

Workers power

30p/10p strikers

Monthly paper of the Workers Power group

SMASH BOTHA'S DICTATORSHIP

WORKERS' SANCTIONS NOW

THE 'STATE OF Emergency' imposed by Botha on Wednesday 11th June is still developing in ferocity. Two thousand people were detained in the first few days and the figure is now probably over 3,000.

Several hundred - perhaps a thousand trade union leaders and activists have been rounded up. Moses Mayakiso, general secretary of the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) was immediately arrested on his return to South Africa from Sweden.

All meetings and rallies have been banned - even in churches. At a church service in Graaf Reinet Methodist Church in the Eastern Cape two people were killed as police broke it up. At Madantsane Methodist Church a child was killed and at Elsie River an entire congregation arrested.

Almost total censorship has been imposed. It has been made illegal to quote the views of over 100 organisations. Organizations included are not only the UDF, Azapo and such like, but also the End Conscription Campaign. Botha will brook no criticism or action from white youth either. By the end of June 86 people had been killed. Police are telling the wives of detainees "You will see your husband next year".

The huge racist apparatus of repression - 77,000 police and 515,000 defence forces - has ringed and patrolled the black townships. In addition gangs of vicious right-wing vigilantes, armed and given direction and logistical support by the police, have set out to destroy the radicalised townships and root out the young rebels - 'the comrades'.

Despite the, as yet, largely verbal storm of protest from the world's politicians, Botha has shown little hesitation in passing from one massacre to another. Why is he so impervious to 'criticism'? The press talks about the Afrikaner "laager mentality". Certainly the pampered white 'workers' (most of them foremen and state bureaucrats) and the farmers' living off the fat of South Africa's fertile lands stolen from its black majority are growing more vicious. They are growing more terrified that their decades and centuries long oppression and share in exploitation is coming to an end.

These are the people the right wing of the Tory Party call "our Kith and Kin". They are no kin of the British working class. In the mines they earn over five times as much as a black production worker and are almost exclusively supervisory. If the term 'aristocracy of labour' applies to anyone



it certainly applies to them. They have a great deal more to lose than their chains. To expect the black miners of the compounds and the township slums to wait until the white workers are prepared to 'share' their privileges - their big houses and swimming pools - would be obscene. The whole edifice of white luxury built on savage exploitation is tottering. It will fall. The British working class is faced with a brutal choice - which side are you on?

SUPPORT-

It is clear which side Thatcher and Reagan are on. Despite the mildest of verbal reproofs they support Botha's dictatorship. The reasons are not hard to find. British bosses - who have made three million redundant in Britain in five years - have £12 billion invested in South Africa, £400 for every woman, man and child in the country. Britain is the largest foreign investor in Apartheid slave labour, closely followed by the United States with £10 billion. Britain also exports 1.7 billion dollars worth of goods to South Africa, though this is outdistanced now by the US, Japan and West Germany. This then is the reason Thatcher, Kohl and Reagan are fighting tooth and nail against sanctions.

Thatcher 'won' a twelve month reprieve from Commonwealth sanc-

tions last year. The Eminent Persons Group was a sick joke - one that Botha laughed right out of South Africa. Now Thatcher and Kohl have, via the EEC, given Apartheid another three months to mend its ways before they pass totally ineffective and harmless 'sanctions'.

These events have shown that to channel the efforts of the Labour Movement and of sincere democrats into calls for sanctions from the 'Chief Contra' and the 'Iron Lady' is to fiddle while the South African townships burn. The inactivity of the British Labour Movement this past two years - led by chief fiddlers Kinnock and Willis - is and should be a cause for the deepest shame on the part of the British working class.

Of course this has not been helped by the tactics of the Stalinist, Labourite and Liberal led Anti-Apartheid Movement. It loves to organise festive jamborees with the minimum of politics and the maximum of inaction involved. It was good for 70,000 to March in London on 28th June and for up to 200,000 to listen to a rock festival 'against apartheid'. But if that is all there is to solidarity then it is an insult.

Workers Power has argued continuously that pleas to Thatcher and the tedious oratory of Kinnock are useless. We have argued that consumer boycotts, dependency on the individual conscience of 'progressive' elements, will never seriously injure the racist regime.

We have said time and again that workers' sanctions alone can really help the black resistance movement to bring Botha and Co to their knees.

Now Oliver Tambo, president of the ANC, has openly called for the British workers' movement to take action. That is the elementary duty of every British worker. Given the delay, every trade union militant, every socialist should make this priority number one this summer.

Ron Todd, General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union has said:

"We should say loud and clear that if Mrs Thatcher will not apply sanctions we will."

That she will not is already clear. But even if she did they would, as she herself predicts, be ineffective because every bank and business office would conspire to circumvent them. Only the workers on the factory floor, the shops, offices, hospitals, banks, telephone exchanges and postal services can supervise and block the transport and passage of goods, services and funds to and from the racist state. The fight to help South Africa's black workers to bring an end to dictatorship and exploitation is a fight against 'our own' exploiters. We will never succeed if we start off from the idea of co-operating or persuading by moral sermons the main beneficiaries of apartheid outside South Africa.

continued on page 10....

PRIDE '86

CELEBRATE AND ORGANISE

HACKNEY'S LABOUR COUNCIL has helped out with Pride '86 celebrations this year. The response from the Tory opposition was indicative of the hatred and bigotry that lesbians and gays have to face.

The Hackney Tory leader fumed:

"To highlight the life of people who live an unnatural and sinful life is to my mind the greatest shame that this borough can embark upon." This redneck is more outspoken than many. But his views are a reflection of the prevailing attitudes towards lesbians and gays under capitalism.

In fact the 'sickness' and 'sinfulness' that capitalist morality associates with lesbians and gay men tells us more about the sickness of capitalism than it does of same-sex love. Capitalism's morality is determined by its economic needs - its drive for profit. Part of its system of exploitation - an integral part - is the family, the unit through which the workers are domestically maintained and physically reproduced. Same-sex love is a challenge to this type of family, and the values identified with it. That is why, even where capitalism 'tolerates' same-sex love, it does so within strict limits and perpetuates the myth of 'sickness'.

The myth can and does have dire effects. The existence of AIDS has been used to stigmatise gay men in particular. The harassment of the 'Gays the Word' bookshop by Customs officials has been used to dam up one of the most comprehensive outlets for lesbian and gay literature in Britain. And even though the conspiracy charges have been dropped against the shop, the seizure of literature by Customs is continuing. Most ominously, an increase in murders of gay men in London recently reveals the terrible consequences of the myth that same-sex love is unnatural.

STONEWALL

Challenging the myth is important. Doing that, by celebrating same-sex love, as the Pride '86 events and march are, is vital. In commemorating the Stonewall gay rising against police harassment in New York in 1969, these events recall the early days of the modern lesbian and gay movement. However, celebration is not enough to defeat the pernicious oppression that capitalism metes out. A lesbian and gay movement in Britain does not really exist now. Moreover the movements that have existed have failed to survive. We believe the key to liberation lies in organising lesbians and gay men to take their fight into the labour movement the better to force the labour movement as a whole to take up the struggle against sexual oppression.

PREJUDICE

Many lesbians and gays will ask "why the labour movement?" They know full well that amongst the working class prejudice and bigotry also exist. We in no way seek to pretend that the labour movement is immune to these ugly features of capitalist morality. But, the working class has no real interest in perpetuating this morality. It too suffers from the oppressive morality of the capitalist family. It has a common interest with lesbians and gays in fighting the root cause of all oppression. What is more it has the organised strength to carry out that fight to the finish.

And, the working class can shake off the prejudices and bigotry. The miners and the printers are two sections of workers who proved this. Both found support amongst lesbians and gays for their struggle. Both, in many ways, have given support to lesbian and gay struggles as a result. After Pride '86 it is amongst these and other sections of the workers' movement that lesbians and gays must organise. **After the celebration - organisation!**

(See Lesbians and Gays Support the Printers - Page 2)

ORGANISING AGAINST THE WITCH HUNT

NINETY-NINE DELEGATES, observers and representatives met in London at the Conference Against the Witch-Hunt on June 21st. The conference demonstrated that a militant minority in the Party does exist and has the will to organise a united campaign against Kinnock's purge.

The conference agreed a statement opposing the expulsion or disciplining of Labour Party members because they read, sell or support separate publications within the party; or because they fight corruption within our ranks; or because they exercise the right of oppressed groups to organise themselves within the party.

It also agreed to set up a steering committee to organise and be accountable to a further delegate conference within six months, and between now and then to co-ordinate and build a campaign uniting all those under threat or attack from Walworth Road.

'LEFT UNITY'

In this regard the belated calls for 'left unity' by supporters of *Militant*, led by Tony Mulhearn from the platform, can only be welcomed. If they follow their speeches at this conference by building the campaign and the next conference they will do much to erase the shame of their previous 'heads-down' approach during the 1983 and 1984 witch-hunting seasons.

Militant must also break from their reliance on appeals to Tory judges to interpret Labour Party rules. This tactic has served only to prolong the agony, not avert it. They must break, as well, from their tendency, under pressure, to plead for unity - under Kinnock's leadership. This has, and will

again, weaken and confuse the forces of opposition to Kinnock.

Instead, *Militant* supporters must re-orient themselves in the spirit of Mulhearn's call, "in spite of our differences", for "a united front of the left to defeat the witch-hunt". The tactics, arguments and organisation necessary must be debated out, of course, within the campaign. *Workers Power* has distinct positions on all of these arguments, and our supporters will not shrink from putting them forward. Neither will we abandon the campaign because we do not convince everyone at the first attempt.

In this regard we think the conference was wrong to reject the resolution, supported by *Workers Power*, and put by a NUPE delegate. The resolution argued that resistance to individual expulsions must be taken up to and beyond the threat of disaffiliation by Walworth Road. Against those who argued that "tactics were a matter for those on the ground", the NUPE delegate asked "but what do we do when we are threatened with disaffiliation?" We cannot hold firm until that point, then collapse into compliance at the first threat of real sanctions. Such a declaration of impending capitulation will not deter Kinnock for one second. Indeed, leaving this question to 'those on the ground' is more likely to encourage Kinnock to tread them underfoot. The situation in Liverpool is, we believe, likely to prove how correct our position was.

If risking disaffiliation was too much for *Militant*, risking supporting *Militant* was too much for *Socialist Action*. Moving right at the speed of an express train, supporters of this paper argued for a narrow campaign around non-*Militant* expellees Kevin Scally and

Amir Khan only. To counterpose this campaign to one which defends *Militant* is ludicrous. *Workers Power* will, of course, support both.

Socialist Action boycotted building for the conference after their chosen figurehead from the 'broadest possible alliance', Ken Livingstone (one of the many 'left' recruits to the Kinnock camp), was not invited onto the platform. They then tried to amend the statement to effectively hand over organisation to the non-campaigning *Witch Hunt News*, and to concentrate what campaign they would undertake solely on the cases of Scally and Khan. Thankfully this cowardly approach was defeated.

FLAWED

In building the campaign now, we need to learn the lessons of the reform movement of the 1979 - 81 period. That campaign was fatally flawed in concentrating almost exclusively on winning constitutional reforms. The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD - joint publishers of *Witch Hunt News*) are harking back to those days. But the lesson is that constitutional reforms in and of themselves were insufficient to break the power of the right-wing and centre coalition of MPs and trade union leaders.

The campaign must ensure that all those being witch-hunted, and in the first place *Militant*, are resolutely defended. We must not abandon those *Militant* supporters nor any other victims of the purge, simply because their cases are seen as 'un-winnable'. They are only 'un-winnable' if the campaign is diverted into a whinge-binge about 'natural justice'.

'Natural justice' will mean, as Kinnock has promised, 'fair' expulsions and 'watertight' proscriptions. Less money for lawyers perhaps, but no better hearing for socialists!

The campaign must argue for the right of socialists to be in and, if they so wish, organise as tendencies within, the Party. It must fight for the right of groups of socialists outside the party to affiliate to "the party of the working class in Britain". It must win and defend the right of oppressed groups within the party (blacks, women, lesbians and gays, etc) to organise themselves as they see fit. These demands, as well as the demands for re-instatement of those recently (and not so recently) expelled, are 'winnable' - but on condition that we do not simply sell *Witch Hunt News*, but also campaign and organise to fight the witch-hunt.

The fight against the witch-hunt must be taken not only to the wards and CLPs but, crucially, into

the trade unions. Speaker after speaker at the conference highlighted the role of NUPE's Tom Sawyer and Turnock of the NUR in pressing ahead with the witch-hunt. Along with the NCU's recently elected president (and previous Witch-Finder General) John Golding these men represent everything that is rotten in the ranks of the bureaucracy. Using their power and influence within both the party and the unions they are attempting to make both uninhabitable

for socialists, or indeed anyone who won't toe the new-realist line.

The urgency of building in the unions was demonstrated by the small number of delegations to the conference from unions. If we are to reverse the gains of the right in the Party, then the men (largely) who wield the block votes must be fought on their own ground - in the unions.

The conference was a start. Its decisions, limited though they are in some respects, must be turned into practical action. If it is, then when the conference is recalled in six months, the small minority could well have significantly increased in size.

by Chris Ramsey (Vauxhall CLP)

LESBIANS & GAYS



SUPPORT



THE PRINTWORKERS

LESBIANS AND GAYS Support the Printers (LGSP) was formed in February of this year. It is based in London and was initiated by a group of lesbian and gay printers, together with other activists.

Like Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSMT) before it, its aim was to forge a link between trade unionists in struggle and the lesbian and gay movement. Its main areas of activity have been collecting money around gay pubs, clubs, bookshops and the London Lesbian and Gay Centre (where it has been holding weekly meetings).

Most importantly the group has had a regular presence on the picket line at Wapping and on the various demos. Its presence on these events behind its own banner, and the production of its own bulletin have made the group visible and distinct within the struggle.

This has had beneficial effects. In the first place it has helped break down anti-gay prejudices amongst sections of the printers. Like the miners before them they have discovered an ally in the sexually oppressed.

ALLIES

Support for the lesbian and gay struggle within the labour movement has been strengthened by this. New allies have been won. Also, the case for making a real link between the lesbian and gay struggle and the wider class struggle and the need to take issues of gay rights into the labour movement, has been able to be put within the gay scene.

The question facing the militants who were active in the LGSMT, and who are active in the

LGSP, is how to consolidate the working class oriented organisations that have been established. If the group simply disperses at the end of the strike then the work of building lesbian and gay groups to take up their own struggle in the labour movement, and the class struggle amongst gays, will have to begin again from scratch.

CONFRONTATIONS

Unfortunately Communist Party activists did just this with the LGSMT. They were not prepared to try and take the united front a stage further. This must not happen with the LGSP.

In Leicester, as a result of experience gained in the miners' strike, lesbian and gay militants established a campaigning Left Out group. This has effectively campaigned on a number of issues relevant to lesbians and gays. Its activities have led it into confrontations with the notoriously anti-gay police and the less overt, but no less bigoted, anti-gay Labour Council. It has won respect and support, however, in the local labour movement.

There are comrades from the LGSMT who opposed the CP line and formed a Left Out in London. The group has not, however, been very active to date. But if it links up with the militants in the LGSP, and if they build on the gains so far achieved instead of dispersing, then a Left Out group in London could become a focus for lesbian and gay work in the labour movement. It would be an example for lesbians and gays in other towns to follow.

by Chris Brind



SHEFFIELD CAMPAIGN GROUP

ON JUNE 19TH the first meeting of the Sheffield Campaign Group took place with around 40 Labour Party members. This followed a rally where Tony Benn, Paul Green, an expelled *Militant* supporter from Sheffield, and others, spoke.

The need to organise the left in Sheffield has been clearly demonstrated by the actions of the 'soft left' leadership of the City Council and District Labour Party. On both local government and the witch-hunt Blunkett and his supporters have revealed that they have no stomach for a fight. They went along with the NEC decision to expel Green.

Moreover, the failure to resist rate-capping has led to £10 million worth of cuts this year with more to follow in 1987 probably including compulsory redundancies. Sheffield's legendary cheap bus fares are no

more! Those arguing for the adoption of a deficit budget backed by a campaign for strike action were isolated in the wards and the CLP's.

An alternative to the Blunkett leadership is clearly called for. But is the Campaign Group capable of building a fighting alternative?

Certainly the Campaign Group of MPs, led by Benn, Heffer and Skinner, have attempted to organise outside Parliament. They have set up some 80 local Campaign Groups already.

UNCRITICAL

The problem is that virtually all these groups are constituted on the basis of refraining from criticism of the Campaign Group of MPs. But these same MPs will not stand against Kinnock in order to

challenge his witch-hunt and right-wing policies. Given that they also offered no alternative based on strike action during the rate-capping debacle such an uncritical stance will tie local groups to the coat-tails of the left-reformists.

There are a whole range of issues on which we must fight both the Tories and Kinnock. Where Campaign Groups exist we will seek to build them as united fronts of the left wing of the party committed to united action around key issues such as the witch-hunt and resistance to any cuts or job losses imposed by the City councils.

When the Campaign Group of MPs fight, we will support them, but when they funk we will openly criticise them.

By Stuart Crossthwaite (Sheffield Central CLP)



Lesbian strength march

FIGHTING RACISM IN NALGO

NALGO POINTS TO its equal opportunities committees, its anti-racist positions and its backing of anti-deportation struggles as evidence of its commitment to supporting the black struggle. Yet despite the rhetoric NALGO stops well short of a serious anti-racist stance.

Its support for black members facing deportation has been on the basis of individual merit rather than a concerted fight against racist laws. Similarly on the question of grievances and cases involving racism, the insistence on proof before a case can be fought means black workers are denied union representation. It is often not possible to present the sort of proof in a race case that you can show in, for example, a health and safety case.

The failure of the labour movement in general to actively take up the struggles of black workers has increased divisions within the workforce. Commonly held racist arguments are not challenged amongst white workers at the risk of becoming unpopular.

For black workers their lower pay, worse conditions and the pervasive racist ideology are powerful obstacles to active participation in the unions. NALGO leaders will no doubt use this situation to backtrack even on their present commitments.

HALF-HEARTED

NALGO black workers should point out that half-hearted measures do not get to the root of the problem - only a **prioritised and consistent** campaign, to **educate and activate** all the members on clear anti-racist policies, can lead to real unity in struggle within the union!

The Union must be forced to recognise the special nature of black oppression. Under capitalism, all workers are exploited and have no control or ownership of production. For black workers, racism means additional oppression and often super-exploitation under capitalism. Capitalism uses them as cheap manipulative labour, reserved for times of expansion, or part-time and menial work. Racism is an indispensable weapon used by our rulers to divide workers from one another. If unions are to be of any use in fighting for the interests of all workers then they must unconditionally fight racism in all its forms!

The Black Workers' Group in

NALGO have to clearly outline an action programme for organising black workers against racism and fighting for support of those struggles from the union. The key elements of such a programme should include:

Firstly, within NALGO, a fight for positive discrimination. This is one way of encouraging the participation of black members at all levels in the union. This should be used to increase the activity of black members and not to marginalise or sectionalise the fight against racism.

DEPORTATIONS

NALGO must continue to fight the cases of its members threatened with deportation but this must be done in the context of a fight against all deportations and to scrap the racist immigration laws. It is these laws that are directly responsible for deportations. Campaigns for industrial action to achieve these goals must be built - both from NALGO and for a similar commitment from other unions involved in the deportation process.

All links with South Africa must be broken. This means fighting to get NALGO and all other unions to take industrial action to boycott all trade with the South African regime. NALGO must be called on to take a lead in organising such a campaign.

Black women's struggles are vital areas in the fight to build a Black Workers' Group. Strikes at Grunwicks, Imperial Typewriters, Chix and others have shown the resolve of black women in the face of oppression. NALGO must give full support to their struggles, their right to caucus separately and special provision to involve them in the life of the union.

HARASSMENT

The experience of the workplace is inseparable from the community. Racist police harassment and black people's economic deprivation must be brought to the attention of all trade unionists. The Black Workers' Group should campaign in defence of all those youth charged and imprisoned as a result of police action at the time of the uprisings. Further, they must build active trade union support for black self defence be it against the police or fascist attack!

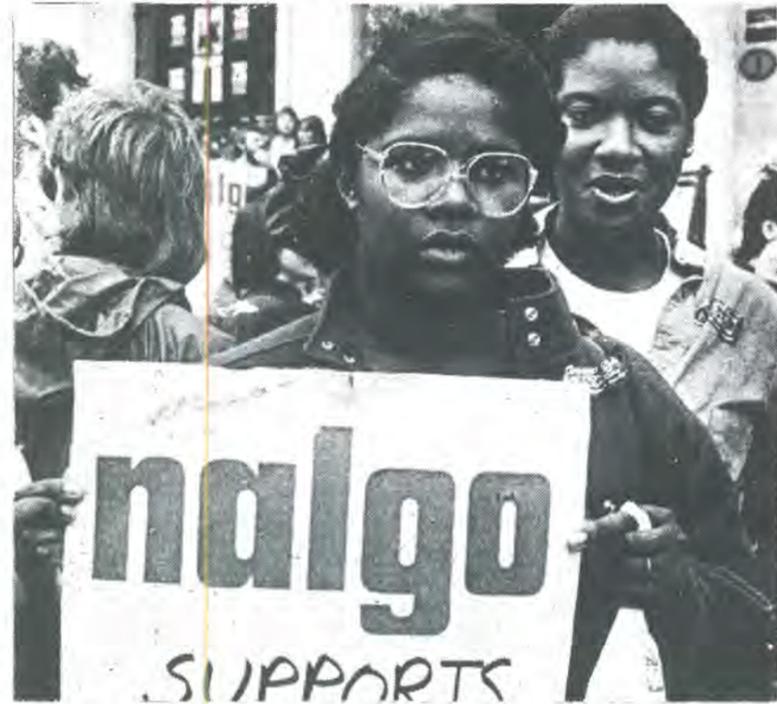
It is vital that black youth are

not alienated from the labour movement faced as they are with chronic unemployment and racist harassment. NALGO should take up their struggles by giving a fighting lead. Unionise the unemployed! Fight redundancies through direct action! Fight racism! Defend black youth!

We believe that these policies provide the broad outline of an action programme which can build a fighting Black Workers' Group. Implementing such a programme will mean launching well planned campaigns in NALGO. Model resolutions, regular bulletins, union and public meetings, speakers' tours, speakers' notes, fund raising and most importantly demands for action from NALGO will all need to be co-ordinated. We should waste no time!

Given such a political and organisational lead NALGO Black Workers will not only grow but will reach out into the heart of the black community thereby stimulating the growth of Black Workers' Groups throughout the trade unions. Last but not least it would be organising the necessary defence of black workers!

by Laura Williams



... 'equal opportunities', but it's short on action!

THE BLACK WORKERS GROUP

HOPES OF OPENING up NALGO's 1986 annual conference to the plight of the inner cities were dashed when delegates voted not to hear a speaker from the Hands-worth Defence Campaign. Nonetheless black delegates, inspired by the Black Workers' Group's campaign to raise the awareness of the union on racism, must continue to build on past gains.

Only two weeks before NALGO's annual conference opened in Bournemouth, 500 black members of NALGO met in Leeds to draw up the aims and objectives of the campaign to eliminate racism and promote equality. This commitment to struggle emerged in NALGO branches in the late 1970s and culminated with the forming of black workers' groups and committees. In particular, the London branches of Lambeth, Haringey, Camden, Lewisham, Southwark and the GLC were all active from the early 1980s. Eventually through the Ealing branch a motion calling for positive action in tackling racism in all NALGO structures was presented to the annual conference of June 1983.

Before that conference a historic national conference of NALGO black members took place in Haringey on the 7th May 1983.

The result of that caucus led to a far more organised black contingent at NALGO's 1983 conference. Black workers, spurred on by the need to force NALGO to fight Muhammed Idrish's case against deportation, shook the conference, even causing a suspension of business. The black members had to concede defeat on positive action and self organisation then, but support for Muhammed Idrish was won.

CAUCUS

Black NALGO members continued to organise, and another conference of black workers in Birmingham May 1984 created a caucus. The aim of this caucus was to organise interventions on behalf of the re-introduced motion for positive action groups in NALGO. In a typical bureaucratic manoeuvre, the NEC tried to weaken this grass-roots struggle

by setting up the Race Equality Working Party, from which a white paper on racism was produced and accepted by conference.

This was a step forward in terms of a programme of positive action. It re-affirmed acceptance of the principles of positive action as one way of combatting the prejudice and discrimination experienced by black members, women members, lesbian and gay members, and members with disabilities.

This history of organisation saw the beginning of an effective black members' caucus, bringing together the ideas that were incorporated in the first delegate conference of black members in Leeds on the 31st May 1986.

The message from that conference was the need to consolidate, build and strengthen black members groups in the branches and districts, and for greater involvement of the rank and file at national level. A recall conference in six months time will discuss a constitution and programme of action.

by Laura Williams

STRIKE AT THE SCABS

THERE HAS BEEN no let up in the Coal Board's drive against the miners. Over 500 miners are still sacked. The closure programme continues with the Board set on closing Kinsley Drift. The NUM has been offered a derisory take it or leave it 1% pay offer.

The judges have continued to do their work for the bosses. The High Court has ruled that the NUM's sole negotiating rights in the industry are 'not legally enforceable'. The vicious miner hating judge, Mervyn Davies, tried to give £35,000 of the NUM's funds to the scab UDM.

But things have not all gone the Board's way. June's UDM conference showed that the scab union has not broken through to the extent that MacGregor and Thatcher had wished. It remains isolated in Notts and shows little sign of being able to break out of that isolation. The conference diet of standing ovations for the Tory Coal Minister and for Ian MacGregor is unlikely to pull new members into its ranks. Neither is its cringing offer of two, or even five year, pay deals to keep the industry 'stable'. No wonder even Eric Hammond

hedged his bets by staying away from this faltering scab gathering!

In this context it is vital that the NUM launches an offensive against the Board. This alone can prove that it is still capable of fighting, while the UDM can only bow and scrape.

There is evidence of a willingness to take action in the areas. The Scottish conference voted for a 24 hour strike in support of its 130 sacked men. Aranthorpe struck for a week in May in support of one of its sacked members. They picketed Bentley out too, only to be refused backing by the South Yorkshire panel. But the South Yorkshire leadership is not alone in backing off from a fight with the Board and the NUM.

The Stalinist led Scottish area is making cooling noises in the direction of the UDM leaders. Mick McGahey has openly called for a re-unification of the UDM with the NUM and has submitted a resolution to the NUM conference calling on the TUC and the Labour Party;

"to make themselves available in the reunification of the British mining unions."



A message for scabs

This will give new hope to the UDM scab leaders.

In a similar vein the South Wales Executive invited Neil Kinnock to address the South Wales Miners' Gala despite his behaviour in the miners' strike. So much for the left credentials of new president Duffield who has so far done all in his power to keep Scargill out of the coalfield.

It is on the pay front that the NUM leadership have to make a move if they are to restore the fighting confidence of the union,

and, in turn, further sap the morale of the UDM. MacGregor is still insisting on withholding the £5.50 pay rise from all miners not in UDM dominated pits. He's capped that with his latest insulting offer. But Scargill and the NUM leadership have not risen to the challenge. Instead of campaigning for industrial action to hit the Board where it hurts the court crazy NUM leaders are now preparing to file 150,000 claims for equal pay through industrial tribunals with the hope of grinding

the tribunals - though not the coal industry - to a halt. This is a classic recipe for leaving the members in passivity while the leaders search in vain for a friendly tribunal to find in their favour.

It is vital that the NUM leadership is forced from below to campaign for action to secure the full pay rise due to its members and for an end to all productivity strings attached to wages. That campaign can breathe life back into the union. It will give new strength to the battle to reinstate the sacked men. It should be linked to a drive into the UDM strongholds to recruit members to a union that fights. In this way the UDM can be isolated as a rump of wretched scabs.

The alternative course of waiting for a Labour government and waiting for a miracle in the form of a pro-miner court judgement will not answer the vital question of stopping the NUM's retreat. It will not seriously challenge the UDM. It will allow Willis, Kinnock and the CP within the union time to stitch a deal together that brings the UDM leaders back into the fold. It would be a deal that to be successful would be struck on Toon and Lynk's terms, terms that dictate that the NUM renounces militant class struggle. Such a course must be opposed every inch of the way.

by Dave Hughes

SHOW TRIAL OF REPUBLICANS



JOHN STURROCK (Network)

Grand Hotel Brighton - room with a view

IN MID JUNE, after a marathon trial, the 'Brighton Bomber' Patrick Magee was finally convicted of causing the explosion at the Grand Hotel in October 1984 that killed five Tory Conference delegates, and which almost obliterated Thatcher and her entire cabinet.

Magee, along with Martina Anderson, Ella O'Dwyer, Peter Sherry and Gerard McDonnell, was also found guilty of conspiracy to cause explosions last summer at English seaside resorts.

Their 'trial', the latest in a long line of British state sponsored show trials of Republican sympathisers, stank from start to finish.

The only evidence against Magee was a finger and palm print on a hotel registration card and the opinion of a so-called handwriting 'expert'. But then the British police and judiciary have never been too particular in the 'evidence' they assemble for their frame ups: the 'Guildford Four' and the 'Birmingham Six' were convicted of causing explosions in 1974 on similarly non-existent evidence.

In a bare-faced attempt to prove their collective guilt, the courts denied the defendants separate trials. Just in case any of the jury had doubts about the defendants' 'guilt', the capitalist press, gutter bound in its entirety, never ceased to proclaim it. In its usual fashion, the press whipped up anti-Irish hysteria and portrayed Republicans as 'mindless murderers'. The *Guardian* worried that the 'Queen may have been IRA target' while the rest of the rags worried

about the effects the purported 16 seaside resort bombs would have had on holidaymakers (not to mention Britain's holiday industry).

It was hardly surprising that the papers should fail to find space for an IRA press statement which pointed out:

"Contrary to the hysteria in the British media, there was no IRA plot to 'create carnage and massive destruction' at British holiday resorts last summer . . . It is not our purpose or in our interest to kill or injure innocent civilians."

In the 'trial of the century', the only thing which outdid the British state's lies and the hysteria of its poodle-press, was its hypocrisy.

The court was told that the Brighton bombing was 'one of the worst actions of terrorism', and the judge informed Ella O'Dwyer that **"You have sunk to the depths of inhumanity"**.

That's rich coming from the functionary of a capitalist state which occupies part of Ireland by armed force and which inhumanly kills thousands of old people every winter by denying them adequate heating. How about the sinking of the *Belgrano* for 'one of the worst actions of terrorism'?

The British bourgeoisie are the real terrorists. For centuries they have engaged in acts of unbridled terrorism against the nationalist population in Ireland. And they continue to perpetrate their crimes.

This has been dramatically con-

firmed by John Stalker - the Deputy Chief Constable of Manchester police - of all people.

Stalker's report on the RUC's 'shoot to kill' policy, implicated this almost exclusively Protestant tool of British imperialism, in a conspiracy to commit murder and pervert the course of justice.

The report exposed such RUC atrocities as the machine gun attack on three unarmed Republicans in November 1982, killing them in a hail of 109 bullets. And the shooting at point blank range of unarmed 17 year old Michael Tighe, by the RUC.

LINKS

Perhaps most importantly, the report showed the close links between the RUC and the British army, and how the latter's role in Northern Ireland has nothing to do with 'peace keeping', but everything to do with suppressing nationalist resistance to British rule.

The capitalists don't like whistleblowers. One of their senior members, probably Thatcher, has stepped in to obstruct Stalker's report. Stalker himself has been accused of 'possible disciplinary offences' (ie corruption) in an effort to rubbish his findings.

The attempt to torpedo the Stalker report, together with the life sentences handed out to Magee, Anderson, McDonnell, Sherry and O'Dwyer, shows that the British bourgeoisie is determined to enforce its imperialist rule in the North of Ireland.

While Magee and the others are undeniably innocent, **Workers Power** would stand in solidarity with them if they had bombed the Tories and planted bombs at seaside resorts, just as we do with all Republican fighters.

CLERICAL REACTION TRIUMPHS

THE IRISH DIVORCE referendum on June 26th delivered a shattering blow to the hopes of Secularists, liberals and the left. It was especially bitter for the outcasts from the 70,000 broken marriages in the Southern State.

The brief campaign to remove the constitutional ban on divorce legislation had begun with a 20% lead in the polls, and ended in a defeat by 63% to 37% of votes cast. The poll was 62.7% and the defeat crushing.

Of the Party parliamentary constituencies, only six showed a majority in favour. Each of these were in the capital, Dublin. The relative conservatism of the rural areas was known, but no-one predicted how it would overwhelm the working class sections of the provincial cities.

All three of the national dailies supported the reform, and all the political parties supported it, with the exception of the largest, the populist Fianna Fail which declared itself neutral. Even the northern Unionists and SDLP called for a yes vote. However, the ruling coalition which proposed the measure, was not prepared to fight for it in the teeth of the Catholic Church's mobilised opposition, despite the fact that the opposition party Fianna Fail put its resources (unofficially) at the disposal of the anti-divorce camp.

Garrett Fitzgerald proposed the measure on a desperate gamble to placate his Labour allies. Also to save his crumbling majority from the poacher of the pro-divorce Progressive Democrats, newly split from Fianna Fail and drawing

dissent elements out of the coalition to a bolder monetarist policy.

The measure was also an attempt to deliver, to the Northern protestants, concrete evidence of Southern willingness to throw off the extremes of Catholic Confessionalism in political life. In the context of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, this consideration was very important.

Fitzgerald's proposal would still have fixed severe constitutional limits to divorce. He also promised to impose new requirements on marriage applicants. But while some bishops wanted to stay out of it key figures in the hierarchy had Vatican backing to secure Ireland as a bastion against divorce. Dissenting clergy were unceremoniously silenced, and anti-divorce tracts were read out from the pulpit time and time again. Farmers were threatened with the breakup of their holdings by divorce, and mothers with the loss of breadwinner and family home.

The Catholic Church, with a long prepared campaign and undisclosed financial backing, mobilised to protect the 'sanctity of the family'. The ruling class dared not confront it because its own state depends fundamentally on the ideological services of the Church, especially in relation to the family as the key to social conservatism and the double exploitation of women.

FAMILY

The leaders of the pro-divorce campaign cravenly boasted of their own 'concern for family stability' and so played into the hands of the clergy. Radical feminism was notable for its non-existence during the campaign, and a significant Catholic section of the Labour Party dissented. Fine Gael was publicly split. Only the youth section stood alongside the middle class Divorce Action Group, sections of the Labour Party, the socialist left and the Workers Party in the campaign for a yes vote.



Bishop McNamara - clerical bigot

Sinn Fein's role was disgracefully low key.

The Congress of Trade Unions published a pro-divorce leaflet and left piles of it lying around its headquarters. The member unions made little use of this leaflet, and mobilized no-one.

The outcome is a blow to democratic rights, and a massive boost to reactionary populism in the shape of Fianna Fail. It is a lifeline for reactionary Unionism in the North, which feeds off the spectre of "Rome Rule" in the South. Most of all, the outcome underlined how only a movement which openly fights to break the social and political power of the churches, a key instrument of bourgeois reaction in Ireland, can offer any perspective of lasting social progress.

By a member of the IWG

ANTI-IMPERIALIST

STRUGGLE

Why? Because the Provisional armed struggle is an act of resistance against British Imperialist presence in Ireland, and its denial of the Irish people's democratic right to self determination and a united Ireland.

The Provisional are not 'mindless murderers' or 'terrorists'. They are freedom fighters. They have mass support from the Irish nationalist population. While we have criticisms of the Provisional's programme, strategy and tactics, these criticisms stem from the desire to see the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland succeed. In our view the guerilla war tactics of the Provos, the electioneering of their political wing Sinn Fein, will not succeed in freeing Ireland from imperialist domination. The mass mobilisation of the Irish working class, North and South, will.

Whatever our criticism of the Provos, they are entirely subordinate to our unconditional support for them in the war against British control of Ireland.

In Britain itself, the tasks of anti-imperialists and socialists are clear: fighting for the release of the Republicans rotting in British jails. They are political prisoners of war! We must build a united front movement, rooted in the working class, which has as its goal getting British Imperialist troops out of Ireland. The creation of such a movement would be a mighty blow to British imperialist domination of Ireland, and to the power of the bosses' state in Britain itself.

FREE THE PRISONERS!

**TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND NOW!
SELF DETERMINATION FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE!**

By Jon Lewis

CLASS STRUGGLE
IRISH WORKERS GROUP JOURNAL SUMMER 1986

JAMES CONNOLLY AND THE 1916 REBELLION
LOWERING THE RED FLAG TO THE GREEN?

vote **YES** to **DIVORCE**

BUT TAKE UP THE FIGHT AGAINST ALL RESTRICTIONS!

ARMY STRIKEBREAKERS
LIBYA'S REVOLUTION
TEACHERS STRIKE
CHERNOBYL
C.A.S.P.
S.J.M.L.
50p

Available through Workers Power - price 85p (incl. p&p) - from: Workers Power BCM7750 London WC1N 3XX.

FREE POLAND'S CLASS WAR PRISONERS

THE JARUZELSKI REGIME has launched a new round of attacks on the Polish workers. It is set on smoothing its passage into the IMF. In exchange for entry into this imperialist thieves' kitchen it is more than prepared to open to the imperialists the very books and accounts that it keeps well hidden from the Polish workers. Jaruzelski is anxious to prove to the western banks that he can force the working class to pay for the regime's crisis of indebtedness.

Over the last period the regime has pushed through new 8% price increases. It is instituting a 46 hour week in the factories and mines. Heavy fines are being imposed on workers who change jobs without authorisation. They are to be legally trapped in jobs characterised by deteriorating conditions and living standards, and a longer working day.

Now, on the eve of the bureaucracy meeting in Congress, in the spurious guise of being the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP), the regime has succeeded in arresting the leader of the Solidarnosc underground. And it has launched a campaign of intimidation against its most noted opponents.

On May 31st the Polish police rounded up Zbigniew Bujak. Once a worker and leading militant in the Ursus tractor works, Bujak (on the run for close on five years) was the leading organiser of the underground. His arrest was a propaganda coup for the regime and a symbolic blow to the Polish workers' resistance. He now faces a show trial in which he will doubtless be accused of plotting against the Polish state hand in hand with world imperialism. He is faced with at least 10 years in prison as a result of his resistance to Jaruzelski's dictatorship.

The regime has failed to silence working class resistance. Around 600 underground newspapers are regularly produced and widely read. However within this ferment major political differences have emerged over the tactics and strategy the opposition should adopt against the regime. In certain key factories Nova Huta for example - rival political tendencies produce their own bulletins and compete for support from the workforce. This reflects a state of ideological and programmatic disarray in the workers' movement.

An important component of the opposition remains wedded to the Catholic hierarchy's project of competitive coexistence with the regime. From the hierarchy's point of view this has to be understood as a tactic, within an overall strategy of strengthening its

reactionary voice in affairs of culture and personal life, defending and extending private property on the road to re-establishing a Catholic Poland. Although now eclipsed as an operative oppositional leader Walesa remains central to this camp.

Workers' hatred of the regime and suspicions of the pacts struck between Generals and Cardinals means that, of necessity, active militants have opposed this path of conciliation. The Polish working class was never going to be the conscious and organised agent of Catholic inspired capitalist restoration. However forty years of Stalinist dictatorship has seriously retarded the political development of the majority of Polish worker militants. One manifestation of this is the influence of social democratic politics amongst the ranks of the Polish workers resistance.

Intellectual opposition leaders like Kuron and Michnik openly paint themselves in the colours of the old Polish Socialist Party - the PPS. This position is reflected in papers and organisations that claim to stand in the same tradition and take their inspiration from the Western European social democratic and Labour Parties.

SECTARIANS

Before sectarians like the wretched Spartacist Tendency who hymn the praise of Jaruzelski find this evidence enough that the Polish workers should be deserted, or Labourite opportunists salivate in their hopes that the Polish workers are moving their way, it is necessary to understand the contradictory features of social democracy's strength in the Polish opposition. Millions of workers understand that the regime is anti-working class and anti-socialist. The Warsaw Inter-factory paper Robotnik gave voice to this very clearly:

"Their regime is essentially anti-worker in the same way that the repressive measures they use and the exploitation of waged work in the factories they direct, are anti-worker and anti-socialist."

Yet this self same paper can also espouse the methods and achievements of the Western European social democracy as the path the Polish workers should adopt. Stalinist repression and mismanagement has made this seem plausible to broad sections of active workers.

This predominance of Catholicism and social democracy has

served to frame the major programmatic positions of the opposition. In general they have advocated moves towards a market economy, the gravitation of Poland towards Western Europe, greater penetration of western capital into Poland and parliamentary forms of government.

Taken together - whatever the intentions of some of its advocates - this constitutes a programme for the restoration of capitalism in Poland. Polish workers and those who actively solidarise with their struggle must not allow their hostility to the Stalinist regime to blind them to this reality.

As testimony to the vital proletarian legacy of Solidarnosc the last year has seen the crystallisation of a current within the opposition that rejects the drift to conciliation with the regime and the adoption of social democratic politics. It has been born in conflict with the Solidarnosc conciliators.

During the British miners' strike the Solidarnosc Provisional Coordinating Committee of the Mines in Upper Silesia (TKKG) was denounced by the regional executive Solidarnosc Committee (RKW) for its support for the NUM. It was denounced for its 'ultra-leftist anarchist deviations'. The same words could easily have come from the lips of Jaruzelski himself.

This proletarian tendency developed in opposition to many of the perspectives of the Solidarnosc underground. Bujak, for example, has proved more interested in the moral victory of securing boycotts of the regime's sham elections, than he has in organising militant action by workers over their immediate grievances. His tendency was to seek symbolic gains by increasingly pacifist means. The working class was seen as only a part of a larger national and social resistance struggle.

POR

It is in this context that a number of publications considering themselves to be of the proletarian left came together in the spring of last year to form the Alliance of the Workers Opposition Press (PPOR later to be called POR)

As against the predominant Solidarnosc tendencies the POR has considerable strengths. It consciously seeks to achieve proletarian leadership in the struggle against the regime.

"Only the working class has the capacity to overthrow the bureaucracy, and it is only thanks to it that the social groups can liberate themselves from the yoke of the bureaucracy." (PPOR - Spring 1985)

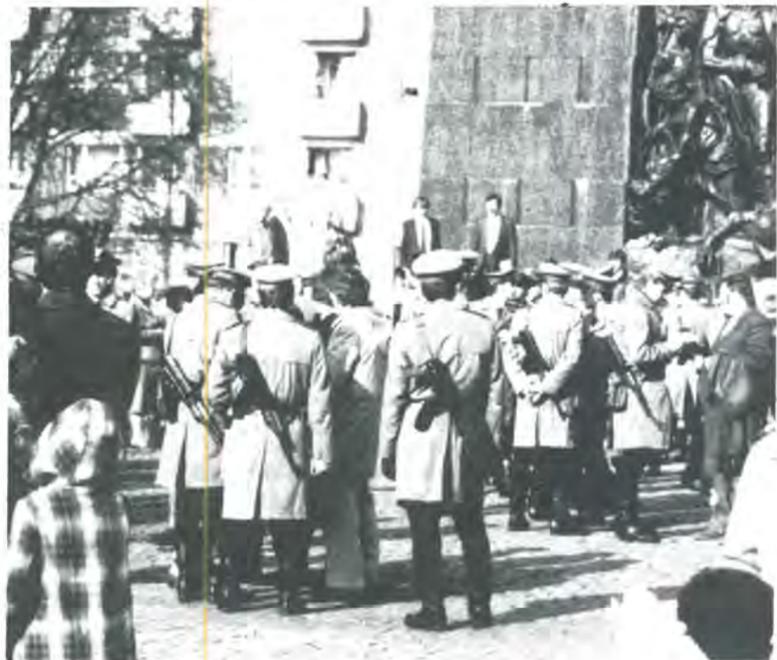
It advocates the General Strike turning into an active strike (meaning the "takeover of the factories by the workers") as the means of overthrowing the regime.

One of its leaders recently told International Viewpoint that:

"Our strategic objective is for the workers to take control of the means of production."

and that the Alliance was committed to the "defence of social property". This evidence decisively confutes the scandalous and reactionary claim of the Spartacists, who dub the workers opposition "a left face of Solidarnosc counter-revolution."

However, this opposition demonstrates many of the classic weaknesses associated with the syndicalist tradition in the workers' movement. It stand four-square for pro-



Police checks on Warsaw demonstration

letarian Independence and working class leadership in the struggle against Jaruzelski. Yet a recent statement by the Union of Workers Councils in Upper Silesia (ZRP PRQ) revealed quite how inadequate that stance can be.

WORKERS POWER

What is desperately required in Poland is a struggle to achieve genuine workers' power through a political revolution that seizes and centralises political power into the hands of workers councils and workers militia. The ZRP PRQ was able to explain its immediate tasks in the following terms:

"Today, it is preparing the working class for self organisation and self management, for an organised national general strike under whose pressure workers' ownership of the enterprises could be established" (International Viewpoint 2.6.86)

But its strategic goal was to achieve power in the factories for the workers while national political power was to be in the hands of 'the nation' through an elected Parliament. Having seized the factories and led the struggle against the regime the workers are to cede central governmental power to ill-defined national parliamentarians. The gateway to bourgeois counter-revolution would be opened if such a project was realised.

Workers' opposition statements about the role of a future parliament are extremely hazy. The original PPOR declaration admitted as much:

"We cannot say exactly what will be the role of the free elections to the Diet that we would like to see."

This almost admits of the contradiction between the industrial and political goals of the workers opposition. Under capitalism, syndicalism, born of a rejection of parliamentarianism, saw militant industrial unionism as holding the key to seizing political power. The militant syndicalism of the Polish left, born of opposition to Stalinist dictatorship, leaves the political sphere open to the social democratic and catholic parliamentarians while the workers assume control of their respective enterprises.

The confusion that reigns in the Polish workers' movement should



Zbigniew Bujak

only serve to strengthen our struggle to commit the British labour movement to solidarise with the victims of Jaruzelski's repression. Bujak is only the latest example. Over 200 trade union activists are now in the Stalinist's jails. Thousands of others have lost their jobs and face prosecution as 'social parasites'.

CAPITALIST

True enough there are brazen capitalist restorationists in the Polish opposition. The KPN, for example, is committed to a capitalist 'Greater Poland'. Workers should not lift a finger to free its leaders from jail.

The present political divisions reflect a movement that the Stalinists cannot put down but which has yet to find a leadership that can offer a programme to overthrow the regime on the road to socialist advance in Poland. Such a leadership, a revolutionary Trotskyist Party, is crucial for the victory of a political revolution.

The Polish working class must be defended by resolutions opposing the imprisonment of its trade union militants. Its cause must be advanced by political struggle against those who would lead it on a path that would deprive it of its historic goal - working class power in Poland.

by John Hunt





The battle for Barcelona

By early 1937 the Stalinists in Spain were in an increasingly strong position to enforce their perspectives against the wishes of the working masses. They held many key governmental positions and by March were the largest single political party. The party and the Stalin-led Communist International were committed to ruthlessly destroying all those forces who wished to wage the struggle against fascism as the struggle against the capitalist system that gave birth to it. The flower of the Spanish working class was to pay for this with their blood.

There were, however, serious obstacles that still lay in the path of the PCE in their drive to destroy the social gains and political organisations of the masses. Prime Minister Caballero wanted to marginalise the POUM but was not prepared for an all out attack on the mass of workers and peasants. He was fearful of losing his mass UGT base by attacking workers' control in the factories and completely destroying land reforms. Under pressure from the PCE to launch attacks he struck up an alliance with the CNT in order to obstruct such measures. Similarly he tried to ally with the CNT in order to retard the dissolution of the militias into a 'mixed brigade' regular army.

CABALLERO

The Stalinists attempted to put heavy pressure on Caballero to dissolve the militias and place their key figures in command positions. Soviet Ambassador Rosenberg visited Caballero daily in order to press this matter. Yet in February Caballero re-assigned several top PCE military men and replaced them with his own supporters. At the same time he was obstructing proposals to fuse the PSOE and PCE and attempts by the Stalinists to secure leading positions within the UGT.

It is no surprise therefore that the March Central Committee decided to attempt to oust Caballero. This was done in alliance with the leaders of the right wing of the PSOE - Negrin and Prieto. They had both realised that the PCE was the best bulwark against revolution. Hand in hand, the Stalinists and the PSOE right were prepared for a show down with the vanguard of the Spanish proletariat - the workers of Bar-

celona. Caballero was to be a victim of the Barcelona proletariat's defeat.

Barcelona was a focus of discontent with the course the Republic was taking. Living conditions were deteriorating. Queues, black markets and corruption were evident. Even the bourgeoisie felt confident enough to put in a public appearance again. On April 14th women workers in the city led a huge demonstration against food rises.

The growing mood of proletarian discontent was reflected in a radicalisation within both the POUM and the CNT. Once they had been expelled from the Catalan government the POUM leader Nin had concentrated his efforts on regaining entry to that government. Not so the POUM youth and militia who pressed for more radical action. Under their pressure the POUM leaders published a March call for the formation of a 'revolutionary government' while at the same time calling for the Catalan Stalinists (PSUC) to be in it! In April the official Trotskyists, who now operated inside the POUM, secured the support of the small Madrid section for an oppositional programme. The Barcelona section voted for the immediate organisation of Soviets on April 15th. In the face of these militant stirrings in the POUM's ranks Nin forbade the formation of factions. Dissidents were called back from the front and expelled.

CHALLENGE

These developments coincided with a small break in the CNT's ranks. In late April the 'Friends of Durruti' declared themselves for 'all power to the working class' and the creation of "democratic organs of workers, peasants and combatants power".

Together the POUM and Anarchist youth were able to mount an effective challenge to the Stalinists in Catalonia. In February 1937 the POUM youth (JCI) and the anarchist Catalan Libertarian Youth were able to bring 14,000 young militants together to form the Revolutionary Youth Front (RYF). In opposition, Santiago Carillo formed the Alliance of Anti-Fascist Youth (AAFY) which comprised the Stalinists and some republicans. The Stalinists were to become increasingly alarmed as the RYF succeeded in causing several splits in the ranks of the AAFY and winning sections of it.

The threat of revolutionary opposition in Barcelona stung the PSOE right and the Stalinists into action. PSUC leader Bonaides coined the notorious slogan 'before taking Saragossa, we must take Barcelona'. The Stalinists set out to crack down on CNT power. Relations between the Republic and the CNT militia broke down after Negrin sent the Carabineros to take control of frontier customs

posts out of the hands of the the CNT militia. On May 3rd Barcelona police chief and PSUC member, Sala, took three truck loads of Civil Guards to take control of the Telephone Exchange out of the hands of the CNT militia.

STRIKE

In response the Barcelona workers immediately struck. Within two hours the workers had stopped all industry and covered the city with barricades. The city was their's again.

At a joint CNT/FAI/POUM meeting the POUM, sensing what was at stake, argued:

"Either we place ourselves at the head of the movement to destroy the enemy within or the movement falls and that will be the end of us."

However the CNT/FAI rejected a confrontational course with the Stalinist-bourgeois coalition. Fatally, the POUM refused to break with the CNT and strike out on an independent course.

For three days the CNT leaders toured the area urging the workers to lay down their arms while they sought a compromise with the Republic. Yet the workers were in a strong position to advance and seize power throughout Catalonia. In Lerida and Hostafranchos the government forces surrendered to the workers. The POUM/CNT militias seized the PSUC Headquarters at Tarragona and Gerona.

Despite this the CNT leaders surrendered the initiative to the Stalinists and, in turn the POUM surrendered leadership to the CNT. There was massive working class disgust at the behaviour of the CNT leaders. Ripped up copies of the CNT paper littered the barricades. But the POUM made no attempt to lead this militancy against the conciliating CNT leaders. On May 6th the CNT ordered their men out of the Telephone Exchange. The POUM commanded their forces to leave the barricades.

The agreement struck with Catalan President Companys at the end of the strike had called for all troops to leave their positions. This was supposed to hold for militia and civil guard alike. Yet while the CNT/POUM militias observed every letter of the agreement the Republic shipped in hundreds of Assault Guards to secure the city. The police moved in to the Telephone Exchange to prevent communications between CNT forces.

COWARDICE

The Barcelona workers paid dearly for the cowardice of their leaders. 500 were killed and 1500 were wounded in the three days of the rising. Hundreds more were killed or wounded in the 'mopping up' operations.

Having defeated the Barcelona workers the Stalinists stepped up their offensive against the revolution. Target number one was the POUM. The POUM were constantly misnamed Trotskyists by the Stalinists. This was not simply because of Nin's one time connection to the Left Opposition.



Destroying 'Trotskyism'

In the Moscow trials and Siberian camps Stalinism was slaughtering all potential opposition in the name of rooting out a Trotskyite-fascist world conspiracy. Designating the POUM as Trotskyite sign-

THE S COUNTER-



The executioner



Franco and his clergy j

fied it as being on the hit list for Stalinist terror.

This was made abundantly clear by PCE General Secretary Jose Diaz on May 9th. Speaking at a public meeting he proclaimed that some 'enemies' of the Republic:

"call themselves Trotskyite which is the name used by many disguised fascists who use revolutionary language in order to sow confusion. I therefore ask . . . why does (the government) not treat them like fascists and exterminate them pitilessly? . . . I must ask: Is it not perfectly clear that the Trotskyites are not a political or social organisation of a definite tendency like the Anarchists, Socialists, or Republicans, but a gang of spies and provocateurs in the service of international fascism? The Trotskyite provocateurs must be swept away". (B. Boloten, p308)

SUPPRESSION

At the May 13th Cabinet meeting the two PCE ministers demanded the complete suppression of the POUM. When Caballero refused to sanction this the PCE ministers walked out and resigned. In turn Negrin and Prieto announced their refusal to serve in a Cabinet without the Stalinists. Caballero's government fell on May 15th and was replaced by one headed by Negrin himself.

The drive against the POUM could be stepped up now that the Negrin-PCE coup had succeeded. On June 16th the POUM was outlawed, its leaders and its militia arrested. The Soviet Consul General in Barcelona - Antonov Orvsenko - ordered its headquarters to be transformed into a prison. Nin was summarily executed after the International Brigades cooperated in staging a supposed Nazi attempt to liberate him from prison.

The Stalinists also turned their attention to pushing the CNT out

of the government of Catalonia. Catalan President, Companys, pressured to bring into his Cabinet Pedro Gimpera - a seasoned reactionary and anarchist - in response the CNT withdrew from the government on 30th.

There was nothing now to stand in the way of the full scale operation of the Stalinist machine. The Stalinists had a practised apparatus of terror. The Soviet internal security force (NKVD) had been sent to Stalin to supervise the operation. In June 1937 the Comintern one of the heroes of today's communists - Tozliatti - to in order to supervise the operation of the PCE and PSUC on Stalin's behalf. The main centre of operation was at Albacete where the national Brigade's secret headquarters (the SIM) had its headquarters. This was completely independent of Republican control and in the hands of PCE chief and member Andre Marty. The force was enormous. In Madrid it was 6000 strong.

After the Civil War it was to boast that he personally had sent 500 members of the International Brigade to their deaths. However it was the POUM and Anarchist workers who were to bear the full brunt of the repression. The Stalinists consolidated their grip on the forces and used this to step up the repression of those who stood in their way. By June 60% of the army were members of the PCE - many of them were the party in order to suppress them. The Stalinists controlled key positions in the army's command structure. From this position of strength they could send POUMists on brutal assaults as they did on the Aragon front. The alternative was to simply shoot them in the back.

Control of the armed forces and of their own terror machine made it relatively simple for the PCE to proceed to crush the remaining militias and incorporate them into the standing army. Negrin government supported PCE's demand for tight control over the CNT militias. The leaders surrendered to N

GLOSSARY

CNT (CONFEDERACION NACIONAL DE TRABAJO)

The National Confederation of Labour, founded in 1910, was the anarcho-syndicalist trade union.

FAI (FEDERACION ANARQUISTA IBERICA)

The Iberian Anarchist Federation was mainly an anarchist pressure group within the CNT

PSOE (PARTIDO SOCIALISTA OBRERO DE ESPAÑA)

The Spanish Socialist Worker's Party had a 'left socialist' wing which followed Largo Caballero, and a 'right socialist' wing which followed Prieto and Negrin's social democrat direction.

UGT (UNION GENERAL DE TRABAJADORES)

The trade union of the socialists.

PCE (PARTIDO COMUNISTA DE ESPAÑA)

The Spanish Communist Party.

PSUC (PARTIDO SOCIALISTA UNIFICADO DE CATALUÑA)

The United Socialist Party of Catalonia was an amalgamation of Catalan socialist parties in the early summer of 1936 which was completely taken over by the communists.

POUM (PARTIDO OBRERO DE UNIFICACION MARXISTA)

The Workers' Party of Marxist Unification was led by Andres Nin (Trotsky's former secretary from whom he had disassociated himself) and Joaquin Maurin. Its main strength lay in western Catalonia. The party was not 'Trotskyist' as the Stalinists claimed.

STALINIST REVOLUTION



scist salute

By the autumn of 1937 the Republic had finally eliminated all militias independent of its direct command. It now had over half a million troops in 152 brigades dancing to its tune. That tune was being called by the Stalinists.

MILITIA DEFEATED

The militias were the last remaining force protecting workers' control in the plants and on the agricultural collectives. Once the militias had been put down it was only a matter of time before the Republic could attack these gains of the working masses. Workers' control was undermined by nationalisation at the hands of the Republic which appointed a manager to rob the workers of their power. Things were to prove less easy for the Stalinists on the land.

In June 1937 the left socialist Federation of Land Workers demanded that the October 1936 Land Decree be extended to all landowners who:

"had violated labour contracts, discharged workers unjustly because of their ideas, denounced them, (to the police) without good reason, (and) encouraged strike-breaking."

In reply not only did the PCE Minister of Agriculture turn down this demand. He also ordered that land be handed back to proprietors who had employed under 25 workers. The CNT General Secretary of the Peasants Federation of Castille complained:

"We have fought terrible battles with the Communists, especially with brigades and divisions under their control, which have assassinated our best peasant militants and savagely destroyed our collective farms."

When the harvest was completed in August the Stalinists began their biggest reign of terror. They set out to destroy the Aragon collectives by force. The PSUC had no base in the area which was the power base of the CNT. The PSUC's onslaught began with

the dissolving of the council of Aragon - the last remaining revolutionary committee - and the appointment of a Governor General. The attack was backed up by a Stalinist press campaign that accused the Aragon peasants of all manner of crimes including terror, theft, the maintenance of arms stores and even forced collectivisation. Those who had herded the Russian peasantry into collective farms at bayonet point now turned on the self organisation of the Aragon peasants. The Aragon peasants made serious inroads into the very private property system the Stalinists were set on defending.

ARAGON

Eventually Enrique Lister - PCE leader of the 11th division - marched into Aragon and proceeded to destroy collectives. Municipal committees were closed down. Land and implements were handed back to their old owners. At least 600 CNT leaders were arrested.

From this time onwards the fate of the republic was sealed. Proof of the fact that only the defence and extension of the social revolution could defeat fascism is to be seen in the fate of the Aragon front. It was to collapse within months of the Republic's attack on the Aragon peasantry. That same Republic could no longer command the selfless support of the workers and peasants of Aragon.



Stalin the executioner

In the face of Franco's advance the Comintern entertained not the slightest thought of chang-

ing tactics or perspectives. At the same time the pro-bourgeois socialists and the last remnants of a republican bourgeoisie began to consider ways of making peace with Franco. The Comintern's response was to call on the PCE/PSUC to urge popular front policies on the government and on the CNT/UGT rank and file. There could be no questioning of the strategy that was paving the way for the victory of fascism over the Spanish proletariat.

Stalin had cynically sought to use the Spanish Revolution and Franco's offensive as a means of pressurising Britain and France into an alliance with the USSR.

Stalin hoped that these democratic imperialist powers could be forced to protect their own interests by fighting Germany and Italy in Spain. In this way they would also be preventing a war against Russia.

In March 1938, Jose Diaz stated:

"We want (the democratic states) to help us, and believe that in this way they will be defending their own interests . . . fascist aggression is going forward at such a pace that national interests, in a country like France, for instance, must convince all men who desire the liberty and independence of their country of the necessity of standing up to this aggression."

FALSE

Always a false perspective, the dependence on "those who desire liberty" in France and Britain was becoming more and more evidently false throughout 1938.

Britain and France had never wanted a loyalist victory for fear of precipitating a social revolution. A victory for the Republic would also, they feared, provoke a German-Italian invasion and so bring war with Great Britain and France that much nearer. Whilst the British and French bourgeoisie could not openly side with Franco - they could and did achieve the same result through the force of the Non-Intervention Committee.

At the end of 1938 Britain and France ended that farce. At Munich Britain signed a 'peace pact' with Hitler. After this Stalin and the ECCI effectively abandoned the perspective of turning Britain and France against Hitler and began to shift the CI toward an accommodation with Hitler. This was revealed in a caustic attack on Britain and France by Dimitrov in *Pravda* in November 1938. In the *United Front Against Fascism after Munich*, he blamed the failure of Stalin's foreign policy upon the:

"reactionary imperialist who, out of fear of the growth of the working class movement in Europe, of the movement of national liberation in Asia, out of hatred for the land of Socialism, sacrificed to fascism the interests of their own people."

That Stalin abandoned the Republic to Franco after this point was evident in the removal of Soviet personnel and equipment from Spain from the autumn of 1938. In November the remaining 10,000 of the International Brigade were pulled out.

Yet the cynical, lying propaganda of Stalinism continued to spew out the necessity for the international Popular Front. Even in defeat the PCE refused to abandon it. With the fall of Catalonia to Franco on February 23rd 1939 the Politbureau of the PCE said:

"It is a profound error to believe that we can hope for nothing or for very little from abroad and that the democratic countries . . . will not help us now that we have lost such an important position . . ."

Stalinism continued to push the illusion that the imminent victory of Franco:

"opens the eyes of those who until now have not wanted to face reality, and increases the possibility of direct and

indirect aid for the Spanish people."

Four days later Britain and France recognised Franco's forces as the legal government of Spain, a full month before the fall of Madrid and the end of the Civil War.

ISOLATED

The final eighteen months of the Civil War within Spain itself reflected these political shifts within the ECCI. On the one hand, the PCE continued to become politically isolated although this was masked by their total control over the bloody apparatus of terror. At the end of 1937 the PCE added the Ministry of Justice to their spoils in order to push more vigorously their campaign for:

"the complete extermination of the Trotskyist POUM gang". (ECCI letter to PCE, July 1938)

Togliatti's only answer to the political shift to the right was to lead it and give it a political expression. Togliatti and Stepanov submitted, on behalf of the PCE, a new draft programme for adoption by the government in April 1938.

It was the most nationalistic document yet produced. Its commitment to democracy was subordinated to the defence of private property rights. The ECCI insisted on the inclusion of a clause protecting the property of foreigners.

None of this, however, could prevent the shadow of the bourgeoisie defecting from the Popular Front. Negrin opened negotiations with Franco in February 1938. But this delay and hesitation in publicly dumping the PCE irritated the Spanish military command - now left to their fate by the departure of the USSR 'advisors'. On March 5th/6th Casado as head of the Madrid garrison formed a Council of National Defence thus usurping Negrin's ministerial authority. Having done that he oversaw the fall of Madrid on March 29th. By then the PCE had abandoned the Republic. In hiding, Togliatti issued a PCE statement on March 10th calling for an end to the resistance.

DEFEAT

On that same day in Moscow Stalin presided over the CPSU's 18th Congress. The events in Spain were hardly referred to. The lessons of defeat would not be drawn in Moscow. To ensure that they would not be drawn, Stalin silenced dozens of his henchmen on returning from their operations in Spain. Stalin thereby hoped to hide from history the crimes of Stalinism. But this was impossible. The Spanish revolution had been drowned in the blood of those who dared to make it.

As Trotsky himself argued: ". . . Stalin in Spain in 1937 is the continuator of Stalin of the March 1917 Conference of the Bolsheviks. But in 1917 he merely feared the revolutionary workers; in 1937 he strangled them. The opportunist had become executioner."

In this connection, workers everywhere will do well to recall the words of the Spanish Stalinist Ibaruri who in 1937 proclaimed:

"We must always remember this. An unbridgeable abyss of blood lies between us and the Trotskyists."

If we understand by 'Trotskyism' the vanguard of the Spanish proletariat, whether socialist, anarchist, centrist or genuinely Trotskyist, then we agree. We merely reply to those who carry her mantle and celebrate her party's achievements fifty years on: the abyss was filled to overflowing by your murderous activities. The blood of Spain still stains your hands.

by Keith Hassell

The end



International

PERU

PRESIDENT ALAN GARCIA has maintained the pretence that he was looking for a "social" rather than a "military" solution to the Sendero Luminoso guerrilla insurgency. These pretensions have been blown sky high with the massacre of hundreds of Sendero supporters in Peruvian prisons in June. It was Garcia who broke off negotiations with the prisoners who were demanding improved conditions and ordered the Army and Navy to crush the revolt.

The government claims 159 prisoners were killed. More reliable sources put the figure at 400, many of whom were buried secretly in unmarked mass graves by the military.

GRENADA

THE TRIAL OF 18 members and leaders of the New Jewel Movement (NJM) for supposedly ordering and carrying out the murder of Maurice Bishop and others on October 19 1983 continues in Grenada.

The trial is run by the US backed Blaise Administration and paid for by the US government. It has always had as its aim not to determine who ordered and carried out the killings, which facilitated the US invasion six days later, but to "convict" the NJM for opposing US imperialism.

The defendants - including Bernard and Phillis Coard, Selwyn Strachan and John Ventour (ex-General Secretary of the Grenada TUC) - were arrested shortly after the US invasion. Their "confessions" were extracted under a regime of brutal beatings and deprivations and are a main part of the prosecution's case.

The US government has refused to return documents of the NJM and People's Revolutionary Government seized in the invasion. These are crucial to the defence's case that the central committee never ordered the killings.

The labour movement in Britain should protest this mockery of a trial. Only the Grenadian people have a right to judge who was responsible for the events of the October 19, free of US interference and intimidation, and via a workers' tribunal.

Further information can be obtained from the Committee of Human Rights in Grenada, c/o 129 Seven Sisters Rd, London, N7s

BOLIVIA

ELEUTERIO GUTIERREZ is a Bolivian miner and Trotskyist who was imprisoned in September 1985 at the time of the five week general strike against the austerity measures of the UDP government. Accused of "stealing mining equipment" on his arrest the comrade has been imprisoned for 8 months without trial or any charges laid against him. The real reason for his arrest was because he was a well known militant in the region of Oruro, being active in campaigns to nationalise the private mines, on protest marches of miners to La Paz, and an active delegate of his Union. Letters of protest and resolutions calling for his release should be sent to the Bolivian Embassy, 106 Eaton Square, London SW1.

THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY party - minus Healy and Banda - held a session of its 8th Congress in June. Workers Power were invited to observe this Congress. What we witnessed was a very inadequate discussion of an even more inadequate 'draft manifesto' entitled 'A Programme of Action for the Crisis'. The whole discussion was badly marred by a high proportion of demagoguery aimed in particular at two WRP members who argued for referring back the draft, at the now departed 'Banda faction' and at Workers Power.

The Congress was treated to WRP leaders like Cyril Smith spewing out pseudo-dialectics to justify their shabby polemics. The refuse of Healyism is still there, and moreover, finds its political expression in the Manifesto.

Many aspects of the document were, in our view, wrong. But at the centre of the document - its strategic core - was a perspective of an advancing mass movement, which could be given direction by the WRP raising as the demand of the day 'drive the Tories from office'. In this critique we concentrate on this important aspect of the document.

The WRP Manifesto emphasises the centrality of bringing down the Tories:

"That is why the demand of the hour is DRIVE OUT THIS TORY GOVERNMENT!"

The working class must take the leadership in the mass movement building up against this government on questions of war, imperialist alliances, nuclear energy, as well as on attacks on trade union rights, jobs, communities, state benefits, education, the health service and basic democratic rights... "All sections of the working class, the youth, the unemployed, women's and community groups, and also sympathetic layers of the middle class, must be united in this mass movement to bring down Thatcher."

DANGEROUS

An amendment did remove a highly dangerous formulation that the removal of the Tories was a "pre-condition" for the solution of the workers' most elementary problems. But that was not the core weakness of this whole approach. Of course getting rid of the Tories is a pre-condition for the solution of these problems on a lasting basis via the establishment of socialism. But bringing them down is not a pre-condition for fighting back now. Suggesting that it is plays into the hands of the argument that Dean, Willis and Kinnock are peddling with great force in order to isolate those sections, like the printers, who are fighting here and now.

Workers Power's objection to the slogan "Drive Out the Tories!" is that it is too general and un-specific a slogan to become an actual object of struggle. How to drive out the Tories? By a "mass movement" says the manifesto - a unification of the various struggles. Here the perspective involved in the manifesto shows its eclecticism. The miners' strike, the printers, the peace movement and the revulsion of a majority of the electorate as revealed in opinion polls and by-elections are given as examples of the mass movement. From this scenario is drawn the conclusion that there is a mass willingness to drive out the Tories. But this ignores, and even rejects, certain unpleasant facts.

DEFEAT

The miners were defeated. No serious rank and file miner militant, let alone the sacked lads, doubt this. Nearly 40,000 jobs have been lost and more pits closed than MacGregor and Thatcher wanted in the first place. A scab yellow union has been formed and gained almost total control in one of the most productive coalfields. The NUM is bankrupted and the leadership is now decisively in the hands of the Kinnockite/Eurostatinist 'New Right'. This was by any standards a defeat - not a 'setback' as the manifesto claims. Let left

WRP MANIFESTO

NO GUIDE TO ACTION

Workers Press

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY MANIFESTO A programme of action for the crisis

bureaucrats like Scargill and Heathfield save their reputations at the expense of reality. The George Boltons and Kim Howells have a fatal advantage over them by 'stating what is', even though they were co-responsible for the defeat and are motivated by a desire to rubbish the strike and its heroic lessons for the future. Are we obliged by this to clap a telescope to our blind eye and see 'no defeat'? To do so would be to fail in our duty as revolutionaries of stating what is. Indeed if we do not look reality in the face we will not be able to explain the Tory offensive, its successes and how it can now be fought.

The manifesto thus fails the acid test of analysing the most important class battle in Britain for many years. It should have drawn a balance sheet. It should have looked at the positive and negative results, assessed the leadership given to the miners, especially by Scargill, and made a judgement as to the strike's long and short term effects. Indeed it makes no assessment whatsoever of Scargill's tactics and strategy - just as Healy failed to do throughout the strike. But whereas he positively endorsed Scargill's leadership the WRP is now silent. Why?

It would be demagoguery of the worst centrist sort to claim (as do Socialist Action, for example) that to criticise Scargill would mean siding with the right. Such a viewpoint would provide every left-reformist leader with left cover before, during and after struggles that they lead. Of course we gave support to Scargill, and will continue to do so, insofar as he stands

for and strives for class struggle against enemies who stand for surrender and class betrayal. But we will not allow this support to prevent us from arguing against reliance on Scargill and from criticising him when necessary. Given that the *Newline* during the strike was Scargill's cheerleader the manifesto should have drawn a balance sheet. That it does not is testimony to its shallowness.

Nor, by calling the strike a defeat, are we blind to its enormously positive effects, to the victories within the defeat, like the creation of a new generation of class fighters, the organisation of the women and so on. A fight - even if defeated - is always preferable to surrender to the bosses attacks without resistance.

Nevertheless, because the working class was not mobilised in class action alongside the miners on a systematic and prolonged basis, because a general strike was not developed, the miners went down to a terrible defeat.

Throughout the strike Workers Power paid attention to every detail of struggle. We were indefatigable in building every form of support from collections through to solidarity action. But we did this within the context of hammering away at the need for a general strike. Of course, in a different (in fact sectarian) way, WRP members also argued for such a strike. In the manifesto, however, as well as the failure to draw a balance sheet on Scargill there is also a failure to draw one on the general strike question. It is simply not mentioned. As a slogan it seems to have been ditched altogether.



The motivation for this abandonment of the general strike slogan would seem to be that it was tried and failed. This response is the sheerest pragmatism. Firstly the WRP cannot really assess the resonance of the slogan since it was wrongly tied by them to bringing down Thatcher's bonapartist dictatorship. We will leave aside the evident lunacy of calling a parliamentary regime deploying its special bodies of armed men under the direction of the judiciary, bonapartism. To tie the general strike from the outset to 'kicking out the government' meant pitting this slogan against the bourgeois-democratic illusions and consciousness of the great majority of the proletariat not directly involved in the strike. It meant ignoring the most immediate general political issue facing all organised workers, the anti-union laws, that made the crippling fines and much of the police repression perfectly legal. It meant relegating to the background the general economic question of redundancies and unemployment.

Supporting the miners' demands and smashing the anti-union laws were issues on which the agitation for a general strike should have been launched. There were many critical moments when that agitation became number one slogan of the day; at Orgreave; when the laws were first actively invoked; during the dockers' strike; around the TUC congress and when sequestration of the NUM's funds took place. Even Scargill and Benn came close to calling openly for a general strike then. Of course this slogan did not replace or preclude more limited demands for solidarity action (any more than the latter precluded calls for collecting money and food).

ISOLATION

Because the miners failed to decisively break out of their isolation - they were isolated in action not in sympathy or material and moral support - they were defeated. The defeat had and still has serious consequences for us all. The anti-union laws which had been rarely and very carefully used before the strike and 'defied' verbally by most union leaders were made to stick against the 'brigade of guards' of the British workers movement.

Since then we have seen nearly every union cave in to them - most recently Dean and SOGAT in the Print Strike. Effective blacking, picketing, bringing out Fleet Street are all made more difficult for militants to win because of the effects of the miners' defeat. The cowardly union leaders use it as a pretext, but even the majority of rank and file leaders are hesitant to fight for these tactics because they feel they cannot win where the miners lost. It is true, and Workers Power has said it many times, that the miners' defeat did not shatter or

greatly weaken all the unions in the way the betrayal and defeat of the general strike in 1926 did. In 1985/86 tens of thousands of militants were not victimised, millions did not leave the unions, and the defeat was not perceived clearly by most workers as their own defeat because they were not directly involved in the battle. Still, it was nonetheless an objective defeat for the whole working class and made itself felt in real life in defeats in the Post Office, on British Rail, in the shipyards and elsewhere.

The defeat was not without its enormous costs to the ruling class - economically, politically and ideologically. It alienated millions of workers and petit-bourgeois from the Tories - even where they had little or no sympathy with Scargill and the mass pickets. Continued increases in unemployment, political subservience to Reagan's bellicose fulminations against the USSR and his actions against Libya have further alienated the masses. But this has not yet become a mass movement against the Tories. Indeed we have seen a diminution of movement in the sense of active struggle, not only by the unions but also by the pacifists of CND and even by the forces of the 'women's movement' and the 'black community'. Here there has also been an effect flowing from the miners' defeat.

ELECTORALISM

The result is another phenomenon the WRP's manifesto cannot come to grips with - the rise in popularity of Kinnock's Labour Party. Nor can its successes at the polls be simply 'translated' into radical language - as a desire to kick out the Tories. Of course two thirds of the electorate want them out but overwhelmingly they want this done electorally. Labour is promising less and less in the name of realism and this is meeting little or no challenge from the established Left in the Labour Party itself or in the unions. This explains why there is a powerful rightward current in the Labour Party and the Unions as evidenced by the witch-hunt and by the unceremonious ditching of left policies and the adoption of the state right wing policies of the 1960s and 1970s based centrally on 'Incomes Policy'.

PLATITUDES

In fact we have an uphill struggle to generalise the defensive battles of the present and the next year or so against the sentiment of 'getting rid of the Tories by electing a Labour Government'. The 'unity' of doing nothing to injure Labour's electoral prospects is the cry of the witch-hunters. Alas it finds a response amongst honest but deceived working people. This brings us back to the essentially right-wing content lodged within the manifesto's strategic slogan. To reduce everything to getting rid of the Tories without specifying the means to do this - general strike? revolution? ballot-box? - and what to replace them with - a Kinnock led government? a Benn led government? socialism? - will play into the hands of Kinnock.

Against the too general platitudes of the manifesto, revolutionaries should put the attacks of the capitalist class and the means to resist them in the forefront of their agitation. These attacks can and will come from a Labour government, or from a coalition. Instead of swimming with the tide of popular anti-Toryism we need to prepare the working class for this now. This means involvement in the unions and the Labour Party in building a resistance to Kinnock and Willis - an anti-bureaucratic, anti-new realist, anti-electoral cretinist opposition. In this struggle a group of a few hundred Trotskyist propagandists and agitators can turn themselves into a real party of a significant proportion of the vanguard workers. But to do this means recognising where we are now and not indulging in wishful thinking or pseudo-dialectics. ■

by Dave Stocking

TAMIL RESISTANCE GROWS

ON THE EVE of the June meeting of the Sri Lankan Aid Consortium, the government of President Jayewardene produced its latest proposals for solving the island's 'ethnic problem'. The measures involve limited devolved powers for all the local regional bodies - including those in the Tamil majority areas in the North and East - but with the essential powers concerning defence and 'security', foreign policy and so on, being retained by the central Sinhalese state or its local representatives.

In short they go little beyond previous proposals which have palpably failed to meet the needs of the oppressed Tamils. But their timing ensured that the government obtained the \$700 million aid from the UK, US, Japan and Europe to keep the economy afloat. The cash will also ensure that the brutal war being waged by the government against the Tamil people can continue, despite the 'reforms'. In fact 'defence' spending now accounts for 17% of the budget - a tenfold increase on the 1977 figure when Jayewardene's UNP government came to office.

Jayewardene's government is based on the majority Sinhalese population in Sri Lanka. The Tamils

- many of whom were brought to Sri Lanka from India by the British to work as near slaves in the tea plantations - are an oppressed national minority within Sri Lanka. That oppression has taken an ever more violent colouration of late. Imperialism fostered divisions between the two peoples. The Sinhalese bourgeoisie - dominant since independence from Britain - perpetuated these divisions.

To escape the systematic oppression they face, more and more Tamils have taken up the demand for a separate Tamil State. The mood for independence has strengthened particularly since the pogroms against Tamils in July 1983. Until then it was only a demand of the revolutionary nationalists and guerilla groups. The bourgeois reformists and parliamentarians - gathered within the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) - pressed only for civil rights and an end to discrimination in jobs, education and housing within a unitary state.

But the crisis in the Sri Lankan economy and state in the 1970s and 1980s has led the majority Sinhalese parties (UNP and SLFP) to divide the working class along communal and religious lines to prevent united resistance to its austerity policies. Resistance has met with increased repression which in turn has hardened opinion. In a recent interview in the March Tamil Times the President of the TULF, M Sivasithamparam, argued:

"There can be no doubt that Tamils can live and work only in a Tamil linguistic state. In the case of the plantation workers there has to be a phased withdrawal (from the south-central uplands - WP). The objective must be to move them all into the North and East over a period of time."

This outlook has spread as the repression intensified.

The proposed devolution which

Jayewardene is pressing ahead with despite the increasing violence is not a fundamental change of course by the Sinhalese bourgeoisie. It is no more than a cosmetic reform designed to split the middle class and bourgeois Tamils from the militants. This much was made clear when the UNP insisted in April that:

"devolution of power and other constitutional arrangements must not violate the essential unitary character of the Sri Lankan state or of its constitution."

This amounted to a further refusal to consider the Tamil population's demand for a separate state (Eelam) within the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Later in April Jayewardene made it clear that he wanted "a military solution to the Tamil insurrection".

The Tamils hardly needed reminding. Since February this year the Sri Lankan army has stepped up the military terror against them. Well documented massacres took place in the Northern island of Ninativu and in the eastern village of Udumbankulam. On February 19th 80 Tamil workers were rounded up in their paddy fields in the Amparai district and shot. Such incidents show no sign of abating.

NEW TACTIC

In March and April the government began a new tactic - aerial bombardments on the civilian population and suspected guerilla camps in and around Jaffna, in the Northern Province. The aim is to terrorise the local population and thereby weaken support for the guerrillas. The result, in fact, has been to add to the 200,000 Tamils who have already fled the country. Moreover, in the interests of self-defence, those remaining have



above: Tamil guerillas left: Gandhi with Jayewardene

increased their support for the guerillas.

Trade unionists and socialists in Britain have a special responsibility to the Tamil people in supporting their right to self-determination (i.e. statehood). Sri Lanka was until 1948 a British colony. Its colonial administration used and deepened the communal differences to sustain its exploitation of the population. Today, the tea barons of London dominate the economy and condemn the plantation workers to poverty and oppression. Thatcher is one of Jayewardene's firmest supporters and has backed him with money. British helicopters (and even ex-SAS pilots) have taken part in the aerial attacks on the Tamils. The Home Office has done as little as possible to help Tamil refugees and is callously deporting some. Anything that trade unionists can do to block goods to Sri Lanka, prevent arms going to its army and helping Tamil refugees, here, will help the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Thatcher's argument that the Tamil fighters are 'terrorists' is a lie characteristic of a woman who delights in the company of murderers like Botha, Zia and Jayewardene. Despite government propaganda, the guerilla's targets remain primarily the security forces. All the groups have vehemently denied responsibility for the bomb attacks in Colombo in May which left dozens of civilians and tourists dead. They may well be the work of agent-provocateurs. Even the Sinhalese civilians that have been declared legitimate targets of the guerillas are those whom they consider are willing colonisers of the North and Eastern provinces.

Nevertheless, the dangers of national exclusiveness and anti-Sinhalese sentiments are evident. In particular the reliance that the Tamil groups place upon the Indian government (Tamil Nadu in Southern India is the home of 50 million Tamils) will bolster this anti-Sin-

halese ideology. An enlarged Tamil Nadu embracing the North of Sri Lanka under Rajiv Gandhi's tutelage will certainly do nothing to liberate the Tamils from poverty and hunger.

It has to be said that the appeal of forced population transfer of the plantation Tamils in the South is limited amongst many of those concerned. The mobilisation of those workers in a General Strike to hit at the profits of big business is what is needed to crack Jayewardene's will. Moreover such action could open the road to unity in struggle with Sinhalese workers. The purely guerilla struggle of Tamil groups like the LTTE and TULO, reveals its real limits in this respect. It cannot generate a class unity against imperialism and its agents in Sri Lanka.

UNITY

Yet the possibility for such unity exists. The economic crisis and austerity plans have hit Sinhalese workers too. The UNP have been swift to use emergency legislation - drawn up for use against the Tamils - against the trade unions; against teachers and nurses, most recently. A conference of 5,000 delegates from 25 unions on March 25th called for a National Day of Protest. The fact that the demands of this mainly Sinhalese gathering called for a political not military solution to 'the ethnic problem' indicates the possibility of winning sections of the Sinhalese workers to break with Sinhala chauvinism, and even to an acceptance of the Tamil's demands. Deepening this break and mobilising the plantation workers still remains the essential component of a strategy to end the oppression of the Tamils and the oppression of all Sinhalese workers at the hands of Jayewardene and his imperialist backers.

by Keith Hassell

GENERAL STRIKE IN CHILE

IT IS NOW two months since Pinochet introduced a new system of tighter repression in Chile. In that time thirty five districts have been surrounded and searched by the military. 100,000 people have been subject to harassment and put on file.

In this climate of repression mounting opposition is due to culminate in general strikes on July 2nd and 3rd. Unlike previous occasions shop keepers and lorry drivers - previously loyal supporters of the Pinochet regime - are set to join the stoppage.

The Chilean dictator remains intent on holding on to power. He has no other strategic project as his repression edges Chile to the verge of civil war. His only support comes from the oligarchy that enjoy all the privileges, including that of being able to take between five and ten billion dollars out of the country for fear of the regime's collapse.

Amidst economic crisis the regime's credibility is in tatters. It can still count on support from the navy and the army. But the air force and police have now hinted that they will abandon

governmental responsibilities at the first opportunity.

The Reagan administration is prepared to accept the dictatorship's timetable for a transition to 'democratic government'. It has tried to avoid putting any economic pressure on Pinochet. Its fear is that the opposition will not be able to guarantee a stable government acceptable to Washington. As State Department official Abram said recently:

"We prefer the formula of transition to democracy coming from within Pinochet's government."

At a recent meeting between US Embassy officials and oppositional National Accord leaders, the US government hinted that Pinochet would fall sooner if any future government guaranteed certain policies. It insisted on pledges to ban 'non-democratic', i.e. Marxist, parties and declare a general amnesty for the military, which should itself be left free to decide Pinochet's fate. It called for a commitment to stay out of Central American peace talks and to continue with the regime's foreign debt policy.

In the face of the repression the Church has acted in defence of human rights. It has had several of its priests killed and hundreds tortured. However the archbishop of Santiago opposes the politicisation of the Church's activities and the 'social Christian' tendencies of many shanty town priests. When previous mobilisations against the regime reached their peak the church used its weight to push for dialogue between the opposition and the government. In so doing it won more time for Pinochet. As a Jesuit editor of a religious magazine explained:

"only in a very extreme case will the church act as a mediator for an agreement between the military and civilians."

The church is preparing a peaceful way out of the revolutionary crisis that is unfolding in Chile.

DIALOGUE

Last year the right-wing opposition agreed to create a national accord for dialogue with the regime. They were supported with some reservations by the left. It was welcomed by the US Government, supported by the Church and praised by some high ranking officers. It sees social mobilisation only as a means of pressuring the government to negotiate. This has been explained by Dr Ivan Luis Gonzalez, president of the Asamblea de la Ciudad in the following way:

"mobilisation is the only way to pressure the armed forces to accept a dialogue that results in a transitional Government."

The Communist Party led Democratic Popular Movement is also set on negotiating their way out of confrontation. Its president Herman Correa thinks such negotiations, while not possible with Pinochet, can take place with

democratic and patriotic sectors of his armed forces.

Recently the Patriotic Front Manuel Rodriguez, a guerilla group that is ideologically and organically linked to the Communist Party, has carried out a series of bombings and reprisal raids. One of its commanders - comrade Daniel - recently explained the group's political goals to an interviewer in Santiago. He said the group wanted:

"the dismantling of the entire repressive apparatus introduced by the armed forces and the resignation of Pinochet."

It wanted:

"the formation of a Provisional Government that incorporated all anti-dictatorial forces and called a constituent assembly to elaborate a new constitution."

That accomplished, Comrade Daniel said:

"we could say that the people have their sovereignty, that

there is full democracy in Chile and therefore we will dispose of our weapons."

The Chilean Stalinists are still carrying on with their programme of forging a new popular front committed to restore bourgeois democracy.

In reality however only the independent class action of the proletariat can lead all the oppressed of town and country to the destruction of Pinochet's regime. To that end a united front of workers' parties and unions must be built. It must give a lead to the peasants and all oppressed strata. Taking up the fight for all democratic demands and its class demands against the bourgeoisie, this united front can lead to the creation of workers' councils and armed militia that can replace the dictatorship with a workers and peasants government.

by Diego Mocar



Arrests in Chile are a daily occurrence

IN THE MONTHS preceding the declaration of the State of Emergency a revolutionary situation has developed in South Africa. Its underlying basis is the deepening crisis of South African capitalism. This crisis has been exacerbated by the flight of foreign capital and the loss of confidence by the European and North American imperialist bourgeoisies in their white South African younger brother.

There has been no real growth in the South African economy since 1981. Unable to reap the big profits of the 1960s and early 1970s, and fearful of the rising tide of black revolt, major companies have been pulling out. One US executive told *Newsweek* that their South African operations "command a disproportionate amount of top management attention". It was more trouble than it was worth.

Since the beginning of 1985, 52 US companies have sold up or made plans to get out, including General Electric, Pepsico and Motorola. Inflation is now running at 18%, unemployment is at least 20%. Interest rates are considerably higher than most other industrialised countries and, before the Emergency, the Rand had once again fallen to below 40 US cents.

COSATU

The South African economy can no longer produce the staggering super-profits based on the slave labour of the mine compounds that it did in the 1950s and 1960s. A result, and in its turn a cause, of this is the development of an organised combative black proletariat whose union federation (COSATU) is half-a-million strong and which has now proved that one and a half million workers will follow its lead. The revolutionary situation is above all testified to by the manifest refusal of the majority of the black population to tolerate the obscenity of apartheid any longer.

The development and politicisation of the trade unions and the mass support for the ANC in the townships both testify to this. The May Day strike by a million and a half workers signified that a mighty new political labour movement was being born. Faced with this upsurge, signs of extreme crisis were increasingly manifest within the South African ruling class. A powerful proportion of monopoly capital wanted and still wants to open negotiations with the ANC and COSATU.

They had visited the African National Congress in Lusaka. Others had joined the collaborator Chief Gatsha Buthelezi in urging a 'power sharing' solution and had even joined his Indaba (conference) in Natal to discuss this option. The message from the international bankers was for reform.

But every step Botha took down this path further enraged the base of the Nationalist Party. The contradictions that lie at the heart of the apartheid system meant that every concession to the black majority is seen as a loss of privilege to the white workers and farmers. The Nationalists lost support at an alarming rate in their heartland of the Northern Trans-

Where is the Revolution going?

vaal. Eugene Terre'Blanche's Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB), employing the methods as well as the rhetoric and symbols of Nazism, organised the racist colons, desperate to protect their privileges and their farms. This was what prevented Botha from confirming the 'reform' perspective by open talks with the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group.

Botha's strategy - in operation for several years - was one of slowly dismantling the economically suicidal aspects of apartheid and stimulating the growth of movements in the homelands, and beyond them, that would compromise with a modified racist system. But this 'reform' strategy was combined with repression of the radical elements, and the prevention of the politicisation of the unions.

Yet even the repression which South Africa's draconian laws permit as a normal feature of life failed to achieve his aim. His strategy has been rent asunder, on the one hand by the revolt of the black masses in the townships and the homelands and, by the development of the unions into a force capable of organising a political general strike, and on the other by the 'backlash' of the white racists. The only answer was a resort to unbridled repression in the hope that this would win a breathing space.

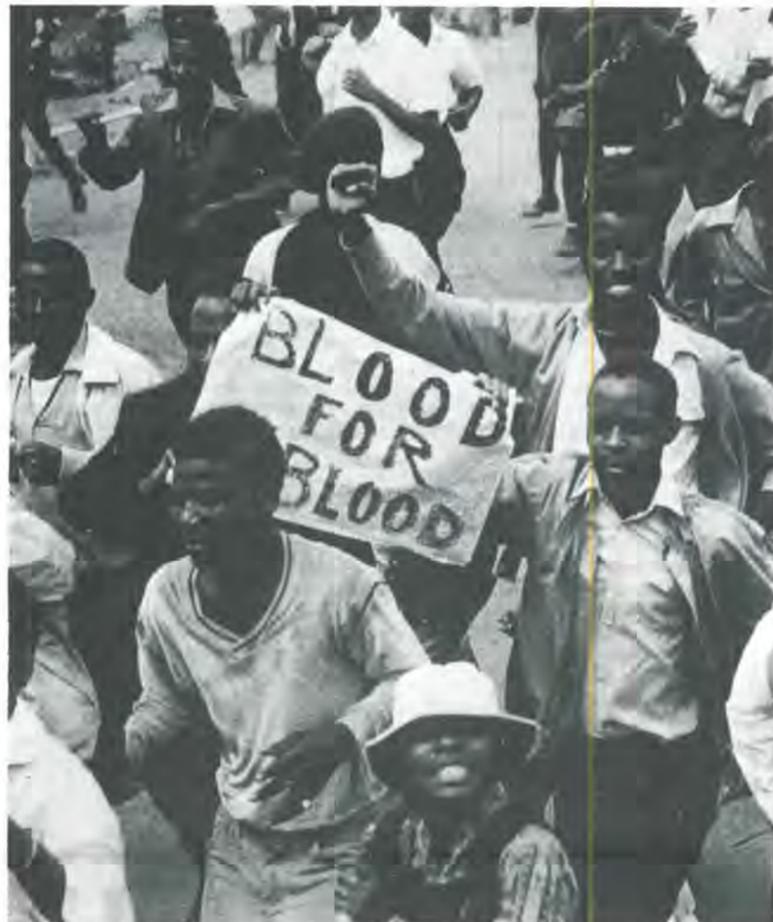
Abroad his backers, Thatcher and Reagan, have sought to win him this breathing space. They have judged, so far correctly, that the weaker imperialist powers and the semi-colonial states in the EEC, the United Nations and the Commonwealth will be too weak spirited to do anything drastic.

From the moment that Botha sunk the talks by raiding ANC exile bases in the Front Line states, he was set on the only alternative course if he was to stem the working class action - massive repression before the working class could fully demonstrate its power.

AGENTS

On its side, the regime had not only the huge fire power and repressive apparatus of the apartheid state itself, but also its agents within the black community. It could take advantage of the formation of Buthelezi's reactionary alternative union federation UWUSA. This has been set on a course of undermining the influence of COSATU and of course is aided by management in a number of workplaces.

It also unleashed the carefully nurtured vigilante groups within the squatter camps. The leaders of these groups had long resented the way in which the growing organisation and politicisation amongst the young 'comrades' and the



women of Crossroads had undercut their influence. Where the new democratic organisation had emerged, there was no room for pay-offs for the 'right' to squat on pieces of land. They were doomed without some shift in the balance of forces. They feared for their livelihood just as the 'she-been' owners and corrupt politicians had feared in Soweto in 1976 when the youth started to clean up.

The shift in the balance they needed came when the state agents not only armed them but indicated that they had a free hand. All reports confirm that the South African Police allowed and encouraged the attacks by the vigilantes on the areas held by the 'comrades'.

Botha's decision meant taking ever more power into the hands of the Presidency. He was unable to get his measures through Parliament in time, as even the stooges in the Colored and Indian sections of Parliament could not stomach a vote for the sweeping

powers of detention and banning that Botha wanted. Facing Soweto Day, he brought in the emergency and subsequently forced his measures through the President's Council.

The imposition of a savage bonapartist dictatorship testifies to the unbearable social contradictions tearing at the vitals of the apartheid system - not to the resolution of these contradictions. Botha claims that his measures have worked. He points to the fact that after the State of Emergency was imposed, the Rand recovered to above the 40 cents mark. No mass demonstrations, threatening to spill over into the white areas, were possible on Soweto Day.

On the other hand the representatives of the South African opposition who have been able to speak out, such as exile ANC leader Oliver Tambo and churchmen Tutu and Boesak, claim that far from indicating the strength of the regime, the measures actually bear testimony to its profound weakness.

The early indications were that whereas the Emergency measures could prevent demonstrations and meetings it could not halt all working class action. June 16th demonstrated the considerable discipline of the black working class. With thousands of its key leaders detained and others underground, with no information other than that provided by the state broadcasting service and the pro-government press, with its townships surrounded by armed forces, the working class nevertheless observed the General strike call. A 90% success rate was reported in the Johannesburg, Pretoria and Port Elizabeth areas, an 80% observance in Cape Town. Even in Natal, a 30-40% rate was reported in Durban.

Several reports indicate that the mines were the weakest point of resistance. If this is so it is a serious blow to the working class - to the NUM and COSATU. Of

course the migrant workers, 40% of whom are from outside South Africa, face enormous problems. Living in prison-like compounds on site, easily cut off by the security forces from the townships and from the rest of the working class, they are most vulnerable to company-police and army repression. Also the role played by Buthelezi's Inkatha and his yellow union UWUSA in splitting the miners may be more significant than first thought. Whatever the causes they must be overcome. South Africa's miners - in the goldfields, in the coal, diamond and platinum mines - hold the key to apartheid's treasure chest. If the miners are decisively defeated a terrible blow will have been struck to the South African revolution.

Nevertheless all reports indicate a more massive turn out than on May Day with estimates of up to two million workers participating. Since then the bulk of reported action by workers has been from the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union. Sit-ins and sleep-ins have seriously disrupted business and sent the retail capitalists running to Louis LeGrange demanding the release of union officials. Other bosses like Mike Sandaar, managing director of the chemicals and explosives giant conglomerate AECI, demanded the release of officials. He commented:

"They play a constructive role in resolving conflict in the community and in our factories and their absence is posing serious problems."

COSATU's unions, despite the arrest of the leaders, have undoubtedly survived the first blows of the State of Emergency especially at work place level. The shop steward system has been built to weather such a storm. If the number of trade unionists detained reached 1,000 this would be less than a tenth of workplace leaders. Research conducted by the South African Labour Bulletin into 23 major unions revealed 12,462 shop stewards and 1,443 stewards committees or councils. Despite the relative youth of the independent unions, their roots have sunk deep. If Botha wants to ban and destroy COSATU then he will need to inflict a much more severe defeat on the working class.

HOLLOWNESS

Given the suppression of information it is difficult to make any definite assessment as to the extent of disorientation or demoralisation that the State of Emergency and the events like the destruction of Crossroads may have brought into the movement. Certainly it will be a powerful blow to the 'peaceful' and 'democratic' methods of the UDF leaders like Boesak and Tutu.

Likewise it shows the hollow-ness of a non-political trade unionism and the severe limits of the ANC strategy of 'making the townships ungovernable'. The dangers and opportunities now facing the South African proletariat and the oppressed masses find their expression in a crisis of strategy - a crisis of leadership.

Soweto Day showed again the enormous potential of working class power. The US magazine *Newsweek* commented:

"Most blacks went back to work the next day. But their stay-away demonstrated how crucial they are to South Africa's economy - and what a devastating blow they could strike if they ever decided to stop work indefinitely." (30.6.86)

Repeated and prolonged mass strike action is the first and most vital weapon with which the proletariat can and must throw back Botha's

WORKERS' SANCTIONS

continued from front page

The decision of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions has taken a step in the right direction by calling on workers to stop work on goods destined for South Africa. Rodney Bickerstaffe of NUPE called, on the 28th June demonstration, for workers to "take action as trade unionists and refuse to handle South African goods". It would however be fatal to wait for the official movement to grind slowly into inaction. Rank and file militants must take the initiative now. In the union branches, the stewards committees and the trades councils we must fight for a complete boycott of all work

for South Africa, all goods from South Africa and all transport or communication with South Africa (with exceptions only to aid the Liberation movement). This will need a trade union organised, inspection and enquiry - seeking help and assistance from the AAM, the ANC, COSATU, SACTU and all the forces fighting for freedom - to locate the traffickers with apartheid.

COMMITTEES

Boycott committees based on work place delegates should be formed in every town and city. Demonstrations, meetings at workplaces, pickets of firms working on South African orders, should be organized to build sup-

port for the 'Workers' Sanctions Against Apartheid'.

Of course Thatcher and the bosses will claim this threatens British workers jobs. So it will, because the bosses will try to off-load their losses onto our backs. We should resist this to the end. They have grown fat on apartheid. We must make these swine pay the insignificant short term losses of destroying racism.

If we British workers do our duty now, then we will truly be able to join in the great shout of liberation when the vile Babylon of Racism crashes to the ground in fragments:

Workers' Sanctions Now. Total Boycott of Apartheid.

Victory to the ANC, COSATU and all fighters for freedom!

offensive. The sit-in strike, protected by a workers' defence organisation presents even Botha's police with serious problems, exacerbating the tensions between the bosses who do not want to see their factories, stores, mines and offices smashed up by an armed assault on them. A rolling and spreading sit-in strike wave can catch police and employers off guard. An indefinite general strike would be more than all the SADF could break. It can transform a revolutionary situation into a revolution itself! It can create the basis for workers' councils uniting workplace and community. It is the only way to open the road to the destruction of the racist state. The failure of either the ANC or COSATU to campaign for and call an indefinite General Strike in the face of the government onslaught confirms that we in Workers Power were correct to argue that the conscious socialists in COSATU should have fought for this when COSATU was first formed. COSATU militants have been wrong to think that the trade union federation alone could provide the necessary political lead.

COMBAT PARTY

This crisis of strategy, of which way for the South African Revolution, comes down to the need for an organised expression of the programme of working class power in South Africa - for a revolutionary combat party capable of winning the vanguard of the proletariat and the township youth. The ANC nationalist and Stalinist has no such strategy and perspective. The 'workerist' syndicalism of many of the union leaders is likewise incapable of outlining a way forward. Every turn in events shows the dire need for a revolutionary communist workers' party.

In the absence of such a party, the strategy of the ANC 'populists' came to predominate. The 'populists' have urged the unions to fall in behind the ANC. But the ANC strategy of limited working class action and externally imposed sanctions has been proved fatally flawed. Without a conscious struggle for working class power, the regime can enforce repression and isolation. The overseas investors may well be worried. They may well withdraw further investment. They may well go scurrying to the ANC to see if a path to peace and further profit making can be smoothed. But this does not help the South African workers whose townships are surrounded and whose leaders are in jail!

These workers must take up as the demands of the day:

- For mass strikes and occupations to smash Botha's State of Emergency!
- For an indefinite general strike!
- End the banning of all resistance organisations! Release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners!
- Demand arms for the resistance from the Front Line States like Zimbabwe, Angola etc!
- Down with Botha's dictatorship! For a revolutionary Constituent Assembly! For a Workers Republic in South Africa/Azania!

by Sue Thomas



REVIEW

POET OF THE REVOLUTION BY JON LEWIS

Vladimir Mayakovsky, Selected Works Volume 1: Selected Verse. Raduga £5.75, 279pp (illustrated).*

Vladimir Mayakovsky! In the flowering of Russian avant-garde art which followed the October Revolution, there was no more brilliant figure; Artist, Propagandist, Satirist, Author...

But above all, Poet. Prolific and pro-Bolshevik. The Selected Verse not only confirms Trotsky's opinion of Mayakovsky as 'an enormous talent' but, by arranging his work chronologically, shows how closely it mirrored the fortunes of the Revolution.

Mayakovsky was in rebellion before 1917. From his debut as a poet in 1912 with *Night* he railed against the stale conventions and norms of the Czarist cultural establishment, and was concerned instead to develop a new form of poetry and art - Russian futurism as it became known.

CULTURE CLUB

Such was Mayakovsky's hatred of the Czar's culture club and the society which spawned it that, in the poem *The Way I Became a Dog*, driven to despair, he assumes canine form.

In the years and months before the October Revolution, Mayakovsky's poetry becomes less anti-social in content. The poet began to welcome and anticipate those social forces which could and would overthrow bourgeois society. In *To Answer!* (1917) Mayakovsky asks the peasants in the bourgeois army:

You whose life is their sacrifice
When will you rise,
Upright and mighty,
and fling your query right
in their face:

WHY
ARE
WE FIGHTING?

Mayakovsky was in the full spate of his artistic rebellion when proletarian revolution broke out. For the ex-Bolshevik schoolboy, faced with October:

"To accept or not to accept? There was no such question for me... My Revolution" (I Myself).

Mayakovsky threw himself into the tasks of building and defending the infant workers' state ("the work of a poet of the Revolution is not confined to the writing of books"). The propaganda posters known as the 'Windows of ROSTA' (the Soviet Telegraph Agency) which Mayakovsky and his futurist collaborators produced, covered the country and brought information to a semi-literate population.

Naturally, Mayakovsky's poetry hailed the revolution and examined its every corner. However, the quality of this poetry is uneven. The revolution itself had spurred on the essence of futurism, revolutionary innovation of form, to a point where frequently there was little or no unity of form and content.

Or, as Trotsky said about Mayakovsky in *Literature and Revolution*:

"In his logic he had outrun his real creative condition".

Much of his poetry of this time is marked by rationalism and self-consciousness.

Despite all this, there are poems from the immediate post-revolutionary years, like the 1920 *An Amazing Adventure of Vladimir Mayakovsky*, which are magnificent. Poems where Mayakovsky successfully combines the revolutionary techniques of futurism with the authentic voice and experience of Revolution.

INTOLERANCE

The triumph of Stalinism was to mean the end of Soviet avant-garde art. The Stalinists could tolerate revolution in the arts as little as they could in politics. Whereas the Bolshevik Party under Lenin had believed that:

"The domain of art is not one in which the party is called upon to command." (Trotsky)

Stalin and his cultural thug Zhdanov insisted on rigid adherence to the dogma of Socialist Realism, with its hollow glorification of

Stalin and tractor production.

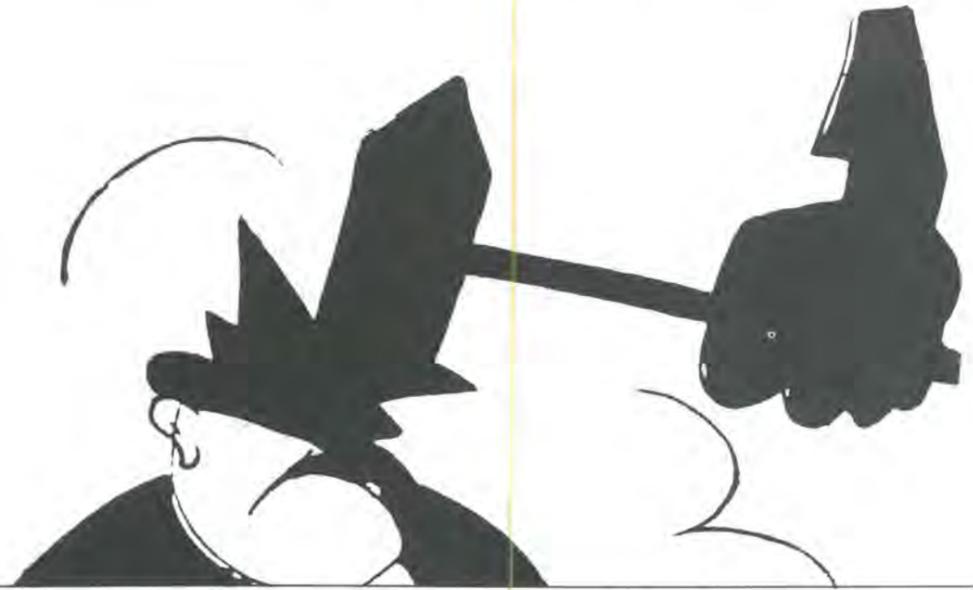
Mayakovsky, like the other revolutionary avant-garde artists, was hounded by the bureaucracy. The creative urge began to decline, the output dried up. In 1930, unable to go on, Mayakovsky committed suicide.

Once dead and buried, Stalin decided to play on Mayakovsky's phenomenal popularity, and canonise him. Stalin introduced Mayakovsky

"forcibly, like potatoes in the reign of Catherine II. This was his second death, but he had nothing to do with it." (Boris Pasternak).

This volume from the Soviet publishing house, Raduga, is part of the Stalinists' ongoing 'rehabilitation' of Mayakovsky. But someone should tell them you can't keep a good revolutionary down. To read Mayakovsky's poetry is still to breathe the air of the Revolution. ■

* Volumes 2 and 3, the *Longer Poems* (including the famous *Cloud in Pants*) and *Plays, Articles and Essays* respectively, are to be published soon.



THE DEATH OF Jock Haston, on Monday June 9th, serves to remind us of the gulf that separates the Trotskyism of the thirties and forties from that of today.

James Ritchie Haston was a seaman from Edinburgh. Attracted to the Communist Party at an early age, he began to pull away from it when he saw the myopia and cynicism of the Comintern at the coming to power of Hitler in Germany. After learning Marxist economics from the SPGB he turned to Trotskyism. He organised a group discussing Trotsky's books around Marble Arch which joined the Bolshevik/Leninist Group in the Labour Party led by Denzil Harber and Starkey Jackson in the summer of 1936.

Haston was one of a number of young workers who had broken with Stalinism and floated uncertainly around the three Trotskyist groups at that time, looking vainly for a lead. When the Bolshevik/Leninist Group split over the 'Lee Affair' in Autumn 1937 Haston found a more meaningful field of activity in a group consisting almost wholly of young workers - the Workers International League.

After Ralph Lee returned to South Africa Haston became

OBITUARY

WE THANK Al Richardson and Sam Bornstein for contributing this obituary to our paper. On questions concerning differences and disputes within the Trotskyist movement *Workers Power* does not necessarily share the same judgements as these comrades. However, this fact does not detract from the value of the obituary.

secretary of the organisation. During the War Haston's qualities were shown to the full. The WIL amazed the existing groups by the sheer level of its activity, grew by more than tenfold and by 1944 had led a number of important strikes, including the only modern example of workers' control in British History at the Nottingham Royal Ordnance Factory.

In his own person Haston broke down the stereotyped divisions between activist and organiser, theoretician and agitator, worker and intellectual. His personal inclinations were generous and

tolerant. On repeated occasions he persuaded Healy to return to the group, and the group to accept him again, when he had let off tantrum after tantrum threatening to leave the movement.

Beginning in 1942 Haston displayed a working command of Marxist theory far in advance of the leadership of the post-war Fourth International. He analysed the scope and extent of the post-war boom; correctly identified the causes and implications of the spread of Stalinist state forms; showed that the creation of the new regimes in Western Europe was a process of bourgeois democratic counter-revolution in which transitional slogans should replace the ultra-leftism of the international leadership; and pointed to the development of statism in the economies of post-war capitalism.

Nor was Haston lacking in personal courage. His coolness at all points of press hysteria and official witch-hunting during the wartime strikes, especially during the Newcastle Trial, gained him wide support.

But in 1948 he began to take his distance from Trotskyism, worn out by the factional battles instigated by the International

leadership, openly contemptuous of their untenable theories with regard to Eastern Europe, whilst seeing no further perspective for revolution with the onset of the thirty year boom that he had for so long foreseen.

After a few years as an NCLC organiser Haston carried on a dubious activity as education officer for the bankrupt and witch-hunting apparatus of the ETU. Ejected from the movement at the same time were many of the fine team he had helped to build in the forties - Roy Tearse, Frank Ward and others, many of them expelled because they refused to break their personal links with him.

Haston was only one of the major Trotskyist figures who left the movement in Britain and France at the time, as the Fourth International was obliged to attack its own working class leaders when it abandoned the politics it had inherited from Leon Trotsky.

But future working class revolutionaries will rather remember the Haston of the years 1936-48, and still stand in awe at his achievements. ■

Sam Bornstein
Al Richardson

PERMANENT REVOLUTION
South Africa Special.
Apartheid:
From Resistance
to Revolution.
Available now
from:
Workers Power
BCM Box 7750
London
WC1N 3XX.
Price £1.15 (incl. p&p)
FOUR

workers power

STRIKERS MUST TAKE THE

LEAD

IN A FIFTEEN MINUTE recess at the SOGAT Biennial Delegate Conference, the initiative in the News International dispute at Wapping, which had been seized when the strikers rejected Murdoch's 'final offer', was handed back to Murdoch.

By agreeing that the leadership of the strike should remain in the hands of the National Executive Committee, led by Brenda Dean, the London SOGAT delegation agreed that the dispute should be restricted to methods that would not threaten the union with re-sequestration of its funds. In other words the militant tactics necessary to win the strike will not be used.

This massive, and unnecessary, retreat was led by representatives of the London District Council. The ability of stalinists like Michael Hicks and Bill Freeman to bring about this sudden cave-in underlines the vital importance of bringing the strike under the control of an elected and recallable strike committee. This is now the most immediate task facing militants in the dispute. At present the day to day running of the strike is in the hands of a SOGAT liaison committee made up of the Fathers-/Mothers of the striking chapels and representatives of the London District Council. This body is in better touch with the strikers than the NEC, but it is still not accountable.

An even greater weakness is that ultimate control of the strike is still in the hands of the SOGAT NEC. It is committed to operating within the law, and will be prepared to use the courts to enforce its decisions.

Only strikers should have the right to decide on the tactics to be used - only they stand to win

or lose. The LDC have a better record in this dispute than Dean (how could it be worse!) There is little doubt that they were central in winning rejection of the Murdoch offer. However, in the last analysis, they are in the same position as Dean. She wants to hang on to her position as a negotiator between printers and proprietors. They want to hang on to their power base in the London chapels and this would have been destroyed by Dean's proposal to establish a pattern of national negotiating bodies for the print industry.

On the other hand, the LDC want to make sure that their position is not threatened from the other side, from the rank and file printers themselves. This is why they capitulated to Dean. It is why they rejected the need for a really militant struggle.

How can the strike be revitalised and put on a winning course? A new leadership is required, a leadership committed to rank and file democracy and fighting to extend the strike out of its present isolation. There are candidates for a new leadership. There are those, who must remain nameless, who have taken the initiative in organising the highly successful, if sporadic, 'lightning pickets' which have taken over the main gates and blocked off the whole of the area around the Wapping plant. But the most obvious alternative leadership is those militants who have grouped together in the Fleet



Street Support Unit which has argued from the very beginning for a Fleet Street-wide strike and an elected strike committee to run it. However, to argue that the Support Unit itself should challenge for leadership of the strike as *Workers Press* (21.6.86) does, is to misunderstand the nature, and the weaknesses, of the Unit.

Grouped within the Unit are three entirely separate elements. There are NI strikers, other printers from Fleet Street who realise the centrality of the strike for their own futures, and supporters who are not printers but can see the importance of the strike for

the whole of the working class. Such a body can do important work in support of the strike. The Unit has organised meetings, distributed leaflets and mounted pickets of the Press Association which is handling scab copy for News International. What it cannot and should not do, is try to substitute itself for the strikers themselves.

Militants can only prepare a new leadership by fighting to win the majority of strikers away from the strategy of the present leaders. This fight for an effective and accountable leadership must take place on two fronts. Firstly, militant strikers must use every pos-

sible avenue to popularise the most important tactics that are necessary - for a real national picketing campaign against every company controlled by Murdoch, for the blacking of all his products in Fleet Street and an end to secret negotiations with him. This means militants organising to gain majority support for these tactics in the chapels. If they are successful they can go to the fortnightly mass meeting for a decision by the strikers as a whole.

The second front is the battle to make decisions of the mass meetings binding on the leaders. What we want is not a vague agreement to 'take it up with the NEC' or to 'raise it at the next committee meeting'. We want a public commitment to carry out decisions of mass meetings. Those who will not agree to this should be called upon to resign. People who will not accept the authority of the mass meeting cannot be entrusted with leadership.

At the mass meeting on June 28, a decision was taken in favour of blacking pre-prints from Murdoch's plants in Liverpool and Watford. Militants must now fight to make sure this decision is implemented. If at all possible the blacking should be imposed by agreement with the workers affected through a campaign of leafletting, street and canteen meetings and mandatory chapel meetings. If this is not successful, then picket lines must be established easier in Fleet Street than on the Highway!

As we go to press, talks are taking place in New York between Eric Hammond and Murdoch. We can safely assume that Dean, Dubbins and Willis know what is being discussed. To avoid the imposition of another 'final offer' which might this time be supported by the LDC, strikers should insist that their elected representatives be present at all negotiating sessions and that the mass meeting has the final say on acceptance or rejection.

- For a democratically elected strike committee!
- For a national campaign against Murdoch!
- Fleet Street out!

STOP KINNOCK'S ANTI-UNION LAWS

OVER THE LAST months the TUC and Labour leaders - meeting as the TUC-Labour Party liaison committee - have been stitching together a package of proposed new union laws for a future Labour government. They are designed to

show that Kinnock and the TUC accept the fundamental loss of trade union rights that the Tory government has engineered.

Unless militants in the unions and the Labour Party get their act together very quickly this package will be passed by an alliance of block votes and Kinnockites at this year's TUC Congress and Labour Party conferences. The fight to force a future Labour government to scrap all anti-union laws and to stop it toeing the bosses' line starts here.

What Kinnock and the mandarins of Congress House want to prove to the bosses is that their anti-union laws are safe with them. The agreed document - 'People at Work' - proposes to make secret strike ballots, and secret ballots for elections, legally compulsory. Unions will have to write those provisions into their rule books. As a result members who claim they have been deprived of the 'right' to a ballot will be able to take their union to court and attempt to sue them under contract law. The document aims to give 'rights' to the individual member and not to the union as a collective organised body. Kin-

nock and Willis are serving up a charter for every Silver Birch and Medlock Bibby in the land.

But the package doesn't stop there. The shadow cabinet intend to set up an 'independent' body - to be called an Industrial Democracy Commission - to oversee the unions. Headed by a legally qualified person (there will be no shortage of union bashers to choose from in such ranks), it will have the power to order Unions to act as it wishes. Refusal to obey will cause unions to lose tax relief and any legal protection that their status as unions affords them.

The years of Tory government have 'seen the unions lose the rights they won for themselves through years of struggle. As the miners and the printers have found to their cost the law now effectively bans virtually every militant weapon in the hands of the workers' movement. The railway bosses now feel confident enough to threaten any NUR workshop striker with the sack for having broken their legal contract with their employer.

Yet the Kinnock-Willis document makes not even the slightest pretence of restoring the collective

rights of the unions. The guff about individual rights and the proposed new legal watchdog shows that the Labour and Trade Union leaders accept what Thatcher has done to the unions.

Activists have only the summer months to organise in. Every union branch and Labour Party must be mobilised for resistance. Joint meetings must be organised in every locality to explain the proposals and organise to block them. The TUC chiefs and Kinnockites will hound their opponents for rocking the boat and jeopardising Labour's electoral chances. They will fight any opposition in order to prove to the bosses that between them they can tame the unions and strangle the militants.

To give in to their blackmail is to sign away union rights in exchange for the vague prospect of a Kinnock in power. On no account must the working class pay that price.

A senior Labour leader told the Observer,

"We expect a storm from the Left when these proposals are published but we will ride it out."

Let battle commence!

TGWU - The price is right!

THE TGWU HAS announced a campaign to recruit the unemployed into its ranks at knockdown membership rates. All unions should follow suit. For far too long the unions have turned their backs on the ever growing ranks of the jobless.

But matters must be taken further. The unions must be forced to draw in the unemployed, to act on behalf of the unemployed and to stand firm against every threat to jobs. Cheap union membership must not be allowed to become either patronising charity or a devious means of boosting the unions' depleted coffers.

TGWU unemployed branches must be given every right to organise and campaign independently. They should reach out to the unemployed in other unions, to the sacked miners in particular, to lay the basis, through local and national conferences, for a national fighting unemployed workers' movement.

workers power

SUBSCRIBE!

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Send £4 to the address below

and receive 10 issues of the

paper. Make cheques payable

to: Workers Power and send

to: Workers Power

BCM 7750

London

WC1N 3XX