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Workers Power

30p/10p strikers

Monthly paper of the Workers Power group

INSIDE:

WRP

its rise and fall

Workersine Press

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Socialist Outlook

Bevan Gives the Lead That Workers Want

'Socialist planning is the answer'

SLUMP FROM TO ENGLAND

Shop Stewards workers of

THE NEWS

DEFEND ALL JOBS!

ORGANISE THE UNEMPLOYED

IN THE LAST month Thatcher's dole queues got 135,000 new recruits. By the Tories' own figures one in seven people are now unemployed.

The official jobless total of 3.4 million excludes almost half a million young workers who are registered on low paid, dead end 'training schemes'. It also excludes tens of thousands - particularly married women - who want and need to work but who qualify for no unemployment benefit. The real number of unemployed stands close to 4.5 million.

The bosses know its going to get worse. With the economy slowing down, the CBI is gloomy about British capitalism's prospects.

It expects to see at least 5,000 jobs a month lost in manufacturing industry in the period ahead. This is sure to prove an understatement.

As the inner cities, health services and education services crumble and decay it is living proof of the rottenness of the capitalist system that millions are condemned to poverty and idleness and that young working class people know no other life but the miserable squalor which the dole queue affords them.

OBSCENITY

The workers' movement must not tolerate the obscenity of mass unemployment for one minute longer. It must organise to resist all future sackings and to mobilise the anger of the unemployed against the system that consigns them to wasted lives. If organised labour does not take up the cause of the jobless then sections of the unemployed can be rallied against a trade union movement that has not lifted a finger on their behalf. A generation will have come into existence which has never benefited from the workers' organisations in any direct way.

The trade unions must give full backing to a national independent movement of the unemployed with the full recognition of the labour movement and official representation in the movement at every level. They should help it acquire the means to make the unemployed visible with marches, occupations and rallies to show the bosses that the unemployed workers are not prepared to sit out their lives in penury. Let such a movement be a spur to all workers to resist redundancies and stand firm to defend every job. It must constantly remind workers of what life on the dole would mean should they lose the will to fight sackings.

The new wave of redundancies must be resisted. All the signs are that the trade union leaders, if left to their own devices, are prepared to sell jobs in order to keep their own. When workers want to resist they will try to divert them into special case pleading or negotiating reductions in the workforce. That way lies only the creation of an ever larger army of the unemployed.

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THE ATTACK ON printworkers at News International is the first of the EETPU and its organisation. Murdoch is just the first boss to take advantage of the victories won by his class in the last round, especially the victory over the miners.

SPINELESSNESS

Central to his chances of success are the anti-union laws and the spinelessness of the official labour movement. All effective trade union action is illegal in this country. Already injunctions have been served on the T&G. The leaderships of the NGA and SOGAT insist that they will not break the law. This simply means that they will not fight.

No lasting victories can be won unless both the Tory laws and the TUC's grip on the unions are broken. Every success that the bosses can chalk up will encourage more to attack. The other press barons, Matthews, Maxwell and the rest, are already bringing forward their plans to cut jobs and copy Murdoch. They will not be alone.

WON'T FIGHT

The success of the bosses' attacks has strengthened the position of those in the labour movement who have always believed that, since they can't (or won't) beat the bosses, they might as well join them. Hammond of the EETPU is the representative and, no doubt, organiser, of these traitors. Throughout the autumn he colluded with Murdoch in recruiting scabs to run the Wapping plant. At the same time he negotiated some eighteen 'single-union' sweetheart deals with other employers.

The TUC itself positively invites the contempt with which Hammond and the bosses treat it. At every turn it has shied away from fight-

ing. The plans of Murdoch, Shah and company have been publicly of the EETPU and its organisation. It is common knowledge. Even after they have led to the sacking of 5,000 workers the supposed leadership of the unions cannot summon up the courage to expel Hammond and his union. The gentlemen of the General Council, who did as little as they could during the miners' strike, will do even less to help the printers. For them, the whole business of strikes, pickets, blacking and solidarity is an interruption to business as usual, an obstacle to getting back on speaking terms with the bosses and their government.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

A successful opposition will be based on a rejection of such politics. In the print for example, it is not the new technology which threatens jobs, it is the control of the new technology by Murdoch. For him it is a route to higher profits.

The computers would work just as well if they were employed to reduce hours, to produce newspapers that actually had some news in them. Printworkers and journalists could be more usefully employed producing the text books that schools are crying out for. It is a question of control; in whose interests and under whose control will the computers be used?

Because this is the real, basic question it is the methods of fighting that challenge Murdoch's control of the presses which must be taken up. Calling on the readers of the Sun to boycott it is perfectly pointless. Proposing that other printworkers produce more Daily Mirrors or Guardians will only speed the day when Maxwell and company can afford to copy Murdoch.

Control of production is the key. At the present time it is not physically possible to occupy, and use, the Wapping plant. Control must be fought for by mobilising trade unionists to



John Sturrock (Network)

defending Murdoch's interests

control Murdoch's ability to distribute his papers. Obviously this means blacking transport, but it would be wrong to ignore the pressure that can be applied on Murdoch by the rest of his class - if their operations are also subject to control.

SPREAD

The strike must be spread to the rest of Fleet Street. When the ruling class retaliates, as it will, by using stronger weapons, extend the strike to a general strike, challenge the control of the state itself.

Needless to say the TUC will not approve of such methods. Kin-nock will search his dictionary for words strong enough to condemn them. However, in the last analysis, these people are nothing

without the working class behind them, they can be forced to act against their own wishes.

The force strong enough to shift them into action is the force of the working class in action. To win their strike, printers must turn away from the strategy of their present leaders. They must send delegations to every chapel in Fleet Street to explain the common threat to all printworkers. Other workers and socialists must fight to build local support committees aimed at spreading the action and convincing other workers that this fight is their fight - the printworkers do not need cans of beans, they need strikes!

DEFEND ALL JOBS!
BRING OUT FLEET STREET!
WORK OR FULL PAY!
FOR WORKERS' CONTROL OF THE PRINTING INDUSTRY!

LABOUR WITCH-HUNTS

NATIONAL FIGHTBACK NEEDED

EVER SINCE THE defeat of the Liverpool Council's rate-capping struggle last November the right-wing in the Labour Party have declared open war against the left.

In the last few days of January the NEC completed its enquiry into the Liverpool DLP. Its findings and any recommendations for expulsions will go before the February 26th NEC.

The right-wing have more than just Militant in their sights. In the last eighteen months there have been at least 28 cases of expulsion of non-Militant supporters. The main charge in these cases is 'bringing the party into disrepute'. This usually means making accusations, backed by evidence, of right-wing corruption (as in the Sparkbrook case which we report in this issue).

FIGHT BACK

At the moment, apart from the Liverpool enquiry St. Helens North and St. Helens South CLPs are suspended; Walsall DLP officers have been suspended; four ex-CP members have been refused membership in Rhondda. The witch-hunt devices include the refusal to allow the transference of party membership from one ward or CLP to another.

What can we do to halt and fight back against the witch-hunt? Some comrades believe that delaying the process by taking court action against the NEC or CLPs is a useful tactic on the basis that the NEC is in breach of the Party Constitution. Stevenage Militant supporters went to court and most recently the Liverpool DLP did the same. We think this is wrong.

Certainly taking the bosses to the courts cannot be ruled out in principle. However, there is no mileage in allowing the bosses' courts to adjudicate in the affairs of the labour movement. The experience of the NUM taking scabs to court showed well enough that the courts will decide over a period of time against the left. So too the courts will back their closest allies in the Labour Party - Kinnock, Whitty and company.

Just as importantly this process is a diversion from devoting all our resources into a political fight against the purge. Although the charges brought seek to conceal the fact, the witch-hunt is directed at kicking out members

who are class-struggle socialists or revolutionists precisely because of their politics. It's no use denying our politics to the witch-hunters - as Militant want to do. The task is to plead guilty as charged and demand our right to be Party members because we are class-fighters.

Concretely, the next steps we must take are clear. First, maximum unity of forces, concentrated in a national campaign is essential. The Labour Left Co-ordination (LLC) are to approach Militant for common action. Militant must respond in kind and go beyond a 'go-it-alone' party-building campaign.

A National Conference against the witch-hunt is being demanded by more and more forces. Recently, Hackney North CLP put its weight behind this call. The LLC, Militant and the Campaign Group of MPs must build for one urgently.

We must go into such a conference with a clear recognition that the only effective way to halt the NEC in its tracks is to threaten civil war if they continue. We must make it clear that we will not back down to the threat or actuality of expulsions; that CLPs will continue to recognise and back candidates democratically selected - such as Paul Green or Russell Proffitt in Lewisham.

DISAFFILIATION

The spectre of disaffiliation must be met firmly. Kinnock, above all else, wants a pacified and 'united' party by the end of the year ready to win a General Election. If he is confronted with the possibility of genuine candidates standing against sanitised official candidates in local and national elections he may back off. For the left to refuse to take this road in principle will only encourage Kinnock to go all the way.

The next NEC on February 26th will be a watershed. If wholesale expulsions are recommended and accepted we will be severely weakened. A mass lobby is being planned. We need more than the usual dozens. St. Helens DLP are planning to attend. This is excellent. Let us make it a national lobby to make sure the NEC realise the strength of opposition to the purge. Be there. ■

▷ continued from front page

Faced with bosses claims that their orderbooks are slim and their workforce too large, workers must respond immediately. They must demand work or full pay and organise to force the employers to guarantee this. Factory occupations can hold the bosses property ransom for our jobs. Strike committees should open and inspect the books and accounts of the bosses to expose their deceit and their job slashing plans. As the unemployment figures grow so such a determined fight against redundancy would be a beacon to workers facing the daily insecurity of redundancy threats or the dole itself.

The Labour leaders, anxious to prove themselves reliable to rule for big business, are increasingly slipping loose of even their previous lukewarm promises to the unemployed. Gone are the promises to bring full employment. Roy Hattersley and Neil Kinnock are more anxious to prove to the employers that they will make no promises that might have to be kept at the bosses' expense. That is why Hattersley was at such pains to tell the London Business School that a future Labour Government would prioritise holding inflation down over achieving

economic growth, as he put it:

"It is better to set demand at a slower pace over a number of years... than to indulge in a dash for growth".

The Labour left has also been lowering its sights. The Campaign Group of MPs, for example, are now willing for 'one million jobs a year' to be the objective of a future Labour Government. Even if this were to be realised it would still leave over half the unemployed jobless after two years!

Labour activists who want to end unemployment, trade unionists who want to stop the sackings and the millions of unemployed who need to put an end to the dole queues must organise together to force the Labour leaders and trade union leaders to act. Every struggle against redundancy must be given full backing and solidarity. The Labour leaders must be forced to commit themselves to guaranteeing the right to work to all through a programme of public works under trade union control. The entire labour movement must fight for guaranteed work or full pay against this system, where the needed skills and energies of millions are squandered and wasted for the benefit of the few. ■

RIGHT ON THE ATTACK



SPARKBROOK

TAKING THEIR CUE from Neil Kinnock, the General Management Committee of Sparkbrook Constituency Labour Party voted to expel two members, Amir Khan and Kevin Scally the day after Kinnock's attack on the left at the Labour Party conference.

Kevin Scally, a long standing member of the party, had recently appeared in an edition of Channel 4's programme 'The Bandung File', in which he made detailed and well substantiated allegations concerning corrupt practices in the constituency.

Amir Khan was expelled for the same crime, although on the surface the reasons were different. At the first organising meeting for a new Black Section in Sparkbrook, some reporters turned up from the bourgeois press. The right-wing claimed that Amir had and subsequently (which he denies) The real reason for this expulsion is obvious. Sparkbrook has a large number of Asians living within the constituency boundaries and the overwhelming majority of them vote Labour. A strong black section would pose an enormous threat to Hattersley's right-wing policies and to his main base in the constituency party - the neanderthal do-nothing councillors and their cronies who rely on black votes while doing next to nothing for black people in the area.

A more recent victim of the expulsions is Mohammad Rafique. Rafique has always been a solidly right-wing figure. Indeed it was he who was shown in the 'Bandung File' to be deeply involved in the forgery and invention of membership cards for the right-wing. However, when Rafique (for his own careerist ends) threw in his

support for the black section and even stood against Hattersley's close ally John O'Keefe at a selection meeting for the council, the right-wing saw their chance and expelled him. In this way they hope to pin the whole blame for the embarrassing episode of the 'Bandung File' on him.

Despite this catalogue of bureaucratic thuggery a fightback is possible. The youth in particular are repelled by the expulsions and the inactivity of the party, and have formed a relatively strong and lively branch of the Labour Party Young Socialists. □

by Richard Gerrard

ATTERCLIFFE

THE FIGHT TO re-instate Sheffield councillor and Militant supporter Paul Green to Attercliffe CLP took a body blow at last December (14-13) the NEC voted to endorse his expulsion. He is the only one to date of the original six expelled to have had his appeal heard.

Resolutions against the expulsions have been passed in almost every ward and constituency in the city. But support for the six is fading fast. Militant has done little or nothing to mobilise a campaign against the expulsions. Another Militant supporter, and one of the expelled, Alan Hartley, absurdly proclaimed the narrow 14-13 vote against Green a victory. The running has been left to Intake ward, where Green's council seat is up for re-election in May.

Intake are under much pressure. The DLP have refused to ratify Green's re-selection, and have asked Intake to select a new candidate. So far, Intake

have held their ground and reaffirmed Green's selection, a stance which deserves support as far as it goes. However, the strategy evolved between Intake and Mosborough, Green's home ward in Attercliffe, contains great dangers.

The two wards have demanded an enquiry into the workings of the Attercliffe Party. They claim that vote rigging and various corrupt practices have been a feature of political life in Attercliffe CLP, which throws doubt on the validity of the original expulsions. They have mounted a campaign for the DLP to disregard the expulsions whilst an enquiry into Attercliffe is in the air. As a response to the witch-hunt it is a diversion for a number of reasons. Let us suppose an inquiry materialised and even that Attercliffe were found guilty of certain misdemeanours. They would simply go through the whole thing to procedural detail.

Workers Power supporters in Sheffield are working to build a lobby of the next DLP meeting, in February. We will be demanding Green's readmittance into the Labour Group, ratification of his selection at Intake for the May election, and for the DLP to recognise all the expelled six as Labour Party members notwithstanding the NEC.

We will, furthermore, be arguing that, whatever the DLP's attitude, Intake should put Green forward as their candidate in the forthcoming election, even against an 'official' stooge candidate of the DLP, even if the NEC threatens disaffiliation. We must show the witch-hunters that we will not back down in our opposition to the witch-hunt. ■

by an Attercliffe Labour Party member



The Editor,

In the last issue of Workers Power you called for a 'workers' enquiry' into the Liverpool District Party, and then attacked Socialist Organiser for supporting exactly the same thing. Was this a slip of the pen, or are you just sectarians?

Yours,

Terry O'Donnell,
Sandwell.

WE REPLY:

You are mistaken to say that we, Workers Power, called for a workers' enquiry to be established. We were quite careful not to issue such a call. We said:

"should any complaints of corruption or malpractice be known to the Liverpool workers they should be put to a workers' enquiry."

In other words we argued that any enquiry was a matter for the

Liverpool Council's workforce. Socialist Organiser on the other hand argued categorically that there should be a labour movement enquiry into the District Labour Party, not the Council and that it should have been held two years ago. In our view there is a significant difference between these two positions. By the way, we use typewriters not pens and, no, we are not sectarians!

The Editor,

With reference to Workers Power 79, I would like to correct an inaccuracy in your article on the witchhunts. You were incorrect to say that Amir Khan was expelled from the party for reporting fake applications to the Bandung File. In fact Amir Khan had no connection with the programme.

The 'official' reason (though this has been subject to variation) for his expulsion was for 'going to the press' and for publicly denouncing racism within the party. The 'official' reason (again subject to variation) for Kevin Scally's expulsion was for revealing his fraudulent application procedures to the Bandung File and for supposedly bringing the party into disrepute. The real reason for

their expulsions was that their political activities were posing a threat to a bankrupt right wing.

It is important that these two comrades receive maximum support in their fight against this witchhunt. The appeal takes place on Feb 7th and Feb 14th for Amir and Kevin respectively. Letters and resolutions calling for their immediate re-instatement and for an enquiry into the allegations should be sent to the NEC. Anyone wanting more information or speakers please contact the address below. It would also be helpful if copies of any resolutions passed could be sent.

Yours,

Mick Barr,
23 Newton Road,
Sparkhill,
Birmingham,
B11 4PS.

WE REPLY:

We thank Comrade Barr for pointing out our error and urge our readers who are active in the Labour Party to heed the comrade's request and fight the witchhunt against Amir Khan and Kevin Scally.

EDITORIAL Breaks in the bosses' ranks

JANUARY WAS A testing time for Thatcher. Amidst a bewildering barrage of lies and counter-lies over the Westland affair, two senior cabinet ministers resigned. Thatcher's personal standing in the polls plummeted and Fleet Street printed a whole series of 'crisis of confidence' articles about the government.

Behind the resignation of Heseltine and the throwing of Brittan to the wolves, there does lie a developing crisis in the Tories' ranks. At the most immediate level the fact that Brittan lied and that Thatcher was undoubtedly party to the skulduggery will have a damaging political effect on the Tories. Many Tories rightly feel that the electorate might be inclined to punish those guilty of deceit at the polls. This explains why the Tories are desperate to delay the impending by-election in Fulham for as long as possible.

At the same time, the affair has once again exposed Thatcher's authoritarian style of government to the public gaze. Heseltine was the sixteenth minister to resign from the cabinet since 1979. Once again he, like many of his predecessors, complained about one-woman rule in the cabinet. The image of the intolerant, even power-crazed, Prime Minister is a certain vote loser. Many Tories know it.

Fleet Street has concentrated on these questions of style and approach as a damage-limitation exercise. In Labour's ranks the Kinnockite New Statesman has been taking the same line as the press barons in shrugging off this "Whitehall farce" and this dispute "over questions of style and not substance" (17/1/86). Indeed, following Thatcher's statement to the Commons at the end of January many Tories, fearful of precipitating a constitutional crisis, forgave her style and rallied around her. Now while such questions might pre-occupy vulnerable backbenchers and deceive the witless reformist commentators in the Labour Party's ranks, they should not be allowed to hoodwink workers.

The fact is that within certain sections of the ruling class - principally the Confederation of British Industry and the military chiefs of staff - there is a crisis of confidence in Thatcher. They seriously doubt her ability to lead the Tories to victory at the next election. And they are the forces that Heseltine, in his undoubted bid for leadership, was appealing to.

The crisis over Westland was in fact a reflection of the ruling class' fears for the parlous state of the British economy. The leading

journals of the bosses were more ready to make this link than were the popular dailies. The Economist noted:

"The weakening of Mrs. Thatcher comes at a bad time for the British economy. The pound has been under pressure this month and interest rates have risen. Growth is slowing, industrialists are grumbling, and the trade-off between unemployment and wage inflation is becoming even worse." (1/2/86)

They conclude that "economic choices have become narrower and nastier". Add to The Economist's list the fact that Lawson's budget looks like being a tight one, that defence spending may have to be cut (to the outrage of the generals) and that unemployment has just risen to its highest ever total and the real reasons for the crisis of confidence in Thatcher become as plain to see as the nose on Heseltine's face.

Seven years of Thatcher's deflationary policies have not provided the promised boom. Britain's slice of the world economic recovery was paltry. Only North Sea oil revenue has kept the balance of payments in the black. With oil prices falling sharply, this safety net is about to be pulled from under Thatcher. The CBI

is understandably worried. It has not enjoyed the profit bonanza that Thatcher was supposed to have ushered in. Moreover, the present 1% increase in interest rates has hit its members extremely hard at a time when they were pleading with Lawson to bring interest rates down.

The crisis in confidence in Thatcher could lead to her departure from Number 10 before the next election. However, before the millions of people in Britain who have good cause to hate Thatcher and wish her gone for good, jump for joy, they should reflect on two things. First, her successor - potentially Tebbit, Howe, Hurd or even Heseltine - will be no friend of the working class. One of the jobs that the CBI is asking the Tories to carry out quickly is the curbing of wage rises (8.75% on average in 1985, up to October). One of these men will be ready to oblige.

The second thing to consider is that sitting back and waiting for Kinnock to save the day in the aftermath of an electoral defeat is unlikely to help anyone, least of all the unemployed. For one thing the polls indicate that, particularly in the South, the Alliance will be the beneficiary from the Tories' discomfort. There is no guarantee that a Labour government will be returned. More-

over, Kinnock in Number 10 will not mean full employment, decent wages and prosperity for all. He and Hattersley have reneged on Labour's commitment to full employment. They have signalled their intention to impose wage limits. In short they have tailored their programme to suit the needs of the CBI rather than those of the working class.

The working class should take advantage of any splits in the ruling class. But this advantage will not be gained primarily in parliamentary debates. In any case, Kinnock proved himself to be verbose, inept and ineffective in the debate with Thatcher. Despite being given a golden opportunity to kick the wretched woman while she was down, Kinnock tripped himself up! No, the real way to take advantage of ruling class disarray is to launch direct action against the bosses in the here and now. Today this means rallying to the support of the striking printers, organising a mass movement of the unemployed, fighting Kinnock's witch-hunt and defending the local authorities under attack. By pressing forward on these fronts we can increase the splits in the ruling class and, at the same time, unify our ranks in the struggle against their system. ■

NO BAN ON FARRAKHAN

LAST MONTH Louis Farrakhan, the black American "Nation of Islam" leader, was banned from entering Britain by Home Secretary Hurd. This followed pressure from Jewish groups and the Zionist MPs Janner (Labour) and Latham (Con).

They claimed that his presence in Britain:

"would not be conducive to the public good and would be likely to stir up racial hatred."

This took place in the same week as the claims of "lakes of petrol" aimed at "incinerating police officers" hit the headlines. It provided ammunition in the government's growing armoury aimed at criminalising the black community and portraying black people as anti-law and order, who "attack the police".

This is not the first time that black leaders have been banned from Britain. Malcolm X in the 1960s and more recently Kwame Ture (formerly Stokely Carmichael)

have both been prevented from carrying out a series of meetings in this country.

HYPOCRISY

We stand firmly alongside those black activists who demand the ban be lifted. The Tory government, (or, for that matter, a Labour Government) have no interest in defending us against "racial hatred". They have totally failed to respond to the growing number of racial attacks and murders against black people.

Black activists have pointed out the hypocrisy of a government which bans Farrakhan while allowing in Bill Wilkinson, leader of the Ku Klux Klan, which has a well publicised record of racist attacks and murders to its credit. More recently, P.W. Botha, murderer of thousands of black South

Africans and upholder of the racist apartheid state, was personally welcomed to Britain by Thatcher herself.

DISSERVICE

Our opposition to the ban does not require us to either deny Farrakhan's anti-Jewish statements nor to glorify him as some great leader of the black struggle. Black activists, such as Lester Lewis, chairman of Hackney Black Peoples Association and local labour councillor, do their community a disservice by denying that Farrakhan is against "the Jews as a race". (Caribbean Times 23/1/86)

On the Ebony Programme (24th January BBC2) Lewis spoke of Farrakhan's "positive contribution to the black struggle" and claimed that talk of Farrakhan as a racist was simply a "diversion from his

economic programme". However Farrakhan's programme is nothing new - it has been touted around the black community since the days of George Washington Carver (1920s). It is the programme of "Black capitalism" and religious bigotry.

POWER

He expounds the idea of power "as a company to sell black products made by blacks". This is supposed to offer "financial stability for blacks" (New York Times 16/9/85) in crisis-racked America.

His massive popularity lies in the fact that, whilst the last ten years have seen the creation of a black middle class in America, the vast majority of black workers remain poverty stricken and dependent on ever decreasing government aid programmes. Rapturous audiences in the US and Caribbean have heard him condemn "the chains of colonialism". Yet his economic programme, if carried out, would only forge new chains for black people - chaining them to their black employers.

His anti-Jewishness is in fact embedded within his view of black people as "the chosen people of almighty God" as opposed to the Jews. His religious dogma is merely the rationale to disguise the growing economic rivalry between the black middle class and Jews in America today.

CRUMBS

Not accidentally, until the 1960s all wings of the black leadership were pro-Zionist. Many believed that if the Jews could 'make it' both in the US and in Israel, then blacks could too. But now, neo-conservative Jewish leaders are mobilising against blacks as the enemy whose 'quotas' are seen as blocks to further Jewish hopes.

The American press are daily full of stories about conflict between the rival brokers over the crumbs handed out by US capitalism to keep the oppressed quiet. Farrakhan's 'programme' will only heighten such conflicts. He can



provide no answer to the mass of black workers facing the brunt of capitalist crisis other than to make a few black capitalists richer.

Farrakhan claims to stand in the tradition of Malcolm X. Nothing could be further from the truth. By the time Malcolm was gunned down in Harlem's Audubon Ballroom, he had become an open opponent of the kind of nationalist demagoguery and bigotry which Farrakhan peddles as spiritual opium in racist America's black ghettos.

In the present situation in Britain, particularly since the Handsworth events, where the Tories and the police are hell bent on dividing the black community between Asian and Afro-Caribbean, we must be clear in our response.

We should unite to fight racism and anti-semitism.

We should oppose all state bans.

The task of defeating Farrakhan's anti-semitism is ours: we don't need any 'help' from the Home Office whose whole history is smeared with the filth of racism and anti-semitism. ■

by Breda Concannon

BABA BAKHTAURA MUST STAY!

We print below a slightly edited version of a Press Release issued by the Baba Bakhtaura Defence Campaign.

As many as 3000 black people face deportation every year under Britain's racist immigration laws. While many of those threatened by the Home Office in this way see no alternative and submit to their fate, others decide to fight for their rights.

Baba Bakhtaura is in this position and has been fighting for over 3 years for his right to stay. He came to Britain in September 1979 on a work permit, as part of a folk group. He applied to the Home Office and his leave to stay was extended until the end of November 1979. He made another application for extension and this was refused in September 1980. Baba appealed against this refusal, but outside the time allowed. He heard nothing more.

In June 1982 he was arrested for 'overstaying' and imprisoned for 2 months. In addition, the

court recommended that he be deported. Baba appealed to the Crown Court and this recommendation was lifted.

In February 1983 the Home Office decided to deport him. Baba appealed to the (Home Office appointed) Immigration Appeals Tribunal, but they refused to even hear the case.

Baba however won the right to have his case heard in the High Court. In March 1984 the court said that the Home Office was wrong to deport Baba without considering the valuable service which he provides to the Asian community as a folk-musician.

But in December 1984 the Court of Appeal reversed this decision and ruled in favour of the Home Office.

The House of Lords has now decided to hear Baba's case and this will take place early in 1986.

Baba Bakhtaura has every right to stay in this country. His contribution to the cultural and social life of the Asian community in

Handsworth is immense. He is a regular performer (often providing his services free) at weddings and other religious occasions, at social and charitable functions, and at fund-raising events, both in Birmingham and elsewhere around the country.

When they hear Baba's case the House of Lords will be deciding whether the Asian community and other national communities have any rights, or whether the 'public interest' is served denying these rights.

You can fight the racist immigration laws by publicising Baba's case wherever you can - especially by winning support in Labour Party and Trade Union branches. For messages of support and further information contact the Baba Bakhtaura Defence Campaign:

101 Villa Road,
Handsworth,
Birmingham B19.
tel: (021) 551 4581

SOUTH AFRICA... FOR A WORKERS' BOYCOTT

SECTIONS OF NUPE and NALGO in the West Midlands determined in January to turn words into action in the fight against Apartheid. They have resolved to refuse to handle goods from South Africa and goods produced by firms with major interests there. This action is expected to take effect during the next few months in the Health Authority and in School Meals. Hopefully it will spread to other sections.

The stated anti-apartheid policy of, for instance, Birmingham City Council will be monitored and made effective by workers taking action themselves. NUPE workers in Portsmouth have already embarked on such action in the face of pay docking and disciplinary measures. On an international scale, seafarers and dockworkers' unions are attempting to enforce the oil embargo on South Africa.

An immense responsibility now lies with the British labour movement to impose a really effective workers' boycott. Britain is South Africa's third largest trading partner. British firms make up 40-45% of foreign investment in South Africa. However strong in its own right, the murderous Pretoria regime cannot survive without the continued export of minerals and foodstuffs. It relies on imports of key components and on the financial support of the big banks and multi-national corporations such as Barclays, Dunlops (B.T.R.), Tube Investments and Rowntrees.

WHAT SORT OF SOLIDARITY ACTION

The undoubted groundswell of support for solidarity and against British backing of Apartheid adds all the more urgency to the question of what sort of solidarity action the labour movement should be conducting. The traditional answer from the national Anti-Apartheid Movement has been to push for cutting business links, pressurising for government sanctions combined with sports, consumer and cultural boycotts. Its policies have been tailored to suit its 'Broad Church' approach of attempting to appeal to all 'progressive' sections of the community.

This strategy is wrong on a number of counts. Firstly in its reliance on the government to take action. The extreme reluctance of the Thatcher Government to impose even the mildest of measures as agreed at the Commonwealth Conference shows just how dangerous it is to concentrate on such calls for sanctions. Yet the 1985 TUC's resolution on Apartheid concluded:

"Congress instructs the General Council to urge the British Government to apply sanctions against South Africa and calls all unions to consider ways in which they can usefully oppose the South African regime."

The first instinct of the TUC is to ask the Government, and when it comes to action, the terms are typically evasive. What good would Tory sanction's be?

Of course, it is possible that the growing solidarity movement will force Thatcher to take further measures after the Commonwealth's Investigatory team of 'wise men' report. But what would be the purpose of such sanctions be for Thatcher and her friends? They would be used to encourage cosmetic changes within Apartheid rather than its overthrow. Any reforms would be designed to allow profit making to continue. Why else appoint a director of Standard Chartered Bank (the biggest banking concern after Barclays with South African interests) to be the British 'wise man'? Anthony Barber can be relied to uphold the interests of international capital.

The second dangerous aspect of the sanctions campaign has been its disinvestment strategy. Of course at the present critical juncture, with Pretoria fighting for its life, all such measures which hit the South African economy serve to weaken the regime. This has been recognised in the recent statements of the black and non-racial South African trade unions including the new federation COSATU, its predecessor FOSATU, and the black conscious-

ness trade unions. The trade unions were previously critical of a strategy of disinvestment where this meant firms one by one closing down and dismantling their factories. This would mean a gradual weakening of the black working class. It is for this very reason that we oppose any long term strategy of disinvestment especially as it relies on the 'morality' of the capitalists!

But direct action by trade unionists against firms with major interests in South Africa is of a different order. It demonstrates working class solidarity and a recognition of the need for concerted and massive action against the regime in 1986. However militants must be on their guard and ready to oppose each and every chauvinistic and reactionary argument that is raised in favour of action against firms with South African investment and a boycott of imports. Sometimes it is argued that trade unions should support investment at home and import controls in order to bolster British industry. That is an argument against all overseas investment and all foreign goods, not just South African! It suggests that British workers have a common interest with British bosses against fellow workers in foreign countries.

In fact the bosses know better. They happily move investment and orders from country to country in order to maximise profits. The way to fight them is by building international working class solidarity. Our argument for workers' action against Apartheid is motivated by the need for that solidarity, not by chauvinism. When the racist regime is overthrown, and workers of South Africa appeal for help in building their new society, we shall be for all possible aid to them.

Thatcher's intransigence and the urgency of the situation in South Africa prompted Oliver Tambo (ANC President) to issue a call, in October 1985, for 'People's Sanctions'. In line with this, the plans for action in 1986 issued by the AAM lay increased stress on the need for direct action. But the term 'People's Sanctions' is misleading. It is not

true that all sections of the 'people' have an interest in helping the solidarity movement.

The ruling class have an interest in preserving capitalism in South Africa. The working class, on the other hand, has an enormous objective interest in seeing the downfall of Apartheid and the capitalist system that produced it. Solidarity activity should be aimed at winning **Workers' Sanctions**. Of course this might frighten off some of the middle class supporters of the anti-apartheid struggle - the Churches, the liberals. But effective action should never be sacrificed to win these unreliable 'friends'.

The most effective form of workers' sanction is the trade union boycott. It can be argued for, imposed and defended collectively. And very significantly, it can be lifted when workers in South Africa request that and not before. It cannot be turned on and off at the behest of the bosses and investors.

Other forms of activity being proposed in the trade union movement should be supported but not as a substitute for the workers boycott. Disinvesting (or 'divesting') trade union and council funds is a gesture of solidarity and the discussion can be used to educate the membership.

Other activities have mobilised considerable energy but remain based on the actions of isolated individuals and can never deliver the necessary blows to the apartheid regime. This applies to consumer boycotts and campaigns of picketing stores. Campaigners for a workers' boycott should stress that such activity depends on workers acting individually and on the dedication of activists to keep up the pressure. It can never be as effective as a real workers boycott. That is why shopworkers should be approached to join the action themselves, following the lead given by Dunnes workers in Dublin.

But doesn't the workers' boycott put some sections of workers jobs at risk? After all, the Dunnes strikers are still striking for their jobs. The answer must be to build a massive and well organised cam-

paign in which as many sections of the movement as possible are directly involved and all sections are committed to taking action to defend any workers sacked because they imposed the boycott. This is possible to achieve given a clear lead, education and preparation. The response to the attack on trade unionism at GCHQ showed the depth of commitment amongst British workers to defending hard won rights. A serious and concerted campaign which explained the issues in South Africa should be mounted.

Such a campaign means con-

fronting racism at home as well as 6,000 miles away. It means exposing and fighting to put an end to British trade unionism's dereliction of duty in the fight against racism.

Joint committees should be created at every level of the movement to organise action. The action of Southampton dockers who stopped a shipment of machinery for the arms industry was successful because not only were there links at nation level through Maritime Unions Against Apartheid, but dockers shop stewards were involved.

Already in a number of areas, solidarity committees have been set up to encourage and co-ordinate trade union action. In Birmingham and Coventry, committees exist with the backing of the Trades Council and the AAM. These must be spread and made real delegate bodies.

Local demonstrations on the 22nd March, and the trade union Week of Action 14-20 April, called by the AAM, can now be a focus for launching action. Youth and the black communities should be drawn into contributing to this campaign. The National Trade Union Conference called by AAM for 1st March should be a working conference dedicated to planning such action. Initial signs are not encouraging though. Resolutions have not been invited and the organisers seems set to ensure that no effective action comes out of the discussion.

WHAT'S IT GOT TO DO WITH US?

Frequently in trade union branches and workplaces when the need for solidarity is raised, the question comes **Well, what's it got to do with us?** Everything! Workers dare not take a nationalistic view of this. If workers in Britain ignore the struggles of workers in South Africa, or South Korea, or Brazil they put their own jobs at risk. British capitalists would rather invest in a low wage country like South Africa than Britain. In turn cheap imports from these countries flood into Britain. To compete, workers in Britain are forced to work harder for less. This is how the capitalists use low wage countries to depress wages internationally.

It therefore makes sense for British workers to support the struggles of workers in low wage and oppressive countries like South Africa. A failure to do so is to undermine our own jobs here. Hence workers' Internationalism is a vital necessity.

Secondly, racism is used to turn white workers against black workers. Racism means workers end up fighting each other instead of the bosses. In Britain this racist division has led to many strikes being lost. A failure by British workers to defend black workers in South Africa will only encourage the bosses to intensify this division here.

Thirdly, a defeat for the Apartheid state will mean a defeat as well for one of its largest backers, British imperialism. It will weaken the British boss class and make it easier for British workers to take them on.

Finally, British workers must not view South Africa as something completely unique. South Africa may be the only society where capitalist exploitation and racial oppression take the particularly intense form of Apartheid. But it is not the only society which practices systematic racism and divides the working class against itself. It is not the only society where workers picket lines are attacked, their union rights denied and their communities put under siege. It is not the only society where young people are harassed, made homeless and look forward to a jobless future.

These features may be sharper in South Africa, but they exist here too, and are growing. As our rulers find their profits under threat, their attacks will increase. Thatcher's dream is our nightmare, and South African society confronts workers everywhere with what that nightmare means. Its overthrow will mark a new stage in the battle against capitalism world wide. ■

by Sue Thomas



Katalin Arkell (Network)



John Sturrock (Network)

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE SLL

by Mark Hoskisson and Dave Stocking

HEALY AND THE BEVANITES

IN THE 1950s the main component of British Trotskyism pursued a policy of deep entryism into the Labour Party. This represented a political triumph for the faction of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) led by Healy.

In the late 1940s Healy, with the aid of Michel Pablo and the FI, split the RCP, and later reorganised it under the control of an unelected majority expelling all dissident voices - such as Tony Cliff and Ted Grant. In the summer of 1949 the RCP's openly Trotskyist paper, the *Socialist Appeal*, ceased publication. An open "Trotskyist" paper was not to re-appear on the British left for almost a decade.

The Healy faction collaborated with a number of left-reformists to establish the Socialist Fellowship (SF) in 1949. This loose grouping published an avowedly non-Trotskyist paper, the *Socialist Outlook* (SO) until 1954, when the Labour leadership suppressed it. In fact, by 1951, it became a vehicle to popularise - and in Healy's schema thereby pressurise - the left-reformist current around Aneurin Bevan.

From its earliest days, the Socialist Fellowship was explicitly non-Trotskyist. It declared its unconditional loyalty to the Labour Party and castigated the ILP for its crime of leaving the Party: "The ILP made the great mistake of leaving the Labour Party in 1932. If we are to succeed where the ILP failed we must remember we are first and foremost members of the Labour Party, desirous of serving it." (SO January 1950 - our emphasis) The idea that revolutionaries are "first and foremost" members of a reformist party indicated the strategic conception that "the Club", as Healy's group was called, had of entryism.

Indeed, retrospectively justifying "the Club's" refusal to fight the 1954 proscription of SO and the SF, the then SLL leader Ted Knight declared: "We retreated on the question of Socialist Outlook. Why? Because at that stage in the development of the left to have gone out would have left a vacuum in a developing situation ... We say our fight around the Socialist Outlook enabled the Left in the movement to mobilise itself around Bevan." (The Newsletter June 11th 1960)

The orientation to Bevan was paramount in "the Club's" politics. Healy regarded the leaders of the Bevanite movement as "centrists". In the schema, of course, centrists could be transformed into revolutionaries. It was only when Pablo, and his ally in "the Club" John Lawrence, pushed for an alternative schema, an adaptation to Stalinism, that Healy broke with Pablo. The question was not Trotskyism versus liquidationism, as Healy's hagiographers would have us believe. Both Healy and Lawrence favoured political liquidation. The argument was about which section of reformism to adapt to.

Healy's victory over Lawrence enabled him to preserve his alliance with the Bevanites. The formation of the International Committee in the split with Pablo in 1953, for all the attendant anti-liquidationist tub-thumping made no difference whatsoever to "the Club's" activities. Their private bellowings about "the party" made not one iota of difference to their practice and public politics. They remained locked on an opportunist course towards Bevan

INTRODUCTION;

THOMAS GERARD HEALY'S expulsion from the organisation, he led for so many years poses the Workers Revolutionary Party with a sharp choice. Either it can uncover the roots of its own degeneration and make a clean break with centrism, or it can simply seek a return to a supposed 'healthy period' in its past and embrace one or other manifestation of the WRP's long tradition of centrism.

In the meetings and debates currently being held by the WRP a keen interest is being shown in the history of the party and that of its predecessor the Socialist Labour League (SLL). This interest is healthy. It is in that history that the key to explaining the Healyites' rotten politics can be found. In this article Workers Power is making its contribution to the current debate. The thesis of this article is that the degeneration of the WRP can be found in Healy's early break with Trotskyism. It was a break that was an integral part of the whole Fourth International's (FI) collapse into centrism. This took place between 1945 and 1951. After 1951 no section of the FI represented a revolutionary political continuity with Trotsky's Fourth International.

The Fourth International (FI) was deeply disoriented by the failure of its perspective of a post-war revolutionary crisis that would shatter Stalinism and Social Democracy and open the way for the FI to conquer the leadership of the masses. Instead Stalinism and Social Democracy were greatly strengthened. The FI and its leading figures Michel Pablo and James P. Cannon both continued to predict an approaching catastrophic crisis which would fulfil their perspectives of mass growth.

The Cold War and the Tito-Stalin conflict led the leadership of the FI to a major break with the revolutionary method of drawing up perspectives and by 1951 to a break with the fundamental principles and programme of the

and co.

This opportunism is evident in Healy's other non-Trotskyist publication of the time *Labour Review* (LR). This had no lesser an ambition than to become "Labour's educational and theoretical organ". (LR Vol.1 No.1 January/March 1952). In order to see the extent of their self-presentation as Bevanites we only have to look at their attitude to the Labour Government of 1945-51. Mr Healy wrote of the experience of this government: "They (the working class - WP) were given glimpses of what a Labour regime could accomplish and even more, what a socialist future could bring." (LR Vol.1 No.4)

While Atlee came in for criticism it was not because of his vicious attacks on striking dockers or other workers. These incidents receive no mention in LR. No, the main fault of the government was in the field of foreign policy: "The outstanding debt on the balance sheet of the Labour Government was undoubtedly its foreign policy." (ibid) For Healy the Atlee government and its "considerable achievements" (ibid) proved the possibility of using the Labour Party for socialist tasks. "We may not have to create a Labour Party, but let's use that instrument to fulfill its socialist purposes." (ibid)

Of course this couldn't be done under the right-wing leaders. But happily an instrument for their ousting was close at hand. The Bevanites were the vehicle for the party's transformation. In order to encourage this development Healy advocated a road to socialism that was, in essentials, no different to that being advocated by the Communist Party, in their new programme the openly reformist *British Road to Socialism*: "What should be the right relation between parliamentary and extra-parliamentary actions? Mr. Bevan criticises those who looked upon parliamentary action 'as an auxiliary of direct action by the industrial organisations of the working class.' But it would be equally one sided, as he does, to make industrial action always auxiliary and subordinated to parliamentary action. Both forms of action are indispensable for conducting the class struggle." (LR Vol.1 No.2 May/August 1952 G. Healy our emphasis).

So for Healy the industrial struggle and the parliamentary struggle are put on equal footing. Whichever predominates at a particular time depends on external circum-



stances. Moreover the equal importance given to parliament and to industrial action meant a fundamentally parliamentary road to socialism: "It is not excluded that the movement for socialism can be carried far through the gates of Parliament and be 'legalised' to a considerable degree thereby." (ibid)

All that is required is "the active vigilance of the mobilised masses" (ibid) and, more importantly, a Bevanite leadership in the Labour Party: "On the other side, which is popularly designated as Bevanite, are all those forces who, regardless of their previous positions and present differences, have absorbed certain lessons from the post war experiences and are seeking to overcome the defeats of the past. They wish to adopt and implement a programme of action that more closely conforms to the realities, needs and aspirations of the socialist and Labour cause at this critical juncture of its evolution in England." (LR Vol 1 No.4)

Flowing from this whole analysis Healy abandoned the use of Transitional Programme of Trotsky. He put in its place a strategy centering on the election of a Labour government pledged to absolutely vacuous "socialist policies" and led by the "left".

Throughout this period there is not one word of warning about the potential for treachery inherent in left-reformism, and manifested in 1957 with Bevan's reconciliation with Gaitskell and the right. Instead, all we get is: "Mr. Bevan and his associates should be given the chance to lead the Labour Party and its next cabinet so they can carry through as far and as fast as they can his experiment in dynamic parliamentarism." (LR Vol 1 No.2) And the socialist policies demanded of such a government?

1. Complete reliance on the organised power of the working class.

2. No confidence in Britain's capitalists or America's imperialists.

3. Finish without delay the job of nationalising, democratising and re-organising industry along socialist lines.

4. Put into effect a socialist and democratic foreign policy. This is the only road to workers' power and socialism in Great Britain." (ibid - our emphasis)

Absent from Healy's public perspective was any mention

of a direct clash between the mobilised workers and the capitalist class, workers' councils, the arming of the workers, the smashing of the capitalist state and the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship.

This then was the public programme of Healy's group. "Orthodox Trotskyism" was retained for the private consumption of the few dozen members of the secret grouping and for international polemics. The two were held together by the notion of a prolonged stage of acting publicly as Bevanites which would eventually lead to the triumph of Trotskyism. Of course this process would be speeded up by an oncoming economic crisis. This was where Healy's lifelong predilection for perspectives based on an imminent crisis - of catastrophic proportions came in.

By 1952-53 it was clear to an idiot that capitalism was in a phase of a powerful and protracted boom. The impact of this was to strengthen reformism within the working class at large. Even where left-reformism challenged the right for control of the Labour Party - as it did at the Morecambe conference of the Party in 1952 - the right's control of the union block votes could be repeatedly used to restore order. The lefts themselves were, as always, unwilling to see a fight with the right through to the end.

Faced with such a situation - the reality of which could be measured by so many objective indicators (full employment, rising real wages, restriction of workers' activity to small scale and fragmented economic struggles) - a Marxist would have sought out underlying reasons for this strengthened reformism - seeking its contradictions and limitations.

Healy had a different notion of 'perspectives'. They had to promise a rapid escape for the revolutionaries from marginalisation and impotence to leadership and victory. Hence economic crisis was the mainspring for achieving this. For Healy, a 'crisis' was always an a priori necessity, the evidence for which was then assembled from one sided and exaggerated 'facts'. Thus figures showing downturn in the trade cycle, bankruptcies, financial crises or alarmist statements by bourgeois politicians were eclectically strung together. On this basis dramatic changes in the leadership of the working class were predicted.

Such changes were based on the sudden exposure (by events) of the present leadership and its replacement - in the fifties and early sixties by the lefts and in the later sixties and seventies by the SLL/WRP itself. The appearance of this perspective seems very different - grossly opportunist in the first period and highly sectarian in the second. But these were simply zig-zags of a common centrist method. Their root lay in an inability to fight reformism (right and left) for leadership in the workers' movement, step by step, struggle by struggle.

Healy's false approach to perspectives was visible in an article written after the Morecambe LP conference of 1952, entitled "Where is British Labour Going?". He stridently announced: "...the movement is militantly determined to push ahead toward a Socialist Britain". (LR Vol.1 No.4)

The evidence was Bevan's successes at the Morecambe conference. In the wings is the ever present crisis, albeit craftily concealed by the capitalists "signs of a slump have already appeared, even though the Conservative controlled press maintains a conspiracy of silence around it." (ibid)

From this economic crisis flows a political crisis: "The problem of power is not merely a theoretical one for Labour in Britain today. It has a burning actuality." (LR Vol.1 No.2)

This approach was not limited to a specific crisis or situation for it can be found year after year, scarcely altered or modified by the actual movements of capitalist economy or the course of the class struggle itself. Thus, in 1954 we find William Hunter writing, "Capitalist Britain, in short, is moving into a crisis. That crisis can only be met by the most drastic methods. That must now be seen as the background to all political and industrial developments." (LR Vol 1 No.5)

The objective of this foolish catastrophism was the same as it had been in 1952; "The big task for the Labour movement shaping up for 1954 is to get a Labour government which will take radical measures against capitalism." (ibid)

In the 1950s Healy's catastrophist perspective centred on the installation of a Labour government, under "left" leadership and carrying out "socialist policies". This was a grossly opportunist misuse of the communist tactic of

critical electoral support for, and putting demands on, a Labour government. It was, in essence, confusing a bourgeois workers' government with a revolutionary workers' government. The former could be installed by exclusively electoral means. It would rule for the bourgeoisie and deceive the working class. The latter (whilst it might or might not receive an electoral mandate) would be installed and maintained by the mass mobilisations of the working class and its first "socialist policies" would centre on arming the workers and disarming the bourgeoisie. It was and is quite impermissible to present working class power in terms of an electoral victory.

Healy's adaptationist politics led to no serious successes. With the suppression of **Socialist Outlook** and the suspension of **Labour Review** in 1954 the 40 or so members of the Club stagnated - publishing nothing, contributing to and selling **Tribune**. 'Pabloism' could not have effected a better disappearing act.

Yet in 1957 they were able to enter a milieu and gain significantly from a period of 'socialist regroupment'. Why? The reasons for this lie outside of Healy's own undoubted energy and organisational skills. They lie in a major crisis which erupted within Stalinism caused by the "Secret Speech" of Khrushchev, the de-Stalinisation campaign and the Hungarian revolution of 1956.

THE CRISIS IN STALINISM

The world's CPs were caught in a vicious contradiction. Firstly they had to denounce Stalin and open up a series of revelations of his crimes that confirmed the Trotskyists' case back in 1936 at least. Then they had to support the crushing of the Hungarian workers. They had to open up "discussions", promise greater internal democracy and then expel those who made use of it.

The crisis in the British CP was particularly acute. The CPGB loyally echoed Moscow's mendacious attacks on the Hungarian rising as having been inspired by fascists. However, Peter Fryer, a **Daily Worker** journalist, saw at first hand that what was happening in Hungary was a workers' revolt being brutally crushed by the Kremlin. His brilliant and accurate reports, though suppressed, caused a major impact on the CPGB. Many workers and intellectuals gleaned the truth and became sickened by the party's apologies for the slaughter.

A struggle in the party followed. While the Stalinist apparatus won out, its victory was a pyrrhic one. In late 1956 and early 1957 over 7,000 members tore up their party cards. A ferment was opened up on the left of the labour movement.

The Healy group intervened energetically in this ferment. The split from the CP did not involve the creation of a coherent faction. As well as left-moving elements who were to be won to Healy's group, there were also 'New Left' elements, like E.P. Thompson, whose evolution was towards social democracy.

In order to intervene, the Healyites re-launched **Labour Review** in January 1957. Later that year (May) they participated in the editorial board of **The Newsletter**, a paper edited by Peter Fryer and aimed at the ex-CP milieu.

The centrism of the Healy group was, undoubtedly, given a left impulse by these developments. Two other factors served to push the group further left. In 1957 the balance of payments crisis in Britain alerted the Tories and the bosses to the need to curb the expectations of the working class.

The long boom's minor shudder did produce a limited offensive by the ruling class on the wages and organisations of the workers.

Engineering was a key target and, in 1957, the AEU responded to an attack on wages with a national strike. Significantly it was the first large-scale national strike since the war. It marked a definite resurgence in militancy. In its wake came a whole series of struggles, that were often bitterly fought in the car industry, on London's buses and in the building industry.

While the AEU strike was defeated, it served notice that the industrial working class was not the fading star that many on the 'New Left' were claiming it to be.

The final aspect of the objective situation that led to the Healyites most healthy period, was Bevan's final reconciliation with Gaitskell. Over the H-Bomb issue Bevan, social patriot that he always was, blocked with Gaitskell against the growing unilateralist movement in the party. The Healyites' disappointment with Bevan and their desire to appeal to the exCPers using the capital of Trotsky's struggle against Stalinism led them to assert their Trotskyism more openly and assertively than they had done throughout the 1950s.

The **Newsletter** and **Labour Review** were at their strongest when analysing Stalinism and its crisis and when responding to the working class struggles of 1957-60. Talented intellectuals and industrial militants rallied to these publications including Peter Fryer, Cliff Slaughter, and Brian Behan. Excellent historical articles by Joseph Redman (Brian Pearce) cleared away decades of Stalinist lies and distortion from the history of the British Labour Movement. The **Newsletter** challenged the CP's strategy of pinning "all their hopes on getting majorities in the leading committees of the trades unions".

With the foundation of the Socialist Labour League in February 1959 an organisation existed that was ready and willing to play more than a role as the left tail to the Bevanites. Brian Pearce's articles on the early CPGB's attitude to rank and file organisation armed the SLL's attempts to carry out a similar policy which fell on the fertile ground of the revived shop steward-led struggles of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Having recruited working class militants, like Brian Behan, from the CP, the Healyites got stuck into the struggles. In early 1958 **Labour Review** advanced **The Newsletter**



Newsletter, June 1960.

group's industrial strategy:

"One successful strike, even a small one, is worth a dozen parliamentary debates with the Tories. Inter-union rank and file organisation is a vital part of the answer to the Tory offensive". (LR Vol.3 No.1)

And later that year this rank and file strategy was put into action in the London bus strike. The **Newsletter** produced a special **Strike Bulletin**, which was written by busmen and sold 20,000 at the height of the strike. It argued

"What is needed is a national network of rank-and-file bodies, with efficient liaison and a central organ, so that information can be pooled, experiences shared and generalised, and the sense of participating in a common class battle fostered". (LR Vol.3 No.3)

The interventions in the class struggle reached their pinnacle in November 1958 with the Rank and File Conference. This was called by **The Newsletter** and attracted 500 delegates, most of them from manual unions. So successful was the conference in comparison with other efforts of the 'Trotskyists' during the 1950s, that Fleet Street felt obliged to launch a witch-hunt. The Amalgamated Union of Building Trades Workers (AUBTW) proscribed the meeting and expelled Brian Behan from the union. Needless to say the CP attacked the event as a 'Trotskyist circus' and joined in the witch-hunt.

The continued interventions of the SLL in the class struggle, enabled it to hold a recall conference in late 1959 this time billed as a National Assembly of Labour, and open to Labour Party bodies as well as unions.

By 1960 the SLL had grown into an organisation of hundreds. **The Newsletter** became its official paper, **Labour Review** its journal. It was proscribed by the Labour leadership. Its members were expelled from the Labour Party by the dozen. To any serious would-be revolutionary in 1960 the SLL was the obvious group to join. Its record of activity in the class struggle and around the crisis of the CP between 1957 and 1959 put those of Cliff's Socialist Review Group, and Grant's gaggle of followers to shame.

Yet the SLL failed to maintain and build on this promise. It rapidly began a process of theoretical degeneration. Its flexible use of the united front in the unions, its bloc with the Labour lefts in the party and the youth movement, its participation in CND were all to give way to the most virulent sectarianism during the 1960s. Why?

THE SECTARIAN SIXTIES

Obviously it was not simply Healy's fault. It is certain he embodied the worst excesses but the SLL leadership as a whole never fully settled accounts with the centrism inherited from the 1948-51 degeneration of the FI or criticised the right centrist politics of the first half of the 1950s. These uncorrected methods poisoned the SLL in the 1960s and reduced it to an interned sect unable to relate tactically to the struggles of the working class and hence to recruit and consolidate the rank and file militants thrown up by these battles.

The SLL never in fact managed to orient itself correctly on the Labour Party issue. Despite its much higher profile the SLL did not alter the earlier Healy perspective of an uncritical support for a left Labour leadership and an electoral victory to bring in a Labour Government pledged to 'socialist policies'. This led to friction with the ex-CP industrial militants like Brian Behan.

By 1960 Brian Behan arguing that the SLL should split from the Labour Party and declare a new party. The SLL had been proscribed by the Labour leaders immediately after its foundation and its prominent members were expelled in a number of areas. To withdraw voluntarily would have been just what Gaitskell and co. wanted.

The SLL leadership were correct to resist though the



Aneurin Bevan

reasons they gave were the old unprincipled deep entrists ones. In rejecting Behan's ultra-left and sectarian rationale they trampled on Lenin's definition of the Labour Party as a 'bourgeois party' based upon the organised working class - in short a bourgeois workers' party. The SLL's second national conference declared:

"...that it is a basic principle of the Socialist Labour League that the Labour Party is a working class and not a capitalist party. In the opinion of conference the Labour Party is a working class party with a reactionary bureaucracy foisted upon it as a result of the pressures of British imperialism". (The Newsletter 6th February 1960 - our emphasis)

The answer is clear - oust the bureaucracy and all will be well with the Labour Party. The idea of a protracted struggle to create a new revolutionary party - a Leninist Party is implicitly renounced. The task of preparing an 'alternative leadership' is posed in the narrowest organisational form.

Why did the SLL reject so explicitly what they were to practice in less than four years? The answer lies in the perspective the SLL had developed in response to the revived left ferment after the 1959 election. Labour, led by Gaitskell, had abandoned any serious promises of new nationalisations. They fought the election campaign on a 'revisionist' platform and lost. Their response was to junk as much as possible of Labour's 'socialist rhetoric' and to distance themselves from the unions in order to play down the 'old-fashioned' class identification of the party. They set out to junk Clause IV. This produced a hostile reaction from many union leaders. When this was combined with the upsurge of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament it put new wind in the Labour lefts sails - now reorganised as "Victory for Socialism" (VFS).

The conflict between VFS, CND and new 'left' union leaders like Frank Cousins and Gaitskell, backed by the PLP, the NEC and the Campaign for Democratic Socialism became quite fierce. Gaitskell's defeat at the 1960 Conference led to a fierce attack on the left - this campaign of expulsions and suspensions was what he really meant when he said he would "Fight, fight and fight again to save the party" for NATO and the H-bomb.

The Newsletter began to offer the scenario that Gaitskell was another MacDonald. They proclaimed that he intended to split the Labour Party. Their whole perspective was of an imminent repeat of 1931 with the lefts inheriting the leadership with the SLL close behind as the alternative. When Gaitskell proclaimed his defiance of the conference decisions and the PLP continued to vote for nuclear weapon programmes in Parliament The Newsletter proclaimed:

"Left MPs must breakaway from the unofficial parliamentary party and place their own motions down for discussion in the House of Commons". (The Newsletter 12th November 1960)

As usual they gave little or no warning of the cowardice and unseriousness of the left. The high point of the conflict between left and right was the PLP's expulsion of Foot and five other MPs from its ranks. Foot and co. did not take long to capitulate. Tribune and the 'left' union leaders sponsored an amendment for the 1961 conference that hauled down the unilateralist flag and handed Gaitskell victory without a fight.

Gaitskell - aided by Tribune - turned his witch-hunting fully against the SLL and the Young Socialists (refounded the previous year) within whose ranks the SLL's influence was growing.

This 'betrayal' of the Lefts filled the SLL leaders with fury. The trajectory from now on was towards proclaiming the SLL as the alternative to the Labour Right and towards a virulence of denunciation which ludicrously underestimated the continued hold of reformism with the British working class. Like disappointed lovers they turned with frenzy on the erstwhile object of all their hopes.

The SLL's perspective began to lose all contact with reality. Their crisis-based perspective turned into increasing catastrophism. These 'perspectives' became a 'superior reality' perceivable only by the higher philosophy of 'dialectical materialism'. The 'alternative leadership' had to be built in order to intersect with the enormous crisis. The crisis itself would destroy reformism and lead revolutionaries to victory. The SLL's view of perspective was completely foreign to Trotsky's approach.

Perspectives for a Marxist are a working guide based on a continual assessment and re-assessment of the economy, the political situation, the balance of forces within the working class and between it and the bourgeoisie. Certainly perspectives must be grounded in an analysis of the capitalist world economy. They rest on the understanding of the Imperialist epoch as one of wars and revolutions. They rest on an assessment of period based on the upswing and downswing of world economy and on the tempo of defeats and victories within the class struggle.

Since the class struggle is a living 'combat' Trotsky correctly observed that perspectives and predictions must have an alternate character. They are not oracular prophecies and need to be constantly re-assessed. Where they are false it must be admitted. This is vital since the revolutionary organisation bases its activities, its propaganda and agitation on its perspectives. From this work comes real concrete confirmation (or contradiction) of these perspectives. Their prime purpose is not to encourage or console the revolutionary militant. Their job is not to spur the militants on to superhuman efforts of sacrifices but to guide their actions.

Trotsky noted "Programmes and prognoses are tested and corrected in the light of experience, which is the supreme criterion of human reason" (Ninety Years of the Communist Manifesto).

The role of perspectives became quite different within the SLL. Exaggeration was present even in the healthiest period. The Healyites used catastrophism to justify their perspectives for short term mass growth and the capturing of the Labour Party. They rightly insisted from 1957 onwards that the industrial struggle was the motor force behind the struggles in the Labour Party. But they went on to exaggerate the revolutionary and political significance of a range of disputes. The real content of the 1957-59 strikes was the defence of wages and job security. Nor were workers in the mass generalising form these experiences. This much is clear from the fact that between 1950 and 1968 there were only 5 national strikes and in only 5 strikes per year were 50,000 or more days lost.

These disputes had a molecular character. Their mili-

tants were increasingly open to political generalisation, and the treacherous role of the trade union bureaucracy clearly opened the way to the development of a new rank and file movement fighting for militant policies, class wide solidarity, for democratisation of the unions and against sectionalism, racism and economism.

If the SLL had held to a united front approach it could have given a lead to and crystallised a powerful and organised shop stewards' movement. Instead it squandered its resources in the pursuit of an illusory get-rich-quick perspective.

The task of destroying reformism was entrusted to the crisis. The struggle against Gaitskell marked the beginning of the end for Social Democracy.

"...the crisis of our times permits little room for manoeuvre in the future. In other words social democracy has reached the gravest crisis of its history ... Who will lead the Left?" (LR Vol.5 No.2)

The answer, of course, was:

"Marxism and a Marxist leadership is the only force that can fill the void on the left?". (ibid)

If the crisis mongering was bad, then the 'void on the left' theory was disastrous. There is never a 'void' on the left so long as Stalinism, left reformism or centrism exist. Unless and until those forces are defeated in reality - and not merely literarily in the pages of The Newsletter - then the central task of Marxists is to fight them using revolutionary tactics.

The first shift towards the future sectarianism was reflected in the 1961 Document "The World Prospect for Socialism". In contrast to all of the previous documents with their schemas of transforming the Labour Party this document declares

"The need to build independent Marxist parties in order to provide alternative leadership is the most urgent task of the day". (LR Vol.6 No.3)

The SLL leadership failed to reassess and correct their earlier perspectives. They should have realised that they had held an over-optimistic and foreshortened view of the 'crisis of leadership'. The right held on to their dominance and the left were weakened after 1961. How on earth could this betoken the growing political consciousness of the masses and the weakening of reformism? Yet this is exactly how Healy and co. interpreted events. Along with this loss of contact with the actual Labour movement and the real consciousness of British workers went an abandonment of the various united front tactics necessary to partake in their struggles and really fight the reformist leaders.

DITCHING THE UNITED FRONT

Throughout 1962 united front tactics were ditched in favour of repeated calls in The Newsletter to build the new leadership. The call for rank and file movements disappears to be replaced with:

"On this May Day 1962, we call upon all workers in the trade union, Labour Party and the Communist Party to consider seriously the next step in the struggle for socialism. Join with us in building the Marxist leadership: Join the Socialist Labour League". (The Newsletter 5th May 1962)

The united front could be got rid of for one simple reason. In the SLL's view of things the victory of the right in the Labour Party had exposed the 'lefts'. Left-reformism was therefore no obstacle as it was:

"...thoroughly discredited and cannot under any circumstances be considered as candidates for leadership in Labour's left-wing". (LR Vol.7 No.3)

Discredited in whose eyes? Cannot be considered as worthy leaders by whom?

The SLL and its several hundred workers might have seen through Michael Foot and co., but millions of workers - as Wilson's 1964 election victory showed - had not even had their illusions in right-wing reformism dispelled.



1956: Budapest workers demolish Stalin's statue.

To give scientific weight to their prognoses the SLL projected a scenario of a capitalist economy in Britain teetering on the brink of ruin. The convenient result of economic crisis was that it destroyed the material base of reformism and justified a sectarian method of party building.

By 1963 the features of Healyism - impending crisis, impending bonapartism or fascism, and full blown sectarianism were codified in a resolution "The Class Struggle in Britain" passed at the SLL's fifth annual conference. This warned that union participation in the NEDC indicated that the main threat of fascism came, not from the right, but:

"Within the labour movement itself, policies of class collaboration and integration into the capitalist state can develop a 'left' or 'radical' wing of the corporatist kind". (LR Vol.7 No.5)

In other words class-collaboration and corporatism become one and the same thing in the Healyites telescoped view of the world. At the same time:

"There is no room in the present situation for left reformist movements". (ibid)

This may have been comforting for the SLL but it was a million miles away from reality as the history of the late 1960s to today demonstrates. The class struggle was painted in terms of a continual struggle for power - despite the fact that the level of struggle had declined in comparison with the 1957 to 1959 period.

This apparent paradox was explained away by Britain's economic crisis:

"The problems of the British economy are so acute, and the relation between capital and its political agents so full of contradictions, that the problem of power is in fact continually posed". (ibid)

To meet this explosive (1963!) situation the SLL announced its turn away from the united front. The resolution of the continually posed problem of power necessitated building the leadership. The crisis was no temporary phenomenon it was "a deep historical one" (ibid) and building the SLL was therefore a race against time. Via the YS, the SLL had staged some significant lobbies of Parliament against the witch-hunt, Dizzy with success they declared that their own campaigns were central and:

"...the work of all the comrades must be centred on these main campaigns... Our political campaigns are the real answer to the problems which are constantly posed by industrial militants. Only the construction of the League in the fight for the political line corresponds to the real needs of the workers in the trade unions, and the work of our trade union fractions must flow from this". (ibid)

This turn to their own campaigns reflected in the headlines of The Newsletter. Events in the class struggle were pushed into the background while the activities of the SLL become front page news.

With the sectarian turn Healy increasingly needed to seal-off his members from the reality of the class struggle and from contact with the rest of the left. The politics of the amalgam that Healy learnt while he was a Stalinist served him well in this regard. All of the SLL's opponents - right and left - were lumped together in a conspiracy against the SLL and the way was cleared to portray the rest of the left, the 'revisionists', as agents of the bourgeoisie. This found its expression as early as 1962:

"From Transport House and the Communist Party Headquarters at King Street, down to the much smaller groups of Mr. Cliff and his so-called Socialist Review state capitalists and the tiny Pabloite fragments, there is unanimous agreement that the Socialist Labour League should be destroyed". (LR Vol.7 No.2)

From this it was an easy step to assert that revisionism, in particular Pabloism "is in the direct service of imperialism" (Fourth International - the successor to LR - Vol.1 No.2 Summer 1964).

The hysteria against 'renegades and revisionists' helped seal the increasingly young Healyite rank-and-file away from the forums or actions of the Labour movement where he or she would have to compare the SLL's politics with those of its rivals.

From 1963 the degeneration of the SLL into a sect proceeded apace. The combination of repeated declarations of the death of reformism with the presentation of the SLL and YS's own rallies, conferences or demonstrations as epoch-making events marks Healy's final departure into a world of his own. By 5th June 1965 The Newsletter could proclaim: "Virtually nobody has any more illusions with the right-wing government" (The Newsletter 9th June 1965).

This same government was to be returned with a significantly increased majority within a year. Clearly to quote Mark Twain "reports of its death had been greatly exaggerated".

On the other hand the SLL's own activities received the most amazing accolades - from itself;

"The Fifth Annual Conference of the Young Socialists which met at Morecambe on the weekend of February 27th-28th was undoubtedly the most significant event in the working class since the end of the war". (our emphasis - WP)

The importance given to youth work came to dominate everything at this time. Important as youth work must be to a revolutionary organisation it cannot replace effective work in the strongest bastions of reformism - in the unions and in the Labour Party where the reformists maintain their grip on the workers' movement. The youth organisation of the SLL - having been expelled from the Labour Party - set about building itself as a self-contained 'mass organisation'. Increasingly it centered on an agenda of discos, sport, mass rallies and rock concerts with exclusively YS demonstrations and conferences where there was no disagreement or debate and where resolutions were carried 'unanimously'.

The Newsletter reporting the 5th YS Conference blithely quoted The Times report that "they voted unanimously on every resolution". Unanimity is a rare commodity in every living organisation. Usually it indicates an unhealthy or dying one.

The YS was increasingly presented in The Newsletter as the replacement for the reformists.

"...The Young Socialists have rapidly transformed themselves into the most advanced political leadership within the Labour movement that has ever been seen in its history". (ibid)

At the SLL's Seventh National Congress (June 1965) a resolution on building the revolutionary party in Britain

was moved by G. Healy, and, needless to say, "passed unanimously". Its report in the Newsletter makes curious reading. It reported proudly that;

"a highlight of the congress was a collection which reached the all time high of £200. Delegate after delegate pledged to do everything possible to launch the daily paper." (Newsletter, June 12th 1965).

Healy's opening address was packed full of hopelessly false estimates and prognoses. The Tory party "is on the way back" to power he predicted. Curiously he commented that "the only section of the labour movement which separated itself from the right wing was ours" (ibid). True enough but in separating itself from Wilson and co. it also unfortunately separated itself from the labour movement.

The absolute centrality of 'the youth' was stressed. Indeed in a conference in which the Newsletter reported "seventy five percent of the delegates consisted of young people below the age of 20 years". Healy talked of "the age problem within the young socialists" - they were too old!

The "great demand of the hour" was for a daily paper. "The paper is the whole essence of Leninism, the whole centre of the advice of Lenin in 'What is to be Done'." Now this is sheer nonsense. Iskra was not a daily paper. The Bolsheviks had a daily paper in 1905-7 when they were a mass force in the first Russian revolution and again from 1912-14 when they led the recovery of the defeats of the intervening years. Healy put the cart squarely before the horse.

ON COURSE FOR THE DAILY

The mass daily is the result of the winning of mass influence by the revolutionaries. It cannot create that influence for a small propaganda grouping. If the latter type of organisation tries to create and maintain it then it will inevitably be turned into an army of paper-sellers and fund raisers with no time, energy or experience of fighting within the labour movement.

Healy's perspective was completely topsy-turvy:

"If we can launch that paper at the height of the crisis in the leadership of the labour movement, we are set for a transformation. We can transform the present organisation into a mass organisation". (ibid)

And so Healy firmly set the SLL on course for the daily, the declaration of the party and political irrelevance.

The catastrophist perspective becomes the justification for all the sacrifices and hyper-activism, for the obsession with building the leadership. The membership have to be convinced of a permanent pre-revolutionary situation which will boost the 'party' to the head of the masses and justify the pain and burning out of comrades.

The 'reality of crisis' dominated, indeed obliterated the humdrum reality of actual struggles.

"...the second imperialist war opened up an unparalleled revolutionary crisis which still continues despite the ebb and flow of the world class struggle". (FI Vol.3 No.3 - our emphasis)

Unparalleled? Obviously the period of the post-war boom was more revolutionary than the period of 1917 to 1923, which produced the Bolshevik revolution and real revolutionary crisis throughout Europe!

Every strike is turned into an example of this revolutionary crisis. Thus the 1966 Seaman's strike, "opened up a period of political strikes which will be of much greater magnitude and explosiveness". (ibid) Yet no other national strikes can be cited to justify this.

If this was the SLL's response to the strikes of the Wilson years then the advent of Heath and his anti-union laws sent Healy into orbit. Armed with the daily paper Workers Press in 1969, in 1973 the Workers Revolutionary Party was 'proclaimed'. Dictatorship and Bonapartism was now on the order of the day. An article in Fourth International entitled "Preparing for Power" warned that:



Leon Trotsky with a real communist paper

"From the standpoint of monopoly capitalism, bourgeois parliamentary democracy . . . must be dispensed with". Healy was joined in this period, appropriately enough, with the actors and actresses of the Redgrave family.

The SLL completed its evolution from a sect to a cult with Healy as high priest of 'Dialectical Materialism'. This was turned on its head, converted into a subjective idealist recipe for rejecting the real world of victories and defeats, of treacherous reformist leaders who did have a terrible grip on the workers organisations, of Labour Governments that workers did have illusions in.

The WRP of today should not try to return to a 'golden age' . . . there never was one.

Healy's whole approach to the question of crisis and the class struggle was far removed from Trotsky's. In The First Five Years of the CI Trotsky observed:

"The circumstance (the ending of the revolutionary upsurge of 1919-20 with a slump - WP) reinforces our conviction that the effects of a crisis upon the course of the labour movement are not at all so unilateral in character as some simplifiers imagine. The political effects of a crisis (not only the extent of its influence but also its direction) are determined by the entire existing political situation and by those events which precede and accompany the crisis, especially the battles, successes or failures of the class itself prior to the crisis may give a mighty impulse to the revolutionary activity of the working masses; under a different set of circumstances it may completely paralyze the offensive of the proletariat and, should the crisis endure too long and the workers suffer too many losses, it might weaken extremely not only the offensive but also the defensive potential of the working class".

Trotsky stigmatises as false any notion of permanent crisis as "incorrect, one-sided and unscientific" and just as crises do not automatically drive the proletariat towards the seizure of power neither do booms or recoveries automatically do the reverse. Trotsky concludes in words that apply powerfully to the Healyite method:

"Most unstable and untrustworthy is revolutionary radicalism which finds it necessary to keep up its morale by ignoring the dialectic of living forces in economics

and politics alike and constructing its prognosis by means of a pencil and ruler". (First Five Years of the Communist International)

In looking back over the history of Healyism we can see that it was born in a rightward moving centrist adaptation to left reformism - the British variant of Pablo and Cannon's centrist collapse. We have seen that it effected a left-centrist turn between 1957 and 1959 which led to its healthiest period but that it never rid itself of its methodological weaknesses and its programmatic revisions. In addition these political weaknesses found organisational form in Healy's factional and cliquish methods. Healy never tolerated opposition within his organisation - producing expulsions and splits. Obviously this extreme personal factionalism also evolved as the SLL became isolated from the conflicts and tendencies of the actual labour movement. Healy became despotic and thuggish. The sect became a cult around his personality. But the seeds of this terrible and bizarre degeneration were political not personal.

The WRP of today should not try to return to a 'golden age', for, if that means a revolutionary age, there never was one. They should learn from the history of other splits in the WRP - the Lambertist Socialist Labour Group and the Thornettites - that in response to Healy's sectarianism there is a danger of a return to liquidationism. The SLG and Thornett have thrown the baby out with the bath water and ended up as foot-soldiers in a variety of left-reformist led movements. The WRP should not allow their break with sectarianism to mean a return to the Labourite liquidationism of the 1950s. Workers Power has never tried to lay claim to a golden age of British Trotskyism. We believe that the post-war break up of the FI rapidly precluded the possibility for such a golden age. However, we are not idealists. We recognise that elements of the revolutionary programme were, at various times, utilised and defended by the centrist currents. In our analysis of degenerate Trotskyism we discard all that is rotten and centrist. But we appropriate the revolutionary aspects of this tradition. Thus, while we do not identify the early SLL as revolutionary, we do identify with its orientation to the working class and its commitment to building a rank and file movement.

We appeal to the WRP to use the same method. Break with the tradition of degenerate Trotskyism. Produce an honest balance sheet of your own history. Discard all the accumulated political errors. Begin discussions with Workers Power as a step towards a principled regroupment of British Trotskyism.

workers power

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BREAK THE ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT

THE MINI-REFERENDUM on January 23rd in the Six Counties may well prove to be something of a watershed in Unionist resistance to the Dublin-London agreement. While the DUP and OUP received some extra loyalist votes over their 1983 tally, this was less than they predicted.

Moreover, they actually lost one OUP seat to the SDLP whose fortunes revived. It was always going to be a question of what would happen after the by-elections. Paisley and Molyneux now face a dilemma. What forms of effective constitutional resistance are left open to them?

DIVISIONS

Divisions have already opened up between the DUP and OUP over whether to boycott Westminster. The OUP realise that little is likely to be gained by this. Moreover, the threat of direct action against the agreement -- raised by the loyalist paramilitaries and cynically exploited by Paisley -- seems far less likely to materialise. All the evidence suggests that Protestant workers see little chance of success along this road.

It seems most likely that a slow process of coming to terms with the agreement will have to occur. Thatcher and King are busy juggling bridges to the Unionist MPs.

Thatcher and King acted in the first place because the Tories recognised that Dublin's co-operation was necessary to step up the repression of Sinn Fein and the IRA. The Unionists' scepticism on this has been undercut since November with clear evidence that Fitzgerald and Thatcher mean business. More Gardai have been sent to the border areas; the wave of arrests and detentions of Sinn Fein supporters on the eve of Christmas brought protest from Dublin; Owen Carron was put under lock and key on a blatantly trumped up charge.

Secondly, Thatcher realised

that the agreement was important if Sinn Fein's political progress was to be halted and the SDLP's fortunes revived. The election results have given evidence of success here too: a 25% drop in Sinn Fein's vote and Seamus Mallon's election.

In essence, Thatcher was prepared to face down Unionist anger in order to try and achieve long-term stability in the Six Counties. While getting Dublin to accept that partition is here to stay and so accept Unionism's continued ruling position, the Tories needed to break loyalism's intransigent opposition to any form of power-sharing with the SDLP. With the Assembly elections due later this year Thatcher aimed to create the conditions for the SDLP's entry into the Assembly and thereby incorporate a section of the minority population into indentifying with, and taking responsibility for, the continuation of partition.

CAN'T STOP

There are two powerful negative reasons why having now begun the process Thatcher cannot afford to lose. First, if the agreement is scrapped then Fianna Fail would undoubtedly be strengthened in the 26 Counties in the wake of a revival of anti-loyalism. In this respect Thatcher's aim to draw the South closer to NATO and Britain would be set back. Secondly, in the wake of the Westland crisis and not far away from a General Election, Thatcher cannot afford another political defeat or protracted crisis.

On the Unionist's side there is very little to be gained by threatening to push the issue too far. There is no mileage in an independent Ulster, economically adrift and bereft of US and EEC financial backing. Short of this there is also the danger that loyalist resistance will stir up huge British anti-Unionist sentiment giving Thatcher the necessary backing for further 'reforms' in



Paisley and Molyneux

the north. We can sum up the agreement this way; an attempt to stabilise partition in the short-term through reactionary policies designed to quell militant anti-Unionism.

Although this involves breaking with those elements of Unionism which do not correspond with British imperialism's interests. Loyalism best serves Britain's aims in the Six Counties but Britain's interests are not identical to those of Unionism.

The elections have also served to expose the weaknesses of Sinn Fein's brand of nationalism. Fierce in its condemnation of the SDLP for selling-out the minority to Britain, they appealed to it for a 'nationalist pact' in the elections! They proposed a united front between a party that embraces the agreement and one that spurns it. What confusion this must sow in the anti-Unionist forces.

Sinn Fein have done nothing to rally the Six County or 26 County anti-Unionist workers in direct action against the Agreement. At their last conference their leader even rejected proposals for an anti-repression campaign which would unite all the forces of the left. Sinn Fein's leaders fear the action of the masses. They seek to constrain it and limit it. They are reduced -- as they were in 1974 over the Sunningdale agreement -- to relying upon using continued IRA activity

to enrage the Protestants against the 'failure' of the Agreement to bring better security. Once again Sinn Fein show that they have no real class programme against imperialism in Ireland by a militant petit-bourgeois echo of the sectarian communalist politics of all the nationalists.

OPPOSITION

On the mainland of Britain we must do all we can to rouse the labour movement to opposition to the Agreement and force a scrapping of its institutional arrangements. Through the trade unions we must put pressure on the Labour Party. It was a disgrace that Kinnock and the majority of the PLP should hide the real purpose of the Agreement from the British labour movement and dress it up as a step to a 'united Ireland by consent'. It was even more disgraceful that some 'lefts' like Clare Short should abstain on it in a Parliamentary vote. Within the Six Counties we must recognise that the agreement will combine repression against the minority with a propaganda war to confuse and divide the anti-Unionists over the nature of the Agreement.

As revolutionary communists we cannot close our eyes to the fact that in the last few months

the Protestant working class has been mobilised in support of loyalism's reactionary objections.

To attempt to quell its fears by promising greater democracy in a united Ireland as some do -- like Socialist Organiser -- is absurd. The Protestant workers have all the democracy they need or want for their purpose, namely, defending their privileges in housing, employment, local government and the security apparatus. What possible temptation can it be to them that they should enjoy greater bourgeois democracy in a 32 county semi-colony with higher prices, massive taxes, high unemployment, a clerical state and the possibility of reverse discrimination?

The Protestant workers will, historically speaking, have to make a big leap in consciousness. Only the programme of revolutionary communism -- implacable struggle against imperialism and green nationalism (of Sinn Fein or the Green Toryism of the South) -- can break off a sector of Protestant workers. Only this programme, fused with the mass movement of anti-Unionist workers throughout the 32 counties can paralyse loyalism's will to resist and convert a section of its vanguard to the fight for a 32 county Irish Workers Republic. ■

by Keith Hassell

BOTHA ~ NOTHING NEW

DESPITE THE FANFARE in South Africa's parliament, PW Botha's latest statement contains nothing new. ANC leader Thabu Mbeki was accurate when he said "Nothing has changed."

In his speech on 31st January Botha called for discussions with black leaders: "My government wants to hear your views, it wants to speak with you and your leaders in the spirit of co-operation." What hypocrisy! The voice of millions of blacks has been heard loud and clear by Botha in the last year. He has responded by sending his gun-thugs into the black townships. They have murdered over 1000 blacks in the last 17 months. If Botha wanted to 'listen' to black leaders he need only visit one of South Africa's many prisons where they lie tortured, beaten and chained.

As for Botha's 'offer' to release Nelson Mandela if the USSR releases two dissidents: it is a cynical attempt to win backing from the ruling class of Britain and the US by rattling the anti-Communist sword. In response the British Foreign Office has already referred to "a number of significant proposals".



P.W.Botha

The rest of Botha's proposals are just as useless. He will get rid of the pass laws only to replace them with another system of movement control that will make blacks foreigners in their own country. The new 'uniform' system of identity is the old pass laws in a different garb.

Whilst Botha's speech signifies no new course, it does indicate the continuing pressure the regime is under. Botha is forced to daub the face of the racist regime with more and more cosmetic reforms. It is desperately trying to convince the US and Britain that tinkering with apartheid will be enough to protect their multi-million pound investments. But none of these 'reforms' will take the steam out of the black masses revolt. It remains to be seen whether they will be enough to buy off the moderate religious leaders who, until now, have remained within the camp of the mass struggle. But because Botha is offering the black masses nothing economically or politically his 'new strategy' will do nothing to abate the struggles of the youth, the black workers and the township dwellers.

Meanwhile the press censorship remains in place. The corpses pile up in the townships. Apartheid in all its essential features is maintained. Its opponents remain banned and imprisoned.

COSATU which has given the regime 6 months to end the pass laws, and the school students



who have given the regime until March, should immediately resume their struggles. They can give Botha until eternity, but they will gain nothing without struggle. A General Strike and school boycott should be launched immediately against the state of emergency and the pass laws. Defence groups should be formed in the factories, colleges and the townships and armed against

Botha's terror squads. Delegate co-ordinating committees should be formed everywhere to co-ordinate the strike.

Botha's speech comes at a time of relative lull in the South African struggle. The response to it must be a revolutionary storm which sweeps away Apartheid and the capitalist system which props it up.

THE CITY

CAPITALISM'S ROTTEN CORE

ONE BY PRODUCT OF the Westland affair was the fleeting glimpse it gave of the social and political power of "the City".

Behind the battle of words in Parliament, the real power to decide the fate of 9,000 workers lay with "the shareholders". Of course in Thatcher's view of capitalism, "the shareholders" are meant to be thousands of middle class pensioners with a few quid to spare. The Albert Hall was hired so they could all file in and vote "democratically".

Events, however, revealed a different picture. Frantic trading broke out in Westland shares. Millionaire capitalists in both camps gobbled up all the shares and votes they could find, at twice the normal price. In the end a handful of investors held the power. Even the politicians had to resort to a mixture of threats and groveling to try to influence their votes.

Operations like this happen every day in the City. The Westland deal simply lifted the lid off this murky world we are not normally allowed to see. So what is "the City", and why is it so important?

FINANCIAL CENTRE

Most people identify the "City of London" with the London Stock Exchange. This is one of its main institutions but by no means the only one. The City's cramped 677 acres also contain the Bank of England, all the Merchant Banks, the headquarters of the High Street banks, the money markets, foreign currency markets, Lloyds (the main insurance market), commodity exchanges, and a whole host of advisors, brokers, lawyers & accountants. There are even companies whose sole purpose is to lure top "analysts" from one £50,000-a-year job to another.

Half a million people work in the City's square mile. A study in 1967 showed that every day over 3 million phone-calls are made, 4½ million letters typed and half a million messages hand-delivered. And that was in 1967!

So on the face of it all this activity is devoted to the not very productive task of moving a mountain of paper from one end of the City to another.

Yet it makes the City one of the most profitable places on earth to invest in. Why?

TOYTOWN

In the textbooks of capitalist economics the City's profits are justified because it provides a "vital" function to industry: the banks provide the money, the Stock Exchange channels it into industry, grandpa's shares earn a few quid a month keeping you and me in a job. This is the kind of stuff that Keith Joseph's new "economic awareness" courses will peddle to school students. It has more in common with the Bank of Toytown than with the real dealings of the City sharks.

Take the Stock Exchange. It is true that the Stock Exchange channels funds to industry through the issue of new shares. However if this were its only task it would be a hundred times smaller.

When a company issues shares on the Stock Exchange it receives money which it can use to buy machinery etc. But this is the last time it does receive any money for them. Thereafter the shares belong to the buyers who can do what they want with them. Nearly all the wheeling, dealing, shouting, pushing and shoving that goes on in the Stock Exchange is devoted to what's called the



Money talking!

"secondary market". This means that you don't buy shares to get a share in the profits of a firm, or to get interest on a government bond in 10 years time. You buy shares at 10.00am to sell them again at 10.30am for more money than you paid for them. Always providing some kind of soul hasn't wiped 5p off the value of the pound by doing the same thing on the foreign currency markets, then you've made a profit.

The main role of the Stock Exchange is, therefore, as a den for speculation. It is the biggest gambling club in Europe.

And it's not the only one. Lloyds, the insurance giant is another source of easy money for the rich. If you are lucky enough to have over £100,000 in the bank you can become a "name" at Lloyds. All you have to do is pledge that money to Lloyds in case they have to pay-up if a plane, ship (or space-shuttle!) comes to grief. Meanwhile you earn money from insurance premiums and your money's still in the bank earning still more in interest. As if this was not enough, you don't have to pay tax for 3 years on your profits from Lloyds. And if you re-invest in Lloyds, you pay no tax at all! What a wonderful world for the City gents. Only a mile away in the East End of London DHSS snoopers terrorise families searching out the smallest dole fiddles.

But this is the beauty of the City as world financial centre: normal laws do not apply. British governments have always refused to "regulate" the City's activities. One of Thatcher's first acts on coming to power was to remove exchange controls, opening the way for an influx of international financial capital to join in the speculative jamboree, and giving British capitalists new freedom to take their money overseas.

FRAUD

Fraud is rife in the city. In 1984 £776 million worth of fraud was being investigated in London. The real figure is much higher as less than 20% of fraud cases are reported.

But despite recent scandals over the collapse of Johnson Matthey Bank, at Lloyds and now over the British Telecom share issue, Thatcher has turned a blind eye. Instead of a hue and cry about "law and order" such as was raised about the so-called crime-wave in the inner cities, the government appointed a "watchdog" made up of... stock-brokers and merchant bankers!

In addition it is now proposed that fraud trials be taken out of the hands of juries because they are "too complicated". The real reason is that jury trials were providing a 95% conviction rate!

POWER

The City is the concentration of the banking system in Britain. The City therefore plays a pivotal role in the British economy. Without new money or the extension of credit, the economy would soon grind to a halt. And because of this it is a centre of political power for the British capitalist class.

Money talks, so the saying goes. And in Whitehall it talks through Treasury officials, the Governor of the Bank of England and the many top bankers who find their way into politics; John Nott and Cecil Parkinson to name but two recent examples. Throughout the 1950s the City dictated the priorities of government economic policy. In 1967 and again in 1975 the Bank of England forced major changes in Labour's economic

policy by engineering a "sterling crisis".

There is one thing the City financiers could not live with; any real attempt to impose legal restrictions on their activity. At the first sign of this they would begin to move their money elsewhere precipitating severe economic difficulties and placing great pressure on the government of the day to "lay off".

Whilst this means that "socialism" is enemy No 1 for the City, it also means that the bankers are not over-keen on any of Labour's plans to "regenerate industry" at the expense of controls on the City.

As a result, whilst Labour's economic thinkers generally love the idea of "regenerating" the profits of the City of London as a leech on the body of capitalism: "If only it could be got rid of, or at least reformed, then investors would put their money into industry instead of speculating in Euro-dollars etc". This is the theme of many a Labour Party "report" or "document" (but not many a manifesto).

It is certainly true that the growth of the City was mirrored historically by the decay of British industry. It is true that in the last ten years investment in industry has stagnated whilst speculation in shares, bonds, "futures", currencies, metals, etc. has trebled. The FT index regularly breaks new records, yet 4 million are out of work.

But it is a total fallacy to think that British capitalism could do without the City, or that there is a "friendly" industrial wing of capitalism that is the natural enemy of the bankers. We only have to look at the Westland deal to see how intertwined GEC, British Aerospace, etc. were with their Lloyds Bank backers.

What is certain, as a Labour Party document on the City admitted in 1982, is that:

"a strategy for economic recovery must entail a challenge to the power of the city."

That is, even a strategy for its capitalist recovery.

But what if the City refuses

to have its power challenged? What if attempts to legally 'regulate' its activities are met with massive economic sabotage - politely known as a 'withdrawal of business confidence'?

Labour has no answer to this. They could not even resort to state-capitalist nationalisation such as carried out by the 1945-51 Labour Government and advocated today by Benn. Why not? Because, as the above-mentioned report admits, compensation to the High Street banks alone would total £3,400 million, 130 times the real value of coal and steel in 1945! And this is precisely why they have never made a real attempt to 'challenge' the city's power - even in order to 'regenerate' British capitalism.

There is in fact a simple way of challenging the power of the City of London - immediate nationalisation of the banks, finance houses and insurance markets without compensation. Under the control of workers a centralised plan of production could then put to work all the money previously squandered on the stock exchange and the money markets.

But if the City were threatened with this its friends in the army, the judiciary, the police and the monarch would come to the rescue. Not to mention its so-called "enemies" in industry. A real challenge to the power of the City means a challenge to the power of capitalism - its armed power, its state machine. To those who think this is 'utopian' we say: not as 'utopian' as expecting Labour to unlock the vast wealth of the City by peaceful persuasion: not as 'utopian' as expecting the city gents to give up their £100 dinners and £1000 suits in the interest of creating jobs at British Leyland.

The City's corridors of power rise high above the poverty of South and East London. But its power only exists because we and millions of workers overseas are exploited. The death blow against this exploitation will be aimed squarely at this den of swindlers and profit sharks.■

STOP THE INTEREST PAYMENTS

LABOUR'S LAST ROUND of resistance to rate-capping was a fiasco. The councillors did not stand firm. Workers who had been told to "back these councillors" were left confused and leaderless. Now Labour councillors are compounding their defeat by putting up no resistance this time round.

Nowhere is this clearer than in Lambeth. Here Ted Knight is planning to sell the Town Hall and other council assets on a lease back basis in order to bridge the deficit budget. Meanwhile Jim O'Brien, local council workers' union leader, intends to occupy that same town hall to threaten the Tories. Whether the City will buy a property with sitting - or occupying - tenants is of course another matter.

A fatal logic lies at the heart of Knight's latest piece of opportunism. He hopes the lease-backs will tide Lambeth over until the return of a Labour Government in two years time. Knight imagines that Labour will then come to his rescue and release Lambeth and Liverpool from the clutches of the wicked City.

Lambeth workers should not trust Knight's word that their jobs are secure once the lease-back deals are made. The Tories will



Liverpool and Lambeth: mortgaging the future?

not allow Knight to sell off the council's silver in order to boost its budget. To trust in Knight will leave workers unprepared for the next attack when it comes.

There is a clear alternative to Knight's strategy. Workers can be mobilised around a budget they need and which is not paid for

by mortgaging Lambeth's future to the City. That means refusing to pay the interest payments that the banks have saddled Lambeth and other local authorities with. It means holding back the police precept. That is the alternative to Knight's costly and opportunistic deceit.□

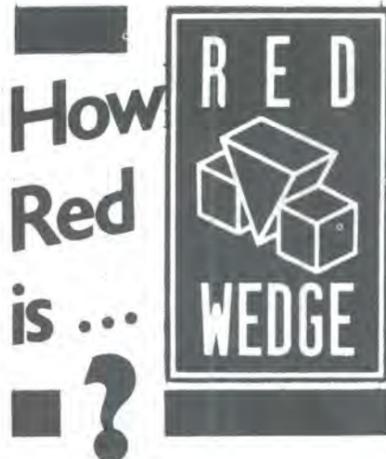
Mike Abrahams (Network)

John Sturrock (Network)

REVIEWS

ON THE FACE of it the RED WEDGE tour represents a revolution in the Labour Party's attitude to youth. Because it is centred on the immediate needs and concerns of young people, rock music is an ideal vehicle for getting over socialist politics. Unfortunately though, socialist politics get a very rough deal in the tour itself.

In contrast to the LPYS, which is starved of funds by the party bureaucrats and starved of ideas by its Militant leadership, no expense has been spared to produce leaflets, posters, badges and T-shirts proclaiming the message of the tour. But what is the message? Look inside the glossy red & black cover of the tour's pamphlet; "A State of Independence" and you'll find it is peddling the same stale politics as Kinnock, Hattersley & co. OK, it points in vivid language to the injustices dealt out to youth by the Tories: no jobs, YTS misery, low pay and few state benefits, no housing, attacks on Gay youth, etc. It does so with a lot more relevance than the stuff regularly churned out by the YS. But look for concrete demands on Labour to do anything about it and you will find very few. YTS trainees should get ... £37 a week; students over 16 should get ... £27 a week. These were the only real political demands I could find. But the Paul Weller records selling at £5 a time let alone Red Wedge T-shirts at £10 were a good illustration of how inadequate they are.



How Red is ... ?

about this lack of political content. Fans of other "political" bands like the Redskins have put Weller & co. under a lot of pressure to criticise the Labour leaders openly on the tour. But their response to such pressure at the Leicester gig for example, ranged from the stupid; "youth can't change anything because we can't vote" (Suggs of Madness) to Jerry Dammers' claim that Red Wedge was meant to set up a way for youth to influence the Labour leadership. "If we show them we've got you behind us then maybe they'll start listening to us," he replied to one sceptic.

Why should they? As with the



YS the Labour leaders are perfectly happy to allow Red Wedge to gather votes amongst youth. But when 250,000 school students actually did "get organised" and went on school-strike last year Kinnock and the NEC roundly condemned them. And the people who organised that strike are now being kicked out of the Labour Party.

The Red Wedge concerts themselves have been largely unpolitical. We don't demand that the Red Wedge groups play "ideologic-

ally sound" music. That is the tradition of Stalinism. What we do demand is that whatever kind of music they play they speak out against the traitors and bureaucrats who run the Labour Party. This includes people like Anna Joy David who, before becoming a Red Wedge frontperson was last seen helping Bruce Kent close down YCND and get rid of its "too radical" leaders. And it means fighting people like Paul Bower the tour manager, who refused to let Silentnight strikers into the Bradford gig to collect money.

Weller, Bragg & Somerville should stop letting themselves be used by Labour's PR machine to promote no-future policies and start using their public voice and popularity to get youth organised to fight now.

"The establishment have turned socialism into a dirty word" says the Red Wedge leaflet. So have the Labour leaders, by denouncing black youth, young miners and striking school students as criminals; by organising no fight against unemployment, by shelving the policy of Unilateral Disarmament.

Turning socialism into reality will involve a lot more than concerts anyway. But concerts where "political" bands cover up for the Labour leaders, and where Red Wedge T-shirt sellers crowd out striking workers? If "This is Socialism" as the T-shirts proclaim, who can blame the youth for preferring rock 'n' roll?

Paul Mason

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NOTHING

As for Gay youth, for low paid youth and black youth suffering police racism the Red Wedge pamphlets promise nothing. Very wisely. For that is exactly what the next Labour government will offer them under Kinnock. As for calls to action, apart from get mad get organised, I don't leaflets have little to suggest. No wonder, since Kinnock has spent the last two years telling the whole working class not to fight back, and to wait for a Labour government.

At the discussion forums held before each concert Paul Weller, Jerry Dammers and Billy Bragg have looked uneasy when pressed



More Confusion From Thompson's Stable

STAR WARS: Edited by E.P. Thompson

Penguin 1985 (£2.95 pbk 149 pp)

Star Wars is a collection of articles, edited by E.P. Thompson, covering the technological, military, economic and political aspects of the 'Strategic Defence Initiative' (S.D.I.) or Star Wars project of the US Government. The book has fundamental flaws, but within its limits it does contain some valuable information. Ben Thompson's article 'What is Star Wars?', for example, is useful in helping give the lay person a scientific understanding of Star Wars' frightening military capability.

The glaring inadequacy of the book's political method and analysis is shown up most clearly in E.P. Thompson's own articles entitled 'Why is Star Wars?' and 'Folly's Comet'. The first article contains a laughable explanation of the US governments' enthusiasm for Star Wars. Thompson puts it all down to Reagan's personal obsession with science fiction (the star trek syndrome) and the influence of 'mad' anti-Soviet scientists - one Edward Teller is mentioned in this regard.

Thompson argues that star wars was a response to the 'popularity and success' of the freeze movement in the US which

made it necessary for the government to package the SDI as a defence strategy to put an end to the threat of nuclear war. In this article, there is ample evidence of Thompson's complete inability to differentiate between specific conjunctural factors - such as the usefulness of Star Wars to Reagan's re-election campaign and the longer term strategic motives of US imperialism.

The second article written by Thompson continues in a similar bewilderingly eclectic vein. Its argument is self contradictory. On the one hand Thompson claims Star Wars is motivated by the US desire to gain overwhelming military superiority over the Soviet Union and undermine the Soviet economy. On the other hand he claims that even the Pentagon strategists have doubts about its military feasibility and instead support it as a clever ploy to give US imperialism a technological advantage over its European and Japanese competitors, and force them into economic client status. In order to piece this jigsaw together Thompson ends up explaining the star wars project as being the responsibility of one particular 'nasty' and 'dictatorial' US Government. The reader is left, at best, in a state of breathless confusion.

Thompson has no understanding of the roots of the Star Wars drive against the USSR. The object of the project is to give the USA total nuclear superiority and the ability to deliver a first strike from behind the Star Wars shield. This is a means of forcing the Soviet bureaucracy to accept US terms and extending US imperialism's global domination on the road to reintroducing capitalist exploitation in the USSR. Thompson's impressionistic pretence of an analysis serves only to blind the reader to that root cause of the project.

Reading this book reminded me of Trotsky's critique of Burnham and Schachtman. They rejected what they called the 'abstract' method of dialectical materialism and sought refuge in undiluted pragmatism. This led them ever further into the imperialist camp. Thompson's 'creative thinking' and 'anti-intellectualism' has already led him into the neutralist camp of the 'European Nuclear Disarmament Movement'. Where will it lead him next?

In short this book does contain some useful information. But the reader has to extract it while rejecting the editor's method and analysis.

Phil Sharpe

A Poet's Tale

A LONG WAY FROM HOME, an autobiography by Claude McKay. Pluto Press 1985 (£4.95 pbk 354p).

In 1912, the young aspiring black poet Claude McKay left his native Jamaica for New York. In 1937 he published his autobiography. During the intervening quarter century, McKay had journeyed over three continents, won international acclaim as a writer, and along the way met people as diverse as Charlie Chaplin and Leon Trotsky.

The journey was seldom easy for the black poet. It took McKay six years to gain any success in the States. Not only did McKay find himself up against the racism of the white cultural establishment, but he could only write in his spare time as a waiter on the railways.

McKay had a lucky break in 1918. His poetry was published by Frank Harris the great Irish-American critic. Success followed quickly. McKay found himself a celebrity in the radical circles of Greenwich village. Soon he became a regular contributor to (and later editor of) the socialist journal *The Liberator*, founded by Max and Crystal Eastman.

It was in the pages of *The Liberator* that "If We Must Die", one of McKay's greatest poems was published. Set against the labour and racial explosions which followed the end of World War One, the poem asserted like no other, the heroism of the black masses. And, "for it the Negro people unanimously hailed me as a poet".

Soon after the publication of "If We Must Die" the wanderlust that was to be a dominant urge in McKay's life began to ring ever more loud. He decided to visit England in 1919. England was a sore disappointment to McKay. The weather aside, the racism he found there was even more bitter than in America. The only solace the poet could find was his own work and the membership of two radical clubs.

It was in England that McKay began to read Marx. He worked as a journalist on the Marxist paper *The Workers Dreadnought* alongside Sylvia Pankhurst. How-

ever, McKay was never a Marxist. He failed to understand the Marxist method and felt that as a poet he was 'above' organised political work. Nevertheless, McKay's sympathy lay with the oppressed and their struggles. It was this sense of solidarity, always at the heart of his art, that led McKay to undertake 'The Magic Pilgrimage' to the Soviet Russia in 1921, to see for himself the results of the 'grand experiment'.

The seven chapters which describe McKay's sojourn in Soviet Russia are the best in the book. Few others have described so vividly the turbulence and dynamism of immediate post-revolutionary Russia. The racism which McKay experienced as everyday reality in capitalist America and Britain was virtually non-existent in the infant workers' state. On the contrary, the Russian workers and their Bolshevik Party embraced and feted McKay as a symbol of the black oppressed throughout the world. He attended the Fourth Congress of the Comintern as an independent observer. He met nearly everyone; Radek, Krupskaya, Lunacharsky, Trotsky, Katsyama, Zinoviev...

McKay left the Soviet Union in ill health. A recuperative wander led him around Europe and North Africa and brought meetings and friendships with such literati as Sinclair Lewis and Ernest Hemingway. But some of the old magic had gone. The journey and its telling is increasingly ridden with a deepening cynicism that speeded McKay's transition to outright anti-socialism (a process only completed after the publication of his autobiography - he died a Catholic in 1948).

A Long Way From Home is a remarkable book about a remarkable life, with the constant thread of both being McKay's perceptive and courageous fight for racial equality. As historian for his age McKay is not always reliable. Yet with McKay's pen, the epoch shaping people and events he witnessed are brought to life in a way that perhaps only poets can achieve.

Jon Lewis

workers power

STOP THE PRESSES

THE TOTAL BANKRUPTCY of the print union leaders was underlined on the morning after the presses first rolled in Wapping. "With hindsight we now realise that we allowed Mr Murdoch about a year to prepare himself" commented Bill Miles, national officer of SOGAT.

If their past strategy was bad their current one is worse. Dubbins has announced that, "We are in this dispute to get sympathy from the public." With that in mind they have promised that they will not break the Tory anti-union laws, they will not call for secondary action, they will not spread the strike and they will not organise determined mass pickets.

If the 'strategy' of Dean and Dubbins is not replaced immediately then it would not be alarmist to say that there could be no printers working in Fleet Street within two years. Militants from all the print unions must urgently organise to spread the strike to the rest of the industry. That will be ruled unlawful and it will be opposed by the official leaders. More important, however, it will stop the greater part of the bosses' press, it will be the foundation for appealing to the rest of the trade union movement for

real active support. It will even open up divisions and back-biting amongst the bosses.

The bosses have, very clearly, decided to restructure the whole newspaper industry. Their plans are carefully laid, the technology exists now to implement them. The fight against them cannot limit itself to a return to the past, that will not happen. The strength of the printers in the past was based on their skills. Today, a bus load of scabs can be taught to run off four national daily newspapers in a couple of months. Plenty of unemployed school leavers already have the typing skills necessary to take the place of a master printer.

The technology could be of benefit to society, the jobs could be saved, the products could undoubtedly be improved - but on one condition. The printers themselves must control the technology and the recruitment of those who operate it. The target for printworkers must be as complete a break with the past as the bosses are hoping to make - but in a different direction. They are hoping to use their ownership to remove the strength of the unions - the unions must use their strength to remove the bosses' ownership. ■

EXPEL EETPU

THE ONLY POSSIBLE response to the EETPU's collaboration with Murdoch is to expel it from the TUC. It's not just a question of defending five thousand printers' jobs at News International. EETPU's support for the scab miners' union in Notts, its torpedoing of support for the NUM in the Great Strike, and its clear preparation for a new breakaway union federation all show the EETPU, under its present leaders, to be a dangerous threat to the whole organised labour movement.

Hammond's scabs should have been thrown out of the TUC during the miners' strike. Letting them get away with their treachery only encouraged them. In the long drawn out preparation of the present dispute by Murdoch, the pussy-footing appeasement tactics of Willis and the General Council have again encouraged the scabs. They have been openly recruiting and training scabs to take printers' jobs since the Autumn - and the TUC has let them. Of course, not all, or even most, EETPU members are scabs. Thousands have been silenced in EETPU by amalgamation. When the Fleet Street electricians supported Heath Service workers during the NHS dispute in 1982, they were so fiercely attacked by their own leaders that they attempted to join SOGAT!

The enemy is the leadership of EETPU, the membership of EETPU are potential allies. But those allies need to be won over to active participation in the fight against Hammond. Expulsion from the TUC would not only make clear the hostility of the union movement to Hammond and co, but also it would give militant electricians the clearest possible grounds for fighting for the overthrow of their leaders. When COHSE was expelled for complying with Heath's anti-union laws this led to a fight inside the union, the overthrow of the Right and re-admission to the TUC on the basis of opposing the laws.

The leaders of the TUC, and of the individual unions, show no sign of wanting to fight Hammond's scab union plans - just as they have shown no stomach for a fight with Murdoch, Shah and co. In fact, all the empty posturing, coupled with total inability to really fight on any important issue for well over a decade, strengthens Hammond's hand. The rank and file must organise to force Willis and company to act. Resolutions condemning EETPU, and demanding expulsion should flood into Congress House from all affiliated unions.

But expulsion must be only the beginning of a campaign to transform the TUC from a pathetic, cringing embarrassment into a federation of militant unions that will not only deal with the likes of Hammond but also with the real forces that stand behind him; big business and their state. This will almost inevitably lead to splits with those whose ultimate loyalty lies to that state. If that should prove necessary then so be it. ■

by Steve McSweeney



Roger Hutchings (Network)



BEWARE THE SELL OUT

AFTER NEARLY A year in dispute the leaders of 5 teaching unions are recommending acceptance of a scandalous 'deal' stitched up by ACAS.

Not only does the deal fall far short of the original claim of at least £1200 for every teacher. For many teachers it is actually worse than the package offered and rejected in October. It gives teachers just 6.9% for 1985 with an additional 1.6% for one day! This leaves 57,000 teachers at the bottom of the pay scales with less than the £480 flat rate

offered before. And there are strings attached.

The NUT has rejected the deal and for the moment is carrying on with limited industrial action. As the NUT leaders have pointed out, the deal on offer gives most to those who have taken no action themselves.

But it is the NUT leadership's own strategy - a war of attrition - that has brought us to this situation. By allowing only limited and selective action they have encouraged the majority of their membership to become passive onlookers in the present dispute.

There is still anger amongst rank and file teachers at our continuing low pay, but a diet of half-day strikes and occasional three day stoppages has failed to move the government and the employers.

The vast majority of the left in the NUT has aided and abetted the leadership in this, in particular the Socialist Teachers Alliance (STA). True, it has argued for making the half-day strikes effective by taking 'guerrilla action'. More recently it has fought to up the action to one day a week. What it has not done is to use its national network of militants - especially those who are national and local officers - to win the union away from the strategy of limited action.

Ten months ago Workers Power supporters argued that, whatever actions were agreed upon, the aim should be to build for an all out strike. By January Socialist Worker was arguing that we needed to "consider the possibility of an all out strike". But nowhere did its teacher comrades argue for such a strategy, presumably so as not to seem 'unrealistic'!

If we don't want to be sold down the river we must act quickly and decisively, motions supporting the Executive's rejection of the offer must be pushed in all Associations. They should include the fact that we are willing to carry on fighting. They should call on the Executive to launch a national all out strike immediately. In particular the STA should adopt this strategy.

By relaunching an intransigent campaign against the employers

NUT members could encourage their NAS/UWT colleagues to vote commendation and fight on with us.

STOP THE SELL OUT!
STEP UP THE ACTION!
ALL OUT STRIKE NOW!

by Adrian Swain

AN IMPORTANT VICTORY

AFTER 16 WEEKS on strike, steelworkers at Sheffield Forgemasters have won a significant victory. 1400 steelworkers voted on Friday January 31st to accept a peace formula worked out with ACAS. Although not a total victory the strikers have won the retention of union negotiating rights for the shop stewards committee, the right of facility time for the chair and secretary of the JSSC and the reinstatement of all those sacked.

An important gain in the strike is the formation of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee across two sites, and the strengthening of links with other steel workers and engineers. Plants such as Shardlows, which contributed greatly to the solidarity fund, will be facing attack themselves under the government's Phoenix Plan to 'rationalise' and privatise the Sheffield steel and engineering industry.

Forgemasters is a victory for trade union solidarity. It shows the bosses can be beaten even after they've sacked everybody and claimed they're bankrupt. It is a signal to the printworkers and to the Silentnight strikers... if we stick it out WE WILL WIN!

by Andy Smith

UDM RECRUITS FOR NCB

AT THE END of January Terry Hughes, the Leicester UDM leader

managed to get 240 miners at Leicester. Scargill and a year of picketing by Leicester's "Dirty 30" striking miners did not achieve.

Hughes had already suffered a double defeat. He was ousted from the Area President's job by an NUM loyalist. Then the UDM were beaten in a 64% to 32% ballot against leaving the NUM.

So, when he started handing out UDM recruitment leaflets in the canteen at Ellistown - where only 2 men were on strike in 1984-85, - a whole shift walked out. Later that day, in an attempt to boost the flagging credibility of the scab union, the NCB announced that Hughes had been given a job at the Vale of Belvoir super-pit. He will be recruitment officer!

The confidence of the UDM about the Vale - their newspaper headline recently proclaimed "Eager Belvoirs" - is a warning to the whole NUM. Especially to those who have been congratulating Jack Jones for remaining 'loyal' and helping keep Leicester in the NUM.

The whole of Jones' campaign was based on the fact that the NUM was now a 'moderate' union, and that Scargillism had been defeated. Voting NUM meant keeping the union 'local', and not being swallowed up into Notts, as far as Jones was concerned.

If the board decides to write off the Leicester NUM and starts employing UDM members at Asfordby Jones, and his new sidekick Terry Tracey, will run a mile rather than fight. The 130 votes in the Vice Presidential election for ex-striking miner, Barry Draycott, while better than 30 reveals how small the militant minority is in Leicester.

Militant miners in Leicester and elsewhere should put no faith in Jones & Co., whose loyalty will last only as long as the NUM doesn't fight the NCB. They should build a rank and file organisation independent of Jones, and independent of his new friends on The Miner editorial board. They should fight now for an NUM closed shop at Belvoir and all other new pits. ■

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