

workers power

30p/10p strikers

monthly paper of the Workers Power group

INSIDE

the
LPYS marxism & Militant

UNION LEADERS RETREAT ORGANISE TO STOP THEM!

HAVING SEEN UNIONISATION drop below 50% of the workforce the trade union chiefs are getting worried. They have taken to whining about how the bosses have moved the goal posts by getting tough and even, horrors of horrors, "militant".

They are nursing their wounds after the drubbing they received at the hands of an enemy that they never really wanted to resist, let alone beat. Their only hope was that the Tories and the millionaires would treat them civilly and occasionally hold talks with them. Did they not offer up the NUM for defeat on MacGregor's terms and only get sandwiches from Thatcher in exchange? Is there no gratitude in this world? Is there no recognition for services rendered?

Most of the union leaders put their present sorry fortunes down to their low standing in the eyes of 'public opinion'. What nonsense. The declining size and bargaining

strength of the major unions is due to the fact that their leaders have not been prepared to stand up and fight. As sections of workers have been cowed and intimidated by the bosses and by the threat of the dole queue, the union tops have sat on their hands. When workers have fought back the leaders have moved into action only in order to contain and control struggles.

In order to restore their public image the ranks of trade union officialdom are taking further steps to clamp down on any action the members might take to resist the bosses' attacks. Brenda Dean sees the battle against Murdoch as a battle to win the public sympathy for the printers. Hence her hostility to the effective picketing and solidarity action that could stop Murdoch. As she told the Communist Party's right wing rag *Marxism Today*,

"On picketing, one night of

violent picketing on the television can undo weeks and weeks of really hard work in trying to get our message across."

She and her kind would prefer to get a big hand for the gallant loser than shape up for a real fight.

In line with this thinking the TUC employment committee have just circulated new guidelines on picketing which stab militant workers in the back. They now explicitly rule out pickets that aim "to blockade a workplace". And they oppose big solidarity demonstrations that might be seen by the police - by Thatcher's scabs in blue - as "intimidation towards those who wish to enter". The union bureaucrats winge and moan at the bosses' militancy. But they spit blood at the militancy of workers trying to make their strikes effective.

The Tory anti-union laws render effective trade unionism illegal. The current sequestrations of the print unions prove that once again. Yet another sign of the right wing stampede is to be found in the TUC's current discussion on trade union laws. The majority of trade union leaders are lining up behind Kinnock and Prescott in pushing for a legally enforceable Bill of trade union rights to be overseen by a new Labour or Industrial relations court modelled on the Irish example.

RETREAT

This represents yet another major retreat even on the 1985 conference policy of non-cooperation with current laws. It puts off the question of challenging the laws to that distant day when Kinnock might come to power.

It also means the majority of trade union leaders are more than prepared to drop demands for trade union legal immunities in order to ease Kinnock's path to office. Quite rightly the workers' movement has always fought for the trade unions to be free of legal shackles and from judicial interference. The sequestered funds of the NUM tell us why. Despite formally apologising to the court the union has still not got its money back! The anti-union rulings of the courts underline the fact that British justice is ruling class justice.

Now Kinnock and Willis want every aspect of trade unionism to operate within prescribed legal terms. Workers will have the right to strike and not to strike. They will be entitled to join a union, and not to join. Special courts will arbitrate over whether those rights have been legitimately



Rank and file must rebuild mass resistance

Andrew Wiard (Report)

used and agreed procedures stuck to. The independence of the trade unions to fight and organise as necessary to advance workers' interests would be sacrificed to the rulings of a Labour court.

Faced with the hard-nosed far right (Hammond) and the right-moving centre (Willis, Edmonds, Dean), the traditional left has become increasingly marginalised. Its silence is deafening. The recent Liaison Committee conference was poorly attended. No action was forthcoming from its desultory deliberations. Tocher's campaign against Jordan in the AUEW contains no commitment to organise and lead struggles in the key questions facing engineers. It is Jordan who is on the offensive in the campaign hustings.

PRISONER

In the highest reaches of the trade union bureaucracy only Arthur Scargill disturbed the TUC's recent consultative committee conference on union laws by declaring that "Industrial relations would be better described as class relations." He also used the Liaison Committee Conference to attack those who favoured building broad support campaigns as against organising industrial action. Yet Scargill himself remains a prisoner within the bureaucracy. His left speech at

the LCDTU provoked a pavement caucus of Jack Taylor, George Bolton and others in the NUM, who are hell-bent on steering the union away from a militant course. Scargill's fatal weakness is that he will not break ranks with these elements openly and organise the rank and file against them.

The task of the day is to organise rank and file militants in every union. Every struggle that erupts needs to be taken up and supported by militants within and across the unions. This way solid rank and file links can be established, and the isolation of militants that the bureaucrats prey on can be broken down.

The basis could be laid for rank and file movements in each union, and for a national rank and file movement, committed to a class struggle, anti-bureaucratic programme.

A start can be made by ensuring that every union branch and conference rejects all legal shackles on the unions, and commits itself to breaking the Tory laws when necessary and backing all workers who do so with industrial action to destroy those laws. The only alternative to the growth of scab unionism is one that offers workers a lead in fighting to defend their jobs and living standards. The TUC leaders' doctrine of retreat can only strengthen the hands of Hammond, Jordan and the UDM. ■

FIGHT SCAB UNIONISM

ERIC HAMMOND AND his cronies boast that what the EETPU does today other trade union leaders will be doing tomorrow. This is no empty bragging on Hammond's part.

The EETPU leaders have good reason for being smug at the moment. They should have been flung out of the TUC long ago. Their better members - in Fleet Street in particular - could have done with just that act of support from the TUC to aid them in rallying members against Hammond.

Instead Hammond can survey a scene of official retreat and capitulation which he can rightfully claim to have been the architect of. Neil Kinnock is now a firm and loyal convert to Japanese Industrial Relations (i.e. company unionism). It is Hammond's crew that have pioneered this company unionism in Britain, the no-strike class collaboration trade unionism that Kinnock thinks contains sufficient worker docility and productive innovation to woo the bosses with.

The TUC's miserable failure to fight Hammond has made the right in the trade union bureaucracy all the more brazen. Witch-hunter general, John Golding has now taken over the NCU. Jordan's present campaign for the presidency of the AUEW has none of the mealy-mouthed dissembling that has become the property of the left in the unions. He openly courts fusion with the EETPU and sings songs of praise to their scab methods. He misses no opportunity to scoff at the failure of the heroic militancy of the miners

and their wives to secure victory, ignoring the fact that it was the treachery of the bureaucracy that led to the defeat. This man shared vice-chairmanship of the extreme right-wing Mainstream group with the UDM's Prendergast. If he wins the presidency it will strengthen the hand of the hard right even further.

Hammond and Jordan are advocates of what they call 'market unionism'. Put bluntly this means that the officials sell their services to the bosses through single union deals and no-strike procedural agreements. And they sell their services to their members too. By services to the members the EETPU now means cheap car insurance and stock market advice. Collective organisation and strength to defend wages and jobs is, they argue, a thing of the past. By selling their new wares they guarantee the salaries of themselves and other officials in the 'union business'.

The fashion is catching on elsewhere. The print unions have just signed a deal with the *Financial Times* that guarantees the bosses against any disruption of production. Vauxhall has secured a similar deal which allows it to replace striking workers with scabs with full union backing.

Militants must organise to do battle with all of these moves by the rampant new right. Failure to resist them now will mean that the cancer of company unionism and de-unionisation will spread.

* Expel the EETPU from the TUC!

* No single union/no-strike deals!

THE 'CRUSADE' LAUNCHED by Neil Kinnock at last year's Labour Party Conference - not against the Tories but against the left within the Party is still sweeping all before it.

The overwhelming defeat of anti-witch-hunt resolutions at the North-West, East Midlands and London Labour Party Regional conferences shows that the New Right have won control of the Party in all but a dwindling number of traditional inner-city bastions of the left.

These votes show that the great majority of union officials - at national and area level are welding together a very large New Right majority within the Labour movement around Willis and Kinnock. Between them they are drawing up a "new realist" electoral manifesto for Labour with no reference to conference decisions or policies. Larry Whitty has been assuring businessmen that "Labour is indeed the party of production". Roy Hattersley has been hymning the virtues of "high profits" and assuring the bosses that he puts the fight against inflation at the top of

his agenda. One million of the unemployed are to be promised a job "within three years". The other three million will have to wait till the 1990s! In return for this largesse Kinnock and Co promise wage-restraint. True they haven't yet found the brand new phrase to replace 'incomes policy', 'social contract' or 'national assessment' that some union leaders are still holding out for. But given time the unstoppable verbal flow of Neil Kinnock is sure to yield a suitably slithery specimen.

The Labour front bench had an orgy of patriotic indignation over Westland and British Leyland - only to be outdone by the Tory back benchers. Doubtless they think that baiting the Tories by accusing them of having unpatriotic

motives is a really smart move. Michael Foot thought that in 1982 over the Falklands. Labour soon found that Thatcher could play Britannia ruling the waves a good deal better than they could. Workers in industries threatened by "foreign" (US and Japanese) takeover will likewise wrap themselves in the Union Jack at their peril. It is not a harmless cloak of respectability. It is a straight jacket that will stop them struggling to save their jobs. Labour's spokesmen have prioritised "continued British ownership" over defence of jobs and the nationalised industries.

Gerald Kaufman is currently trying to steal the Tories' clothes on the "crime wave" and law and order issue. Again Thatcher and

Hurd will outbid him in terms of more police, more prisons, more draconian legislation. Instead of blaming crime on a society where millions rot on the dole and millions more are on subsistence wages, Official Labour spokesmen are distancing themselves from protests at the thuggery and racism of the police.

The whole logic of this scramble is to turn Labour's 'programme' into a colourless duplicate of David Owen's "social market economy" or Michael Heseltine's "caring capitalism". The Labour leaders are attempting to win back the benevolence of the bosses and their media by assuring them that Labour will not deprive them of any of the spoils they have won in their victories over the

working class under Thatcher. Don't worry, they say, we will leave you an army of unemployed at your factory gates to intimidate your wage slaves with. Never fear your ill-gotten gains from privatisation are safe and we won't seriously increase taxation on your profits or increase welfare spending at your expense. As for the main fetters on the unions we will persuade the union leaders to agree to new ones just as effective.

Kinnock and Hattersley's maximum strategy is to scrape a majority on this anti-working class platform. However, should they end up on the day after the election with no overall majority they need the way clear to do a deal with the Alliance. That is why they need to cow the left in the Party. That is why they attacked first Scargill and the miners, attempting to discredit militant trade union tactics, and then stabbed Liverpool in the back in its resistance to the Tories. ■

LABOUR PARTY WITCH HUNT

THE WITCH-HUNT exists to terrorise and marginalise the left - to keep up the process of "re-alignment" i.e. desertion to the right. Livingstone, Blunkett, Meacher and most of the left MPs have carefully re-aligned themselves, 'critically', behind Kinnock leaving Militant open to the blows of the Party leadership.

The way this 'critical Kinnockite' fake left operates can be seen in the pages of *Tribune* and *Labour Leader*. Peter Hain, vice-chair of the Labour Coordinating Committee nicely illustrates how things go in an article on nuclear power. What is Labour policy?

"A halt to the nuclear power programme and a phasing out of all nuclear plants".

What does Labour's energy spokesman John Cunningham say?

"The Labour Party has supported the development of civil nuclear power for decades. One conference decision won't change this and I don't expect it to be included in the next manifesto."

What does Peter Hain say about this?

"We all accept that phasing out existing plants cannot be done overnight... But simply to repudiate the whole basis of Party policy in such an arrogant manner leaves no time for such give and take."

It's pretty clear who is giving and who is taking. Hain's 'left criticism' is just that these arrogant Kinnockites won't give a fellow the space or time to realign with dignity.

Moving from Kinnock's deceitful accomplices to his victims we find a serious split has opened up. Militant reply to the threat of the expulsion of twelve of their leaders in Liverpool by restricting themselves to noisy pickets in Walworth Road and resolution passing in the wards, GCs district and regional committees and conferences. They are not willing to launch a real united front resistance embracing the whole left to resist the witch-hunt. Dominated by a pathological fear that dogged mass resistance might lead to mass expulsions or outright proscription for anyone selling their publications they are effectively agreeing - under protest - to sacrifice the Liverpool twelve, as they did their editorial board. Militant cover this with rhetoric about the inevitable advance of Marxism but in fact they are in retreat. If they yield Liverpool to the right over the next few

The Left and the Purge

months they will find Kinnock coming for the LPYS and for the parliamentary seats of Dave Nellist and Terry Fields before the next election.

Even now the right are going for Militant members in every constituency and district they control. They are establishing precedents that seriously undermine the democratic rights of the whole left. They are letting the overwhelmingly right wing PLP off the last threads of the control that the democratic reforms of the early 1980s put them under.

The situation on what used to be called the far left of the Party is no better. Here too there is indecision, retreat and clear signs of 're-alignment'. The Labour Left Coordination, the Campaign for Labour Democracy and the Campaign Group of Labour MPs have been unable to do much beyond publish a newsletter tabulating the attacks of the right.

BILLS & BENN

Tony Benn and the Campaign Group of MPs, only 16 of whom seem to act consistently together, are trying to organise a federation of local groups based on an 'Aims and Objectives' similar to that Benn has sponsored in the Chesterfield Party. With the loss of *Tribune* the Campaign Group has no weekly organ and various papers are (or have been) competing to offer their services - *Labour Herald*, *Socialist Action*, *Labour Briefing* and *Socialist Organiser* have either offered their own papers or some form of 'Alliance' or 'Campaign'.

Tony Benn and friends are obviously very wary of any conflict with Kinnock and co. Instead of

resolutely campaigning for resistance to the witch-hunt they are satisfied with voting against it and denouncing it in occasional letters, articles or press releases. Benn himself counsels a 'turn the other cheek' policy to combat the right's onslaught:

"The fact that the left did not respond personally in counter-attack was very wise. It was very important that these events - the vacuum in policy, the witch-hunting of the left - should be allowed to be conducted without the normal press comment that this was really the left attacking the right. It was manifestly seen to be the right attacking the left."

Benn falsely characterises the policy situation as a vacuum. Rather than wake up to the fact that Kinnock has demolished most of the "left policies" gained between 1979-81 and replaced them with new realism. He believes that the Campaign Group should occupy the time from now to the next election by drawing up "socialist bills" which they will either introduce into the House of Commons as Private Members Bills now or forlornly offer to the PLP after the next election. To start with the Bill rather than to start with mobilising workers to fight for the object of it is an exercise in futility. Worse it is an exercise in diversion. ■

by Dave Stocking



Witch-finder general

FIGHTING BACK

THE BURNING ISSUE is how to fight the witch-hunt going on across the country. A national struggle must be waged both in the Labour Party and, crucially in the trade unions.

Workers Power supporters in Vauxhall, London, argued successfully for their GC to fight for a national anti-witch-hunt conference. Similar resolutions have been passed in Hackney North and Hackney South CLPs and representatives from those constituencies plus the Witch-hunt News Sub Committee of Labour Left Coordination are organising a conference to be held in June. Better late than never!

Such a conference however cannot be limited to delegates from left constituencies which are opposed to the purge. Unlike the earlier expulsions of the Militant editorial board it is not simply NEC dictates we are fighting against. Now the bulk of the expulsions are occurring in right-wing CLPs - any fightback must unite left opposition groups from such areas with the hundred or so CLPs who have resolved to oppose the expulsions. In addition representatives from the Black Sections, LPYS, Women's Action Committee and other groups should attend the conference.

KEY

But it is trade union support which is the key to the success of this fight. When expelled members appeal to national conference it will be the bureaucrats' block votes which will decide their fate. And these friends of Kinnock are not satisfied seeing Militant kicked out of the Labour Party - moves against left wing activists in the unions are also beginning. Rank and file trade unionists need to organise against the witch-hunts, join up with Labour Party activists and attend the conference. As part of a struggle to take control of the union block

vote at conference it should really undermine the strength of the right.

Such a conference should do everything humanly possible to involve the first and main victims of the purge - Militant. This will be difficult given the latter's factional attitude to their own defence but it should be attempted. An offensive for a united front needs to be launched on Militant.

DEFIANCE

A central question facing those opposed to the witch-hunt is that of defiance. Most of the forces in the LLC plus Militant themselves prefer to shy away from this problem, hoping it will go away. But where NEC expulsions are ordered local parties must refuse to carry them through, and where the Walworth Road heavies threaten to disaffiliate local parties and set up stooge bodies with sanitised candidates, the left must say in advance that it will not recognise these candidates or bodies. The parties should continue to operate and stand against official, Kinnock-backed candidates.

We should also ask the Campaign Group MPs and the left union leaders to launch a campaign at least as vigorous as Tony Benn's deputy leadership campaign was. Meetings at every union conference to support resolutions against the witch-hunt committing the unions' Labour Party Conference delegation must be organised. This is one reason why *Workers' Power* believes that prominent left leaders such as Tony Benn and Dennis Skinner should stand against Kinnock and thus force the issue before the union membership. Would the publicity be bad for Labour poll ratings? Undoubtedly, but Neil Kinnock could resolve that by abandoning the witch-hunt immediately.

Yet even if the left leaders will not fight Kinnock for the

leadership, and Benn is absolutely clear he will not, then maximum pressure must be put on them to campaign against all the expulsions and for a conference resolution calling the NEC and the Party leader to heel, and blocking the attack on Militant and the left in general. The policies we must fight for on this issue must be:

- * Opposition to all witch-hunts. No expulsions. A clear reaffirmation that there is no proscribed list, and a refusal to recognise the NEC's phoney registration of papers and groups in the party. For the right of all socialists to remain in the Labour Party.
- * Restoration to Party membership of those already expelled.
- * Right of organised political tendencies to affiliate to the Party.
- * Right of all oppressed groups to caucus and be represented in leading bodies at local and national level.

CONFERENCE

If the witch-hunt is a vital and pressing issue facing the left others are also crucial in the period up to conference. The left should fight together for resolutions to block Kinnock's attempts to base Labour's election on incomes policy and the scuttling of all progressive conference decisions. It should also fight to pledge the Party to opposition in principle to any coalition with the bosses' parties - pre- or post- election. Lastly the left needs to unite now at all levels to force the maximum support for the printers, the Liverpool and Lambeth councils and for all sections of our movement in struggle against the Tories. Involvement in struggle will strengthen the left against the right and offset the blighting influence of Kinnockite parliamentary (and opinion poll) cretinism. ■

by Helen Ward (Vauxhall CLP)



Kinnock targets the left

LABOUR LEFT'S ECONOMIC MUDDLE

by Paul Mason and Keith Hassell

TODAY'S LABOUR LEFT, in common with all its predecessors, is incapable of drawing-up its own coherent programme. On its right, Kinnock and Hattersley's 'Jobs and Industry Campaign' draws its coherence from being 100% committed to maintaining capitalist exploitation.

On its left, the revolutionary programme of workers control, planned production according to need, expropriation of the means of production draws its coherence from being 100% committed to overthrowing capitalism. Stuck in the middle, pressurised on the one hand by the 'realism' demanded by electoral politics and on the other by the aspirations of millions of workers is the Labour left with its muddled 'alternatives'.

With every month that has passed since the defeat of the miners' strike, Kinnock and Hattersley have taken the opportunity to narrow the goals and sharpen the pro-capitalist emphasis of Labour's economic programme. For Kinnock, giving workers jobs, raising and protecting the real value of their wages is not a guiding principle.

His only principle is doing what the financial magnates, the stockbrokers and CBI will allow him to do and enlisting the labour movement's support for this. The leadership's latest insult to the unemployed is to announce that a Labour government can only manage to create one million jobs in three years and then only if there is some form of wage control!

CONVERSION

At last October's Party Conference the scale of Kinnock's conversion was summed up in the phrase "... we must be the Party of production". It is possible to imagine the advice that the banks and the boardrooms have given a thousand times to Kinnock:

"It is possible for you to borrow more money and raise more taxes. With this you could inject demand into the economy to try and create new jobs. But it will only lead to renewed inflation because we will not satisfy this demand by increasing output. Prices will rise because of bottle-necks in supply."

To increase investment and raise output - to expand production - the capitalists will have to be convinced that it can be done profitably. Kinnock has not yet convinced them that the Labour Party can lower wage costs drastically and so create the conditions for profitable production. But he is working on it.

For now his policy is a mixture of mindless exhortation - "Britain has made it, Britain can make it, Britain will make it" - a desire to match Japanese production techniques and a determination to attract investment funds back from abroad by ensuring that:

"the return paid on those funds is equal to what they can earn elsewhere."

In short, raise the level of exploitation of British workers, boost profits and hope that this nibbles at the edges of the dole queue.

BRAZEN

This is nothing more than a repetition of the policies of Wilson, Callaghan and Healey in the last two Labour Governments, suitably modified to take account of the fact that there is less room for radical improvement than before. It is also more brazen about its limitations on account of the lowered horizons produced by Thatcherite victories.

In this context it is not difficult to understand the popularity of Andrew Glyn's recent pamphlet *A Million Jobs A Year* (Verso

1985). Benn and the Campaign Group of MPs have tentatively put their names to it. *Militant* has endorsed it (Glyn himself is a *Militant* supporter). Phil Hearse of the International Group greeted it as no less than "the socialist answer to the NEC". Socialist Action's Alan Freeman greeted it as "the most important popular pamphlet on economic policies... for many years".

Glyn intended this pamphlet to be a radical break with the old Bennite/stalinist Alternative Economic Strategy (AES - import controls, nationalisation and voluntary 'planning agreements'), but he has produced a document that has more in common with the AES than with revolutionary Marxism. In the process he reveals the reformist content of the 'revolutionary' slogans of *Militant* itself.

Glyn argues that getting rid of mass unemployment is the key task of the next Labour Government. A massive programme of house-building, social services, NHS spending and the rebuilding of industry involving an extra £15 billion in government spending over 5 years could create a million jobs a year.

A number of commentators have rightly pointed out that this is little more than the strategy of state investment and intervention pioneered in the 1930s by the liberal economist Keynes. It was a strategy abandoned by Labour in the Wilson/Callaghan years in favour of a 'deflationary' policy which limited state borrowing and therefore state investment.

Before we look at the fundamental problems of Glyn's world it is worth bringing out the flaws in his policies which result from his departure from the traditional *Militant* nostrums - weak even as these are.

First of all Glyn openly espouses import controls as a short term measure for a Labour Government. For the long term there are fine phrases about "new patterns of trade based on the mutual benefit of the economies concerned". But import controls carried out under capitalism - even under a Labour Government which created a million jobs a year - are nothing more than economic nationalism.

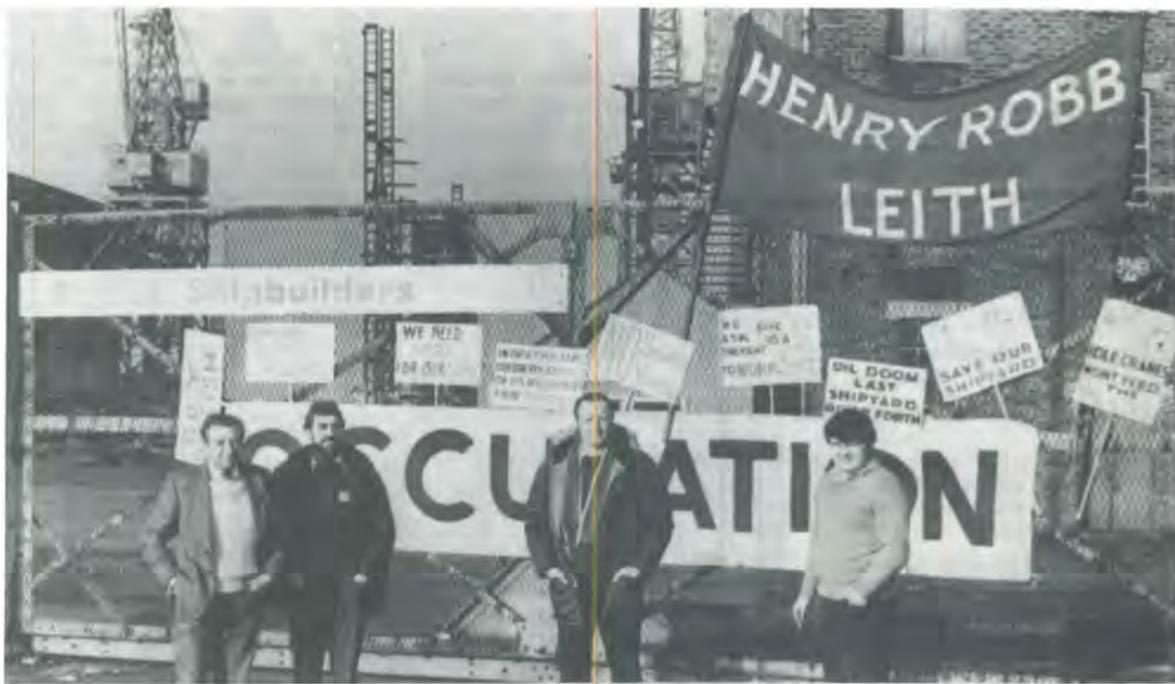
Import controls export unemployment to workers abroad, they do not fundamentally solve it. Glyn's arguments call to mind those of the Stalinists who *Militant* so vigorously disagree with over the AES. Of course under a workers' state, in a planned economy, all foreign trade is subject to state control. But so are wages and all aspects of the economy.

In the workers' state the economy is being planned to meet the needs of all workers. Under capitalism, however controls on trade and wages are aimed at securing maximum profits at the expense of all workers. Import controls, like wage controls, under capitalism can only harm the interests of the working class.

The second point where Glyn



Laurie Sparham (IFL)



Defending jobs now is the key to fighting unemployment

departs from *Militant* is on the question of nationalisation itself. Having posed the question, he answers it in an unconvincing and equivocal series of formulations. Dealing with the major financial institutions he argues:

"Taking them into public ownership seems indispensable if a Labour Government is to prevent financial crisis and be enabled to use the credit system as part of planning for full employment."

This hardly rings with the strident tones of *Militant*'s "socialist policy" regarding the banks. And what of the two little words "without compensation" which we, along with Trotsky and previously *Militant*, have regarded as the crucial difference between state capitalist nationalisation and expropriation? It is hardly a small point but Glyn says not one word about no compensation for the banks.

The decisive weaknesses in Glyn's pamphlet concern the methods he advances to circumvent the sabotage by the bosses of the parliamentary reform programme. Precisely because the employers have not yet succeeded in crushing trade unionism to the point where they can re-invest without a wages explosion, they cannot afford a government committed to anything but the mildest expansion. Faced with any such government they would use all their economic and political power to engineer an about-turn.

Glyn is not blind to this. Indeed in a chapter headed 'Problems - and how to control them' he deals with the main ones.

"The broad nature of these problems are clear enough - flights of capital, problems of financing increased government expenditure, inflation, controlling trade, ensuring adequate investment."

To prevent increased demand leading to increased prices, Glyn calls for price controls. To prevent it sucking in a flood of cheap imports he advocates import controls. To prevent the financiers taking their money elsewhere he advocates exchange controls. To ensure that the banks don't go on an 'investment strike' he recommends that they should be obliged by law to lend to a future Labour government. In addition he recommends a drastic attack on the income of the rich via taxation.

For those who label him as Keynesian he replies:

"A Keynesian expansion is one which is not accompanied by such controls at the level of industry and the economy which are necessary to ensure success."

It is true that the 'controls' he advocates would, if carried through vigorously, represent a major curb on the power of capital. He also demonstrates in each case how

the implementation of such controls would bring a Labour Government face to face with the question of nationalisation.

"The crucial question then is whether the solutions advocated below are consistent with private ownership of the major financial and industrial companies."

But the basic weakness of the pamphlet is this. Long before Labour had posed the question of 'private ownership or not' by challenging the bosses' economic power, their political power, which lies outside parliament in the army, police, judiciary and in civil servants like the Governor of the Bank of England, would be used.

Dealing with the question of capitalists taking their money out of the country before an election (no doubt accompanied by dire warnings in the press against Labour, massive price rises, etc) Glyn advocates that labour should "go on the offensive" and make it an election issue.

This squares very well with the official politics of *Militant* who argue that a peaceful transition to socialism is possible provided a Labour Government is backed up by 'mass mobilisations'. Unfortunately it does not square very well with reality. The question of what Labour would do if the capitalist state machine was mobilised against a serious attempt to implement these controls is never answered.

ALTERNATIVE

As a socialist alternative to Kinnock it is simultaneously not far reaching enough and too drastic. It is not radical enough to meet the immediate and burning needs of working people. Glyn has designed his package so as to stay within the bounds of left reformist 'realism' and parliamentarianism. Yet if mass unemployment is really such a priority then why not spend an extra £15 billion in one year and create a million jobs every three months?

Most of the unemployed resources are there. If £5 billion can be found to beat the miners, £11 billion for Trident, what's the problem? A *Million Jobs A Year* is not likely to be a ringing slogan for those at the end of the queue - black youth, unemployed married women, the over-45's. In this sense, then, the programme is not really one capable of mobilising the mass of people for its implementation against capitalist opposition.

This leads to its other weakness, namely, that it is far too drastic for the bosses to stomach without provoking a major backlash from their state machines. Yet Glyn has no political answers to this eventuality.

The truth of the matter is that Glyn's approach is upside

down. If this programme were the official policy of Labour then Kinnock and Hattersley would have to be forced to implement it by the rank and file. The task of revolutionaries would be to mobilise the forces to overcome the sabotage it would meet and press on to overthrow capitalist private property itself.

But this is not the situation. The pamphlet reflects the marginalisation of left reformism and as such is little more than propaganda that revolutionaries should not endorse as the programme needed by the labour movement today.

There is an alternative approach in the here and now. The fight to create a million jobs starts with the defence of every existing job. In every struggle against closures and redundancies it is for workers in the factories and offices to use their collective strength to impose demands such as work-sharing with no loss of pay, workers' control over all aspects of the production process - control over hiring and firing, over the intensity of work. These measures begin to establish, from below, dual power in the economy, begin to challenge the rule of private property and profit. They prepare and mobilise the working class for a political confrontation with the capitalist state.

In the last analysis it is not even a question of one or two million jobs a year. A workers' government - based on and accountable to the independent organisations of the working class - would seek to draw up and implement a massive programme of public works. Only working people know what is needed in terms of bricks and mortar and basic goods to begin repairing the fabric of working class life that has been shredded by Thatcher.

Glyn's pamphlet falls far short of being the action programme to meet working class needs and mobilise working class struggle. As such its ideas need to be countered, not encouraged. The centrists who have hailed it are confessing to the bankruptcy of their own politics.

Of course it is not excluded that a decisive challenge to capitalist state power may begin with the growth of action councils set up to defend and enforce the reform programme of a left Labour government and in the process go way beyond it. But even if this were to happen one thing is clear. Only the organised might of the working class in non-parliamentary councils armed to defend their political power can break the will of the combined might of the City, Whitehall and Parliament. When the working class is politically the ruling class we can really look forward to the total eradication of unemployment. ■

UNIONS AGAINST APARTHEID

REPRESENTATIVES OF the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) from South Africa have been visiting Britain to gather support for 1,000 workers locked out by British Tyre and Rubber Company's subsidiary SARMCOL, in Howick, South Africa.

They have also been describing the formation of the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Charles Makabela, Executive member of MAWU and member of the Central Executive Committee of COSATU, spoke to us while he was in the West Midlands, addressing meetings of trade unionists which were organised through the South African Solidarity Committees of Coventry and Birmingham Trades Councils.

WP. Can you tell us about the growth of the trade union movement in South Africa?

Our union, the Metal Workers, was started in 1973/4 after strikes in the Pietermaritzburg area. Because of the history of South Africa, it had been difficult to build unions, especially because until 1976 it was illegal for black workers to join. There have been many attempts to form federations and industrial unions but these have been crushed by the government and employers.

After struggling to form our union we continued illegally until 1976, when a law was passed allowing blacks to join trade unions, although at first the unions had to register. After legalisation many trade unions were formed. By the end of 1979 there were more than 45 small unions with small memberships scattered round the country. We realized the dangers of this, how the weak trade unions would be easily crushed by the government and employers and decided to bring the small unions together in a broad federation based on industrial unions. We started discussions in August 1981.

WP. What problems were there in trying to form the federation?

It took a very long time to come to any agreement because of political differences created by the apartheid system. As you know, people are kept in different groupings. In each township there has to be separate areas for the races. We saw that the government can use one group against another and for that reason it has been difficult to get people of different races in the same factory in one

union. There has been a coloured union, a white union and so on and when the blacks were allowed to join unions, there were three different unions with different interests.

So we fought this problem, and managed to bring 33 unions together by the end of 1984 - and it was agreed at the last meeting of the unity talks in June to form one broad federation based on industrial unions. There were three main principles: one union for each industry, that the unions must be worker-controlled organisations, and non-racial organisations. We agreed to aim at just one federation in the country.

Then, after we had agreed on all this, the government declared a State of Emergency which forbade any organisation in the country to hold any meetings unless it made a special application and submitted an agenda. They say what we can talk about, who can talk, how many people can attend. It has been very difficult and we had to have 'in house' meetings in the matchbox size houses we live in. Sometimes one leader had 20 houses in a night to cover our members to discuss the federation. Leaflets and pamphlets had to be distributed at night. But eventually we founded COSATU.

WP. What did you mean by 'worker controlled' organisation?

At the moment we are building an organisation in the local areas which will allow the workers themselves to take any decision in their union. In all the committees of the union, from the shop floor right up to the National Executive, there is a policy that the majority on any committees must be workers. So if you've got a committee of 7, at least 4 must be workers, but it is likely that more will be. If we have to take a serious decision - like taking any action, strikes, stay-aways, consumer boycotts or other things which will affect the workers directly - we ask the officials to go out of

the room and we tell them what we've decided - how many want to go on strike, when and how.

So in that way we are trying to involve the workers in their own struggle as much as we can, to avoid our previous experience when a few leaders were detained, and that meant the end of the union.

WP. What is your opinion about the unions which decided to stay outside the federation?

The other federations, CUSA and the AZACTU, the black consciousness unions, are now rather small. They did not join us because we insisted on the principle of non-racialism. Our impression is that now most of the workers want to join COSATU. I want to make clear that our differences do not affect making joint, united front action which has happened and which we consider very important.

WP. What is COSATU's attitude to political questions, to the struggle against apartheid as a whole?

We have recognised that there can be no clear division between trade union questions and political ones. We have plans for a lot of campaigns which we are working on now. We are drafting a programme about where we are now and where we are going. But ob-

viously we can't discuss in detail or it would give the enemy a chance to plan ahead.

On the ANC Charles added: We agree with the ANC and think it is the organisation which will liberate South Africa.

WP. What about the threat of general strike action against the pass laws?

I can say something about the campaign against passes and around education. There's a possibility of a national stay-away by the end of this month to force the government to pay for equal black education, and to scrap the Bantu Education Act. There are a lot of plans for this year. We gave the regime till the end of June to scrap the pass laws - then they announced they were getting rid of them on 1st July! But we don't expect they will really get rid of them altogether.

WP. Can you tell us about the dispute which brings you to Britain?

Well, besides the general problems, each union has its own problems. One of these faces MAWU - the dispute with the multi-national British Tyre and Rubber Company (BTR), which has subsidiaries in South Africa and round the world. This was a company which we first organised in 1973/4 and because it was illegal for blacks to join the trade unions, the company refused recognition until the 1976 law. From 1976, they continued to refuse basic rights in their plant, and last year, the workers finally went on strike.

The day after the strike, all 1,000 workers who went on strike were sacked, not given a chance to collect their pay. The gates were locked. They had to go back to the hostels, as they are from different homelands. You probably know that according to the South African government all blacks are foreigners or so-called immigrant workers. If you want to qualify to live in any of the cities, you have to work for one employer for ten years, then you get to be a sort of citizen in that city. These workers were all immigrant workers. In other words, if they lose their jobs, they lose their accommodation and have to go home.

We tried to defend their accommodation but the company forced them to move out by cutting off the electricity and water. They were forced back to the Homelands where there are no means of employment, no means of leaving there, nothing to do except to sit at home the whole day. So the problem which faces our union now is to keep these workers and their families alive by supplying food. This has been difficult, as you know unions in South Africa haven't got money, what money comes in just about pays for legal cases and basic administration.

The big problem is to keep the workers together when they are scattered around in rural areas. To have meetings we have to collect them all and each meeting costs R5000-6000 (£2000), but we consider this is very important.

WP. Can companies break strikes easily by replacing workers?

In some townships, we can mobilize to prevent anyone taking on the jobs of strikers. But sometimes there is nothing we can do, because the companies just drive six hundred miles or so to the Homelands and recruit workers. Often these people have not had work for years, they have no land and are really starving.

In my own factory, Siemens in Johannesburg which is one of the biggest and best organised in South Africa, we were out for 2 weeks last year and we organised against the scabs, on the buses and so forth.

We don't like using intimidation but this is necessary otherwise we have no hope of winning. We held our strike solid and won all our demands. ■



Black trade unionists on the march against apartheid

MINERS STRIKE ROCKS SOUTH AFRICA

MASSIVE DEMONSTRATIONS AND strikes marked the anniversary of last year's Langa massacre. They graphically demonstrate the depth of the revolutionary crisis gripping South Africa. The savage brutality of the Apartheid regime has failed to stem the tide of defiance and militancy in the black townships.

The near total stay away strike that accompanied the anniversary and major battles in the mines show the revolutionary potential of the South African working class - black and coloured. Using its power to lead the onslaught against the racist state and paralyse its mines, its docks and its factories, it could decisively take forward the struggle to overthrow the regime.

REPRESSION

The struggles in the South African mines show that, despite the formal lifting of the State of Emergency, the South African bosses are continuing to defend their profits by the most bloody

repression. At the Blyvooruitzicht mine 30 miles west of Johannesburg, NUM organised workers struck against revised production bonuses. So as to prevent the use of scab labour they organised an underground sit-in which was attacked by the mineowners' security force.

Management attempted to weed out the union organisers by dismissing known militants and inviting the rest of the workforce to return to work.

VICTIMISATION

During the bosses' attempt to break the strike six miners were killed in clashes with the police and the mineowners' security force. 176 were injured in this battle against victimisation and increased exploitation.

Over the last month there have also been sporadic stoppages at the Vaal Reefs gold mine. The media have presented these as primarily inter-tribal conflicts between black workers. The NUM shaft stewards from the mine

paint a very different picture which shows the bloody lengths to which the mineowners will go to prevent the consolidation of the NUM in the mine. According to the stewards, management appointed team leaders are deliberately encouraging fights between Basotho and Xhosa so as to break the cohesion of the NUM's organisation in the mine.

WORKING CLASS TAKE THE LEAD

These local battles in a key industry show the intensification of the class struggle and the need for the workers to use their collective strength to destroy the regime in its entirety. The alternative is for the miners to be left at the mercy of individual mineowners, their armed security cops and the racist police force that backs them to the hilt.

The Langa anniversary showed the potential power of the black working class to finish off the Apartheid regime. Black workers stayed away completely from work

in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage. In an important positive development most of Uitenhage's Coloured workers also responded to the stay away call. What is now vital is that the militancy of the black workers is not channelled into occasional protest actions in support of the UDF political leadership and its initiatives, or left isolated and localised. The working class must take the lead in the struggle in South Africa with its own class weapons of the General Strike and workers' councils, and with its own class goals of struggling to destroy Apartheid and the capitalist system it defends.

The future of the South African revolution depends on winning black workers to that perspective. The power is there to realise it. South African capitalism can be ground to a halt by the power of the workers. The anger and desire to fight is there. Hence the urgency of building a revolutionary party amongst the most militant sections of workers that can lead that struggle to its successful conclusion. ■

by Dave Hughes

LPYS CONFERENCE

NOTHING TO LOSE - A WORLD TO WIN!

IN THATCHER'S WAR against the "enemy within" no group is attacked with greater ferocity than working class youth.

Cuts in dole money for students and school leavers and pitiful wages on YTS drive youth back into the family home. Cuts in recreation facilities and increased bus-fares leave youth on the streets with nothing to do and nothing to look forward to.

The Tories have helped right-wing bigots like Victoria Gillick in their attempts to restrict contraception facilities for young women. Press campaigns have whipped up hysteria about "teen-age sex". Gay youth have faced a vicious wave of harassment and persecution.

On the grounds of fighting "crime" and "drug abuse" the Tories have sent their police thugs, armed with revolvers and plastic bullets, into the black communities. Black youth have been at the sharp end of this police onslaught.

CONDEMNED

In Thatcher's Britain most youth are condemned to a life of poverty, boredom and real misery on the dole. One in four under the age of 24 is unemployed.

All the while the children of the rich are getting richer. Rarely do the police bust the little lords and ladies in Mayfair for their heroin or cocaine habits. But black youth in Handsworth and Tottenham were hassled by the police during their recent crackdown on the ganja trade.

As the crisis deepens the rich youth are flaunting their wealth more and more brazenly. Their champagne parties are lovingly reported in the Fleet Street rags. Their figurehead, the royal scrounger Andrew, gets a huge rise in pay simply because he's getting married. Yet the snoopers are round, working out ways to cut benefits to working class youth who live together or get married.

NEC ELECTION

THE ELECTION OF a delegate to the NEC is the only significant chance the YS conference gets to elect a leadership.

Workers Power wants to see a different leadership in the YS. We think Militant have the wrong politics and run the YS bureaucratically.

This year Kingsley Abrahams is standing for the NEC against Militant. He is supported by the Black Sections, the Labour Coordinating Committee, Socialist Action and NOLS. He is likely to get the biggest vote for any non-Militant candidate for years. But we do not advocate voting for him.

In the first place he is standing on a programme which is fundamentally no different from Militant. He calls for a "return to full employment based on a million jobs a year" (Black Sections Newsletter) and the nationalisation of the banks, etc. This is more or less Militant's programme on the economy.

Kingsley fights for demands which we would support against Militant: for fighting black sections, Britain out of Ireland, etc. But he does not claim to be a revolutionary. His programme is not a coherent revolutionary alternative to Militant.

This is why he has gained support not just from Socialist Action but from two witch-hunting organisations - the LCC and NOLS. Socialist Action's 'alliance for socialism' now seems to involve



Working class youth can fight Thatcher

But youth have fought back. There were no braver fighters in the miners' strike than the young miners and the young women who supported them. Last year 250,000 school students took part in strike action against YTS. Last year, as well, black youth took to the streets against the police invasion of their communities.

The response to these examples of resistance by the official leaders of the labour movement has been a disgrace. Kinnock and Hattersley condemned the inner city youth as a criminal minority. The young miners - fighting for the very existence of their communities - were attacked by the Labour leaders for breaking the law. So incensed was the Labour NEC by the school strikes that they passed a resolution denouncing them.

an anti-Militant alliance with the Kinnockites.

Black sections' supporters have argued that because Kingsley represents the Black Sections, and Black Sections are under attack, revolutionaries should support him whatever his programme. Criticising those who stood against him, the Black Sections Newsletter said:

"They refuse to recognise that solidarity with the oppressed means supporting those people whom groups like the Black Sections say represent them. For predominantly white groups not to do so is racist." (Spring '86)

We support the right of black people to organise in the Labour Party. We have fought for and supported the setting up of Black Sections wherever our supporters work in the Labour Party. Black Sections should be represented by right on the Labour Party NEC and on the National Committee of the LPYS.

We support the right of other oppressed groups to do the same. This includes youth themselves. It is up to youth themselves to decide who best represents their struggles, on the basis of programme.

In the elections various shades of centrism - Socialist Organiser, Red Youth - will also be standing. These groups represent no more of a revolutionary alternative to Militant than does Kingsley. To vote for them would mean voting for a centrist programme. Therefore, in these elections we cannot recommend a vote for any of the candidates. ■

Any number of appearances with Tracey Ullman or on The Tube will not hide the fact that Kinnock and co have done nothing for youth and promise them nothing. Little wonder that less than 17% of first time voters voted Labour in the last general election.

BUREAUCRATS

In the trade unions the picture is the same. Few have youth sections or youth subs rates. The TUC as a whole sits merrily with the government bureaucrats on the MSC - the modern day slave market. They have not only stood by while the Tories replaced real jobs and the apprentice system with cheap labour schemes: they have co-operated with them.

On the "left" anybody can be found to utter a few curses about YTS, unemployment and police harassment. But who will organise youth?

Not the Labour bureaucrats, who stand around in their suits and ties at the YS conference to make sure no one breaks the rules. Not the thousands of social

workers and "project leaders" poured into the inner cities on the inner city area programmes. And not the trade union barons who go white with terror when coachloads of working class youth arrive on the picket line at Wapping.

Youth must organise themselves.

Every union must provide the facilities and money for an active youth section. The Labour Party must be stopped from strangling the LPYS and NOLS.

Most importantly we need to build a Revolutionary Youth Movement. This movement would be far removed from the world of today's LPYS. It would organise youth in struggle, opening the door to the real fighters amongst working class youth. Unlike today's YS it wouldn't call police thugs "workers in uniform" - it would take the lead in organising the physical defence of the inner cities and the workers' picket lines against these well-paid servants of the bosses' state.

It would fight for the abolition of YTS and fight to replace it not - as the YS "bold socialist programme" demands - with 75% of the minimum wage. It would

fight on the principle of equal pay for equal work. It would fight for special rates and full rights for youth in the unions and Labour Party. It would campaign to unionise all youth and build an unemployed workers' union.

A Revolutionary Youth Movement would not relegate the struggles of the specially oppressed because they "disunite the workers". It would recognise, as well as super-exploitation in the factories, the oppression youth suffer in the family. The family is a prison house for youth and for gay youth and young women especially.

MOBILISE

The fight for legal and financial independence is a socialist fight. Abolition of the age of consent, sex education and special centres for youth and free contraception and abortion on demand would all form part of our programme of action.

A Revolutionary Youth Movement would mobilise youth in the struggle against nuclear war: not with the middle class pacifism of CND, but on the clear basis of defending Nicaragua, Libya and the USSR against the warmongering adventures of US imperialism. Against "our own" imperialism too it would rally British youth to the support of Nationalist youth in Ireland who face an army of occupation on their own streets every day.

We fight to build a movement like this now. We fight within the LPYS not just for "socialist policies" but for methods of combat different from the tin-rattling and door-knocking of Militant controlled YS branches. But we also recognise that such a movement would not co-exist for long in the party of Kinnock and Larry Whitty. That is why we fight now in campaigns and on issues that the LPYS will not touch. It is why we fight to break Militant's stranglehold in the LPYS.

The heroism of South African black youth is an example we must follow. Youth who have most to gain by smashing capitalism, its wars, its dole queues, its bigotry and oppression, must be rallied to the forefront of the fight against it. Join us in the fight for a Revolutionary Youth Movement. ■

by Clare Sowerby (Leyton LPYS)

DEFEND THE LPYS

AS FAR AS the LPYS is concerned, the intentions of the witch-hunters are becoming clearer day by day.

In December the Labour Party cut the YS budget from £13,000 a year to just £8,000. At the same time it increased the budget of NOLS, the student organisation, from £13,000 to £14,000.

Now Labour has moved to 'merge' the posts of Student and YS officers at the Labour Party's Walworth Road HQ.

None of this reflects a new found concern for students from Kinnock and Co. It represents an ominous preparation to close down the YS, if need be, or to merge it with NOLS. These moves must be resisted.

NOLS is run by the Kinnockite stooges of the so-called 'Democratic Left'. So 'democratic' is this 'left' that it regularly rules out the delegates of Militant and other socialists in NOLS to the annual conference in order to keep control. Details of the venue of the conference are kept secret

until the last minute. For an ordinary student member of a Labour Club to observe the conference costs £20. Only by such means and bureaucratic manoeuvres does the right-wing keep control.

But the sad fact is that for anyone on the receiving end of Militant's 'Marxist' leadership, the YS annual conference is only marginally better. Every year important emergency resolutions are ruled out of order, and opposition motions 'lost' in compositing. Miraculously, the chair is able to pick out speakers from the floor to give an accurate representation of opinions. Miraculously this usually turns out massively in favour of Militant delegates, whilst the real proportion of Militant to opposition delegates is more like 3 to 1. The YS National Committee is elected from regional conferences beforehand. These platform speakers then have unlimited speaking time at the end of debates. Last year one 'summing up' took forty-five minutes!

The task of defending the YS

against the witch-hunt goes hand in hand with transforming it; not just organisationally but politically as well.

If Kinnock and Co. attempt to close down the YS, or merge it with NOLS without the agreement of the YS conference there is only one answer. The YS must resist closure, continue to function as a national and local organisation, seeking money from and local affiliations to CLPs and trade union branches. It must demand of constituency GMCs that they allow voting delegates from YS branches, and defend this right up to and including disaffiliation from the party.

There is no evidence that the Militant leaders of the YS will do this. They need to be replaced - not by the right-wing, nor by Socialist Action's 'alliance for socialism' which now seems to include the LCC witch-hunters. We call on all revolutionaries in the YS to join with us to:

Defend the YS!

Defend all socialists against expulsion!

Fight for revolutionary politics and a democratic YS conference that will give them a hearing!

THE REAL LESSONS OF LIVERPOOL

THERE IS NO better demonstration of the fatal flaws in Militant's politics than the struggle of Liverpool City Council. On a local scale Militant had the chance to implement their strategy of "Labour to power on a socialist programme".

They are proud of the results. Peter Taaffe, writing in *Militant International Review*, says:

"Liverpool is a model to workers everywhere who want to see a victory over capitalism".

But for revolutionary Marxists, the lessons of Liverpool are very different from those drawn by Militant.

By getting 'Marxist' councillors elected to Liverpool City Council, Militant thought they had created an 'island of socialism' on the Mersey. Indeed, compared to the spineless behaviour of nineteen other Labour Councils, Liverpool did become an island of resistance to Tory cuts. In the end though, that resistance crumbled.

Real Marxists never deceive workers about the possibilities that arise from winning control of a local council. While better pay, more jobs and new houses are important gains, they cannot be defended without a bitter fight with central government. Quite simply, central government, acting on behalf of capitalism, will try to claw back these gains.

Strike action in Liverpool and solidarity on a national scale was always the key to defeating Thatcher. The attack on Liverpool was part of a national Tory offensive against local government spending. Resistance in Liverpool needed to be spread nationally. But Hatton and Mulhearn at every stage preferred negotiations and time wasting manoeuvres, to trying to link Liverpool's fight with other workers'.

The biggest and best chance came during the miners' strike. But right in the middle of the strike, after threatening "mass civil disobedience" and "general strike" action, Hatton did a deal with a grateful Patrick Jenkin. The result? One less worry for Thatcher and a 17% rate increase for the workers of Liverpool.

'VICTORY'

Militant claimed this was "an overwhelming victory over the Tory government". On the same day as Hatton's 'victory', the dockers launched a national strike alongside the miners! But the Liverpool councillors ignored the opportunity to help generalise these struggles by sitting on their hands.

Once the miners were defeated, the pressure was on Liverpool again - this time without the possibility of help from the NUM which was in retreat. Again manoeuvres and legal loopholes were used to buy time in preference to mobilising the council workers for action. Workers in Liverpool were marched onto the streets, off the streets and back onto the streets again, just like the army of the Grand Old Duke

by Julian Scholefield

of York. Every demo and one day strike was hailed as yet another 'victory', yet another proof that "Marxism goes from strength to strength".

Yet no serious preparations for an all-out strike by the council workforce and for the spreading of that strike to the private sector in Merseyside were made. Militant's, "the councillors must lead" approach led them to downplay such preparation.

FAILURE

But when the crunch came, all these 'victories' ended in defeat. Militant would do well to remember the words of Rosa Luxemburg, the great Marxist:

"Revolutionary struggles are the direct opposite of parliamentary struggles. In the course of four decades we have had nothing but parliamentary 'victories' in Germany, we have advanced directly from victory to victory... the result was a devastating political and moral defeat."

In September 1985 the failure to get a city-wide general strike signalled the council's inability to genuinely mobilise the rank and file. Then in November Militant advocated accepting the result of a ballot amongst council workers which narrowly rejected strike action, rather than trying to build the strike from below.

Taaffe bleats that despite local "Marxist leadership", Labour and union officialdom demobilised the workers. He concludes:

"The first alternative was to engage in battle with only a minority of the workforce clearly understanding the issues and prepared to fight. The other alternative of an orderly retreat was chosen".

In one bound Jack was free! What Taaffe and Militant ignore is that in the class struggle the determined action of a significant minority can alter the balance of forces in favour of the working class.

Only a year and a half earlier the militant minority in the NUM showed how to do this, by picketing out the majority of the union. In Liverpool the majority against strike action reflected the votes of wavering white collar workers. The manual unions recorded majorities for strike action, as Taaffe admits.

These workers were decisive. Their action could have swung over the waverers. Militant's cowardly failure to give this type of lead - something that even a militant left-reformist like Scargill was prepared to give - demonstrates the hollowness of their 'Marxism'.

In fact, partly as self-justifica-

tion, these 'Marxists' claimed that the NUM should have had a ballot. Without a ballot the miners opened up the real possibility of breaking Thatcher through class struggle methods. With a ballot Militant avoided a strike and made the Liverpool working class pay with cuts.

Militant matched this cowardice with a display of tactical ineptitude that was staggering. To stall for time and bureaucratically force the workers out on strike they issued 31,000 redundancy notices. This totally confused and demoralised the rank and file, opening the way for Kinnock and the bureaucrats to stick the knife in at the Party Conference.

Peter Taaffe is again brought in to give the 'Marxist' explanation for this action. He informs us:

"The position of the council in this situation is analogous to the relationship that would exist between a democratic workers' state and the trade unions."

What utter rubbish. A local council with a Labour majority cannot be considered to be analogous to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Capitalism was not abolished in Liverpool!

More to the point, even elementary aspects of workers' control - like the opening of the books or control of hiring and firing - were not granted to the council workforce. Under capitalism a local council can, at best, become a bastion of struggle against capitalism. It cannot become a local socialist alternative to it.

ACTION COUNCILS

Real Marxists in Liverpool would not have concentrated political power in the hands of the District Labour Party as Militant did. They would have built councils of action based on the rank and file, on the communities of Liverpool and on private sector workers in the city. Militant never advocated this or tried to build such committees.

But they were essential if defeat was to be avoided. Rather than being kept in the dark, working people, knowing their own needs and the mood of their work-mates could have organised to defend the City Council and to control its actions. If Militant think this is what happened in the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee or in GMBATU they are deluding themselves. No genuine committee of workers would have endorsed the stupid tactic of hiring taxis to break the NALGO embargo on layoff notices.

Militant's tactics in Liverpool were in line with their overall view of the struggle for socialism. Put Labour in power. Implement socialist policies. If the bosses resist, call on the working class to rush to your defence.

Only someone who regards

MILITANT CLAIM THAT they are the authentic Marxist wing of the Labour Party. Kinnock's attack on them would seem to lend credibility to this claim.

However a claim to Marxism can only be justified by adherence to the Marxist programme. On countless issues Militant have long since departed from this programme. They are a tame left inside the Labour Party.

They believe that this party, despite its pro-capitalist leadership, can and will inevitably be transformed into a revolutionary party. All that has to be done is to hang on in there, no matter what, and eventually "Marxism's" day will come.

No matter what happens in the Labour Party, Militant argue that:

"the objective situation is moving in the direction of Marxism".

This is also true for the elections:

"If the Tories win, as the right wing never tires of repeating, Marxism will gain. If Labour wins that will be even better. Marxism will gain even more."

It is also true for the witch-hunts:

"Whatever action is taken, the right wing will fail. If they do not witch-hunt us we will gain influence. If they do witch-hunt us we will gain more influence".

There is a clear conclusion from these ideas: as long as Marxists can stay in the Labour Party until the hoped for mass influx of workers takes place, all will be well. Nothing the right wing do will affect the 'objective'

move towards Marxism.

This is why Militant's for fighting the witch-based on staying in the Party at all costs, keeping heads down and hoping the wing's desire for unity them off the hook.

In fact this approach lead to defeats. It will the demoralisation of militants. It will lead strengthening of the Right's inability to see this that they are an obstacle both the building of a revolutionary tendency in the Party and to the building revolutionary party.

A revolutionary party can organise and direct the of the working class is needed. We say this as members of the Labour to all those youth, party and trade unionists looking an alternative to Kinnock urge them to unite and Kinnock in the Labour as part of the fight to this revolutionary party.

Militant on the other will only whisper this chosen few. If Marxism from strength to strength its own, why bother building revolutionary party? Why fighting Kinnock's purge if "ism" will benefit from what happens? This is the logic of Militant's politics, but it the logic of real Marxism.

In these articles we have two key issues - Liverpool Council and Ireland - which the extent of Militant's departure from real, i.e. revolutionary Marxism. ■

Why Militant Is Not Marxist

the advance of the working class as a never ending, unstoppable process separate from the class struggle with its twists and turns could argue this. Only someone who sees every defeat as a victory could settle with the Tories in the middle of the miners' strike. But such a view squares entirely with Militant's view of the world.

Militant's strategy as here advocated in the Labour Party as a whole and as carried out in practice in Liverpool is seriously flawed. It says that socialism can

be constructed peacefully and defended constitutionally. It pictures socialism as something achieved on behalf of the working class rather than by the working class. It fails to warn and prepare workers for the confrontation that would result from a challenge to the economic might of the employers - either in parliament or in the council chamber.

Has Militant learned any lessons from Liverpool? Not at all.

They refuse to recognise it as a defeat. "The council was forced into a partial but orderly retreat," writes Peter Taaffe. But this was the refrain of the miners' leaders when they marched their 'victorious' troops back to work. In Liverpool, as well as the loss of a solid Labour ward to the Liberals this 'orderly retreat' has meant real cuts. Amid all the flag waving and rhetoric Taaffe admits:

"... some cuts, such as the non-filling of vacancies, etc, were inevitable."

In addition, after defending to the hilt, before millions of workers, the tactic of sending out redundancy notices, Militant now admits this was wrong. Do they admit this openly in front of the workers they misled? Not a chance. Tucked away in an eight page article in *Militant International Review*, their theoretical journal, is the single sentence:

"Given these factors it was



Liverpool workers in 1984 - a missed opportunity

MILITANT'S MYTHS ON IRELAND

IRELAND IS A key question for the left in Britain. Since 1969 British troops have occupied the streets of Northern Ireland. Along with the RUC and the Ulster Defence Regiment they have terrorised the Nationalist community. Over 2,000 have died in this conflict.

Militant's arguments on Ireland are clear. They are wheeled out time and again at the LPYS conference and at meetings up and down the country. But Militant's position on Ireland has nothing to do with Marxism. It has more to do with the illusions and prejudices of British workers which Militant will not challenge.

Richard Gerrard looks at Militant's main arguments and the myths behind them.

"The Northern Ireland conflict is a sectarian conflict"

Militant often describe the Northern Ireland conflict as "sectarian strife", or a conflict between religious groups. They equate the violence of Protestant paramilitaries with the violence of the IRA/INLA. They see both as "increasing sectarian tension". At the same time they admit "British imperialism bears responsibility for this state of affairs" (Militant Irish Monthly "What we stand for"). But this is only half the story.

Britain partitioned Ireland in 1920. The Northern Ireland state was set up on totally artificial lines, guaranteeing the Protestants

a majority. It is this state which should be described as 'sectarian'. It safeguards Protestant rule, discriminates against Catholics in jobs, housing, wages and education. Through this state, British imperialism rules in Northern Ireland, dividing Ireland and fatally weakening the Irish working class.

Who supports this state? The Unionist parties, the Loyalist organisations, the Protestant paramilitary groups (UVF and UDA) and the state forces of the RUC and the UDR and 10,000 British soldiers.

Who is fighting to overthrow this state? At the moment the IRA/Sinn Fein are the main force fighting British imperialism in the North.

No 'Marxist' can equate the violence of both sides in this conflict. Marx, Lenin and Trotsky were clear, not just in general, but especially referring to Ireland, on the need to support the fight of colonised nations to decide their own future. This meant supporting those who were fighting to get British imperialism out of Ireland, no matter who that fight was led by.

The Irish struggle is a fight for national liberation. It's the duty of Marxists to support those fighting against British troops and their allies, and to convince workers in this country to support them.

But Militant will never do this. One of their chief arguments against this is:

"The IRA are individual terrorists"

Individual terrorists are those who carry out isolated military actions with no support amongst the working class. Certainly we think the IRA substitutes military action for mobilising mass working class action. But this doesn't make them individual terrorists.

The IRA has the support of hundreds of thousands of Nationalist workers. At the funeral of Bobby Sands, a convicted 'terrorist' 100,000 turned out to mourn. Sinn Fein gets hundreds of thousands of votes.

For years Militant have peddled the barefaced lie that the IRA are just "gangsters" with no support. Since the election of Gerry Adams they have quietly forgotten this argument.

On the other hand Militant are proud of the fact that they are "not pacifist". Good. Here is a war. A war of national liberation. The IRA/INLA are fighting it. Whatever our criticisms of the IRA/INLA we must support them against the British Army. For a real Marxist there can be no excuse for refusing to do this.

But Militant have an excuse. The armed struggle "serves to further disunity in the working class and increase sectarian tension" (MIM What we stand for). So for Militant, Marxist principles on the National Question can be set aside because of "workers unity".

"Workers' unity is the key to the Irish struggle"

Workers unity is a fine phrase, but what divides Northern Ireland's workers?

The Protestant workers' antagonism to the Catholics and to a united Ireland is not just based on religion. It is based on the privileges granted to Protestant workers by the Orange state. This is another fact about Northern Ireland that Militant try to hide. For years Militant have insisted that "any marginal privileges the Protestants might have had were wiped out by the economic recession".

But recent figures show that whilst the recession has increased



'Workers in uniform' clock on for a shift in Derry

Eamonn O'Dwyer (IFL)

unemployment amongst Protestants to 12%, Catholic unemployment stands at 30%. A report in 1981 showed that there was not one single Catholic skilled worker at the Harland and Woolf Shipyard. Protestant workers dominate the skilled labour market, which has been boosted by US and government contracts to the main Protestant employers; Short's, Harland and Woolf and the Hughes Tool Company.

Another area of Protestant employment has boomed during the last 5 years; the RUC, UDR and prison officers now number 30,000 in Northern Ireland; one in ten Protestant men now works in the security services.

These privileges might look insignificant to the speakers at YS Conference. They obviously look minute to Canterbury YS whose resolution claims that "the implacable unity of the working class" exists in the six counties. But to a Protestant worker with a skilled job for life at Harland and Woolf, and to a Catholic on the dole in West Belfast the difference is real enough.



Reactionary face of Loyalism

What is true is that whatever privileges the capitalists might grant Protestant workers, it is the working class as a whole which suffers as a result of this division.

Unemployment in the of NI is second in the league table of British unemployment behind Liverpool. One in five are out of a job in the six counties. And whilst the Northern Ireland working class is one of the most highly trade unionised workforces in Europe, it is among the lowest when it comes to strike figures.

This is why any socialist programme for Ireland must take on board the question of destroying the Orange state. For Marxists, workers unity is an empty phrase unless it means unity in action around a common goal. The common goal of all the workers in Northern Ireland must include destroying the sectarian state.

"Workers' unity can be built out of trade union struggles"

Militant think working class unity can be built in Northern Ireland by ignoring or playing down the National Question. They argue that struggles around workers' wages, conditions, jobs, etc can permanently break the bond between Protestant workers and their own bosses. They give the example of the Outdoor Relief Demonstrations of 1932 as proof that unity in struggle is possible between Catholic and Protestant.

But history shows that this unity is possible only as long as it does not challenge partition and Protestant privilege.

The victory of 1932, when Protestant and Catholic workers took to the streets against forced labour schemes for those on the dole and a General Strike developed all over Belfast, was followed by a massive pogrom campaign by the Protestant employers.

Modern day trade union 'unity' is a sick joke for Northern Irish workers. It is unity based on silence when union members are beaten up, jailed or murdered by the state forces; silence when loyalist paramilitaries organise reactionary mass strikes of union members such as the one-day strike against the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Protestant workers do have a basic common interest with their Catholic brothers and sisters. The only possibility of breaking their loyalty to partition lies in appealing to this. But any appeal to the Protestants on the basis of class interest must not ignore what cripples the whole working class in the North - the border, the British presence, the Orange state.

"Troops Out Now means calling for a capitalist united Ireland"

Workers Power argues that British Troops play no progressive role in Ireland. They prop up the Orange state. We fight in the unions and in the Labour Party for the policy of immediate withdrawal of troops. We think that it is possible to build united action around the call for "troops out now" even with those who don't yet support the IRA/INLA's armed struggle.

When it comes to the question of "troops out now" Militant has

no clear position. Militant Irish Monthly's "What we stand for" says nothing about getting the troops out. On the other hand recent YS conferences have seen Militant supporting resolutions which call for troops out now, linked to setting up a trade union defence force. At other times Militant argue against "troops out" on the basis that it would mean a capitalist united Ireland.

For example the composite resolution on Ireland at last year's YS conference said:

"We affirm our opposition to the use of troops in Northern Ireland and call for their immediate withdrawal, recognising however that this will only be possible with a mobilised united working class fighting for socialism and with the creation of a trade union defence force to protect the workers".

What does this mean? If it means Militant will only call for troops out if all these conditions have been fulfilled, then it means they don't call for troops out now! It means they are echoing British workers' prejudices about the 'progressive' or peace-keeping role of British troops. Their insistence that these professional soldiers, engaged in a brutal and unjust war against the nationalists, are "workers in uniform" underlines Militant's tendency towards social chauvinism on the Irish Question.

As for being in favour of a capitalist united Ireland, we say: in Britain it is the duty of all socialists to campaign for troops out now regardless of whether this results in a capitalist united Ireland. To say anything else, to say keep the troops in until Irish workers are ready to throw off the leadership of ruling class and middle class nationalists, is really to say: British troops, defending a capitalist sectarian state, are more progressive than a capitalist united Ireland. It is no accident that this is the very excuse given by right-wing labour politicians for keeping the troops in.

In Ireland, revolutionary Marxists take part in the struggle for National liberation precisely because they don't want a capitalist united Ireland. They want to turn the national struggle into a workers' revolution, by fighting for the tactics and strategy of permanent revolution. This is the strategy of Workers Power's fraternal organisation in Ireland, the Irish Workers Group. It is certainly not the strategy of Militant. ■



Militant Marxist

a mistake we believe for these redundancy notices to be sent out".

Do they try to explain why Militant's 'Marxist leadership' could advocate such a terrible tactic? No. They even deceitfully hint that it was non-Militant councillors who were responsible for it!

This admission of guilt has the same function for Militant as confession has for a catholic. They say a couple of Marxist Hail Marys then carry on sinning. The rest of Taaffe's eight page blockbuster is a song of praise to the:

"48 councillors who remained implacable and unwavering to the end".

Taaffe writes:

"The Liverpool working class is fortunate to have at its head a leadership within which the Marxist supporters of Militant have played a crucial and at certain stages a decisive role."

In Liverpool Militant's 'decisive' leadership led to the redundancy fiasco and the failure at the 'crucial moment' to get strike action by council workers. In Liverpool this meant the difference between a victory and a defeat that Militant have yet to admit happened. On a national scale - with a 'socialist labour government' instead of a city council - it could mean the difference between revolution and counter-revolution. Nothing less. ■

ON EASTER MONDAY, 24th April 1916, James Connolly, founder of Irish Marxism, embarked on the last great struggle of his heroic career. As vice president of the Provisional Government and Commandant General of the Dublin Division of the Army of the Irish Republic, Connolly fused the resources of the Irish Citizen Army with the Revolutionary wing of the Irish Volunteers, under the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), to strike a blow against British Imperialism.

Exactly one week later the city centre of Dublin stood in ruins as the rising was quelled by the relentless fire-power of the armed might of Britain. Its gunboats on the Liffey, its artillery pounded the walls of the half dozen or so points held by the rebels - O'Connell Street, the Four Courts, Liberty Hall (Home of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union) and various outlying positions. Outside Dublin City, in the few centres that rose - County Galway, Enniscorthy and County Dublin - the officers in command reluctantly accepted the order to surrender.

Twelve days later Connolly was executed as were most of the other leaders of the Rising - P.H. Pearse, Tom Clark, Joseph Plunket to name but a few. The surviving Citizen Army and Irish Volunteer troops were arrested and deported to jails in Britain, interned until an amnesty could be forced from Britain's hands.

The rising of 1916 took the world by surprise. The bourgeois 'Home Rule' party of Redmond ranted against the rebels. The Irish Catholic (published by Dublin Capitalist and owner of the Irish Independent, William Martin Murphy, who unleashed the Dublin lock-out of 1913) wrote after Connolly's execution:

"What was attempted was an act of Brigandage pure and simple . . . no reason to lament that its perpetrators have met the fate universally reserved for traitors."

They were soon forced to change their tune. As execution followed cold-blooded execution and internment and deportations mounted, this apparently isolated rebellion registered more and more deeply in the minds and hearts of a down-trodden people. The 'Home Rule' party was jettisoned in the 1918 Westminster elections as Sinn Fein, newly wedded to the Irish Republican Army, rose to dominate the support of the working class and rural masses. Sinn Fein declared the first Dail (assembly) in Dublin's Mansion House in 1919 and launched the war of independence.

A protracted struggle followed, in which modern 'guerilla warfare' was born. It was to lead to limited independence, in a partitioned Ireland, by 1922. In turn, as the most conservative section of the Irish bourgeoisie moved, with England's military backing, to quell the revolutionary democratic republicans, there followed a bloody year-long Civil War in the 26 Counties 'Free State'. The dust began to settle on the victory of the counter-revolution.

TOUCHSTONE

Internationally, in the crisis torn social-democracy, the 1916 Rising became in Lenin's words "the touchstone of our revolutionary views". Far from being the pointless project of a bunch of romantic dreamers cut off from the external world, the Easter Rising was fully a part of the 'epoch of crisis' of inter-imperialist war and a striking testament to the role that oppressed nations played as one of the 'bacilli' of the decay of imperialism. It was along with the Indian troops' mutiny in Singapore, suppressed by the English; with the rebellions in French Annam, the German Cameroons and the bloody suppression of the defiant Czechs by the Austrian Imperial Government.

The War had shaken the Second International to its foundations, polarising it into revolutionary and social chauvinist wings. For Kautsky and Plekhanov such national struggles were not only pointless but downright reactionary. But

CONNOLLY AND THE EASTER RISING

by a member of the Irish Workers Group



James Connolly

behind this condemnation of the rebellion of small nations was the sickening chauvinism and patriotism of the great imperialist powers.

But for the left, and leftward moving elements who remained uncertain of their ground in the transition of capitalism into its imperialist epoch, the Easter events of 1916 were also a bone of bitter contention. Lenin had throughout the war, and increasingly in 1916 prior to the Rising, been re-elaborating his analysis of the national question - and the nature of imperialism itself as the foundation stone of the question. The Rising was a factual verification of the substance of his criticisms of the left around Luxemburg, Radek and others, because of the concessions they unwittingly made to the Kautskyan renegades.

Lenin's polemic with Radek, over his article *Their Song is Over* on the Easter Rebellion, responds to the effects of such confusion. Radek's argument rested on the fact that the Irish agrarian question was effectively solved from above by Britain - ergo there was no longer any social basis for a 'national' rebellion. Lenin rejected this pedantry and Radek's conclusion that the rising was a mere 'putsch' which:

"notwithstanding the sensation it caused had not much backing."

Yet Lenin's arguments have, through the warp and woof of subsequent history, been treated as an uncritical celebration of the substance and form of the 1916 rising. Stalinists who have turned against the whole method of Lenin in order to justify popular frontism, and Irish 'left Republicans' who in the final analysis always insist that 'labour must wait' in the 'interests' of the anti-imperialist struggle of oppressed nations are guilty of such a reading of Lenin.

In fact, Lenin's analysis of 1916 was by no means uncritical. He wrote:

"The dialectics of history are such that small nations, powerless as an independent factor in the struggle against imperialism, play a part as one of the ferments, one of bacilli, which help the real anti-imperialist force, the socialist proletariat, to make its appearance on the scene." (Collected Works 22:357)

Lenin added:

"It is the misfortune of the Irish that they rose prema-

turely, before the revolt of the European proletariat had time to mature." (Ibid:358)

Taken as a whole, Lenin's defence of the Easter Rising had, as its immediate focus, the fight against imperialist chauvinism which had poisoned the right wing of social-democracy - from the Hyndmans to the Plekhanovs - and the fight to clarify the lefts who had not yet adopted an unequivocal position on the right of nations to self-determination. They had an insufficiently concrete understanding of the imperialist epoch. As such Lenin's criticisms of the Rising are all the more notable since he was not concentrating on the role and tasks of socialists in an oppressed nation, but on the duty, as internationalists, of those in oppressor nations.

But what of the role of Marxists in the imperialised nation? More concretely what was the nature of Connolly's role in 1916 and what was wrong about it? While an insurrection was not only a likely but indeed a desirable event in the context, we must nonetheless weigh Connolly's role in it in the light of Marxism and the events of the time. He not only participated in it but all the signs are that he was probably the most active and unrestrained advocate of it.

PREMATURE

It is clear that Connolly precipitated an insurrection that was premature from the standpoint of the revolutionary proletariat internationally. But it was also premature from the standpoint of the Irish proletariat. The Rising, though led by the armed militia born out of the 1913 strike and lock-out, took place in isolation from the trade union it was created to defend.

Since the defeat of the ITGWU of Larkin and Connolly, membership plummeted as non-union pledges were extracted from the defeated ranks of dockers, tramway men and other workers of Dublin. From 30,000 members at the peak of the strike membership fell to 5,000 in early 1916 - the lowest recorded. Instead of the once burgeoning press - the *Irish Worker* before its suppression had a circulation of up to 95,000 - Connolly struggled to produce and distribute some 8,000 copies of the *Workers Republic* per issue.

Yet the Rising was no mere putsch. For it sparked off a movement that saw general strikes against conscription in 1918 and even the embryo of soviets. Tragically these were dominated by the re-vamped Sinn Fein in whose interests Connolly's former collaborators in the ITUC and Labour Party stood back even in the 1918 Westminster elections.

The organisation of the working class in the ITGWU also recovered its membership dramatically reaching 14,500 in December 1916 and continuing to reach 100,000 in early 1920. But not only were the members increasingly hegemonised politically by the post-insurrection Sinn Fein/IRA, but Connolly's role in 1916, in subordinating the Red banner to the Green, unwittingly aided this process.

To grasp why Connolly went into the General Post Office alongside the IRB under the Tricolour requires some appreciation of the process of wavering between syn-

dicalism and the struggle for self determination of Ireland as he viewed it. Until the defeat of the essentially syndicalist battle of 1913/14 Connolly had assumed that the 1912 Home Rule Bill would be automatically implemented. Although it became law in 1914, Carson's Unionists had extracted the concession of partition in principle and the Redmondite Home Rulers acceded to this demand.

The hope that Connolly maintained in 1912 - of a united ITUC and Labour Party going into opposition as soon as Home Rule was granted - was shattered by this development. It was bad enough that the ITGWU - the syndicalist engine of Connolly's aspirations - had been incapacitated. But the 'decapment' of the protestant working class falsified Connolly's belief that there was little material basis left to Ulster Unionism once the landlord aristocracy had been undermined.

SYNDICALIST

Another vital development in determining Connolly's fatal course was the effect of the war both on the international social-democracy and on the working class of nationalist Ireland. Imbued with syndicalism, Connolly was at first horrified that the 'Bugles of war' did not sound the 'tocsin of revolution' immediately. Although not a participant in the pre-war Second International debates on what to do in the face of war, he identified with the Vaillant/Hardie call for a general strike call as the immediate response to war.



Pearse



The last days of the battle in Dublin

This syndicalist answer was incorrect and abstract since it ignored the attendant conditions to be typically expected - the whipping up of fears of invasion, chauvinist protection of the Fatherland, etc. Lenin's view was that only in exceptional circumstances, where the course of the class struggle itself might have reached the point of all out confrontation, could a general strike be possible at the outset of war; and that it would have to be part of a drive for mass revolutionary insurrection in order to succeed.

Lenin's initial policy for the war was to force the International sections to refuse to vote for war credits or participate in bourgeois governments, to organise underground if suppressed, to support fraternisation of soldiers on the front and every struggle by the proletariat. That way, as the war wore on, the socialists would increasingly win the workers and soldiers to the policy of defeat of their 'own' bourgeoisie and to turning the imperialist war into a civil war for socialism.

IMPERIALISM

Connolly's disillusionment with the failure of a general strike to emerge spontaneously was not sufficient to justify the road to national insurrection however. Of key importance was his interpretation of the war itself. Unlike Lenin, who saw all the major belligerent powers as imperialist, Connolly only saw England as the bastion of imperialism. He identified its domination of the seas as the underlying cause of the war:

"I believe the war could have been prevented by the Socialists; as it was not and the issues are knit, I want to see England beaten so thoroughly that the commerce of the seas will henceforth be free to all nations - the smallest equally with the greatest." (International Socialist Review, March 1915)

In so identifying England as the bulwark of imperialism Connolly, lacking Lenin's dialectical view of the course of the war potentially paving the way to civil war, sought to 'end' it by seeing England thrashed. Then, he reasoned, the teachings of industrial unionism, in a world of expanding commerce - i.e. in peacetime - would penetrate Europe and open the road to the socialist commonwealth.

Viewed in this light it is not too difficult to fathom why Connolly could allow himself to precipitate the Rising. Since he failed to understand the imperialist nature of the war on the part of all the major protagonists and how to apply revolutionary defeatism within it he had little conception of the vital importance of a proletarian war programme. Rather than seeing increasing opportunities for a working class recovery and mass revolutionary assault emerging, Connolly feared that the opportunity for hitting the main

enemy was receding more with every passing day.

The International betrayal by social-democracy was bad enough. But in Ireland Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party accepted the deferral of Home Rule until after the war. The defeated working class, beleaguered and demoralised, succumbed to the pressure to enlist in the war. A majority of the Irish Volunteers split to the right to form the 'National Volunteers'. Redmond acted as recruiting sergeant and persuaded thousands of these men to throw themselves into the trenches of British imperialism with the promise of 'Home Rule' (for 26 counties) after the war.

Of the 200,000 original Irish Volunteers, only 12,000 opposed Redmond's call in September 1914. It was in this immediate context that Connolly threw every effort into anti-war propaganda and appealed to the 'Irish democracy' to take a stand against this capitulation. The minority of anti-war Irish Volunteers were politically cast in the mould of Irish separatism before all else. Connolly hastened to reach a rapprochement between them and the Irish Citizen Army. In doing so he subordinated the goal of the workers' Republic to that of a Republic.

He did everything possible to overcome the initial hostility of the IRB to socialism. He failed to outline an action programme rooted in the bedrock organisations of the working class. Even though he made consistent propaganda for economic struggle, the anti-war strategy he outlined was essentially directed at the Irish Citizen Army which he converted from an amateur militia into a uniformed brigade primed for insurrection - alone if necessary.

It is sometimes argued that with the outbreak of war Connolly became disillusioned with the working class and hence 'collapsed' into nationalism. But this is not true. He believed in the power of industrial unionism even in the last two years of his life. The national insurrection was to break the logjam that blocked its hoped for re-emergence.

But if Connolly thus oscillated between syndicalism and an accommodation to revolutionary nationalism he also tried to unite these two conceptions in the revolutionary vision he sought to propagate in Ireland. Innovative as this vision was, it nevertheless lacked clarity and concreteness and repeatedly it impeded the crystallisation of a proletarian cadre party.

HEROIC

In the final analysis, therefore, it is not the fact of Connolly's participation in the Easter Rising, that is the essential problem but the manner of his participation. Even with a war programme along the lines put forward by Lenin, Connolly might still have had to participate. But then it would have been on the basis of proletarian class independence. Instead the Red banner was subordinated politically to the Green and an opportunity to clarify a revolutionary minority for the ensuing period was tragically lost.

Revolutionary communists will commemorate the Easter Rising as both a tragic and heroic episode in Ireland's struggle for independence. We will strengthen our programme for today by jettisoning the mistakes of yesterday. But our criticisms of Connolly do not blind us to his courage and his dedication to our class. He committed errors not crimes.

The real criminals are those who butchered the insurgents - the British ruling class - and their grovelling apologists in the labour movement. To avenge themselves on one who dared challenge their rapacious rule in Ireland, they ordered Connolly - wounded and incapable of walking - to be carried to a firing squad on a stretcher and shot. His death was then toasted in the clubs and salons of 'polite society' in London and Dublin. Truly, by learning from his errors we will ensure that his murder is avenged when next the workers of Ireland (and Britain) rise up against their exploiters. ■

REVIEW FIGHTING THE MORAL BACKLASH

THE PREVAILING REACTION to the outbreak of AIDS in recent years has been irrational and harmful. This new, devastating and, as yet, incurable disease had been met by a moralistic, accusatory response in which the ill person is not the victim, but guilty of creating and spreading the disease.

Dennis Altman's book, *AIDS and the new Puritanism* (Pluto Press 1986, £4.95), is a sympathetic contribution to the discussion around the question of the puritanical moral backlash which has accompanied the development of AIDS. He explores the different reactions (mainly in the US) to the disease from the media, the right-wing Moral Majority and the medical establishment. He also assesses the response of the gay movement - from Democratic Party gay organisations through the gay 'sex industry' to gay activists like himself.

Briefly explaining some of his own reactions he writes:

"Any gay man writing about AIDS, at a time when it remains both unpreventable and incurable, will be brought face to face with questions of his own mortality and fears." and "I know too many people who have died."

The book covers the false under-

standing of the origin of AIDS, which was based on the fact that the first few identified cases were all in gay men. The cause of the disease was automatically assumed to be related to a gay lifestyle. Ironically, as Altman points out, the identification of a specific 'gay lifestyle', which was something activists in New York and San Francisco had been determined to assert during the 1960s and 1970s, had suddenly been turned back on the gay community, as if in retribution.

In particular the moral reactionaries identified promiscuity in gay men as the sin God was now avenging. Early media reports concentrated on the 'excessive' numbers of partners that many gay men 'had'. This idea was seized on by the puritans to boost their campaigns against promiscuity in general and gays in particular.

Not confined to ultra right-wing political propaganda, so-called

respectable medical journals churned out similar rubbish:

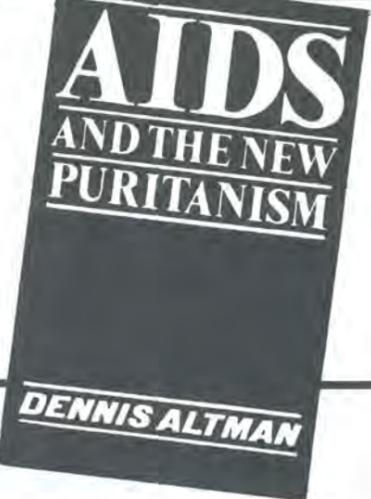
"A logical conclusion is that AIDS is a self inflicted disorder for the majority of those who suffer from it... Perhaps, then, homosexuality is not 'alternative' behaviour at all, but as the ancient wisdom of the Bible states, most certainly pathologic". (Southern Medical Journal, February 1984)

A right-wing religious group in Nevada tried to prohibit a gay rodeo from taking place as part of a homophobic AIDS scare. One of their members - a minister - was quoted as saying "I think we should do what the bible says and cut their throats".

Even when the virus which causes AIDS had been identified in 1984, and many groups other than gay men were known to be affected, the blame was still placed on gays. They were now also accused of spreading the disease to innocents, by being blood donors.

The concept of guilty groups who deserve the disease on the one hand and innocent victims - the haemophiliacs, the babies or the heterosexual partners - on the other, has been widespread and is associated with increasing homophobia and discrimination. Lesbians, too, have suffered from the general backlash. AIDS has been identified with all gays and lesbians.

The media response to AIDS has been predictable. The crudest sensational headlines occur when 'innocent' victims are affected, when there are scares about infection just through close contact. "Gay Bug Kills Gran" screamed *The Sun*. However when other reports came out that "AIDS is not a contagious disease" (Professor



Adler, Middlesex Hospital), whereby he tried to reassure people that AIDS could not be transmitted through social contact, the press have been largely silent. Scientific truth doesn't square with their gay-baiting proclivities.

Although it is now recognised that AIDS is not caused by promiscuity or anal sex or drug use, the gay community has still been forced to face the reality of a disease spreading rapidly within certain groups causing considerable suffering and deaths. The number of people with AIDS remains small. Other causes of death are still more common amongst young men. But amongst gays in major cities like London many people have seen friends, lovers or acquaintances die from AIDS. AIDS has had a direct effect on the sexual practices of gays.

This is where many of the most acute problems are posed.

"The central dilemma that faces gay men as the epidemic spreads is how to develop 'safe sex' without feeding the traditional moralism that condemns both homosexuality and sex outside a committed relationship and so easily feeds into the heightened homophobia unleashed by AIDS."

The arguments raised by this problem are impossible to recount in a short review, but divisions exist between those who argue for state intervention to try and modify sexual behaviour and those who wish to rely totally on education, discussion and free choice. Altman himself tries to balance the rights of the individual with the role of the state in protection.

This is valid in so far as the state does have a definite role to play. It must be forced to provide funds for research education and health care. But to grant the capitalist state (with its distorted and prejudiced moral values) any rights to interfere with individual sexual activity or gay clubs and institutes would be to hand them a weapon with which to attack the whole gay community and any other groups of whose sexuality it disapproved.

Gay men, and other groups who are also at risk have faced up to the problem of curbing the spread of AIDS. Guidelines for safe sex, as developed by gays themselves, are an attempt to deal with the risks of catching and spreading AIDS in a scientific and positive fashion.

The belated government response to AIDS shows they would like safe sex to mean monogamy. The recent advertising campaign in the British press shows that they like to pretend that having only one partner is the best answer. But in reality it is the forms of contact which determine whether or not the virus is spread. Being monogamous with someone who has or is incubating the HTLV-III virus is no protection. Having 'safe sex' with many different partners can prevent an individual from contracting or spreading the disease.

Anything which interferes with sexual freedom is a blow to gays, lesbians and all who want a varied enjoyable sex life. But campaigns which have stressed the positive aspects of 'safe sex', and encouraged people to "Adapt, enjoy and survive!" must help gay people to overcome the real isolation and celibacy which many have been forced into through fear. Altman's book is a popular contribution to helping such campaigns. ■

by Clare Huath



DEFEND 'LEICESTER LEFT OUT'

THE NORMALLY PLACID local free-sheet, the Leicester Trader, exploded into fury on 26th February. BAN THIS FILTH screamed the front page headline; "I was appalled says mother" it continued.

The "filth" in question was a leaflet produced by Leicester Left Out, a politically active Lesbian and Gay men's group. The leaflet, called "Playing it Safe", contained advice to gay youth on how to have sex safely and reduce the risk of catching AIDS. It was written in straight forward language and was given out at the Red Wedge concert in Leicester. Following "complaints from mothers" and the press outcry the police are now investigating the leaflet for "obscenity".

The anti-gay hysteria of the press should surprise nobody. What did surprise many was the participation of the Leicester City Council Labour Group in this hysteria.

The leaflet was funded by a £42 grant from Leicester City Council. But Council leader Peter Soulsby was quoted in the Trader as saying:

"the grant was most definitely not intended for this sort of publication which we find offensive".

Within a week the Council Grants Committee withdrew a planned grant of £500 to produce another leaflet because the group refused to show them a full draft of all future material. The Estates Committee refused permission to use the Town Hall Square for a Gay Pride march. "These people

have already taken over the Liberal Party", said one councillor, "and we won't let them do it to us".

Even the Leicester South GMC voted to 'defer' an emergency resolution calling for the immediate reinstatement of the grant. They too wanted to see the leaflet before making a final decision. "We've got a law in this country against paedophilia" argued one delegate.

The Labour Group and the GMC's demand to see the contents of the next leaflet before deciding on the grant is nothing less than censorship.

Providing information and advice to gay youth is an important task for the labour movement and for Labour controlled councils. It is a class issue. The DHSS adverts which appeared in the papers recently were inadequate. They gave vague advice, full of medical jargon about 'Safe Sex' and 'Risky Sex'.

The Leicester Left Out leaflet was aimed at working class gay youth. It was given out not only at Red Wedge but in gay pubs and clubs. It contained detailed advice written in no-nonsense language about safe gay sex. It used words and slang that working class gay youth will understand. The same advice is given by doctors and the Terrence Higgins Trust. In fact both the leaflet and the DHSS adverts were based on the same source, a leaflet written in America which is banned in this country.

"But should this be given to kids?" is a question many have raised. We say yes. Young gay people are the least likely to be able to get sound advice - either from school or from their parents.

Gay youth now live in fear not just of bigotry at school, at home or at work, not just of police harassment, but also of catching a potentially lethal disease.

Safe sex is possible. But the Tory bigots of the DHSS won't explain how. They still opt to portray gay sex as 'abnormal'. It is a contravention of capitalism's rules for a family orientated sexuality based on rigid notions of the differences between, and roles of, men and women. Gayness in fact threatens these rules. Because it is subversive, capitalism seeks to portray it as perverse.

It is up to the labour movement to provide the money and support to groups like Leicester Left Out. Such groups challenge capitalism's restrictive moral codes and give useful advice to young gays.

The action of Leicester City Council should be condemned. Soulsby now claims he was misquoted, but he has yet to issue a statement about this. The grant should be immediately and unconditionally restored.

Donations, etc, and copies of the leaflet can be obtained from

Leicester Left Out
c/o Blackthorn Books
70 High Street
Leicester

by Mike Leece

RAPE, LAW AND ORDER

THE BOSSES' PRESS has been waging a daily campaign on the subject of rape. Seizing on the vicarage rape case and on the police announcement of a 29% increase in reported rapes the Mirror, the Sun and the Star have been frothing with indignation on the subject.

Socialists, working class women and feminists will all naturally suspect the sincerity of this professed concern over women in the yellow rags. Their 'page three' nudes, their constant stream of stories which present women as vulnerable objects for men's sexual satisfaction express the values of a society which systematically oppresses, humiliates and dehumanises women.

CRIME-WAVE ?

The guardians of this society and its values - the police chiefs and Tory Home Secretary Douglas Hurd - have rushed forward to denounce the crime-wave in general and the 'increase' in rape in particular. Hurd has promised an extra 3,000 police for the Metropolitan Force.

Yet for over a decade the women's movement has given ample evidence that rape is very widespread. Only a very small number of rape cases, perhaps 10%, are reported to the police. One very important reason for this lies in

the humiliating procedures and attitudes of the police to women reporting rape.

Now the police openly admit this with their talk of training officers to eradicate these sexist attitudes. Why should this be any more successful than their 'education' to counteract their racist attitudes? Police "prejudice", whether against blacks, women, strikers or working class people in general is a product of their



More police will not stop attacks on women!

function as defenders of capitalist society, its laws and its values. This "prejudice" can be no more educated away than a swamp can be drained with a bucket.

Women themselves have set up Rape Crisis Centres. They have repeatedly called for protective measures - better public transport, street lighting, self-defence courses. If the Tories were in the slightest bit serious about combatting rape they would not have cut central and local government spending on public services.

In fact, if there is an actual increase in rape (rather than in its reporting) then its root cause is the increasing demoralisation and criminalisation of layers of the population in the inner cities. Mass unemployment inevitably creates a desperate, demoralised and atomised lumpen proletariat.

JUSTIFICATION

The answer to the problem of crime - including those aimed specifically at women like rape or "wife-battering" - is not more "law and order" i.e. more police repression. Yet this is precisely what the present outcry is designed to act as a justification for.

The crime of rape, like "mugging", can be used to create a panic atmosphere - rooted in real fears - with the object of softening up the public for ever greater

police powers. Women are being used as a stalking horse for greater repression that they, as miners or printers' wives, as peace protesters, as strikers, will soon be the victims of.

The socialist response to these calls should be 'not a penny, not a man (or woman) for this system' of repression. We should support the demands for state funding for women's and Rape Crisis Centres, for increased public transport including women's bus and taxi service, for physical defence training easily available to all women, etc.

We believe that women along with blacks and working class

communities should not rely on 'police protection' but should organise to defend themselves - both against the criminal elements produced by rotting capitalist society and against its defenders, the police.

The miners' strike showed the impact that militant self-organisation can have. Multiply that many times across broad sections of working class women and a real challenge will develop. If women are seen predominantly in the labour movement as class fighters, views of them as sex objects can and will be challenged. Once the women are organised, the men won't dare read the Sun! ■

DEFEND GUILLERMO LORA!

THE PAZ-ESTENSORO GOVERNMENT, as part of its wave of repression aimed against the Bolivian workers' movement, has invoked a reactionary electoral law against the Revolutionary Workers Party (POR) and its secretary general Guillermo Lora.

He was arrested for non-payment by the POR of the \$70,000 'fine' because the POR received under 50,000 votes in the July 1985 elections. Whilst Lora has been released on payment of the fine on a loan basis, Workers Power believes, - despite our serious political differences with comrade Lora - that the British and Inter-

national workers' movement should:

- 1) Protest to the Bolivian Government against the undemocratic law and fine;
- 2) Raise funds to offset this vicious attack;
- 3) Organise the defence of other militants arrested by the government after last Autumn's general strike.

Contributions should be sent direct to the:

International Committee for the Defence of Guillermo Lora, Juan Pablo Bacherer, c/o G. Bohrt, Vaktarsatan 30-D, 754 22 UPPSALA, Sweden.



IDEOLOGICALLY SOUND?

Comrades

Your article on "Red Wedge" (WP No.80, February 1986) correctly describes the cynical use being made of Red Wedge by Kinnock and the Labour leadership. In assessing the pamphlet sold at the concerts you correctly point out that it contains few political demands and no call to action. Such points are important ones to make to youth drawn towards political debate and action by Red Wedge.

It is also important to criticise those involved in Red Wedge such as Jerry Dammers who have suggested that it can become a political voice of youth in the labour movement as presently constituted. Equally those such as Suggs of Madness who are involved because it fits in with their music while denying that there is any way forward for youth (not a "stupid" just a wrong position) need to be countered by explaining what can be done and what needs to be fought for.

But your article goes further than that. It asks if Red Wedge is a vehicle for getting "socialist politics" to youth. The article says correctly that it is not but concludes disastrously:

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

This position is confused and wrong.

Firstly, you make no attempt to say how what you demand is to be done. By Red Wedge? By the individual musicians? In their songs? In speeches on stage? In interviews? It is particularly confusing since you also write:

"We don't demand that the Red Wedge groups play 'ideo-

logically sound' music."

So they can play whatever music they like but they have to use their public voice:

"to speak out against the traitors and bureaucrats who run the Labour party."

How? By confining their politics to interviews and their performances to the stage.

The only sense I can make of this is that you want them to speak out against the labour leadership and raise the demands and support the type of fighting youth organisations which are needed in the interviews they give as rock musicians and in the Red Wedge debates "whatever kind of music they play". This not only demands hypocrisy of these singers and musicians but it also assumes a completely unrealistic concept of leadership and an action programme for youth.

Demands on YTS, on jobs, low pay, housing, for the rights of gay youth, etc, will only be worked out by youth in struggle, and it is from the same source that the organisation and leadership for youth will emerge. While it is correct to point to the limited political content of Red Wedge it is utopian to demand of its musicians that they pre-empt the development of the class struggle by resolving those limits.

This demand ignores the real character of the public voice available to these musicians which is extremely limited. Their open support for Labour is a healthy development by comparison with what went before in Rock, not an unhealthy surrender to Kinnock.

Workers Power say vote Labour as part of their struggle against the grip of reformism on the working class. But it is wrong to say that those who say 'vote Labour' without such a perspective are simply being used by "Labour's PR machine". Where have Red Wedge said it was right not to re-nationalise, not to release jailed miners, not to aim for full employment, not to disarm unilaterally? These are Kinnock's no hope policies - Red Wedge have not supported them.

They have said, correctly, vote for Labour, get organised. Vague, but right insofar as it goes. It flows from the SWP's undervaluing of such a message that the SWP band The Redskins (whose political allegiance to the SWP you failed to mention) should ignore this and focus on demanding that Weller and company criticise the

Labour leadership. It is simply unrealistic to call Red Wedge a cover-up for the Labour leadership.

What should be done is to draw out the lessons and assess the value of Red Wedge. On this basis every opportunity around Red Wedge should be taken to argue for the need to take up the issues and to do so in the unions, the LPYS and the Labour Party without thinking Red Wedge forums are any substitute. Insofar as someone like Paul Weller wants to and can come down off the stage and join that fight he is welcome. Meanwhile, recognising that what he can do on stage is limited and without falling into the trap of arguing that the stage should therefore be abandoned, what he and others have been able to achieve should be realistically evaluated and welcomed insofar as it goes.

In this way the diversion of placing demands on rock musicians to give ideologically sound performances is replaced by what has always been the Marxist approach of taking whatever political advantage that could be gained from the arts without destroying them in the process with the utopian demand that they systematically serve the political interests of the working class. This is the content of the article by Paul Mason despite the disclaimer of such a purpose with which he protects himself.

M. Moloney
Dublin

Paul Mason replies:

M. Moloney is right to criticise the idea that Marxism demands "ideologically sound" music. This has been the biggest weakness of Socialist Worker's coverage of Red Wedge, and I had in mind Martin Hewes' (of the Redskins) article in Socialist Worker when I made my 'disclaimer'.

But there is a difference between what an artist or a musician creates and what she or he might say in everyday life. This is why it is possible for total reactionaries to make good music. Its also why being in the SWP does not guarantee the Redskin's music is any good.

In criticising what Red Wedge artists have been saying, we are criticising their politics, not their music. It is a shame to see people whose music can inspire thousands of youth come over as political dupes when youth ask them ques-

tions about politics. There is no contradiction between saying Red Wedge is good but it is not enough, and arguing against the Stalinist idea that art has to have the 'correct line' to be any good. If my original article did not go over the top in praising Red Wedge it is because there are enough people doing that already.

Socialists should certainly participate and build Red Wedge, but on a revolutionary basis, i.e. to try and organise youth to fight back.

Credibility

Comrades

In your March 1986 issue you rightly point out the need for revolutionaries to support the surcharged Labour councillors. How, though, can your alternative strategy be correct? You advocate the use of Ted Knight's local conference "as a forum where a strategy can be worked out to win the battle". Yet of whom does this forum consist? The union bureaucrats, who have so often ignored the wishes of the local membership, the councillors who have made themselves so unpopular with their own workforce through their use of bureaucratic dictats from on high, witness the kangaroo court which followed the Jasmine Beckford case. If there is no grass roots support for the councillors among the work-force surely it is a mistake to call for "all-out strike action", as this diminishes the credibility of your answers to other questions. Clearly revolutionaries must never hesitate in taking decisive action in the interests of the working class, but surely at the same time, we must never rely on the bureaucrats or advocate answers which have no conceivable chance of success?

William Jefferies
Bradford

We reply:

Comrade Jefferies is correct to point out that we should never rely on bureaucrats. However, neither should revolutionaries ignore forums where there is a possibility of organising opposition to the bureaucrats.

A conference where delegates were present from local unions, labour parties, and community

groups could have been used precisely to question those leaders, put forward and debate alternative strategies and organise the rank and file.

Obviously it is difficult to win council workers to strike in support of an administration which has presided over declining services, appalling housing conditions and many disputes with its workforce. That is why, in local unions and Labour Party wards, Workers Power supporters have consistently argued for a massive expansion of the council budget, a strategy of confrontation, refusal to pay the debts to banks, finance houses, refusal to pay the police precepts. We argue that such measures should be backed up by mobilising industrial action from council unions and other local workers.

To carry through such a fight and determine the spending needs would mean maximum rank and file discussion and control over the council strategy and campaign.

Local democracy must be defended by the working class, but not uncritically. As well as defending the councillors a fight for better services, more jobs and houses must be waged. Without this it is difficult to organise industrial action to defend the Lambeth councillors, but revolutionaries must constantly argue for what is needed to win the fight.

SORRY!

Comrades

There were two errors in your version of the IWG article "Sinn Fein Votes For Cuts" in Workers Power 81. First, Gerry Adams is attributed with arguing that there was a "radical shift away from 'verbal socialism' to the real thing". In fact this was our estimate of what SF supporters hoped for not Adam's expressed position.

Secondly, we were told by SF that there "had been" no discussion on the way SF voted, whereas the article states wrongly that an SF member told us there "would be no" discussion.

Please print this letter by way of correction.

Yours fraternally,
the IWG member who wrote the article!

IS WORKERS POWER SECTARIAN?

JOHN LISTER IS a leading member of the Socialist Group and a regular contributor to its Journal Socialist Viewpoint. Many WRP members will also know him as publicity officer of London Health Emergency, in which capacity he was recently interviewed in Workers Press. One other sideline of this 'man for all seasons' has come to light in the latest Socialist Viewpoint (No. 11). He is a grossly dishonest polemicist who substitutes unbridled venom for political arguments with his opponents.

The discussion that Workers Power has had with WRP members has called forth a torrent of polemic against us from the 'anti-pabloite' groupings. In a typically childish article the Spartacists describe us spitting on the Fourth International. The British section of Pierre Lambert's international outfit - the Socialist Labour Group - have attacked us in a similar vein. We are guilty they tell us, of "shallow eclecticism" in their Bulletin. The SLG, of course, do not offer a single quote to justify their charge. They rely on the hoped-for-ignorance of their audience.

REPLY

In reply to these polemics we would simply refer WRP comrades to our book *The Death Agony Of The Fourth International* and our history of the SLL and International Committee contained in supplements to *Workers Power* 80 and 81. Taken together these publications provide the most extensive analysis of the post-war Fourth International available in English.

Lister's polemic against us requires a separate reply. By using a few quotation marks he attempts to give the impression of authenticity. In addressing himself to our own history he seeks to prove that we are hopeless sectarians. By charging us with dishonesty he hopes that his own lies will go undetected. Lister starts with a clear attempt to prove us guilty by association. We are:

"no more honest than the Spartacists, nor is their history one of any exemplary practical work in the British class struggle."

He hopes, by linking us to the Spartacists, to score an immediate point with WRP members who, rightly, abhor an organisation that scabbed on the struggle of the Polish workers in 1980-81.

The truth is that our positions on virtually every major question are the polar opposites of those embraced by the IS. Any quick survey of our positions would show this. The old WSL, on the other hand, of which Lister was a leading member, served as the womb for two sizeable pro-Spartacist factions.

TRADITION

This was a direct product of the WSL's attempted rescue of the International Committee tradition. It was and is a political premise they - not us - share with the Spartacists. We say this not because we believe either the old WSL or the Socialist Group are a proto-Spartacist grouping but to demonstrate that they are no alternative to sectarianism. Their repeated inability to break with centrism feeds sectarianism.

Lister says our Open Letter to the WRP:

"carefully skirts around their own relatively recent abandonment of the state capitalist analysis on the Stalinist states."

So we are Spartacists and - perhaps - closet state capitalists! If Lister thinks our formal break with state capitalism over six years ago is "recent", fair enough. But since then we have produced a major book *The Degenerated*

Reformists and centrists readily seize upon every occasion to point a finger at our "sectarianism." Most of the time they have in mind not our weak but our strong side; our serious attitude toward theory; our effort to plumb every political situation to the bottom, and to advance clear-cut slogans; our hostility to "easy" and "comfortable" decisions, which deliver from cares today, but prepare a catastrophe on the morrow. Coming from opportunists, the accusation of sectarianism is most often a compliment.

Leon Trotsky
"Sectarianism, Centrism and the Fourth International"



Revolution explaining our break and presenting an analysis that maintained intact the revolutionary programme with regard to Stalinism. In addition we produced two six page supplements in our paper criticising every aspect of the SWP's politics, as part of our own break with them.

Of course Lister may not have known this. At a debate we held recently with him on Cuban Stalinism he admitted to not having bothered to read our book! Moreover, given that all the WSL ever did on this central problem was reprint an old essay by Tim Wohlforth and a rambling piece on Cuba by Adam Westoby we feel entitled to ask who is actually doing the "skirting around"?

STALINISM

Lister then uses our previous state capitalist position to deride our claim to have had a consistently revolutionary position on Stalinism. We would simply point out that John Lister was a co-editor of *Socialist Organiser* which called for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, argued that defence of the planned economy was a non-issue in Poland and printed stalinophobic diatribes by Stan Crooke and John O'Mahoney.

At the same time we did take 'consistently revolutionary positions'. The moment that defence of the USSR, albeit in an indirect way, was concretely posed in Afghanistan, we formally revised our analysis. We denounced the soviet invasion but in the war that followed it argued for a military united front with Soviet troops in order to defeat reaction. Wherein lies the departure from a revolutionary line?

On the Fourth International Lister states that we have:

"the megalomaniac arrogance of the 'minute red blob' theory of a grouping magically discovering the elixir of everlasting Trotskyism amid a wilderness of centrists."

This is a wilful distortion of our position. It displays Lister's profound ignorance of the nature of centrism.

We were not immaculately conceived as a 'red blob'. We were militants who, in the late

1960's and early 1970s, joined the International Socialists thinking it had a serious orientation to the class struggle. We learnt collectively via a faction fight and through the impact of the class struggle that the organisation we were in was centrist. In a struggle we evolved from centrist confusion to revolutionary clarity. It was a process in which we continued to develop.

We firmly believe that comrades who want to be revolutionaries can, like us, break from centrism under the impact of the class struggle. But to do so means understanding what centrism is. It is not, as Lister implies, a swearword. It is a political characterisation. Applied to the fragments of post-war Trotskyism it recognises that while they have departed from the programme of revolutionary marxism they have not yet embraced a counter-revolutionary reformist programme.

Centrism vacillates. As such the possibility of a thorough break with centrism exists during left-centrist vacillations. This is no 'red blob' theory. It is the scientific understanding of politics that guided Lenin and Trotsky in their relationships with parties as diverse as the German USPD and the British Independent Labour Party.

HEALTHIER ?

What Lister is actually saying is that somehow (he does not specify) the IC was healthier than Pablo's IS. Thus the old WSL and other tendencies emerging from that tradition can claim that, in however a partial way, revolutionary continuity has been preserved. Phew, we can trace our ancestry in the Trotskyist register! This is Lister's method. We on the other hand "spring from nowhere", are, presumably the bastards of the left!

The failure to recognise centrism led Lister and the old WSL into a disastrous international adventure. In early 1980 the WSL set up the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee. In May 1983 this body split asunder. The WSL - then embracing the crude nationalist Sean Matgamna - and their opponents, the RWL of the USA and the LOR of Italy, all proclaimed adherence to the TILC's found-

ing document *The Transitional Programme In Today's Class Struggle*.

At the heart of this document was the wrongheaded notion than an international tendency could be built on the basis of agreement purely on general principles. Thus, major tactical questions were conveniently ignored in the TILC's documents. This was supposed to enable them to play the role of catalyst in re-grouping the 'World Trotskyist Movement' which included not only the IC fragments, but also the Mandelites in the USFI. Because this 'movement' was supposedly 'oscillating' around the Trotskyist Programme (Declaration of Intent), it could be won back to that programme. After all that programme for the TILC was merely a set of principles and not principally a guide to action. For TILC, therefore, the task was always to reconstruct the FI out of its existing degenerate fragments. Programmatic clarity came low down. We said in 1980 that this was a recipe for future splits. We were right.

When the WSL adopted a social-pacifist, reactionary line on the Malvinas war, by initially refusing to defend Argentina the whole rotten method of the TILC was exposed. General agreement on principles did nothing to stop the sections moving in opposite directions. From then on the TILC and the WSL were bound to split.

Only one year later the WSL itself split with Thornett and Lister going on to form the nebulous Socialist Group. This is part of the tradition Lister berates us for attacking.

Lister's 'Sound and Fury' polemic reaches its poisonous peak with his remarks about our size and practice. He states:

"Hastening to score cheap points on the numerical decline of other groupings on the left (namely his own - WP), Workers Power swagger, boast and inflate the picture of their own size, with wilfully deceptive claims for the size of their support amongst miners, and their ludicrous slogan of launching a new rank and file 'minority movement' in the NUM consisting of themselves and a few close supporters."

PHILISTINE

The wish is father to the lie in this case. Here is what we actually say about the size of Thornett's group and our own in the Open Letter:

"We detail these figures not because we want to carp in a philistine manner about small groups. We are the object of too much carping on that score to indulge in it ourselves. No, we simply wish to demonstrate that in over a decade Thornett's policies have led to a diminution of cadres, indeed a squandering of cadres."

This is what John Lister calls "swaggering" and "boasting". Nothing of the sort. And neither were we "wilfully deceptive" about our support amongst miners. This is what we actually said:

"Despite our limited size, our organisation threw itself into every aspect of the strike. Our work enabled us to launch and sustain a special bulletin for miners Red Miner."

If like Thomas after Christ's death, John Lister requires 'flesh and blood' proof we can show him the 8 issues of this bulletin that we have produced so far.

On the rank and file movement question we gladly plead guilty to Lister's 'charge' of calling for the building of one. We did intervene in the National Rank and File Miners Movement precisely in order to build that into such a movement. That movement's founding conference was attended by over 100 miners - far more than us 'and a few close supporters'. Our resolutions to that

conference were defeated but far from failing to work constructively with "any number of unaffiliated workers" we helped that movement produce a paper and carry out a number of activities. Where was the Socialist Group's miners to help in this endeavour?

In fact the NRFMM has failed to grow into the type of movement we advocated. This does not invalidate either its early attempts or our call. Indeed if our call for the rank and file movement is "ludicrous" why then did *Socialist Viewpoint* state:

"At the same time it is necessary to develop a militant rank and file movement within the NUM." (*Socialist Viewpoint* No.6)

Perhaps what Lister thinks is ludicrous is that unlike his outfit we did not boycott our programme in order to stay pally with a few middle-level Scargillite bureaucrats who were prepared to grace the Oxford Miner's Support Group's platforms. However modestly, we did try to fight for what we thought was necessary.

Lister insists that our "bluster and bravado" is a ploy to conceal our sectarian contempt for involvement in the workers' movement. Lister is, to put it mildly, ignorant of our work in the labour movement. This does not surprise us, as our field of intervention in the health service, for example, is centred in the workplaces and unions where we have fought and led struggles (London, Sheffield, Leicester). Lister, on the other hand, is an employee of one of the GLC's many bogus 'campaigning' quangos, London Health Emergency. The bulk of NHS trade unionists have little to do with this.

HONEST

Our size limits our scope of involvement in the labour movement. And if Lister was honest he would admit that this is even more the case for his group. Wherever we are we fight and our record of struggle in numerous strikes will stand scrutiny. We do not expect a pat on the back for this. It is an elementary duty for revolutionaries. Only Lister's polemical technique - the unsubstantiated smear - obliges us to draw attention to it.

Lister's parting shot is to suggest that the absence of any mention of:

"the fundamental issue of democratic centralism"

implies that our approach to the WRP is some kind of cloak-and-dagger style raid. In fact it demonstrates the opposite. Like every Marxist before us we put politics first not organisational methods. Psychologically speaking Lister's position is explicable. His battering at the hands of Matgamna's regime has led him to elevate the 'democratic' in democratic centralism to an all important level. For us honest debate leading to political clarity can alone lay the basis for a healthy internal regime. There is nothing more sinister in our approach than that.

By putting a malevolent construction on our approach to the WRP and by rubbishing our politics and record of struggle Lister is appealing to the emotions rather than to the minds of WRP members. A few choice words - 'sectarian', 'deceptive', 'blustering' - and, hey presto, we can be portrayed as aspirant Healyites. But this method of incantation to ward off evil sectarian spirits will not cut much ice with WRP members. Our experience shows that these comrades want deep-going political debate and to re-look at the FI's history. In us they will find honest discussion partners. Judging by this piece of vitriol from Lister they are likely to find him and the Socialist Group somewhat less than honest. ■

Workers power

AFTER TWO MONTHS the 5,500 printers sacked by Murdoch are no nearer re-instatement. The blame for this lies entirely with the leaders of the unions involved, the NGA and SOGAT '82, and the TUC. Their strategy of behind the scenes negotiation and appeals for a boycott of Murdoch's papers has been a disaster.

Not only has Murdoch refused to back down but now Maxwell has sacked 1,000 workers, printers and journalists at the Daily Record and is after a sequestration of SOGAT's funds. In Fleet Street, both The Guardian and Daily Mail managements have revealed plans to bring forward the introduction of new production methods. The past month has also seen the start of Shah's Today operation which will increase pressure on all the press barons to attack jobs and conditions throughout the industry.

The shape of a possible compromise with Murdoch has been widely leaked. It consists of an agreement to take back a handful of union members at the old Bouverie Street plant and establish a £5 million compensation fund for the vast majority of those sacked.

Whether or not Murdoch decides to go along with this TUC-inspired treachery, the plan itself underlines the main priorities of the union leaders. What is important for them is that, at the end of the day, they are recognised as the negotiators between whatever workers are employed in newspaper production and the owners of the papers. Their strategy is aimed at convincing Murdoch and the other press barons that they could run their empires better by co-operating with them.

This is why they refuse to

CLOSE DOWN FLEET STREET!

go beyond Inconveniencing Murdoch and have not taken action against the other national papers. As a result the focus for militancy has become the weekly mass pickets at Wapping. For Dean and Dubbins these are simply a safety valve and a morale boost for the members. They refuse to treat the picketing as a serious attempt to stop the distribution of papers from Wapping. This has led some, notably the SWP, to pose serious picketing as the key to winning the dispute. This is dangerously short-sighted.

The experience of the miners' Great Strike showed that numbers alone are not enough to close a plant against the police. On March 15th, the police at Wapping were caught off guard and lost control of the situation - for about ten minutes. They could reorganise and regain the initiative but the pickets could not take advantage of their initial success in breaking their lines. At this level the simple call for more militant picketing is unserious unless it is accompanied by arguments for the creation of picket defence units.

More importantly, even a well organised and defended picket at Wapping could not be sustained for long enough to drive Murdoch to defeat. The whole area would have to be turned into a well guarded no go area that could keep out thousands of well trained

police units.

Picketing is an essential part of the fight against Murdoch. It is particularly important as a focus for solidarity from other workers. All pickets should be organised to halt distribution for as long as possible. But this alone will not win the fight.

To go forward now the strike needs to change direction. From the start Workers Power has argued that spreading the strike to the whole of Fleet Street was the single most important weapon the unions could bring into play. This remains true. It is not just a better way of beating Murdoch, it has to be a fight over the future of the printing industry itself.

Dean and Dubbins are opposed to any such widening of the struggle. They wish to appear 'responsible' in the eyes of the newspaper owners. That is what their jobs depend on. The lead in taking up the fight, therefore, will fall to the most militant of those whose jobs depend on breaking the power of the bosses. Irrespective of which unions they belong to, rank and file militants need to get control of this strike before it is sold out. Joint Chapel organisation would be the best basis for this but this cannot be a condition for extending the action.

Militants also need to take



Strike-breaker Murdoch as seen by printers!

Andrew Wiard (Report)

up the fight to put the unions' own house in order. The TUC compromise with the EETPU must be rejected. The scabs in Wapping, and the union that recruited them, must be thrown out of the TUC. Unions like the T&G which are effectively condoning the whole scab operation by tolerating their members at TNT transporting the papers, should also be disciplined.

The local support committees

which are slowly developing around the country can be important in helping to change the direction of the strike. By drawing in workers from other industries and unions they can spread picketing to provincial distribution depots and raise demands in their own unions for throwing out the scabs and collaborators. ■

by Steve McSweeney

SUPPORT S.AFRICAN METAL WORKERS

Inside we carry an interview with a representative of the South African Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU), on building unions in the face of the apartheid regime's attacks on black workers. Here the representative, Charles Makabela, tells us what help MAWU needs from workers in Britain in its present strike against SARMCOL, subsidiary of the British company BTR.

First, you can help us financially. Workers, political organisation, students in Britain can collect for our strike fund.

But, secondly, we need pressure on BTR to force them to negotiate. We need a boycott of their products and most of all, we need workers in the other BTR companies to demand that BTR SARMCOL reinstates the workers and meets our demands. Already we have spoken to several groups of stewards, and they are going to do this.

In general we want workers to apply a boycott to goods going to and from South Africa. Some of you may have been told that black workers in South Africa are against British workers boycotting goods from South Africa because they will lose their jobs and will suffer. In fact black South Africans are already suffering and the bosses are in any case importing machines which take black South African workers jobs for ever.

The employers are feeling the pressure and they are trying to put us up as a shield to defend them from the boycott. To clarify - we are calling for a general boycott and you will hear no-one from the black workers' side against this. We accept the problems that come with it for the period until the end of apartheid, and we want to see the complete end of apartheid not just reforms.

The most important question for us in getting support is worker to worker direct links and solidarity action between workers in South Africa and in Britain. Because I think what we have learnt is that the multi-national companies move the production from country to country looking for cheap labour and nobody can stop them, only the workers themselves.

If we know they are moving work we can try to stop them doing it and refuse to take on work that has been done by other groups of workers. To challenge the employers it is essential that we have these direct links between our unions and yours, and this is what we want to build at every level of the unions.

Send donations to:

SARMCOL Solidarity Fund
Lloyds Bank
Earlsdon
Coventry

A/C 0260425 Bank code 30-92-84

(FULL INTERVIEW PAGE 4)

FIGHTING APARTHEID IN PORTSMOUTH

Workers Power spoke to Portsmouth Hospital Stores' NUPE steward, Andy Lavender, about the action he and his workmates have been taking against Apartheid.

WP. Can you tell us what action you have been taking?

Most of the action is in the central stores. This is where most hospital equipment, including food, is stored. We decided last September that we'd like to see an alternative to South African produce in the store. We informed management that from 13th January 1986 we would enact a boycott, mainly of tinned fruit from South Africa. It was a small moral stand by British workers in solidarity with the South African people.

WP. How many workers were involved in the action?

Initially 12 storemen and 21 drivers, members of NUPE and the TGWU. Management pressure led to two people deciding to work normally. It ended up with 10 people in the stores carrying on a boycott and all the drivers refusing to drive tins of fruit around the district. Portsmouth Health Authority refused point blank to buy alternative fruit and said the matter was not open to discussion.

WP. What has the management response to your action been?

In the early stage they cut our bonuses by 10%. This meant a wage cut. From £66 take home per week our wages went down to between £50 and £60. Plus we were sent home early each day. This went on for a number of weeks and then they started bringing in outside contractors to move the stuff. When one of our drivers refused to move South African produce they were told they were not allowed to take the rest of the load to the hospital

concerned which included medical equipment. He was sent home and an outside contractor was brought in. We refused to load these contractors so management loaded the lorries themselves.

When management also started unloading lorries coming in, we had a meeting of the membership and decided that whenever management brought in a contractor to load or unload goods from a supplier we would walk out and form a picket line for the rest of that day.

We'd also put in a grievance about the way we were being treated. It reached the stage of the District Health Authority meeting which we attended to put over our case. But the chairman of the committee showed his apparent lack of interest in our case when, at one stage, he actually appeared to fall asleep in the hearing. He openly boasted about the number of times he'd been to South Africa so it came as no surprise to us that the management disciplinary action against us was upheld.

We decided to highlight the injustice of this by staging a two day strike. When we returned to work management brought in contractors so we walked out but arranged a meeting with management. At this meeting we were not even allowed to enter into discussion at all. We were handed letters which amounted to a lock-out; return to normal working, including handling South African stuff, or be indefinitely locked-out. We were locked-out for a further six days.

The drivers had a two hour stoppage and joined our picket line. Management came out, demanded the vehicles' keys and threatened the drivers with a lock-out as well. We immediately decided that we would send out the one lorry that was directly involved in patient care. The rest of the drivers came out.

Eventually management allegations that patient care had been

affected by our action shifted public opinion against us. Some members were becoming worried so to avoid a drift back to work we did re-open negotiations. After 21 days of talks there was an agreement for a return to work by the drivers and a partial return to normal work for the storemen, with 5 people continuing the boycott.

WP. What is the situation now?

We have got two months to lobby support and try to escalate the action elsewhere in the country and then we are going to be asked by management to all return to work or face disciplinary action.

If we try to distance ourselves from an internationalist approach we are going to find the struggles that we are fighting in this country all the harder to win. We need direct action by other trade unionists in their workplaces, in boycott campaigns concerning the exports of the companies they are working for, where the union funds are invested etc. The people of South Africa need the support of the British trade union movement now.

Send donations and messages of support to:

C/o Andy Lavender,
NUPE Offices,
93 Leigh Road,
Eastleigh,
Hants.



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