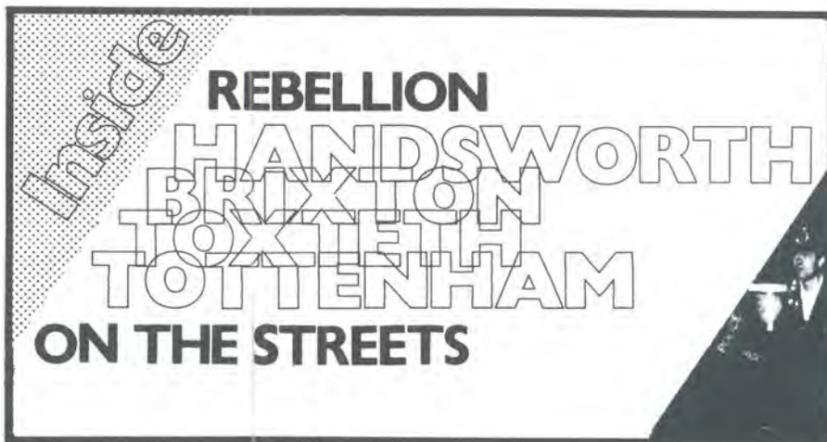


Workers power

30p/10p strikers

Monthly paper of the Workers Power group



LIVERPOOL - RELAUNCH THE FIGHTBACK

THERE WERE FEW more sickening sights at the Labour Party Conference this year than the spectacle of Ramsey McKinnock rubbing the actions of Liverpool Council.

The Militant-led councillors and the 31,000 council workers have, since the end of the miners' strike, been in the forefront of resisting Thatcher's attempts to decimate the inner city heartlands of the working class.

They have not been content to play the part Kinnock has assigned them and all victims of Thatcherism - that of passive aid recipients in a future "compassionate and caring" Labour Britain, otherwise known as the Land of Nod.

He wants to turn the working class into the political equivalent of the Mexican earth-quake victims - only too grateful to be rescued from the ruins of Thatcherite Britain, as and when Kinnock can get to them.

But Liverpool had different ideas. They fought back! The Council have built 3,000 homes and reclaimed many others from their slum conditions. They have

employed 4,000 more workers, raised pay and improved YTS conditions.

And all this has produced a clash with the Tories who have stolen £350 million, through rate-capping, from Liverpool and put them in an impossible financial position.

Of course, the hateful Kinnocks, Cunninghams, Shaws and trade union officials have to pretend that all this bile is necessary because Liverpool is an electoral disaster. Yet the latest poll (*Sunday Times* 29.9.85) showed that 55% of the Liverpool workers would vote now for Labour - more than in 1983!

Kinnock's fury is roused because Liverpool dents his claim to be in firm grip of a Party which can be completely entrusted with managing the affairs of the CBI and the City. He is thus determined to isolate Liverpool from the labour movement and make it easy for the Tories to score another victory.

Militants and rank and file trade unionists must do all in their power to prevent this happen-

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Labour Party Conference....

CRY OF THE JACKAL

FILE COPY

THE 1985 LABOUR PARTY Conference has been billed as a great triumph for Neil Kinnock and the 'new realists' who control the NEC.

The triumphant baying of the 'New Right' was obvious in the way the debate on the Miners' motion was conducted. The chair so brazenly rigged the speakers' list that even the hired hacks running the TV coverage were astonished.

The far right union leaders Eric Hammond and Gavin Laird were given free rein to pour filthy abuse on the miners. They taunted the miners, sneering at their defeat - a defeat these wretches had helped to bring about.

What a transformation in 12 months! Last year Basnett and Hammond alone spoke out against the NUM. Kinnock himself resisted right-wing pressure and refused to vote against the NUM resolution in the NEC on the eve of last year's Party Conference.

He and Hattersley had to sit on their hands and ride out the first day of 1984's conference in grim silence, while conference delegates overwhelmingly passed resolutions backing councils who were "forced to break the law" and 'committing' a Labour government not to use police in strikes. Above all the 1984 conference was a court for King Arthur.

How different this time! It was Kinnock who got the cheers and the standing ovations. Arthur Scargill left the rostrum to boos and was refused the right to reply by the arrogant chair.

media

The bosses media loved every minute of it and yelled encouragement through the banner headlines of the *Star*, the *Sun*, the *Express*, the *Mall* and the *Mirror*. ("Boy oh Boyo!", "Kinnock: It's War!", "Lashing for Loony Left!", "The Courage of Kinnock" and "Neil Slay's 'Em" respectively).

When these "friends" of the labour movement heap praise on your head, anyone with a shred of honesty would pause to wonder what terrible crime they had committed.

Not the Kinnockites - they pranced and cavorted in the limelight, outdoing one another in obsequious praise and even more

outrageous flattery of Kinnock. Some, like Livingstone, Hain and Meacher, hope by their services to be rewarded in a future government.

But many activists who jumped and cheered for Scargill last year now praise Kinnock for more genuine reasons. They have fallen victim to the argument that only Kinnock can bring Labour victory and really any Labour government would be better than no Labour government. The memory of 1978 - 79 has faded. When Kinnock praises the Attlee, Wilson and Callaghan governments it is not because they were socialist, but because they seem good now compared with Thatcher.

This argument is a total fraud. Attlee's 'reforms' were carried out after a war in which Tories and Liberals accepted serious extensions of state ownership to shore up unprofitable parts of the economic infrastructure that their owners could not or would not provide the investment to develop. In addition, Britain's ruling class was terrified of revolutionary upheavals at the end of the war and conceded reforms like the health service and the secondary education system. A massive twenty-five year period of capitalist boom preserved these reforms.

Wilson and Callaghan's reforms were piddling in comparison. But when a major slump hit in 1974 and again in 1979-81 all questions of reform flew out of the window. Now the bosses didn't offer hand-outs, but demanded give-backs. Labour was as willing to go along with them as the Tories.

Kinnock, by basing Labour's programme on incomes policy and on scaled down 'realistic' policies to fight unemployment, is signalling loud and clear to the bosses that they have nothing to fear from him and Hattersley. If Labour is elected - and that's a very big if indeed, since it can't as yet break out of the 35% to 38% range in the opinion polls - what would it do?

It would be elected not in a period of post-war boom, not even in a feeble cyclical recovery that Thatcher is enjoying at the moment, but in a new recession that is approaching and which will add hundreds of thousands more to the dole queues. Labour's promises, "modest and realistic" as they are, will be turned into

threats and demands.

We will face an anti-working class government, a tool in the hands of the bosses and the bankers. If Kinnock attacks the miners and Liverpool working class now, in the ease and comfort of the opposition, what will he do with the "responsibilities of office" and all the pressures of the bosses' economy and state behind him?

Having used the union block vote to give Kinnock his way, Hattersley and Kinnock are engaged now in the serious business of getting the union leaders to come up with the goods of a new incomes policy. The Transport and General Workers and the AUEW alike are still worried and seeking to avoid commitments. Alan Tuffin on the other hand is making the running for Kinnock. Unions like NUPE with ex-left leaders like Bickerstaffe and Sawyer are following behind. Yet again the disguise for incomes policy is "helping the low paid".

pledges

Labour has pledged itself to a minimum wage. But Hattersley has alleged that if other workers ask for comparable rises (i.e. restoration of differentials) then the benefit of the minimum wage will disappear. So his answer is wage restraint. False! The car workers' restrained wage rise goes straight to their employer, not to a nurse or an ancillary worker. And if you want to make a minimum wage a real increase protected against inflation then protect it with a cost of living escalator clause. "Incomes policies" under capitalism benefit only the bosses - the last one cut 10% off real wages in two years, a feat no Tory government has been able to perform.

Nor does it have any but the shortest term electoral advantage. The last Labour Incomes Policy goaded precisely low paid workers into a massive revolt - 'the winter of discontent' which led to Labour's electoral debacle. Millions of voters deserted, seeing it was neither a workers' nor even an efficient bosses' government. Hattersley's 'old hat' Wilsonite economic policy will harm the working class in its operation and demoralise it in its breakdown.

continued on page two >>>

DON'T KNEEL TO KINNOCK

USING MILITANT AS stalking horse and with his man Larry Whitty at the head of the Party bureaucracy, Kinnock is likely to follow up his triumph with an attack on the 'hard left'.

The statement of 'principles of democratic socialism' that will eventually emerge from the NEC will be a witch-hunter's charter. Elementary self-defence and fidelity to the ongoing class struggle that will not stop or roll back at Kinnock's chapel rhetoric, demand that the left in the Labour Party unite in action.

platform

On what basic platform should a united front be formed? First and foremost defence of the miners and all other fighting workers, of Labour councillors who defy the law to defend working class interests. This means a clear determination to put electioneering let alone Kinnock's empty wind-bagging 'campaigns' below and behind real involvement in the struggles of trade unionists of black youth, of the unemployed whenever and wherever those struggles erupt.

Secondly, it means a defence of inner party democracy and absolute opposition to witch-hunting up to and including defiance of Kinnock's stacked NEC or his bully-boys at Walworth Road. Disaffiliation rather than surrender. The first line of defence will often be defence of constitutional rights which the right-wing will seek to ride rough-shod over. But it will prove self-defeating to limit our defence to this. What is at stake is the right of socialists, militant class fighters, Marxists and revolutionaries to a place in the 'broad church'. The party cannot be a haven for Fleet Street magnates, CIA-lovers and 'sweet-heart deal' trade union bureaucrats.

Black Sections

We must press ahead with the defence and extension of black sections. The best form of protection against the taunt of 'careerism' is to make them relevant to the struggle of the black youth of Brixton, Handsworth and Toxteth; to act as a bridge between their fight and the organisation of the labour movement.

To defend re-selection and the electoral college is important but insufficient. They have proved ineffective in preventing Kinnock's advance. Worse, he has a better chance than before of winning 'one person one vote'. The best method of defence is attack. We need to campaign for the crucial democratic reforms that can destabilise Kinnock's power, namely, democratic control of the block vote and conference control of the manifesto.

Thirdly it means opposition to Kinnock and Hattersley's anti-working class policies. There must be two strands to this fight: a struggle to repeal wage-cutting incomes policies and other reactionary policies.

continued from front page

JACKAL

Yet this is what the Kinnock leadership is trying to make Labour safe for. Alan Hadden, the debate rigger and Party Chairman, underlined this by saying it is a matter of supporting Neil Kinnock: "I say to anyone who is not prepared to do that, you are not one of us."

Over the next months every militant in the Labour Party and unions is going to have to decide whether they are happy being one of Kinnock's "cuddly left-ists" or whether they are interested in fighting with our class and against Kinnock's leadership.



Fighting back despite Kinnock

But in addition we must fight to force any future Labour government to implement such pro-working class policies as have been won in the Party. For example:

- abolition of all Tory trade-union legislation;
- abolition of the legislation dissolving or re-structuring local government;
- an amnesty for all miners sacked or imprisoned as a result of the strike;
- repayment of all money seized by the courts for fines, sur-

charges and sequestrations as a result of Tory anti-working class legislation.

rank & file

Fourthly, the left in the party must recognise in practice the decisive character of the trade unions in the fight against the Tories. The left must support and build all movements of the rank and file against the trade union officials. With the unions and trades councils it must seek to

to build in every struggle direct action councils made up of delegates of the unions, local Labour parties and community organisations to control the direction of and further the fight.

Each partial or general struggle in the direction of this platform implies a fight against Kinnock. His leadership must be challenged.

weakness

This is the left's weakest point. Heffer and Hatton want him in

No. 10. Even Campaign Group MP Alan Roberts blithely argues in his post-conference analysis

- "Labour is going to form the next government and Neil Kinnock will be the next PM."

But this would mean we don't intend to fight for these policies to the end. Benn wants to skirt the problem of challenging Kinnock's leadership by the call for a 'refounding conference'.

Campaign Group

If the Campaign Group wants to be taken seriously in its claims to be the guardians of the left in the PLP then name your candidate to stand against Kinnock!

Existing left caucuses should be won to a worked out platform of opposition to Kinnock. Only 'lefts' willing to do this will escape becoming his cuddly toys. Ted Knight said correctly that he was not in favour of a Labour government at any price. Whilst we are in favour of Labour defeating the Tories and the Alliance and winning an outright majority at the next election, we will not commit a single act of class treachery to get it. There must be no betrayals of workers in struggle - as the miners were betrayed. Nor can we ease up on working class demands on Labour, on the struggle to make the parliamentarians accountable to the whole movement, on the struggle to remove Kinnock, Hattersley and Co from the leadership. To do so will not guarantee a Labour government. It will guarantee that if there is a Labour government it will be the worst, most anti-working class since the days of Ramsay MacDonald.

continued from front page

ing. But a pre-condition for victory is a sharp break with Liverpool Council's existing strategy for the campaign.

The campaign is now in a weaker position than ever before as a result of the debacle surrounding the issuing of redundancy notices to the council's workforce. The fact that the Militant leadership of Liverpool should be trying to sack 30,000 workers to save jobs is perplexing at first sight.

To the leadership of Liverpool Council the situation presented itself as follows. If the Council gives out 90 day redundancy notices, its coffers will be replenished with rate support grant. That buys it time (90 days) to do a deal with the new Environment Secretary, Kenneth Baker - if the Tories were so inclined. It also gives a further 90 days to prepare for action - if the workers can be mobilised.

buying time

If the Council fails to give the notices, it will rapidly incur further surcharges, lay itself open to replacement by commissioners or Liberals, paying the way for 6,000 redundancies and corresponding cuts in services.

It was buying time to do a deal that was and is decisive in Militant's thinking. Originally they did not want the indefinite strike from September 24th. At first they urged the JSSC to accept the redundancy notice plan.

It was only then that the Council hurriedly allied themselves with the majority vote on the JSSC to call instead for an indefinite strike. It was the GMBATU stewards who correctly argued this course of action. This had the best chance to unify the workforce.

LIVERPOOL - RELAUNCH THE

The next mistake was to refuse to go ahead with the strike even though a minority of unions supported it. GMBATU, UCATT and the TGWU secured a majority. But NUPE and NUT leaders refused even to allow their members a vote.

NALGO secured a majority against (with 1,400 in favour) because their leaders make it clear they supported the 'capitalisation' option - ie bringing forward money from next year's building programme to finance current expenditure.

Even so 47% of council workers consulted voted to strike. They should have done so and gone out and put the argument to NALGO, NUT and NUPE members. Instead, the JSSC called off the strike in the belief that 'unity needed to be preserved'. But it is fighting unity that matters most, not the unity of those who won't struggle or haven't been convinced yet of the need to struggle.

It is going to be much more difficult now to get a majority out on strike because the issuing of redundancy notices has split the workforce down the middle and alienated large sections from the Council.

One factor weighing on the Council workers' minds will be the realisation that should they go on strike, they will lose their redundancy money (some £25 million in all). And there is no guarantee that at the end of the day jobs will be given back, despite Council pledges to that effect, because by then the commissioners may well rule Liverpool.

However, the failure of Liverpool's 'Marxist' councillors lies less in its inept choice of tactics and more in their flawed outlook towards the possibilities of municipal socialism that has lain behind



GMBATU members vote to strike

the whole campaign since 1983. Genuine Marxists, that is, revolutionary communists, do not deceive the working class about the possibilities for genuine social change that come with winning control of a local council.

struggle

While social reforms (wages, jobs, housing) are important in rallying workers to struggle, the political priority is to take the offensive against the central government as soon as possible by generating solidarity on a national scale. This may be a more difficult and protracted process but it has to be done.

All actions and propaganda have to hit at the same point; that all the social reforms will be thrown back unless the central government resistance is cracked by national action. Above all,

holding office - either gaining it or retaining it - is a tactic subordinated to telling the truth and mobilising the working class in its own independent organisations.

Militant councillors, however, have done the opposite. They have avoided generalising the conflict. They have sought to stay in office and mobilise support to pressurise the Tories to concede enough finances to them to allow the continuation of the reform programme of the Council. This will prove self-defeating.

All this was well illustrated by their actions last year during the miners' strike. Since Labour ousted the Liberals in Liverpool in 1983 Thatcher and the Tories have continually attempted to provoke a showdown in order to drastically cut spending on jobs and services in Liverpool. The response of the Labour Council to this provocation has, up until

LEFTS COWED BY KINNOCK

THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE revealed another harsh truth: that Kinnock's triumph owes much to the failings of the Left. First they joined his camp in 1983 voting for him as an alternative to Healey-Hattersley.

Ironically, the democratic reforms of 1979-81, bringing the election of the leader by a broader electoral college of all the Party, has strengthened Kinnock's position and lent a sharp edge to his arrogance. Now he turns on the Party and says, 'You all voted for me, constituency activists, unionists and MPs alike! 80% of the votes were cast for him. Unlike Callaghan, he can now boast, 'I am the Party! Shut up and do as I say'. To Socialist Organiser's question 'who makes Labour Policy?' Kinnock has given his answer. Me! Workers Power always

maintained that the really decisive constitutional reforms worth having were subordination of the PLP and Manifesto to the conference, and bringing the union block vote under democratic control. How correct we have been proven.

Last year the left failed to challenge Kinnock for leadership when the balance of forces was on their side. Instead, they believed he could be saved from the grip of the right and would act as populariser of the left's policies. With the miners defeated he has vented his fury on the left.

That this has come to pass is because of the political weakness of left Labourism; namely, they shared with the right the fundamental belief that above all we need a Labour government. Most grotesquely, despite the ham-

mering they have received, Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, Arthur Scargill and Derek Hatton have all been quick to reassure that they "want to see Neil in Number 10".

None of them have any alternative to hoping a Labour government will "implement socialist policies" given a bit of pressure. Benn, Hatton and Scargill all cling desperately to a schema whereby the working class can pressure the Labour leaders to do the right thing.

But, as the defeats of the miners and the current Liverpool Council struggle show, Kinnock, the shadow cabinet and the TUC don't sit still waiting to be pressurised. They are under constant pressure from the bosses and the manufacturers of "public opinion" to intervene in, to break up and demoralise ongoing working class struggle.

The class struggle is not some sort of irresistible and inevitable rising tide as Benn or Militant would have us believe. It is a series of battles. Victories advance the confidence and cohesion of the workers' movement but defeats disorganise and weaken it. The miners' defeat enabled Kinnock to take the offensive.

wing of the bosses' class. They are bosses' narks within our movement, sabotaging our struggles, defending the police, the judges, the law against workers in struggle. Above all they defend an illusion that Scargill and Benn share - that winning parliamentary elections and using the bosses' state is the only possible road to working class advancement or 'socialism'.



Tony Benn

an election approaches. In fact they have a job to do for the Callaghans and Kinnocks, to keep burning bright the hopes and illusions in the Labour rank and file and in the trade union voters that 'this time it will be different', this time we can win 'socialist policies'. Having performed this task in the early 80s they can be slapped down and turned out to graze.

The lefts who have defected to Kinnock - the 'cuddly-left' as the Financial Times say they like to call themselves - have an important role to fulfil. Kinnock's brutal onslaught on the left is designed to lower the political expectations of the consti-

Scargill and Benn do not want to sacrifice workers' struggles to the parliamentary goal. But they are just being inconsistent and that is their weakness. To be consistently loyal to the working class, to stick with mighty struggles like those of 1984/5 you have to have as a goal working class power not parliamentary office.

"Principles without Power is Sterile" says Kinnock, meaning to hell with principles, it is government office that matters. "Power without principles is unthinkable" says Scargill, a more honorable position but one still confused about what power is and what principles it should be used to implement.

Working class power can only mean replacing the rule of the armed servants of the bosses with a state based on the armed working class. Our principles, our programme will then be to create an economy planned for human need, with no unemployment and no bosses and bankers, and to spread socialism world wide.



Arthur Scargill

But Tony Benn and Arthur Scargill can't or won't see this. Benn comforts himself with the claim that "there are more socialists this year than last". Scargill seeks to comfort his union members with a narrow and hollow victory at the conference. Each of them carefully codes their criticisms. Scargill refers to "criticisms I have heard from this platform". Benn refuses to "criticise personalities". What is this but a mealy-mouthed refusal to attack Kinnock as directly as he attacks them? What are workers to think? They will conclude that Kinnock is 'honest and courageous' for his open brutality and that Scargill and Benn are beaten and shame-faced - yesterday's men.

What they cannot understand, with their 'broad church' view of a fundamentally electoralist Labour Party, is that Kinnock and co are not simply figures on the right wing of the workers' movement but figures on the left

It is because the Labour left remain "democratic socialists" - socialists who subordinate their socialist aspirations to the bosses' sham and shoddy democracy - that they repeat the cycle again and again of growing strong in the wake of a defeated Labour government (1979-81) but wilting to an impotent opposition whenever



David Blunkett

tuency activists.

Eric Heffer may be generalising too much when he glumly notes "The mood in the constituencies when we get back will be pretty sour", but it's true that most cannot come to terms with Kinnock's line easily or immediately.

For this Blunkett is invaluable to Kinnock. The constituency activists put him at the top of their NEC poll - displacing Benn. Those who put him there do not want to grind Militant or Liverpool Council to the dust as Kinnock does. Like Blunkett they distance themselves from their intransigence but want to leave a path of retreat open back to the Great Leader.

Only those 'lefts' who are prepared to stand by workers under attack, to stand firm against Kinnock's blackmail and threats will avoid being absorbed into what is in reality the New Right. ■



Derek Hatton and Ted Knight

FIGHTBACK

... been to put off a real confrontation by negotiations with Tory ministers like Patrick Jenkin, and find loop-holes to dodge through in the legal system. Tactical manoeuvres of this sort cannot be ruled out on principle, of course, but the record shows that they have been pursued at the expense of mobilising an all out confrontation rather than gaining time for it, as Militant claim.

For example, last July instead of lining up with the miners and forming a powerful second front against Thatcher, the Labour Council struck a deal with Patrick Jenkin. This was on the very day that the dockers called a national strike!

The deal itself was nothing more than a rotten compromise. Derek Hatton shunned his no cuts policy by putting rates up by 17% for the sake of remaining legal and postponing a confrontation for a further year.

In June this year Liverpool again bought time. Reneging on their earlier stance of not setting a rate, they increased rates by 9% representing yet another cut in workers' living standards.

As the Liverpool Council again backed down from a confrontation militants in other councils were desperately looking for a lead as they saw their own councils dropping like flies around them in the face of rate-capping.

Despite the enormity of the crisis, with Liverpool facing total bankruptcy and possible further surcharges on Labour councillors, on top of the current £106,000, it still didn't stop the Council using the same tactics as before, with even more disastrous consequences.

It is still possible to rescue the situation. The effects of delay and Kinnock's intervention will need to be quickly checked so that loss of momentum does not



become demoralisation. And that means an end to all delaying tactics.

The redundancies, rightly blacked by NALGO members, should be withdrawn. Mass meetings should be held in work time, facilitated by the Council, where the arguments can be heard in full by all workers. Decisions should be taken by show of hands at these meetings.

At such meetings it would be imperative to argue for immediate all-out strike action by all council workers. The choice is to fight or wait for the axe to fall. It should be argued too that delegation should be sent immediately to all factories, workshops, the docks and hospitals. Redundancy notices have been falling like confetti in the private sector in Merseyside. The workers' interests can best be defended by linking the defence of these interests in the private and public sectors.

The army of young unemployed whose chances diminish with every redundancy can also be won to mass action. The depression which breeds riots can be transformed by the confidence which organised struggle unleashes.

Every class-conscious worker in Britain and beyond must rally to the support of Liverpool workers. Down this path lies the road to lasting victory. ■



Eric Heffer and Denis Skinner



HOW TO FIGHT FASCISM?

RECENT MONTHS HAVE seen a rapid and vicious escalation in racist violence in the East End of London and elsewhere. On top of the daily occurrence of verbal and physical abuse toward black people we are now witnessing a situation whereby arson attacks are becoming commonplace.

The main targets for these attacks have been property and homes belonging to Asian families. The July fire bombing of the Kassam family's home in Ilford resulting in the deaths of Shamira Kassam who was eight months pregnant and her three children, aged 6, 5 and 14 months was one of the most horrific examples. In virtually every single case however the police response has been entirely predictable. Friends and relatives of the victims are questioned, taken to police stations and kept there for hours, confused and often uninformed.

denials

Meanwhile the police make statements denying any racial motive or else suggesting that it is one of many lines of enquiry. While socialists should not be surprised at this attitude on the part of the police, it has meant that community reaction against the police is increasingly resentful. 'Police accountability' is seen increasingly as a utopia.

However with the collapse of the old strategies comes a new problem: what to replace them with? Many different groups of people are putting forward ideas which they believe will protect black people by isolating the racists and fascists in some way.

The first strategy, mainly linked with the people grouped around 'Anti-Fascist Action' regards the development of groups of people able to 'smash the fascists' as essential. While this position is



You can't fight this...



...with this!

essentially correct the comrades concerned do not as yet see the need to root these groups firmly in the ranks of the organised working class - the only force capable of defeating facism and the capitalist system which spawns it. If this is not done then the danger exists that Anti-Fascist Action will not grow, it will in fact become the preserve of brave but isolated anti-fascist militants.

More surprising (to anybody that went through it) is the belief among some on the left, that what is needed is a new 'Anti-Nazi League' which gained large popular support in the late 70s.

The ANL was set up after the NF had been smashed off the streets in Lewisham in 1977. The SWP (who were the driving force behind it) set it up specifically to draw in "the thousands

of people who hated the Nazis, but disapproved of the SWP strategy of physically confronting them on the streets". (SW Review 3).

In order not to alienate these predominantly petit-bourgeois elements the ANL organised carnivals, discos and indeed demonstrations against the NF. The one thing it did not do was to attempt to build the prerequisite for actually defeating fascism - a Workers United Front.

actually demobilised anti-fascists and the workers' movement generally.

In fact bans encouraged the fascists to announce that they were marching on the same day, and in the same area as labour movement organisations precisely in order to get the progressive march banned.

All this misdirection was to have disastrous results on September 24th 1978 when 1,000 fascists marched virtually unopposed in East London while the ANL organized a carnival in South London. Doing this whilst knowing well in advance of the fascists' plans was bad enough, but the ANL leaders - including the SWP - blocked attempts to organise a massive counter-demonstration.

The SWP preferred to play host to a bevy of Labour platform speakers in Hyde Park like Tony Benn who were doing nothing against the then Labour government's racist immigration controls. These controls themselves were fostering a favourable climate for the growth of fascism.

scum

Perhaps the worst element of the ANL was that it refused to adopt a position of opposition to all immigration controls. This allowed traitorous scum like Sidney Bidwell to sponsor the ANL (Bidwell was a Labour MP who was on the Select Committee calling for even tighter controls).

In view of this mish mash of incorrect positions, and the amorphous nature of its membership, it is hardly surprising that once the NF lost its momentum and its electoral support the ANL withered away, leaving nowhere for anti-fascist militants to go.

This of course contrasts completely with what has happened to the fascists. They have quietly regrouped on a much harder if less numerous basis in order to be able to terrorise black people and individual white anti-fascists.

Workers Power believes there is absolutely nothing wrong in wishing to build a mass anti-fascist, anti-racist organisation. But it cannot again be built on liberal politics. Unconditional labour movement support (trades councils, Labour Parties, union branches) must be forthcoming for black self-defence groups - brothers and sisters on the front line.

Out of this can be rebuilt the organisations of self-defence within the labour movement itself ready to defend its own premises and meetings and quick to crush the fascists wherever they seek to peddle their filth or swell their numbers by organising public parades. ■

by Adrian Swaine

ORGANISING IN LEICESTER!

IN LEICESTER THE BNP have ventured onto the streets again with a 'Hang Nelson Mandela' campaign.

This started after the local Labour Council named a public park after the jailed ANC leader. They had previously succeeded in banning apartheid-loving Leicester Tigers rugby team from training on the ground.

demonstration

Recently the BNP have bravely begun to distribute leaflets: by throwing them on the ground in the little-used park. Then they called a "Hang Mandela" demonstration on September 27th in the park. A mobilising leaflet called on "Indians and Whites" to oppose "Black terror gangs and the councillors who support them".

At the last minute however, local BNP leader Peacock called off the rally. In a letter to the City Council he warned this was only a temporary postponement, due to fear of a riot(!) and of "the criminally violent Labour left".

In the light of this statement the Leicester Anti-Fascist Defence Campaign (formed originally to support those arrested at the last BNP meeting) decided to go ahead with a counter demonstration, despite the non-appearance of the Nazis. It also issued a leaflet to every house in the vicinity of the park explaining who Nelson

Mandela is and why we defend the park against fascists. In contrast the council has totally failed to publicise its own gesture and many of the residents of the working class district around the park were totally unaware that its name had been changed.

Over 100 people attended the counter demonstration, including a large contingent from the Azania-Namibia Task Force (a black anti-apartheid group), a contingent of strikers from Haddon and Costello and the prospective MP for Leicester East, Keith Vaz.

Conspicuous by their absence were the local Anti-Apartheid and "Inter-Racial Solidarity" groups. They set the seal on their record of inactivity, either on South Africa or anti-fascism, by declaring the counter demonstration "provocative".

No Platform

The Defence Campaign now needs to become a permanent, delegate body of trade union, Labour Party and black organisations. It needs to organise a network of anti-fascists prepared to drive the fascists off the streets. Those in the labour movement, such as Keith Vaz, who give verbal support to "No Platform for Fascists" should organise their hundreds of supporters in the workers' movement and the black community into a force that can implement this policy in action. ■

by Paul Mason

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state bans

To make certain that their project received support from the liberal press and some sections of capital, the ANL pandered to jingoistic nationalism and equated British fascists with Nazi Germany; as if fascism was somehow alien to British capitalism. Rather than physically confront the fascists the ANL organisers claimed that state bans on fascist marches were a victory.

These bans, it must be remembered, affected not only the fascist marches but also every other march in the area for a specified time. In other words the bans

Peace at any price?

IN SEPTEMBER THE Labour Party NEC ruled that the Party's Welsh regional Executive had acted unconstitutionally in debarring Militant supporter Chris Peace from its meetings.

When Workers Power supporters argued in Peace's own LP branch that it was necessary to capitalise on the NEC's ruling to demand the re-instatement of all the expelled Militant supporters, Peace argued that any such resolution should be withdrawn. Another example of Militant's reticence in campaigning for re-instatement was given at the "Wales Labour Unity Campaign" conference in Cardiff on October 5th.

This conference, supposedly called to "campaign for an end to witch hunts" was treated to a succession of Militant speakers including Tony Fields MP. Militant's conference resolution calls for a "unified democratic and socialist party". It's strategy is to try to outbid Kinnock in cries

for unity and to attempt to prove he is the splitter.

The real question working people want to know is why is he attacking the left? Why is it worthwhile fighting him? The answer is that Kinnock is preparing sellouts and betrayals for the whole working class. To fight the witch-hunt is to fight Kinnock's project, to ring the alarm bells, to warn the working class.

At the October 5th Congress one hundred and fifty or so delegates were simply treated to an endless string of Militant speakers saying the same thing. Their pleas for democracy are not helped by their own complete inability to practice it. Delegates were simply not allowed to seriously debate the way forward against the witch-hunters.

By such methods Militant are digging their own grave. They cannot be expected to provide real resistance even to their own purge.

Jon Lewis, Cardiff North CLP.

NCB TARGETS MORE PITS

NEIL KINNOCK USED the miners debate at the Labour Party conference to launch a vicious attack on the entire conduct of the miners' strike. He said in words what his deeds during the strike had made only too clear.

According to Kinnock the strike should never have been called in the first place. And once it was underway the miners' leaders themselves were responsible for the police attacks and brought the full weight of the courts down on their own heads.

Quoting from an unnamed Lodge official, Kinnock said the strike call in March 1984 came at the 'least appropriate' time. The men had lost money after an overtime ban for 19 weeks. The coal stocks were at an all time high and win-

ter nearly over.

In reality the miners had no alternative but to strike when they did. The announcement of the closure of Cortonwood heralded a premeditated offensive to cut the workforce and, more significantly, break the power of the NUM. If the union had not stood up and fought management's plan the union would have shown itself powerless to resist the wave of closures the Tories were set on.

March 1984 was the time chosen by the bosses to take on the union. They had their coal stocks high and policing mechanisms in place. To have run from a fight meant accepting defeat. It would have meant bowing to MacGregor.

Kinnock came clean on his

long known support for a ballot. Out to rubbish the strike in every phase and aspect he argued; "the fact that it was called without a ballot denied to the miners unity".

criticism

We criticised the failure of the NUM leaders to issue a clear and unambiguous call for an all out national strike from day one. By opting for rolling area by area stoppages the leadership lent legitimacy to the scab leaders to organise ballots against the strike. That, in its turn, lent legitimacy to all those in the labour movement who turned their back on the miners. It was not the absence of a ballot but the absence of a decisive call for the strike, which Neil Kinnock never wanted, that created the breathing space for the scabs.

heroism

Moreover, there was nothing about the scale of coal stocks that made defeat inevitable. Nor does the year long heroism of a majority of miners suggest they were demoralised before they even started. What was necessary was to recognise the scale of the conflict the boss class was prepared for and answer their declaration of class war with a concerted working class response. All the coal stocks in the world would have been of no use to the Tories in the face of mass strike action alongside, and in support of, the miners.

courts

So too would Kinnock have us believe that the miners got their just deserts at the hands of the judges and courts. It was

the "attitude to the courts of the NUM leadership" that "got them crippled". That the NUM refused to bow and scrape to Tory laws aimed at letting any boss, scab or reactionary lawyer take the unions to court and take their funds is a credit to the NUM.

While Kinnock was counselling accepting defeat without a fight the NCB was rolling up its sleeves to launch a two year job-slashing campaign in the coalfields. Output is now due to be cut back even further to 90 million tonnes. This will mean the closure of at least 50 more pits if the NCB gets its way.

hatchet man

The Tories have put the NCB under strict orders to run at a profit by 1987. At a cost of £145,000 a year they've appointed their hatchet man for the next phase, Sir Robert Haslam. Haslam comes from British Steel which ruthlessly slashed its workforce after defeating the steel strike. That is what the NCB are out to do in the coalfields.

But there is no need to lie down and accept the next wave of closures. The miners lost last

time because the TUC and Labour leaders betrayed them. However much they blame the miners Kinnock, Hammond, Basnett and Laird were the real culprits. If the latest closure plans are to be resisted miners must learn the lessons of the strike's failure to break out of its isolation, remember who it was who left the miners to fight alone and link up with all those in the Labour Party and unions who want to oust those treacherous leaders.

silence

Arthur Scargill was stunned into virtual silence by Kinnock's attack and the braying of the unleashed Kinnockites on the conference floor. He studiously avoided attacking Kinnock and his crew by name.

Even less has Scargill been prepared to criticise those union leaders, like Ron Todd of the TGWU, who save their consciences now by voting to support the NUM's amnesty resolution but who sat idly by while T&G truck drivers scabbed on the NUM.

Scargill emerged from both the TUC and Labour Party conferences claiming the amnesty votes as a great victory while accepting that Kinnock would throw it out. Scargill needs to be reminded that a pre-condition for a new fight is looking reality in the face. ■

by Dave Hughes

Police outnumber pickets at Harworth Colliery, Notts.



FOLLOW COVENTRY PIT'S LEAD

RECENTLY, A 24-HOUR STRIKE took place at Coventry Colliery which had been campaigned for over a long period by militants. The strike was over three issues. Firstly, the re-instatement of sacked miners, secondly, the attitude of the management to the NUM and thirdly, their ripping up of local agreements.

Although canteen meetings were argued for, followed by a branch meeting and a show of hands for strike action, this was defeated and a pit-head ballot decided upon.

The result of the ballot was in favour of the strike - some 560 to 490. This was despite management threats to stop bonuses for a week if the strike went ahead.

This example shows why votes should be taken at branch meetings without management interference. Workers would not feel isolated when voting. They would be able to see who was standing alongside them.

The militants called for the strike to be undertaken immediately, only to find another bureaucratic rule in their way. Under the new rules - voted in at the 1985 Conference - any strike has to be given prior NEC blessing.

A letter was sent away to the NEC for permission only to be objected to by the Power Group representative McSparran, because the strike involved his members and he had not received notification by letter.

All the more reason why the NUM should have one rule-book, one union and should break up the federated structure that still exists.

By this time miners were getting fed up waiting for the strike, and considering what year it was to be allowed! Also during this period the management had tried to undermine the strike by revising the local agreements and not treating the branch with respect.

Eventually, one month after the branch had agreed to strike it was allowed to happen. During the 24 hours, pickets were put on at the main shift times. Supporters from the wider labour and trade union movement attended to give support. Even some members of NACODS supported it. Quite amazing!

At the end of the strike we had a total of five scabs out of a total membership of 1400. Management's attitude towards the sacked miners has not changed since the 24 hour strike. We will be calling for more action. But miners up and down the coalfields must realise that the only way our comrades will be released from jail, sacked miners reinstated and stopping more pit closures, is by determined direct action.

The rank and file must organise, not only miners and women against pit closures, but by building direct links with workers in other industries, preparing for another fight against the Tories. ■

by Colin Ward

LETTERS PRINCIPLES?

The article on the SWP's unity call in the last issue of *Workers Power* somewhat misses the mark. No one seriously expected Militant to suddenly up and abandon thirty years of burrowing within the Labour Party and unite with the SWP, least of all the SWP. Towards the end of the article it is made clear that for the SWP, the open letter to Militant was simply a ploy to win individual recruits from Militant. As such, the SWP would claim that it was a perfectly justified tactic and that no principles were involved!

Cliff has always mentioned that there are no principles for revolutionaries only a small number of elementary axioms; in particular the emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself; the necessity of smashing the capitalist state; the need for a revolutionary party. Everything else is reduced to 'tactics' and these must change with changes in the situation (as determined by Tony Cliff).

It is this false understanding of principles and tactics in which the membership of the SWP have been educated that needs to be explained. If it isn't then appeals to 'principles' (in the manner of the article) will only fall on deaf ears.

In comradeship,
John Romely,
Nottingham.

SUPER SCABS

The article - *Drive Out the Superscabs* - in *WP 76* correctly calls for the expulsion from the NUM of "all union officials who scabbed in the strike or members who organised against the strike from the outset," - ie SUPER-SCABS. The article nevertheless recognises that the NUM has no interest in artificially swelling the ranks of the new scab union with those who scabbed because "they were beaten back to work as the strike failed to break out of its isolation". A distinction is correctly drawn between superscabs and those who scabbed because they were 'misled' or were "weaker than the heroic active minority who held the strike together".

Having made this qualitative distinction it is then for the rank and file and not the leadership to decide who is expelled, since it is the former who know who organised for the defeat of the strike.

In this context the call for the expulsion, for ever, of those who scabbed in the most solid areas, ie Doncaster, Barnsley, S. Wales and Kent is ambiguous and confusing.

Yes, many of the minority who scabbed in these areas chose decisively to help defeat the strike. But there were also those who, particularly towards the end of the strike were simply weaker and less able to withstand the pressure of what seemed a hopeless situation. Thus, for example, in S. Wales (held to be a militant

area) strikers were faced with a leadership who stopped mass picketing, failed to fight the sequestration of funds, asked the Church to intervene and finally and most insidiously spent the last months of the strike arguing within the S. Wales coalfield for an orderly return to work. In such circumstances are those who scabbed towards the end of the strike in S. Wales qualitatively different from those who scabbed in S. Yorkshire?

All of this is not to say that we should ignore the different level of scabbing between one area and another. However, to divide the coalfield into two, as the article appears to and then to seemingly argue for a tactical rank and file response to scabbing in the one, and blanket expulsions in the other is contradictory. It might even be argued that such a distinction panders to the federalist divisions within the NUM and lends support to the erroneous argument from some militants that all scabs should be kicked out of the NUM for good.

In comradeship,

Gaynor Jenkins

We reply:

We were trying to make two key points. Firstly, that the hard core organised scabs must be driven out, and secondly, that the rank and file in the lodges themselves should have the power to decide who has the right to be a member of the NUM.

In our view in the most militant areas those who crossed picket lines did so consciously to beat the strike against the vast majority of their workmates. They should be dealt with as such. But it is the lodges themselves who should decide whether any exceptions should be made. We know of no evidence that there should be.

FIGHTING BACK!

THE ARREST OF a parking offender in Birmingham, the shooting of a mother of six in Brixton, the sudden death during a police raid of a Tottenham woman and the trial of four blacks in Liverpool, all triggered a wave of riots in Britain's inner cities. The scope of the violence echoed the youth uprisings of 1981.

The burning cars and buildings are a powerful symbol of life in Thatcher's Britain - misery for the working class in general and for the oppressed, the youth and the black community, in particular.

The Tories and the police were every-ready to look reality in the backside. The riots it seems, were simply products of hooliganism, of criminals or the result of outside agitators.

"Militants from the West Midlands" who "tried to fan up feelings against authority about socio-economic conditions and that sort of thing" were the target of Brixton's police Commander Alex Marnock.

HARASSMENT

Of course, Marnock, Hurd and Thatcher were quick to denounce the suggestion that the terrible social conditions and unemployment faced in the inner city area could be a major cause of discontent. Still less could they admit the widespread and persistent racist harassment the police mete out to black youth on a daily basis. In a bid to outdo the Tories on the law and order front the Labour leadership have shown equal contempt for black youths.

While some like Birmingham MP Jeff Rooker labelled the riot as "a barbarous act of criminality", Kinnock himself saw fit to pinpoint what he called black youths' "massive overreaction to any kind of conflict with authority or with the police (which is)...part of the final product of horror of what happened in Birmingham", adding that the Handsworth riot

was "senseless and indefensible."

On the contrary all working class fighters should unconditionally defend and support the black youth of Birmingham, Brixton, Toxteth and Tottenham in rebellion against police harassment and repression.

The riots were not, as the Tories claim, criminal outbursts. They, of course, did involve some 'ordinary' criminal activity and some indefensible acts. But in each city what was involved was a spontaneous response by predominantly black youth to flagrant instances of state racism. Police brutality, harassment and deportations are the methods that the British state has chosen to keep the lid on the inner cities.

This is the real answer to the Tories and Hattersley who recommend the passive resignation of say, the Newcastle or Glasgow unemployed youth who do not riot. Why do the bricks fly and buildings burn in Brixton and not Sunderland? The answer is simple - police racism.

A report of the Brixton events appearing in the bosses' house journal *The Economist* (11th Oct) is pretty reliable witness of what this means. "In the side streets there, police in riot gear were banging their shields and shouting racial abuse". It reports a young black and his white girlfriend stopped by the police who were "addressing the young man as 'nigger'". Other police in the same report are quoted as saying, "There's nothing like a bit of coon bashing". Black youth face this almost daily from the police. How would Neil Kinnock respond to being violently abused for being Welsh?

Nor is this racism just a case of a few - or even lots of 'bad coppers'. It comes from the top down. Kenneth Newman is on record as saying that "In the Jamicans you have a people who are constitutionally disorderly. It is simply in their make-up. They're constitutionally disposed to be anti-authority." Such views abound in the police.

A racist police force tolerates

racism among whites. Racist attacks on blacks have accelerated considerably since 1981 (see London Table). The police usually deny a racist motive or worse, accuse the victim of some crime.

An Asian medical student found lying unconscious in the road in the East End of London in 1983, slashed with razor blades and with the letters "NF" carved into his body was not the victim of a racist attack according to police. They claimed he mutilated himself to get out of his exams. In the East End particularly, racist attacks, arson, and gangs have made whole estates no-go areas for blacks.

CONFUSION

The very fact of rolling a whole series of actions and events together and calling them a riot leads to all sorts of confusion - the Tories and the police are happy enough to encourage. The angry response to a piece of brutal police racism like the shooting of Mrs Groce was a spontaneous demonstration that led to an assault on that hated Bastille, Brixton Police station.

Police riot squads counter-attacked and the youth fought back with the means at their disposal. This was a completely justified and supportable struggle not the only and ultimately not the best way of fighting police racism. But this is true of all spontaneous struggle, all outbreaks of resistance. So-called socialists who say 'they shouldn't' or 'they over-react' in reality want black youth not to rebel at all. In fact every working class militant, every real socialist should hail the acts of resistance. Whilst not all the 'rioters' have a uniform degree of political consciousness (in what strike is this the case?) what was involved was a mass

fightback, a realisation of the role of the police.

The negative side of spontaneous flare-ups is that anger does lead to pointless and self-defeating acts of burning of houses and shops. Looting, again understandable in a terribly deprived community, eventually detracts from mass struggle and where it is aimed at small shopkeepers, perhaps themselves members of racially oppressed communities, can give the police allies they should not have. Likewise ordinary criminal lumper acts like rape and assault on innocent individuals can and do occur and can be used by our enemies. These acts cannot be defended, though obviously cases of police frame-up must be.

Because of the spontaneity and disorder of a 'riot' the eventual police repression is very severe, indiscriminate and brutal. The day after every riot the police were back in force. Their video cameras in Brixton High Street enabled them to make a sweep that took the total of arrests to 230. The "no-go area" of the previous night had become a happy hunting ground for the riot cops. Lastly, riots cannot defeat the police. The exhilaration of a night's rioting cannot compensate for the lifetime of harassment and unemployment.

Isolated, through no fault of its own, from the organised labour movement - which under the leadership of men like Kinnock and Willis is indifferent to racism and hostile to black self-organisation and resistance, spontaneous uprisings - 'riots' - have been the only really mass response to unemployment and oppression. Defence campaigns, like the Newham 7 Campaign, have begun to organise youth - white as well as black to fight police racism. It is to organised, militant mass campaigning that we must look if we are to really turn the racists round and keep them on the run. ■



Andrew Moore

Being black in Britain

IN ALL OF the outbursts denouncing the rioters the real problems that caused the riots will be ignored.

The social fuel for the riots is of course the decayed state of inner-city Britain. These areas of Britain have since the late 1960s been systematically run down by capitalism. Starved of investment and industry the inner cities have become saturated with the unemployed. Since Thatcher came to power registered unemployment has risen by over two-thirds to almost 3.4 million. Thousands of youth have been kept off the register by being enslaved on YTS 'jobs'. In Brixton alone unemployment has risen by 249% since 1979. Lambeth, the borough Brixton is in, plays host to 15,340 dwellings officially regarded as unfit for human habitation. *The Economist* talks about the "disemployed West Midlands". Hands-

worth youth live this glib phrase. Of the 1,434 school leavers in the area this summer only 99 found jobs. Of these 42 were Asian and only 8 Afro-Caribbean. The Runnymede Trust in a 1981 report found that between 1972 and 1981 while total unemployment had increased by 138%, black unemployment had increased by 325%. Also in 1981, the CRE found in a study that out of a group of school leavers, 44% of whites gained apprenticeships, compared with 14% of blacks. In 1976 a PEP report found that 18% of white male workers were in semi-skilled or unskilled work compared with between 32% and 58% for black men.

In terms of housing and local authority racism, two 1981 reports found that "black people tend to be offered housing of a poorer quality or in unpopular areas; black people usually have to wait

longer for offers of accommodation.

The Department of Environment found in 1978 that over 60% of Asians and over 50% of Afro-Caribbean people were living in pre-1919 accommodation compared with 26% of whites.

The Social Services and DHSS have a long record of discriminatory practices. For example in 1981 an Indian woman was refused social security because she couldn't speak English and many black people are regularly asked to produce their passports at DHSS offices, hospitals and the like.

More recently, the 1984 PSI Survey - **Black and White Britain** - shows that in most respects this discrimination and racism has considerably deepened. ■

CRE = Commission for Racial Equality

PEP = Political Economy Plan

PSI = Policy Studies Institute

Black Britain

RACIAL ATTACKS BY DISTRICT:

	1983	1984	1985
Camden	40	34	22
Hackney	30	18	15
Tower Hamlets	238	319	111
Newham, Barking and Havering	132	146	68
Islington	32	50	26
Brent & Harrow	70	89	108
Ealing	73	64	46

UNEMPLOYMENT HAS PREVENTED many youth, black youth especially, from joining the official labour movement in the form of the trade unions.

Many will feel very little affinity for a movement which has done little or nothing for them. Kinnock's remarks will

the white workers would refuse to work with him.

When black workers themselves have taken up the struggle to organise unions for themselves they have been met with either racism or indifference. In Birmingham the struggles at Keneal Brothers, East & West, Raindi's and

DESERTED BY THE LABOUR

widen the gulf. The labour movement has not attempted to draw these youth into its ranks. It has not given them the option of expressing their rebellion through political campaigns, rallies, demos, strikes and so on against Thatcher-inflicted idleness. In six years the labour movement has held two highly-policed, vetted and tame People's Marches for Jobs.

Although blacks who are in work are more likely than whites to be trade unionists (56% to 47%) the large portion who are unemployed, especially the youth, are offered nothing by the trade unions.

Many union officials are openly racist, for example, 2 AUEW officials at British Leyland's Castle Bromwich plant in Birmingham were investigated by the Commission for Racial Equality because they told management that if a black worker was employed,

Supreme Quiltings, Winterwarm have all demonstrated the enthusiasm of Asian workers, especially women to join a well-known union like the TGWU. The failure of the Regional officials to give sufficient backing to these struggles has led in some cases, not all, to defeat. The failure to secure Zedekiah Mills' reinstatement at

A STEP IN

During the rioting in Handsworth Basall Heath areas of Birmingham 9th and 10th September Claimant Back (CFB) was the only organisation to distribute literature to the rioters. On Tuesday and Wednesday following the Monday events in Lozells at the Benefits Rights demonstration the following Saturday, CFB issued leaflets. They called for unemployed to organise, demonstrate and carry their fightback against the system has produced unemployment and

THE
AFTERMATH:

COMMUNITY POLICING...

THE REVOLT OF black youth in Handsworth, Brixton and Toxteth exploded the facade of 'inner city renewal' of a whole host of projects by the 'race relations industry' designed to cover up the realities of unemployment and racism. It exploded also the great panacea of 'community-policing'.

It came as no surprise to many black youth in Handsworth that it was local Labour Councillors Taurque and Morwa - who have been tied in with the community policing network - who were swift in condemning the riots and who have been the most vociferous in calling for more police action. Both men were previously involved in hi-jacking the District Labour Party's Community Advisory Committee, preventing any Afro-Caribbean representation. When John Clarke, a Radio 4 reporter, appeared on the streets of Lozells and Brixton within hours of the rioting he was appalled that the premises of Community Transport in Berners Street had been gutted by petrol bombs.

ALL FACADE

Either he didn't know or was not saying that the project was widely rumoured to have been funded through the Lozells Project - a police funded organisation. West Midlands Chief Constable Geoffrey Dear appeared on TV, and radio for several days following the Lozells Events to say how completely taken by surprise the police had been.

Not one single media report has so far mentioned that there had been major disturbances in the vicinity on the weekend prior to the main rioting.

Like the 'envelope' schemes which do up the front of the pre-1919 houses but not the inside, community policing is all facade - merely a different way of keeping the lid on the black working

class areas.

In the mid 1970's the Gray report had targetted 200 Rastafarians in the Handsworth/Lozells area as being the font of all evil. This analysis was accompanied by strenuous harassment, vicious beating administered by police.

Then Superintendent David Webb (now SDP politician and owner of an import-export business) arrived, anticipating in his methods, the so-called softly-softly approach of the Scarman Report, which followed the 1981 riots. In September 1981 Workers Power described the method. "From boxing clubs to adventure holidays the police attempt to divide the oppressed.

They try to co-opt a privileged section of youth to act as spies and informers and as an ideological transmission belt for the principles of law and order. However such methods alone failed to overcome the suspicion and hostility of the most conscious and militant sections of the Asian and Afro-Caribbean youth. As a result 'community policing' widened its scope to include an age-old police concern, the control and development of corruption and crime.

And so the ganga trade began to flourish until Thatcher's moral crusade on drugs forced the Home Office to attempt to vary the terms of the community policing regime in the area. Police harass-

ment was stepped up, fanned by moral panic paraded daily on the front page of the local press, the *Evening Mail*, *Daily News* and the *Soho Star*.

The iron fist in the velvet glove has been used time and again. In the summer of 1981, the local police, knowing that they would have to face a riot at some stage in the aftermath of Brixton, St Pauls and Toxteth, determined to have it over and done with on terms favourable to themselves. The relatively small-scale Handsworth 1981 riot was followed by massive repression, beatings, long gaol sentences and deportation. In 1981 no defence organisation existed in Handsworth. This time it must.

...OR SELF-DEFENCE?

THE HANDSWORTH DEFENCE Campaign was set up immediately after the first arrests on the 9th and 10th September. It was initiated by the Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Group.

Many other local black groups and individuals have joined the campaign, including the local Asian Youth Movement and Birmingham Black Sisters.

In the first three weeks of work the campaign has correctly stated that it will boycott the Silverman enquiry set up by the City Council which "cannot guarantee immunity from prosecution for any witnesses"

ENQUIRY

This fact alone underscores the correctness of the call for a labour movement enquiry into the 'riots', one which is free from the pressures of the police and courts. To date, however, the campaign has not put its weight behind this call and indeed has

failed to take up the challenge of building the campaign within the trade union and labour movement as well as the community. It is precisely within this arena that arguments against state racism, police harassment need to be put.

Certainly, the campaign can justifiably pour scorn on the Birmingham Trades Council's 'solution' of 'more jobs'. But such simple-mindedness will not go away unless its politically fought against from the inside. The campaign's view of the labour movement is extremely manipulative (ie 'if you want to help then donate money').

But this suits such bodies no end as it commits them to no action. The campaign has outlined two major tasks for itself to date. First, to gather information on those arrested. Secondly, to ensure that defendants get a legal and political defence. On the last point, it is to be welcomed that the campaign has now agreed to take up the defence of white youth after an initial refusal to do so.

But there are still weaknesses in the campaign. First it fails to argue for 'dropping all the charges' and for the release of all those arrested. Failure to do this fudges the issue of 'who is to blame?' thereby giving no political defence of those arrested.

Secondly, it has failed to take up the plight of those who lost goods and shops in the riots. If the defence campaign fails to take up certain justified demands of the shop-keepers, it is leaving them prey to the proto-Tories in the Asian community. The compensation provisions of the Riot Damages Act are inadequate and the demand must be raised of full compensation for all local people who suffered loss in the rioting.

IMPORTANT

This demand is important and in no way inconsistent with dropping the charges against rioters and freeing those imprisoned. The unity of Afro-Caribbean and Asian Youth is fantastic. But this should not be a signal for complacent attitudes towards the small traders who have more in common with the working class and unemployed who use their shops than with the capitalists, black or white.

The conspicuous consumption style of some of the traders has given a false impression to some youth of just how well off they are or how they may have got their money. But other youths were active during the disturbances defending shops from criminal opportunists. Rasta's and others played a prominent part in defending Asian-owned shops on the 9th and 10th of September.

These examples of black unity in defending and 'policing' while the police ran riot point the way to an alternative to the thugs in blue in our communities. If the aftermath of the riots of 1981

bolstered illusions in reform or accountability of the police, the miners strike and now these latest rebellions have undermined them.

Revolutionaries can hold out no schemes for reforming the police. They are part and parcel of a state which defends the class interests of the bosses. They and the bosses' armed forces cannot be reformed; they must be smashed.

However, this is not a task for a militant minority in the here and now. It can only be achieved when the working class surges forward in a mass revolutionary struggle culminating in an insurrection that can destroy the police force and replace it with a militia of the armed working people.

Here and now in situations like the recent upheavals the need is shown for organised black self-defence squads against police riots and harassment and also to protect the community against lumen elements taking advantage of the disorder.

Sports clubs or even recreation centres-free of police and their narks-can act as the basis for training and organising.

POLICE VIOLENCE

Just as in the miners' strike police violence indicated the need for workers' defence squads so it is becoming clearer to militant fighters that the para-military police squads exist to smash any effective resistance to the bosses attacks on working people. We need a united response, particularly active labour movement support for black self-defence.

To hit back at and obstruct police repression we should support certain immediate, short-term demands and some democratic reforms. When the police are on the rampage it is correct to call for their total withdrawal from the area concerned. After the events like the recent ones we should resist 'official enquiries' and counterpose to them a black community-labour movement enquiry into the prosecutions.

We should also demand that Labour Councils withhold the police precept and we should demand of any Labour Government that it dissolves the riot and picketing squads, breaks up the Association of Chief Police Officers and subordinates local police forces to the democratically elected local councils.

SUPPORT

We support these demands, not because individually or by themselves they will solve the problem of police attacks but to make their job in these areas more difficult for them.

In the end though, like the rotten capitalist system they stand guard over they will have to be abolished by the action of a united (black and white) revolutionary working class.

min in revolt

the Longbridge plant after he was sacked for cuffing a foreman who made a racist remark provided further proof, if it were needed, that the unions as they exist now are unable to take up specific questions of black oppression.

Black youth cannot be blamed

MOVEMENT?

for their isolation from the labour movement. Their anger is not just at Tory policies, as the Labour left claim. It is also at the indifference of the labour movement.

The answer to the passivity, racism and bureaucratic nature of the unions lies not in abandoning them though, but in fighting

RIGHT DIRECTION

ignores them. Three days after the main rioting a job centre was occupied with press and TV giving coverage (watered down quotes) of the young unemployed's views of the riot.

Because CFB were on the streets supporting youth fighting back we were able to put over political ideas in the hope of forwarding youth's anger and arguing for further action against unemployment and against the injustices of the present society. □

by a member of Claimant Fight Back



Andrew Ward (Report)

to transform them into militant class struggle bodies. Young black workers can and should play a leading role in this.

Militants must begin to address the black community and the youth as a whole with a programme of action that can offer them hope, offer them a conscious and organised way of fighting back. We must fight in every labour movement body against every instance of racism:

- * Against the police harassment of black youth;
- * Against the immigration laws;
- * Against deportations;
- * Against attacks on black families by fascist and racist thugs;
- * For the opening of the unions and the Labour Party to black workers, young and old, with the provision of democratic black sections. On top of this we must take up the terrible

plight of the young jobless. We must argue for:

- * Working class unity, the unity of the employed and unemployed;
- * The right of unemployed workers to join a union of their own choice with full rights and reduced subs;
- * A fight for work or full pay and for the imposition of the 35 hour week in every industry;
- * A fight to end YTS and, in the meantime unionise the youths on YTS 'jobs';
- * For the provision of full benefits and free social and recreational facilities for the unemployed at the expense of the state;
- * Organise the unemployed into a National Union of Unemployed Workers with full representation at every level of the labour movement. ■

WITHIN SIX WEEKS of his inauguration as President, Victor Paz Estenssoro has given notice to the Bolivian working class of what it can expect from his new government. Declaring a 'state of siege' on September 19th, Paz proceeded to order the arrest of thousands of trade unionists involved in a general strike against government austerity measures.

Juan Lechin, longtime leader of the COB (the Bolivian Trade Union Federation), together with its current general secretary Walter Delgadillo and leaders of the Oil, Bank and Telecommunications Workers were sent into 'internal exile' - banished to remote towns in the Amazonian jungle near Brazil.

Soldiers opened fire on striking workers in the capital La Paz, while others raided the trade union headquarters and university looking for strike leaders and 'political agitators'.

Paz is the 77 year old leader of the MNR-H and has been elected president three times before. In 1952 a general strike and insurrection, led by the Bolivian miners overthrew the existing military regime, and brought to power the 'National Revolutionary Movement' (MNR).

This party had enormous support amongst the workers and peasants at that time on the basis of its anti-imperialist pronouncements. Its leaders promised to free the country from the grip of imperialism, especially the USA, and from the exploitation of the multi-national corporations which made enormous profits out of Bolivia's natural resources, while its workers lived in abject poverty.

mobilisation

Under the pressure of the mobilised and armed masses the MNR government introduced a major land reform which broke up many of the larger estates and distributed land to the peasants. The major mining companies were nationalised and the state mining corporation COMIBOL was set up.

Despite its revolutionary and anti-imperialist rhetoric, the MNR remained a government which defended bourgeois property. Its strategy of developing Bolivian industry behind protective trade barriers and through state-capitalist enterprises like COMIBOL, was combined with a determination to demobilise the masses and reach a compromise with imperialism.



Paz Estenssoro

Within a few years the Paz Estenssoro regime had managed to divide the peasant organisations from the workers, re-build the shattered Bolivian army through US supplied aid and impose a US backed IMF 'stabilisation plan' on the workers which attacked jobs and living standards.

But this was not sufficient for the Bolivian ruling class nor their imperialist masters. As in many other Latin American countries the strength of the working class and its combativity in the face of attacks on its living standards demanded more extraordinary measures.

coup

Having weakened the workers organisations and defences, Paz himself was overthrown by a military coup. This regime of General

BOLIVIAN WORKERS RESIST NEW AUSTERITY



Juan Lechin leader of the Bolivian workers central (COB)

Barrientos guaranteed the Bolivian and US bosses stable and profitable exploitation through the massive repression of the labour movement.

This vicious circle of mass revolt headed off and contained by 'revolutionary nationalist' governments, who only pave the way for renewed military dictatorships, has become the tragic pattern of modern Bolivian politics.

Paz replaces his old ally the outgoing President, Hernan Siles Zuazo, leader of the MNR-I. The MNR-I, having split from Paz in 1970, took over the 'revolutionary' mantle of the MNR and formed the UDP government in 1980. Siles, like Paz before him, was swept into office after a general strike which forced the corrupt military junta to hand over power to a civilian government.

austerity

The UDP government which included the Bolivian Communist Party and 'socialist' MIR, proceeded, after a short time, to try and impose IMF demanded 'austerity' measures, only to be met by massive working class resistance. Between September 1982 and the elections in July there were six general strikes in Bolivia.

Despite their enormous heroism and self-sacrifice, especially from the miners, the Bolivian working class was once again crippled by its leadership. The entry into the government of the major 'left' parties, and the support initially given to it by the COB leadership, provided Siles with a left cover.

Even when the UDP was openly attacking the working class its leaders were unwilling to fight for an alternative kind of government, one which would have defended the interests of the masses and taken real measures to expropriate the bosses, arm the workers and disband the army - a Workers and Peasants Government. (see; **Bolivia failed general strike paves way for right. WP73**)

defensive

Under such leadership the series of general strikes became purely defensive, exhausting the resources of the masses, at best giving temporary respite from UDP attacks. Yet they provided no permanent solution to Bolivia's economic crisis.

Only a programme of action, which rejected placing the burden of the crisis on the shoulders of the workers and peasants and which counterposed to it making the bosses and the imperialists pay the costs of their own crisis, would have been able to rally the rural masses and middle strata behind the proletariat. The immediate and complete cancellation of the debts to the international

as under the 'Cocaïne Junta' of General Luis García Meza of 1980-81, was given the Ministry of Defence!

Clearly Paz hopes this will give the reactionary Generals enough influence in Government to make them desist from launching a coup. Such concessions were tried without much success by Salvador Allende near the end of his 1970-73 government in Chile.

extension

That is why, by its very nature, such a struggle had to aim beyond the borders of Bolivia. The struggle would have dynamised the opposition to the tottering Pinochet regime in Chile, opened the possibilities of the Bolivian workers giving a lead to the masses of Peru and Argentina faced with similar attacks from their governments to pay their crippling debts to the imperialists.

Such a strategy was the only one that offered a way out of the disastrous cycle of military dictatorships imposed on the Bolivian people. Instead, the beneficiaries of the apparent stalemate between the UDP government and the organised workers was the right.

Hugo Banzer's ADN (Banzer headed the military dictatorship between 1971 and 1978) won the largest percentage of the votes in the July elections - 28% compared to Paz's 26%. He took over 50% of the votes in the capital La Paz. The MNRH scored heavily amongst the peasants, while Siles' MNR-I was decimated. Despite this Paz with the support of the MIR and other 'left' parties won the Presidency in the Congress.

sacrifice

Within days of his inauguration Paz was declaring to a meeting of Bolivian businessmen his plans for solving the economic crisis; **"The only alternative is work, sacrifice and to place ourselves in a completely realistic situation. This means going against the political approach we created and adopted (since 1952). We are breaking with this policy to adopt an entirely different one"**.

The 'sacrifice' of course was not to be asked of his well fed

banks, the expropriation of the capitalists and all imperialist holdings, the taking over of the major retail distribution companies and placing them under workers control, stamping out the black market, the extension of credit to the peasants; these were the type of demands which needed to be fought for and mobilised around.

hostility

Of course, a government which implemented such revolutionary measures would have faced not only the ferocious hostility of its own bourgeoisie and its armed forces, (thus the importance of revolutionary work amongst rank and file soldiers) but also a virtual blockade by the imperialists.

The Paz government of 1985 is very different to that of 1952. The government knows that it will only be tolerated if it shows it can do what Siles could not do, break the resistance of the working class and drive down living standards in the interests of profit.

If Paz fails there is always the ADN waiting in the wings or a return to a direct military dictatorship. So aware is Paz of this that he has included in his 'democratic' government two well known "Golpista's", figures who have been involved in previous military coups and their dictatorships. Luis Fernando Valle, who served in the military government of General Pereda in 1978 as well



Sán Jose tin mine

audience but their poverty stricken employees. The MNR's traditional anti-imperialist rhetoric and aversion to foreign investment has quickly been dumped in favour of policies which will attract US support and investment. Paz quickly announced Bolivia's 'willingness to pay' its \$4.8 billion foreign debt. Nearly \$1 billion is owed immediately in overdue payments to the international banks as the UDP had declared a unilateral moratorium in June 1984.

payments

Such payments can only be made at the expense of the workers and peasants. On 29 August a swingeing austerity package was introduced aimed at doing just that. Petrol went up 700%, domestic gas (widely used for cooking) went up 20 times, bread quadrupled in price, electricity and telephone costs are to rise ten fold. Most restrictions on imports and exports were lifted in the interests of this 'free market', while the currency was massively devalued. Other measures announced included the breaking up of COMIBOL into decentralised enterprises obviously aimed at weakening the miners' control over management and paving the way for future privatisation of profitable mines. He also announced the opening up of the Uyuni region, said to contain the largest deposits of Lithium and Potassium in the world, to foreign capital.

It was also these measures which led to the September general strike. Originally called for 48 hours by the COB leadership, such was the support that it was extended indefinitely. Paz immediately declared the strike illegal, a fact that did not stop the miners, factory workers, workers in telecommunications, teachers, bankworkers, the oil workers, railwaymen and many other sections making the strike solid.

lessons

The declaration of the state of siege and the use of the army against the strikers was deliberately aimed at weakening the union movement and demonstrating to the bourgeoisie and US imperialists Paz's determination to take on and defeat the working class.

The Bolivian workers must quickly learn the lessons of the past period and set about forging a new leadership in the struggle against the MNR government. Only by doing so can they finally settle accounts with the Bolivian capitalists and their Generals, as well as with their imperialist paymasters. ■

by S.King

THE LEFT ON SOUTH AFRICA

Socialist Worker Review



AS THE NON-RACIAL South African trade unions have moved to form a single trade union federation, so the debate in the workers' movement over the question of forming an independent workers' party has sharpened. Naturally the debate has raised the question, what should the workers be fighting for in South Africa? Around what politics, perspectives and programme should such a party be built? What should its relationship be to 'multi-class' organisations like the ANC and UDF?

Two organisations on the British left - the Socialist Action, a paper associated with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, and the Socialist Workers Party have recently taken up these questions, and both have provided their usual misleading answers.

by Stuart King

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) declares it is for a socialist revolution in South Africa and is critical of the ANC/SACP perspective of the need for a bourgeois 'democratic stage' of the revolution.

However, when it comes down to putting forward a strategy to achieve a workers' revolution, to build a party that can lead it in the midst of the revolutionary crisis that grips South Africa, the SWP is completely at a loss.

While Alex Callinicos thinks that the Militant-aligned Marxist Workers Tendency's perspective of transforming the ANC into a revolutionary party "has some merits", he has no time for those who call for the formation of a revolutionary workers party based on the black trade unions. "Any such quasi-syndicalist strategy fails to confront the fact that the mass of black trade unionists are likely to look towards either the ANC or the Black consciousness movement for political leadership." (Socialist Review Sept 1985)

And why are they likely to look towards the ANC or the National Forum? Clearly because there is no alternative political party representing the interests of the workers, fighting for socialism and leading the democratic struggle against the Apartheid regime. This struggle is now left precisely under the leadership of the UDF and ANC. Callinicos rejects any struggle to involve the mass of black workers in political leadership through their trade unions and a workers' party. This is in fact a recipe for not challenging the hold of the ANC and UDF.

Besides, Callinicos exaggerates the degree to which black workers, especially trade unionists, look to the ANC for leadership. In the past few years South African workers have been engaged in a historical task - that of constituting themselves as a conscious class, building a mass organised labour movement. From trade union tasks they are beginning to raise the question of a workers' political party.

The current Socialist Review carries an interview with a leader of MAWU, the Metal Workers' affiliate of FOSATU, Moses Mayekiso. Mayekiso represents an important current within the FOSATU unions, one which clearly sees the need to build a workers' party. "The general feeling is that the workers must have their own party and their own freedom charter" declares Mayekiso. "The (ANC's Freedom) Charter is a capitalist document. We need a workers' charter that will say clearly who will control the farms, presently owned by the capitalists, who will control the factories, the mines and so on. There must be a change of the whole society." (S.R. October 1985)

Mayekiso, and apparently others within the FOSATU, believe such a party can be formed after the unified trade union federation has been created. How does the Socialist Workers Party respond to this extremely healthy current? Predictably Nigel Lambert takes up Callinicos' theme that it's not possible to build a mass revolutionary party in South Africa at the moment. "Any mass workers' party formed under existing circumstances would end up with 'fudged' politics. It would be a centrist and not a revolutionary party." (Emphasis in original)

So what does the SWP tell workers who want to struggle for a mass workers' party, one which can really influence events, and break the hold of the multi-class and non-socialist organisations like the UDF and ANC have on the struggle? It is of course the identical recipe these bankrupts peddle for Britain, "recruit the ones and twos".

It is simply laughable when transferred to a country convulsed by revolutionary upheaval, involving hundreds of thousands of the toiling masses. The "Leninist Party" is grotesquely misrepresented as coming about by "the conscious decision of a handful of likeminded individuals."

Why a handful? It is described as a "grouplet" and of course, "it is unlikely that such an organisation would be able to lead the masses in struggle." Indeed. So this is the wretched perspective that the SWP offers the South African working class in a situation it describes as revolutionary. This is the politics of a pathetic sect, not of a revolutionary group claiming to be "a party".

A revolutionary party would grasp at the desire of significant numbers of workers to form their own party, not discourage it. It would intervene in the struggle for such a party.

Rather than standing on the sidelines declaring "it will all end in tears", it would fight to win such a party to a revolutionary perspective - a revolutionary programme. It would have on its side the enormous energy of a new proletariat, with only an embryonic trade union bureaucracy to hold it back.

In such circumstances even if such a party came into being as a mass centrist party, the revolutionaries would have gained a serious influence with the best elements, providing they had fought alongside them for revolutionary, not centrist politics. But this approach is quite beyond the ken of the SWP. At the decisive moment of the mass upsurge they offer a "grouplet" unable to "lead the masses in struggle."

The unspoken logic of their position is that the trade unions and their mass membership should not mess with politics. If they did it would only end in a centrist mess. So what should they do? Leave politics to the Stalinist popular frontists of the ANC/UDF and get on with the good old 'economic struggle'. That is the inescapable logic of their position.

'Leninist Party', 'Socialism', 'workers revolution' - for the SWP this is the music of the future, and a very distant one at that! What is this political method? Economism and tallism just as Lenin characterised it in "What is to be done?". ■



SOCIALIST ACTION

SOCIALIST ACTION DOES not have the same problems of developing a strategy for socialist revolution in South Africa. Indeed it castigates any tendency which dares to raise anti-capitalist or socialist demands in that country today. "The first step in developing a correct appreciation of the dynamic of the South African revolution is to reject the economist and wrong schemas of forces who attempt to explain that the key demands in South Africa are in the first instance anti-capitalist, for the nationalisation of the top monopolies and so on. Revolutionary democratic demands, in every aspect, constitute the cutting edge and axis of the South African revolution". (S.A. 6.9.85)

The positions developed in Socialist Action are, in fact, virtually indistinguishable from those of the South African Communist Party. Indeed, in their enthusiasm to become the best foot soldiers for the Stalinist perspective of the "democratic stage", they are prepared to go further. Even the ANC's Freedom Charter pays lip service to the need to transfer mineral wealth, the banks and monopoly industry "to the ownership of the people as a whole". Not so Socialist Action. Such demands are wrong and "economistic". "One of the most serious errors which exists on the Marxist left in Britain" starts one pompous article in a recent socialist section, "is to consider that a democratic is a 'second best' issue, that the really key slogans are economic - for the nationalisation of the 200 monopolies, for wage increases etc". (S.A. 20.9.85)

For the erudite "Marxists" of Socialist Action the expropriation of the expropriators becomes just another economic demand equivalent to an increase in wages. Not for Socialist Action such economic demands, they will stick to "democracy only please".

The underlying view expressed here is that political demands are bourgeois-democratic demands and that the specific class demands of the proletariat, whether immediate (wages) or historic (expropriation of all the major industries etc, are merely economic.

Since political demands are 'higher' than economic - hey presto - the workers' demands are a lower form of struggle - economism, an obstacle and a diversion. The quickness of hand deceives the eye! But wait a minute, didn't old Marx say something rather different; "the economic emancipation of the working class is therefore the great end to which every political movement ought to be subordinate as a means."

The working class has in its programme not merely political demands for bourgeois society

whilst it lasts (democratic demands) and economic ones to for that matter (higher wages, health and safety provisions etc). It has political demands for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, for replacing capitalism which starts with the expropriation of the bourgeoisie.

It has transitional demands which bridge the immediate and the historic tasks. For Marxists, Leninists Trotskyists this should be ABC. Not for Comrade Ross who has returned to the Mensheviks and the Stalinists for guidance. "The black working class must throw itself completely into the democratic revolution against apartheid...Will the South African working class through the struggle to overthrow apartheid succeed in establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat?...It is impossible to decide in advance. Only struggle not speculation decides these questions". (Democratic and Socialist Revolutions - S.A. 13.9.85)

Yes, but struggle for what? Ross is in effect saying: 'If the working class goes beyond the democratic stage well and good but you must not fight for it to do so. That would upset the apple cart of the democratic revolution.' In fact the United Secretariat, with the briefest nod in the direction of the "process" of Permanent Revolution, adopts its bitter rival, the Stalinist-Menshevik revolution by stages.

The United Secretariat is determined to play the role of fifth wheel on the cart of Stalinism. In March 1983 the USEC adopted a resolution which proclaimed the perspective for Permanent Revolution in South Africa, and which called for the formation of "a workers' party". But no sooner had the UDF been formed than the USFI saw little wrong with the leadership of the struggle remaining in its hands. "Recent struggles have also shown the need for political centralisation: in their own way the UDF and the National Forum are seeking to fill this vacuum". (USEC declaration Sept 1984)

The workers' party slogan has sunk without trace. The perspective of Permanent Revolution for socialism, is perverted into a struggle for democracy as a first stage. As in the past at the first approach of petit bourgeois nationalist and Stalinist forces, the USFI quickly jettisons its "Trotskyist baggage" to make itself indistinguishable from them.

The USFI, if it had a significant influence in South Africa, would guarantee the triumph not of the proletariat revolution but of a bourgeois democratic regime which would carry on the exploitation of the masses, albeit in a different form, in the interests of capitalism, and imperialism. ■



Conditions heat up in Durban



PHILIPPINES - THE NEXT DOMINO?

THE MURDER OF liberal leader Benigno Aquino in August 1983 highlighted the political crisis in the Philippines. In the last 2 years it has deepened. Popular revolt against the corrupt Marcos regime is intensifying with massive demonstrations and strikes. One hundred and thirty strikes alone were reported for the first quarter this year. The regime's repression cannot halt it.

The Philippines is also in the depth of an economic recession. It's the fifth largest debtor nation in the world. In the 15 months after Benigno Aquino's murder, inflation went up to 64%; there has been a 49% devaluation of the peso, with unemployment up at 25% in urban areas and personal consumption down by 3.5%.

By the end of 1984, the Philippines was \$2 billion in arrears with its repayment of bank loans. A World Bank report of the Philippines recommended that to stabilise the economy would need a "significantly lower standard of living, high unemployment, declining real wages and rapidly increasing poverty". (Far Eastern Economic Review 12, 1984). The answer of course is to make the workers and peasants pay for the crisis.

IMF loans

This can be seen in the deal with 483 foreign banks and the IMF to bale out the economy. Its massive debt of \$5.8 million was rescheduled along with arrangements for new loan facilities, trade credits and special drawing rights of over \$600 million from the IMF.

This deal was arranged at a price - the IMF wanted the devaluation and the floating of the peso against the US dollar, a tight control on the money supply, cuts in public corporation spending, abolition of price controls on a wide range of consumer goods and, most importantly, tax restructuring (shifting the tax burden from external transactions and trade to domestic sources). As a consequence, it is expected that the bulk of the 1986 budget will go towards debt servicing.

Marcos has further prostrated the Philippines to the rapacious banks and opened up the Philippines still further to exploitation by US monopolies. The Philippines economy is heavily export-based, dependent on commodities such as sugar, coconut products, copper, timber and gold. The economy was hard hit by slumping world prices and a decline in export. Sugar was trading at 60 cents per pound ten years ago but it is now worth 2 cents a pound. The export of copper concentrate has fallen by 54% in the last year.

Also what have become known as the 'cronies industries' - sugar and coconut - have suffered from years of corruption during which monopolies in trading, tax concessions and preferential interest rates were given by Marcos' family to allied clan businessmen and golfing partners.

slump

Plantation workers in both the sugar and coconut agribusiness are poorly paid, usually only seasonally employed and live at near starvation level. Mechanisation and the slump in world prices have brought wholesale unemployment and under-employment to sugar islands like Negros, with both agricultural workers and sugar mill workers out of work. Coconut share croppers and small holders are forced to sell their crops to the monopoly controlled by the Minister of Defence, Enrile.

Most of them have to borrow on future crops and end up with lifetime indebtedness which is passed on from generation to generation. The so-called land reform by Marcos in the rice growing area involved only a small area



Anti Marcos demonstration in Manila

of land, and the peasants had to buy the land 'distributed' to them. Most peasants had their land seized for debt long before they had finished paying for it.

Many observers have drawn a parallel between Marcos' regime and that of Somoza in Nicaragua, or the Shah of Iran. In fact it is a pattern for the United States' semi-colonial 'empire'. Washington is anxious to find a respectable pro-US oppositionist to replace Marcos. Aquino had fitted that bill.

Since his murder, the US has increasingly pressurised Marcos to carry out minor reforms in order to defuse popular revolt. But despite the fact that the US has misgivings about the continued rule of Marcos, a leaked US State Department document revealed that Washington plans to continue to support Marcos because "a radicalised Philippines would destabilise the whole region." (FEER 21.3.85)

US bases

The Philippines plays a central role in US military strategy in the Pacific region. The Archipelago controls the straits between the Pacific Ocean and Indian Ocean. There are over 20 US military bases in the Philippines. Two in particular, the Subic Bay Naval base and the Clark Air Base, are the biggest foreign US bases in the world. They are located in a king-pin position, linking up a network of US bases along the Western Pacific from South Korea to Guam to Okinawa to Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, encircling the 'communist' countries of China and Indo-China. Marcos had recently threatened to abrogate the agreement on US bases to blackmail continued support for his regime from the US Congress.

There is a significant bourgeois opposition to Marcos. It includes many businessmen and professionals shut out from the economic spoils monopolised by the Marcos Ramouldaz families and their cronies. They are split between a pro-American faction, centred on the Unido party and an anti-American nationalist grouping. They also disagree on the choice for a common presidential candidate for the 1987 Presidential election.

The 30,000 strong Communist Party of Philippines (CPP), on the other hand, spearheads the popular opposition to Marcos. Its political wing the National Democratic Front (NDF) has been active in organising mass demonstrations on popular causes in what the NDF describes as the 'effective forms of legal struggle'.

It is involved in organising urban squatters, e.g. the Zone One Tondo in Manila, the students' movement and also the anti-nuclear movement. However up till recently the main emphasis of the CPP has been on a guerillist strategy. Its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA) organises over 20,000 fighters and has been engaged in armed struggle against the Philippine security forces since 1969.

The NPA has significant support and influence amongst the peasants in many parts of the Philippines. The US Embassy in

Manila estimates that '17% of the villages and city wards are under a certain degree of NPA control and the shadow government of the NPA often is the more effective one in the Provinces'. (FEER 30.8.84) The CPP magazine *Ang Bayan* claims 45 guerilla fronts in 53 provinces.



NPA guerillas

In the guerilla zones there are self governing units, Barangay (village councils) which organise their own defence, health, education and administration. (International Viewpoint 16.9.85) The NPA controls large areas in Luzon, the Samar Island and the area around the city of Davao in Mindanao. With increased spontaneous mobilisation in the urban area and the success of the bourgeois opposition in the May 1984 elections to the National Assembly (the number of opposition seats was increased from 13 to 61) the CPP is turning towards work in the urban areas.

Bayan

It is now working through the one million strong Bayan (New Nationalist Alliance) together with liberal democrats such as ex senator Tanada, the League of Philippine Students as well as the May First Movement. Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) is an independent trade union coalition of 12 labour federations plus over 100 individual unions with a total membership of 500,000 workers in the garment, textile, mining, steel and sugar industries.

The Bayan is an alliance combining bourgeois political forces with those of the working class and peasantry. It is supposed to combine protest action with electioneering. Since May 1985 the group has organised general strikes in Southern Philippines and in the central region near Manila, and there are plans for a national general strike later this year. It also plans to stand candidates for the local elections in 1986 for mayors and governors in the areas where the NPA has the greatest influence. This is an about-face from its unsuccessful calls for boycott in the May 1984 elections.

Yet the attempts to maintain and even extend the popular front have met difficulties. Two leading

bourgeois oppositionists Dionko and Agapito Aquino (Benigno's brother) withdrew support from Bayan; ostensibly not because of its politics which are bourgeois democratic, but because of a squabble over a power-sharing agreement. Recent interviews with leading CP members (IV 28.1.84 and IV 28.1.85) have shown that the

CPP limits its aims to the overthrow of Marcos and so-called national independence from American imperialism. It is for the break up of feudalism "so that the local forces of capitalism can be liberated, that is, the national entrepreneurs and smaller businessmen. The property owned by the multi-nationals and traitor elements will be taken over by the state. Our economy would be a combined one - of state and Philippine private ownership...the solution is a national democratic revolution of a new type. That is, with the class leadership of the proletariat."

Here we have the classic Stalinist strategy of a 'revolution

by stages' and the utilisation of the Peoples' Front. The CPP looks to its allies the petit-bourgeoisie and the middle classes and even the Catholic Church. Its only enemy is the comprador bourgeoisie - the bankers and the big landlords. It is also in favour of a "coalition government that would be representative of the various sections of society" with Diokno and Tanada, as a transitional stage.

But tailoring one's strategy and tactics to maintaining an alliance with the national bourgeoisie means abandoning not only the historic goal of the working class (socialism) but also pushing into the background the immediate needs of the workers and peasants. The 'leading role of the working class' is a fraud if its class demands are trimmed and ignored.

US imperialism's massive military presence means that the fight to replace Marcos with anything other than the tamest bourgeois government will take an enormous revolutionary mobilisation of the workers and peasants. When this occurs the 'progressive' bourgeois will rush into the arms of the Americans.

permanent revolution

The choice is between the road of permanent revolution via the worker-peasant alliance to working class power or, at best, a bourgeois parliamentary regime that will soon be imposing the IMF's austerity measures on the people. The Stalinists will then have to choose between impotent and demoralised opposition or urging the masses to make sacrifices in the name of the 'national democratic revolution'. Proletarian revolution or bourgeois democratic counter-revolution - there is no third way. ■

by Din Wong

continued from back page

holds of the United Democratic Front (UDF) which is increasingly gaining influence amongst the Natal youth. Buthelezi's growing isolation has signalled to Anglo and Barclays that they shouldn't put all their eggs in one basket.

The United Democratic Front (UDF), despite severe repression, is commanding increasing support with demands for one person one vote and the dismantling of Apartheid. Polls reveal the loyalty of the black masses to the UDF's co-thinkers the banned African National Congress (ANC) and its jailed leader Nelson Mandela. The logical step for 'progressive' big business? Talk to the ANC! And so they did, flying last month to a game lodge near Lusaka.

Anglo boss Gavin Relly described the talks after as 'useful' and 'cordial'. While being unable to persuade the ANC to drop the armed struggle or abandon their commitment to majority rule, the businessmen were heartened to find agreement with the ANC on the need to preserve a 'mixed economy'.

freedom charter

Of course the ANC has never claimed to be fighting for socialism in South Africa and its programme, the **Freedom Charter** is not one for socialist transformation. The ANC has talked about taking over the big, white owned monopolies, indeed it would have to, to allow space for black businesses to emerge. Neither has it declared which monopolies are classified as 'big' - apart from mining.

Already much of South African capital is state owned or semi-nationalised like steel, fuel and transport. Anglo-American could survive with such a government. In Zambia for instance, not only was it fully compensated for its copper mines when they were

nationalised, it now makes enormous profits from marketing Zambia's copper internationally under contract to the Zambian government.

Measures which really break the grip of the monopoly capitalists on South Africa and benefit the workers are not part of the ANC's programme. These would include the immediate nationalisation of all the monopolies without compensation and under the control of the workers. Not only do the ANC oppose such demands but so does the major force within it - the South African Communist Party, who argue for a 'democratic stage'. Where capitalism is restricted rather than overthrown.

The South African capitalists know that, if they have to, they can live with a capitalist, if statified, mixed economy. They have done it elsewhere in Africa many times - in Zambia, in Zimbabwe. It is the workers and peasants who end up paying the price through exploitation and oppression.

Nevertheless despite the fact that the ANC and the UDF are fighting not for working class power but for one person one vote etc., it is the clear duty of British workers to give the fullest support to their struggle against Apartheid. There is a sharp dividing line at present between them and the collaborator Buthelezi.

What the talks do confirm is the dangers within the ANC's long standing strategy of fighting for a democratic South Africa as a first stage, without fundamentally attacking capitalism. This leads them to look for alliances with 'progressive' sections of capital at home and abroad. If victorious as a strategy within the black trade unions and opposition movement, it could tie the South African working class into a fatal alliance with their exploiters. ■

Clara Zetkin's Revolutionary Writings

CLARA ZETKIN Selected Writings Edited by Philip S Foner. International Publishers, New York 1984. (£5.50 Pbk).

CLARA ZETKIN WAS the major leader of the German Socialist Women's Movement from 1890-1917, and she launched and directed the Women's Secretariat of the Second International. Until the publication of this book nothing except short extracts of articles has been available in English. For that reason this volume of Selected Writings is to be welcomed.

Philip S Foner, editor of the book, has written a useful introduction which sketches Zetkin's life personally and politically, giving a degree of insight into her strength and determination as a revolutionary fighter. But the pieces included in the book are highly selective. Zetkin wrote profusely, mainly as editor of a fortnightly women's paper *Die Gleichheit* (Equality) for 27 years. Her works were also used in general socialist publications and pamphlets, plus many resolutions and theses for Party Congresses. Obviously a book of only 134 pages of her writings cannot show the breadth and depth of her work.

PROPAGANDIST

By all accounts Zetkin was primarily a propagandist, writing articles in papers and journals, rather than a great theoretician. Each piece is therefore directed towards a specific audience, commenting on particular debates. Not given the political content of her writing means that some of the significance of each article is lost. Zetkin was in fact involved in a number of major debates in the German SPD which need to be understood to appreciate her real contribution.

Zetkin's political strength lay in her ability to take up the theories and analyses of women's oppression contained in Marxism up to that point, and then make them immediately relevant to the socialist programme. As she herself commented: "His (Marx's) materialist concept of history has not supplied us with any ready-made formulas concerning the women's question, yet it has done something much more important: it has given us the correct, unerring method to explore and comprehend that question." (p93).

Socialists had for many decades stressed women's liberation, but they had always seen it as something to happen once socialism is achieved.

Zetkin saw that the equality of women was inextricably linked to the class struggle, but also that if the working class was to be victorious women had to be an active part of the movement.

Marx, Engels and Bebel had argued that women needed to be drawn into work outside of the family if they were to become economically independent and be able to participate in the class struggle. Zetkin took these arguments to the German socialists and demanded that they support women's right to work.

Zetkin won the International Congress of 1889 and the SPD to this position, and led a struggle to organise women in trade unions alongside men.

FEMINISTS

Another major application of Zetkin's work was over the question of relationships with middle class feminists. Again Bebel had raised this question - bourgeois feminism not being sufficient for the liberation of working class women but he still argued for possible joint work. Zetkin was quite clearly opposed to any compromises with such ladies.

In 1895 she vigorously attacked the SPD for urging workers to support a women's rights petition from the bourgeois feminists. She argued that tying working class women to the partial demands of their rich 'sisters' was a diversion of energy and potentially divisive of the working class.

"...the liberation struggle of the proletarian woman cannot be similar to the struggle that the bourgeois woman wages against the male of her class. On the contrary, it must be a joint struggle with the male of her class against the entire class of capitalists." (p78)

Zetkin's rejection of bourgeois feminism did not mean that she ignored the sexual division within the working class. She recognised that male workers were often hostile to women taking on jobs in factories, but proposed definite ways of overcoming these divisions.



sions. Specifically on unionisation and its problems, she argued in 1893:

"The male workers must stop viewing the female worker primarily as a woman to be courted if she is young, beautiful, pleasant and cheerful (or not). They must stop (depending on their degree of culture or lack of it) molesting them with crude and fresh sexual advances. The workers must rather get accustomed to treat female labourers primarily as female proletarians, as working class comrades fighting class slavery and as equal and indispensable co-fighters in the class struggle." (p59).

Zetkin forced the SPD to take up a programme for women's equal political rights, unionisation campaigns, defence and protection for pregnant and nursing mothers, plus rights for women within the party. She objected to the sexism and dismissive attitudes of male chairs at meetings and got women put in to chair major meetings.

Zetkin also fought within the SPD on other questions. Revisionists like Eduard Bernstein were

trying to steer the party away from revolutionary Marxism towards slow reforms and the 'parliamentary road'.

Zetkin, alongside Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht and others argued against this rightward drift. Zetkin used the paper *Gleichheit* to win women to her left wing positions within the party.

In later years Zetkin was an opponent of the First World War, rejecting the capitulation of the SPD to chauvinism. She again used *Gleichheit* to argue against the general party line - out of 97 SPD papers only 5 refused to support the imperialists' war, *Gleichheit* being much the most influential.

EMANCIPATION

The selected works in this book give a glimpse of these and many other positions of Zetkin. But much more translation is needed if we are to see the full scope of her work. Many weaknesses can for example be found in these articles on questions of women's oppression: Zetkin seems to overestimate the economic independence gained by women who work. She even at one stage rejects protection for women workers. Elsewhere she takes up positions on birth control and the family which indicate a rather glorified idea of motherhood for women. But until we have more access to her work it would be wrong to generalise from a few statements.

What can be said is that Zetkin was the first revolutionary socialist woman to commit herself and her Party to a programme for mobilising women workers in the struggle for working class power and women's emancipation. This valuable collection of her works should be read by all those wishing to continue her struggle.

Helen Ward

KHOMEINI'S IRAN



IRAN UNDER THE AYATOLLAHS by DILIP HIRO Published by Routledge and Kegan Paul PLC, London 1985. (£20 Hardback) 416pp

THE JOURNALIST DILIP HIRO has compiled a large and fascinating body of information about post-revolutionary Iran in this book.

While the early chapters explain the roots of Shia Islam in Iran and the nature of the Pahlavi dynasty, the bulk of the book charts the rise to power of Ayatollah Khomeini and his consolidation of that power.

In particular Hiro shows how the Shah's unswerving loyalty to imperialism, mainly US imperialism, and the cruel dictatorship it necessitated, eroded any social base that the Shah may have had.

With the petit-bourgeois Shiite clerics at its head, the opposition movement blossomed - involving all classes and decisively, the working class, led by the oil workers.

While the book is informative about the protagonists in the Iranian revolution and its aftermath it does not clearly demonstrate the continuing capitalist foundations of the Islamic Republic.

Instead Hiro opts for vague characterisations based on the regime's preferential treatment of the poorer sections of society.

He concludes, "In short, the Islamic regime rests on a foundation which has working and lower middle classes at its core and bazaar merchants on the periphery."

Hiro is quite muddled on this question. The treatment afforded to the poor in the Islamic Republic is Khomeini's means of maintaining a vast social base.

The dispossessed are paid dole, enrolled in Islamic committees or into the army to fight Iraq, as a means of incorporating them into the Islamic state.

This acts to guard the regime against middle class, and more importantly, working class opposition to the regime.

REPRESSION

The regime fears the working class. Its strikes proved decisive in toppling the Shah. Its strength in the oil industry means that it could strangle the Iranian economy if it struck.

This is why the regime has combined repression - the banning of strikes, the arrest of trade unionists, the Islamicisation of the factory committees - with the granting of some material benefits to the working class.

Hiro sees anti-imperialist rhetoric and a generous state benefits system as distinguishing features of post-revolutionary Iran. The rhetoric is empty. Since the revolution, as Hiro proves in the section on Iran's foreign relations, imperialism - Britain, Italy and Japan in particular - have reasserted their economic grip on Iran. The state benefits keep the proletariat and sub-proletariat divided, giving the latter a (pathetic) stake in the Islamic regime.

Nevertheless, despite Hiro's failure to clearly define Iran as a capitalist state, the revolution notwithstanding, the book is still well worth reading.

Mark Haskisson

BOOK REVIEWS

Municipal Myths

POLITICS OF LOCAL SOCIALISM by JOHN GYFORD. Published by George, Allen and Unwin. (£5.95 Pbk) 129pp.

IN THIS SHORT book the author is concerned "with presenting a general overview of local socialism and setting its emergence and some recent developments in a wider political context".

He does so via a cursory, but interesting glance at local Labourite history (Fabianism, populism, Morrisonism and local Labourism) and distinguishes "local socialism" as a new form which shares some of the features of earlier forms, and is a rebellion against post-war municipal-machine politics.

For the author local socialism cannot be understood as a "single coherent ideology. With its growth in the emergence of a new urban left, local socialism encompasses a variety of their different concerns - decentralisation, popular planning, local initiatives, workers co-ops and voluntary groups.

As a lecturer in urban politics and with experience of local government both as an officer and a labour councillor, Gyford is well placed to examine this milieu. The book provides a useful insight into their petit-bourgeois utopias, and is at its best when tracing the new left's clash with the Thatcher government. However, the author cannot break with the tradition. His criticisms are those of the would-be objective academic fundamentally in sympathy with his subject.

While Gyford explores the relationship between the local and national state, he does so from a reformist practice and perspective. He is concerned with the question of autonomy, accountability and participation, rather than a clear understanding of the state as the executive of the ruling class. He therefore ignores the Marxist tradition in which the great lessons of the Paris Commune and the Russian Revolution furnished Marx and then Lenin with a class analysis of the state.

Gyford dismisses what he calls the 'insurrectionary route' to socialism out of hand. While he identifies "problems of strategy and style", and his view of the prospects of local socialism is itself highly conditional, he concludes that the problems do not necessarily call into question the "fundamental plausibility of the local road to socialism".

For Francis Place and A J Roebuck to have had such a vision in the 1930s is understandable. In the 1980s it is no longer.

Dave Jenkins

Review: The British State and the Ulster Crisis. Paul Drew & Henry Patterson. Verso 1985 £4.95

FOR THE LAST ten years or so these authors have been part of a small band of so-called 'revisionist' academic historians from the 6 counties. During this time they have skilfully exposed some of the contradictions of nationalist accounts of British rule in Ireland.

Too often the British left have gone beyond the obligatory unconditional defence of the IRA and anti-unionist struggles against Britain to adopt the one-sided or romantic conceptions of Irish history constructed by Republicanism. More recently, there are those, like Socialist Organiser who have embraced the 'revisionist' view of history with glee as an excuse for abandoning support for the struggle of the beleaguered minority in the North. In the name of 'conciliation' with the Protestant working class they preach acceptance of the latter's present power and privileges. Revolutionary communism - the application of the programme of permanent revolution in Ireland - can and must avoid both pitfalls and transcend both traditions. A critical reading of this book will help us in this.

BRITISH POLICY

The book is both an account of British policy towards the 6 counties in the last 20 years and a series of proposals on how to resolve the conflict. Particularly useful is the section on Wilson's government and the carte blanche given to Northern Ireland Premier O'Neill's 'reform' project in the 1960s. The way in which O'Neill used that reform project to con-

Labour Loyalists?

solidate his base among Protestant workers and deepen the alienation of the Catholics is well described.

The meat of the book is an interesting account of the 'constitutional initiatives' of successive Northern Ireland Secretaries and their failure to solve the Irish question. The political thrust of their account, and here lies their 'revisionism', is to downplay the role of British imperialism in the creation and maintenance of partition.

PARTITION

Bew and Patterson argue that in 1918 Britain was more interested in the creation of a moderate, anti-De Valera Free State than they were in conciliating to the Unionist demands. In that sense, for them, partition was conceded rather than planned for.

Similarly, today they argue that Sinn Fein and British left Labourism place too much emphasis on the need for Britain to maintain partition because it suits Britain's NATO-related defence interests. While this may have been the case during and immediately after World War II it no longer applies.

While there may be elements of truth in this, the authors fail to recognise that despite the financial drain, despite the casualties, British imperialism refuses to withdraw until the threat of an end to partition from below (i.e. by revolutionary methods) is crushed. It is in this sense that the underwriting of Ulster has to be under-

stood.

In addition, there are no guarantees for Britain that even a conservative republic uniting 32 counties, would not develop an 'independent' foreign policy which might for example be pro-Soviet. Britain prefers partition to this uncertainty. Meanwhile, neither Fine Gael or Fianna Fail are willing to join NATO without movement by Britain on partition. Hence, stalemate.

The natural complement to minimise the role of British imperialism is the authors' concern to prove that Ulster Protestants are in essence a separate nationality. Thus, their resistance to Home Rule and eventual partition was a natural expression of this. Here they make a mirror-opposite mistake to the Republicans who have generally seen in the Ulster Protestants nothing but duped tools of British imperialism.

The truth is that the Northern Protestants are a contradictory unity of British and Irish development. They have never become - or been allowed to become - fully British and the uneven development of industry in the North East and, crucially, partition has obstructed their path to integration in the Irish nation.

Consequently, their allegiance to Britain is neither unconditional nor just a rhetorical mask. Those forces exposing separatism for the Protestants (e.g. UDA) are marginalised. On the other hand, their greatest militancy occurs (e.g. the UWC strike in 1974) when they fear that they are about to be abandoned by Britain.

Bew and Patterson's book is also a programme for change, one which reflects 'constitutional initiatives' for fear of enraging Protestants.

Briefly they argue that since there is no viable reforming political force among the 6 counties unionist population (the Alliance, Workers Party and NILP being marginalised) a British Labour government must act as this force. A programme of economic expansion with regional investment in the North would enable the situation of the Catholics to improve without threatening that of the Protestants.

UTOPIAN

In addition the structural reforms (in the RUC, Civil Service) would have a chance of success because of the economic expansion and it would not be a stage on the road to a united Ireland, thus calming the unionists. They hereby show the same 'Labour' subservience to British imperialism that their hero William Walker showed at the turn of the century. So 'realistic' about the Protestants refusal to 'become Irish' they blithely expect the nationalist population after a century and more of the most brutal national oppression and a decade and a half of outright war, to settle down in a Labour Britain.

The authors' programme - which acknowledges its debt to Stalinism - is utopian precisely because we no longer live in a period in which generalised economic expansion is possible. It is reactionary in that it takes as its starting point the interests of the oppressors rather than those of the oppressed.

Keith Hassell

BOOKS RECEIVED

"Political Trials in Britain" by Peter Hain. Penguin, 1985. 320pp. (£3.50 Pbk)

"The Politics and Economics of the Transition Period" by Nikolai Bukharin. RKP, 1985. 261pp. (£8.95 Pbk)

"Karl Marx and the Anarchists" by Paul Thomas. RPK, 1985. 406pp. (£8.95 Pbk)

"Finance Capital" by Rudolf Hilferding. RPK, 1985. 466pp. (£8.95 Pbk)

workers power

SOUTH AFRICAN CAPITALISTS RUN SCARED



Youth demonstrate at a funeral in Soweto

AGAINST THE UGLY backdrop of continued arrests, killings and torture, South Africa's rulers are still searching for some formula which will secure them a future.

The depth of the crisis that is rocking Botha's National Party is revealed in the proposals for reform made in the last month. Botha announced on 11 September that the government would restore 'citizenship' to 10 million black Africans whose South African citizenship was removed when four of the 'Homelands' were declared independent states - Venda, Transkei, Bophuthatswana, and Ciskei. At the same time the advisory President's Council proposed that the hated pass laws should be removed.

in force. This is the system which herds black workers and their families into deprived townships to act as a source of cheap labour for the bosses and prevents them from settling in 'white areas'. In this context the proposal from Botha's stooge Presidential Council for an end to influx control (the pass laws) and for a 'strategy of orderly urbanisation' would mean little change for the lives of black workers.

Control is one of the most hated aspects of Apartheid, requiring black Africans to carry passes which have to be stamped to show their right to be in 'white' South Africa - a right which goes with a job, making profits for the white bosses. But what does an 'orderly urbanisation' mean? It could only mean an 'orderly overcrowding' of the townships while the Group Areas Act remains in force. All the rest of the battery of repressive legislation allowing the police to harass and arrest black citizens would still remain.

While the fundamentals of Apartheid remain 'non-negotiable' for Botha's government, at the same time he spouts about his willingness to allow 'participation in the political process on a group basis'. In a speech to the Cape branch of the National Party on 1st October, Botha made clear what he meant by the latter

phrase. He announced his intention to restructure the President's Council to include black Africans.

'reforms'

Not even the most acquiescent of black leaders took this as a serious 'reform'. The Presidents Council has only an advisory role. The Indian and Colored representatives on it were elected by a tiny minority of votes in 1984, the rest boycotting it. Botha's announcement was for business ears at home and overseas. To the black majority, it signalled only his determination to resist all moves to a democratic franchise, and to preserve the power of the white minority.

Led by mining giant Anglo-American, sections of South African big business have been courting friends to prepare for all eventualities. As the South African business weekly, the *Financial Mail*, pointed out, Anglo American are old hands at this, "Anglo's involvement (in talks with the ANC) brings with it the corporation's experience in maintaining its interests in a society in transition and working out a modus vivendi with any new regime - Zambia is a case in point" (*Financial Mail* 6.9.85). Anglo and the other monopolies need to defuse the growing revolutionary threat it they are to continue profiteering from Apartheid (in their language - to try to distance capitalism from the Apartheid state).

The favoured option is 'power

sharing' where the white minority retains its influence, ruling jointly with "responsible black leaders". September saw the launch of the Convention Alliance, which includes the Progressive Federal Party (backed by Anglo) and arch-collaborator Gatscha Buthelezi, Chief Minister of KwaZulu Homeland. The Alliance calls for a new 'National Convention' in which the balance of power is renegotiated - it specifically excludes one person, one vote majority rule.

However Buthelezi's thuggery increases in inverse proportion to his credibility. His power base in Natal is eroding. Squads of his Zulu based movement, Inkatha, have been sent to attack strong-

continued on page ten >>>

illusions

But no-one should be under any illusions that the Nationalist government has embarked on the road of dismantling Apartheid. Those who will regain 'citizenship' will not gain any political rights - no vote, no right to free speech, to form parties or hold meetings.

Botha made clear at the beginning of October that one of the corner-stones of Apartheid, the Group Areas Act, would remain

turnover were increasing, with counter staff working until 6.30 pm to clear callers from the office.

The right wing CPSA leadership tried to force the strikers back to work after 2 weeks in order to hold an official ballot inside the office! The strikers won their alternative of two ballots - one inside for the scabs and one outside for the strikers - and carried the vote 53 to 11.

The CPSA leadership have now responded by insisting that any sub-branch must hold a secret ballot before asking their permission to strike! At a time when all sectors of the union face increased workloads and cuts in staff the leadership obviously fear that local actions could spread.

Local leaders of other unions have also done their best to isolate the strikers. Ilford SCPS members have scabbed throughout, with their East London branch secretary Jim Gee blocking a call for all out action.

He argued that members should wait for planned London-wide co-ordinated action - merely an excuse for local SCPS members to scab.

Canning Town CPSA and SCPS members did come out alongside Ilford, demanding seven extra workers. The CPSA regional secretary, Colin Middleton (member of the CP and Broad Left 84) ensured they were taken out of the battlefield quickly by negotiating a compromise of a few extra CPSA grades.

Middleton also tried to negotiate a shoddy compromise for the Ilford strikers, but we voted overwhelmingly to reject the offer. He argued that no one group of workers could take on the Tories, threatening that strike pay would be withdrawn.

Recognising the role local union leaders would play in sabotaging solidarity calls, strikers

went directly to the DHSS offices. A meeting of Broad Left activists supported a motion for a one day London wide strike, with some offices putting all out strike action to the vote.

The day of action, supported by the London North Regional Committee and the DHSS Section Executive Committee was a success with over 20 DHSS and unemployed Benefit Offices out. However, the vote for all out action was taken in only two offices and was unfortunately lost.

The DHSS Section Executive Committee which is controlled by the Broad Left has virtually ignored the Ilford strike. Their main input has been to call a London wide office reps meeting on the 12th of October. They are supporting a plan from the South London regional officials for a one day strike on November 1, rolling strikes during November and all out action from the end of the month.

These are clearly delaying tactics - the same as used by the Broad Left NEC over pay in April 1985. That was a total debacle resulting in a lost vote over the one day strike.

Ilford strikers have taken the lead in fighting staff shortages in the DHSS. If we are isolated we are likely to be defeated which will help to undermine any future action against staff cuts.

All out strike action is needed to win more staff in DHSS offices, to unite the many offices in London and nationally taking other forms of action against overtime and the use of casual workers.

The Fowler review and introduction of new technology in DHSS are going to make work in local offices even more intolerable. Further staff cuts are inevitable. The meeting on the 12 October and the SEC must recog-

nise this fact and build a campaign for all out strike action now, so that workers will not have to face even worse conditions over the next few years.

SOGAT STRIKE AT UK CORRUGATED

ON 19 SEPTEMBER, 45 SOGAT members struck at UK Corrugated, Gosport. The women and men walked out when an ex-union member reported for the day-shift. They struck to preserve their closed-shop.

After unsuccessfully fighting to transfer membership to the TGWU, the scab threw in his SOGAT card in June. For three months UK Corrugated suspended him on full-pay with a bonus! Meanwhile he threatened to sue the company (and let the company sue the union) for £26,000 if he was sacked. On their part, the work-force made clear their determination to strike the minute he turned up to clock in.

But the strike came up against problems. First, the majority of the afternoon shift ignored the work-place ballot and crossed the picket line. Secondly, SOGAT ducked making the strike official. Brenda Dean even claimed not to have heard of the strike, although the dispute is three months old. Also UK Corrugated's other plants are scattered far and wide, making the task of rank and file militants wanting to spread the action that much more difficult.

Despite this, the management

have backed down, the union breaker has again been suspended, and the strikers went back victorious on 30 September. However, the dispute is not yet over. Militants in SOGAT must organise now for effective solidarity strike action should the scab return.

The bureaucrats will only support their members if the rank and file take the lead in fighting the bosses. As one striker put it, "We have learnt a lot. We had too much faith in the bureaucracy. The rank and file must be able to fight independently when need be". All SOGAT militants must fight for solidarity action in their branches and work-places.

CCMC STRIKE

WORKERS AT COVENTRY Community Media Centre (CCMC) have been on strike since September 30th. The company they work for is an independent grant-funded charity producing community programmes for the new local cable T.V. network.

The seven members of the production team were recruited from the dole queues on MSC schemes. Apparently the CCMC was considered a training scheme by the employers but not by the workers who received no instruction

Even so they were expected to produce programming to professional standards for Coventry Cable on a daily basis and also to 'train' new recruits into the profession.

The working week generally averaged upwards of 60 hours with no time off in lieu for weekends and bank holidays worked. So they got themselves organised into an ACTT shop and are now seeking union recognition plus union rates of pay. Send donations and messages of support to: CCMC strikers, c/o 13, High St, Coventry.



ILFORD DHSS

AT THE TIME of going to press seventy Civil and Public Service Association members and one member of the Civil Service union at Ilford DHSS are entering their sixth week on strike. Our demands are for 32 extra staff and permanent jobs for the 12 casual workers in the office.

The strike began when we were no longer prepared to accept the increasing workload and deteriorating conditions. Sickness and staff



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