's present re-settlement plans. These plans maintain the old division between the infertile Tribal Trust lands and the highly productive white owned farms, merely re-distributing what is termed 'under used' white land—after paying compensation—and taking over further tracts of infertile soil.

But Mugabe can afford to make few concessions at present if he is to succeed in his aim of creating a stable capitalist economy. Extending a 'sincere and friendly invitation to potential investors in Zimbabwe' at a special conference held in September to attract foreign investors, Mugabe announced that the new investment policy would allow remission in full of venture capital after two years, not to speak of over 50% of after tax profits.

Even the acceptance by private enterprise of state objectives and priorities my government will refrain from imposing its will upon it'. (Irish Times 2nd September 1980).

Mugabe has therefore to placate the whites, hold back the black workers and peasants and make Zimbabwe safe for capitalism. Thus he told striking workers in March:

"I must emphasise to those concerned that there are clearly defined procedures which must be used when a dispute arises, and no employee, or employer for that matter, may take the law into his own hands, and take action which results in serious loss to both parties and thereafter to the country as a whole." (ZIG bulletin Summer 1980).

What Mugabe most fears at present is a split in ZANU's ranks with the radicals putting themselves at the head of the disaffected guerrillas, workers and peasants. At present the radicals aim to do not go beyond speeding up land reform, Africanisation and limited nationalisation. But this is enough to place them closer to the aspirations of the masses in struggle than Mugabe is.

Objecting to talk of the 'crisis of expectations', Edgar Tekere, 'Radical' Minister for Manpower, Planning and Development, insisted that:

"It is natural for people after such viciousness with guns and bullets, losing so many lives, to expect change as soon as we come in. The people expected it from those who behaved and acted as revolutionaries for all these years. So—la luta continua—this is what people are saying". (New Statesman 15th September 1980).

With his limited nationalist politics, his fast cars and £40,000 house Tekere will not lead a revolutionary challenge to Mugabe. But Mugabe is using Tekere's arrest to keep him, if not under lock and key, then at least under wraps.

Once the constraints of capitalism are accepted then Mugabe's policies are indeed more 'realistic' than those of Tekere. The constraints include not only the entrenched position of the old white rulers in the state machine—firmly enshrined in the Lancaster House agreement—but the stranglehold imposed on growth and investment by the banks and finance houses and the private ownership and control of land and industry. Total foreign private capital stock in Zimbabwe is estimated to be in the



British soldier trains Zimbabweans in the new "integrated" army.

region of £1230-£1640 million, with British capitalists owning the greatest part. (D. G. Clarke Foreign Capital and International Investment in Zimbabwe). Every bit of new investment increases the stranglehold of imperialism over the Zimbabwean economy.

The 'U-turn' in Mozambique towards encouraging private investment, and similar shifts in policy by other neighbours of Zimbabwe shows that the halcyon days of illusions in go-it-alone self-sufficiency are over. However, despite the rhetoric about a 'new deal for the South' the IMF and the World Bank are imposing increasingly harsh terms on their borrowers. Just in case any national government was thinking of defying them the IMF has just issued a clear warning to them; it has succeeded in starving large sections of the Jamaican working class into voting for White House stooge Seaga.

The 'new realism' as the bourgeois press loves to call it—of Mugabe and Mozambique's Machel cannot meet the needs of the African masses. Land reform becomes ever more urgent. Famine is stalking half the continent. But this famine is a direct result of the fact that ownership, investment produce and productivity on the land is determined by the demands of the capitalist world market.

Potential investors in Zimbabwe are all too aware of the likely challenges that the Mugabe regime will face. Mugabe has therefore to prove to the foreign bankers, and to the Zimbabwean masses that he is the boss of his government. That is why he has

moved against, in turn, the potential white backlash by expelling General Walls, ZANU militants and guerrillas, workers and peasants in struggle and, most recently, against supporters of Patriotic Front (ZAPU) leader Nkomo. The recent wave of arrests of PF leaders took place without the knowledge of Nkomo who is in theory in charge of the police force as Minister of Home Affairs. The move against Nkomo allows Mugabe to restore his credibility with the ZANU radicals by scapegoating ZAPU.

Communists have no interests in supporting either side in this fruitless intra-party warfare. It contains within it the additional danger of whipping up and playing on the hostility between the Ndebele and Shona speaking peoples. Nkomo's moves back towards the Soviet Union are an attempt to find a backer and head off Mugabe's current negotiations with the Moscow bureaucracy rather than indications of a radical shift in policy. ZAPU guerrillas have also been guilty of indiscriminate attacks on ZANU guerrillas and supporters.

It is vital that a new communist party is welded out of the forces, including the dissident guerrillas, who are standing in opposition to Mugabe and that it turns to strengthening the resistance of the workers and the peasant masses. Only that perspective—for a workers and peasants revolution in Zimbabwe—can prevent Mugabe's plans to turn Zimbabwe into a Bonapartist type dictatorship.



EDGAR TEKERE

"Today to be true to revolutionary honesty, it is necessary to give an unambiguous answer to the question: in the present circumstances can defence of the country be separated from defence of the Islamic Republic? Revolutionary honesty obliges us to put this fact to the masses decisively and unambiguously for their judgement. In its telegram of 26th September to Ayatollah Khomeini our organisation states clearly that, in present circumstances, to defend the country's independence has no meaning but to defend the Islamic Republic of Iran. . . We tell the masses that the claim, 'defending the country against the Iraqi regime's aggression' is only meaningful if it leads to the defence of the Islamic Republic from the aggression of the Iraqi regime and the plots of US Imperialism." (Page 10. Emphasis in the original).

The Fedayeen take this support of the regime so far that they even chide the Islamic Republican Party (IRP) for sowing mistrust in it. They say of the slanders made by the IRP against the Fedayeen "when they reach the masses especially in the war zone (they) . . . incite mistrust and suspicion towards the Islamic Republic itself." (November 1980 KAR).

The fundamental error of the Fedayeen is to develop their position on the war not from the point of view of its impact on the Iranian revolution and the masses hard won freedoms but on the basis of the nature of the regimes involved. On the one hand they characterise the Iraqi regime as the product of the degeneration of a 'anti-imperialist' revolution which is now objectively pro-imperialist and 'anti-popular'. On the other they see the Khomeini regime as generally progressive and anti-imperialist if inconsistently so. Thus describing the regime of Khomeini and the IRP the Fedayeen argue that:

"despite all its contradictions and inconsistencies its main aim was to fight against the oppressive domination of imperialism over Iran and the rest of the region." (KAR November 1980) and therefore:

"Iraq's war against Iran is a war between the Iranian revolution and the Iraqi counter-revolution, between a regime that is moving in the direction of fighting against dependence on imperialism, between a regime that during an anti-imperialist revolution and in its further developments has defeated the worst enemies of the people, confronting them directly, and a regime that has distanced itself from the camp of the masses and is totally antagonistic to it." (ibid).

This position means that the Fedayeen sink all their political and class differences with Khomeini. It can only mean the cessation of class struggle for the duration of the war and a vote of confidence in Khomeini to defend the Iranian masses against imperialism.

The Fedayeen have arrived at a position at complete variance with the Marxist attitude toward war as a direct consequence of their false analysis of the nature of the Iranian revolution and the role of the working class in that revolution. Whilst the Fedayeen have made a partial break with the politics of the major Stalinist practitioners in Iran, the Tudeh, by arguing for the independent and leading role of the working class in Iran the break remains partial precisely because they view the present 'stage' of the revolution as 'democratic' or 'anti-imperialist'. During this 'stage' it is, for the Fedayeen, the anti-imperialist petit-bourgeoisie who will lead. Thus the Fedayeen argues:

"They (the petit bourgeoisie) can take political power if they develop from a conservative and backward petty issue to a forward looking



Iranians look at patriotic mural in Tehran street.

and revolutionary one." (Imperialism and the Class Struggle in Iran p.30).

Forward looking denotes, for the Fedayeen, a willingness to form an alliance with the working class. But while the Fedayeen view the Khomeini regime as tending towards conservatism the way was always left open for an alliance because circumstances could push it to turn to the working class for support. Thus in the course of the present war the Khomeini regime can be characterised as one which has defeated the 'worst enemies of the revolution'.

The Fedayeen turn the Marxist position on the petit-bourgeoisie on its head. The petit-bourgeoisie can become an ally of the working class but only when it is under the leadership of the working class. Left to itself the petit-bourgeoisie is incapable of developing an independent course and without the leadership of the working class defend the interests of the bourgeoisie. Thus the state in Iran is not petit-bourgeois as the Fedayeen characterise it, but bourgeois through and through.

Khomeini and the IRP hold political power in conjunction with the bourgeoisie through their major representative Bani Sadr. The dominant mode of production in Iran is capitalist and Khomeini defends capitalism. This is why he attacks the minorities, the left and the workers organisations.

We argue that the unfinished tasks of the bourgeois revolution i.e. freedom from imperialism/national independence, the question of the nationalities within Iran, the expansion of the Iranian productive forces etc. can only be carried through if the working class seizes power. Thus the fundamental task in Iran is to bring the working class to the head of the struggle against imperialism, to direct that struggle toward the overthrow of Khomeini and establish a workers dictatorship of the proletariat. There is not, and cannot be, any intermediate, stable 'anti-imperialist government' between now and the socialist revolution. Lenin expressed this point with his usual clarity writing in relation to Russia in September 1917:

"It is impossible to stand still in history in general, and in war-time in particular. We must either advance or retreat. It is impossible in twentieth-century Russia, which has won a republic and democracy in a revolutionary way, to go forward without advancing towards socialism, without taking steps towards it. . . Imperialist war is the eve of socialist revolution. And this, not only because the horrors of war give rise to proletarian revolt, but because state monopoly capitalism is a complete material preparation for socialism, the threshold of socialism, a rung on the ladder of history between which and the rung called socialism there are no intermediate rungs." (The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It).

Against this position of Lenin first elaborated in the famous April Theses, the Fedayeen advance Lenin's pre-March/April 1917 position of the 'Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Peasantry.' In other words they fail to understand the significant advance made by Lenin in arguing for no confidence in the bourgeois-democratic government of Kerensky. It was in this period that Lenin solidarised with Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution in recognising that between capitalism and socialism 'there are no intermediate rungs.' Indeed Lenin recognised Stalin and Kamenev's willingness to cede power to the bourgeois government in February 1917 for what it was—a betrayal of the interests of the working class. But still the Fedayeen insist that the major question is not the seizure of power by the proletariat but the defence of democratic rights—not realising that you cannot have one without the other.

The whole development of Iranian capitalism testifies to the fact that it cannot break loose from imperialism. Under the Shah the



LENIN

Iranian bourgeoisie developed via its oil revenues, on the basis of complete integration into world imperialism. Iran will have no independent development until the rule of the bourgeoisie is broken, and the rule of the bourgeoisie will only be smashed when state power is in the hands of the working class. Khomeini came to power, not on the basis of the abolition of capitalism, but on the basis of its continuation. His power base lies without the bourgeoisie, a section of petit capital crushed by the Shah. In order to hang onto power Khomeini balances between the masses who have illusions in him and the big bourgeoisie who realise that Khomeini provides a safeguard against their expropriation. But Khomeini dare not unleash the power of the masses because he realises that that would bring his own destruction. As such Khomeini has no progressive mission in Iran, he stands for the smashing of the mass movement, above all he is a component of the counter-revolution.

Unless Khomeini's role as an agent of capitalism, albeit in contradictory fashion, within Iran is understood, no revolutionary organisation will be able to defend the interests of the working class. And this is the problem for the Fedayeen. They want to fight imperialism but they believe it can be done without overthrowing capitalism, thus they can paint pro-capitalist forces as consistent anti-imperialist fighters. Thus they fail to call for the overthrow of Khomeini, even outside the situation of war.

In the course of the war with Iraq, Khomeini has been forced to struggle against the counter-revolution to save his own skin. But he does it, only to safeguard his own power, the better to turn on the masses in the aftermath. Trotsky explained this well in relation to Chiang Kai-Shek during the war against Japan:

"But Chiang Kai-Shek? We need have no illusion about Chiang Kai-Shek, his party or the whole ruling class of China. . . Chiang Kai Shek is the executioner of the Chinese workers and peasants. But today he is forced, despite himself, to struggle against Japan for the remainder of the independence of China. Tomorrow he may again betray. It is possible, it is probable. It is even inevitable. But today he is struggling. Only cowards, scoundrels or complete imbeciles can refuse to participate in that struggle." (Trotsky on China).

It is on that basis and on that basis alone, that we side with Iran in this war. The comrades of the Fedayeen, by their capitulation, are strengthening the hand of Khomeini. In doing so they are signing their own death warrants as surely as if they laid down their arms and allowed Iraq to annexe Khuzistan.

A. N. L. revived: first time tragedy...

The spectacle of hundreds of white youths, mainly working class skinheads, marching the streets sporting swastikas, nazi medallions and chanting Si Heil, is a cause for dismay as well as disgust. At the start of the week in which unemployment reached a post war record level of 2,162,874, the openly nazi British Movement publicly proved that they have been taking advantage of the frustration that mass youth unemployment is giving rise to. The 23rd November BM march in West London was a graphic example of the threat that exists to the working class from within its own ranks, if the trade unions fail to organise and act positively to help, the millions on the dole queues.

Blissfully ignoring such problems the leaders of the revamped Anti Nazi League, after issuing their troops with regulation pretty coloured balloons, marched the 3000 anti-fascists off in the opposite direction from the fascists.

The leaders of the ANL have realised that their claim to have effectively finished off fascism at the last election, is wearing a bit thin. They are out to 'rebuild' the ANL to deal with the undoubted upsurge of fascist activities in Britain.

It is important at this time for trade unionists and anti-fascists to recall the record of the ANL. Based on the idea that it was possible, by appealing to broad 'democratic' and 'liberal' anti-fascist forces, to build a mass movement that could stop the growth of the National Front, the instigators and main foot soldiers for the ANL, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) proceeded to collect 'big name' to festoon its platforms. Liberals, clerics, famous footballers, Labour fakers like Sid Bidwell who signed the commons Select Committee report calling for harsher immigration controls, and even the Tory students organisation were vigorously wooed to support this broad based campaign.

Of course a political price had to be paid to hold this motley coalition together. No stance was taken in opposition to immigration controls and the ANL could never take a position of no platform for fascists. The question of organising workers defence against fascist attacks was not raised. Instead they called for reliance on the state to stem the rise of fascism.

That this did not just mean dropping 'abstract programmatic demands' but also resulted in disastrous political betrayals was shown when the fascists declared their intention to march into the East End of London in September 1978 on the same day as the massive ANL carnival was planned to go from Hyde Park to Brockwell Park in South London. Any attempt by the SWP, the largest organisation in the ANL, to fight to divert the demonstration, even a section of it, to physically stop the fascists would have split the ANL wide open. The SWP, along with their camp followers in the International Marxist Group, knew this and as a result obstructed, and declared as 'diversions', all attempts to mobilise sections of the ANL march to go to Brick Lane and confront the fascists. This shameful betrayal left an Asian area that the NF had already attacked vulnerable to a further fascist rampage. Tony Cliff, attempted to explain it away in the following week's Socialist Worker as, an organisational failure. On the contrary it flowed directly from the attempt to build and keep together an all-class alliance against the fascists in a popular front.

While the ANL mobilised tens of thousands of youth against fascism it taught them all the wrong lessons. That the fascists could be stopped by large passive, demonstrations and carnivals; that 'respectable' public opinion, the media and even the state could be used to reduce support for the fascists; that the trade unions and the working class were peripheral to the fight against fascism. The ANL's claims to be responsible for the decline in the NF's vote at the last general election fails to mention one vital fact—it was Thatcher and the Tories who, by playing the racist card did most damage to the fascists' electoral support. We are now seeing the results of that in the increasing state harassment of immigrants and the racist Nationality Bill. In fact, despite the loss of votes and the ensuing crisis which fragmented the NF between those who wanted a respectable racist image to recruit from the middle class and those who aimed at recruiting working class youth by action on the streets, the fascists are as strong as ever.

The SWP and its hangers on in the other left groups might well build another 'mass movement' against the fascists but in doing so they will block the road to the only strategy which can break up and marginalise the fascist organisations.

What is needed is not an ANL Mark II but a drive in the unions to build a workers united front against fascism. Unionise the unemployed youth and involve them in the struggle against unemployment, the Tory attacks and the fascists. Build committees in the unions and the local areas committed to active labour movement support for black self defence against fascist and state harassment, opposition to all immigration controls—and the smashing of the Nationalities Bill. They must drive fascists out of the unions and off the streets—no platform for fascists. There must be no calls for state bans on demonstrations—we know the state and its police will always use bans against the left and in periods of acute crisis will actively use and support the fascist bands against the working class. This perspective won't win the working class any 'liberal' friends but it will prevent the scum of the British Movement or National Front gaining support from youth who should belong, as of right, in the organisations of the working class. It will ensure that we can fragment and finish off the fascists for good.

Articles from
workers
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25p

IRAN: workers must make the revolution permanent

Workers Power has reprinted, in pamphlet form, all the articles that appeared on the subject of the Iran Revolution in our newspaper from October 1978 to June 1980. It costs 40 pence including postage and is available from Workers Power, BCM Box 7750, London WC1V 6XX. All cheques and POs must be made payable to Workers Power.

workers power

FORD WORKERS SAY NO TO



'FINAL OFFER' but Todd still wants to play ball with Toy

Mass meetings in Ford plants up and down the country have overwhelmingly rejected the company's 9.5% "final offer". The company provoked a strike at Halewood, over the suspension of 22 press shop workers, and the 2,400 lay-offs that it was used as an excuse to introduce, failed to scare Ford workers into voting "Yes" to the management's offer. Thousands of Ford workers are confident of their ability to wring more money out of the bosses. By acting now, Ford workers could link up with those, like the firemen, who are fighting the 6% pay limit. They could help the working class to do to Thatcher's pay limit what they did in 1978 to Callaghan's 5% limit - smash it!



Ford workers protesting against the last pay limit PHOTO: Laurie Sparham (IFL)

But Terry Duffy and Ron Todd have openly refused to organise any action in pursuit of the full claim. Instead they have made it clear to the Ford's management (Roots, Toy and Co.), that they are more than willing to carry on negotiating. The union side of the National Joint Negotiating Committee (the NJNC), dominated by full-time officials and convenors (often full time) has shown a similar reluctance to take the initiative. Instead of acknowledging that the rejection of the offer is a mandate to take action against it, they are calling for more negotiations. If these do not result in an improved offer (the full claim has already been ditched as an aim) then, from early December, the NJNC are proposing an overtime ban and a no co-operation with management policy.

This still leaves the initiative with the bosses - and they will take it! As at Leyland, where a similar offer was rejected in

General Strike...

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

These Labour leaders, in collusion with the leaders of the unions, will do all they can to direct opposition to the Tories into one-off protests. We have not had much evidence of the Labour Party fighting the cuts since their big demonstration in November 1979. Nor are we likely to see them doing anything on unemployment for another year at least. Left-wing wind at a one-day rally is much easier than determined action to fight the policies of the Tories as they are affecting workers now.

The mini-budget's massive cuts, the threatened rent rises, the endless stream of closures, the 6% wage limit in the public sector - being tested out now on the firemen - and the attempt to drive down wages in private industry (eg at Ford's) are all part of an offensive that has to be beaten back immediately. If it isn't then a demoralised working class will be easy meat for further and more vicious attacks, as and when they are demanded by the bosses.

The potential for a fightback does exist. The willingness of the firemen to take on the government for reneging on its deal, expressed in its large contingent on the march, the large numbers of miners opposed to the sell-out pay deal and the anger of Ford's workers at the insulting pay offer made to them, are all indications of this. Furthermore, the Gardner's workers, while conceding,

wrongly, on the question on voluntary redundancy, were able, by militant direct action, to defeat the bosses' plans a clear demonstration that workers can fight and win in the here and now. There is no need to wait until 1984, for the next Labour government!

What is needed is not the angry but ultimately fruitless rota of big protest events, but the linking up of those workers engaged in struggle, into a mighty offensive to smash the best laid plans of Howe, Thatcher, Joseph and their pack of Tory hyenas. In every town the unemployed need to be linked together in action councils based on delegates from workplaces and from unemployed organisations, that the trade unions must be forced to build. Such councils must organise action - strikes occupations, blocking, mass pickets, all the weapons of the working class' arsenal - to fight the Tories on pay, cuts, jobs and for Trade Union rights. Such rank and file organisations must be united in a generalised offensive against the whole gamut of Tory policies - a General Strike:

* To smash the 6% pay limit and force the government and employers to meet all wage claims in full.

* To oppose every closure, to protect every threatened job.

* To stop all cuts and force the restoration in full of all the cuts imposed by Healey and Howe.

* To smash the Employment Act, which is designed to severely restrict the working class' right to take industrial action.

A General Strike on these issues would leave the plans of the Tory government in tatters. It would necessarily pave the way for its removal from office. In fact it is the only way "to compel" the early election that Benn has said he wishes to see. The fact that he has decried the use of such means shows the real nature of his desires. Still, to the militants who look to Benn, to Foot, to the Labour Party, we say make them turn their words into action. Demand them, and their cohorts in the trade union bureaucracy, to act now against the Tories. Benn - disrupt and obstruct the working of Parliament! Moss Evans - organise strike action! Foot - place the whole machinery of the Labour Party at the disposal of workers in struggle!

We do not believe that these polite parliamentarians and treacherous trade union leaders will carry out such a fight. We prefer to rely on the strength of the rank and file - the firemen, the Gardner's workers, the Ford workers.

We seek to build a revolutionary communist party, rooted in that rank and file. A party that will not merely lead workers into the 1984 election campaign, but into a struggle to strip the entire capitalist class of all its power.

a similar way, the failure to act immediately led to a debacle, where the Edwardes' offer was railroaded through with the help of Grenville Hawley and Terry Duffy. This must not happen at Fords.

To stop it, we say occupy all the plants now, and don't come out until the original claim is met in full. Only a sit-in strike can both hit the bosses where it hurts, in their pockets, and stop them from carrying out their threat to pull out of Britain and close all their factories here. An occupation means that we can hold their cherished property (land, plant and machinery) to ransom - pay up or we stay in! Such a tactic would also, very quickly, disrupt their production throughout Europe, thus hitting their profits even harder. A strike outside the gates - giving the bosses the freedom of the plants, computers, records, stocks etc. - could enable them to start moving out.

On the day of the mass meeting at Ford Langley, a special issue of the regular bulletin WORKERS POWER produces for the plant, argued for such action. We print here extracts from that bulletin: "If we don't act now then the bosses' softening-up process will have worked. They are attempting to bully us into accepting the lowest pay offer they think they can get away with. In Langley they have started this latest offensive by sacking Steve Moise for 'sabotage' - a trumped up

charge that was really meant as a threat to militants. Then they laid us off, not because they had to, but because lay-offs were a warning that redundancies would follow if we didn't play ball. Then, along with Roots' letter earlier this month we've had an increased use of the disciplinary code that the bosses have been trying to implement since before 1977. Suspensions in the plant this month have been more frequent.

On top of these provocations we've had to listen to the weepy Paul Roots on the TV and in the papers, claiming that Fords is making a loss, that they can't afford a bigger offer and that, if we try to force one out of them, they will PULL OUT OF BRITAIN!

The bosses are trying to do a Leyland on us - they are trying to weaken our unions and our stewards organisation so that they can tie a SLAVE'S CHARTER round our necks.

Terry Duffy and Ron Todd seem keen to help management deliver their blow. Duffy has declared that he supports the 9.5%, while Todd has said that "we are not talking about people going over the top". Both of these men have said that they are willing to trade a cut in hours for a cut in (our) wages. We say, cut the hours and raise the wages - by £25 across the board now and a 1% rise every time the cost of living rises by 1%. This cost of living index

would be calculated by Ford workers themselves though, in price-watch committees that draw in the housewives who really know what it costs to keep a working class family, not by a government official behind a desk in Whitehall.

The NJNC have taken their cue from Duffy and Todd's hesitancy. They are proposing that we do nothing until December 8th and then, if management still refuse to budge, that we refuse to co-operate with management and operate an overtime ban. This leaves the initiative up to the bosses. It gives them plenty of time to organise to break any further action that we might take. This is not good enough. It is our wages that are at stake. We must make sure that the claim is met in full.

Langley workers must give a lead that other Ford plants would be willing to follow. We must challenge Roots head-on. He has said that if we strike Fords will close their UK operations. We must strike and stop Fords pulling out. How?

BY A COMPLETE AND IMMEDIATE OCCUPATION OF THE WHOLE LANGLEY PLANT AND A CAMPAIGN TO GET EVERY OTHER FORD PLANT TO DO THE SAME, UNTIL THE WAGE CLAIM IS MET IN FULL!

SCARGILL: Running for office and away from a fight

As we go to press, the result of the miners' ballot is not known. But it is clear that, particularly in the 'Left' areas of Scotland, South Wales, Kent and South Yorkshire, there is a mounting opposition to the wage cutting plans of the NCB and their Tory paymasters.

Arthur Scargill has used the campaign to groom himself to become the next president of the NUM when its absentee landlord, Joe Gormley, retires in search of comfort in the velvet of the House of Lords. Thousands of miners will rally round Scargill as a leader who will take on the Tory Government on their behalf.

It is vital that miners have a clear estimate of the role that Scargill will play in the coming months. His words and actions will be shaped by his intention of winning the Presidency. To win the support of the 'Centre' and 'Right' in the union, he will doubtless move to accommodate their politics, not confronting them.

Perhaps the clearest, and certainly the most recent, indication of Scargill's approach was the role he played in the 'No' campaign. He made a barely concealed bid to deliberately keep politics, the question of the Tory Government, out of the argument. Likewise he never advocated industrial action to secure the needs of the miners.

Proof of this can be found in the special edition of the "Yorkshire Miner" brought out before the vote. In advocating a 'No' vote it had this to say: "Remember this ballot has nothing to do with strike action.

A 'No' vote will simply force the board back to the negotiating table".

This position was backed up by a leaflet, distributed to every miner in the Yorkshire area, which further underlined the 'carry on talking' position: "We strongly recommend all our members to reject this disgraceful offer, and instruct the NEC to resume negotiations in order to win a decent increase". Again, the banner backpage of the Special edition of the "Yorkshire Miner" summed up the position in the following manner: "Vote No and let's get back to some sensible negotiations".

Where were all the calls to use the examples of 1972 and 1974 as the necessary way to launch a serious fight? What had happened to all the fiery talk of industrial action and confronting the Tories that had accompanied the drawing up of the claim at the summer conference of the NUM?

For the NUM 'Lefts', such statements are sufficient for the occasional rally or public meeting, but not for leading an actual struggle amongst the miners now. At no stage was the case for immediate strike action following rejection of the offer ever put. Equally on the question of confronting the Tory government, there was complete silence when it mattered.

There is a crying need for the miners to see their fight as political. Specifically this means the miners, as one of the most powerful sections of the British working class, deliberately putting themselves at the head of a movement that can smash the Tories' 6% pay curbs.



Compare this with the following words of Arthur Scargill in the October issue of the "Yorkshire Miner": "I believe we can win through and play the major role in taking our country along the road to economic recovery". Such windy nonsense would be better heard from the mouths of CBI spokesmen, than a supposed working class leader.

Further evidence of Scargill's refusal to support and advocate political action is provided by his attitude to the Right to Work Campaign. On the Yorkshire NUM executive it was Scargill who argued against supporting the Right to Work Campaign's march and rally outside the Tory Party conference. Doubtless he does not want to be associated with external political questions if it stands to lose him votes.

In the coming months, Scargill's credentials as a leading fighter against the Tories and for the interests of the working class will be severely tested. More importantly for militants in the pits, there can be no question of waiting to see which way Scargill will jump.

Whatever the outcome of the miners' present pay battles, matters cannot be left to rest there. "Unofficial" rank and file



PHOTO: MARK RUSHER (IFL)

action rooted in the militant areas is urgently required. That is why we argue for the building of a rank and file movement rooted in each pit. Ongoing action committees must be built in every area. Such committees must immediately seek to organise industrial action to fight any closures or redundancies as well as being ready to call out miners, "unofficially" if necessary, in sympathetic strike action with other sections of workers. In this way a serious challenge can be mounted to win the leadership inside the NUM.

ANDY SMITH

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