

Workers Power

30p/10p strikers

Monthly paper of the Workers Power group

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BEWARE

A NEW

SOCIAL CON-TRICK!

IN A SICKENING spectacle the trade union leaders have been falling over themselves to find forms of words to sign away trade union rights under any future Labour Government. The rotten fudge they manufacture will only serve to encourage the bosses and the Tories to kick the unions even harder as the TUC chiefs show just how spineless they are.

There are two key issues on which the Congress House cabals have been working to avoid any conflict with the new rightist deals struck between Willis and Kinnock. The first concerns anti-union laws, the second concerns incomes policy under a future Labour government.

The TUC leaders and the Labour NEC have already agreed to leave the essential features of the Tories' anti-union laws in place. That line is most notably presented at Congress in resolutions from GMBATU and the UCW. Both call on Labour to legislate a new bill for trade unionists - the UCW call it a 'Workers Rights Act' - which leave the major Tory laws intact. The UCW urge that the new rights include:

"an individual secret ballot before being asked to participate in industrial action".

In return the new act would give to individual employees vacuous and meaningless 'rights' to be consulted by their employer, to health and safety protection and to join a union.

BRAZEN

In addition any individual employee would have recourse to the courts should they object to the actions or procedures of their union. The collective strength which the unions need to mobilise against the bosses to secure the most modest of gains, and the collective rights which the unions have fought to secure against the ruling class are bidden farewell in the hope of getting Labour back into power.

The new right are brazen about their intentions. Their so-called opponents however have shown themselves to be cowardly fudgers on every issue. Ron Todd, for example, initially insisted that all

reference to the pre-strike ballots be deleted from the UCW resolution. But he was soon singing a different tune. A Congress House sub-committee proposed a composite calling for:

"a right to strike and to have a secret ballot in such situations and to take other industrial action".

The UCW and GMBATU chiefs were perfectly happy. No wonder since it was their policy. So too was Ron Todd who announced after this deal:

"I am quite happy. The amendment I sought to put forward questioned one small facet of the UCW motion".

PATHETIC

The same skulduggery surrounds the issue of incomes policy. The new right are using the issue of a statutory minimum wage as their Trojan horse for an incomes agreement with a future Labour government. ASTMS, NUPE and USDAW all presented resolutions calling for a 'statutory minimum wage'.

They all accept that this would entail a wage restraint agreement with Labour on behalf of the entire trade union movement, but don't say so in their resolutions. The architects of a minimum wage aim only at the pathetic target of phasing in £80 a week minimum over a period of years. They will still condemn millions of workers to starvation wages. But in the name of helping the poor they will unite with Kinnock to curb union wage demands.

The opposition to this package comprises the EETPU and an assortment of flabby left talkers. The EETPU leaders make no bones about the fact that their leaders are in business to serve the skilled, the well paid and the scabs. They reject any form of incomes policy in favour of:

"adequate reward for skill, responsibility and effort achieved by free collective bargaining".

Todd and co formally oppose this new incomes policy but only on the laughable grounds that it is not the

TGWU's policy yet and could not be until next year when its conference meets. The advocates of an incomes policy are ready to walk over this kind of opposition.

The rotten carve-up has only one aim. To present a united face of a toothless tame-cat TUC that will neither rock the Tories' boat nor upset the bosses should Labour come to power. It is a recipe for further retreat in the face of this government and for handing a blank cheque to a future anti-working class Labour Government.

How can workers prevent the TUC chiefs having their way?

Certain unions have signalled their opposition to the rightist drift of the TUC's policy. This is the case with the NUM and TASS for example. Not only should they put their votes where their mouth is on the Congress floor. They should signal now that they will unify their forces to defy the anti-union laws, that they will do so against any Labour government too, and that they will refuse to be party to any incomes policy agreement with a future Labour government.

RESISTANCE

In the name of 'unity' against the Tories they will be told to shut up by the right and by the fake left. But every time the left has accepted unity on these terms they have allowed workers to be defeated and the strength of organised labour to be sapped. Only by raising the banner of resistance can the left hope to turn the tide against the right and rally those workers who want to fight.

This task cannot simply be left to the official 'left' leaders. In every union militants must raise the alarm and organise together to defy any and every rotten deal the TUC comes up with. They will be rounded on by the witch-hunters and by those who talk left. But to flinch from the fight now is to deliver the trade unions on a plate, not only to Neil Kinnock but to Thatcher and the bosses as well.

FOR THE SECOND time the print union leaders are holding talks with Murdoch. Their sole purpose is to end the bitter eight month old dispute at News International. For the second time the sacked printers are being kept in the dark concerning the details of the negotiations.

This round of talks is even more dangerous than the first round two months ago. Then the print leaders were divided amongst themselves. SOGAT's Brenda Dean was willing to settle for far less than Dobbins of the NGA, whose craft union had more to lose. Now as the NGA's resolution to the TUC Congress admits, he is willing to settle for far less:

"... this dispute must be settled by negotiation on the basis of achieving trade union recognition... employment opportunities, retraining facilities and adequate compensation".

More importantly for the outcome of the ballot, within SOGAT there were significant divisions between the National leadership and the London leadership. Then the London leadership - the London District Committee (LDC) - went to court to try to have the SOGAT ballot declared illegal.

In his ruling, the Judge said it was wrong for the SOGAT leadership to try and circumvent the local trade union structure by directly posting ballot forms to the strikers. Now Brenda Dean has no reason to circumvent the London leadership. Their stifling of any criticism of Dean's leadership indicates that they are likely to support any agreement she arrives at.

Before the SOGAT conference in June, Murdoch was beginning to feel the pressure. There was a resounding no vote for his 'final' offer. One of his warehouses had spontaneously combusted. His journalists were on the verge of mutiny. Even Home Secretary Hurd was on television begging protestors to avoid Wapping because morale had sunk so low in the Met.

Yet a week later, by the end of the Conference, Murdoch was confident enough to issue writs against SOGAT. This turn around had been facilitated by the Stalinist influenced London leadership. Rank and file strikers had, to a large extent, turned away from Dean and the national leadership, and looked more to the London leadership.

Confronted by this hot potato, the London leadership promptly handed leadership back to Dean. The Stalinists never wanted a real break with the national leaders. By the end of the Conference Dean was rehabilitated and the pickets more isolated. That is why Murdoch was confident enough to go on the offensive.

After the conference the London leadership did not have it all their own way. Under pressure from the more militant FOCs and MOCs they were forced to make some concessions and allow mass meetings. They were even forced to concede the right of chapels to bring resolutions to the mass meetings.

However, these mass meetings

were correctly recognised by the London leadership as a potential challenge to their authority. They therefore did their best to ensure that they did not turn into authoritative decision-making forums. They ensured that all resolutions coming out of the meetings were strangled with the labyrinth of the Fleet Street union structures.

The London leadership were largely successful. Attendances dropped, as printers came to see them as talking shops. With the pressure off for mass meetings the London leadership could go on the offensive. At the last weekly FOC/MOC meeting they were confident enough to threaten militant FOC's who dared call for mass meetings with removal from the room.

The London leadership has therefore suffocated every spark of rank and file initiative or criticism of the leadership. They have confined all activity to the chapel structure which they control. The result is that Dean, who months ago was howled out of a mass meeting, can now safely appear to address the crowd on a Saturday night at Wapping.

It may have taken the national leadership two months to regain control of the strike, but with the help of the London leadership they have. Dean once again feels confident enough to attempt another sell out.

Two months of legal attacks and determined sabotage of any attempts to build on the success of the rejection of Murdoch's 'final offer' have no doubt improved Dean's chances of getting away with her treachery. The strike is more isolated and the strikers more weary. However, the tenacity of the strikers should not be underestimated. The pickets are still maintained and the weekly demonstrations remain a focus for militant opposition to Murdoch.

That tenacity, the steadfast refusal to bow before the combined attack of the state, Murdoch, the 'new realists' and their Stalinist stooges, must be the foundations upon which militants build a new democratically controlled leadership.

As Workers Power has argued throughout the strike the immediately essential demands of militants must be for an elected strike committee responsible to authoritative mass meetings; the re-imposition of pickets at all Murdoch's plants; an end to secret negotiations and for the strike committee to observe all negotiations; the mass meeting (joint NGA/SOGAT/AEU etc) to have ultimate control of all decisions affecting the conduct of the strike including any settlement offers.

Militants must counter any arguments put against mass meetings being held by explaining that the last round of mass meetings proved a problem only because the London leadership blocked them from becoming real decision making forums.

It is around these demands that militants can, and must, urgently organise to contest the well-developed plans of the current leaders.

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**NO INCOMES POLICY!
NO ANTI-UNION LAWS!**

EDITORIAL

EXPEL EETPU

THE NGA's PROPOSED motion to the TUC, widely presented as calling for expulsion of the EETPU scab union, is a cruel, calculated and cynical manoeuvre against trade unionism in general and the NGA's members at News International in particular.

The motion calls on the TUC to instruct the EETPU to stop its members crossing the official picket line at Wapping. Although a possible implication of this might be the EETPU's suspension if the motion was adopted this was not specified in the motion.

It is cruel because its intention was to raise false hopes in the hearts of the Wapping strikers, hopes that real action might at last be taken against the scabs.

It is calculated because Congress has no powers to make such an instruction and would therefore be ruled out of order. The NGA leaders knew this full well when they formulated it.

It is cynical because those same leaders knew equally well that, should rank and file anger force the motion onto the agenda and pass it, then the bureaucratic machinery of the TUC would ensure no action would be taken for months on end.

Finally, lest all this fails, Dubbins leaves a way out. The resolution ends by quoting from the EETPU scabs at Wapping. It retails, in good faith their "concern" to reach an honourable "settlement" of the Wapping dispute. Through the mouths of scabs, Dubbins is signalling that he is willing to negotiate some form of compromise over Wapping.

The sole purpose of the manoeuvre was to rehabilitate Dubbins' image as a militant. By latching onto his rank and file's justified hatred of the EETPU, and their distrust of the TUC leaders Dubbins hoped to direct attention from his despicable opposition to organising and leading a fight against Murdoch and the Fleet Street barons.

lessons

All the same, the furore over the motion contains lessons for working class militants. *Socialist Worker* (23 August) argues that the NGA is "quite justified in making its demands" but qualifies that by saying that "the best way to stop electricians working at Wapping is to picket them out". This avoids the question of whether the call for expulsion should be taken up and campaigned for by militants in the unions. Of course there should be a real fight to picket out the scabs but that is not an alternative to placing demands on the TUC. It is not a matter of the NGA being 'justified' - it should be obliged to fight tooth and nail for the expulsion. That obligation should be enforced throughout all unions by a determined rank and file campaign.

Socialist Organiser, typically, is even more craven. In the name of 'unity' it argues against either expulsions or even suspension it believes that: "the expulsion of the EETPU would weaken not strengthen" the union movement. There would be "a real danger of an alternative trade union centre".

scabbing

Far better that the anti-working class leaders of the EETPU, who are consciously and openly orchestrating a scabbing operation, be publicly distanced from the labour movement than that they be allowed to pursue their politics within it. The regroupment of electricians in a class struggle union could then take place.

As for the suggestion that Dubbins might lead the NGA out of the TUC, this is merely another of his rhetorical smokescreens. No credibility should be given to it. The NGA stands at the abyss of complete elimination at the hands of the press barons. Dubbins' empty threats are no more than an attempt to stop his members fighting that elimination while he and his like prepare to safeguard their own positions through merger with their equals in SOGAT '82. □

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NEW MILITANCY IN NUM

IN A BID to eradicate the traditions of the great strike, the NUM's 'left' leaders used the annual conference in Tenby to rubbish Scargill's calls for the union to consider industrial action in defence of the industry.

An alliance of 'left' Labourites like Eric Clarke and Jack Taylor and Communist Party members like George Bolton was built up to fight Scargill. Their chosen theme was the call for "reconciliation" with the scab UDM. Eric Clarke spelt this out in an interview with the *Morning Star*:

"We need to create the atmosphere nationally for reconciliation." (19/8/86)

Clarke was not only seeking a sweetheart deal with scab-herders. The *Morning Star* also reported that:

"Scottish Area NUM is gradually developing an improved relationship with the Coal Board's Scottish area."

At Tenby the new realist, new rightist coalition seemed to have everything going their way. But two factors are opening up new possibilities for defeating their plans.

BUTCHERY

The first factor is British Coal itself. It is still dizzy with its success in defeating the great strike. It is not prepared to give an inch. All the signs are that - despite the naive hopes of the NUM leadership - MacGregor's successor, Haslam, will continue with the butchery of the industry.

There has been no let up in British Coal's drive to rub the NUM's nose in the dirt over pay. They are refusing to grant the NUM the £5.50 pay rise given to all other unions in the industry, including the scabs. They are demanding the forfeiting of pension rights from the NUM as the price for the rise.

Neither has the Board changed its tune on closures. Their latest move is the announcement that Seaham in Durham would be "mothballed" and its 500 workers transferred to Vane Tempest. The board had only recently told the NUM at Seaham that the pit's future was viable. The transfer proposal would put 1,300 men - far too many - in Vane Tempest. It is a deliberate attempt to get rid of men. The colliery manager put it bluntly when he said:

"These are the arrangements for transfer - if you don't like them go on the dole."

As well as Seaham, two workshops, in Lancashire and the Midlands, are to be closed.

The Board's bloody-mindedness is, in turn, producing the second factor that could undermine the plans of the new realists in the NUM. There are definite signs of a rekindled militancy amongst the rank and file in the face of the relentless attacks. The failure to

get the rise due to them led the South Wales men to vote overwhelmingly for an overtime ban on coal cutting.

MILITANT

Des Dutfield, a South Wales leader who joined the anti-Scargill chorus in Tenby, was taken by surprise by the enthusiastic support for the overtime ban from the rank and file. Seaham and Vane Tempest both agreed to fight and the Durham Area Council is organising a ballot to get an area wide overtime ban against the closure. Pits in Yorkshire are campaigning for a national overtime ban.

In individual pits the militant mood has been reflected in a series of sporadic strikes. Hatfield Main struck on 26 August demanding reinstatement for the sacked lads. At Armthorpe 200 men struck for 3 days over management mistreatment of a workmate. At Frickley a spontaneous strike greeted a visit by the notorious British Coal hatchet-man, Ken Moses. Miners remembered his gleeful declaration that as far as he was concerned strikers could eat grass. At Frickley their walk-out showed that they would not eat dirt. Even in an area that largely scabbed during the great strike, Leicestershire, hundreds of NUM members at Ellistown struck when the management withdrew office facilities for the union.

This militancy is a sharp reminder to both the new rightists and British Coal, that the rank and file still have the capacity to fight. But to build this mood the various actions need to be extended and spread and the backsliders in the leadership need to be openly fought.

The left Labourites and Stalinists are trying to keep each of the actions separate and isolated, and channel the new militancy in a harmless direction. At Seaham, for example, a Save Seaham Colliery Campaign has been established on the basis of involving local business men and convincing 'public opinion' of the need to save the pit. In

South Wales Des Dutfield has used the overtime ban to suggest that it is an alternative to strike action, that strike action is now dated and "different tactics" are needed. The South Wales leadership have explicitly stated that they are not calling on other areas to follow their example.

ORGANISE

These moves can derail the present round of struggles unless militants consciously organise to fight them. It will enable the Board to take on each pit and area separately. As a first step to rebuilding the fighting capacity of the NUM at a national level, the present round of militancy must become a springboard for a national total overtime ban. As Hatfield branch delegate Dave Douglas recently said:

"It is vital that another area takes action so that South Wales are not left out on a limb."

The South Wales ban on coal cutting has already cost the Board £450,000. With the Board still desperate to increase production, a national overtime ban can hit them hard indeed. The militant in South Wales, Durham and in the Doncaster pits (Hatfield Main, Armthorpe and Rossington) that have called for an overtime ban must co-ordinate their efforts. These areas and pits must get to militants in the other areas to get them to campaign for a ban. This action - though limited - will be a hundred times more effective than any Stalinist inspired 'broad based' (cross-class that is) campaign.

An overtime ban won't defeat the plans of British Coal. Only a renewed strike that breaks out of its sectional isolation can finally achieve that. But a ban can check the immediate offensive and begin to inspire new confidence and organise the spontaneous anger in the ranks into an effective fighting power once again. ■

By Mark Hoskisson

Back the sacked miners - affiliate

THE NATIONAL JUSTICE FOR MINeworkERS CAMPAIGN

Organisation

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FIGHTING FUND

WORKERS POWER is expanding. We are growing in size and are involved in an ever increasing range of activities. To match these developments we want to expand the size of our paper and, sooner rather than later, go fortnightly.

At the same time Workers Power, as a section of the Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International (MRCI), has considerably increased its expenditure on international work. Our work in collaboration with the comrades of the Trotskyist Workers Fraction (FOT) in Peru and Bolivia for example requires money. The comrades in these countries face enormous financial difficulties. Financial aid to them is vital.

To fulfil our plans we need to buy new equipment - new typesetting and printing machinery and so forth. We need to be able to meet the regular printing costs that go with running a paper. We need to finance our other publications - *Permanent Revolution*, our theoretical journal; *Red Miner*, our mineworkers' bulletin; and projected pamphlets and books.

So, after reading *Workers Power*, do not file it away until you have remembered to send us a cheque, postal order or cash - as much as you can possibly afford and then a little bit more.

We made a good start to our fund at the recent summer school, collecting over £700. But that

won't last long. We have a target of £2000 between now and December 31st 1986. We will be setting a new target in 1987. So rush your donations to:

WORKERS POWER
FIGHTING FUND

BCM BOX 7750,
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and make cheques etc payable to Workers Power.

CONTROL THE PRESSES

THE WAPPING DISPUTE is now in its eighth month. The strengths and weaknesses of British trade unionism have been on show in the course of this dispute - the heroic picketing of the rank and file versus the tame-cat legalism of the leadership. But the strike has also placed on show the specific strengths and weaknesses of the print unions themselves.

An understanding of these guild-like structures and their continuing influence is crucial in order to explain the as yet largely unbroken stranglehold of the NGA and SOGAT bureaucracies. Such an historical view also highlights the difficulties faced by dedicated militants in Fleet Street in their so far stymied attempts to build an alternative leadership.

For decades the magnates of the national newspaper industry have made substantial wage concessions to printworkers in Fleet Street, especially those in production chapels. As a result many printers took home more than twice the average wage packet for male manual workers throughout the 1960s and 1970s. However begrudging the Beaverbrooks and Rothermeres may have been in granting high wage settlements, their overriding concern was with keeping the presses running, sometimes even at the cost of profitability.

Of course the anger of printworkers confronting filthy working conditions, deafening noise levels, and unsociable hours was not always defused with financial carrots. Nor were the carrots always on offer. By the mid 1970s Fleet Street proprietors had collectively decided that the industry was in acute crisis. In the past several newspaper managements had cried "wolf", but while some publications had indeed sunk, most proceeded to carry on with business as usual even while restructuring and shake-outs were ruthlessly executed by US and Dutch publishers. The convening of a Royal Commission in 1975 to find solutions to the erosion of profitability signalled a new resolve to break with the past traditions of capital/labour relations in the Street.

CONTROL

Union organisation also wrested more from management than high wages. Whatever their shortcomings the print chapels engaged in a daily battle, generally low-key though occasionally intense, for an extraordinary measure of control over the shop floor. Management sometimes fought to overturn customary working practices but frequently proved a reluctant partner allowing Fathers of Chapels (FOCs) to perform a supervisory role. Many News International strikers hark back to these "golden days" when the chapel had a solid



Shah's new technology meant smashing the unions

veto over hiring and firing, regulated working hours and staffing levels, and exercised extensive control over demarcation between various jobs. These are potent memories and explain something of the deeply-ingrained attachment of printworkers to their chapels.

Despite the tangible achievements of the chapels, which it would be too easy either to demean or to over-romanticise, they never achieved workers' control over production. The Chapels' very structure, tended to reinforce a narrow consciousness that did not see beyond immediate, day-to-day concerns. Because of this the chapels found themselves not simply ill-prepared but virtually powerless in the face of a coordinated offensive to achieve much higher rates of profit through capital's control over the introduction of new technology. Regardless of the specific equipment inside the Wapping plant and contrary to what many printers themselves believe, the use of new production processes is very much at the heart of the battle.

Whatever their value in winning or avoiding shop-floor confrontations, a chapel structure which dates directly from the 17th century could not combat the tendency to be obsessed with the relative and temporary advantages of section and craft. An industry-wide organisation capable of forging strong links between workers in the various papers, be they clericals, domestics, machine minders or compositors has long been needed. Instead a chaotic quilt of chapel organisations survived well into the 1970s. In 1969 a total of 128 NATSOPA and SOGAT chapels represented workers at 11 Fleet Street titles.

In certain respects the 1970s

witnessed rapid change in union organisation, with the consolidation/amalgamation of national bodies, the elimination of many chapels and a concerted effort by the Newspaper Publishers' Association and several national union leaderships to sound the death knell for shop floor organisation. For those already employed in the Street very little changed, at least on the surface: no assault on high and stable real wages or shop floor bargaining power. (The Times dispute of 1978-79 being a crucial exception.)

But jobs were disappearing in the production chapels - several thousand through voluntary redundancy or natural wastage. The door was all but closed to new recruitment and the situation for casual labour made more precarious. So, at the same time as an overwhelming majority of printworkers in London rejected a form of class collaboration industrial unionism from above, FOCs gave a nod and a wink to the sale of jobs.

Though chapel officials were comparatively accountable to their members, their dangerous isolation continued. Federated house chapels at most papers existed in name only, or to negotiate parking fees! A valuable opportunity to build the desperately needed class struggle industrial unions, smashing the time worn craft divisions, was missed.

Against this background Murdoch, Mackenzie and co. dug deep to give new meaning to the phrase "gutter journalism" and prepared to shatter both the reality and myth of union power in Fleet Street. There can be no turning the clock back. Whatever the outcome of the battle for Wapping traditional print unionism is neither

in the unions



possible nor desirable.

Militant strikers must be in a position to argue that not only does the battle centre around jobs and union recognition but also over the control of photo-composition, direct input, and the many less spectacular changes in production technology. More than this, rank and file activists cannot afford to shrink from the reality of systematic discrimination that traditional print unionism perpetuated against women and ethnic minorities in hiring for better paid jobs. Many production chapels actively excluded blacks and women, as a print union membership card became a virtual family heirloom.

Workers' control must go beyond the issue of hiring and firing. Given the ideological role of the press for the bosses - how many Fleet Street titles have you read that have ever given a good press to a striker? - an elementary demand that must be won is the right to reply by the unions. Equal space and equal prominence must be wrung from the bosses to answer them every time they print their filthy lies about the labour movement. If they fail to meet this demand then the presses must be stopped outright. Unless this demand is won, unless it is enforced, printers will weaken their own position within their workplaces and within the labour movement as a whole.

OBSOLETE

Those print barons with capital to invest in new technology have finally found a way to bypass the old craft unionism and the social division of labour they defended. Now, with old typesetting skills rendered obsolete the fundamentally altered jobs have passed from NGA members to journalists at Wapping, at Today, and at a number of provincial papers.

The union answer to these developments should have been, and must become, a demand for a drastic reduction in the length of the working day with no loss of pay, for those in the manual production chapels. Even at this late date the need remains for militant activists to raise the slogan, "cut the hours, not the jobs" and to discuss the concrete implications of translating the slogan into reality. At a minimum this would mean on the job retraining, a strict union-supervised programme to monitor the possible hazards of working in front of a VDU, and a re-assertion of control over production levels and hours worked.

Needless to say the reply from Maxwell, Matthews, and the rest will be that it cannot be done. Many platitudes will be preached about management's right to manage and even the right to a 'fair' rate of return on investment. There's nothing complex to the workers' answer: "Open the books". After all Murdoch is not the only one to preside over a vast multinational corporate empire strewn across all aspects of publishing and communication.

EXPOSED

By opening the books, the transactions involving millions, the book-cooking, the disregard for workers' in pursuit of profit can be exposed as a starting point for mobilising workers' in action against the press barons' plans. Where the millionaire proprietors plead bankruptcy, then workers in the industry must demand nationalisation without compensation and under workers' control, occupying the presses to achieve it. The bosses would, of course, claim that nationalisation would threaten the "freedom of the press". But where that freedom is the freedom to sack 3,000 workers at will, it is hollow indeed. The right to work comes before the proprietor's "freedom".

In the heat of the present dispute the fight for workers' control may seem utopian. Yet its relevance is dramatically underlined by the very existence of the dispute. The lack of control over production enabled Murdoch to carry through his switch-over. The demands outlined here are merely the bare bones of a programme that must be rapidly developed as part and parcel of the fight to establish a single, democratic union that seeks to maintain and build upon the new unity between chapels across the labour force achieved during the Wapping dispute.

FIGHT-BACK

We appeal to militants within the print who can see the dangers of relying on their traditional methods of struggle to collaborate with us in developing this programme, in organising a fighting force - a real rank and file movement - to act on it.■

By George Binetti

SOLIDARITY NOT CHARITY

THE NEW DARLING of the TUC right wing and 'top man' in the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU) - Bill Jordan - looks set to become the Bob Geldof of the entire trade union movement!

Following in the footsteps of Band Aid, Sport Aid, Soap Aid - to name but a few - Jordan has come up with Trade Union Aid. A hard act to follow! He is proposing that engineers who work for companies in the Engineering Employers Federation (EEF) donate one hour's pay to famine relief in Africa on a suitable day next year.

To show that he is not just biased towards the "workers" on this one, Jordan is also proposing that the various EEF boardrooms should cover pound for pound the sum

raised. It's a case of 'Let's all pull together on this one "brothers", "sisters" and "gunners"'.

For the AEU leaders, this is nothing more than a grandiose public relations exercise, designed to portray the AEU as a thoughtful, "caring" union. Jordan, Gavin Laird and the other top union bureaucrats want to rid the AEU - and other unions - of their images as militant, disruptive, industrial conflict ridden organisations. Yes, strikes and industrial militancy are definitely out!

Put simply, improving the image of the AEU means doing away with effective trade unionism, of preventing worker resistance to the bosses' attacks on engineers - all the time! The union Jordan wants

will merely soften the bosses' attacks by acting as a benefit society, not a defender of pay, jobs and conditions. Indeed all of these are sacrificed for recognition in single-union, no strike deals on the Nissan model.

INSULT

In this context Jordan's proposal is nothing short of an insult. We get poor wages as it is! If Jordan is in favour of aid to the starving millions then those with the money - the bosses - should foot the entire bill. We should force them and their government

to pay out credit free aid - with no strings to the countries of the imperialised world. After all it is their system that reduces millions to poverty in the first place!

But there is another dimension to what Jordan is putting forward. Whilst trade unionism has nothing in common with charity, it has plenty in common with solidarity. If Jordan was really serious about relieving the plight of the African worker and peasant then he should argue for and support those black workers who are fighting at this moment for an end to poverty, oppression and for national liberation! Black South African trade unionists don't want charity, they want solidarity action.

International workers' action

must be called for and built - amongst the affiliated bodies of the International Metalworkers' Federation.

Yes, an hour's pay in solidarity with the black struggle against apartheid is something our leaders should argue for amongst the membership. The money would aid in the building of COSATU, for example. But we doubt very much if the bosses in the EEF would then be willing to cover the sum raised pound for pound, for in the end many of these member companies have links with South Africa.■

By an AEU Member (Birmingham)

THE RETREAT OF Peter Robinson's Loyalist mob from Dundalk, under a shower of broken glass and petrol bombs, symbolised the frustration and lack of direction within Ulster Loyalism.

It is now in the ninth month of its campaign against the Anglo-Irish Accord. But although this is the highest level of mobilised reaction in Northern Ireland for over ten years, there is not yet any prospect of outright victory for Loyalism.

The key weakness of the Loyalist campaign is the deep division within it. On the one hand is the bourgeois Unionist wing under Molyneux's Official Unionist Party (OUP). On the other hand there is a plebeian alliance of rabid Loyalist youth, workers and farmers - grouped in and around the Loyalist paramilitaries and Ulster Clubs - which at present looks for leadership from the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) of Robinson and Ian Paisley.

Resistance to the Anglo-Irish deal from the OUP, so far as it went along with the DUP, was no more than a constitutional protest. Its high point was the resignation of all Commons seats. After they were ritually re-elected the OUP MPs' boycott of Westminster was hardly noticed. Their promise to bring local government to a halt crumbled in the face of threats of personal fines!

Hijacking the Northern Ireland Assembly for use as a Loyalist soap-box equally failed to impress the British government. Thatcher's hiring, Tom King, quickly rel-

LOYALISTS UNLEASH SECTARIAN TERROR

egated the Assembly to the junkyard of Irish history along with the Convention, the Sunningdale Assembly and Stormont Parliament of yesteryear. Since then Molyneux's forces have played no other role than disowning the extremes of the Paisleyite mobs. As an organised political force the OUP is staring a historic dead end in the face.

Effective leadership of Loyalist reaction now lies in the hands of the 'proletarian' wing of the DUP: a shady network stretching from the paramilitary UVF/UDA, the Ulster Clubs and the Orange lodges to shop floor workers in the big engineering, shipbuilding and electricity plants, and fronted by Robinson.

But can these forces wage an effective fight against the agreement. Working class Loyalism failed to muster anything like the fist of organised power that brought down the 1974 power-sharing deal. A decade of economic decay, the

withering of the old workplace networks and the pervasive crisis of confidence in Unionism have meant much less mass appeal for the Ulster Clubs and the UDA.

The changed balance of forces is partly reflected in Thatcher's success in holding the RUC on her side against Loyalist intimidation and rioting. A campaign of anti-catholic rioting, house-burning and sectarian murder reflects the lack of more solidly organised Loyalist resistance to the Agreement.

In Lisburn, Co. Antrim, 124 catholic families have been forced to move. Every day petrol bomb attacks occur in isolated sections of the nationalist community. They go unreported by the press, unchecked by the RUC. The UFF issued a statement threatening the lives of all catholics living in protestant areas. Two weeks later the 'Protestant Loyalist Council' at Shorts aircraft factory launched a campaign of intimidation against

the catholic 10% of the workforce. Clearly Thatcher's 'success' against the Loyalists has been at the expense of the already oppressed catholics.

Some of the Loyalists' difficulties lie in the nature of their target. Unlike power-sharing in 1974 there is no concrete institution to destroy. The flexibility process agreed by Thatcher and Fitzgerald gives them room to play out and fragment Loyalist resistance. The major problem for Loyalism, however is that the Agreement represents a strategic attempt, jointly undertaken by the British and Southern Irish ruling classes, to re-establish imperialist and capitalist order in Ireland.

Without the forces of the British state behind it Loyalism is in the final analysis impotent. Unable to split off the RUC the 'Loyalist veto' becomes a dead letter. The Thatcher-Fitzgerald deal seeks to alter the political complexion of the northern state in a way which threatens the protestant ruling class not one iota, but which severely dents the Loyalist view of the catholic masses as an alien minority with no equal rights to jobs and housing.

COSMETIC

To rekindle support for the reformist SDLP British imperialism must give it some reforms to deliver. Thus they concede symbolic measures like the 'right' to fly the Irish tricolour. At the same time they keep up the pressure for cosmetic reforms in recruitment policy on the big Orange capitalists such as Shorts.

But such measures have proved extremely provocative to Loyalist workers and youth, while offering no fundamental gains to the nationalist masses. The deal does nothing, and was never meant to do anything, to remedy the systematic discrimination against catholics which is the social bedrock of partition. It has not even produced real gains for the SDLP. Neither has it marginalised or defeated the military resistance of the Republican movement.

Today the situation is characterised by stalemate. Stalemate

between violent Loyalist reaction and the project of the Thatcher government: a stalemate that will not be broken as long as Thatcher retains the loyalty of the state security forces. Stalemate too, exists in the military struggle of the IRA against the RUC and the British army.

In Ireland the Irish Workers Group argues for organised mass struggle against the Loyalist pogrom threat: for mass self defence organisations of the nationalist working class. This is a perspective ignored by the trade unions, whose bleating about sectarian violence generally masks their 100% accommodation to the sectarian state.

It is a perspective rejected by the Republican movement, in favour of the continued war of attrition against the British troops and against the civilian contractors who service police and military forts and barracks.

Day after day the British media is hammering home the message. 'Ireland is descending into a pit of sectarian terror, protestant outrage followed by catholic reprisals. The British army, the brave RUC, and most of all the brave, brave Mrs Thatcher are all that stand in the way of religious civil war!

Faced with this the Labour left, so outspoken in the days of relative peace, has allowed Ireland almost to fall off the agenda at this year's Party Conference, as the leadership re-establishes its bi-partisan agreement on Ireland with the Tories. Socialists and solidarity activists need to stand firm. We need to use every lever to create a movement in the British working class in solidarity with those fighting to destroy the Orange state. Britain has no progressive role to play in Ireland. The British presence underpins every Loyalist privilege. In Britain our first duty is to fight for Troops Out Now, to support the Republican fighters against the army and the RUC, and to support them, whatever our criticisms, **without condition.**

By a member of the Irish Workers Group



Loyalists on rampage



SOUTH AFRICA

Dear Comrades,

I find it necessary to comment upon a deficiency in the front page article on South Africa in *Workers Power* 85. That deficiency is the failure to elaborate upon the reasons for Thatcher's refusal to implement sanctions, or to even state why she may be forced to implement them in the future. For example, the article points to £12 billion worth of British investment and to British trade with South Africa - and mechanically concludes that this means no sanctions. Later on, we're told that although it is clear that Thatcher won't introduce sanctions, even if she did, they would be evaded by the bosses - certainly the bosses would do all they could to evade the sanctions, but there is no mention of why Thatcher might be forced to introduce sanctions, pre-

sumably because you've already decided that she's not going to!

This is a serious over-simplification. In fact, the £12bn worth of British investment in South Africa does not mechanically lead to a policy of no sanctions. It could also mean a policy of sanctions, depending on the existing political situation.

Thatcher does not refuse sanctions, and will not implement sanctions in isolation from the needs of British imperialism. The needs of that imperialism may dictate different policies at different times - depending on the political situation. Thatcher's current estimation of the South African crisis is that British imperialism, needing a resolution by repression, is best served by a policy of no sanctions. But should Botha prove unable to resolve the crisis by repression, then British imperialism's needs will be safeguarding of its interests and of capitalism in South Africa, via reforms, to head-off the struggle of the black workers. It may be necessary to implement sanctions in order to pressurise Botha into adopting a policy of reform. If that is the case, Thatcher will be forced to implement sanctions - it's not a question of choice, but of the needs of imperialism.

To fail to analyse the basis of the sanctions issue is potentially disarming for the working class, faced with the possibility of imperialist sanctions, and as such, a serious shortcoming of the article.

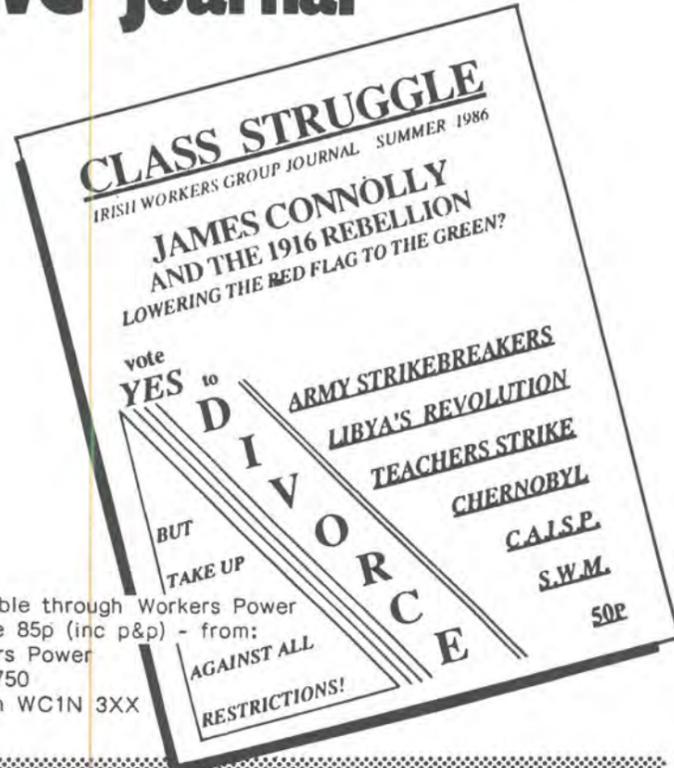
Simon Anderson
Ilford,

WE REPLY:

The point we were making in the article was precisely that at this critical juncture in the South African Revolution Thatcher will not implement sanctions. That developments may force her to implement them in the future is, of course, true. But, as the title of the article, "Workers' Sanctions Now", makes clear it is her immediate plans and the immediate tasks facing workers here, that we were referring to. Moreover our point that if sanctions were used by Thatcher then they would be circumvented remains valid. The case history of Rhodesia/Zimbabwe shows that. However, we would accept your general point that under certain circumstances sanctions by the imperialists could become a possibility (see article on Workers Sanctions, back page).

TROOPS OUT NOW!

IWG Journal



THE CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP

"The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterised by a historical crisis of leadership of the proletariat."

These are the opening words of the **Transitional Programme**. This idea, the crisis of leadership, is fundamental to the **Transitional Programme**. It is repeated regularly by those who claim to follow Trotskyism today. But what does it mean, and why is it important?

In 1938, just as today, there was no shortage of 'Marxist' professors to explain that the world was not ready for a socialist revolution. According to them the "objective conditions" for a socialist revolution had not "ripened" enough. This argument was echoed by many Labour and trade union leaders. It was a perfect excuse for doing nothing in the face of the attacks of the bosses.

Those who argued this, again like today, claimed justification from Marx who had said:

"No social order ever perished before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed."

They could also list a series of bitter defeats for the working class. From the British General Strike in 1926 to Spain in 1936 the workers had mobilised in millions. Each revolutionary situation had ended in defeat. For some, this was proof that capitalism could not be toppled, that the Russian Revolution of 1917 had been a fluke of history.

CHAOS

Trotskyism, on the other hand, drew a completely different lesson from these events. A lesson summed up in the first section of the **Transitional Programme**.

Pointing to the deep recession of the 1930s, mass unemployment and the slide towards war, Trotsky wrote:

"The economic pre-requisite for the proletarian revolution has already in general achieved the highest point of fruition that can be reached under capitalism. Mankind's productive forces stagnate."

He went on to outline a perspective of economic chaos, war and revolutionary turmoil which would be confirmed to the letter in the ensuing decade. He concluded:

"The objective pre-requisites of the proletarian revolution have not only 'ripened' they have begun to get somewhat rotten."

Without a proletarian revolution barbarism and destruction faced humanity.

Trotsky has been accused of "catastrophism" by those, like the British SWP, who reject the **Transitional Programme**. On the other hand Healy's WRP turned Trotsky's perspectives into a vision of economic "apocalypse now". The final

THIS IS THE first of a series of articles on the Transitional Programme (which will occasionally alternate with a Workers History series). By looking at the issues covered in that programme and their relevance to today we will explain fundamental aspects of our own politics. In particular we will demonstrate why we believe an urgent task for revolutionaries today is to reclaim and re-elaborate

the Transitional Programme. Reclaim, because the centrist fragments of the Fourth International who claim the programme as their own in fact distort it and trample on its method and principles. Re-elaborate, because after almost 50 years the development of that programme is urgently needed to enable us to deal with developments in the world situation.

theory
programme
& practice

crash was always just around the corner. Both these interpretations of the 1938 programme (as well as those that simply state, as does Alan Thornett's Socialist Group, that the **Transitional Programme** is, in every detail, 'valid today') fail to grasp the **method** of the programme and the role of perspectives in it.

Trotsky started by recognising that in the imperialist epoch periods of economic crisis became ever deeper and ever more convulsive. In such periods - and the 1930s was clearly a period of crisis - the features of the imperialist epoch, wars and revolutions, became sharply pronounced. Thus, Trotsky's 'catastrophic' predictions in 1938 were a concrete application in a specific period of the theory of imperialist epoch. This method of approach remains valid.

But Trotsky did not simply work with a perspective of general catastrophe. It was more detailed, taking into account the problems confronting specific capitalist countries, and the specific problems confronting Stalinism. The **Transitional Programme** was based on the perspective that capitalism, and particularly European capitalism, was far weaker than at the beginning of the first world war. This very weakness meant, in Trotsky's view, that a revolutionary crisis would bring about the collapse of the whole capitalist system. Nor was the USA exempt from this perspective.

Trotsky recognised that perspectives are not infallible prophecies:

"Political prognosis is only a working hypothesis. It must be constantly checked, rendered more precise, brought closer to reality."

As such they were designed to guide the Fourth International for the period immediately confronting them. This period was, in Trotsky's view, likely to be a protracted pre-revolutionary period:

"The economy, the state, the bourgeoisie's politics and its international relations are completely blighted by a social crisis characteristic of a pre-revolutionary state of society. The chief obstacle in the path of transferring the pre-revolutionary condition into a revolutionary one is the opportunist

character of proletarian leadership . . . The multi-millioned masses again and again enter the road of revolution. But each time they are blocked by their own conservative bureaucratic machines."

This is Trotsky's understanding of the crisis of proletarian leadership on the eve of war. In the pre-revolutionary situation the masses - particularly in Europe - had entered the road of revolution. The struggles of the French and Spanish workers were not of a sectional, economic or episodic character. They were generalised struggles pregnant with revolutionary potential.

The specific feature of the crisis of proletarian leadership at that time was the ability of the old leaderships to stop this potential being realised. The Stalinists and social democrats had shown their capacity for treachery in both France and Spain in 1936 and 1937. At the same time the forces of Trotskyism were too weak to challenge for leadership. In Trotsky's view the potential for resolving this crisis of leadership did exist in the short term.

The political result of the crisis would be the collapse of Stalinism and social democracy precisely at the point when the masses were propelled again to enter the road of revolutionary struggle. For Trotsky, therefore, it was vital to arm the Fourth International with the means of taking advantage of revolutionary struggle.

A decisive turn to the mass movement was necessary, with the **Transitional Programme** itself being the means to take the sections of the Fourth International to the head of the mass movement:

"Henceforth the Fourth International stands face to face with the tasks of the mass movement. The transitional programme is a reflection of this important turn."



In other words, the problem of achieving socialism lay not in the objective conditions facing the working class, but **within the working class itself**. More specifically it lay in the leadership of the class.

During and immediately after the Second World War the failure to resolve the crisis of leadership led to either the demobilisation of workers' struggles through 'reform' programmes (Britain, France, Italy) or, where this proved impossible, the physical destruction of those struggles by the imperialists and Stalinists (Vietnam, Greece). This required a change of perspective on the part of the Fourth International.

The perspective of revolution and war lay at the heart of the programme. Within two years it had been confirmed. Yet by 1948 a new period of stability was opening up. The perspective of war and revolution, still characteristic of the whole Imperialist epoch, was no longer valid for the immediate period in the imperialist heartlands. Humanity's productive forces not only ceased to stagnate, they underwent a massive development in the post-war economic boom. Moreover the defeats or successful demobilisations of the immediate post-war struggles took their toll on the willingness of many sections of workers (particularly in the imperialist heartlands) to wage major class battles.

Failure to recognise this, fuelled by an appetite for repeating phrases from the **Transitional Programme**, led whole sections of the 'Trotskyist' left to a mechanical view of the crisis of leadership. According to this view the bureaucrats and labour leaders are the cork; the workers a constantly shaken bottle of Pomagne.

The end result is that real defeats, and the effects of such defeats, are either denied or ignored: so for Militant every defeat for Labour at the polls, for Liverpool in the courts, or for the Militant at the hands of the NEC, becomes a 'victory' of one sort or another. The same was true of the old WRP and the miners strike, and for the Thornett-led WSL faced with the effects of successive defeats on shop floor organisation in the late 1970s/early 1980s.

Another element of Trotsky's analysis of the crisis of leadership often used out of context is the passage:

"The orientation of the masses is determined first by the objective conditions of decaying capitalism and second by the treacherous politics of the old workers' organisations. Of these factors the first of course is the decisive one: the laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus."

This was a correct formulation given two conditions: first that the Fourth International was fighting against all the other treacherous and confused political currents to practically **resolve** the crisis of leadership; second, that massive revolutionary events were on the horizon.

But after 1948, those who stuck to this formulation when the second condition, the revolutionary events, had come and gone, ended up abandoning the first condition.

'Trotskyism' was turned into a theory of the "objective revolutionary process". And it was the above passage exactly, although ripped out of context, that degenerate, centrist 'Trotskyism' inscribed on its stolen flag.

For Pablo, and for many an 'anti-Pabloite', the laws of history being stronger than the old leaderships came to mean that the laws of history would **resolve** the crisis of leadership, if not in the shape of mass growth for the Fourth International, then through a Tito, a Castro, a Maurice Bishop, Gadaffi, Scargill, etc. This is 'only the first of many examples we will see of a correct formulation in the **Transitional Programme** turned into a 'truth', "valid for the epoch", providing good cover for opportunism.

Nobody who has been involved in the Print strike, or who watches the coming TUC and Labour Party conferences, can deny that a "crisis of leadership" exists today in the British labour movement.

With a whole workforce sacked, with the very future of their unions on the line, the Print leaders have displayed exactly the same "cowardice before the big bourgeoisie" that Trotsky described in 1938. Their fear of breaking capitalist laws means they no longer dare lift a finger against Murdoch.

Likewise the Labour left, faced with the choice "Kinnock or no Labour Government", display exactly the same kind of cowardice as the Print leaders. This year's conference will see them knuckle--under even further to the openly right-wing project of the Kinnockites.

CONFUSED

But the crisis of leadership facing workers today goes far deeper than this. It exists at every level; from the crisis of the union bureaucrats to the weakness and demoralisation of shop floor militants; from the failure of Benn and the Labour lefts to the confused antics of the centrist groups.

In this sense the crisis of leadership depicted by Trotsky in 1938 has, if anything, become deeper as a result of the Fourth International's own collapse into centrism. And, while the world situation as a whole is not pre-revolutionary, a new period of crisis has opened up.

Solving the crisis of leadership is the key to victory for revolution in South Africa today, or for the victory of a mighty economic struggle such as occurred in Britain during the 1984-85 miners' strike.

The stakes are becoming higher. We need to defend the method of the **Transitional Programme**, re-elaborating it for today's tasks and today's perspective. At the same time we fight to build a revolutionary party - the only way of resolving the crisis of leadership. The fight for that party means an implacable struggle against the existing leaderships - the Labour leaders, the union bureaucrats, the Stalinists - and against the myriad of centrist groups who kow-tow to those leaderships. ■

By Paul Mason



South African black workers in the 1930s - their crisis of leadership is still unresolved

In March 1921 Harry McShane led his first demonstration, "...a couple of thousand turned up and they were really wild and angry men. Some of them were carrying hand grenades they had brought back from the front - I also knew that some even carried guns on demonstrations. They were a very militant, threatening crowd." They had good reason to be. They were among the 1½ million unemployed in that month. In percentage terms that meant about 12% of those covered by unemployment insurance.

The following month an event took place that was of great significance for the unemployed, the founding of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement (NUWM). Although he himself was not directly involved in its inception, Harry McShane's life ran parallel with that of Wal Hannington, the founder of the NUWM. Both had, by that time, dedicated themselves to Communism and the fight for the rights of the unemployed. Now, sixty years on, with two million on the dole, that fight has to be taken up again.

At the end of the First World War, those who had survived the carnage were confronted with a crisis-racked world. Hundreds of thousands of the recently demobbed and those from the armaments industry who were no longer needed, found that the "land fit for heroes" that they had been promised was, in reality, a land of no work and little or no maintenance.

The revolution in Russia, the five years of upheaval in Germany and the militancy of the masses in France and Britain had sent shivers down the spines of the European bourgeoisie. They knew that their very survival depended on smashing down working class resistance to their attempts to impose wage cuts and permanent mass unemployment.

The Twenties and Thirties were years of continuous struggle. True, there were periods of downturn, between 1920-24 and again 1926-28 for example, but they did not contradict the general trend of revolutionary crises and social upheavals that characterised the two decades. The 1926 General Strike was a high point in the British class struggle, but its aftermath was not all gloom and retreat. By 1929, sections of workers, the Durham miners, for example, were again locked in bitter strikes against the employers. While 1926 was a serious defeat, it did not extinguish the fighting spirit of the working class by any means. The events in France and Spain in the Thirties, the mass strikes and civil war, found a less noisy but not insignificant echo in the struggles of the unemployed in Britain.

The courage and determination of the NUWM was an example to the employed and unemployed alike. It constantly fought against attempts to divide the working class and against the treachery of the leaders of the working class. In 1931 Ramsey MacDonald led a defection to the Tories which led to the formation of the National Government. In the same period the policy of the TUC leaders was 'Mondism' which aimed at the integration of the unions into the State, thus crippling them as fighting organs of the class.

Against this the NUWM took to the streets, mobilised thousands, fought with the police and helped to smash the Mosleyite Fascists.



1921

We can learn from such struggles by re-examining the programme, strategy and tactics that Hannington, McShane and others developed in their struggles, learn from their experience, their triumphs and failures and see how revolutionaries can apply these lessons today.

In 1920, thousands of militants previously active in the rank and file movements of, for example, the Clyde Workers' committee and the National Shop Stewards and Workers' Committee movement, found themselves victimised and among the unemployed.

The first organisational form the unemployed had adopted in the post war period was that of the local Ex-Servicemen's Association. These bodies were primarily concerned with wandering the streets begging for charity. It was not uncommon to see rival demonstrations actually competing for the pennies of the rich in Oxford Street. The likes of Wal Hannington soon put a stop to that. He and others had gone through a communist training in the rank and file movements and they began the struggle to transform these local organisations into a fighting national organisation.

In October 1920, the London District Council (LDC) of the unemployed was formed, helped by a particularly vicious attack by the police on a demonstration in support of a deputation of London mayors, led by George Lansbury. They were demanding an interview with Lloyd George over unemployment. As

Various contingents of hunger marchers set off.



Hannington puts it, "The Whitehall baton charge .. had the effect of sharply awakening masses of the unemployed to a clearer understanding of their class position and making them realise that they would receive no redress for their plight as unemployed by quietly looking to a capitalist government for sympathy."

A delegate conference was held and within a few weeks the LDC was meeting twice weekly with representatives from thirty one London boroughs. By February of 1921 the LDC had decided to press for a national organisation, bringing together all the local groups throughout the country which had been formed in the struggles against the Boards of Guardians, in order to co-ordinate and lead these struggles.

The basis of the NUWM was laid down at the first national conference which met on 15th April, 1921. Fifteen months later there were 300 local committees with a combined membership of 100,000, linked up by the NUWM and its fortnightly newspaper 'Out of Work'. As a result a permanent, well organised mass unemployed movement was established, with enrolled members and accountable leaders.



1929

In the following years the NUWM developed and refined its tactics considerably. The main plank of its platform was to be the slogan, "Work or Full Maintenance at Trade Union Rates of Wages".

Later, at the second national conference, the full programme was agreed upon as :-

- i) 'Work or Full Pay
- ii) Abolition of Task Work
- iii) Relief for Unemployment to be Charged to the National Exchequer, administered by the Trade Unions
- iv) Abolition of Overtime.

These points were supplemented by additional demands such as, "No distraint for rent and rates on the goods of an unemployed person" - important demands in the context of the eviction struggles.

However, key elements of a full action programme for the unemployed were missing. The call for work sharing was posed, later, (in the "Unemployed Workers' Charter") as a cut in hours to be determined by "the requirements of the industry". This formulation lets the employers off the hook. A clearer basis to fight on would have been to call for workers' control of the sharing out of work. Similar criticisms have to be made on the absence of the slogan, "trade union control of hiring, firing and productivity".

However, as well as the one penny weekly subscription, NUWM members did have to swear an oath, "to never cease from active strife against this system until this system is abolished". The many thousands mobilised on this basis showed the real revolutionary potential that the struggles against unemployment had.

In fighting for its programme, the NUWM carried out three basic types of activity on a local and national scale. It organised the unemployed locally to fight for their rights and entitlements - the fight to actually get benefit or against eviction. McShane was involved in a number of these, his own included, "We lived on toast, my wife said her stomach was all scratched from toast with nothing on it. There were many others in just the same situation. I had always said that the unemployed should feed their families and not pay the rent, and that is what I finally did."

Then there were the raids and occupations - both for meeting places and as a means of putting pressure on the local authorities. One such occupation, if it can be called that, was of Wandsworth workhouse.

Under the 1834 Poor Law, still in operation, the Boards of Guardians were obliged to give either outdoor relief or accommodation and work. Barbarous as this 'workhouse' system was, the NUWM worked out a way to exploit its provisions to the full. One day 700 people turned up to the Wandsworth workhouse and demanded accommodation until the local Board of Guardians granted outdoor relief. On the second night, a massive demonstration expressed its solidarity. Despite a large police presence, "from the hall of the workhouse speeches were delivered to the demonstrators



"WE WILL NOT STARVE IN SILENCE"



DAVE GARROCH looks at the review of two books about the period (Pluto Press) and Wal Hannington's Wishart)

outside. Then, to the amazement and jubilation of the demonstrators, about 9 o'clock just as it was getting dusk, we saw the red flag run up on a flagmast over the workhouse."

The factory raid was also an important aspect of local NUWM work. From the very beginning, the unemployed saw the need for the employed to come to their aid, just as they were pledged to "assist in every possible way workers who may come out on strike or who are locked out." Thus, raids would usually be carried out on a factory where systematic overtime was being worked or where wages were being paid below union rates. At a given signal, a disciplined squad of unemployed workers would rush the gates, guard the exits and phones, until the police came, and a speech would be made explaining the need to ban overtime, to fight for the going rate and on the need for the employed and the unemployed to unite. Major successes were achieved with these tactics in stopping regular overtime and getting workers taken on. However, the demands and tactics were never developed further towards actually agitating for workers' control of the hours.

In 1922 the NUWM was in the vanguard of the struggle against the national lock out of the engineers. Scab factories were raided and pickets were reinforced. The unemployed and locked out engineers demonstrated together for the right to "outdoor relief" for the engineers - a magnificent example of the solidarity and class spirit of the unemployed.

However, perhaps the best remembered activities of the NUWM locally as well as nationally were the hunger marches and demonstrations. Hannington explains their elementary purpose as the refusal to starve in silence. They certainly broke the wall of silence behind which the bosses' press tried to imprison the unemployed.

The first hunger marchers set off from Glasgow in October 1922. After trying the total news blackout, the press lost its nerve and

began to shake with indignation as they near London. Supposedly led by criminals bearing arms, and replete with Bolshevik gold, these 2,000 men were said to be plotting murder and mayhem on their arrival. In fact their declared aim was to present their demands face to face with the Prime Minister, Bonar Law - hardly an insurrectionary act. Nor was the decision to attempt to deliver a petition to George V. Buckingham Palace and Number Ten were barred to them - by thousands of police - but 70,000 people demonstrated with them when they arrived in London. They also received a tremendous reception en route, not of course, from the authorities but from the working class districts through which they passed. As far as the authorities were concerned it is difficult to decide who gave whom the harder time of it. One of the aims of the marches was always to force the local guardians to provide food and accommodation. Local benefit offices and other municipal buildings were therefore, often the target for the marchers.

A feature of the marches that impressed everyone was their discipline. "The discipline of the march was self-discipline, imposed by men themselves, in everybody's interests," as McShane puts it. Despite the long and arduous miles in the terrible weather, they took good care to preserve it. The value of such discipline was illustrated in Glasgow. On September 23 1931, an unemployment march was savagely attacked by the police. The next day a 50,000 strong protest demonstration was staged. This time it was protected by a disciplined corps of 500 unemployed workers, armed with heat sticks - the police kept their distance this time. Alas, such workers' defence corps did not become a general feature in other cities and the unemployed often paid the price for this with serious injuries at the hands of the police.



1932

Enormous demonstrations were staged in support of the hunger marches when they arrived at their destinations and often these turned into savage battles when the police attacked. The early Thirties saw many street fights between unemployed workers and a brutally repressive state. In Birkenhead, the railings were ripped up by workers as they defended themselves against unprovoked police attacks. A few nights later the police took their revenge throughout the working class district dragging men, women and children from their

OCTOBER FIRST 1986 sees the launch of a "Jarrow Crusade". It is a commemoration of the original crusade of 1936. In the article reprinted here from Workers Power No. 18 we detail the tragic nature of the original march.

It was designed by its reformist sponsors to eradicate the last vestiges of militancy in the NUWM. The tragedy was that it succeeded. The re-run is a theatrical farce.

The thirty strong march (!) is to be joined by 2 marches from the limited number of towns it passes through. Each evening a play on Jarrow will be performed. On November it will present Thatcher with a petition. Nowhere does

it plan to help organise the unemployed, or link up with workers' struggles today.

The whole thing is designed, in the words of a mobilising leaflet, "to make a major contribution to the election of a Labour government". It is a publicity stunt.

Trade unionists and unemployed activists should use the occasion of this march to argue with the marchers and labour movement bodies that support it, that what is needed is a fighting organisation of the unemployed, not a Kinnock—boosting roadshow. The lessons of the 1920s and 1930s are vital in enabling militants today to put these arguments.



Employed struggles between the Wars in a Harry McShane's "No Mean Fighter" unemployed Struggles" (Lawrence and

beds and beating them mercilessly. A report from a Mrs. Davin to the International Labour Defence inquiry revealed the extent of police violence, "My husband got out of bed without waiting to put his trousers on and unlocked the door. As he did so, 12 police rushed into the room, knocking him to the floor, his poor head being split open, kicking him as he lay ... I tried to prevent them hitting my husband. They then commenced to baton me all over the arms and body. As they hit me and my Jim, the children and I were screaming and the police shouted 'Shut up, you parish-fed bastards.'"

The workers in Belfast faced even more savagery. There, the police force was heavily armed and barricades were thrown up when the police opened fire. Several workers were killed and Protestant workers, who believed that the Six Counties was, 'their' state found out to whom the RUC really belonged.



When such bitter class battles were taking place what, one might ask, were the official representatives of the class doing? Where were the TUC and Labour Party leaders? Then, as now, they were holding conferences.

A delegate conference on unemployment was convened by the TUC and the Labour Party in 1921. Hannington's report of it may sound familiar to today's militants. "Many of the delegates had come prepared to vote for 24 hour strike action to compel the government to face up to the question of unemployment. The platform refused to allow the delegates to discuss anything other than the official resolution which they had put forward. This resolution contained no proposals for action, it simply condemned the failure of the government on unemployment and referred to the five parliamentary by-elections which were in progress, urging that the best way in which the workers could express their opposition to the Lloyd George government on its failure in respect to unemployment was to work for the return of the Labour candidates in these by-elections."

However, in 1922, the TUC General Council decided to organise a national, "day of action". Powerful demonstrations were to be held ... on a Sunday! Hannington, it must be said, fails to point out the function of these "Unemployed Sundays" (another was held in 1924) which, in fact, kept employed workers out of the direct action struggle against unemployment but, at

the same time, allowed the TUC to present itself as, "doing something" on behalf of the jobless.

The TUC consistently refused the NUWM affiliation and equally rejected its call for a, "24 hour general strike against the government in regard to unemployment". In the aftermath of the 1926 General Strike the TUC, in line with its "peace in industry" policy, severed its connections with the NUWM completely and broke up the Joint Advisory Council which had been set up in 1923. From then on the TUC did its best to sabotage and betray the NUWM's work.

The 1927 miners' march was denounced as a "Communist stunt" which did not have the support of the official trade union movement. This signalled, as Hannington points out, "an outburst of violent abuse and excitement from the capitalist press, who called for the government to ban the march and for the police to, 'show no mercy for the political incendiaries who were organising it against the wishes of the respectable elements of the Labour movement'". The police duly obliged by stepping up their campaign of harassment and intimidation.

Walter, later Lord, Citrine went so far as to specifically instruct Trades Councils not to render any assistance to the march.

The marchers set out with a grim determination nonetheless. The first day's march was to end in Newport, "Our reception in Newport surpassed all expectations. Men and women of the Newport labour movement overwhelmed us with their eagerness to serve food and provide every possible comfort. Here was the real heart of the labour movement, beating to greet us! Here were the typical men and women, examples of the great mass of hard-working folk who really constitute the life and vitality of the movement."

This support, that ordinary workers gave unstintingly, contrasts dramatically with the actions of the contemptible Citrine and his cronies. Between 1927 and 1933, the TUC repeatedly tried to set up bureaucratically strait-jacketed unemployed committees which did nothing for the unemployed. However, the general secretaries were unable to organise in a sphere that was "non-negotiable" with the bosses. This ensured that even these feeble



efforts came to nought. For his services as a saboteur of the struggle against unemployment, Citrine, the TUC leader, was made a Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. As the Daily Telegraph noted at the time, this was a, "generous admission that those also serve who oppose the government of the day." The bosses have always been glad of the service of men like Citrine whose opposition to them is a gentlemanly bluff — but whose opposition to workers defending themselves is real indeed.

The betrayals of the reformist leadership reached their culmination, however, with the Labour government which came to power in 1929. It was this Labour government which refused to abolish task work, which refused to cancel the relief debts of the boards of guardians and which presided over a vast increase in the ranks of the unemployed. These measures were justified then, as now, as "economies" that were necessary to save the pound etc.



The 1930 hunger march was the first to include a detachment of women marchers. Ironically the first woman Minister of Labour, Margaret Bondfield, was personally responsible for the unceremonious ejection of a deputation of the marchers from the Ministry of Labour. She had a long history as an enemy of the unemployed. A signatory to the Blanesburgh Report (1927) which had proposed a severe cut in benefits that the Tories had not dared to carry through, she and her ministerial colleagues succeeded where Baldwin and Co. had failed. They did this via the Anomalies Act and the introduction of the infamous Means Test, which deprived the unemployed of £30 million in benefits.

It was an attempt to carry through a further cut that finally split the Cabinet and made even the TUC jib and led to MacDonald's defection (with Margaret Bondfield!) and the creation of a National Government. At the same time, Citrine blocked a delegation of unemployed Welsh miners from addressing the TUC at Bristol. When they were baton-charged outside the Congress by the police, Citrine attacked the marchers and praised the police.

As the dole queues grew, so did the determination of the TUC and Labour leaders to defuse the extensive wave of militancy and to preserve the capitalist system that guaranteed them their privileges.

The legendary 'Jarrow Crusade' was, in fact, a clear example of how the reformists neutered the struggles of the unemployed. It is no accident that this march is the one that is kept alive by the reformists' and the bosses' propaganda, as the symbol of the Thirties. It was one of the smallest marches ever to go to London from the unemployment blackspots. It was organised by the Jarrow Labour MP, Ellen Wilkinson who ensured from the outset that it would be a law-abiding, passive, pleading demonstration. It was a far cry from the NUWM marches of the Twenties and early Thirties which set out fully aware that the only official reception they would get was from police truncheons. The non-political nature of the Jarrow march was guaranteed by a grotesque form of class collaboration. Two agents were appointed to arrange the eating and sleeping arrangements — one from the Labour Party and the other from the Tories!

On the other hand, as a result of Special Branch intervention, a CP member was expelled from the march. Fears were expressed that the NUWM might take advantage of the crusade but Wilkinson reassured the authorities by refusing to have anything to do with an NUWM march from the North-East taking place at the same time. The Home Office rewarded this respect for the rule of law by organising a tea for the Jarrow marchers in the House of Commons as a "good way of encouraging and placating them." (From the Special Branch report on the Jarrow March, 1936)

The Jarrow March, despite the undoubted sincerity of the marchers and many who supported them, was a typical example of the TUC and Labour Party attitude to the unemployed. It was class collaborationist to the core and reduced the unemployed to pitiful objects of charity. Its aim was to provide these leaders with cover for their own inaction.

The mid and late Thirties saw a change in the CP's and NUWM's attitude to the reformist leaders. Between 1929 and 1933, the CP's politics were dominated by the notorious "Third Period" line dictated by the Communist International. Stalin's famous dictum that Social Democracy and Fascism were "twins" meant, in Britain, calling the Labour Party "Social

Fascist", striving to create revolutionary unions and abjuring the united front tactic. Mc Shane and Hannington, in practice, ignored the worst lunacies of this line which would have spelled doom for the NUWM. The CP leaders were unable to call them to account because the NUWM and the militant battles it fought were the only mass actions that the CP was involved in.

The CP's change of line in 1934/5 to the Communist International's 'Peoples' Front' tactic (which called for class collaborationist fronts between communists, ILPers, Labour Party members, Liberals and even 'progressive' Tories) blunted the cutting edge of the NUWM. Gone was the merciless exposure of the TUC and Labour Party leaders.

By 1936, the CP's criticisms had become so mild that Clement Attlee was quite prepared to share the platform at a London rally welcoming the march of that year. A contemporary police report remarked, "speeches were moderate in tone and the communist speakers avoided provocation or extremist remarks".

Indeed, such an approach undercut the very existence of an independent, rank and file based unemployed organisation. The 1936 march was the last major unemployed demonstration of the 1930's.

Wal Hannington's and Harry McShane's books vividly evoke the atmosphere of the class struggle in the Twenties and Thirties, the poverty and degradation that capitalist crises visit upon the unemployed and their families. They also show the militancy and courage, the pride and dignity that sprang from resistance and organisation. On that basis alone they are worth reading. But there are also lessons to be learnt, and problems to be addressed. One problem with which the NUWM had to grapple, and which is still with us today, is how to unite the unemployed and the employed. The NUWM, correctly, never ignored the official movement, despite its sorry record. They continued to demand that the TUC do what it claimed to do — serve the interests of the working class.

The NUWM consistently fought for the right of the unemployed to take their place inside the official labour movement, in Trades Councils, and at the TUC itself. It fought for the unionisation of the unemployed and against the betrayals of Citrine and Co., who were eager to forget the plight of their ex-members.



The life blood of the NUWM was its local organisations, born out of the struggle against Boards of Guardians. They provided the solid foundation for the hunger march mobilisations, the organised resistance to police brutality in Birkenhead, Belfast, Glasgow and elsewhere. They ensured that the unemployed were mobilised against capitalism — and not against their employed fellow workers.

Such local committees need to be established today. They need to be built in every town to organise the unemployed, especially the youth, on a permanent basis, bringing them into militant action against the bosses. Such local roots will provide the best basis for national initiatives, marches etc.

A national organisation of the unemployed must be built around a clear programme, clear political answers to the crisis that the unemployed and the employed face together. For they do face it together, and if unity is not welded in action the working class faces serious dangers. There is no doubt that deep frustration and growing despair could develop within the ever-increasing army of the unemployed, particularly so in regard to the youth. If that frustration and despair, that anger, is not directed against its class enemy, there is a real prospect of it turning in upon itself in the cancerous form of fascism. Not only the fascists could benefit from a leaderless army of the unemployed. The spectre of a chronically weakened Trade Union movement lies before us in the shape of a divided and demoralised working class lacking the strength to even defend, let alone improve, wages, conditions and social services.

Such a prospect need never become a reality provided, at every level of the labour movement, in every town, every plant, every Trades Council, the question of the fight against unemployment is taken up. A mass national unemployed movement, based on uncompromising hostility to the capitalist system and linked to the employed workers, the trade unions can, and must, build in the months ahead.

Each symbol represents 200 000 unemployed.



THE ECONOMIST HAILED President Jayewardene's proposals for 'devolution' in Sri Lanka as "a genuine degree of autonomy" for the Tamils. Such a response was exactly what Jayewardene was after - Western approval and the accompanying cash with which he can continue to arm his Sinhalese chauvinist regime to the teeth.

The reality behind Jayewardene's proposals is exposed in the statement we print below from the Revolutionary Workers Party of Sri Lanka. This organisation is implacably opposed to Sinhalese chauvinism. We print the statement as a fraternal act of solidarity with their current struggle. The statement has been slightly abridged for reasons of space.

'PROVINCIAL COUNCILS'

Statement of the
Revolutionary Workers Party

President Jayewardene has once again come forward with proposals for a 'political solution' of the Tamil national problem. However, even at a moment when he is seeking to get the attention of the Tamil people in regard to his proposals, Jayewardene has not made a single reference, either in his speech, or in the text of his proposals, to the Tamils and their problems. Evidently, Jayewardene does not want to show to his Sinhalese electorate that he is offering these proposals as a solution to the civil war situation in the country, arising from the liberation struggle of the Tamil people. . .

In regard to the Tamil national problem the Tamil people have the right to a separate state (Tamil Eelam) which has been their goal since 1973. The right of self-determination of a nation has no other meaning than the right to a separate state. That indeed is the Marxist-Leninist position on the national question.

The workers and toilers of Sri Lanka can do no less than unconditionally support the present struggle of the Tamils for a separate Tamil state. But, the achieving of a separate state is no solution to the problems arising out of both national and class oppression. Such a solution can be found only in and through struggles of the Tamil workers and toilers in unity with the workers and toilers of the whole of Sri Lanka for the overthrow of the Jayewardene govern-

PROVINCIAL COUNCILS

- Dangerous diversion for Tamils

ment and of capitalist class rule and through the establishment of socialism.

During the last 3 years since 1984, the Jayewardene bourgeoisie regime believed it was possible to solve this problem by launching military operations against the Tamils and pursuing a policy of genocide of the Tamils. Having failed to suppress the Tamils by these means, Jayewardene has trotted out a new version of a 'political solution' . . .

President Jayewardene now proposes a plan for devolution of power. The question that is posed is whether he will open the road for any real devolution of power.

To start with, it is relevant to refer to one fundamental right - the right of universal franchise. It is expressly stated in his proposals that the Provincial Councils will be elected on the basis of proportional representation - the undermining of the power of the voters remain unchanged.

In order to inquire into the question whether there is, and to what extent there is, any devolution of power it would suffice if we consider this under 5 headings.

I. Executive Power

As in the case of the Parliament, executive power will not be wielded by the Board of Ministers of the Provincial Council which is composed of elected members, but by an official, a Governor, who is appointed by the President. Thus, like the Parliament, the Provincial Council will only be a talking shop.

If the reality is that the Governor (who is the President's man) has the full executive power

in all spheres of administration in the Province, where is the devolution of power to the Provincial Council? Concretely, it means that the limited executive powers that the Board of Ministers will exercise will be at the will and pleasure of the Governor- the President's man.

2. Law and Order

Section 11:1 says:-

"The D.I.G. of the Province shall be responsible to and under the control of the Chief Minister thereof in respect of the maintenance of public order in the Province."

Does this mean that the Chief Minister who is a democratically elected member of the Provincial Council will have control of the maintenance of public order in the Province?

In the first place, "maintenance of public order" is left undefined. On the other hand, this provision has to be read with Annexure II which lists the "subjects and functions that should be exclusively reserved by the Government". Here is sub-section 1:4 -

"Law and Order and Prevention and Detection of Crime, subject to the extent that some of these powers will be devolved on Provincial Councils and District Councils"

That means only some of the powers coming under law and order are devolved on the Provincial Council. In the absence of any listing of these powers under law and order, as powers that are so devolved, it is not possible to say that the powers granted to the Provincial Council in relation to the maintenance of law and order can give the Tamil people's representatives power to adequately protect the Tamil people from the police oppressors and violence by the Sinhalese bourgeois central government.

What is most relevant in regard to the so-called power of a Provincial Council over law and order is the fact that whatever power that is devolved on the Provincial Council in this respect is nullified and negated every time a State of Emergency is declared by the President. In that event, the President takes over all the powers in regard to law and order in the Province.

This reality of a dictatorial President having the power to declare a State of Emergency at his own will and pleasure without being responsible to Parliament makes a nullity of any powers of Provincial Councils in regard to law and order.

And the very next sub-section exposes the fraudulent nature of the powers granted to a Provincial Council in regards to law and order. Under this sub-section, without declaring a State of Emergency, the President can, if he is

"of the opinion that the security of, or public order in, a Province is threatened by a grave internal disturbance"

by order deploy any unit of the National Division of the Armed Forces in the province for purposes of restoring public order.

Thus it could well happen that on the very inaugural day of the functioning of the Provincial Council in the Northern or Eastern Provinces, that the President chooses to send his armed forces to massacre the Tamil people because he entertains a belief that there is a threat to public order.

3. Land and Land Settlement

Provincial Councils will have only a fraction of the cultivable land in its area under its own power for any projects or settlement on landless people.

It is expressly stated that "State" lands mean all land under the Crown Land Ordinance, the land under the Land Development Ordinance and Irrigation Ordinance - all these lands, that is the entirety of the land belonging to the Government. It is vaguely stated that the Provincial Council will get only "lands required by Provincial Councils for purposes devolved on them". Apparently, it is left to the Central Government to decide on what amount of land should be left to be controlled by a Provincial Council. However, even in respect of this small category of land,

"Alienation and disposition of land under such schemes . . . will be made by the President"

And as for land development projects (e.g. Mahaweli)

"the principles and criteria regarding the selection of allottees for such land will also be determined by the government of Sri Lanka"

The details given under the Alienation of New Allotments under Mahaweli reveals the method by which the Tamils are to be discriminated vis-a-vis the Sinhalese on the burning question of land distribution. We are told of a system of:

"entitlement on the basis of National Ethnic ratios of Sri Lankan Tamils, Muslims and Indian Tamils - 12% for Sri Lankan Tamils, 7% for Muslims and 5% for Indian Tamils."

And on this 'principle' 75% of the lands coming under the Mahaweli Development Scheme will be reserved and given the Sinhalese . . .

If this principle is to be adopted in regard to the distribution of land, it is inevitable that the same principle will be applied to educational facilities and employment leading to the abominable "standardisation" and "quotas". This is not the road for achieving the unity of the nation but tearing it apart.

4. Education

In regard to education, the devolution is to be only for cultural matters and education up to secondary schools.

The State universities within the Provinces will not come under the control of the Provincial Councils. Nor have the Provincial Councils any power to set up their own universities. Thus, in regard to the admissions to universities, Tamil students will be at the mercy of the Sinhalese chauvinists of the state. On the question of the rights of Tamils to university education they are expected to be satisfied with one single sentence in the proposals. Under the headline "National Education Policy" we have this sentence - **"This will be non-discriminatory" !!!**

5. Industry

It is a categorical statement in the proposals that state-owned industries will not be transferred to Provincial Councils. The granting of power to the Provincial Council to 'establish' and promote industries within their own areas means nothing as the Councils have to depend for all finance on the Central Government. On the one hand,



butcher of Tamils, Jayewardene

this means that there will be no industrial development within the Tamil Provinces, and on the other hand, the Councils in these Provinces can do nothing to provide employment to Tamils in industrial undertakings as the state-run industries will remain virtually closed to Tamils.

The conclusion is plain enough. Any devolution of power to the Tamils through Provincial Councils remains a myth. Jayewardene's proposals, albeit with the blessings of the Indian capitalist government, is a trap for the Tamils and their liberation struggle - Jayewardene and his Sinhalese chauvinist bourgeois regime is offering the Tamils this empty shell of Provincial Councils, with trappings of devolution of power, hoping that the Tamil liberation struggle will be abandoned and that the Tamils could be brought under a form of subjection from which they could never rise.

And, as far as the workers and toilers in the South and other parts of Sri Lanka are concerned, the so-called Provincial Councils will not mean any devolution of political power to them which they could exercise through the proposed Provincial Councils, Municipal and Urban Councils and Pradeseya Subhas.

The Presidential dictatorship that Jayewardene set up since 1977 remains as before. Jayewardene will continue to exercise his dictatorial powers in a camouflaged way through a system of local bodies which in reality will function under the direction of the President.

In this context, the part that the so-called left parties are playing is not merely despicable, but is treachery to the Tamils and a betrayal of all the workers and toilers of the whole of Sri Lanka to the Jayewardene class enemy.

The LSSP, CP and NSSP, who knew well the emptiness and the deceptive nature of Jayewardene's proposals, rushed to welcome them as a basis for the political solution of the Tamil problem . . .

The LSSP, CP and NSSP helped Jayewardene, the murderer of the Tamils, to get himself an image of a person genuinely interested in a political solution of the Tamil problem, by their act of participating in the Political Party Conference and by indulging in secret talks with him.

And, at a time when Jayewardene and his regime were hated by all the workers and toilers of the whole of Sri Lanka, and when it was the moment to mobilise the masses of the whole of this country against this regime, these left parties - LSSP, CP and NSSP actively came to Jayewardene's assistance and have betrayed, in advance, the coming struggle of these masses. ■



Tamils burn effigy of Jayewardene

U.S. ECONOMY SLIDES INTO RECESSION

DURING 1973/74 the price of oil tripled. The imperialists promptly blamed their emerging recession on this price jump.

Twelve years later oil prices have collapsed. In fact, oil at \$10-14 a barrel is cheaper in real terms than before the price jump in 1974 when it stood at \$4 a barrel. It was therefore to be expected that these same imperialists should now be predicting that the fall in oil prices will spark off a new boom.

They were wrong in 1974 and they are wrong now. Far from sparking off a new boom, the fall in oil prices is a symptom of the deepening recession. This recognition is beginning to dawn on the capitalists and it is starting to send shivers up and down the spines of every stock exchange.

THE BOOM THAT WAS!

Thatcher and Reagan rose to power amidst the wreckage of post-war Keynesian attempts at government intervention in the economy. Proclaiming the bankruptcy of Keynesian policies they stood for capitalist orthodoxy, a return to market forces.

The defeats they managed to inflict upon their workers in the early 1980s allowed the world capitalist economy to emerge from the 1979-82 recession. Reagan and Thatcher hailed this recovery as the greatest recovery in history. The servile media provided the chorus. Nothing could be further from the truth. In the recovery from the 1974-75 recession, industrial production in the major capitalist countries (OECD) grew by 23%. In the recent recovery production grew by barely 15%.

THE SICKEST ECONOMY

The American economy led the capitalist world out of recession towards the end of 1982. In 1986 it is leading it back into recession.

Industrial production in America has fallen consecutively over the last 3 months and now stands 5½% below its peak in 1985. Between April and June 1986 American GNP increased by only 0.6% on an annual basis, the lowest increase since the last recession.

The most significant aspect of the 1982-5 world capitalist economic recovery was its dependence on the US economy. The rising dollar and growing US market acted as a magnet for the exports of all the other capitalist nations. Between 1982 and the end of 1985 exports to the US surged by 46%. It was too much for even the mighty US economy. It buckled under the staggering weight of imports.

The impact of these events is dramatically reflected in the transformation of America into a debtor nation. In 1982 America had \$150 billion dollars of net foreign assets. By the end of 1987 it will have over \$300 billion liabilities, triple that of the next most indebted nation. Presently its liabilities stand at \$107 billion. This is still only 3% of the American GNP, but it reveals a definite deterioration in the country's economic might. America's position as 'creditor' to the world has been taken over by Japan. Already Japan has accumulated \$133 billion of net assets.

WHAT HAS GONE WRONG?

One of the few virtues of Thatcher and Reagan compared to the social democrats is that they reveal the naked face of capitalism. Thatcher likes to brag about how she has rehabilitated the word profit. Profit she says is no longer a dirty word.

True! Profit is not a dirty word to the capitalists. It is the most beloved word in their limited vocabulary, for profit is the very basis of their economy. The reason that



U. S. steelworkers on the march

there was such an anaemic recovery after 1982 is that despite the defeats inflicted on workers profit growth from the low points in 1982 has been sluggish. Nowhere more so than in the US.

The mass of company profits peaked at \$253 billion in 1979 and then collapsed in the recession. They revived in the recovery to stand at \$184 billion in the middle of 1984. A peak nearly 30% below the 1979 peak. Since then they have been falling at 13% per annum.

At first the fall in profits in America resulted from the gains made by those countries exporting to America. But since the fall in the dollar and the contraction of the US market, profits have begun to fall in other countries, notably Japan. Profits in Japan fell by 8% in 1985 and are expected to fall by 9% this year. By September profits for the non-electrical and non-oil industries will be 47% below their March 1985 peak. In Britain and Germany profits are down by 4%.

In other words, profitability is beginning to fall throughout the major capitalist nations. This fall in the mass of profits has led to an absolute fall in the rate of profit. In manufacturing in America it has fallen by over a third to under 6½% since its high point in 1984. This fall poses a renewed threat to the capitalist world and heralds an intensification of the attacks on workers.

WORKERS FORCED TO PAY THE PRICE

Nowhere is the crisis better illustrated than in the US steel industry. World capitalist steel production is down 6% this year so far. In the US despite massive closures, steel is only operating at two-thirds capacity. Together the steel companies lost \$7 billion in the last 4 years. Last month, the

second largest steel company, LTV filed for bankruptcy.

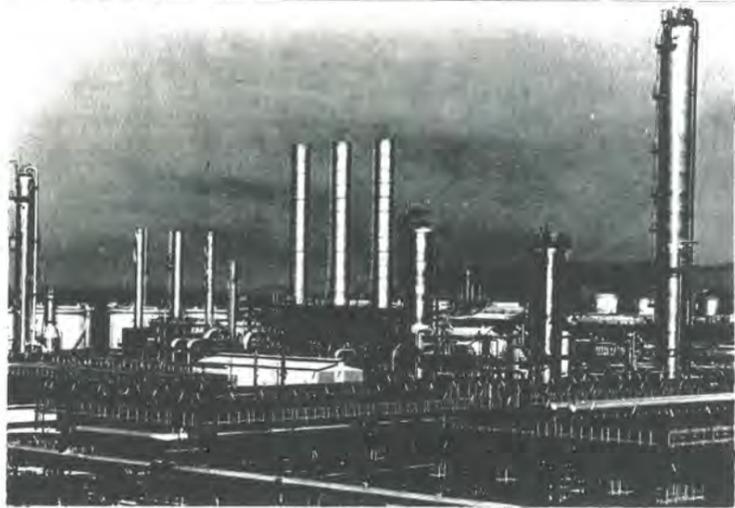
One of the reasons it did so was to avoid paying its workers pensions. It also demanded give backs (wage cuts) of up to 40%. However not everything is going the bosses way. A few weeks ago the workers in America's largest steel company USX (formerly US Steel) went on strike for the first time since 1956.

As the recession deepens other industries will fold. American workers will be faced with stark choices - fight or be sacked, strike or live on miserable wages. The strike by the steel workers gives notice that key sections will choose to struggle.

The eventual depth of the emerging recession cannot be predicted with complete confidence. The tempo of developments over the next months depends partly on the extent of the class struggle and partly on the extent to which the state can take counter-recessionary measures.

Essentially, having sustained the burden of the recovery the US has run up against the barriers of a huge fiscal and trade deficit which can no longer be indefinitely expanded. The US demands that Germany and Japan take the 'locomotive' position and reflate their economies to attract US exports. If they refuse the US threatens either to let the US dollar fall even further in order to cheapen exports or to collapse before the pressure of the protectionist lobby in the US to keep out imports. Germany and Japan plainly do not relish the choice: the bullet or the rope!

Nevertheless, these political manoeuvres are only likely to effect the eventual shape and duration of the recession together with which nations will shoulder the greatest burden, rather than arrest the recession itself. ■



slump hit oil refinery

SUMMER SCHOOL SUCCESS

THE WORKERS POWER Summer School held between 30 July and 3 August in Sheffield was the biggest we have ever held. One hundred and twenty five comrades registered for part or all of the school.

Apart from members and supporters of Workers Power also present were comrades from the Austrian, Irish and French sections of the Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International (MRCI) as well as members of the Revolutionary Workers Group (GOR) of Italy. Members of the British SWP, WRP and Socialist Organiser also participated in and had the opportunity to compare our school with those organised by

their own groups.

The school would have been bigger still but for the absence of German comrades of the MRCI. Happily this absence was occasioned by the need for comrades to prepare for the MRCI's first German language Summer School in Vienna which was held in the week following Workers Power's own school.

MRCI

Those in attendance could choose from eight courses on offer ranging from an **Introduction to Marxism** to the **History of Bolshevism**, from **Women's Oppression**

to **The Theory of Imperialism**. We had short sprint courses on **Ireland** spread over 3 sessions and marathon courses like the ten sessions on the **History of Trotskyism**.

In the evenings, lectures on a wide range of topics brought greater numbers of comrades together. A highlight of the week was a debate over Nuclear Power in front of the whole school, part of the ongoing discussion within the MRCI.

The school ended with a look back over the first ten years of Workers Power (1976-86), an appraisal of the gains of the MRCI since its foundation in 1984 and an outline of the tasks ahead; looking forward to the challenge

of the next ten years.

The preparation that went into the course presentation was rewarded by stimulating and extensive discussions. On many topics the school served the purpose of acting as a catalyst for the theoretical and programmatic development of the group. As a training ground for revolutionary cadre, as a forum for winning new members to our ranks and as an occasion for re-inforcing the bonds of comradeship, the 1986 Summer School was an undoubted success. As the sixth such school it was judged by many to be the best - though next year will be bigger and we hope better still, so **book now for 1987!** □

in brief...

PAKISTAN

THE DETENTION OF Benazir Bhutto and many other leaders of the Pakistan Peoples Party has sparked mass unrest in Pakistan.

Coming on the anniversary of independence, and only months after the lifting of martial law, the government crackdown has spelt-out what capitalist 'independence' and 'democracy' mean for the Pakistani masses.

Whilst Zia has clothed himself in holy innocence, taking a pilgrimage to Mecca, his Muslim League thugs and the riot police and army have repeatedly attacked anti-Zia demonstrations organised by the New Movement For Return to Democracy. The MRD is calling for the release of the detainees and for elections. As we go to press several hundred of its supporters are in gaol, scores have been killed.

AUSTRALIA

"IT IS NOT a budget for wimps" said Australian Treasurer Paul Keating, announcing the Labour Government's massive cut in public spending. He was right. Lopping off millions from government health, education and welfare programmes, it is a budget for the bosses.

Bob Hawke's Labour Party was elected in 1983 on the basis of an 'Accord' with Australia's trade unions. In return for a wage freeze Hawke promised to "increase the social wage" via more public spending. Three years later real wages have fallen 20% and the government's side of the 'bargain' thrown in the waste-bin.

Carried out under pressure from the Australian employers and international banks, the budget has failed to satisfy the capitalists. They are pressing for a wage cut of 3%. Despite the budget, and despite Hawke lifting the ban on uranium sales to France, the Australian dollar has continued to plummet on the money markets.

The Australian Labour Party had already gone for an open confrontation with the unions at state level. Having banned the Building Labourers Federation in Victoria, it has now entered a bare-knuckled fight with the workers on a national scale.

The Australian workers must force the union leaders to fight, break the Accord, strike against cuts and redundancies and for restoration of real wages.

The lessons for Britain are clear: Hawke's Accord was the model for the Kinnock-Willis document - **New Rights, New Responsibilities**. Hawke's attacks on workers' living standards, and the union leaders' refusal to fight will be a model for life under a Kinnock government.

LIBYA

US Imperialism has launched a new provocation against Libya. Following its brutal bombing of Tripoli it has staged deliberately threatening naval manoeuvres on the edge of Libya's territorial waters.

These manoeuvres were also designed to draw Egypt further into the simmering conflict in the area. After rejecting requests to join US manoeuvres three times in the recent past, President Mubarak has now been cajoled into participating. Such a development means the fight to defend Libya against imperialist aggression must continue.



despite the repression

BLACK MASSES FIGHT ON

AFTER TWO AND a half months of Botha's State of Emergency the brutality and scale of his repression has united the great bulk of the National Party's base around him.

It is also clear that South Africa's bosses - despite a few crocodile tears - wholeheartedly support the State of Emergency. Gordon Waddell of JCI commented:

"There is a view by the majority of business that the State of Emergency was necessary to restore law and order." (Weekly Mail 4-10 July)

It is clear from the huge number of COSATU officials and local union activists detained that the clampdown was aimed at stopping the political development and growing power of the unions. The Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU), whose leaders such as Moses Mayekiso have issued calls for a more political and anti-capitalist role for the union, has come in for particularly savage repression. Not only has Mayekiso himself been kept in conditions aimed at breaking him, 41% of the 203 COSATU officials detained are from MAWU.

Yet the repression has far from broken the spirit of South Africa's workers. In the last six months MAWU has recruited 14,000 new members and the NUM some 80,000. MAWU is still maintaining an overtime ban in the metal industry despite employer/state harassment. It is balloting its members for a 'living wage' for the industry (£1 an hour).

The other great fear of Botha and co was the developing 'alternative power' in the townships. This is especially the case in the Eastern Cape where the ANC's presence and mass support was clear for all to see. The old community and town councils of apartheid stooges had been crushed and swept aside. Street committees had begun to develop which had the clear potential for creating a dual power. If linked up with the shop stewards' committees in industry, commerce, transport and on the farms they had the potential to become the soviets of the South African revolution. This terrifying

prospect was a major motivation for the crackdown. Since the Emergency the townships have been ringed with barbed wire. Massive repression has been launched to break the repeated schools' boycotts. The townships are under constant siege or occupation.

Despite this repression the flame of resistance and revolt has not been extinguished. At present the most active freedom fighters are debating how to break the State of Emergency and open up the advance towards the revolutionary overthrow of apartheid.

IMPOTENT

The repression has taught hundreds of thousands that relying on 'democratic' countries like Britain and the USA to pressure Botha is a hopeless task. Only the combined force of the advancing South African revolution itself and the US and British working class movements passing from words to action will produce any response from Thatcher and Reagan - Botha's principal backers and defenders.

The worth of the 'liberalism' of South African big business has been shown up for what it is. So too has the impotence of the United Nations, of the Commonwealth and of the European Parliament and US Congress.

South Africa's workers and the youth of the townships must rely on their own strength and appeal directly for assistance to the world workers' movement and to the broad masses in black Africa to join them in the struggle.

The State of Emergency has shown up the crisis of leadership that exists at the top of the resistance movement. Despite the heroism of the ANC rank and file and the courage of the fighters of Umkhonto We Sizwe the ANC leadership is wedded to a path of pressure, of governmental sanctions by the main imperialist powers and of class collaboration within South Africa.



Zach de Beer, a leading director of Anglo-American, revealed continuing contact and 'informal' discussions with the ANC. South Africa's leading black businessman, Dr Sam Motsuenyane, said after meeting Oliver Tambo in Lusaka that the ANC had agreed that

"private ownership of property was to be allowed at all levels and the spirit of entrepreneurship encouraged"

in a liberated South Africa.

The ANC and the National African Federation of Commerce which Motsuenyane represented agreed that

"It was in the country's best interest that the spirit of

entrepreneurship be nurtured and encouraged and not crushed" (Weekly Mail 11-17 July) and that the ANC believed in a "mixed economy".

The ANC's commitment to the defence of capitalism is clear to all who can read or listen. Its leadership will therefore play a disastrous and ultimately a treacherous role in the South African revolution.

The advances of COSATU unions towards political struggle cannot cover the continuing political weakness of their leaders. They remain torn between the influence of ANC 'populism' - subordinating the unions to building the popular

front and supporting the "armed struggle" - and 'workerism' - a variant of economism that leaves the political terrain open to the bourgeois nationalists.

But COSATU as a mass union federation is still developing and is the vital arena for forging a new proletarian leadership. Those who stood aside from it like the 'black consciousness' influenced groupings have played a much worse role in the resistance to the State of Emergency. The Weekly Mail 11-17 July reports that

"The COSATU position is notably different to that of the two smaller federations - the Council of Unions of South

EYEWITNESS REPORTS

Bolivian Workers Renew the Fight

BOLIVIA IS A country wracked by social crisis. Inflation runs at over one thousand per cent per annum. Severe food shortages hit hardest at the workers and peasants.

The MNR Government headed by Victor Paz Estenssoro is pushing through a vicious programme of closures of mines (copper, tin, coal) and cuts in education, health and social welfare. After the failure of last year's general strike called by the COB (Bolivian Workers Center - the TUC) a period of retreat set in.

Yet only a year on the resistance of workers and also of the peasants and the urban petit-bourgeoisie is mounting. In addition to its other attacks the central government tried to close two local private TV stations in Oruro the main mining and metal smelting city of Bolivia. The reason was that they had given voice to the resistance to the dual policy of mine-closures and privatisation.

Their local owners - small bourgeois - called for protests and supported strike action. This erupted into a city-wide and regional general strike. A mass meeting was held in the main square of Oruro on 15 August that voted for an indefinite general strike not only to demand the keeping open of the TV stations but also the abandonment of the scheduled mine clos-

ures and the freeing of certain working class and peasant prisoners. These were Eleuterio Gutierrez, an imprisoned miner (see separate article) and 12 peasants accused of killing a government official who tried to prevent the holding of a referendum organised by the COB, on the new tax system being introduced by the government.

The COB itself, responding to the Oruro strike, called a two day general strike on 21/22 August to protest against the closure of the mines and also the presence of 150 American troops in Bolivia (there on the pretext of an anti-cocaine campaign). The sympathy of the peasants and the urban petit-bourgeoisie for the workers' struggle to prevent the closure of mines indicates that conditions are ripening for a renewed working class counter-attack against Paz Estenssoro and his Austerity Programme. In Oruro the Trotskyist militants of the Trotskyist Workers' Fraction (FOT) - a group of comrades expelled from the POR (Lora) and at present engaged in discussions with the MRCI - have played an active role in the struggle.

We hope to carry a fuller account of the situation in Bolivia and of these comrades' political analysis in the next issue of **Workers Power**. □

Peru - Aftermath of Gaol Slaughter

IN THE WAKE of the killing of about 250 Sendero Luminoso prisoners in Peru's gaols by the military an exceptionally tense situation is developing in the country. Military and police control is spreading.

Lima is under a curfew. Two taxi drivers have been shot by the trigger happy security forces and no taxis can be found on the streets after midnight.

Repression is being used to quell all forms of social discontent. On 21 August a large demonstration of shanty-town dwellers marched to the offices of the water board demanding the extension of water supplies to their areas, as promised by President Alan Garcia in his election campaign. They were met with tear gas and baton charges - women and children being clubbed down before the eyes of Mayors and Senators (including members of Garcia's own Aprista party).

The campaign for the forthcoming municipal elections has been profoundly affected by the aftermath of the killing of the Sendero prisoners. The United Left candidate for the mayoralty of Lima Barrantes, was quick to express his support for Garcia and to support the re-establishment of order since the Sendero guerrillas were simply "provocateurs".

This statement has caused havoc amongst the United Left's supporters in the shanty towns. It was outspokenly criticised by the leader of one of the United Left's constituent parties Diaz Fonseca of the

FREE ELEUTERIO GUTIERREZ

ELEUTERIO IS A MILITANT miner and local trade union leader from the Bolivar pit in Antequeral Canyon, Oruro, Bolivia. He has been incarcerated in the San Pedro prison for 11 months with no sign of his case coming to trial. Eleuterio was arrested at the time of the five week general strike in Bolivia in 1985.

He has been accused of stealing mining equipment, a ridiculous

charge for which no evidence exists beyond the word of two known management stooges. The real background to this frame-up is that Eleuterio was a leading militant in the general strike, in the March 1985 miners' march on La Paz, and has been active in organising private sector miners to resist the threatened closure of their mines and to demand their nationalisation.

But Eleuterio was not simply a trade union militant. He was also an active member of the Revolutionary Workers Party (POR) led by Guillermo Lora and stood on their list as candidate for the Oruro council. His imprisonment is part of a pattern of persecution of working class militants in the aftermath of last year's defeats. As part of the renewal of the fight during the general strike in Oruro in August, the mass meeting which initiated this action placed as one of its demands the release of Eleuterio.

Eleuterio has a wife and children, and worker militants like him can expect to rot in jail indefinitely unless pressure is brought to bear on the Bolivian government. Eleuterio is a class war prisoner and all workers' organisations should press for his release. We urge all labour movement bodies at local and national level to do the same. We urge all union and Labour Party members to write to the addresses below pressing for this and to publish material in their union or party publications. We urge you to get your MP and union leaders to take up his case now. The Campaign to free Eleuterio Gutierrez is organising a picket of the Bolivian Embassy lest he lose control. □

United Marxist Party (PUM), a twenty thousand strong centrist organisation. Meanwhile another element of Garcia's mass support - the peasants in the Andean South of the country - are planning to launch a wave of land occupations. Garcia may wish to turn a blind eye to this to refurbish his tarnished populist credentials. He has likewise used his present clash with the IMF to indulge in furiously demagogic 'anti-imperialism'.

The clash with the IMF also poses before his government another dilemma - how far dare he go in even a verbal conflict with imperialism? Peru is once again entering a period of sharp conflict and upheavals. The military will be keeping an eagle eye on Garcia

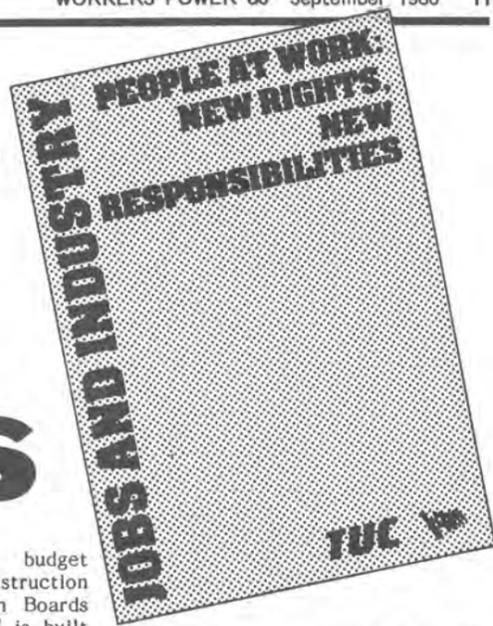
lest he lose control. □

lest he lose control. □

lest he lose control. □



Kinnock's Chains for Unions



Africa (CUSA) and the Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions (AZACTU) who have proposed that employers and unions form a united front against the government."

It reports that CUSA did not support the 14 July day of action and that its general secretary Piroshaw Camay stated that:

"National action could exacerbate the situation rather than obtain the release of workers and unionists. We want to return to the situation where the rule of law is applied in this country."

Worse, CUSA issued a joint declaration with the Federated Chamber of Industries (the South African CBI) and with the Associated Chambers of Commerce saying that they all believed that,

"conflicts can be resolved through negotiations, discussion and compromise. We therefore urge that all acts of violence from whatever source, cease . . ."

This shameful statement indicates the dangers of the alternative alliances to COSATU formed by CUSA and AZACTU. They are no less popular frontist than the ANC inspired elements and indeed seem to be pursuing the path of capitulation to the repression.

The repression shows that what is needed above all is a revolutionary workers' party capable of guiding the unions, taking the lead in the townships towards mass strike action and the building of soviet-type councils. Such a party will have to be built if the black masses are not to be cheated out of the destruction of apartheid and its roots in South African capitalism.

Such a party must be a Leninist party, capable of working in the savage repression and lack of legal rights which exists in South Africa while also utilizing every legal avenue. It will, moreover, have to be a Trotskyist party - one committed to a strategy of permanent revolution, of the uninterrupted struggle from the basis of national and democratic rights to the creation of working class power in South Africa.

The cadre for such a party exists and is developing amongst the vanguard fighters in the unions and townships. What is needed is the first nucleus of conscious Trotskyist to begin the building of such a party. This first step is a vital one for the success of the South African revolution.■

By Dave Stocking

on the first anniversary of his imprisonment:

Tuesday 30 September
11.00 am till 2.00 pm
105 Eaton Square, London SW1

Send messages of support and donations for Eleuterio's legal defence in Bolivia to:

Steve Masterson
BCM 7750, London WC1N 3XX
(Tel 01-435 5652)

Send letters urging action and indicating your support to:

Bolivian Embassy
105 Eaton Square, London SW1

Trade union Federation of Bolivian Mineworkers (COB)
Ayacho 288, 4th Floor,
La Paz, Bolivia

Miners International Federation
8 rue Joseph Stevens,
2nd Floor, 1000 Brussels,
Belgium

► continued from front page

On the picket line and the demos, crucial because many of the militants attend those every week, and in the chapels and the branches, militants must fight to win the mass of strikers to the only way forward. It is only through that fight that a trusted and trustworthy alternative to Dean, Dubbins and the L.D.C. can be built.

The first attempt at a sell-out helped to expose the national leaders. The fight against this attempt may be the last opportunity not only to expose them and their allies but to replace them.■

NEIL KINNOCK FACES two major hurdles this month. He must steer joint TUC/Labour Party proposals on employment legislation through both the TUC and Labour Party Annual Conferences. Only then can the proposals - summed up in the pamphlet *New Rights, New Responsibilities* - take their place as one of the cornerstones of Kinnock's strategy for the next Labour Government.

Already the plans have come under fire from sections of the PLP and the 'left' union leaders. They must be stopped decisively at both the TUC and the Labour Party Conference.

The major sticking point for the trade union leaders has been Kinnock's proposal for a legal requirement to hold a secret ballot before strike action.

KEY ELEMENT

The central need for this measure, which effectively retains a key element of Thatcher's anti-union laws, springs from two sources. On the one hand it is demanded by the employers, who have seen strike after strike in major industries demobilised with this law. On the other hand the TUC right wing have seized this part of Thatcher's legislation as a golden excuse for avoiding confrontation. From Tuffin to Brenda Dean they have tried it once and got themselves hooked.

The ballot proposal has been opposed from the left, but after a lot of noisy recriminations, the main source of opposition, the

TGWU, has been bought-off by a classic TUC compromise. As the TUC and Labour Party conferences approach, only the NUM and TASS remain against the compulsory ballot.

But the ballot wrangle has merely served to obscure the fact that the union bureaucrats have swallowed the rest of Kinnock's plan hook, line and sinker.

The key words of the *New Rights* document are "a partnership" and "involvement in change". In 'Kinnockspeak' this means a return to the union leaders being able to negotiate away jobs, participate in productivity schemes and hold down wages by voluntary agreement. This is just what the bureaucrats have been longing for in their years in the Thatcherite cold.

But their ability to deliver is so crucial to the strategy of Kinnock and Hattersley that it can't be left to chance. They must convince the employers they will be able to hold down wage demands and prevent any restoration of shop-floor militancy. Otherwise the bosses will refuse to go along with

their mildly reflationary budget strategy. Hence the construction of a series of Arbitration Boards and "independent tribunals" is built into Kinnock's scheme.

Most important, under cover of "restoring the right to strike", the Kinnock/Willis document says:

"It will be lawful for workers to organise or take part in a strike or other industrial action in defence of their interests. The range of issues on which workers could properly seek to influence an employer would need to reflect the wider collective bargaining agenda envisaged in our proposals on industrial democracy."

THREAT

The unspoken threat is that "certain issues" could be deemed by law to be outside of what was "proper": like for example a boycott of South African goods, or a strike against the introduction of Cruise missiles into Britain. Workers must resist any attempt to lay down in law the "proper" issues for trade union action.

The *New Rights* document is a synthesis of Labour's previous tactics of enforcing social peace. "In Place of Strife" (1969) was pure legislation. "The Social Contract" (1975-79) was "voluntary". In both cases they were destroyed by a rift between the bureaucracy and the Labour leaders, under pressure of rank and file militancy.

EXTRACTED

Kinnock's policy of legislation and voluntary agreement, extracted from the TUC at its weakest moment, attempts to construct a legal barrier, approved by the bureaucrats, against any revival of shop floor militancy under a future Labour government. Only with this barrier in place can Kinnock sell the idea to the employers and the bankers.

Kinnock needs to prove at Brighton that Labour is the Party that controls the unions. At Blackpool in a month's time he needs to prove that Labour is the Party

that is no longer controlled by the unions.

The TUC/LP document does try to sweeten the pill with the abolition of all existing Thatcherite union law, and by restoring security of employment rights, Wages Councils, etc. Trades unionists should force Kinnock to implement these, but not at the price of accepting the *Rights and Responsibilities* package.

ATTACKS

But a few legal rights restored will not be enough to protect workers from the attacks of the Tories and employers now, and those that a future Kinnock government will make. Trades unionists should fight to commit their union branches and national conferences to a policy of:

- * Abolish all anti-union laws. No state interference in the unions.
- * No social contract.
- * For a national minimum wage based on the average industrial wage, but against all attempts at wage restraint.
- * Against all forms of "workers' participation" in industry - for workers' control.
- * For workers' democracy in the unions. Elected and recallable officials, elected by mass meetings and receiving no more than the average wage of their members.
- * Labour must legislate to guarantee the right to strike, to establish clearly and unquestionably the trades unions' legal immunity from prosecution for strike action

At the Labour Party Conference the whole of the Kinnock/Willis document must be thrown out. Rights, responsibilities, freedom, fairness - like all the other meaningless rhymes that bubble out of Kinnock's mouth - cover-up a well prepared kick in the teeth for the working class.■

By Helen Ward (Vauxhall CLP)



a message for Kinnock and the TUC

DEFEND THE L.P.Y.S.

ONCE KINNOCK'S WITCH-HUNT bandwagon began to roll it was predictable that someone in the Labour leadership 'think tank' would come up with a scheme for getting rid of the Militant-led LPYS. This scheme was unveiled in July by Tom Sawyer and now looks set to be pushed through the Party Conference.

Under Militant the YS has hardly been a thorn in Labour's side. Militant's politics of peaceful co-existence with the Labour leaders until the long awaited day of 'mass influx' put the YS on the sidelines of the mass youth campaigns that actually took place. This the leadership could tolerate.

What they can no longer tolerate is that the YS provides Militant not just with a public platform, but with official party resources, a paper and a place on the NEC.

The first part of Kinnock's strategy was to put into place a mass, populist but politically empty campaign alongside the YS. This took shape in the Red Wedge tours and Labour listens to Youth rallies. To lead the political backlash the Kinnock machine has groomed the leaders of the National Organisation of Labour Students.

All that remains is to deprive the LPYS of its one remaining strength: its independence and its relatively democratic structure. Relative, that is, to the NEC proposals. The YS regional conferences will be turned into rallies. At both national and regional level key decisions will be put into the hands of 'joint' bodies of LPYS, NOLS and Trade Union Youth Sections, including the right to elect an NEC member. The YS age limit will be reduced from 26 to 21.

Both the style and the content of Kinnock's 'reforms' attack the

YS just where it is at its weakest. Militant always ignored youth culture. Their response to the Red Wedge tour ranged from half-hearted to hostile. Traditional YS conferences - modelled on their adult counterparts - are never very edifying for the new, youth fighters the YS should be recruiting. And Militant, who turn every conference they lay their hands on into a rally, are not on strong grounds to protest if the NEC turns the tables.

Nevertheless the NEC proposals must be fought. Not just at the Labour Party Conference, where block votes wielded by Tom Sawyer's NUPE alone are probably enough to clinch victory for Kinnock, but afterwards.

The YS must refuse to comply with the new regulations. It must continue to admit to membership those up to 26. Until it itself de-

cides a new age limit, it must preserve the structures of workers' democracy in the YS, even if they have gathered dust under Militant stewardship. But it must do more. Last year's turgid and small YS conference and now the Kinnockite attacks prove that the YS must either transform itself or die. This is a job for youth themselves - to do in their own way, in their own time.

Faced with defeat at the Party Conference, the YS National Committee must not be allowed to make big protests then 'duck and cover'. It must call an Emergency YS Conference to organise defiance of Kinnock's measures. And if, as it has done twice before, Labour moves to close down the YS, we must not flinch from a fight to keep the YS in existence and build it into an independent revolutionary Youth Movement.■

workers power

TUC MUST ACT WORKERS SANCTIONS NOW

P.W. BOTHA SENT Geoffrey Howe back to Britain with a flea in his ear. The Commonwealth leaders turned up in London ready to 'leave the Commonwealth' if Thatcher refused to take meaningful action. They went away with 'unity' preserved around largely meaningless gestures.

These events sum up Botha's contempt for the huffing and puffing of 'democrats' and 'world leaders' and their endless reserves of hot air. Four months after the new State of Emergency, with 12,000 political prisoners rotting in apartheid's jails, the question remains: who will take effective action against apartheid?

Thatcher and Reagan's number one aim is to preserve Britain's and the USA's vast investments and profitable trade. The UK has some 40% of all overseas investment in South Africa, the US nearly 30% and West Germany 10%. British linked companies employ 7.5% of the South African workforce. But it is not this economic interest alone which makes the US and British ruling classes close allies of the Botha regime. In fact, since 1982 profits in non-mining investments have slumped considerably. Many British firms have cut their involvement.

Thatcher and Reagan know that apartheid South Africa is a political and military bulwark of reaction in southern Africa as a whole, capable of smashing any anti-imperialist moves that the surrounding states may consider making. Any revolutionary overthrow of Botha would be a catastrophe for imperialism. Sanctions would destabilise him, narrow his options and make his overthrow easier. Hence, no sanctions.

RHETORIC

What about those countries which have implemented sanctions? Much is made of their 'heroism', but behind the rhetoric and the limited actions stands the self-interest of the bosses of competing nations. Whatever Rajiv Gandhi says, he has no intention of ending India's trade in rough diamonds with South Africa, which employs half a million in India. Canada's and Australia's call for blocking South Africa's coal, steel and agricultural goods squares nicely

with the fact that they are major competitors of the apartheid state in these markets. Denmark which has imposed a total trade embargo has relatively little trade with South Africa.

No matter how principled these country's actions look compared to Thatcher they will not be decisive. Only action that cuts apartheid's lifelines, trade and investment with Britain, America, Japan, and West Germany, will help the South African masses bring their day of freedom nearer.

In Britain, only the labour movement has the interest and the power to implement really effective sanctions.

It is in our interest to aid the black masses of South Africa because victory for them will strengthen the confidence of the working class all over the world. Since it would be a powerful defeat for apartheid's allies, Botha's downfall would massively weaken the confidence of the British ruling class.

TRADE

We also have a major responsibility. Although South Africa's trade with the UK does not amount to a great deal for Britain, it does for South Africa. In 1985, Britain was the third largest market for its fruit and vegetables. The UK is also the third largest supplier of manufactured goods to the racist state.

In addition to the interest and the responsibility our class also has the power to strike a major blow at apartheid. Most South African trade goes through Southampton, Liverpool and Heathrow. Boycotting this trade and preventing it being diverted to other ports is a realistic form of action.

The press, and in particular the BBC, is waging a campaign to spread the lies that 'sanctions cannot be monitored', or that there is always a way round them. If they are carried out and checked by £20,000 a year civil servants this may well be true. But if workers themselves make sure the goods are stopped, then the bosses' attempts to break a blockade can be checked.

The TUC has been pathetically complacent. Vigils outside the Commonwealth conference! Full page adverts in the financial papers and the Daily Telegraph (or rather Torygraph) to persuade the bosses that investing in South Africa is unprofitable! They prefer pleading to the bosses to organising

their members to impose sanctions against the racist state.

The one form of action they do endorse is the consumer boycott. However well intentioned consumers are, they cannot ever be as effective as organised workers. Twenty cashiers and fifty shelf stackers with union backing can achieve in days what it would take thousands of leaflets and months of persuasion of the amorphous mass of consumers to achieve.

Whatever the bureaucrats say about the 'backwardness of the membership', and whatever echoes this might find in the 'socialist' theorists of the 'downturn' (such as the SWP) there is a will to take action against apartheid.

The Dunnes Stores strikers' battle started as an initiative of the rank and file. TGWU dockers in Southampton, backed by the NUS blocked the export of military machinery to South Africa. Portsmouth health workers fought to boycott goods in their central stores. Thirty six unions are affiliated to the Anti-Apartheid Movement. Yet even the best union policies only agree to back workers action once it is taken.

We desperately need a campaign for workers sanctions. That campaign has two tasks. To show the TUC and the AAM that there is a willingness by workers to take direct action and to call on them to spend less time and money trying to persuade Thatcher to take sanctions, and instead spend more time educating and preparing the union membership for workers' sanctions. At the moment only the NUR, NALGO and ACTT have officially backed Anti-Apartheid committees. We need many more.

On top of this a workers' sanctions campaign needs to promote and organise action now, where it can be delivered, without waiting for the TUC to get off its backside.

ACTION

A strategy for workers sanctions has to take account of the following:

- * We must counter the argument that sanctions cost jobs. Only if we let the bosses lay us off will this happen. In fact leaving sanctions in the hands of 'sympathetic' bosses and politicians is the sure way of letting them endanger jobs through sanctions.
- * We must fight for a boycott



photo - Bernie Malone

BUSMEN BACK LOBBY

LONDON BUSMEN are to lobby the TUC to demand trade union sanctions against apartheid. The busmen's banner and campaign bus go to Brighton on 1 September to join trade unionists from all over the country who will be lobbying the TUC.

Terry Allen, TGWU London Bus Section District Secretary, said:

"We are proud that our union is in the forefront of the campaign against the apartheid South African state. The battle in South Africa is a class question, and it is the decision of our delegate conference to attend the lobby as a presence in solidarity with South African trade unionists . . .

If British trade unionists don't understand what is happening in South Africa, they would do well to consider what it must be like in that apartheid state for trade unionists to have their leaders incarcerated.

South African trade unionists are asking us to support sanctions against apartheid and demand the release of their leaders. Workers in Britain act very firmly when their organisations are under attack and now must support South African workers."

The chairman of the TGWU London Bus Section, Peter Gibson, will speak officially at the meeting following the lobby.

WORKERS' SANCTIONS AGAINST APARTHEID

FRINGE MEETING
TUC CONGRESS

4 September - 7.30 pm
The Royal Albion Hotel
Old Styne, Brighton

"WORKERS SANCTIONS
AGAINST APARTHEID"

(Sponsored by Lambeth TC)

Speakers include David Kitson (TASS) (20 years in apartheid jails)

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lobby of TUC General Council in July

photo - Bernie Malone