

# workers power

30p/10p strikers Monthly paper of the Workers Power group



the police in force



## BRITISH WORKERS MUST TAKE

# ACTION against Apartheid!

LIKE AN INJURED beast the South African regime lashes out ever more wildly. Their police arrive in the black townships in unmarked trucks to pump round after round of live ammunition into crowds armed only with stones. To reassure the privileged and pampered white minority they flood the city centres with armed troops. In frustration against the failure of Botha to suppress their "slaves" thousands of whites turn to the far-right wing HNP, they rush to the stores to buy rifles and machine guns. The government reinforces the State of Emergency, it threatens journalists with 10 years' jail if they report a single grain of truth about this bloody crackdown.

What has been the response of the British Government? Thatcher has remained obdurate: 'There will be no sanctions'. At the Commonwealth Leaders Conference she treated them like school children that had only to be talked to severely to be brought to order. This august body, whose heads of government "represent" between them millions of black people, was thrown the most insulting concession imaginable. Britain will ban the import of Krugerrands!

### BRITISH BOSSES

Thatcher emerged smirking, "Has she given way?" the world's press asked. Laughing scornfully she replied, "Do you know how much imports of Krugerrands are worth?" Asked to supply an "eminent person" for the Commonwealth "peace mission" she chose Anthony Barber - Edward Heath's bungling Chancellor, now chairman of Standard Chartered Bank, second only to Barclays in the league of British companies which prop up the racist state. Thatcher's attitude should not surprise us for a minute.

The British bosses have a £12 billion stake in the Apartheid regime. The men who sit in the boardrooms at BP, GEC, Dunlop, EMI, Plessey, Courtaulds and a

hundred other "great names" of British industry provide 40% of all foreign investment in South Africa. In turn the racist state provides the cheap labour of the black working class. Herded into barracks, their families exiled to far-away "homelands", the black workers' toll makes millions for the British bosses.

### NIGHTMARE

The only argument between these leeches has been about how best to preserve this never emptying pot of gold. Against hardline supporters of Apartheid like Thatcher have stood the US Democrats, the EEC leaders and the Commonwealth heads of state. Instead of the iron fist they advocate the velvet glove. "Reform Apartheid", "talk to the black leaders" they have urged the racist thugs who run South Africa. Nervously eyeing millions of pounds tied up in loans and investment they have shouted for sanctions and quietly moved their money to safer places.

But they share with Botha, and with his backers in Whitehall and Washington the same nightmare: a black workers' revolution. Even the black bourgeoisie of the front-line states, of the Caribbean and India will go no further than Thatcher in action even though they bluster against her to save face at home.

It is the working class, in Europe and the USA but most of all in Britain whose urgent duty is to come to the aid of the black brothers' and sisters' struggle against this inhuman regime. The Anti-Apartheid Demonstration of 2nd November was a massive show of solidarity, in particular from students and working class youth. But on their own, demonstrations, even demonstrations which end in pitched battles outside South Africa House, will not decisively help the fight against Apartheid. A massive movement of solidarity action needs to be built in Britain now. But



South African security forces on the rampage

what kind of movement, and how can it be built in time?

The whole strategy of the Anti-Apartheid movement is aimed at pressurising the imperialist governments to implement economic sanctions against South Africa. This strategy echoes the policy of the Africa National Congress, the outlawed resistance movement in South Africa. But it is a strategy doomed to failure.

### WORKING CLASS

First of all, to expect Thatcher, Reagan and co to implement measures that would hit not only their pockets, but also seriously destabilise the regime of their racist blood brothers in South Africa, is ludicrous.

Look at the "sanctions" supposedly implemented against Rhodesia before the overthrow of the Smith regime. The big mining and petro-chemical companies continued to ship goods in and out of Rhodesia throughout the 1970s with hardly a prosecution. The Labour government of the day did nothing to enforce the sanctions. So even

fighting for this course of action. First the resistance of the trade union leaders who have so far made no attempt to initiate solidarity action. In the case of Southampton dockers it was the rank and file who organised blacking of tank components.

Second, many workers reeling under the attacks on Thatcherism will say, "how can we help the South African workers when we can't stop Thatcher closing our factories and pits?" But how did the mineworkers in South Africa, impoverished and repressed, manage to organise solidarity visits and collections for the British miners? They organised, educated their members and raised the arguments. This is how we too must proceed.

At every level of the trade union movement we should organise joint committees of workers to fight for solidarity action and blacking. Trades councils, stewards committees, etc need to produce educational material for British workers, and organise meetings with speakers from the South African trade unions.

### DIRECT ACTION

In this we must also ignore the "advice" of the ANC federated union movement SACTU who have argued that British unions should have no direct links with the legal South African unions like FOSATU or the NUM(SA). These unions organise millions of black workers who are fighting Botha and the racist employers. Instead of boycotting them, we should invite them to speak directly to British workers instead. Such meetings would have a powerful impact on British trade unionists.

When the black working class of South Africa moves decisively it will shake to earth the system of Apartheid and capitalist exploitation. Because a defeat for Apartheid is also a mortal wound for British and US imperialism, we the British working class have a direct interest in helping the workers of South Africa now!

There will be difficulties in



# WRP DRAGGING TROTSKYISM THROUGH THE MUD

"RED IN THE BED" chortled the front page of the Daily Mirror, The Star, the Mail, the London Standard all joyfully regaled their readers with the tales of the "grand old man" of British Trotskyism. Millions of working class readers are being presented with a simple message. Revolutionary communists, Trotskyists, are some sort of bizarre cult whose "secret life" is marked by sexual abuse of women, violence and financial corruption.

It must be said that the feuding factions in the WRP are handing ammunition to the yellow press by the barrow-load. That is why it is urgent to explain what this is all about. What is the WRP? What justice is there to its claims to be the Workers Revolutionary Party and to represent Trotskyism?

We learn from the daily Newsline, the organ of the WRP now led by Michael Banda that, 'Healy abused the position of authority and respect which he enjoyed in the movement. He violated comrades' constitutional rights and established entirely non-communist and bureaucratic relations inside the Party'. (25.10.85) Healy 'used his power for personal gratification.' On October 30th it was clarified that this "gratification" included 'repeated sexual assaults on women members of the Party', 'cruel and systematic debauchery'. Healy, it was claimed, thought 'nothing of abusing his political authority to degrade women and girl comrades and destroy their self-respect.'

If these charges are true then they reveal an outrageous situation. It is outrageous not because communists are slaves to hypocritical "morality" of The Sun or Mirror but because it is an abomination for a self-proclaimed "Marxist" to use his "authority" to coerce women comrades to have sexual relations with him against their will or inclination. This is the morality of a nineteenth century mill owner, or a modern day tycoon. It is likewise an abomination for a leader to inflict violence on junior comrades or to live it up on the proceeds of party funds.

It is not the first time that these sort of allegations have been made about Healy and his organisation. In the past they have been made by every expelled faction and countless ex-members who told stories of violence and corruption. This time it is Healy and his supporters, Alex Mitchell and the Redgraves who have been expelled and it is long time collaborator, Banda, who makes them.

## QUESTIONS

The question that Banda and the WRP leaders have to face is if these charges are true how was it possible for such a situation to exist - by their own testimony - for over 20 years. Banda himself stumbles at this point, 'It is admittedly not easy to make this conclusion after 35 years of close political collaboration....For reasons which cannot be fully explained here the truth was concealed from me as General Secretary.'

But why were the women comrades unable to raise the question of their mistreatment themselves? Are we supposed to believe that somehow Healy on his very own had 'established entirely non-communist and bureaucratic relations inside the party'? Did he do so against the wishes of or unknown to Mike Banda or Cliff Slaughter? Why were the ordinary rank and file members of the WRP unable to correct or fight this bureaucracy?

Banda's explanations are as unconvincing as Khrushchev's account of "Stalin's crimes". The crimes were real enough but to put it down to one man's charge is ludicrously un-Marxist.

Of course Banda and Co try to explain it not simply as a personal degeneration. They discover that the real reason was Healy's bad philosophy, 'Healy's sexual practices were inseparably linked up to his philosophy and political theory which are permeated with subjective idealism and what the recent ICFI statement called a "self-glorification" of his intuitive judgements'.

## HOME TRUTHS

But wait a minute! Is not this the same Thomas Gerard Healy who has been delivering much vaunted courses on "dialectical materialism" at the "College of Marxist Education". These have been printed at enormous length in daily installments in Newsline. Yet now Banda refers to Healy's pamphlet which reprints them as, 'the outrageous piece of charlatanry called "Studies in Dialectical Materialism"'. Clearly a split is a time for letting out home truths!

Such is also the case with those sections of the International Committee who failed to support Banda. Newsline now tells us that the Greek and Spanish sections were 'notorious for their eclectic impressionism and their adaptation to the parties of the bourgeoisie and its state.'

Eventually the Healy faction got themselves together to produce their own Newsline. Predictably they announce that they were the victims of a conspiracy by a group of 'poisonous accomplices starting with Banda and Bradford university lecturer Cliff Slaughter'

## 'DISHONOUR'

The other side seem equally intent on reminding us that Vanessa Redgrave is an actress - if either profession were dishonourable in itself one wonders how it was tolerated for decades! A co-conspirator against Healy was 'South African born Clare Cowen'. Another was Dave North head of the American group in political sympathy with the International Committee which we are informed is 'an organisation of no more than 74 members.'

So what really lies behind all this mudslinging and argument whose bad faith would be obvious to a five year old. It is quite simply that Healy is not and was not 'the outstanding leader in the world Trotskyist movement' or the father of British Trotskyism as the bourgeois press state. Neither was the WRP a Trotskyist organisation.

Healy was the 'gravedigger of British Trotskyism. He accomplished this task in the late 1940s and early 1950s when he destroyed the already disorientated Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) in favour of a deep entrism group in the Labour Party. He toadied to Bevan much as today's Socialist Action or Socialist Organiser do to Tony Benn. He was a political liquidationist - the British agent of Michel Pablo the revisionist and liquidationist leader of the Fourth International in the years 1948-1953.

He clearly never had a clue about workers' democracy in the Leninist Party. He achieved his monstrous prominence by ousting all the main leaders of post-war Trotskyism except himself. In the fifties and sixties he built his organisation, the SLL, on the basis



Death mask of Trotskyism?

of a catastrophism that presented a perspective of revolution right around the corner. This meant that the SLL/WRP demanded, and for a short period could get, the most drastic sacrifices from their

members. But with the exception of a tiny core of devotees they could not keep them.

The result was a tremendous through-put and a permanently under-educated membership. Thus Healy and his bureaucratic entourage could get away with their twists, turns and somersaults. His regime became more and more despotic. Security, plots, police agents were all excuses for the absence of democracy and the expulsion of the mildest dissenters. To keep the pretence of a mass following a daily paper was necessary. To maintain it, financial sources outside the international labour movement had to be tapped. Gaddafi, proclaimed a fascist in the early 70s, had his speeches obsequiously reported in the latter part of the decade. Newsline defended Saddam Hussein, the butcher of the Iraqi CP. Khomeini came in for the same treatment. Doubtless this is what Banda now calls, 'unprincipled relations with bourgeois nationalist leaders.' He should know. He was on the

spot all the time!

Eventually the unreality of the WRP's pretensions and a shortage of funds created intolerable tensions between the membership and the apparatus and within the leadership itself. Obviously Banda and co were the first to appeal to the outraged members. Hence the Healyites' testy charge that Banda and co have 'rejected dialectical materialism in favour of subjective idealism; violated the constitution, flagrantly replaced it with rank and file-ism, freedom of criticism and rule from below.'

## VIRULENCE

This language is saturated with the outlook of a Byzantine despot. Healy and co have forgotten nothing and learnt nothing. They insist that the 'source of this sudden and virulent attack from within the WRP itself is the immense revolutionary changes in the objective situation.' So the immediate effect of this being "a revolutionary period" is that it smashes the WRP, leaving Healy claiming merely 250 members!

Banda's feeble excuses and promises of internal democracy come too late. The sooner this grotesque caricature of Trotskyism is swept away the better for the building of a revolutionary communist party in Britain. Then and only then can Trotsky's name and programme be cleansed of the accumulated filth of thirty five years "work" by these gentlemen. ■

# BRITISH USEC SPLIT

**THE RECENT SPLIT** in the Socialist League reflects the developing disintegration of the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" (Usec). Its roots lie in the Usec's chronic adaptation to Stalinism and petit-bourgeois nationalism.

Since the 1979 overthrow of Somoza in Nicaragua by the FSLN, various factions have been vying with each other to dump whatever remnants of the Trotskyist programme they thought got in the way of organic unity with the "Sandinista Current".

For Barnes and company in the Socialist Workers Party (US) this meant launching an attack on the theory of Permanent Revolution. This theory they (rightly) saw as an obstacle to "political convergence" with Stalinist influenced currents, such as the FSLN and ANC. The programme of such currents was based on the idea of a "democratic stage" of the revolution during which socialist demands have to be subordinated to maintaining an alliance with the bourgeoisie in a "mixed economy" capitalism.

## FOUNDATIONS

The result has been the virtual withdrawal from the Usec of one of its largest sections. As the report to the Twelfth World Congress points out, 'the SWP leadership has reduced their participation in the life of the International to a minimum'. While the SWP (US) openly rejects the programmatic foundations of the Fourth International it sees some use for it as an organisation of solidarity with the FSLN, Cuba, Vietnam etc. As long as the Usec continues to support these regimes uncritically and allows the SWP (US) to continue printing the interminable speeches of Fidel Castro, the Ortega brothers, Tomas Borge and others, then Barnes is willing to carry on with the pretence of staying inside the Usec.

Not so the Australian SWP, which, with its claimed 1000 members, was one of the Usec's biggest sections before it split barely 6 months after the Twelfth Congress. The SWP (Aus) argued, with impeccable logic, that if the theory of Permanent Revolution

was junk, and if Marxist revolutionary leaderships had appeared in Cuba, Vietnam, Grenada, Nicaragua etc which had led socialist revolutions and established workers' states, why bother with the Fourth International? Especially when leaving it 'removes an obstacle to our development of relations with other revolutionary forces' (Direct Action 28.8.85)

The same goes for the recent split in Socialist Action. Anyone would be forgiven for not realising that the group that was split from Socialist Action was publishing a new Mandeliste journal, International. Its authors do not even have the courage to try and explain the political basis of their split. A wise course given there does not appear to be any! "Building a Marxist Movement in Britain" dishes up the same centrist mish-mash that we have come to expect from Socialist Action in the past. The major struggles will take place in the Labour Party around the "struggle to refashion it to serve in the interests of socialism". Benn and company have moved 'quite sharply to the left'; his programme must be supported 'critically'. But of course not a word of criticism is actually made of Benn or his programme in this founding "perspective" of the new group.

## "SOCIAL MOVEMENTS"

A "New Minority Movement" was to be built, but this turns out to take the form of 'building the already existing broad lefts'. The "social movements" - women, blacks etc - retain their 'anti-capitalist dynamic' independent of their class composition. And of course attempts to win them to the struggle for socialism under the leadership of a revolutionary party remain "economistic".

On South Africa, the new group accuses Socialist Action (again not publicly) of being "semi-Stalinist" like their SWP (US) mentors. True they uncritically support the ANC. But what is the difference between the programme of the FSLN and the ANC? If the FSLN has introduced the "dictatorship of the proletariat" why can't the ANC? The truth of the matter is that leaders of the new group, like Charlie Van Gelderen

have their eye on a different current for "revolutionary leadership" in South Africa - AZAPO. There is no difference of political method here, only of opportunist preference.

Whether this split will be lasting, or just a prelude to further re-juggling of clique alliances within the British Usec, perhaps drawing in the tattered remnants of Thornett's outfit, Socialist Viewpoint has yet to be determined. What is certain is that International represents no break from the centrist politics of the Usec.

## PERMANENT REVOLUTION

Neither were the Australians convinced by the Usec's European leader and supposed "defender" of Trotskyism, Ernest Mandel who attempted to square the circle on Permanent Revolution. The Mandelites decided to baptise the FSLN government as a "dictatorship of the proletariat" presiding over a "workers state" at the Twelfth Congress. They endorse the FSLN's strategy of leaving the majority of the economy in private hands, and its policy of maintaining a "productive alliance" with the bourgeoisie as a necessary stage in the 'consolidation/building of a workers state' (The Central American Revolution). The politics are those of Menshevik stageism draped in the mantle of Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution.

The Australians, having openly embraced this perspective, correctly estimated the impact of the Usec's line on Nicaragua: 'It forced the key leaders of the Fourth International today to distort Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. In the discussion at the World Congress, leaders of the International majority faction (Mandelites - WP) claimed that Trotsky accepted the need for two stage revolutions in colonial countries'. Precisely! Mandel is deliberately distorting Trotsky in order to justify his own version of capitulation to petit-bourgeois nationalism and Stalinism.

Programmatically there is not a halfpenny worth of difference between the politics of Mandel, Barnes or for that matter Jim Percy of the SWP (Aus). They differ only in their willingness to pursue an opportunist course through to its logical conclusion. ■



# FIGHTING BACK ON THE FRONTLINE

**THE PATTERN OF police operations in the areas torn by street fighting last month displays a chilling similarity from city to city. From Handsworth to Brixton the same stories are emerging of doors broken down in house to house searches, beatings in the cells, detentions without charge and refusal of access to a solicitor.**

Instead of trying to buy off the youth with 'riot money' for inner city projects, instead of wheeling out a 'sympathetic' judge to appease the community leaders, the Tories have unleashed their police Gestapo squads on our streets. Of course the TV and newspapers, who devoted hours of news to the death of one policeman are now too busy with the Queen, Charles and Di, etc to say one word about this crackdown.

As our series of reports shows, this campaign of terror has not gone unchallenged by the black and white working class people on the receiving end. Based on the immediate need to organise the legal defence of hundreds arrested during and after the fighting several Defence Campaigns have been formed.

## TOTTENHAM

Since the night they were driven out of Broadwater Farm the police have returned in force. On the pretext of searching for stolen goods they have conducted house to house enquiries, smashing down doors and removing clothes and even food as evidence. They have routinely demanded answers to questions like 'what country do you come from?', 'who lives in the house?' and 'what are the contents of the house?'. Since the riot nearly 50 people have been arrested, some held without charge for up to 54 hours without access to a solicitor. A 9 year old boy told of police sticking pins into his hands until he told them the name of a friend. At a meeting of over 100 residents the Broadwater Farm Defence Committee has been formed and is calling for delegations from colleges and workplaces.

## BRIXTON

At 7 am on the morning of Wednesday 30th October 100 police descended on seven houses in Brailsford and Arlington Road, in Brixton. Armed with search warrants for stolen goods allegedly

stolen during the riots they broke down the front door of each house and then burst into the flats of the occupiers. One 70 year old man was flash photographed as he lay helpless in bed after police broke down his door. Another occupant watched as police ransacked his flat and went through every piece of personal correspondence. What stolen goods were found? None! Only two people were arrested and this for possessing small amounts of cannabis.

During and after the street fighting which followed the shooting of Mrs Cherry Groce, 270 people have been arrested, the majority held in jail for at least a week, and then given bail conditions involving a curfew from 10.30 pm to 7.00 am. The Groce Family Support campaign has organised a demo for Monday 11th November.

## HANDSWORTH

Since September 9th over 400 youths have been arrested in and around the Handsworth area. The Lozells area has been systematically raked by police; streets are sealed off, house to house searches carried out, and youth dragged off to the cells.

The Handsworth Defence Campaign continues to monitor these

developments. At the moment it is working to organise legal representation and gather financial support much needed by those charged.

Over 100 people appeared at Victoria Law Courts on October 30th. Birmingham Trades Council members and supporters of the Defence Campaign turned out to show their solidarity with the arrested and gave out leaflets supporting them. The Campaign is willing to send speakers to trade union branches, political groups, etc to explain what has happened in Handsworth and expose the lies fed to us by the media, the police and the opportunist Labour politicians. The Campaign and the Trades Council will be mounting a picket at Birmingham University on 8/9th November to protest at a meeting of the police and the City Council to discuss so called 'problem areas'. Instead of collaborating with police, the Council should be defending those arrested and refusing to pay the police any money.

## LEICESTER

Unlike the street Battles which took place elsewhere, Leicester's 'riot' was sparked off by visiting football fans from Derby who broke away from their police es-

cort to the railway station after the match. Some of the fighting spilled over into Highfields, the mainly black inner city area. Several shops were looted but the police next day praised 'Highfields people' for not joining in the riots. The following night a few local youths did overturn one car and set alight a computer showroom. But most of the youth in the area saw this as an end to the trouble.

However the police then embarked on a snoop through the area. Forty nine young people were arrested almost all of them from inside the Highfields.

An angry meeting of over 100 youths heard mothers of youth still in custody tell how their doors were broken down and how police jumped through windows. As in other cities, those arrested have been held without access to a solicitor, whilst the couple of Derby fans were let free. Instead of being taken to Charles St police station where interviews are tape recorded, the youths have been held at a smaller cop-shop where no tapes are made. The common factor in all the arrests has been police arriving with lists of previous convictions. They are out to settle old scores with so-called 'troublemakers'.

The Highfields Defence Committee was set up from this meeting. On Friday 1st November over 150 black and white residents of the area picketed first Charles St station, then the offices of the Leicester Mercury - the local racist paper which has tried to stir up race hatred in the city for years. 'Leicester Mercury is racist, bring the Editor now!' clamoured the youth. But the lie mongers, like the police on this occasion, could only cower behind their security systems.

## THE WAY FORWARD

It is clear that, unlike 1981 the Tories have not been shaken by the inner city uprisings. They have given the police and the courts the go-ahead to bring down an iron heel on the black community. Through media silence about police terrorism and hate campaigns against black resistance they hope to isolate inner city youth from white workers on the estates and in smaller towns who have not yet seen police seal off their streets or had their children hauled off to the police cells.

The Defence Campaigns which have been set-up face tremendous legal and political battles if they are to stop hundreds of youth going to jail. Wherever possible the legal defence of those arrested needs to be co-ordinated and barristers who won't co-operate with this replaced. This will need money: we print below all the addresses we know of where money can be sent to.

Politically defending those

picked up means saying all are innocent. Drop the charges now! Otherwise the prosecution will play off one defendant against the another; 'I'm not guilty but he/she might be'. This also means actively involving the youth of the area. Pickets of trials, police stations and the media will give the youth a regular focus outside of the meetings needed to plan the gathering of evidence etc. In this way we can also make sure we are organised to fight back, because the way the police are acting there will undoubtedly be more Cynthia Jarrets and Cherry Groces.

The Defence Campaigns also need to go out to the passive sections of the inner city community and to white workers on the estates and in the factories. The failure of the Labour and trade union leaders to challenge racism amongst white workers has led to spectacles like the one-day strike of council manual workers in Harringey against black council leader Bernie Grant.

But to those who say the white working class cannot be purged of racism we say - you're wrong. Thousands of miners can see that what is happening in our areas now is the same as the invasion of their villages by the riot squads a year ago. Without allies like these black people cannot decisively crush the forces and the society that cruelly beats them down. That is why we say that in the case of the Defence Committees they must be open to black and white working people in the area and, like the Broadwater Farm Campaign, fight to involve trade union organisations. (This does not mean we are against black only organisations in general).

The most crucial argument we must take up is that black people under attack from racist thugs in or out of the police force have the right to self defence. In the here and now we say:

**STOP THE RAIDS - GET THE POLICE OFF OUR STREETS  
DROP ALL CHARGES FREE ALL THE PRISONERS  
SUPPORT BLACK SELF DEFENCE**

## DEMONSTRATE AGAINST POLICE HARRASMENT

called by Cherry Groce Support and Community Defence Campaign  
11th NOVEMBER  
Assemble 11.30 -12, Brockwell Park, Brixton. Nos 2 or 19 buses outside Brixton tube

**CHERRY GROCE SUPPORT CAMPAIGN.**  
506 Brixton Road, London SW9.

**BROADWATER FARM DEFENCE COMMITTEE.**  
c/o Broadwater Farm Youth Assoc. 12-16 Tangmere, William Rd, Tottenham, London N17.

**HANDSWORTH LEGAL DEFENCE CAMPAIGN.**  
104 Heathfield Rd, Handsworth, Birmingham.  
(021) 554 0026/2747

**SMASH THE P.T.A.**

**MAIRE O'SHEA IS INNOCENT**

**DEMONSTRATE!**

Assemble 11am Sparkhill Park, Park Rd, by Stratford Rd (A34), Birmingham

Maire O'Shea Support Committee  
c/o 448 Stratford Rd Birmingham 11  
tel: 021-773 8683



The boys in blue - coming soon to your neighbourhood?

## VICTORY!

**MUHAMMAD IDRISH STAYS!** He won his appeal against deportation at the Immigration Appeals Tribunal on October 24th. This major victory in the fight against immigration laws and it will give renewed confidence to all those fighting deportation to fight for their right to stay.

Muhammad's 4 year campaign was the first of its kind to be supported by a major trade union. This union, NALGO, held demonstrations in London and Birmingham and NALGO Conference 1983 promised industrial action in the event of deportation. Clearly a positive development, it was a move that highlighted the importance of challenging racism within the organised working class. This

perspective, though, had to be fought for by the Campaign.

Muhammad's success was clearly set against a background of a long and determined campaign. The Tribunal's decision may well have been influenced by the recent events in Handsworth, the area in which Muhammad has his job and campaign base.

Following the Immigration Appeals Tribunal decision, Muhammad will now fight to win indefinite leave to stay in Britain. This victory needs to be used to launch a massive fightback against all deportations and immigration laws. The Campaign now must draw in other unions to this kind of struggle. Pressure must also be exerted on NALGO to open up a campaign against all deportations.

Local union branches should invite Muhammad to speak on his success and on immigration

laws. Fighting racism in the trade unions is no easy job but it won't just go away, it has to be rooted out from within!

The state may have drawn back from this deportation but the attack on black people continues. At this moment 70 Bangladeshi men are detained under immigration rules in Britain. Hurd is considering a new round of racist visa requirements. David Waddington, his henchman, has attacked Labour MPs for "helping immigrants into Britain".

If Thatcher chooses to stir up even more racism in the run-up to the next election we must make sure she has as few allies as possible amongst the white working class. With the confidence of one victory behind us we should re-organise to -

**FIGHT ALL DEPORTATIONS!  
SMASH ALL IMMIGRATION LAWS!**



Mel James





# DOCK GREEN TO BROADWATER FARM

THE TRADITIONAL IMAGE of the British police is one of an unarmed, impartial force based on the local community and answerable to the local Council. It is a view the police themselves constantly peddle.

In 1979 Sir Robert Mark, ex-chief of the Metropolitan Police wrote: "The fact that the British police are answerable to the law, that we act on behalf of the community and not the mantle of government, makes us the least powerful, the most accountable and therefore the most acceptable police force in the world."

In the years since this was written every section of the working class that has fought back against the attacks of the Tory government has discovered this picture to be utterly false. Thatcherite rhetoric sees trade union militants, the black communities, Labour councils and the Left as 'the enemy within'.

As with the Falklands war, no expense has been spared to defeat the 'enemy'. The Thatcher years have seen the assembly of police organisations, police equipment, police weapons and police powers on a massive scale. Most recently the miners and the black communities have tasted the power of this internal 'task force'.

In the aftermath of Tottenham, the Tories have demonstrated their political will to continue to escalate the weapons and powers available to the police. The gloves of Liberalism, community policing and the Scarman report are off. The Chief Constables have been given the green light to assemble and use massive armoured units of CS gas and plastic bullets. A serious examination of developments over the last seven years reveals not only the scale of police militarisation, but also the systematic influence of the police chiefs themselves on Tory policy.

## RIOT SQUADS AND RIOT TRAINING

In law a policeman is supposed to be just another individual "paid to perform acts which, if he were so minded, he might have done voluntarily". In practice though the police have always been used by the bosses to break up strikes and demonstrations. The problem was that by the early 1970's 'normal' methods of doing this were no longer adequate to contain the organised strength of our class. The closure of Saltley Gate in 1972 in spite of the presence of thousands of police was a turning point in police thinking about 'public order'. It led to the development of the Special Patrol Groups as small, highly mobile units, able to be deployed against large formations such as demos and pickets. They were not yet trained and equipped with riot gear, although this did not stop them causing the first political fatality of the decade when Kevin Gately was killed after clashes between the SPG and anti-fascist demonstrators in 1974. However, a search of police lockers after Blair Peach died at the hands of the SPG in 1979 showed they were not averse to accumulating such gear on a do-it-yourself basis.

In the first major struggle against Thatcher, the 1980 Steel strike, at the St. Valentines Day mass picket of Hadfields steel-mill the assembled SPGs of several Northern police forces were re-

quired to put their training to the test. For several hours they succeeded in pushing pickets back from the gates. Over 50 steelworkers and miners who had turned up in support were arrested. Yet in the end the pickets were in control and the mill stopped work. At Hadfields, however, riot gear was not used. It was to be against the black community that shields and helmets were first used in large numbers.

The Brixton revolt of 1981 was in fact a direct response to another aspect of the SPG's tactics. In the week before Brixton burned, the SPG had been on the streets in large numbers in a clampdown against "street crime" codenamed "Swamp 81". When black youth fought back it was the police who were "swamped". They found their ungainly, stationary lines outflanked by the youth. Their riot shields went up in flames.

In response to similar "difficulties" the Merseyside police resorted to the first use of CS gas in Britain and the use of Land Rovers which Chief Constable Oxford unashamedly explained "were deployed into the crowd to break it up". As a result of firing masonry piercing CS gas shells, several people were seriously injured. As a result of police driving into the crowd one man, David Moore was killed, and another, Paul Conroy suffered a broken neck.

In the aftermath of the 1981 battles a parliamentary working group was set up by Home Secretary William Whitelaw to consider "sophisticated and offensive anti-riot weapons as well as purely protective measures".

Whitelaw formally sanctioned the use of plastic bullets and CS gas by police forces in Britain. This marked a crucial change of tactic which was only to rear its head fully in the 1984 miners' strike. From SPGs primarily trained in the push and shove tactics of the picket line and the defensive use of riot equipment, police thinking went over to the development of an "offensive" capability.

Riot training became much more widespread. Every recruit to the Metropolitan police now undergoes "public order" training, and nationally 20,000 of 120,000 police have done this training. The Police Support Unit (PSU) was developed. A PSU consists of 23 men: two platoons of 10 each controlled by a sergeant and under the direct command of an Inspector, usually travelling in 2 or 3 transit vans (van number 3 being there to carry the shields). In addition, the tactics changed: at the Warrington Messenger mass-picket and later, (with short shields) at Orgreave, large squads were used to baton charge stationary crowds. A police training manual has since come to light which describes the purpose of such attacks not to "arrest criminals" but to "incapacitate demonstrators".

In addition to the whole range of medieval weaponry displayed at Orgreave, Sir Kenneth Newman has now declared that in the light of Tottenham he is "prepared to use both plastic bullets and CS gas".

Everybody has heard of these weapons, but what exactly do they do? The plastic bullet, used since 1976 in Northern Ireland weighs just under 5 oz (about the same as a cricket ball). It is fired at between 130 and 170 miles per hour (about twice as fast as Denis Lillie). Plastic bullets have killed 12 people in Northern Ireland, six of them children aged less than 15. Hundreds have been wounded seriously by them. They are a

lethal weapon for use against an unarmed enemy.

Also developed in Northern Ireland is CS gas. When fired in an open space it produces "pain in the eyes, tears and spasms of the eyelids...a sharp pain in the nose, throat and chest which becomes worse and causes choking sensations, in high concentrations the violent coughing which is set up may induce vomiting". (All these wonderful claims are taken from the original patent document from Porton Down.)

Even against peaceful sit down protests the police are now trained to use lethal neck holds and painful arm locks. Make no mistake, even with all their armoured vans, helmets and shields the Metropolitan police were beaten out of Broadwater Farm estate. At the next major picket or "threat to public order" they will be straining at the leash to use these chilling new toys.

## "UNARMED" POLICE

Parallel to the offensive use of riot techniques has been the development of police training and use of firearms. As well as specially trained snipers such as the D11 unit of the Metropolitan Police over 4,000 police receive regular firearms training.

In 1983 two such officers opened fire on a man they suspected of being armed robber David Martin seriously wounding him, then pistol whipped him unconscious, fracturing his skull in the process. The problem was that they had shot the wrong man - Steven Waldorf - whose crime was to look like Martin. Significantly he was unarmed and had offered no resistance.

Responding to this "mistake" Whitelaw issued new guidelines of police use of weapons. They were only to be used as a "last resort" following the failure of "conventional methods". Yet three months after Waldorf was shot Greater Manchester Chief Constable, James Anderton announced, "armed police officers, in signed police vehicles are patrolling Greater Manchester round the clock to deal with a serious escalation of armed robberies".

Only this year John Shorthouse, aged 5, was shot and killed by a policeman involved in a raid on his home. Mrs Cherry Groce was shot and paralysed as the police raided her home in Brixton looking for her son.

An important point about police use of firearms is that it is here particularly that the idea that they are "answerable to the law" is most ridiculous. Neither of the officers who shot Waldorf were found guilty of attempted murder. Neither of the officers who shot John Shorthouse or Mrs Groce has even been charged.

## NATIONAL FORCE

The third element in the new style of policing developing under the Tories is the development of national co-ordination of police activity. This has in turn underlined the uselessness of the so-called police committees of local Councils.

For black youth who have grown up to see their areas invaded twice by police from places like Northamptonshire and Dorset, it must be news that Britain has no national police force. Yet the myth that British police are "democratic" because they are part of the local community is very dear to the bosses and their

IN RECENT MONTHS tactics, powers and military scale. Amid control" Colin Lloyd says since the early 1970s defence is the best ans

# BRITISH 'THE MOST ACCEPTABLE



John Harris (IFL)

friends in the labour movement. It is enshrined in the pages of the 1964 Police Act. This set up police committees in every local authority (1/3 magistrates, 2/3 councillors). But at the same time it placed operational control of the police firmly "under the direction of the Chief Constable". It is the 43 police chiefs who have made the running in "nationalising" the police force, through their organisation Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

Immediately after Saltley in 1972 the Home Office collaborated with ACPO to set up the National Reporting Centre (NRC). At the same time a Cabinet Civil Contingencies Unit was set up (including police chiefs, generals, ministers and top civil servants). The aim of this initiative was to co-ordinate the state response to any future Saltleys. The director of the NRC was to be automatically the President of ACPO.

According to a recent book on the police, in the years of the Labour government "the initiative lay dormant". However the NRC was not scrapped. It only remained for ACPO to re-activate it when the Tories returned to power.

This they did during the miners strike, deploying over 5,500 officers each day, organised in PSUs. ACPO president (and Notts police chief) Charles McLachlan insisted throughout the strike that the NRC was only co-ordinating "requests" from local police. However when a Guardian reporter wrote of hearing commands issued direct to PSU from the centre McLachlan refused the Guardian further access to the place.

Most important the NRC left the illusions of Labour controlled police committees that they had any control over the police in tatters. When South Yorkshire police committee attempted to stop picket busting operations by withholding money (one of their few actual powers over the police)



they were successfully taken to court by the Attorney General. So much for the police acting "on behalf of the community".

But if Chief Constables are clearly autonomous from the local council they are certainly not simply yes men to the Home Secretary. Over the years they have placed considerable pressure on the Tories and were responsible for 2 major policy decisions of the Tories: the decision to ignore the recommendations of Lord Scarman about Metropolitan police racism, and the decision to grant police sweeping new powers in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984).

The Scarman enquiry was set up to appease "liberal" opinion in the Tory Party after Brixton 1981.



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# WHERE NEXT?



# POLICE; ST ABLE FORCE'?



JUST AS IN the wake of the 1981 uprisings, the recent inner city battles have led to renewed calls for a return to community policing. The development of police tactics, in the miners' strike as well as in the 'riots', has also led to widespread demands for some form of 'democratic control' or 'police accountability'.

Since 1981 another 'short term' solution has also been advanced by critics of the police: that of independent 'monitoring' by local-government funded bodies.

## COMMUNITY POLICING

Community policing came into fashion after the Scarman report. It was never seen as an **alternative** to the hard methods of policing which, for example, Brixton had seen prior to the summer of 1981. In the words of its architect, John Alderson, one time

police chief of Devon & Cornwall, now liberal politician: "...it provides a complementary element in a total police strategy which includes preventative patrols, incident cars, task forces and criminal investigation."

The practical meaning of this can be seen from the events in Handsworth. After getting themselves involved in youth clubs, community work projects and even turning a blind eye to small crimes the West Midlands police then cracked down with a vengeance. The work of sifting through over 800 people arrested in Handsworth since the street fighting has been made easier by the network of informers 'community policing' built up.

Community policing is no solution to police racism and harassment in areas like Handsworth. Not only do we reject demands for 'more officers on the beat' but we should fight in the youth clubs and community organisations for **no co-operation with community police**. This includes an end to the police consultative committees where social workers, teachers and police swap information and do secret deals.

## DEMOCRATIC CONTROL

'Democratic control' is a solution put forward by respectable Labour Party leaders like Margaret Simey of the Liverpool police committee and London lawyer Paul Boateng. But it is not an argument confined to their circles. At meetings from London to Liverpool inner city youth fresh from defending their areas from police attack have voiced demands for some form of control over the actions of the police. So what is wrong with 'democratic control'?

The mildest form of 'police accountability' usually takes the form of arguing for police operations to be under greater control of the Police Committees. (In London where there is no Police Committee this would first involve setting one up). But who sits on the Police Committees? By law a third of the members are unelected magistrates. And whether you live in a Labour or Tory area the magistrates bench usually consists of the thickest bunch of reactionary bigots the police can find. The same can usually be said for many of the Labour councillors who find their way onto these committees as most of the middle class careerists who make up the 'left' on Labour councils who would much rather make a name for themselves in 'Arts and Recreation' or 'Housing' before hopping off for a stint as a Euro MP.

## HYPOTHETICAL

But let's take the hypothetical example of a police committee formed of genuine representatives of the workers and community organisations in a city. Just for the sake of argument let's kick off all the Tories and all the magistrates. The police would still be able to round up hundreds of 'looters' and 'arsonists' after street battles in the inner cities. They would still be able to herd scabs through picket lines. They would be within their legal rights to stop and search black youth for ganja and white youth for smack, raid the pubs at closing time etc.

Why? Because the law the police uphold is the bosses' law! The bosses law says that a scab has a right to go to work and that an employer can throw hundreds out of work. No form of democratic control could force the police to escort the sacked

miners back into the pit; or turn up alongside slum-dwellers to harass their landlord about the damp on their walls.

Getting back to reality, at the first sign of even mild powers being granted to police committees the Police Chiefs would orchestrate a revolt against 'political interference'. The judiciary and the Law Lords would certainly come to their defence - even against an elected Labour government - just as they did against an elected Labour council in South Yorks.

If the present need to pay lip-service to 'democracy' and the police committee hampers the picket-busting zeal of Chief Pigs like Anderton and, if the division of the police into separate forces hampers their operational ability to invade working class areas then we should defend these 'democratic' constraints. Where a council or future Labour government tries to implement some utopian form of 'police accountability' we should fight with it against the sabotage of the police and the judges. But 'democratic control' is of little use on the night they break your door down. And in the long term it will not stop the police from enforcing the bosses' law and propping up the bosses' order. So what will?

## SELF DEFENCE

In the here and now the only effective response to police violence, against a strike, an inner community, or even a peaceful demonstration is **self defence**. When the youth drove the police out of Broadwater Farm with petrol bombs and shotguns, when the miners hurled stones at the police and turned their vans over they were carrying out legitimate acts of unorganised and sporadic self defence.

The first question that should be asked of all the lawyers, MPs, 'community leaders', monitoring projects etc., is do they support the right of black communities and trade unionists to defend themselves? Some, like the Newham Monitoring Project are clear on this. Many are not. Yet unless such groups and individuals are prepared in practice to help politically and legally defend those involved in self defence, they are useless.

However we do not advocate that young blacks and trade unionists face the police unorganised and untrained. This is a recipe for losing. In the long run it aids the arguments of those who say 'mass pickets are useless', that 'fighting the police is useless'.

Faced with tooled-up police squads the working class needs its own **organised** defence groups. These should be based in the first place on the thousands of football teams and other clubs that exist in working class communities. Instead of allowing youth to be dragooned into Martial Arts clubs run by right-wingers and police instructors, the Trade Unions, local Labour Parties and LPYS etc should form their own.

The building of organised self-defence, will show that our class has a long term as well as a short term answer to the problem of police power. Out of the defence squads will grow the forces and experience that we will one day need to confront the whole of the bosses' state machine. Across the road to socialism, justice and real equality stands not only the road-block of the police, but also the armed forces and judiciary. Those who are serious about travelling that road must also be serious about sweeping that obstacle away. Self defence on the picket line and in the city is the first step towards this.



John Sturrock (Network)

increased powers of stop and search for police, the power to stop vehicles, the power to detain without charge for 72 hours and the removal of the right to say nothing when questioned by police. In practice the police had already been using such powers in certain areas, but having to bend the rules to do so. McNee's recommendations were thoroughly written into the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984).

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act does not come into force until 1986. But most of its powers have already been used in response to the miners' strike and the recent inner city revolts.

It reintroduces the hated SUS law: the power to stop and search an individual on suspicion. It legalises the use of roadblocks initiated on a large scale by ACPO in 1983/4. It increases powers of arrest and legalises the position previously known as "helping the police with their enquiries". Now suspects can be held **without charge** up to 24 hours and, if a serious offence is suspected, for up to 96 hours (ie 4 days). Anyone who has been in a police cell even for a few hours knows what this means. This period will be used to threaten, cajole or beat a confession out of a suspect. And it does not stop there.

The Tottenham battles took place in an area where the police are "testing out" the 1984 Act. But even the draconian powers of the new law are already being flouted. A juvenile of 13 years old was arrested and held for over 24 hours without permission from a magistrate which even the new Act demands. Then after 36 hours, when his solicitor demanded access to him he was told "you are wasting your time" because senior police had ruled that "no solicitors were allowed in this investigation". Only after 55 hours was the solicitor allowed to see the boy. There is more than one such case.

## A POLICE STATE?

The significance of the new powers of the police, the NRC, the riot squads, etc, is far reaching.

The newly militarised and centralised police force and the new police powers bring within the bounds of **legality** many of the powers used by police states such as Turkey or South Korea. Of course the mythology of "British Democracy" says that these powers won't be used. But fifteen years ago the British police didn't shoot people or race around in armoured transit vans or seal off whole counties either.

Britain is not yet a Police State. But under the mantle of "democracy" the Tories have assembled laws and forces that could enact much more severe repression than we have seen yet in Britain. Detention for four days without charge, already possible under the PTA, could be extended to hundreds or thousands of workers at the **discretion of a Chief Constable**, and that's even without resorting to Emergency Powers.

It is a sign of the social strength of the working class, and in particular its fighting detachments such as the miners and black youth, that the Tories have prepared such powers and such a police force. They fear our class, the "enemy within", more now than at any other time since the 1920s. Yet up to now the decisive weapon of the ruling class has not been the police, the law etc, but the weak and traitorous **leaders** of the Labour Party, the trade unions and the black communities. **When we look at the political strategies offered by these leaders to combat the newly powerful police force we can see all the telling signs of political weakness that infects the workers movement in this country.**

Scarman recommended minor reforms like police "race awareness training" and in particular that "racially prejudiced behaviour" should result in immediate dismissal from the police. Not wanting to lose the whole of the 20,000 Metropolitan police overnight, Kenneth Newman, the new Metropolitan Chief Constable struck back by issuing for the first time a racial breakdown of "muggings" and burglaries in London. Massive press hysteria was whipped up to "prove" that police harassment of young blacks was "justified". David McNee, Newman's predecessor, had an important and much more lasting influence on Tory policy. In his evidence to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure in 1980 he argued for



# CPCGB: VANGUARD OF THE NEW

THE DIVISION OF British Stalinism into two distinct camps has now been completed. Having failed to get the Morning Star back, the Eurocommunist CPCGB executive committee has now launched '7 Days' as its weekly paper. In turn the supporters of Star editor Tony Chater have organised themselves as the Communist Campaign Group. They are refusing to recognise the CPCGB's 'reorganisation' of branches and 're-registration' of members.

'7 Days' is to replace Focus and appear as a weekly supplement to Marxism Today. Under editor Chris Myant it intends to continue on the path taken by those journals. This path has already led them into the camp of the 'New Right' around Kinnock in the Labour Party. In the TUC it has brought them close to the revived 'New Realists'. In the future its pursuit of the broadest possible alliance will lead it even further towards a Labour-Alliance Government.



Birds of a feather - Gavin Laird AUEW



Pete Carter CPCGB

ment epitomised by Arthur Scargill and Ken Gill, and a sectarian minority in the CP." In the face of Thatcher: "The hard left relied on good old class hatred as the way forward. They appeared as the Colonel Blimps of the class war" (ibid).

But Campbell takes heart that a new alignment of forces is maturing in the Labour Party which is prepared to break with the 'old ways' of the left. Just as Carter lined the CPCGB with the Right in the TUC so Campbell lines up with the Kinnock New Right in the Labour Party - and in particular with Michael Meacher whose vote was cast against the miners.

What she calls the growing 'participatory left' are the natural allies of Marxism Today. "It may not yet constitute an alliance, but it is slowly finding new confidants among the Tribune Group, Labour Party libertarians like the Chartist and the old soft left clustered around the Labour Coordinating Committee." Bea Campbell firmly believes that their chances will become stronger the more they isolate and defeat the hard left.

Despite the fact that the CP is now in cahoots with Kinnock and co its direction and speed could take it out of the labour movement altogether. The letters page in Focus regularly contains overt attacks on any kind of class alignment whatsoever. Thus Geoff Roberts writes with smug satisfaction: "The industrial working class as a whole is no longer the powerful and progressive force it once was - other sections have now come to the fore; ascribing a 'leading role' to any one force in the broad democratic alliance is a relic of vanguardism that the party should abandon once and for all" (Focus 16.5.85).

These people are petit bourgeois liberals busting to say 'goodbye to the working class'. They represent the logical end-point of Stalinism's Popular Front strategy, a campaign to dissolve the labour movement itself.

While the Marxism Today crew have joined the great leap rightwards with gusto the Morning Star have been taking things more slowly. Their industrial correspondent Costello took up the cudgels against Carter's line on the ballot. The Morning Star has been making cooling noises towards the 'hard left' so reviled by Marxism Today. It has gone as far as to say that this 'hard left' has... "established that it has several important advantages over the Labour Coordinating Committee" (Morning Star 5.10.85) It made no criticisms of

the line taken by the NUM at the TUC. Yet it would be wrong to say that the Morning Star has moved to the left.

In reality the politics of those around the Star are only a re-hash of the traditional orientation of British Stalinism to left wing officials within the trade union and Labour bureaucracy. Behind their talk of 'class politics' lies a strategic orientation to capturing and maintaining positions and friends amongst the diminishing circle of left-talking officials.

When Costello took out his pen to criticise Pete Carter he did so not simply because Carter was advocating using Tory cash for balloting, but because Carter had the cheek to suggest that some union leaders were out of touch with the rank and file members. Of course Carter's criticism was that they were too militant for their members. Costello rushed to the defence of the Trade Union bureaucracy: "The thesis of Peter Carter's article - familiar to those who study either Tory propaganda or the ultra left - that the leaders of the unions are out of touch with the membership should also be rejected as at best simplistic." (Morning Star 4.10.85)

future Labour government. The CP writes pompously what the hapless Norman Willis failed to say coherently at the TUC. Perhaps he was using a Pete Carter script: "The argument that a Labour government should reimburse their allies when they are in power embodies a concept of clientelism and patronage which should be anathema to any one seriously committed to a democratic and socialist society." (Focus 12.9.85).

He openly set out to give Willis and Kinnock cover by urging what he called 'more realistic demands' on the miners so as not to push the leaders too far to the right! "The adoption of mistaken sectarian positions by the trade union left merely goes to justify a drift to the right by the TUC and Labour Party leaderships, and forces people such as Norman Willis and Neil Kinnock into position they don't want to be in." (ibid.)

It was all too obvious what position Kinnock and Willis wanted to be in. They were against the miners' strike in 1984 and 1985 and now they are against the legitimate demands on any future Labour government. Yet Pete Carter has the gall to blame the NUM itself for the stance of Kinnock and Willis.

But Pete Carter was not satisfied with knifing the NUM. He was to the right of the majority of the TUC over the question of obeying the anti-union laws - advocating ballots and taking the Tories money. Effectively this puts him close to Gavin Laird and the AUEW. "On the substantive issue itself, ballots are here to stay and because balloting incurs heavy costs for trade unions, alternatives for offsetting this should be considered....With a possible two years to go before the next general election it would be ludicrous for the trade union movement to divide over government cash for ballots." (Focus 26.9.85).

On the substantive issues posed at the TUC Congress the CPCGB was, in reality, well over on the right wing fighting the left. This will not shock or dismay the editorial board of Marxism Today. They increasingly revel in this fact.

On Liverpool, for example, they

quite logically oppose calls for strike action because such 'confrontationalism' would alienate sections of Liverpool's 'anti-Thatcherite' population. As a condescending correspondent put it in Focus: "The call for an indefinite all-out strike fits in to the pattern of confrontation politics practiced by the ultra-left here in Liverpool. This, in a city well known for its rebels, has raised a certain amount of gut support. Their attitude to dissent has been equally uncompromising and the predictable result has been the creation of widespread disunity, not only among the city's unions but also among its people." (Focus 26.9.85.)

General secretary Gordon McLellan hailed Kinnock's Militant-baiting conference speech as "positive and indicating new prospects for Labour's renewal." Focus was jubilant that Kinnock was "marginalising the hard left".

In October's Marxism Today Bea Campbell outlined the view of the world as seen by the CPCGB leaders. Labour's sights must necessarily be low ones because the political environment is one that is defined by Thatcherism. In reality all we can possibly hope for is, at best, a Labour government that would do what Labour set itself to do in the 70s but failed - "A socialist agenda is almost inconceivable in the 80s, but a strong and sensitive intervention of the left is imperative if Labour is to succeed where it failed in the 70s". (Marxism Today October 1985).

Consequently Bea Campbell can take nothing but inspiration from every setback and defeat suffered by those who would commit the labour movement to militant struggle or even talk of socialism. All her venom is saved for the 'hard left': "What has emerged in 1985 is a sectarian alliance between Trotskyists, Bennites, fundamentalists within the trade union move-



The recent TUC and Labour Party conferences gave the 'creative Marxists' around the CPCGB ample opportunity to show their true political colours. Ever since Thatcher won her first election and set out purposefully to rule in the interests of her class, Marxism Today has been counselling retreat and urging the labour movement to dedicate all its efforts to building the 'broadest possible' movement to isolate Thatcher.

Martin Jacques put it thus: "If Thatcherism is a qualitatively new kind of threat, then the key priority becomes its isolation and defeat. The labour movement cannot afford to pursue a go-it-alone, 'take socialism or leave us' approach. On the contrary it needs to see itself as the focus of the broadest possible anti-Thatcher movement, the hub of a vast range of alliances." (Focus Feb 21.2.85).

Put baldly the labour movement must do nothing to upset the prospect of building amorphous webs of alliances with those who don't like Thatcher. Hence the CPCGB's objection to nearly all the aspects of the miners' strike - and in particular mass picketing.

Thankfully the CPCGB's base in the 'labour movement' is now an extremely tenuous one. Many of its old industrial stalwarts like Ken Gill and Derek Robinson have been flung out for supporting the Chaterites. With a few exceptions in the Scottish and South Wales NUM the CPCGB is barely in a position to initiate the kind of alliances it advocates. Jacques himself admits that the party's industrial base is in a desperate state of decay; he told the July EC "we desperately need to rebuild our industrial base; without it we are in grave difficulties".



The chosen path to winning influence in the 'Labour Movement' has primarily taken the form of an orientation to right moving currents in the trades unions and the Labour Party, with earnest literary encouragement to them to go yet further. 7 Days will now take up where Focus left-off as a cheer-leader for the 'Great Moving Right Show'.

At the the TUC the CP counselled the NUM to drop their demand for re-imbursment from a



While the CPCGB leadership are prepared to cut themselves loose from the dwindling camp of left-talking union officials the Chaterites are stuck there. It was that constituency that was mobilised to keep the Euro's hands off the Star.

John Mitchell of SOGAT '82, Ken Cameron of the FBU and Arthur Scargill - what Focus called the "most obvious element in the management committee's support - trade unionists who reject the party's policy of alliances". (13th June) - as well as Ken Gill and Derek Robinson were all used to fend the Euros off. However as the Star's small network and declining audience is itself pulled rightwards - in the TUC and within the Labour left - so too will the Chaterites paper. Survival depends on it remaining palatable to their bureaucratic friends, and so it will inevitably be dragged behind their rightwards move.

Freed from the trendy academic Eurocommunists the Chaterites will attempt to strengthen and organise their industrial support. They have recently been instrumental in relaunching the Building Workers Charter. Yet, as before, that base will only be mobilised in support of 'left' officials and wound down to the extent it offends them.

A further victim of the CPCGB split has been the 'Leninists' of the CPCGB. Until June of this year they took the line "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."

This line was ratified at their third conference in June. At the time of the PPPS AGM they suddenly changed their minds and urged a vote against the Chaterites and for the Eurocommunist CPCGB leadership (leaflet of 6th June). This was later rationalised in the July Leninist as being the result of Chater mobilising non-CPCGB forces (vis Scargill, Benn, etc) and thus threatening to liquidate





# STAR WARS THREAT TO USSR

RONALD REAGAN CAME to power in the USA set on reversing the global decline that US imperialism had suffered at the hands of the Vietnamese, the Iranian and the Nicaraguan revolutions. His administration was set on stemming the tide of defeats suffered by imperialism in Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia. He saw a massive boost in US armaments as the key to carrying out this task. In particular this renewed arms drive was to be aimed at the Soviet Union - 'the evil empire'.

Reagan has resorted to the old cold-war rhetoric that sees the Soviet Union as a centre of revolutionary plotting, 'international terrorism' and all the difficulties the Western Alliance has experienced in the last 15 years. Reagan's leadership, like Thatcher's, was designed as a crisis regime whose aim was to put back the clock.

## "NEW-BROOM"

Ironically, in the Kremlin the Russian bureaucracy has also been driven to emergency measures and a 'new-broom'. Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Kremlin in the face of mounting evidence of stagnation in the USSR's domestic economy. While the Soviet Union had begun to close the gap with the United States on defence in the 1970s, it did so on an economic base that was ill-equipped to meet Reagan's new re-armament offensive. Gorbachev, and his immediate predecessors, were under enormous pressure to lessen the strains that permanent rearmament rounds placed on the Soviet economy.

Now, amid a flurry of proposals and counter proposals, Reagan and Gorbachev are set to hold their first summit meeting in Geneva. At the centre of the entire affair will lie the question of arms control.

Ever since the testing and dropping of the first atomic bomb it has been the USA that has set the pace in the nuclear arms race. The US has a clear nuclear superiority over the USSR. The most recent book of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute reckoned on the US possessing 10,650 nuclear warheads to the USSR's 8,900. However all of the US arsenal is aimed directly at the USSR, and both Britain and France also possess nuclear weapons targeted on the USSR. The US submarine superiority renders Soviet targets extremely vulnerable.

Now Reagan is set on the famous Star Wars system that (if it can be developed) would make the USA invulnerable to attack while maintaining its ability to deliver a nuclear strike several times over. He is set on increasing that advantage by maintaining the 10% per year increase in military spending that the US has been chalking up since 1980.

## IMPERIALISM

The architects of US rearmament have always had precise objectives in mind. Their conventional arsenals are designed to cower and bully all those who struggle to free themselves from the yoke of world imperialism. Reagan and the rulers of the United States like to present these struggles as Soviet 'subversion' - engineered from outside.

In fact this is the reverse of

the truth. Imperialism's vicious exploitation and the depredations of its local agents create revolutionary situations. The Soviet Union is much weaker, economically and militarily, than the US. The Soviet bureaucracy, whilst it has no love for, and is certainly no organising centre of, 'world revolution', is forced to rely on these revolutionary upheavals, as a counterweight to imperialism's global dominance. Therefore the Soviet bureaucracy gives some economic and military support to states or movements resisting the US. Yet at the same time it consistently counsels these struggles to preserve capitalism intact and to avoid provoking major difficulties for the USSR with the US.

## CO-EXISTENCE

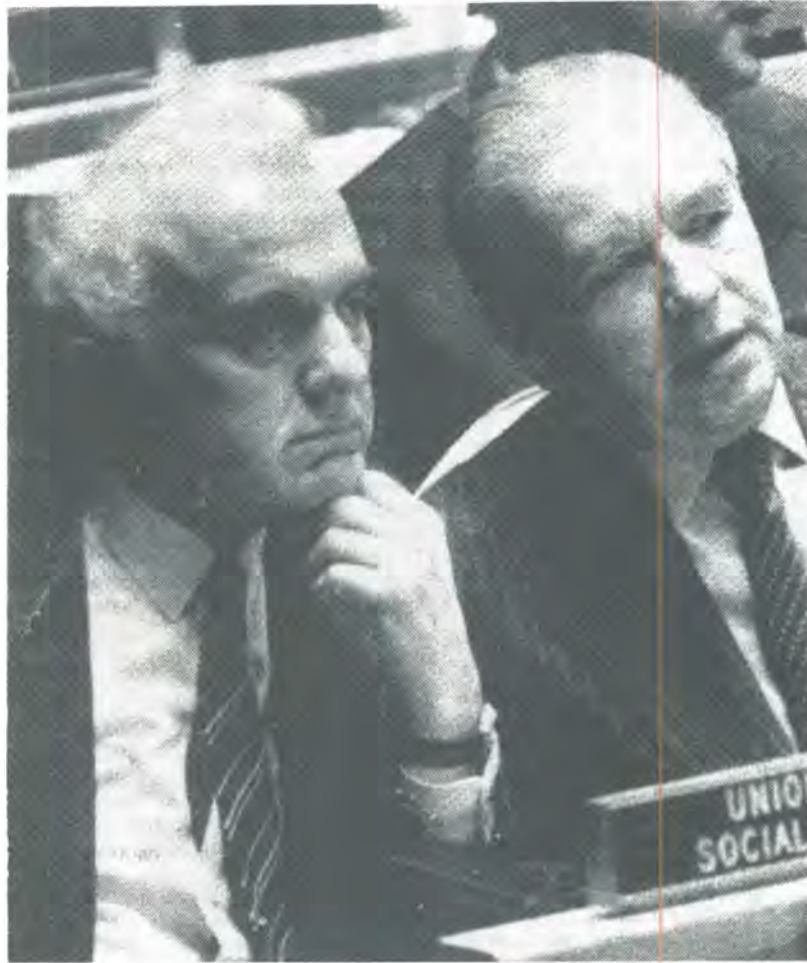
The Kremlin's policy is the search for peaceful co-existence with US imperialism. To that end it is ready and willing to sacrifice the success and victory of the anti-imperialist struggles. Yet to the extent that the USSR does provide material aid and by its very existence acts as a mighty challenge to total US world domination, the latter seeks constantly to weaken it and to sever the aid and supplies it sends to foes of the White House.

That is why Reagan told the UN in October that from his administration's point of view the pre-condition of meaningful disarmament agreement was that the USSR stopped aid to Kampuchea, Angola, Ethiopia, Afghanistan and Nicaragua and helped open them all to US aid - that is to imperialist exploitation.

## CRIPPLING

Most crucially however their arms race is aimed at economically crippling and eventually militarily blackmailing the Soviet Union. Moreover the imperialist powers have a strategic aim with regard to the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Cuba, Vietnam and China. They wish to overthrow these regimes and thereby restore capitalism.

As long as the USSR exists as a society within which capitalism has been abolished and in which free and open access to imperialism is denied so the US



Shevardnadze and Troyanovsky

and world imperialism will aim to destroy it and recapture its raw materials and potential markets for its own exploitation.

The very existence of the Soviet arsenal has served to prevent the US using direct military force against the USSR and against the post-war arrangements for Europe that both the UK and the US only reluctantly agreed to with the victorious Soviet Union. An impenetrable umbrella around the US would undermine the deterrent role of Soviet arms. That is what the Star Wars system aims to do.

Soviet nuclear arsenals have been accumulated in response to and in defence against the US's historic anti-Soviet war drive. The Soviet bureaucracy has been obliged to keep abreast of the pace set by the US but has always sought an agreement to slacken or even halt that pace.

Its reasons for this are simple. On the one hand the bureaucrats' power and privileges depend on maintaining and defending the non-capitalist system within which they have usurped political power from the working class. For this reason they cannot sit back and allow the US to accumulate sufficient military superiority to threat-

en physical destruction of the USSR.

However their genuine desire to live in harmony with world imperialism leads them to repeatedly seek to use their arsenals to reach a balanced agreement with imperialism which would then recognise the bureaucracy's power and the global status quo. The economic burdens imposed by permanent rearmament on the USSR's relatively backward economic base, similarly propel the Soviet leadership to reach arms limitation agreements.

## ARMS DEALS

All the signs indicate that in the face of the Star Wars threat the Gorbachev leadership is desperately earnest to reach an arms reduction deal. On August 6th it announced a freeze on nuclear testing. Since then the US has carried out two tests. One of them was provocatively conducted fifteen minutes after the beginning of the first talks between Ronald Reagan and Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze. Since then Gorbachev has offered a 50% cut in Soviet arsenals in

exchange for the dropping of Star Wars. He offered separate talks to both Thatcher's and Mitterrand's governments on mutual reductions involving European-based SS20s.

The Western response has been predictable and consistent with the entire course of imperialist nuclear armament policy. Reagan fulminated at the UN and demanded that the USSR accept US global hegemony or give up hopes for an arms deal. Rather than be outflanked by the Kremlin he later pepped up this offer with a cynical proposal of Star Wars for the entire planet - including even the Soviet Union. Reagan's offer was thoroughly bogus. The US refuses to allow access to these technologies and plans to its own allies in NATO. The share-out offer could also only become operational after the US had been allowed to develop and test the system. The 'offer' would then become a grim threat. Reagan's proposal was clearly just a ploy to distract attention from the existing reality of his administration's militarisation of space.

## PREDICTABLE

Equally predictable was the response of the British and French governments: 'We have nothing to negotiate', declared President Mitterrand. Geoffrey Howe refused to discuss the much-vaunted 'Independent' British deterrent separate from an agreement reached with the US. The imperialists hope that they now have it in their grasp to install a strategic new weapon system that will undermine the deterrent role of the USSR's arsenals. They sense that the Soviet economy is in no shape to allow the Soviet bureaucracy to match them.

## ENCIRCLEMENT

As Reagan and Thatcher try to tighten their nuclear encirclement of the USSR it's the duty of the labour movement to resist their plans and resist them for what they are - the means by which the imperialists want to weaken and destroy the USSR and other bureaucratized workers' states. It is in the interests of British workers to defend the USSR against those who wish to destroy it.

We don't need to prettify the USSR or ignore the scale of bureaucratic tyranny that exists there in order to recognise that workers everywhere are strengthened by the fact that capitalism has been abolished there and that world capitalism has been accordingly weakened. The existence of the non-capitalist USSR has been the source of material backing to those who have taken up arms against imperialism. It's no wonder then that our capitalist bosses are strategically set on undermining and destroying it. Success for them would strengthen them against workers and the oppressed everywhere.

## ROTTEN DEALS

This does not mean we need to blind ourselves or our fellow workers to the crimes of the Soviet bureaucracy. While defending the USSR against imperialism we must also combat every rotten deal it strikes with the imperialists at the expense of the working class or the struggle for national independence. We must combat its privileged misrule over Soviet society which is maintained only at the expense of the wholesale repression of the USSR's working class and squandering of much of the potential of a planned non-capitalist economy. We must support all working class struggles against their bureaucratic masters. But our opposition to bureaucratic rule must not, in turn, blind us to the need to stand four-square with the USSR against Reagan's war drive. ■



New leader - same story - work harder



# ANGLO-IRISH SUMMIT: Non Event in the Making



**DURING NOVEMBER THE British and Irish governments will sign an agreement which places a seal on 15 months of discussion between the Northern Ireland Office and Dublin over what role the 26 Counties can play in the affairs of the Six.**

It will take place exactly one year after the last summit which was held some months after the publication of the New Ireland forum report. Although that report recognised the 'desirability' of a united Ireland its favoured proposal established control over Northern Ireland's affairs by Dublin and London. This proposal had the backing of Fine Gael Prime Minister, Garret Fitzgerald.

Thatcher refused to countenance the forum's proposal. She stated at the time: "I have made it quite clear...that a unified Ireland was one solution. That is out. A second solution was confederation of two states. That is out. A third solution was joint authority. That is out."

Thatcher's prime political purpose was to make her staunch Unionism perfectly clear to Ulster Protestants and lower Fitzgerald's horizons at ministerial level: "Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom because that is the wish of the majority of her citizens. The majority wish to stay part of the United Kingdom."

Thatcher's intention was to give as little away as possible while getting the Southern bourgeoisie to agree to the possible

measures against the IRA. Thatcher wanted, and still does, a massive improvement in cross-border security operations at the judicial and police level. It is unlikely, however, that Thatcher will get her own way on proposals such as the right of 'hot pursuit' for the RUC across the border.

## LOYALISM

While not budging on her loyalist fundamentals there were still good reasons for Thatcher to get some agreement with Dublin. The rise of Sinn Fein's electoral popularity and its new presence in the local council chambers, has severely dented the constitutional nationalist Catholic party in the province - the SDLP. An agreement which delivers some minor (token) concessions to the northern anti-unionist population and which may elicit Fine Gael's tacit approval for the moribund Assembly may - she believes - revive the SDLP's flagging fortunes.

In addition Thatcher recognises that total failure to agree something credible will fatally damage the fortunes of Fitzgerald's Fine Gael government. It is extremely likely that Fine Gael will lose the next election to the more populist Fianna Fail of Charles Haughey. The Tories would prefer to treat with Fitzgerald if possible.

Thatcher is also under some pressure from Reagan and the EEC to reach some settlement with Dublin. On this depends the

former's willingness to loosen the purse strings (investment and grants) and help finance the gap left by Treasury cuts.

During the year's discussions, the range of possible agreed proposals have become narrower. As recently as October 18th, the new Northern Ireland Secretary, Tom King, insisted again that nothing "which resemble joint sovereignty or authority" would emerge. The possible concessions Thatcher may make include a repeal of the Flags and Emblems Act which make flying the Irish Tricolour an offence and the setting up of a joint commission on tourism to parallel the one on fisheries that has existed for decades. Whether a permanent political mechanism - an Anglo-Irish Commission - with a few civil servants and junior ministers sharing an office out of the reaches of the Unionists, will emerge is unclear. If it does, its brief will be purely consultative, but it may be the minimum necessary for Fitzgerald to save face within his own ruling circles. Thatcher has certainly scotched all Irish proposals to reform the RUC, the UDR or the judiciary.

In his turn, Fitzgerald is therefore unable and unwilling to grant Thatcher the more radical varieties of cross-border security.

However, as the McIlinchey affair revealed, Fitzgerald is already showing responsiveness to extradition requests for targeted Republicans. This was demanded as a down-payment for Thatcher to even consider the most minimal of political concessions.

Unionist reaction to the discus-

sions was inevitable. Paisley has urged 'resistance unto death' and warned that the loyalists have a 'well-stocked up armoury'. Archbishop George Seawright has promised to bomb Dublin in protest against the 'sell-out'. More sober comments from the Official Unionists, but also from Paisley, have made it clear that their prime response will be to seek constitutional initiatives in order to make their opposition clear. This kind of response in fact is a sign that the Unionist leaders suspect that



The Unionist veto

the mass of Protestants remain unpersuaded that the agreement is the first step on the road to a united Ireland. This can be seen, for example, in the pathetically small vote for ultra-rightist Paisleyite maverick, Ethel Smith, in a recent local council bye election. It's also evident in the marginalisation of forces such as the UDA and their paramilitaries.

Most unionists recognise a friend in Thatcher. Moreover, Thatcher has made it clear that she will not tolerate revolts from the Protestant workers such as the UWC strike in 1974. The RUC treatment of Protestant marchers in Portadown this summer is indicative of this.

The Anglo-Irish talks have shown that British imperialism remains in the driving seat and that the 26 Counties' bourgeois parties are bankrupt of any commitment to fight for a united Ireland.

The anti-unionist population of Northern Ireland cannot - as Fitzgerald would have it - find reconciliation with the Orange State along a path of meaningless symbolic cultural gestures. Being on the sharp end of discrimination in jobs, housing and, above all, political representation, forces them to struggle against the state that Fitzgerald and co. are reconciled to.

British imperialism's domination of Ireland can only be broken by the anti-Unionist working-class (North and South) mobilising its strength through direct action to immobilise British rule and loyalist intransigence. ■

by Keith Hassel

# IRISH BUREAUCRATS DAMPEN FIGHT

**MASSIVE ONE-DAY STRIKES of civil and public service workers and battles by isolated groups of public sector workers have challenged the austerity policies of the Republic's three-year old coalition government.**

Three years of failure to achieve any of its pledges to reduce budget deficits and foreign borrowing led to desperation overtaking this government of collaboration between the minority and deeply discredited Labour Party and the big-farmer Fine Gael party under Garret Fitzgerald. The opposition party Charles Haughey has massively overtaken the Coalition in opinion polls. It is well placed to add to its successful demagoguery on the governments economic failures with a turn to rhetorical attacks on Fitzgerald's current crawling to Thatcher and the Northern Ireland Unionists on the terms of a new Anglo-Irish 'deal'.

The fiscal crisis deepens despite swingeing cuts in health and local services. Unemployment is up 100% since 1982. Significant year-on-year wage cutting through inflation is added to regular increases in the already penal taxation on workers wages and spending. Foreign debt, in dollars is over 15 billions, and only the high export-productivity of the transnational monopolies dominating industry in Ireland has so far kept the Republic off the international bankers' critical list. But the sting in the tail of this dependence on tax-free foreign monopolies is the rapidly growing mass of profits that they are now openly and legally taking out of the country - rising from about \$300 million in 1982 to an expected \$1300 million this year.

Public sector pay restraint has become the focal point for government attempts to control its finan-



ces, meet its foreign interest payments and set wage norms for the rest of the economy.

Failing to hold the line at any of its targets since 1982, the Coalition proclaimed a total wage freeze for the period of the '25th Wage Round' beginning this December for 150,000 civil and public sector workers - intending it to extend also to 150,000 more in state 'commercial' enterprises - Electricity, transport, Post office, Telecom, turf and peat production, Airlines, Broadcasting and the smaller fertiliser and steel enterprises.

This onslaught is not just an attack on public sector workers. Such a freeze is a slap in the face to the trade union bureaucracy which justifies its bloated lifestyle by the annual ritual of national wage negotiations, for this thime there were to be no

negotiations at all! The Government also decided to prevent the hearing of special wage claims by not appointing an 'arbitrator' - whose decisions are binding on unions and Government in the civil service. They furthermore decided not to accept the binding special award, made by the outgoing arbitrator, of a 10% increase for 40,000 teachers. To do this the Coalition parties must pass an Act to overturn the award, a prospect that deepens the conflict between unions and Labour Party.

The teachers' union leaders immediately set dates for a series of national and regional one-day stoppages, the first on October 15th. The other member unions, defeat that already seems likely for the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' "public sector committee" next election. The more certain the electoral prospects for Fianna Fail, however, the more determined

for the appointment of an arbitrator and the opening of wage talks. They refused to organise any general rank and file independent action rallies or demonstrations - only the teachers marched. Nowhere was there any rank and file independent action or any sharpening of the general demands beyond the bureaucrats' call for ritual 'negotiations' and for the maintenance of the class collaborationist arbitration system. Undoubtedly the years of Government and media propaganda directed against the wages and conditions of 'non-productive' public employees, and unresisted by any fighting response from union leaders, had sapped much of the selfconfidence of these section of the class.

Nevertheless the limited and controlled mobilisation from above, on October 15th, was loyally supported by the rank and file mass in the civil and public sector service. While over 7,000 teachers carried thousands of identical official placards in a solemn snake-like march through the capital demanding their 10%, they were greeted in every street by the unprecedented sight of mass pickets drilling out in front of a bewildering number of buildings housing every branch of the public services. For not only did 150,000 workers strike but a huge proportion of them turned up outside their offices to demonstrate the fact.

Any compromise now by the government can only deepen the economic crisis of the ruling class. On the other hand a successful wage freeze must guarantee the government that already seems likely for the coalition parties in the next election. The more certain the electoral prospects for Fianna Fail, however, the more determined

will Haughey be - especially now that the hoped-for economic upswing has not come - to cast aside the disguise of his populist economic expansion programme. Increasingly the capitalists will expect from him the decisive austerity offensive and anti-union campaign that Irish bourgeois party divisions have repeatedly stymied since 1977.

## CONSERVATIVE

Against a deeply conservative trade union bureaucracy, always ready to settle for half of nothing the rank and file urgently need to organise. As yet only small groups of incredibly heroic workers have resisted job cuts. 300 power workers - members of the British-Irish Transport and General have struck against 41 redundancies since August 19th with no union support. They have been left to the mercy of police harassment, court injunctions, scabbing and even the use of anti-subversion laws to jail some of them.

The left-wing in the unions have done little to help build the rank and file resistance to the government and employer attacks. The 'Broad Lefts', often influenced by the Militant, are more concerned with chiding and advising the official leaders than helping workers to fight the bosses and resist the sell out merchants of the union bureaucracy. The building of real rank and file organisations able to fight the bosses and the bureaucracy is an urgent task of the coming period. ■

by a member of the IWG



# RIGHT

the party. By August Chater's rebellion was being attacked as a 'rightist' rebellion against the party: "Everything about the Management Committee 12 and Chater himself smacks of rightism. Their history, their theory, their psychology, and their practice. Tony Chater and his Morning Star ooze conservatism, dullness, myopic official optimism and British political backwardness from every pore. Chater is indeed in many ways the personification of the opportunist Party hack. A bureaucrat with the personality of a paper cup, a time server with some administrative ability but not the merest trace of revolutionary principle" (Leninist August 85).

Too true; but in order to defeat the 'rightist' Chater the Leninist backed Martin Jacques, Bea Campbell and Pete Carter. On the pretext that these virtual liberals call themselves a Communist Party the Leninist has discovered a qualitative political difference between the feuding camps.

In fact there is no qualitative difference between the CPGB and the Communist Campaign Group. What the latter calls class politics is, in reality, its own variant of bureaucratic left reformism. What the former calls 'creative Marxism' is, in reality, the politics of the Labourite's new right wing. That they choose to still call themselves a Communist Party makes not one iota of difference to their political character.

The split in the Stalinist's ranks will serve to further diminish their organised strength. But that can be no reason for relaxing our vigilance against the poisonous influence its various disintegrating forms can have in the workers movement. ■



Comrades,

In the article 'Liverpool - Relaunch the Fightback' in WP 77 there is a position advocated which I believe needs clarification. You maintain that "Decisions should be taken by a show of hands" (my emphasis) at mass meetings.

Presumably you say this in full knowledge that the procedure used by the council unions in Liverpool was a ballot taken after mass meetings - i.e. immediately following full discussion. What was wrong with the method used in Liverpool? Are you opposed to ballots taken at mass meetings?

My own view is that we should not argue in favour of ballots. Postal ballots should be opposed under all circumstances - they diffuse struggle, lead to uncertainty, are open to press manipulation, leave workers vulnerable to employer/management intimidation, isolate workers from each other, etc, etc. However, there is a clear difference between postal ballots and ballots taken at mass meetings.

Surely a more flexible attitude towards the method of voting should be taken. We could argue that a show of hands at a mass meeting is by far the best method. Indeed, we should openly and forcefully argue this at all times. However - and this is the important point - if there is a clear feeling amongst workers in favour of a ballot at the time of voting, surely we could go along with this as a second best option - on one condition. This would be that the ballot be taken at a trade union meeting immediately following the discussion and arguments of the meeting. In no way must any form of postal ballot be sanctioned. Is there any reason why Workers Power would oppose such an approach?

Comradely Yours,  
E. Short, Rotherham.

# THE BLACK POPULAR FRONT

**BLACK AMERICAN POLITICS** by Manning Marable. Published by Verso 1985 (£6.95 Pbk 366 pages).

The struggle of black people in the USA holds many lessons for us in Britain. In particular, the emergence of black businessmen, lawyers, etc as self appointed 'community leaders' mirrors the rise of a black middle-class political movement around figures like Jesse Jackson. This book by US black historian Manning Marable looks at the history of this and other black movements in America.

In *Black American Politics* he has provided a fascinating history of the major 'social movements' of Black America from the anti-slavery revolt to the Rainbow Coalition which has coalesced around Jesse Jackson of the Democratic Party. In passing Marable throws light on some of the leading historical figures - Frederick Douglas, Booker T. Washington, Web Du Bois, Garvey, Martin Luther King and many more.

## CLASS QUESTION

Yet *Black American Politics* is not intended merely as a history. In part the book provides an "attempt to advance a general theory of Black politics". Furthermore Marable aims to do this from a Marxist viewpoint. The strength of this is his recognition, in the words of CLR James, that "the race question is subsidiary to the class question in politics...But to neglect the racial factor as merely incidental is an error no less grave than to make it fundamental".

This approach leads him to locate the political programmes of the movements and leaders he describes within the context of the class struggle. Thus, for example, the democratic movement against 'Jim Crow' (American Apartheid) in the 1930s is explained in the context of the shift of black people to the Democratic Party in the Depression years



and the emergence of a trade union movement (CIO) with a positive attitude to the organisation of black workers.

But to simply relate 'class' to 'race' in this way is not enough. Absolutely central is the need to decide which class within the 'black people' can fight consistently against their oppression and the capitalist society which generates it. Marable has no faith in the black working class. Like most American radicals his politics are a confused jumble-sale of Stalinist and social democratic reformism. As a result Marable is forced to confront and reject Trotskyism. He dismisses the theory of permanent revolution. Truth to tell he does not know what

the theory is. Trotskyism has had no genuine voice in America for over 30 years, and Marable contemptuously dismisses Trotsky's present day 'followers'.

But when he returns to Trotsky himself to find "critical errors" on black nationalism he simply explores his own false perspective.

Trotsky, we are told, grossly underestimated the black petit-bourgeoisie. This is important to Marable because his work points out the predominance of the black petit bourgeoisie in black American politics. He quotes Trotsky, (the black petit bourgeoisie) "...will take up the demand for social, political and economic equality...but prove absolutely incapable in the struggle; the Negro proletariat will march over the petit bourgeoisie in the direction of the proletarian revolution".

As this has not happened (yet), Trotsky was wrong. Marable comes to the conclusion that the "class conscious black petit-bourgeoisie may or may not serve the social class interests of the black majority". The possibility that they may play a progressive role leads Marable to critical support of the popular front.

He quotes Stalinists Sweezey and Magdoff on Reaganism as "doing things that in other countries are done by fascist governments". Hence, all the 'progressive' forces must be grouped together to defend (bourgeois) democracy. The class interests of black workers must wait, and if necessary, be resisted in the name of the popular front.

In American politics today the popular front is represented by Rev. Jesse Jackson's 'Rainbow Coalition' which our Marxist can console himself has a "peace platform...qualitatively to the left of any Democrat's in recent memory". Moreover, while "progressives retained private doubts about Jackson during the early stages of his campaign"...we should have known that the social class pressure from below would make "Jackson grow rapidly in his social vision". Hence, Marable offers a perspective of transforming the Democratic Party into a social democratic party with the aid of an "unconscious" social democratic leadership.

## SACRIFICES

This 'vision' is a betrayal of all the sacrifices of black workers that Marable describes. Jackson is no more than a vehicle for mobilising the inert mass black vote behind the left-wing of the American ruling class. His reward? A few crumbs off the Democratic table for the small urban professional black middle class.

The real lesson of the Rainbow Coalition is that the Democratic Party cannot be reformed. It is an out and out ruling class party. The task facing the black working class is the building of their own party with Latins and white workers. Nor can this be a social-democratic party. Such a party is useless for socialism.

Throughout imperialist democracies social-democratic parties have vigorously blocked the advance of the working class to socialism. In 1985 the crisis of capitalism prevents it delivering even the tiniest reforms.

The black American working class have no experience of the betrayals of a British type Labour Party. Nor, as part of their political awakening and search for class independence, do they need it. ■

# BOOK REVIEWS

## NO MORE RETREATS

showed that all too clearly. Many of the area barons want to see him go. Kinnock and Willis would dance the night away if they could get rid of the hated Scargill who remains a symbol of resistance and militancy. Scargill's head would be the minimum price for the scabs to "re-unify" and it is a price the Eurocommunists and the Kinnockites would be happy to pay.

But Scargill cannot be "saved" or supported by uncritically following his own do-nothing tactics and loyalty to the Executive. Only if the rank and file fight the scab union and those who would compromise with it will we see if Scargill will break out of the Iron circle closing around him.

## YELLOW UNIONS

This struggle against the UDM is not just of concern to the miners. Born out of a great defeat on the verge of another great capitalist crisis it is part of a strategy by the employers as a whole to bust unions, institutionalise scabbing and institute US and Japanese union-free conditions for exploiting workers. The UDM obviously intends to penetrate all the other areas and to become a focus for a rival alignment of yellow unions.

Already links between the EETPU and the UDM have been established. EETPU has a full-time liaison officer with the UDM. According to the *New Statesman* discussions that were held 'very privately' considered that 'once the bother over government money for union ballots is out of the way, the new miners' union will

merge with Eric Hammond's 'electricians.' The seriousness of such a development should not be underestimated. We are faced with a potential mass yellow union. Unions that want to defend their members "conciliate" with such an outfit at the peril of their lives.

## MOBILISE

Rank and file militants will have to fight hard to force the national and area officials to mobilise the NUM against the UDM. An immediate, massive national campaign must be set up. In all the "NUM loyal" areas there must be a campaign based on mass meetings to explain the arguments and nip the UDM's growth in the bud. The danger signs are already there. In Agcroft in Lancashire, Daw Mill in Warwickshire and North Wales ballots on joining the UDM are being held. In other words the breakaway has potential to grow not die. That is why opposition in the "loyal" areas must be used as a base to go into the scab areas and defeat the UDM at source. Each pit in the loyal areas should "twin" with NUM branches in the scab areas to organise and assist those NUM members who remain loyal. Teams of militants armed with the arguments should be sent around the country to counter the scab arguments. The area NUM leaderships cannot be relied on however. They are doing very little, simply hoping the breakaway will disappear. Where the officials refuse to help, the rank and file will have to take up the task and appeal to all militant sections of the labour

movement to help them.

Equally important is the question of the avalanche of closures which threatens to sweep away the NUM as an effective fighting force.

The NUM faces a repeat of the situation that faced the Leyland workers after 1979 and the steelworkers after 1980. Defeats, compounded by bureaucratic misleadership enabled Edwardes and MacGregor to halve the workforces in both industries. More to the point in Leyland in particular the militant rank and file workers were systematically victimised. Rank and file confidence was thus dramatically weakened.

This need not and must not be the fate of NUM militants if they organise themselves into a fighting militant minority. Such a minority can relate to and build on the willingness of miners at many pits - Bold, Rossington, Ireland, Keresley, to mention a few that have struck over the last couple of months - to resist the NCB rampage. Links must be established in the first place between those prepared to fight. The Kent area, Darfield Main, Bold and St John's have all voted to oppose closure. They must be given official backing for strike action.

## STRIKE ACTION

In their areas they must fight for back-up strike action. In all pits they should seek support through any action the militants can win - strikes if possible, overtime bans and work-to-rules. The NCB still need smooth running production. Any action that hits at that hurts them. By making these links in action - and here Kent should take a lead - a fighting minority can help restore confidence, provide protection for

the militants against victimisation, and help fellow militants in UDM areas to show that class struggle not class treachery is the way to defend jobs.

Necessarily in the next period struggles will start on the defensive. But if they are fought resolutely and with militant tactics, if they are used to build links between the pits and areas, used to forge a new leadership that is prepared to fight, then they will be the foundations for a rebuilt NUM capable of a future offensive.

## POLITICS

Lastly, and most importantly is the question of politics. The miners' strike was a great battle in a class war with the employers and their state. The bosses and their state are still waging that war, not only against the miners but against the unemployed, against the black youth of the inner cities. When the opportunity presents itself to counter-attack and defeat the Tories it probably will not be on an issue arising from the mining industry. It may not even be on a trade union issue at all. Political consciousness is the key to seeing when our enemy is weak, when to attack him or her.

For politics you need a political organisation, ultimately - a party. The party of Kinnock is the party of betrayal and surrender. Militant miners must, along with the fighters in every front of struggle, make the decision to break out of the isolation of pure trade unionism and self-satisfied NUM-ism. They must become political militants. They must become revolutionary communists as many of their grandfathers were! Hard times need hard solutions. ■



# workers power



## NO MORE RETREATS

THE BITTER CONSEQUENCES of the NUM's defeat are now being felt with full force in the mining communities. Arthur Scargill's claim that there was no defeat rings ever more hollow. Many militants went along with it because it expressed their courage, their refusal to lie down and to surrender. As such this attitude is 100 times better than those in the NUM Executive like Eric Clarke and Emlyn Williams who use the defeat to counsel surrender and a disorderly retreat without resistance.

However militants need to use their intelligence as well as their courage. To say that there was no defeat is just plain stupid. We need to learn the lessons of the defeat in order to minimise that defeat and in order to be able to carry on resistance effectively.

Of course we have nothing in common with the NUM regional officials, especially those influenced by the Communist Party, who say the cause of the defeat was militancy. They are now on the verge of saying the strike itself was a horrible mistake. This is a self interested criticism. It covers up their own misleadership - from their refusals to black and picket the power stations to their disastrous "return to work with no agreement."

It also covers up the treachery of the whole trade union bureaucracy. Arthur Scargill's line also covers up for these traitors. There was a defeat and Kinnock, Willis, Hammond, Basnett were direct and open enemies of the miners. The "let bygones be bygones approach" is disastrous. It helps these traitors stab another section of workers in the back the next time around.

Besides the "critics" of the strike are busy disorganising and sabotaging any effective resistance to the NCB. Scargill's promised "guerrilla warfare" has been shown up for what it was. He would have been more honest if he said "You're on your own now lads."

### ONSLAUGHT

In the last month the NCB's onslaught has been stepped up. The formal establishment of the scab Union of Democratic Mineworkers gave them tremendous encouragement in the campaign to decimate the industry and des-



stroy the NUM. The closure programme is now in full swing. Since the end of the strike 18,000 jobs have gone. Over the last month Celyn North, Penrhwceiber, Abertillery, Cortonwood, Yorkshire Main, Brookhouse and two coke plants in the North East have all voted to accept closure.

### REDUNDANCY

A statistical breakdown in the *Economist* magazine showed that the great majority of jobs gone and planned to go are in the militant coalfields, especially Yorkshire and Kent. In Kent two of the three pits, Betteshanger and Tilmanstone have been targeted for closure.

It is the case that many miners have been intimidated into taking voluntary redundancies by the threat of losing all payments and all benefits due to non-payment of national insurance during the strike. But this is only a partial explanation of the collapse of resistance to the NCB. The truth is that having been led back to work after a year's struggle, the miners have been given no perspective for resistance by the leadership.

In South Wales - which proposed the return to work - NUM leader Arfon Evans had the gall to say that miners 'are now suffering the bitter consequences' of the defeat. In addition to covering up his own role in the 'back to work with no deal' move he "forgets" to add that in South Wales the area NUM has allowed pits to close with no resistance. In fact the only form of resistance he calls for is an "exposure" of the NCB by glossy publicity from the Welsh Congress. Miners know that all the cleverest arguments in the world will not budge a ruthless employer. In the absence of an alternative many have despaired and taken redundancy. The misleaders, not the men are responsible for this despair.

On the pay front the NUM is being deliberately humiliated by the Board. The NCB gave its thirty pieces of silver to Judas Lynk. It took the form of a pay increase that will take the best paid Notts miners to £209.20 per week. In Notts £53.50 of this is earned in bonus. This is a considerably higher average bonus level than anywhere else in the country.

The pay deal was designed to boost the vote for the UDM in Notts and elsewhere. It worked.

On the other hand the NCB are offering a slightly worse deal (30p per shift incentive payment, instead of the 50p the scabs get) to the NUM. However, they are rubbing the NUM's nose in it by tying the offer to "an unequivocal commitment" by the NUM to collaborate in the NCB's drive "to reduce costs by increased efficiency and productivity on the basis of incentives."

Faced with this humiliating offer the leadership have, as with closures, offered no perspective for resistance to the members. Scargill came out of the meeting claiming the talks were merely exploratory. If they were he should have been honest about exactly what his explorations had revealed, the fact that the NCB is making an offer that is deliberately designed to trap the NUM into aband-

oning its opposition to incentives. He will not because he fears that UDM members waving £200 wage slips will attract more NUM members. But on this principle where does the retreat stop. Arthur says nothing and keeps his record clean. That is all.

However, pressure in the Executive is likely to mean that opposition to incentives will be dropped, albeit quietly. With no strategy to defend and improve their members' pay they are likely to cave in. The *Financial Times* journalist John Lloyd - who is kept well informed by sections of the left bureaucracy in the NUM - predicted this when he wrote: 'The pressure on the NUM Executive to dilute its principles in order to take what it can before it suffers a haemorrhage of members in now very great.' (2.11.85)

The terrible paralysis of the NUM leadership on the closure and pay issues is related to their fear of the UDM. They have no active strategy for combatting the scab outfit. This much is proved by the fact that they allowed the hardened scab organisers to remain and organise inside the NUM throughout the strike. After the strike they allowed them grace to rally 20,000 NUM miners to a yellow union. They split when they wanted to. The NUM failed to isolate and expel them before they could do their damage. They believed conciliation could win them over.

Amazingly the Scotland and South Wales Eurocommunist influenced leaderships are pushing for reconciliation. If you can't tell the difference between a hardened scab-herder and a NUM member then you won't be able to tell the difference between a bosses' yellow union and a genuine trade

union. A split in the NUM is a tragedy. But to convert the whole NUM into an NCB staff association would be a disaster. A union must exist to fight the bosses and defend its members, not police them in the interests of MacGregor and Peter Walker.

### UDM CANCER

Yet the TUC and Kinnock are trying desperately to get the cancer of the UDM back into the body of the NUM. They are helping with the process of destroying the NUM as a fighting union. Basnett has declared, 'The TUC should consider offering to establish a special conciliation commission to try and heal the break between the NUM and the breakaway organisation.'

Clive Jenkins is openly touting the dissolution of the NUM and a "return" to the old pre-1945 "Federation." He wants to dismember the national union (already too federal as it is) leaving area unions to face their NCB areas. Just what MacGregor wants! Just what Thatcher and the privatisers want! And these reptiles are supposed to be leaders of the labour movement. They are clearly the bosses' agents in our movement. Unify with them on their terms is the unity of the graveyard.

Arthur Scargill is not vigorously fighting these moves. He is resting content with calling for the TUC and the Labour Party to refuse to recognise the scab "union". In fact Scargill as NUM President is himself a prime target of the re-unification moves. He is already isolated on the Executive. The vote to purge the union's contempt



THIS YEAR'S PAY campaign has seen the most widespread and long lasting action ever. The latest series of ballots with their massive majorities in favour of further action show that teachers resolve has not faded away with the summer holiday.

Yet with the NUT now in a minority within the Burnham Committee there is a danger that the ending of the present campaign effectively lies in the hands of the NAS/UWT - the second largest union. Their leadership too have felt the pressure of their members for firm action.

### MARGINAL

It is unlikely they will simply accept the last offer (6.9%) even if it is still on the table. They will try and get some marginal improvement otherwise they stand to lose members to the NUT because they will be tarred with the brush of a sell-out.

Meanwhile, the NUT leaders will maintain a stance of pseudo-militant posturing, comfortable

## TEACHERS - HOW TO WIN

In the knowledge that they can claim that they have been outvoted. Given the scenario what can teacher militants do to put some life back into the campaign? So far the action has been highly bureaucratized with none of the rank and file activity seen in the struggles of the early 1970s.

A sharp break with existing strategy and tactics are needed if the campaign is not to be ended this month. First, NUT members need to recognise that the totally undemocratic, Department of Education-staffed, Burnham Committee is not a body that is fit to decide on the fate of the campaign. The NUT leaders have an overwhelming mandate to pursue the full claim with militant action. We must organise independently of the Executive to put pressure on it.

In this regard the NUT activists grouped within the Socialist Teachers Alliance (STA) have a special responsibility. STA groups need to urgently do the following:

i) Put resolutions through their Schools/Division urging the Executive to stand firm and to carry on the dispute after we lose our majority on Burnham.

ii) Use i) to put pressure on their local Executive members, and try to get them committed to voting against any deal which falls short of the full claim of 12% (and issuing a statement to this effect).

iii) Arrange to picket the next Executive meeting demanding the full claim, flat-rated and with no strings.

iv) Attempt to organise strike action (unofficial if necessary) on the date of the Burnham meeting at which the NUT loses its majority.

v) Put resolutions calling for a Special Salaries Conference (whether or not there is a new offer) to discuss ways to take the campaign forward. At this conference (and anywhere else) STA members should argue for complete boycott of all public examinations in line with the Scottish teaching union (EIS).

### REGROUP

For too long the STA has confined itself to organising the widest possible support for official action and urging more militant measures upon the NUT Executive. But the union officials will never fight to the finish. The present campaign must regroup all militants who can be won to a perspective of challenging and replacing the NUT bureaucrats at Hamilton House with an independent rank and file organisation rooted in each Association. This was always necessary. Now, with the changes in Burnham, future campaigns depend upon it.

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