

workers power

25p/10p strikers

paper of the Workers Power group



Kinnock urging the TGWU to witch-hunt....

STOP THE MARCH TO THE RIGHT!

THE KINNOCKISATION OF the labour movement is in full swing. The TUC and labour leaders want to dampen down all struggles with the Tories. They want to present a 'reasonable' face to the employers and the electorate. They want the working class to oblige them by refraining from action now. The return of a Labour Government is being sold everywhere as the only hope.

This year's union conference season has been a succession of climb-downs and retreats. The NUPE leaders caught a heavy dose of Kinnockitis when they called an effective halt to national action against Tory cuts and privatisation plans. They voted to kick Militant out of the Labour Party. The Postal Workers Union voted to comply with the anti-union laws, the leadership having already submitted to them in practice during the Mount Pleasant dispute. Jimmy Knapp and the NUR leadership pride themselves on their 'left' credentials. The NUR Conference showed these credentials to be fake.

On Knapp's special pleading, the Conference decided to cooperate with the Tories by balloting before any strike is called. In doing so they were also caving in to British Rail's claim for £200,000 for their 'illegal' strike by promising their bosses to play by the Tory rules in the future. Knapp came out with a load of claptrap about how this decision was going to scare the living daylights out of the Tories: "I think they will be worried to death because the decision means they have not got the sword in their hands. We have got it and we are going to use it".

Quite what sword Knapp thinks he's got in his hands on we don't really know. BR is on the rampage. It has trampled on the closed shop. It is set on scrapping 5000 workshop jobs in Swindon and Glasgow. It is pushing through its one person train programme and Knapp and co are running scared. They are reaching for the ballot to save their own skins and keep their own funds intact. They are also lining themselves up to blame the members for their own lack of leadership should the members vote against action, while doing nothing to campaign for support for action.

WITCH HUNTERS

The TGWU conference did not turn out to be quite the victory for witch-hunting Kinnockery that the media hacks had predicted and hoped for. The witch-hunters' call to boot Militant out of the Labour Party was defeated. Conference re-affirmed its opposition to co-operation with the anti-union laws and it opposed wage restraint. It voted to keep funding the NUM. But behind the bluster Todd and co were also preparing their lines of retreat.

Key issues of union policy and action were squeezed off the agenda to avoid dispute and any commitment to action. The role of the TGWU in the miners' strike last year - when they twice pulled the dockers out of the firing line and when TGWU lorry driver members

scabbed on the NUM - were not discussed. The YTS slave labour scheme was pushed off the agenda too. Instead of action now and an accounting for the past record of the union, the delegates were offered only the posturings and rhetoric of the leaders.

ANTI-UNION LAWS

The TGWU's stand on the laws is a case in point. Todd says the TGWU is for defying the laws. But that does not mean that he, or the union, will. In fact he told the conference that the union will take its position of defiance back to the TUC. He does so in full knowledge that the TUC chiefs are charting a course for surrender at this September's Congress. And doubtless Todd will then see fit to claim the TGWU put its case, lost the vote and should now comply with the TUC. A typical piece of left bureaucratic buck-passing!

All the signs are that the TUC will back down and revoke its Wembley decisions at the coming Congress. The gentlemen of Congress House been in a cold sweat ever since the miners' strike threatened to embroil them in real struggle. TUC General Purposes Committee chairman, Warburton, was recently reassuring an employers' meeting that those who saw strikes as Labour's effective weapon held a "shortsighted and obsolete view". Instead he advocated overtime curbs and consumer boycotts!

The TUC Employment Policy Committee is already in session drawing up what its members are brazenly calling a 're-interpretation' of the Wembley decisions. Their plan is to present a new document to Congress. With the Kinnockite winds blowing in the union offices there can be little doubt they will counsel retreat. They have yet to take any action against the AUEW for its open snub to the TUC's policy in accepting government money for ballots.

The TUC chiefs have also been hard at work with Labour's shadow cabinet hatching a programme for the next Labour Government. Not content with selling workers short now, the TUC wants to play its part in planning the means of selling workers short in the years ahead. The new document - A New Partnership, A New Britain - is itself a watered down version of the Labour-TUC Liaison Committee's last document. Gone, for examples is any figure for a public investment programme which stood at £30 billion last time.

NEW REALISM

This 'new realism' - read new 'rightism' - goes hand in hand with no commitment to scrap the anti-union laws and compensate those who have been fined as a result of them. There is no commitment of any sort to the sacked and jailed miners. Indeed Kinnock has denounced Tony Benn's

Amnesty Bill as ludicrous. If Labour are re-elected then heroes of the 1984-85 strike like Terry French from Kent, will still languish in jail. Neither is wage restraint explicitly rejected. The document tells us it is 'no solution'. But when the Labour Executive received an amendment that would add 'and therefore will not be implemented' it was ruled out of order on the grounds that the matter had already been settled with the TUC chiefs.

The Labour Right and Kinnock are junking any concrete commitments to even the mildest of reforms that are in the interests of working people and the heady promises of two years ago. In their place are bland and empty phrases. Kinnock told the TGWU Conference bluntly that they could kiss farewell to full employment - "we know it's not coming back in that form". In the next breath Kinnock unleashed all his filthy venom on those who don't share the labour bureaucrats' belief that getting Labour back into office by jettisoning every policy commitment the bosses may not like, is the salvation to all working class problems: "those who don't share that instinct of cooperation in strength to secure victory for democratic socialism in this country had better take themselves off and indulge their hobbies elsewhere". He signalled his own support for the TGWU's witch-hunt lobby and purges that are taking place in several local Labour Parties: "we will not tolerate in

this movement people whose preoccupation, whose obsession is with the fringes, the outer limits of politics".

The Kinnockite rot must be stopped. If it is not, workers stand to lose twice over. They will lose now if they accept the Kinnockite's line and lie down and play dead in the face of the bosses' attacks. Every retreat, as well as every defeat, serves to encourage a class enemy that is keen to get as much as it can while the tide seems to be running in its favour. The anti-union laws are biting and are due to be toughened in a further round of legislation. The NGA suffered another £15,000 fine in June. The NCB has rammed through its own colliery review procedure without reaching a deal with the unions. From hospitals to buses the privatisation offensive is intensifying. To lie low for two or three years is to concede victory to the bosses on all these fronts. In point of fact this will boost the Tories' and Alliance's electoral chances, not Labour's.

However that is not the only price workers will pay if they swallow Kinnock's line. They will lose in the here and now. They will see the fighting strength of their organisations sapped in the hope of getting a government elected that will not and cannot guarantee workers' basic needs for jobs, services, nor the dismantling of the numerous anti-working class laws that the Tories have made. Should the bosses come to terms with the prospect of a Labour Government they will do so only if it will rule for them and only if it will serve them by blinding the working class to the reality of its treachery.

It is vital that militants organise to turn the tide against Kinnockism in the unions and in the Labour Party. In the unions that means building a fighting rank and file movement that will battle to force the unions on to a course of

intransigent struggle for workers' interests. That must include the defiance of the anti-union laws, active industrial solidarity with those hit by these laws and a commitment to stand by that policy whatever the TUC says this September. The TGWU, the NUM and all the other unions that have voted like them must be forced to create an alliance of defiance and active solidarity in order to destroy these laws. The Kinnockite leaders will bellow that militants are stabbing them in the back and ruining Labour's chances. They must be told that it is they who are stabbing the workers' movement in the back and undermining our class' chances of resisting the Tory offensive.

The Kinnockites are cashing in on the deep political weakness of the British working class. They are demobilising the working class by playing on its traditions of political reformism. The defeat of the miners' strike and the prospect of an election in three years time has strengthened that strain in working class organisation that sees the solution to the workers' interests as being realised only through the election of a Labour Government. The harder Thatcher hits, the more Kinnock seems the only hope of salvation and the more the Labour bureaucrats will sanction his witch-hunting promise-breaking careerist crew.

A Kinnock-led Labour Government will turn on the working class. Its line of attack will be different from Thatcher's. The 'social compact', however, will cut wages and do nothing to reduce unemployment. The picket busting police squads will be kept intact along with every other piece of capitalist state machinery. The end product will be a demoralised and demobilised working class and a safe passage at the subsequent election for the Tories. The capitalist

continued on back page ▶▶▶

Fight anti Irish hysteria

AFTER A WEEK of interrogation at the hands of the Special Branch, six Irish Republicans have been charged with the bombing of the Grand Hotel in Brighton last October.

The six, who were among 16 persons held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), now face life sentences. Their trial will be accompanied by all the anti-Irish hysteria the British establishment and the Fleet Street press barons can muster.

The "hunt for Irish bombers" has also been used to further develop the national coordination of Special Branch and other covert operations by the British security forces. Under Sir Kenneth Newman, former head of the Ulster police, the experience gained from the police operation against the miners' strike has been used to establish a single directing centre at Scotland Yard. This will be used against socialists and trade unionists in future struggles, just as it was used against the miners.

Collaboration between this police conspiracy and Fleet Street has also been extensive. As soon as the charges were made the press printed details of the operation which led the police to their catches. In the minds of the hacks there was no doubt that those caught were guilty. Their trial will simply be a legal formality.

The Fleet Street campaign has a sinister purpose. The British bosses know that they need the support of the mass of the British people for their continued

occupation of Ireland. To get this support they launch repeated propaganda campaigns like the present one, casting the IRA in the role of mad bombers, murderers etc. Never once is the political reason for the IRA's war against British imperialism mentioned. By these means the British bosses, with the help of Labour movement leaders, foster chauvinism inside the working class. This chauvinism must be countered.

□ OLDEST COLONY □

Whether or not those charged are an active service unit of the IRA or not is not the central question. The British state is waging a war against the nationalist population of Northern Ireland. In this war it is obligatory for all socialists and class conscious workers to stand by those fighting for the expulsion of British imperialism from its oldest colony. The question of how the Republicans choose to wage their fight is subordinated to this principle. Our support for the Provisionals and all other forces fighting British control of Ireland is unconditional - it does not and cannot depend on their adopting the strategy and tactics of class struggle that we favour. This support is aimed at weakening our class enemy. A defeat for the British bosses in Ireland will weaken them. We need to help bring about that defeat by our solidarity

action. The same state that occupies Ireland occupied the pit villages. We can have no common cause with that state.

The working class of Britain has not yet broken with the imperialist policy of its own class enemy. Nor has it purged itself of the agents of that class enemy in its own ranks, the Merlyn Rees' and the Concannons who enthusiastically backed the war against the Irish when in office. Indeed it was a Labour Government that brought in the repressive PTA.

In large measure that has strengthened the commitment of the IRA to a military campaign against 'the British'. There will be no end to that war until British imperialism is removed from Ireland. The strongest blow that we can deliver to bring that about is to stand by the Republicans and fight to break the working class from indentifying with their enemies. Working class opposition to the war in Ireland and support for Irish Liberation will be an essential component of breaking the power of the bosses' state in Britain itself. It will speed the development of a revolutionary working class party to lead the Irish Revolution not only against British imperialism but the capitalist and religious bigots who dominate Ireland North and South of the 'Border'.

**TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND NOW!
REPEAL THE PTA!
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE
IRISH PEOPLE AS A WHOLE!**

ONLY STRIKE ACTION CAN STOP JENKIN

VERY FEW TRADE unionists and activists would not agree that the Labour Councils strategy to defy the Rates Act is now in tatters. Trade Unionists have watched from the sidelines for the past 3 months as one by one the Labour Groups - with much handwringing and public recriminations - have succumbed to legal threats and set rates.

Amongst the fallen are such left-wing 'strongholds' as Camden, Hackney and Islington. Of the three remaining, Liverpool has set a rate which means a 9% increase. No amount of trumpeting on the part of Hatton, or his new found cheerleaders in the SWP, about standing firm on a 'deficit budget' can disguise the fact that a 9% rate increase represents a cut in the living standards of workers in Liverpool.

The collapse of the councils was not unexpected. The strategy they adopted of refusal to set a rate 'at the moment' was always designed to put pressure on Jenkins to negotiate. They all hoped they could get Jenkins to 'do a Liverpool'. Jenkins however had the measure of these left fakers - it was he who stood firm and called their bluff.

The same reasoning of bluff and 'tough negotiating stances' dominated the trade union side of the campaign.

The councillors had done little to campaign for strike action by the workers whose jobs are threatened by the cuts and by whose services will



A shop stewards only occupation of Lambeth Town Hall.

be destroyed. Even where councillors have been 'building links' with the trade unions these have been confined to cabals with union leaders, not mobilisations of the rank and file. Their methods have been limited to publicity stunts, mass leafletting and canvassing aimed at improving the councils' standing in opinion polls, the traditional labour electoral methods.

In this way the role of the workers who will be

directly affected by the cuts has been reduced to one of supporting the councils. This is a disastrously short sighted policy. If or when the councils are unable to win a reprieve, or are replaced by commissioners, it will be down to the workers to suffer the consequences or take action. Throughout the whole 'fightback' charade, however, those workers have been treated as passive consumers. True, local union leaders have been briefed on what the councillors intend to do and active trade unionists have been 'given the line' at union meetings, but the overwhelming majority have not been mobilised and prepared for action. If workers are prepared to take action it is largely despite, not because of, the tactics and strategy of their political leaders.

Derek Hatton declared after setting the deficit budget, "We're not like councils before us that make promises and then don't keep them." The same message is echoed by Ted Knight, "People are looking to Labour movement representatives who actually carry into action the promises they make". The implication is clear. Provided the leaders do not back down (as so many have before them) the campaign can be successful. The whole strategy is dependent on the honesty and determination of a handful of councillors, not on the effective mobilisation of rank and file workers. Certainly, the working class needs honest and determined leaders, but those qualities will not be enough if they are not at the service of the independent mobilisation of workers. We have already seen, in Lambeth in 1980 and Liverpool in 1984, that the same councillors have backed down and treated their supporters to steep rate rises and backtracking on election pledges.

The lessons of those defeats have not been drawn. Even now, with the crunch looming, the councils' strategy is the building of a fighting fund for their defence against the legal action that the Tories will take against them.

In the unions, the consequences of leaving the initiative with the councillors is evident. Militant sounding resolutions often 'sold' on the basis that they were only to back up the councillors and

frighten Jenkins rather than for real action, have, now the crunch has arrived, left the unions disarmed. The collapse of the 'fightback' elsewhere has left its mark. Local union leaders, who have spent more time behind closed doors with councillors than in preparing with their members for action, sense the mood but do not combat it. Instead they retreat before it and compound it.

When Lambeth councillors were issued surcharge notices, the town hall was occupied...for the day. This protest was organised by Lambeth Bridge stewards' committee. Its press conference on the day explained that the occupation was only a symbol. It certainly did not involve Lambeth workers. Members turning up for work were not invited to join the occupation but were simply sent home for the day! Indeed, Lambeth Bridge assured the press that the town hall would be given back to 'the people' at 6.00pm. The stewards did not want to hurt 'our community'. But, without all out strike action it will be the working class of the community that will be hurt. The occupation, instead of being viewed as a publicity stunt, could have been used to involve more workers in the action and in winning the arguments for further escalation.

Lambeth Bridge has similar weaknesses. Its paper policy of 'all out strike action, sit-ins and occupations' has been effectively abandoned. Despite being committed to a 'match for match' policy in support of any individual council's workers taking action, a request for support from Lambeth trade unions drew little response. Not a single steward was willing to commit themselves to try to bring their members out, with all the stress being placed on the 'difficulties' involved, the level of demoralisation etc. Instead Lambeth Bridge has limited its call on other trade unionists to 'high level publicity' action in support.

NEXT ROUND

Mass strike action is the only way to make an impression on a government which is, even now, preparing the next round of local government cuts. In order to take them on, the present strategy must be changed. Even if the councillors stand firm to the bitter end, this in itself, will not stop the government who will simply replace them with commissioners. It cannot be assumed that, when that happens, militant action from the workers can be turned on as if it were a tap. All the resources and political influence of the councils must be used now, immediately, to convince trade unionists in the public and private sector that their action alone is capable of stopping the destruction of local services and local democracy. Political strike action, organised and controlled by stewards and elected strike committees, must be built out of the present stand.

Rank and file militants must raise demands in their unions now for all out action in response to the surcharge of the councillors. Pressure must be put on Lambeth Bridge to organise decisive action now. Delegations must be sent to London Bridge arguing for all out action across London. If they receive no response Lambeth workers should go straight to the rank and file of the unions in other councils.

by Dave Jenkins

Press barons prepare for showdown

FLEET STREET BOSSES are anxiously awaiting the outcome of a series of disputes in the provincial press. Between them, Murdoch, Maxwell and Rothermere have invested some £400 million in new technology printing plant in London's derelict docklands. They aim to reduce their workforces by up to 40% by closing the old-fashioned presses in Fleet Street.

The major obstacle to their plans, as shown by the failure of the twelve month lock-out at *The Times*, is the strength of the print unions, particularly the National Graphical Association (NGA).

Unable to effectively overcome the resistance in Fleet Street, the bosses have moved the battle lines to the provinces. The way was opened for them by Eddie Shah's victory over the NGA at Warrington in December 1983. Indeed, building on that victory Shah is now set on establishing himself in direct competition to the press barons. Next year he plans to launch a new national daily, produced in full colour and undercutting the price of existing dailies. The key to his plans is by-passing the London and Manchester based printing plants altogether. Electronic transmission of completed page designs to a series of decentralised, computerised printing plants stationed close to the motorways and delivery by non-unionised transport firms is rumoured to cut costs to only a quarter of Fleet Street's.

RIVALRY

The significance of the current disputes like those at the *News* in Portsmouth and the *Wolverhampton Express and Star*, is the rivalry it has created between the NGA and the National Union of Journalists (NUJ). Both unions claim that the operation of 'single-stroke keying', which does away with the jobs of NGA compositors, should be undertaken by their members.

In Portsmouth, the NGA negotiated a deal to transfer ex-compositors to the editorial department, the NUJ's traditional preserve, without even informing the NUJ! The journalists refused to cooperate and 74 were sacked in January. Strike action in their support in all of the company's 26 newspapers resulted in the NGA ordering their members to cross journalists' picket lines.

In response the NUJ refused to support 160 NGA members at the *Wolverhampton Express and Star* who refused to accept a management imposed agreement on new technology. Worse, the NUJ made an agreement to accept 'direct inputting' which would remove the compositors' jobs altogether.

The implication of this dispute were spelt out by Tony Burke of Stockport NGA, a member of the NGA National Council, interviewed on the picket line at Wolverhampton: "The national newspaper owners are very interested in this dispute because of their plans to move to the Isle of Dogs (East London - WP). This is greatly connected with the attempt to introduce high-technology and decimate the workforce and so it's an important question for the NGA. If we don't get a decent

agreement in Wolverhampton it will definitely affect the rest of the industry".

Rank and file printworkers must campaign for effective joint action against the proprietors' offensive. Workers will be the only losers in these inter-union disputes. The way forward was shown at the *Brighton Argus* in May when NGA members refused to cross NUJ picket lines in a pay strike.

The new technology will, without any doubt, transform the printing industry. It will remove many of the crafts and skills which formed the basis of the different print unions. Defence of those unions' traditional areas of membership will rapidly become meaningless. As in so many industries before, the deskilling of the entire production operation will reduce all employees to approximately the same level.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

It is vital, therefore, that in the battles currently taking place and those looming on the horizon, unity of action and organisation is created. The introduction of the new technology should be the occasion for the formation of one industrial union for all workers connected with the production and distribution of newspapers, magazines and books.

The first step to this, immediately, is to ensure that no agreements are signed without the agreement of joint meetings of the different union chapels (branches). With the union leaderships clearly all trying to preserve their own particular cabbage patch it is obvious that it will be the rank and file who will have to take the initiative through the formation of joint union action committees.

It will be such committees which, in the course of the struggles over jobs and conditions, must become the base organisations of an industrial union for all print workers. They can spearhead the struggle for unity in the print unions so desperately needed to beat the recent attacks. By coordinating action regionally and nationally and by building their own network of delegate-based leading committees they can ensure that a new union will be both militant and democratically controlled by its members.

Such a campaign will face the unbridled hostility not only of the bosses but of the state as well. The miners' strike showed how much the entire capitalist class relies on their control of the media to undermine and demoralise militant workers. Even the old craft unions found it impossible to completely divorce their own trade unionism from the question of asserting trade union rights in general against the vicious anti-union press barons. This will be even more the case when the battles are against these barons. Printworkers therefore need to fight, from the beginning, for both control of manning levels, control over the new machines, and also for control over what is printed on those machines.

by Dick Pratt



On the picket line at Wolverhampton

Communist Party in fragments

THERE IS NO honour amongst thieves - and even less amongst Stalinists. The British Communist Party's faction fight has demonstrated the absolute bankruptcy of all wings of the Stalinist movement.

The CP is divided into two main warring camps. On the one side are the Euros, on the other the Chaterites. The Euros consist of an alliance between the Eurocommunist ideologues, like Martin Jacques, who control *Marxism Today*, and the party apparatus around people like Gordon McLennan. Their political project is to build a new broad democratic alliance involving all-class campaigns like the women's movement and the peace movement, the church and even the SDP/Liberal Alliance and wet Tories. Their perspective does not go beyond constructing an 'anti-Thatcher' alliance out of these motley elements.

In practice the Euros policy involves a clear rejection of militant class struggle. This is typified by their attacks on the miners' strike. The Euros denounced mass picketing as 'counter-productive', and calls for industrial solidarity action as 'outdated'. In their place they lauded miserable 'alliances' like the Welsh Congress. A leading light in this campaign, Hywel Francis, was given the front page of the Euros' paper, *Focus*, to denounce the heroic miners' struggle. He wants the NUM Conference to "repair some of the damage to working class unity which was so evident in 1984-5" (June 27th 1985).

The militant miners did not damage working class unity. It was scab leaders like Kinnock, Willis and Basnett, and fake lefts like Knapp and Buckton that sabotaged class unity against the bosses.

ALTERNATIVE?

The Chaterites, who control the *Morning Star* via the Peoples Press Printing Society (PPPS), claim to be a class struggle alternative to the Euros. The Euros denounce Tony Chater (editor of the *Morning Star*) for a 'sectarian' exclusive orientation to the labour movement. In fact the *Morning Star* has an orientation to trade union officialdom which is what it means by the 'labour movement'. They orientate to Todd, Knapp, Buckton and Scargill not their rank and file.

For example the day after Knapp argued for complying with the Tories' anti-union law, the *Star* presented his capitulation as a means of beating the Tories at their own game. In the miners' strike the bureaucratic deals that kept coal flowing into steel plants and power stations were paraded as great examples of solidarity building by McGahey and Williams.

The choice in the CP is between two bankrupt trends clinging on to political life with a perspective for a liquidation of the CP into either the middle class campaigns and movements or the left labour bureaucracy.

Both factions have fought by the dirty rules of bureaucratic centralism. This explains why before the CP's May Congress 42 Chaterites were suspended. It explains why the Chaterites fiddled the rules of the PPPS to ensure that they had a

majority at the three AGMs held in June. Thus those in control at both events ensured their own victory - the Euros at the Congress, the Chaterites at the AGMs!

The split in the CP is to be welcomed. The CP is an obstacle to class struggle in Britain. The *Morning Star* is the jaded voice of left fakers. We have always said to any honest workers at the CP Congress or the PPPS AGMs, do not support either side in this quarrel; leave the party and join the ranks of revolutionary Trotskyism, join Workers Power.

Originally, one group that has flowered during the CP's crisis - the Leninist - was not prepared to place itself clearly in either camp in this bureaucratic feud. It stated that "The Euros and Chater are but two sides of the same liquidationist coin. Don't vote for the lesser of two evils. Use your vote to build the Communist Alternative". (*The Leninist* June 1985)

Prior to this unambiguous declaration the Leninists had always argued that the general opposition to the Euros, while led by liquidationists like Chater,

contained better elements than the Euro wing of the party. They argued in April 1984 that: "... we recognise that the opposition, despite its domination by centrism and its drift towards liquidationism contains many fine communists". This led the Leninists to orient themselves towards the Chaterites and smaller fry like the grouping around *Straight Left* (a slavishly pro-Soviet, Labour orientated faction).

The Leninist performed a sharp about turn at the June PPPS when they announced in a leaflet that they were now calling for a vote for the Euros. Their special leaflet issued on June 6th "after serious deliberation" urged all those attending the PPPS: "...to vote for the candidates of the Executive Committee of the Party (ie the Euros - WP)...We have taken this decision because saving the CPGB from disintegration is at the centre of our political strategy".

The Chaterites are accused of 'overt liquidationism' and are exhorted to 'Stand with your Party'. Then in a beautiful piece of doublespeak the leaflet concludes: "Voting for EC candidates

is not a vote for Eurocommunism: it is a vote for the party and against liquidationism".

This position marks a definite step to the right by a tendency that had rapidly moved left during the miners' strike.

The Eurocommunists and the Chaterites are, as the Leninist and ourselves have repeatedly pointed out, both liquidationist. The Euros' defence of the 'Party' is purely formal. That party, led by the Euros, daily recommends to the working class that it subordinates its own struggles and interests to the middle class alliances they want to build. The latest *Marxism Today* even finds space to publish anti-communist drivel from *Daily Telegraph* journalist and former Thatcher adviser Ferdinand Mount, in the name of opposing left 'dogma'.

The Leninist are urging support for a Euro-communist Party. Dressing this up as defence of the 'party' is formal and abstract nonsense. Alas this position has always been lodged in the Leninist's politics. Their assessment of the CP has always been formal. They wrote in April 1984: "For us the Communist Party is most certainly worth saving. It is still the party of the working class and a component part of the world communist movement, dominated by opportunism yes, but not sect".

For the Leninist the reason why the CP is worth saving is because they claim that its leadership, policy and practice, the 'essence' of the CP, remains revolutionary.



Euro trendies offer a champagne invite to hoped for middle class allies

Real Leninists are materialists. We do not abstract the CP from what it is in reality. A *Morning Star* controlled by Dave Cook, Martin Jacques and Gordon McLennan will be every bit as liquidationist as one controlled by Chater. It will do every bit as much to liquidate the Marxist programme. A party led by men like Pete Carter and women like Bea Campbell who denounce the heroic miners' struggle as 'macho' is every bit as pernicious as a daily paper written by Chater and Mick Costello devoted to excusing the treachery of the bureaucrats.

For real Leninists the point of departure in all spheres of the class struggle is the defence of the independent interests of the working class. In the miners' strike the Leninist realised that and advocated a strategy for victory very similar to our own. However, they have now shown a trait incompatible with Leninism, inconsistency in the defence of an independent class standpoint. They are excusing this by divorcing the mystical, and therefore non-existent, essence of the CP, from what that party actually is.

The CP does not defend the independent interests of the working class. Even when trying to win honest workers within the CP, that point should never be hidden. We call on the Leninist not to do the Euros' dirty work for them. Re-evaluate your position. Open discussions with genuine revolutionaries. Open discussions with us. □

by Mark Hoskisson

LETTERS

VOTE MUHAMMAD IDRISH

Dear comrades

I believe there are a number of dangers and some confusion in the positions argued in the article on the Idrish campaign in WP 73.

Even if you believe that the tactic of standing for election to the county council is the wrong one for the campaign to adopt, surely once the campaign has taken the decision for Muhammad to stand, we should not argue as WP 73 does that "Labour should not stand down". Even if standing for election won't do Muhammad much good, surely if Labour stands against him this would be disastrous for Muhammad and a great setback to the campaign.

We do not put conditions on voting for Labour candidates. Why then does the article say that "Muhammad, if he stood, would have to make his position clear on all these issues (rate-capping, Tory cuts and immigration laws)". This would not be a condition of voting for the Labour candidate, so why for Muhammad? Is our support for Muhammad Idrish's fight against deportation conditional on his tactics, or even worse, his views on rate-capping?

I don't see the decision to stand as the disaster that WP 73 makes it out to be. Perhaps with misgivings WP should now throw their full energies into Idrish's election campaign and in forcing the LP not only to stand down but to actively campaign for Idrish's election.

I don't totally discount the possibility that an energetic and vigorous election campaign could help Idrish in taking the issue to more

black and white workers and perhaps even materially affect the situation within NALGO. In any case who can blame him for trying to avoid deportation?

It could even be argued that Idrish standing is a good way of testing the Labour Party in front of militant black and white workers, saying to the Labourites "Is the campaign against this black person's deportation more important than Labour winning this bye-election? Here's your chance to prove it".

Isn't this kind of work the basis and aim of WP's work in the LP?

yours comradely

Abdul Sheir

We reply:

We maintain our position that it was correct to argue against Idrish standing in a county council election. It follows that as we did not support the tactic we would not support a call for a Labour candidate to stand down. In our view this was not the best way of taking the fight to defend Idrish forward.

Now a new situation prevails. Idrish found a vacant seat and is standing. Labour, in a cynical manoeuvre has decided to stand against him. This is a disgrace. Labour was prepared to quietly allow the seat to be left vacant. But when Idrish said he would stand, Labour, for petty electoral reasons, stood against him.

In this situation we regard the defence of Idrish as more important than a vote for Labour. Consequently we urge people to vote for Idrish, but not to believe that by standing he will be defended. A vote for Idrish is only one element in the campaign to keep him in this country. Building for industrial action is the most important element in his fight against deportation.

To would-be Labour voters we must explain why Idrish's campaign, representing as it does the plight of hundreds of victims of Britain's racist laws every month, is preferable to the election, in this case, of their party's candidate.

Comrade Sheir is correct to point to the error in our last article with regard to placing conditions on Idrish. Since we endorse in elections only the communist programme, and since Idrish does not claim to be standing as a communist, it would be wrong to place any conditions on him. The only demand we place on him is that he use the election to fight his deportation and to expose Britain's racist immigration laws.

As far as the election campaign goes we will participate in it. In a contest between a Labour Party engaged in a cynical electoral manoeuvre and a representative of the oppressed we stand four square with the oppressed.

DEFENDING THE NEWHAM 7

Dear Editor

I am writing to you about the article in WP 73 entitled Stand With the Newham Seven.

Firstly, the article calls for "a permanent organisation of black youth...to defend their communities". Whilst it is true that we must defend the right of blacks to organise independently, caucus separately etc, surely our programmatic demand must be not for a black organisation to defend blacks, but for Workers' defence of the black working class and communities? Your rider that "Anti racists must back them to the hilt and argue in their unions, LP wards etc for support" does not absolve you from your incorrect programmatic formulation. Yes, we do call for support for blacks, however they may wish to organise but only the call for working class defence of blacks can make it explicit that fighting racism is the responsibility of the working class as a whole.

Finally, I was horrified that Workers' Power failed to clearly distinguish themselves from Unmesh's contention that although racism cannot be fought on a popular front basis, fascism can. How else to interpret his statement "As far as anti-racist goes there should be unity in action of all those who want to kick the fascists off the

streets, but when you talk of anti-racism I think it should be much more principled and not built on a popular front basis." Furthermore, Workers' Power appears to endorse Unmesh's view by concluding the article with a statement that "Workers Power will do its best to work with and develop such organisations." What organisations? The fantasy of a transformed ANL, and the popular front to fight fascism that Unmesh has just referred to in the previous paragraph? Please, I implore you, clear up this unholy mess!

yours fraternally

Ann Taylor

We reply:

On the question of black self-defence, comrade Taylor makes a sectarian counterposition. We do not counterpose demands for workers' defence squads to our support for demands for black community based defence squads. We link them by calling for Labour movement support for black self-defence. The black communities face a daily need for defence. Most workers do not. They need their defence squads when they are picketing. We can help prepare them for that eventuality politically by calling them to support black self-defence in the here and now. If we are successful then the possibility of creating permanent working class defence squads in the communities as well as on the picket lines will be brought nearer. Anti-racism will be given a class content. Comrade Taylor's counterposition of slogans does nothing to make "fighting racism the responsibility of the working class as a whole."

Unmesh certainly does appear to justify the popular frontist politics of the old ANL. Perhaps it is not clearly enough stated in the article but our position on this is unambiguous. We oppose (and did oppose in the late 1970's) any form of popular frontist campaign to fight fascism or racism. Against both evils our slogan is for a workers' united front. To this end we will seek to win all anti-racist/anti-fascist campaigns to a labour movement orientation and win the labour movement to an anti-racist and anti-fascist orientation.

THE SECOND IMPERIALIST

THE LAST FEW months have seen endless celebrations, commemorations and TV presentations on the war that ended 40 years ago. The purpose of all this has been to reinforce the idea that the Second World War was a "people's war against fascism" and a fight to "defend democracy".

Most militant workers accept this view of the war. They have been educated by the Labour Party (who had people like Atlee and Bevin sitting in the war cabinet alongside the butcher of Tony-pandy Winston Churchill) and the Communist Party. Indeed the CP was one of the loudest voices at the various patriotic anniversary knees ups. A special issue CP paper in May sang the praises of Winston Churchill, the "heroes of the RAF" and the Anglo-Russian alliance.

MYTHOLOGY

We need to counter the myths of the Second World War not only to put the record straight but also to reveal to today's generation of workers, especially the younger generation raised on a steady diet of biased films, books and comics, the true nature of the war. In all likelihood it will be this generation which will be called upon once more to sacrifice itself in the interests of its masters' profits. Today crisis-torn capitalism is again growing restless. It requires new outlets for investment. It requires new territories to plunder. The object of its warmongering threats is its erstwhile ally, the Soviet Union. No doubt the "democratic" pretext of countering Soviet "totalitarianism" will be recited to the millions who will die to protect the millions of pounds of the few who won't. Only the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism can halt the drift towards the nuclear abyss.

The Second World War was on the part of all the major protagonists, except the Soviet Union and China, an imperialist war. Von Clausewitz's dictum that, "war is the continuation of politics

It was the clash of interests between these competing imperialist powers that dictated the inevitability of war and its imperialist character. The war was fought in order to redivide the spoils between robber nations - nations that oppressed others and exploited their own working class with varying degrees of brutality.

The Soviet Union was not, however, an imperialist state. Although it was ruled by a despotic bureaucracy led by Stalin, the planned economy established as a result of the working class revolution in October 1917, still existed. The Soviet Union was not, and today is not, driven towards war by imperialist ambitions. It was desperately defending itself against imperialism. As this defence entailed a defence of the planned economy the war waged by the USSR was a justified one, and the defence of the USSR was (and today is) the duty of all workers.

China's war against Japan was also a just war, a war worthy of workers' support, but for different reasons. China was a state dominated by imperialism. It was a semi-colony. While it was formally independent (except for Shanghai, Hong Kong etc - territories directly run by imperialism) imperialist finance capital controlled its every

INTER-IMPERIALIST TENSION

move. The direct invasion by Japan would have been an enormous step backwards for China in its struggle against total imperialist domination. China was the most important example of an imperialised state fighting imperialism during the second world war.

Throughout the Thirties, the tensions between the rival imperialisms mounted. It was not the last decade of peace but yet another decade of war. It was also a decade of increasing tensions within the imperialisms as unemployment soared and trade and profits dropped. The war itself, which can be dated variously from 1937, 1938, 1939 or

pensive affair. Unable to control the skies following the Battle of Britain, and even more importantly, unable to control the Channel long enough to transfer an entire invasion army, perhaps a million men, Hitler called off the invasion.

In any event, Hitler and his backers in the German bourgeoisie, Krupp, Thyssen, Siemens and company, had always known that German expansion fundamentally required conquests in the East and there was no reason to believe that the British and American bourgeoisies would go out of their way to assist Communist Russia. Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of Russia, began on June 21st 1941. By the end of the year Hitler hoped to be celebrating in the Kremlin. So confident was the German High Command that they did not bother to issue their troops with winter clothing.

PREPARATIONS

The Soviet Union was completely unprepared for the invasion. Stalin refused to believe the reports from the "Red Orchestra" spy ring in Germany that over one hundred and fifty divisions were being transported to the Eastern Front for Barbarossa. Indeed, so convinced was Stalin that he would be able to placate Germany, he had ordered the dismantling of the Red Orchestra in

1937. It was only maintained by the personal initiative of its key members acting against orders. Stalin's policy is now portrayed by Stalinist apologists as a shrewd means of buying time to prepare Russia for the long fight against Germany. This is as much a myth as the similar one that Chamberlain was buying time at Munich in 1938. It was a shortsighted bureaucratic policy that surrendered the international revolutionary struggle to diplomatic deals with the imperialists. The German advance was halted, in the end, along a front stretching from Leningrad in the North West to Moscow in the centre and Stalingrad in the South. One third of the population was in the conquered areas and forty-five per-cent of the industrial capacity.

The Kremlin bureaucrats had not prepared for the war but they, nonetheless, had two singular advantages as against Germany. Firstly, they could still draw upon the awe-inspiring heroism of the great mass of the Soviet population and its determination to defend its country, and its revolution, from the Nazis. By the end of the war 20 million Soviet soldiers and civilians had died compared to a total of less than 700,000 dead in the whole of Britain and America. Secondly, although inefficient, state command planning provided the means for a single-minded campaign to produce war material. By means of brutal discipline, the mobilisation of the Orthodox church and even, in the front line, allowing a degree of self organisation reminiscent of

An anti-fascist war?

In no sense was the war waged by Britain and the US an anti-fascist war. If that had been the case then Britain and the US would have agreed to Soviet requests to open up a second front in Europe well before 1944. Instead they concentrated their resources on a war for the colonies - and the Mediterranean in particular - and left the USSR to take on the might of the German army in Europe itself.

Indeed the second front was only opened when the Soviet army was advancing against a retreating German army. It was clear that the USSR had defended itself and was in a position to dictate terms in central Europe and elsewhere. The Soviet advances served to encourage popular mobilisations against the old order and strengthen the resolve of resistance movements. For that reason it now became imperative for British and US imperialism to push its forces into Europe as soon and as fast as possible.

Churchill's anti-fascist bluster - much loved by the Stalinists then and now - was a masquerade. He was, for example, a long time admirer of Mussolini as a bulwark against proletarian revolution in Italy. In his memoirs, Churchill candidly explained why he wanted Mussolini as a friend, "The alternative to his role might well have been a Communist Italy, which would have brought perils and misfortunes of a different character both upon the Italian people and Europe....Even when the issue of the war became certain, Mussolini would have been welcomed by the Allies".

Clearly a fascism that would collude with the British Empire and not confront it was acceptable. That it subjected its people to a murderous dictatorship was neither here nor there for the British imperialists.

Towards the end of the war Anglo/American collaboration with fascists became more and more overt. In Italy the Allies supported the fascist slaughterer of Ethiopia, Marshal Badoglio, when he attempted to overthrow Mussolini in 1943. They looked to this laundered fascist as an ally against popular working class anti-fascist mobilisation in Italy. They negotiated a separate peace with him

(despite the fact that by this time all of Northern Italy was in German hands). In Germany itself the allies toyed with the idea of a separate peace with the Nazis.

The British General Montgomery was clear that as victory on the battlefield was assured the Allies should begin to prepare to combat Bolshevism. He stated, "War is a political instrument, once it is clear that you are going to win, political considerations must influence its further course."

To this end the Anglo/American forces adopted a strategy of meeting the Russian armies as far the east as possible. They captured North West Germany and Schleswig Holstein, whereupon Admiral Doenitz (who Hitler had appointed as his successor on April 30th 1945) surrendered. He quickly authorised the surrender of the rest of the western theatre to the American general Eisenhower. The plan was to concentrate on a fight to the finish with the Russians, allow the Anglo/American forces to push east with little or no resistance and thereby, in Doenitz's own words, "to save German territory and the German race from Bolshevism."

An unconditional surrender was signed in Italy. Millions of civilians and troops were allowed to get behind western allied lines. As the British Tor Harold MacMillan approvingly noted, "The German plan is now becoming pretty clear. It is to obtain de facto what they failed to obtain de jure, viz., a surrender to the British and Americans instead to the Russians."

At the same time as the British and Americans accepted the surrender of the German armies, the Soviet army, at the cost of 305,000 lives, took Berlin. Even when Germany did surrender to all the allied forces (following further delaying tactics by British and Americans) Churchill ordered that bulk of the German army, some 700,000 troops, the high command be maintained intact in order to counter any Soviet push west.

The notion of the anti-fascist war in Britain and America is a pernicious lie. Collusion with fascists was widespread. Indeed the fascist dictatorship of Salazar in Portugal eventually joined the Allies. It was consideration of their imperialist goals that dictated the conduct and nature of the war.



Hanover 1945.

by other means" is applicable in every case. And for Britain, Germany, the US, France and Italy the war was a continuation of imperialist politics by military means.

Lenin had explained the imperialist nature of these powers during their first bloody scramble for profit in the 1914-18 war. He wrote, "Capitalism now finds that the old national states...are too cramped for it. Capitalism has developed concentration to such a degree that entire branches of industry are controlled by syndicates, trusts and associations of capitalist multimillionaires and almost the entire globe has been divided up among the 'lords of capital' either in the form of colonies, or by entangling other countries in thousands of threads of financial exploitation....From the liberator of nations, which it was in the struggle against feudalism, capitalism in its imperialist stage has turned into the greatest oppressor of nations." (*Socialism and War* 1915)

Britain and France went to war to defend their worldwide empires. In North Africa Germany threatened British and French control of the oil rich region and the key shipping zones. In the East Japan threatened to devour Britain's lucrative colonies up to and including the jewel in the crown, India. German imperialism, dynamic and expanding under Hitler's dictatorship, had no external empire. It desperately needed one in Europe and beyond. Its dynamic was towards world domination. Japan, similarly dynamic, was hemmed in by European and US control of the Far East and Pacific. It could not tolerate its exclusion from a share of the world's spoils on its own doorstep. While the US wanted to break Britain's stranglehold on world trade, via the Empire, Germany and Japan were more immediate threats to its own imperialist interests. Italy, under the fascist Mussolini, opted for an alliance with Germany, hoping to be a trusted, if not fully equal, ally in the Nazi's new world order.

1941, dependent on whether you happen to be Chinese, Czech, British or American, is the phase in which the various ruling classes decided that their problems could only be solved via war.

Germany recognised by mid-1939 that no more could be gained by bluff and military manoeuvre. Major expansion into Eastern and Central Europe threatened her with war on two fronts against France and Russia. This had always been Germany's weakness and the cause of her defeat in the First World War. This time, rather than hope for a slow Russian mobilisation which would allow her to defeat France before turning to the East, Hitler was offered a guarantee of Russian neutrality by Stalin. With this agreed the full superiority of the German economy, expressed in squadron after squadron of dive bombers and regiment after regiment of tanks could be thrown against the relatively puny forces of Belgium, Holland, Denmark, France, and Great Britain.

LEND-LEASE

Victory was quick. Within six weeks the whole of mainland Western Europe had been reduced to client states, occupied territory or established allies - Spain and Portugal. Only Great Britain remained at war with Germany. The same combination of Blitzkrieg and invasion, coupled with the destruction of the greater part of the Royal and Merchant Navies by U-boat operations, should have been sufficient to convince Britain to sue for peace and, at best, join with Germany in the long-planned attack on the Soviet Union. However the rise of the 'Empire' faction around Churchill, who saw the German threat as an immediate danger to the Middle East and India, and the guarantee of American supplies via the Cash and Carry scheme and, later, Lend-Lease, promised to make the defeat of Britain a more long drawn and ex-



The Yalta Conference.

WORLD WAR

the Civil War, the bureaucracy was able to replace its lost industry to the East of the Ural mountains, beyond the range of any bombers. At the same time new regiments of the Red Army were formed in Siberia to guard against a second front being opened by the Japanese - but not to open a front against the Japanese who were currently at war with the Chinese Communist guerillas to the South.

Impressive as the Soviet reconstruction of its industry and army was it took nearly two years, during which Germany might have advanced the last few miles into Moscow, Stalingrad or Lenin-

grad. By 1943, hand to hand fighting was taking place in the suburbs of all three cities. The only possible source of a respite for the Soviet Union would have been the opening of a second front to which Germany would have had to divert men and material. Immediately after the invasion of Russia, Stalin had formed an alliance with Great Britain and, later, with the USA. For two years he pleaded with his new allies to open a second front in Western Europe, a direct threat to Germany itself, a threat which Berlin could not ignore. Yet, the allies delayed until 1944. ■



Marshall Zhukov in conquered Berlin.

US imperialism the real victor

The US hoped both to secure an Anglo/American victory over Germany and Japan and to break up the British imperial preference trading bloc which was a major barrier to the expansion of US capitalism.

Until 1941 the US attempted to achieve these goals by economic means. This was summed up in the 'Cash and Carry Policy'. The Neutrality Acts of the Isolationist Congress forbade the supply of goods to any country involved in a war. This was supposed to ensure that America would not be 'dragged into' a war like the First World War. Roosevelt got around this by the 'Cash and Carry Act' which allowed goods to be supplied provided they were paid for in cash and were transported in the buyer's own ships. By this means Britain and France were kept supplied and the American war industry began to mop up the unemployed and to gear itself for all out war production. By 1941, France had been defeated, American unemployment had dwindled to less than one percent and the British Empire had liquidated all available assets to pay for her cash and carry goods.

If a cold war is defined as a conflict between nations in which policy objectives comparable to outright defeat are achieved without the use of the army, then the relations between the USA and Great Britain from this point on are an example of the most successful cold war ever fought. Britain could not survive without supplies from America. American laws prevented the extension of credit to warring nations. Roosevelt, therefore, proposed to lend to Britain whatever she needed to carry on the war. Anything that was destroyed by warfare would be written off, anything that survived would be returned. In return for this 'Lend-Lease', however, Britain was to agree to an "elimination of all forms of tariffs and other trade barriers" (Article VII, Lend Lease Act). In other words, the Sterling bloc was to go forthwith, British markets were to be open to American companies and, to offset costs to America, Britain was to reciprocate Lend-Lease in the form of free deliveries of raw materials from her colonial possessions to the US.

Roosevelt appreciated that even this would not give America the overriding global superiority that she needed. For that military superiority was needed. Consequently, he agreed to send US navy ships to escort the Atlantic convoys to Britain, certain that Germany would attack them and provide the context for open warfare. In the event however, this was upstaged by events in the Pacific. Here too, Roosevelt had long been aware of the likelihood of war with Japan and of Japan's likely strategy of a first strike against the US Navy. To ensure that such a strike would provoke the Congress into declaring war, Roosevelt ordered the majority of the ships of the Pacific Fleet to Pearl Harbour where, he was sure, they would present too tempting a bait for the Japanese to ignore. After the Japanese attack war was declared and, in keeping with treaty obligations, Germany declared war on Japan's enemies. The vast superiority of the American economy now came to the fore. The Pacific Fleet was replaced within the year and, at the same time, ships for the Atlantic war were produced as if from a production line. The counter attack in the Pacific was launched in May 1942, using the aircraft carriers that Roosevelt had kept well away from Pearl Harbour. At the same time, it was agreed by the US and Great Britain that Europe should have priority over the Pacific.

To the Americans this meant a rapid build up of men and supplies in Britain ready for an invasion of Germany from the Atlantic coast - precisely the second front Stalin wanted. Britain, however, reckoned that such a strategy, whilst it might destroy Germany, would do nothing to advance Britain's position. Accordingly, using her only strong card, America's need for British bases from which to attack Europe, Britain insisted upon a joint campaign to clear the Mediterranean of Axis forces. Churchill correctly calculated that by involving the US in the North African campaign he could, by degrees, oblige them to commit more and more forces to fighting for British aims in securing the route to India and British control of the Middle East, the Balkans and, via, Italy, access to the central European plain. This strategy had the advantage of delaying the second front, thereby allowing Germany and Russia to continue destroying each other precisely in the central Europe that Churchill aimed for.

By August 1943, US Secretary of War Henry Stimson was well aware of Churchill's plans, "The British theory is....that Germany can be beaten by a series of attritions....and that the only heavy fighting which needs to be done will be done by Russia."

While German defeat in Europe was inevitable by 1943, in the Far East, however, the war was far from over. America had already experienced the tenacity of the Japanese Army and feared the loss of at least a million to conquer Japan. Once again the Soviet Army was seen as the decisive factor. By the time of the Potsdam Conference in 1945, the Red Army was by far the most formidable army in Europe. It had conquered 210 divisions of the German Army while the Western front was defended by only 85, many of them being reserve units. To defeat Japan it was agreed that the Soviet Union would declare war in the East as of three months from the day of victory in Europe. This was a dangerous move on America's part. Japan lay close to Soviet territory, a Soviet invasion of Japan would mean likely Soviet domination of the Pacific. Until July 1945, however, America had no choice but to call for her own "second front". In that month the whole balance of forces changed with the successful explosion of America's atom bomb. Two days before Stalin was due to begin operations against Japan, 6th August, Hiroshima was destroyed. The day after the Soviet declaration of war, Nagasaki was destroyed in order finally to convince Japan to

the British. Not a single British soldier was shot by ELAS. The crunch came when General Scobie ordered ELAS to disarm and at the same time brought in right wing Greek forces. This was a direct threat to the physical existence of ELAS members. To resist its dissolution and disarmament the ELAS backed EAM called a protest demonstration and a general strike. Clashes in Athens followed with 24 unarmed demonstrators gunned down by police. On December 5th Churchill gave Scobie his orders, "Do not, however, hesitate to act as if you were in a conquered city where a local rebellion is in progress." Thousands of British troops poured in and ELAS capitulated at the end of 1944. Stalin played his rotten part taming the Greek communists and refraining from any interference.

The events in Greece dramatically confirm that Britain was no liberator. She went on to play the same role of suppressing the national resistance movements in Vietnam, Malaysia and, along with the US, Italy. Indeed in Italy the Anglo/American forces encouraged and enabled the Nazis to wipe out the partisans. In November 1944 General Alexander, head of the Allied forces in the Mediterranean broadcast to the partisans in the North that they should not carry out any large scale operations through the winter. The broadcast was also aimed at the Nazis. Decoded it meant, "we will not be advancing this winter so do with the partisan what you will." The Nazis obliged by carrying out a massive and successful operation, which eliminated many of the resistance's key leaders.



General Scobie (centre) and ELAS leader, Saraphis (left) confer on disbanding of partisans.

surrender to America, rather than risk the destruction of Tokyo and possible invasion by the Red Army, already moving through Manchuria. Japan surrendered.

As the Allied armies marched through Europe and Asia they dubbed themselves as "liberators". This was an extension of the idea of the 'anti-fascist war'. Imperialist conquests were portrayed as acts of national liberation. This myth is quickly exposed if we consider for a moment the attitude of the Anglo/American forces to the national based resistance partisans in Italy and Greece. The Italian partisans and the Greek ELAS were dominated by the respective communist parties. Despite sickening pledges of loyalty to capitalism, these parties - resting as they did on armed masses of people (182,000 in Italy by March 1945 with a further 500,000 potential recruits) - were seen as a threat to the post war order. Churchill in particular hated and distrusted the mass partisan movements. ELAS, he described as, "the most treacherous, filthy beasts I have ever read of in official papers." When the Germans evacuated Greece in October 1944 ELAS found itself in control. Its political expression, the National Liberation Front (EAM), had governmental ambitions. Did the British liberators introduce democracy? Not at all. They turned on the heroic resistance fighters. Churchill warned, "I fully expected a clash with EAM, and we must not shrink from it."

The British objective was to restore the right-wing Greek monarchy to power. Control of Athens was identified as central to this plan, and a British force was sent in. The Communists, acting under orders from Stalin (who had "given" Greece to Britain), appealed for order and collaboration with

result at major conferences at Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam the Western powers were forced to concede the redrawing of Soviet borders in line with Stalin's desire to emulate the territorial scale of the old Tsarist empire. They were forced to concede a Soviet buffer sphere of influence for the USSR in Central and East Europe in exchange for Soviet assistance to defuse revolutionary situations in South and West Europe. They were forced to concede a share of the administration of defeated Germany to the Soviet bureaucracy.

There was little the US could do to prevent these losses for imperialism. Lend-Lease Aid for the USSR was abruptly stopped in May 1945. Soviet requests for a \$6 million credit were studiously ignored. But the West were dependent on the Kremlin bureaucracy to assist in the re-establishment of the capitalist order. Greece showed that all too clearly. The result was a deal with the USSR that the imperialist powers want to undo to this very day.

Similarly the entire imperialist order was placed under increasing strain as a result of the anti-colonial wars that were waged within the imperialist war, most markedly in China, Korea and Indo-China - major anti-imperialist forces had been assembled around the respective communist parties. The crises and convulsions of imperialist rule were to give way to the overthrow of imperialism's yoke in the post war years - most notably in the Chinese revolution of 1949.

Imperialism emerged from the war restructured and stabilised. However it was also seriously weakened by its outcome. The war between the imperialist powers showed the scale of barbarism and slaughter that imperialism will resort to in order to maintain its rule. So too did the reigns of terror to which national independence movements were subjected by the imperialist powers. But the victory of the USSR and the strengthening of anti-imperialist movements in the colonies and semi-colonies showed that imperialism was a system in decline and decay. It was a system whose very weakness was underlined by its resort to a deal with Stalinism to shore up its class rule in those areas most precious and accessible to it.

ANTI-IMPERIALISM

In the second world war the policy of revolutionaries in all of the imperialist states should have been the policy of revolutionary defeatism. This policy, first advocated by Lenin in the 1914-1918 war, can be crystallised into a number of definite slogans. For Lenin the policy meant a struggle to turn the imperialist war into a war between the classes. Agitation in the army against the war and against the officer hierarchy was necessary. In the factories workers should be won to the slogan that the main enemy is at home - the bosses of your own country. Practically this means urging no cessation of the class struggle during the war. Crucially the defeatist policy is coupled with a struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie. The workers of Britain for example, to end the war to their advantage, needed to overthrow 'their' capitalist government.

Lenin's policy does not mean that revolutionaries favour the victory of a foreign imperialism over their own. Revolutionaries in Britain and Germany were not in favour of Nazi Germany or British imperialism winning the war. As Trotsky explained: "Unscrupulous enemies have tried to interpret this (ie defeatism - WP) to mean that Lenin supposedly approved collaboration with foreign imperialism in order to defeat domestic reaction. In fact what he was talking about was a parallel struggle by workers of each country against their own imperialism, as their primary and most immediate enemy."

Patriotism in Britain in world war two would have meant supporting the imperialist war aims of Churchill. Defeat was a lesser evil. That patriotism to the Churchill government held firm, was precisely due to the Labour Party and Stalinist leaders in the working class who preached unity in the 'anti-fascist war'.

The policy of defeatism in Britain or America in no way contradicts the policy of defensism of the USSR. As the delay in opening the second front showed, Churchill and Roosevelt did not wish to seriously support the Soviet Union. In no way could defensism be helped by hitching the working class to the chariot wheel of imperialism. Independent workers' action was the best form of defence of the USSR. ■

by Steve McSweeney

RECENTLY THE VETERAN Sri Lankan Trotskyist, Edmund Samarakoddy, was in Europe. Workers Power interviewed him about the situation in Sri Lanka, where the conflict between the oppressed national minority, the Tamils, and the chauvinist Sinhalese government of Jayawardene is growing daily more intense. Edmund is a leading member of the Sri Lankan Revolutionary Workers Party.

BEHIND THE TERROR AGAINST THE TAMILS

IN this country the press widely reported the massacre at Anuradhapura supposedly carried out by Tamil separatists. What is your view of this massacre?

What was reported was that some Tamil peasants had come in army uniforms in a bus to this Sinhala Buddhist town and killed about 100 people including a Buddhist monk and two nuns. All Tamil guerilla groups which have been active in attacks on army and government institutions have denied any responsibility for these killings. There is no evidence that this was done by Tamil guerillas. But of course any vindictive actions by the government or Tamil guerillas against innocent Sinhala or Tamil people have to be condemned. It is very difficult to believe that any one of the Tamil guerilla groups had carried out this action. Such violence in this city, venerated by the Buddhists, would not only have seriously discredited the Tamils and the guerillas but would have led to anti-Tamil pogroms by the Sinhala people, and in that way have seriously harmed the liberation struggle of the Tamil people. It is true that shortly before this attack in the city of Anuradhapura the government armed forces had shot and killed 100 young Tamils, including children in the North of Sri Lanka. This was reported by the BBC. The government sought to say that the attack in Anuradhapura was a revengeful killing by the Tamil guerillas. There is no proof whatsoever that the Tamil guerillas have been involved in this attack.



Tamil Guerillas.

Has Rajiv Ghandi's succession to power in India made any difference to Indian/Sri Lankan relations?

No real difference has taken place in India with regard to the Tamil liberation struggle. The Jayawardene government has pressured Rajiv Ghandi to withdraw whatever support his government is said to be giving to the Tamil guerilla movement. It is a fact that nearly 80,000 Tamils have crossed over from the North of Sri Lanka to India, a large number of whom are refugees. Included among the people who have crossed over are large numbers of youth and militants who are continuing the struggle and continuing to give leadership from Southern India. The government, even from the time of Indhira Ghandi, has claimed that the Indian government was providing training facilities for guerillas in Southern India. The Indian government has denied this many times but it is not possible to say what the exact position is. The Tamil guerillas have a right to get support from whatever quarter they can. They have a right to get training facilities wherever they fight.



Sinhalese chauvinist, Jayawardene.

What role has the Jayawardene government played in attacks on the Tamils? Have the pogroms been "spontaneous"?

Government forces have resorted to revengeful killings and the burning down of Tamil houses and looting of the property of Tamils for a long time now. When the government reports any killings of its troops by guerillas, always included in the same report is the claim that large numbers of Tamil guerillas responsible for such actions were killed or wounded. The truth is that the armed forces cannot get at Tamil militants who carry out such activities. Accordingly they immediately respond by the killing of large numbers of innocent Tamils in the neighbourhood.

What has been the policy of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) during the recent unrest?

For a long time the TULF distanced itself from the violent actions of the Tamil guerillas. The TULF leaders are, however, now seeking to consciously appear as supporters of the armed struggle. This is a change of policy. The motivation is to gain influence with the Tamil guerillas. Recently the TULF leaders have been active in bringing about a certain amount of unity between several guerilla groups. It seems that the TULF leaders are seeking to gain a position in the leadership of the Tamil liberation struggle. This is possibly because the struggle of the guerillas is being intensified and becoming more widespread. In view of the history of collaboration of the TULF with the oppressive Sinhala bourgeois governments, any gaining of a leadership position by the TULF in the Tamil liberation struggle would be a real danger. The TULF leaders will seek, as before, to compromise the struggle and seek conciliation with the Jayawardene government to betray the struggle.

The recent Tamil attacks seem to be bolder and further afield than before. Is this a sign of their growing strength?

The Tamil guerillas have stepped up their attacks on the government armed forces and widened their field of operation. It is not only in the Northern province but now attacks are taking place in the Eastern province which is also largely populated by Tamils, and also by Moslems who are Tamil speaking. Undoubtedly the stepping up of armed actions by the guerillas is aimed at forcing a political solution from the government. While the government is becoming unpopular having failed to counter the guerillas Jayawardene will find it very difficult to make any concession to the demands of the Tamils and make any positive steps to a political solution. In point of fact, at the end of one year's deliberations in a so called all-party conference, Jayawardene put forward certain proposals for a political solution but he found that extreme reactionary Sinhalese chauvinists were strongly opposed to these proposals. When he found that a member of his cabinet, the Minister of Industry, a prominent Sinhala chauvinist Mr Matthews, publicly denounced these proposals he very quickly dropped the proposals. The current increase in the number of successful attacks shows that the Tamil guerillas have strengthened their forces. This could well be attributable to the fact that recently there has been a united front amongst the various guerilla groups.

Some reports suggest the Tamil separatists are carrying out attacks to make Sri Lanka ungovernable and to force Jayawardene to grant independence. Recently a leading Buddhist in Sri Lanka - hitherto the most reactionary wing in Sinhala politics - has been reported as suggesting some concessions will have to be made. What do you see happening?

It is true that a leading Buddhist monk has called for consultations with the Tamils, or even the guerillas, to find a solution to the problem. But the real purpose behind this move was the setting up of an unofficial advisory council to the government aimed at the control and more effective suppression of the Tamil guerillas. It was reported that among the political parties that were invited by this monk was the United National Party (the government party). It was reported that the government party did not attend this conference but other opposition parties - the party led by Mrs Bandaranaike, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, the Communist Party, LSSP, the MEP (Peoples United Front) did. It would appear that Mrs Bandaranaike's SLFP has expressed support for the move by this Buddhist monk for the formation of an official advisory council. However other parties have so far disapproved of the suggestion. The government party has not attended the discussions.

What is the current economic situation in Sri Lanka?

The government has been compelled to divert a large amount of its resources to the problems created by the Tamil Liberation struggle. It is a fact that social services have been badly cut. As a result of the July 1983 pogrom large numbers of workers have lost their jobs because establishments run by the Tamils were burnt and had to be closed down. It is also true that the widespread nature of the attacks carried out by the Tamil guerillas has badly affected the tourist industry. Since last year the number of tourists has declined very visibly and a large number of hotels etc., have had to be closed down or just maintained. The question of unemployment is also becoming a much more serious factor in Sri Lanka. There has been considerable unrest among the wage earning people because whatever the government may claim about bringing down the cost of living in point of fact it is daily rising. So there is a continuous demand for a rise in wages. But the policy of the government with regard to the Trade Unions and the policy of repression that

Are there any signs of progressive unrest amongst the Kandyan Tamils or even the Sinhalese working class?

With regard to the Tamil workers on the plantations, they are the section of workers who, over the years, have received the poorest wages. But unfortunately the leadership of the big trade unions are in the hands of reactionaries. The leader of the biggest trade union on the plantations is Tunderman who is also in the cabinet. So while strikes have taken place there are the problems of repressive legislation on the one hand and on the other the conscious sabotage of Tamil workers' struggles by Tunderman.

With regard to the Sinhalese working class there are signs of unrest. From time to time they seek to organise trade union struggles, but any type of trade union activity, like public meetings or demonstrations, are very difficult because the government immediately intervenes. Even the distribution of leaflets leads to the arrest of workers and their leaders and from time to time the government deliberately takes into custody trade union leaders. They are kept for 2 or 3 days in police custody. They are questioned and harassed and in that way, although there is a growing unrest, there are no signs yet of any major working class upsurge in the period ahead. But of course, as revolutionaries, we would never entirely rule out the possibility of a major out break of class struggle.

What do you think are the key tasks for revolutionaries in Sri Lanka today?

Revolutionaries have to remember and clearly see that the working class as a whole, Tamil and Sinhala, have become seriously weakened by the chauvinism of this government, and the anti-Tamil chauvinism which has been propagated since the government took over. This chauvinism has made the Sinhala working class anti-Tamil. Any working class struggle could become a reality and become a success on the basis of Sinhala/Tamil unity. The task of revolutionaries is to intervene and take the Tamil question to the Sinhala workers. We must patiently explain that the Tamils are fighting for their democratic rights and that there is no possibility for the Sinhala working class to stand aside and watch while the government is persecuting and massacring the Tamil people.

This is very difficult because the main political parties that claim to be Marxist have capitulated to Sinhala chauvinism. The Communist Party and the LSSP (neither of which have much influence), and the newer parties like the NSSP (linked to the British Militant) have also capitulated. They have said from the start they are against a separate Tamil state. They have gained some influence amongst the Tamil people by calling upon the government to stop the repression and oppression of the Tamils but they are very clearly opposed to the struggle the Tamil people are carrying out today.

Without clarification on the national question these parties cannot expect to play any real part in taking working class struggles forward. Generally the picture for the left is very difficult because it would appear that the government is seeking to increase repression not only against the larger parties but also against the smaller left-wing groups. They are seeking not only to harass but to completely destroy the left.

At the moment the government faces many problems. Posters are up in Colombo calling on the government to resign because of the failure to solve the problems of the people. But these posters could well have been put up by more reactionary elements. So the opposition that is likely to grow in the coming period could well be led in the wrong direction by the Sinhala chauvinists.

has been evident for the last several years has made it very difficult for the working class to move into any sort of trade union activity to win their present demands.

However there was a manifestation of something that is to come in the period ahead recently. An unprecedented student struggle took place about a month ago around the question of an amendment to the Universities Act. This was a way of undermining the system of free education in Sri Lanka. The government has decided to allow the setting up of private universities, which would only be open to people who had money, or whose parents had money.

There is also in this amendment an attempt by the government to lower the status of universities to that of secondary schools, with regard to the rights and privileges of the students and their activity within the universities. For instance, students organizations within the universities have been gradually banned by changing the character of these organisations into welfare organisations. Any type of independent thinking on the part of the university students will disappear.

The students reacted very fast when the proposals were announced, not only university students but students in the secondary schools, for several days were on the streets demonstrating against this act.

GUYANA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED.
On Thursday 15th June a public meeting of 60 people launched a new campaign called "Guyanese Against Dictatorship". The campaign aims to aid the struggle against President Forbes Burnham's increasingly dictatorial regime in Guyana. The paper of the campaign *Courage* was also launched at the same meeting. Further information from G.A.D. P.O. Box 654, London SW2 4LF.

GUYANA UPDATE
A digest of news and reports about Guyana. Available from *Guyana Update*, Box BCM 77934, London WC1N 3XX
(Subscription Rates: £3.00 individuals, £6.00 institutions.
Cheques and postal orders made payable to: *Guyana Update*.)

THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT is facing the worst economic crisis since the overthrow of Somoza in 1979. Earlier this year a number of drastic austerity measures were introduced. They involved freezing the budgets of Health and Education programmes, dramatically curtailing subsidies on basic food stuffs and increasing the prices paid to farmers.

They were accompanied by an attack on 'egalitarianism' in wages aimed at attracting skilled and qualified workers into the more productive sectors of the economy by financial incentives. The measures increased prices of some basic necessities by between 100 and 200%. Coming on top of extreme shortages - major hospitals in Managua are often unable to obtain even basic medical supplies such as syringes, antibiotics, sheets, soups etc - and a flourishing black market, these measures represent a severe blow to the workers and to the mass of poor peasants.

The leaders of the Sandinista trade unions backed these measures as a necessary 'wartime austerity'. However they met immediate opposition from ordinary workers. At the end of February a strike broke out amongst cane cutters at the major San Antonio sugar complex over compensatory wage rises. Even the Communist Party's paper *Avance* was led to compare the measures to an IMF programme and suggest they were designed to precede a new approach to that body.

Indeed it is not difficult to understand the causes of the latest economic crisis in Nicaragua. In 1979 when Somoza fled the country he left Nicaraguan debts to private banks in America and Europe amounting to \$580 million. The IMF and the banks demanded, and the Sandinista government agreed, that all these debts should be honoured. (Even those which were given to Somoza a couple of months before his flight and which disappeared with him!)

MOUNTING DEBTS

As a result Nicaragua, devastated by war and Reagan's economic blockade, has been further saddled with mounting debts which it was unable to pay. By 1985 those debts to private banks had increased to \$1.3 billion as unpaid interest owed by Nicaragua has been added to the original sum. Nicaragua's total debt now stand at over \$4.5 billion.

The austerity measures were clearly aimed at convincing the IMF that the government was determined to remain 'credit-worthy'. As with other countries in Latin America the IMF's criteria for credit worthiness is whether governments are willing to slash social programmes and food subsidies, and to direct resources to private industry.

That this is happening in Nicaragua as well was revealed by Joaquin Cuadra Chamorro, president of the Central Bank. Commenting on an IMF report, updated following the austerity measures, he pointed out that: "though the (IMF) report contains much criticism of the excessive expansionism of the past, it says that at least now we are on the right path." He went on to declare: "these measures to be only the beginning of the process. We have to curtail consumption...and in this respect we have to admit the U.S. is helping us. Without its aggression the people would never have given their consent to the sacrifices we are asking them to make". (Quoted in *Latin American Reports* 5/4/85)

US TRADE EMBARGO

These sacrifices are made even more costly by the determined attempts of the U.S. ruling class to strangle the Nicaraguan economy. Reagan's trade embargo along with Congress' renewed aid to the contra guerillas is designed to step up the pressure on the FSLN government and undermine

NEW AUSTERITY AS NICARAGUAN ECONOMY WORSENS

its support. While a direct U.S. invasion has not been ruled out, Reagan told Congress when introducing his embargo that military force "must realistically be recognised as an eventual option for the region if other policy options fail" it is clearly seen as a potentially costly last resort.

For the moment, at least, they prefer to rely on the economic disruption caused by the forced mobilisation of the Nicaraguan economy to protect itself against the well funded contra mercenaries as well as a potential U.S. invasion. The U.S. campaign to block sources of aid from international bodies has been actively taken up by the Thatcher government within the EEC. It is seen as a method of destroying the FSLN government in Nicaragua and with it the threat to U.S. interests in Central America.

The strategy of the Nicaraguan government in the face of this imperialist onslaught can, in the end, only serve to undermine the gains achieved by the masses in their heroic struggle against Somoza. This strategy relies on maintaining an alliance with the capitalists in order to 'further the revolution'. Ambassador to Britain, Francisco d'Escoto, declared in a recent speech at Oxford University:

"...we are for a mixed economy. The Reagan embargo has hit the private sector hardest, which controls 60% of the Nicaraguan economy...We have, as a responsible government, to help the private sector meet their requirements in order for them to continue in the process of the revolution". (Quoted in the *Morning Star* 3 June 1985)

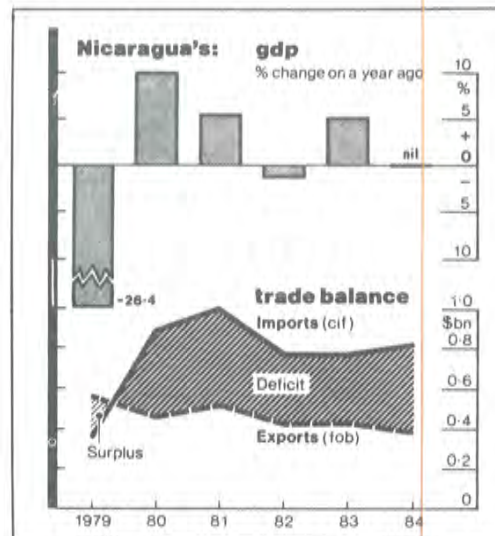
FIFTH COLUMN

The concessions made to the IMF demonstrate how the government pursuing this policy, is forced to impose increasing sacrifices on the workers and peasants in the interest of the profits of the international banks and private capitalists. Yet to renounce the debts and break with the IMF would mean taking real measures against the imperialists and their allies within Nicaragua. It would mean reorganising the economy under the control of the workers themselves. It would mean expropriating the imperialists' holdings and the large privately owned businesses. Only on the basis of a planned economy, controlled by the workers themselves in an alliance with the peasantry, would it be possible to resist the imperialist onslaught and defend the gains of the 1979 revolution.

At the moment in Nicaragua sacrifices are demanded from the masses while the economy remains dominated by the private capitalists. In such a situation sacrifices will always be in the



Nicaraguan worker.



interests of the bosses, who will demand them to 'keep the economy moving', to 'increase profits for investment' etc. Yet these are the same capitalists who represent a massive fifth column within Nicaragua. Their interests are inextricably linked to U.S. imperialism and they actively undermine the economy by sabotage and investment boycotts. A real struggle against imperialism would have to strike precisely at the economic power and privileges of this group.

Only a government which really represented the workers and peasants in Nicaragua, which had smashed the power of the capitalists and had placed economic and political power in the hands of the masses through their elected soviets would have the right and the duty to demand sacrifices to defend the revolution.

Neither can the gains of the Nicaraguan revolution be defended, let alone extended, on the basis of confining the struggle against U.S. imperialism within the limits of Nicaragua. Yet again this is the policy being pursued by the Nicaraguan government. "Our revolution is for us and not to be exported" declared d'Escoto in the same speech at Oxford University, repeating the many similar declarations of the FSLN leadership designed to appease the U.S. Administration.

In reality the survival of the Nicaraguan revolution has always been inextricably bound up with the struggle in El Salvador. A defeat for the FMLN in El Salvador would be a crushing blow to Nicaragua; its victory would be the opposite. A successful struggle against imperialism is absolutely dependent on spreading the revolution to the whole of Central America. Yet the Contadora Treaty, which the Nicaraguan government believes will take the pressure off it, explicitly rules out 'outside interference' in sovereign states. They see it as a binding commitment to abandon physical support for the FMLN and other anti-imperialist movements. They have already run down their support as a 'sign of good faith' to Washington.

REPUDIATE AUSTERITY MEASURES

The Nicaraguan masses face an increasingly critical situation. The government of Daniel Ortega could well face a similar crisis to the one which shattered the PRG in Grenada. As the economic crisis intensifies and imperialism demands more and more attacks on the gains of the masses, a growing disillusionment will set in amongst the workers and peasants who are being asked to bear the brunt of these 'sacrifices'. This could in turn tend to fracture the popular frontist coalition which makes up the FSLN.

If the masses in Nicaragua are to avoid either a bloody counter-revolution backed by U.S. imperialism, or even the outside possibility that the proto-Stalinist wing of the FSLN leadership will move to crush both the capitalists and the independent workers' organisations in establishing a bureaucratic Stalinist regime, they need to address the burning task of building a mass revolutionary party - a Trotskyist Party.

Such a party would immediately repudiate the 'wartime austerity' measures as being in the interest of the bankers and capitalists and not of the workers. It would demand the immediate cancellation of the debts to the imperialists and the expropriation of the capitalist saboteurs inside Nicaragua. It would address the rank and file of the FSLN, as well as its leaders, calling on them to break their alliance with the bourgeoisie and unite in a struggle to defeat the imperialist attacks and defend and extend the gains of the workers and poor peasants by entering onto the road of struggle for a revolutionary workers and peasants government in Nicaragua. ■

by Stuart King

ZIMBABWE ELECTIONS

THE ELECTIONS TAKING place in Zimbabwe on the 1st and 2nd July seem certain to result in a victory for the ruling party, ZANU, and its leader, Prime Minister Robert Mugabe. He is likely to increase his majority in the 100 seat Parliament.

Five years ago, when Mugabe came to power, ZANU easily defeated the other contenders. This resulted from several factors: ZANU's predominance in the liberation war to oust the white minority Smith regime, its radical programme which particularly stressed land reform and also the fact that Zanu is primarily based on the majority Shona people. Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU, the other party of the liberation struggle, had more limited support based in Matabeleland. Bishop Abel Muzorewa paid the price for his collaboration with the white minority and captured only a handful of seats.

ONE PARTY STATE

Despite his 'Marxist-Leninist' rhetoric, Mugabe has been careful not to threaten the interests of the Western capitalists and local white farmers. Indeed so favourable has been their treatment, and so profitable the big white owned farms, that for the first time since Mugabe came to power there has been a significant inflow of white settlers. He has also been willing to back-pedal on his intentions to move to a one-party state at least for the moment and stick to the British-imposed 'Lancaster House' constitution.

Mugabe needs a one-party state because he



knows he cannot deliver on his promises to the masses. As long as there are opposition parties and democratic rights which allow workers and peasants to organise, Mugabe's regime is under threat. Looking ahead at the economic prospects, he knows he will have to launch further attacks on workers and peasants, and cannot allow an oppo-

sition to rally them. For the moment the urgency of proceeding to such a state has been offset by the current bumper harvest, after three years of drought. Mugabe now talks of changing the constitution in 1990.

At the moment Zimbabwe can feed its own population and export considerable quantities of grain as well as coffee and tobacco. Production has increased on the big white estates and even more so on the recently established 'communal' farms. The small individual peasant farmer has done less well, not only as their units are inevitably less efficient, but because the land they received in resettlement programmes was low quality. But the government refuses to encroach on the good land in the big estates. The agreement signed at Lancaster House ensured that black majority rule wouldn't mean an upset for the capitalists. Land taken over from the big estates must be paid for in full in foreign currency. So large numbers of Zimbabwe's poor peasants cannot take part in the agricultural 'success story'.

FOREIGN DEBT RISES

Similarly, the developing crisis in towns and industry has been postponed rather than overcome. The International Monetary Fund bailed out Zimbabwe in 1982, 1983 and 1984 in exchange for promises of cutbacks on government spending and wage restrictions. In fact, the government has been unable to stop the rise in public borrowing and in

the foreign debt. In 1984, debt servicing was the biggest single item of state spending, swallowing 20% of the state budget. Austerity measures are likely to be toughened once the election is out of the way.

UNIONISATION

In the past three years, Mugabe has used industrial relation laws to ban strikes and also tried to set up ZANU-controlled unions. But workers have tended to stick to their own unions. Recent attempts to set up reform movements in the General Engineering and Metal Workers Union, and the Harare Municipal Workers Union, have been stamped on. Nine trade union officials were detained in goal.

When opposition increases to Mugabe, his only alternative, given his intention to defend the capitalists and placate the IMF, will be further repression. The moves to a one-party state will be accelerated again. The Matabele have already experienced what this means with a virtual army occupation of Matabeleland, arbitrary arrests, beatings and disappearances, all in the name of dealing with 'dissidents'. Unless the workers and peasants of Zimbabwe organise to defend their living standards, their democratic rights and their trade union organisations, Mugabe will undoubtedly unleash the same attacks on them. □

by Sue Thomas

workers power

Miners' Rank & File: organise to fight

DESPITE EVIDENCE of demoralisation in the coalfields, the prospects for building a rank and file movement in the NUM remain good.

True, thousands of men have taken voluntary redundancy. This was inevitable after the defeat of such a historic struggle. More significant is that in many of the branch elections just held, strike militants have won positions. Even in Nottingham several scab dominated pits have seen strikers win branch positions. The spirit of militancy still, to an important extent, prevails.

The behaviour of the leadership at a national and area level creates the openings for a rank and file movement. In Yorkshire the NCB announced the closure of Cortonwood, Darfield Main and the Carcroft mining workshop. In reply Jack Taylor announced that there would be no fight against these closures. Cortonwood, the spark that lit the fire of militant resistance in March 1984, is closing without opposition!

In Wales and Scotland the leaderships have behaved in a similar vein. All of Emlyn Williams's rhetoric cannot disguise the fact that the Welsh workforce is being drastically cut. Maerdy is being linked with Tower in a job cutting plan which will mean no more coal coming out of the Rhondda Valley.

The leaders in the key left coalfields no longer have any stomach for a fight. But what of Arthur Scargill? Over the last weeks he has hinted on several occasions that a new national strike is necessary. In June he said that if the NCB continued its closure programme then: "...our membership will see that there is no alternative to taking united action possibly with under-officials (ie NACODS - WP) in this industry".

While Scargill is right to point to the need for new national action, he is wrong to only say so in veiled hints. National action is needed. The campaign for it must begin now. Every local action, like those at Markham, North Derbyshire and South Kirby in Yorkshire, need to be officially supported, spread within and

between areas and used to rebuild confidence in the union.

This perspective would have to involve a challenge to backsliders like Taylor. This Scargill is not prepared to do. Just as he would not openly challenge the bureaucrats of the TUC during the Great Strike, so he will not challenge the area barons now. The result is that the prospects for renewed national action become less as local defeats dissipate militancy.

Scargill's other defect is his insistence that no defeat has taken place; "Our historic struggle has been seen as a setback by some but like the early struggles in Cuba they were not defeats but steps on the road to victory".

Whatever Scargill's motivation in making statements like these, the fact is that he is leading members in a dangerous direction.

Militant miners at work, sacked miners, miners at pits that have closed since the end of the strike and the NCB, all know different. The miners are feeling the effects of the defeat every day. The NCB are enjoying some of the fruits of victory.

The tasks for militants now is to learn the lessons - positive and negative - of the Great Strike and its defeat. They need to build upon the rank and file initiative that characterised the great picket lines of the strike. They need to

learn the dangers of the bureaucratic deals that Scargill made, deals which failed, even in the case of left-led unions like the NUR and the TGWU, to deliver the widespread solidarity action needed to ensure victory. Scargill's statements are hindering, not helping this vital learning process.

The formation of the National Rank and File Miners Movement (NRFMM) in April this year could prove an important counterweight to Scargill's errors and to the cowardice of Taylor and Williams.

At its first conference the NRFMM decided to concentrate on building a movement of sacked miners. We argued at that conference that this was a wrong perspective. We said the key battles would be in the pits. We have been proved right.

The launch of the paper *Rank and File Miner* is to be welcomed. With its appearance the NRFMM must change course. It must use the paper to build a rank and file movement in the pits.

Such a movement must be based on local branches of the NRFMM themselves rooted in the pits. Such groups would be decisive when officials such as Taylor moan that nothing can be done. In Yorkshire for example, had such local groups existed they could have organised against the new closure threat to Cortonwood.

Local leaflets countering Taylor's pessimism could have been widely distributed. Contact could have been established with the militants in Cortonwood to plan a campaign across the coalfield. Taylor

could have been given a rough ride everywhere he put his defeatist position. If the NRFMM is to survive and grow then these are the types of activity it will have to engage in.

Of course such activities will lead to a clash with the officials. The NRFMM must openly recognise this and not flinch from stating its criticisms clearly and acting on them decisively. This will cause the officials to hurl all sorts of accusations at the NRFMM; that they are splitters, a front for 'left-wing outside agitators' and so on. Such charges are best met head on. The NRFMM must say boldly and clearly, we will take the action necessary to prepare for a new battle without fear or favour from anyone!

But a rank and file movement cannot simply be a loosely organised group of militants in the NUM or a rank and file support for the 'left' NUM officials. It must become an organisation committed to building an alternative fighting leadership in the NUM. It must commit itself to campaigning to transform the NUM into a thoroughly democratic class struggle union, one that is in the hands of the rank and file. All of this means a major change of perspective for the NRFMM.

On August 10th the chance to discuss making such a change will exist at the third NRFMM National Conference. It must open itself to a democratic debate, with resolutions, on the direction of the NRFMM.

In our view the elements of such a change will consist of adopting clear policies on a range of issues facing miners. There must be opposition to the rule changes that make officials more

unaccountable (ie the two thirds rule, the life Presidency and casting-vote rule).

Rules for a *centralised democratic* union in which officials are not only accountable but also recallable, by the men, are needed. The fight against closures and for higher wages needs to be a big priority. The struggle to smash the scabs, effectively given up by the officials, must be taken up and fought through to the end with their expulsion from the NUM.

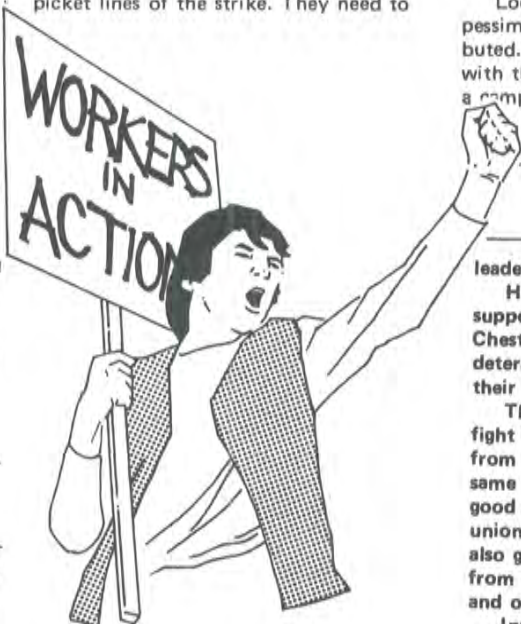
In sum, the NRFMM needs a political programme and perspective. The task will be to win the NUM to such a programme. Without such policies, militants will be entitled to ask - what is the distinction between the NUM and its leadership, and the NRFMM? If the first is basically portrayed as sufficient then the second becomes redundant.

The forces of *The Red Miner*, the **WORKERS POWER** bulletin for miners and their families, will be arguing for the perspectives and policies outlined here, inside the NRFMM. We will urge a change of course at the August 10th Conference. We appeal to all miners to support this conference and support the policies we advocate at it.

If we are successful then the building of the NRFMM into a flourishing, anti-bureaucratic movement in the best traditions of the Miners Unofficial Reform Committee and the Miners Minority Movement, will become a real possibility.

For details of the NRFMM Conference and its paper - contact:

A Robe 0302 - 844446 or
T Clegg 0302 - 845655



leadership".

However despite the lack of official support for the strike, the women in Chesterfield are not giving in and are determined to stick it out and save their jobs.

They have been encouraged in their fight by the response they have had from rank and file trade unionists. The same strikers told us "we've had very good financial response from other unions that we've written to and we're also getting support on the picket lines from the NUM, the NGA, the AUEW and others".

Invite a speaker to your next meeting and organise a delegation to visit the strikers on the picket line.

Donations and letters of support to:

Mr M Naughton.
N.U.P.E. Hardship Fund,
C/o Labour Club,
113 Saltergate,
Chesterfield.

Scarsdale fights on

SINCE THE 16th of April 47 domestics at Scarsdale Hospital and 50 domestics at the Royal Hospital in Chesterfield have been striking. In the words of one striker the strike is "against privatisation in general, for jobs, and to save the Health Service as we know it".

The workers have been forced into striking by the determination of the Health Authority to privatise. In fact the workforce had previously agreed to cuts in jobs and hours to keep the 'contractors' (ie contractors) out. But the bosses had come back for more, just proving that if you give them an inch they will always try and take a mile. Of course the local Health Authority is only carrying out the Tories' plans to privatise the Health Service.

Unfortunately, just as in the miners' strike, the leadership of our movement is leaving the Chesterfield strikers, and others like them, such as at Barking (where the workers are now 15 months into their strike) to fight alone. One striking N.U.P.E. member pointed out: "The women are virtually left on their own, apart from N.U.P.E.'s commitment to make it official and pay strike pay. We don't get a lot more from the

ILEA attacks teachers

In March this year the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) announced its intention of cutting 943 jobs.

Having recognised that last year it only managed to compulsorily redeploy 29 teachers, ILEA embarked on a programme to entice the London-wide NUT leadership into backing a campaign for voluntary redeployment which would achieve significant overall job reductions.

ILEA sought a 'painless' procedure whereby "the outcome in numbers (ie jobs lost - WP) would be broadly similar while relationships across the Authority would not be damaged as they are by compulsory redeployment." ILEA received a boost to their hopes in this regard when the new elections to the Inner London Teachers Authority (ILTA) produced a leadership comprised of mem-

bers of the Socialist Teachers Alliance. The bulk of ILTA Officers are Socialist Action supporters or Labour Party fellow-travellers.

On April 24th they were instructed to negotiate a deal with ILEA which would guarantee four things:

1. No job loss in any school.
2. No identification of 'surplus' teachers.
3. A proper timetable for all teachers.
4. No early retirement schemes without a guarantee that all such jobs would be replaced.

Yet only two days later the ILTA officers signed an agreement, "Voluntary Movement of Teachers 1985", which guaranteed practically the reverse of all these four things! Jobs would be lost in some schools, teachers would be identified, their timetables would be 'collapsible' (with other teachers having to cover their timetable if they left) and early retirement would be used to cut jobs. This sell-out was hailed in ILTA's publicity as "the end of Compulsory Redeployment", which was the only gain incorporated in the agreement. This agreement was endorsed by the ILTA Executive, including leading SWP militant Dick North.

Those who have opposed 'voluntary redeployment' schemes, like Workers Power, have agreed that they leave the initiative with ILEA. Management can find ways and means of putting pressure on teachers to move and get rid of their jobs.

Last year 300 jobs were lost, although only 29 teachers were forced to move. Since 1979 some 2,500 jobs have gone in ILEA. This directly leads to a worsening of working conditions and to areas of the curriculum being eroded.

We need to maintain and increase our vigilance. It is crucial that union members in the schools refuse to cover the work of teachers not replaced in September, and that all teachers designated as 'surplus to requirement' are properly written into timetables for next year. Firm resistance now will enhance our fighting capacity next year, when we can expect rate-capping and the abolition of the GLC to cause compulsory and more stringent 'voluntary' schemes to be resurrected.

Defend Tinsley Park!

ON JUNE 4th BSC reaffirmed the closure of Tinsley Park Steelworks in March next year. This decision was actually taken by BSC two years ago but not announced until March this year. It is part of the Tories' plan to privatise special steel production and merge BSC with the private sector.

In response to the closure announcement a joint union committee has been established. Its proposals so far hold out little change of forcing management to back down. BSC rejected a 50 page 'Alternative Plan' out of hand & withdrew facilities from the Campaign.

Faced with this the committee turned first to the TUC Steel Committee and the Parliamentary Select Committee on Steel. The feeble suggestion of a 2 month stay of execution was similarly rejected. Now the ISTC executive has decided to seek a High Court injunction to stop the closure. They have based this on BSC's lack of consultation with the unions. We can expect this tactic to meet a similar fate.

Even the decision to ballot for a strike in the special steels division is only a small step forward. It leaves all decisions about the strike in the hands of an executive that has watched 100,000 jobs go in the last 6 years. Roy Evans, ISTC general secretary, has already described strikes as "doing management's jobs for them".

It is now vital for rank and file steelworkers to take the initiative. They alone can change the direction of the present inadequate campaign.

The call for a national steel strike against closures and privatisation and for the nationalisation under workers' control of the whole steel industry must be at the centre of a renewed campaign. Without such a campaign steelworkers face an increasingly harsh management offensive. Messages of support and solidarity should be sent to:

G Stronach (Secretary).
13, Ashmount,
Winsford Road,
SHEFFIELD 6.

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