



POLISH WORKERS RISE AGAINST BUREAUCRACY

The Polish working class has struck a major blow against the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy. The wave of stoppages and demonstrations which erupted across the country last Friday forced the government to back down on the savage price increases announced only 24 hours earlier.

The strikes, which began at the giant 'Ursus' tractor factory in Warsaw rapidly spread, as huge queues formed outside food shops on Friday in anticipation of the price increases. At Radom, 60 miles from the capital, a large demonstration formed outside the Party Headquarters - which had to be protected by police.

Railway lines were blocked and strikes were reported in many other factories, shipyards and smaller plants.

TURNING POINT

These struggles mark a turning point in the European revolution. Polish workers, strengthened by the international gains and offensive of the oppressed masses (as shown in Indo-China and Southern Africa) have not only weakened European and world Stalinism but demonstrated to the world's working class that the labour bureaucracy which shackles their struggles can be defeated and the road opened up for the fight for socialism.

This is true in every country, including Britain, where workers confront TUC and Labour leaders collaborating with the employers to inflict a massive cut in real wages.

It is for this reason the capitalist press has played down last Friday's huge upheavals.

Yet confronted by what was tantamount to an uprising challenging their very right to rule, the Polish bureaucracy, headed by

Prime Minister Gierek, held back from the routine Stalinist response of police and military repression.

NO ATTEMPT

Unlike the strikes in East Germany and Czechoslovakia in 1953, the 1956 movements in Poland and Hungary, the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, or the shooting of strikers in the Baltic ports of Poland itself only six years ago in 1970, there was no attempt to confront the anger of the masses by guns and police.

Instead they *withdrew* the planned price increases (some of up to 100%) "for further consultation".

No doubt Gierek remembered only too clearly that he himself had only come to power in 1970 after his predecessor, veteran Stalinist Gomulka, had been brought down by mass riots, demonstrations and occupations sparked off by the shooting of dozens of workers demonstrating also against rising prices.

FROZEN

Since that time food prices have been officially frozen (though numerous unofficial loopholes have been found), and it has taken the Gierek regime over five years to pluck up the courage to attempt to reimpose the increases.

The last minute announcement made last Thursday, to go for huge price increases, is the direct



result of attempting to put the cost of the Stalinist policies of building 'socialism in one country' and of 'peaceful coexistence' with capitalism on the backs of the Polish working class.

These policies, which have led the Polish bureaucracy into a whole series of reactionary deals with imperialism, contain also *opposition* to socialist revolution in other countries.

This in turn has resulted in

Polish scab exports of coal being used against Spanish and other miners' strikes.

The Stalinists' preference for seeking arrangements with capitalism rather than conceding any form of workers' control over the bureaucratically planned Polish and East European economies or giving support to the working class in the advanced capitalist countries in the struggle for socialism, has led to a massive

indebtedness of the Polish economy to American and European capital.

The economic dislocation this has brought about - worsened by the slump in exports to the West caused by the recession - has forced the hand of the Gierek regime.

And, as if they were running

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STALINISTS PROTECT NUM BUREAUCRACY



Gormley

Only one day after the 17-17-1 vote for the 4½% wage-cutting policy at the Special Congress of the TUC, the press gave workers an insight into the hypocrisy of the right-wing bureaucracy in the Miners' union.

It was revealed that at the May meeting of the NUM Executive a decision was taken not simply to increase the salary of Joe Gormley and Lawrence Daly by £6 per week - but also to *pay* the rates on their houses.

This would have boosted their already massive pay cheques by another £7 per week in the case of Gormley and £5 for Daly - over and above the £6 pay limit which they were so instrumental in forcing onto the trade union movement!

Only since this was exposed have Gormley and Daly now offered to stay within the £6 limit.

These revelations are of great importance in understanding the basis of privilege from which right wing bureaucrats lecture workers on "tightening belts", "grinning and bearing it" and the need to accept redundancies and cuts in social services.

CRUCIAL

Gormley and Daly played a crucial role in the TUC acceptance of the 4½% deal. The NUM Executive meeting in May only carried by one vote a recommendation for acceptance of the deal in the union ballot.

It was this direction which proved decisive in winning the

narrow majority of votes in favour of the wage-cut plans - there is no doubt that given a lead the vote would have swung heavily for rejection.

The acceptance of the 4½% by the miners then strengthened the hand of other right-wing bureaucracies and sabotaged any possible fight against the deal at the TUC.

Every worker has thus been affected by the treachery of Daly and Gormley.

But much more is involved.

Firstly, the Press, which must have known about the Executive hand-outs to Daly and Gormley well beforehand, (the *Daily Mail* spoke about resentment having "grown" among rank and file miners since the decision) clearly *suppressed* the facts until after the 4½% deal was safely in the bag.

Secondly, the Communist

Party members and 'lefts' on the NUM Executive also suppressed this vital information throughout the ballot campaign.

REVEAL

They knew only too well that to reveal these details could have swung the vote to one of rejection. Yet McGahey, Whelan, Du and Scargill all kept silent - a their silence aided only the right wing.

Indeed when the story finally broke into the open at the Scottish miners' conference McGahey said nothing on the question. Instead he produced complete diversion - a speech predicting collapse for the policy and belatedly offering

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS



LESSONS OF SOWETO KILLINGS ARMED STRUGGLE - ONLY WAY

The barbaric response of the Vorster regime - leaving 200 dead and over 1,000 wounded - to the uprising of African workers in Soweto lays bare once again the impossibility of any peaceful reformist road to elementary democratic rights for the 20 million black South Africans.

The protests about the use of the Afrikaans language in African education is only the tip of an iceberg.

As the *Observer* noted:

"Eighty-six percent of houses (in Soweto) have no electricity, 93% are without a shower or bath and 97% have no hot water.....fifty four percent of all Sowetans are unemployed.....the average monthly wage per worker is £10, this compares with £69 for the average white worker in Johannesburg".

It is on this that the rate of profit of international capital invested in South Africa depends.

CONNECTION

This connection was dramatically brought home by the *Sunday Times* survey last month of the utter failure of the Labour government's 'code of practice' on wage rates to African workers of British companies operating in South Africa.

According to the code the minimum wage paid should be at least 50% above the poverty line. "Most companies," concluded the *Times* (May 16) "are paying below the minimum wage rate laid down by the British government".

Of course they are! Their profits depend on it. And it is to maintain those profits and those of white South African capital that Vorster's police state exists.

TOWNS

Since African workers have to work in towns - where the factories are - and since towns breed class consciousness and trade unionism, Vorster has to take every measure possible to resist the growth of a conscious political leadership in the

LEBANON TRAP FOR P.L.O.

The Arab League's "peace-keeping" formulae for the Lebanon are in reality a trap for the destruction of the Palestinian Liberation forces. This stark fact, which looms over all the comings and goings between Beirut, Damascus, Cairo and Saudi Arabia was hammered home at the weekend.

The Lebanese-Christian right-wing entrenched in East Beirut and egged on by Israeli statements of support launched a mammoth rocket and artillery bombardment of three of the main Palestinian refugee camps to the east of the city.

In their primitive corrugated iron huts live around 50,000 refugees, most of them civilians.

And as the fighting continued the Arab League's "peace keeping" forces folded their arms and stood by.

It is not hard to understand why. The large majority of them

African working class.

The police terror and battery of legal restrictions are growing. A new State Security bill currently before parliament will legalise what already happens as a matter of common occurrence - detention without trial of anyone whose actions oppose or criticise the regime for virtually indefinite periods.

In spite of this, Vorster is not succeeding.

The wave of strikes in 1973-4 has been followed by the rapid expansion of black trade unions. Black trade unions are denied legal bargaining rights by the state.

CITIZENSHIP

In October, Vorster will begin the attempt to play what will undoubtedly be his last card in the struggle to hold back the movement of the working class - stripping the vast majority of black South Africans of their citizenship.

This will be done by creating 'independence' for the black Bantustans (Homelands) - backwaters of barren land onto which blacks were forcibly evicted at the turn of the century.

Blacks will become citizens of their respective homelands but will of course have to continue to work in South Africa stripped of even the few civil rights they have, as 'foreigners' in their own country.

Throughout South Africa blacks have demonstrated their complete opposition to these proposals.

CLEFT

Vorster is now sinking more and more tightly into his cleft stick. The regime of apartheid and police terror is integral to the survival of the capitalist industrial economy of South Africa.

But so is the acquiescence of the black African regimes to the north. These regimes are now coming under increasing pressure from the masses to take a left face and criticise apartheid and finance the guerrilla war in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia).

Vorster has been putting pressure on Smith in Rhodesia to come

to some sort of settlement with the Nationalists to avoid a prolonged war of liberation which would mobilise the masses in southern Africa even further.

The events in Soweto show that it is now too late.

MILITANCY

The increased militancy and self confidence of the workers and oppressed classes in South Africa is directly linked to the successful anti-colonial struggles in Angola and Mozambique.

In Rhodesia itself, the Smith regime flounders on a similar set of contradictions. Any attempt at a negotiated settlement with even the right-wing of the nationalist movement immediately poses the question of land.

But any concessions on this crucial question threatens the whole economic basis of the settler regime. Thus despite pressure from Vorster and Kissinger, Smith has been able to offer no concessions or new initiatives since the talks with Nkomo broke off.

Last week the Rhodesian Special Commission on Racial Discrimination published its report. And the Rhodesia Front ruling party was immediately thrown into crisis as regards its implementation.

Its report recommends some minor changes in the land law to allow a few middle class Africans to buy farming or industrial land in the white areas.

These recommendations which even if implemented would in no way change the balance of power in Rhodesia, were sufficient to send a wave of horror through the majority of the white settlers.

Meanwhile the guerrilla war is going badly for Smith. More and more areas of the country have proved vulnerable to attack by freedom fighters.

Not only that but the official 'kill ratio' has fallen from 12:1 in favour of the Rhodesian army in January to 6:1 today, as the equipment and training of the guerrillas increases in quality. This means that an increasing part of the white population is being called up into military service.

This, coupled with a level of white emigration which is the highest for twelve years, is putting severe strain on the economy.

It is against this backdrop, and specifically that of Soweto, that Kissinger met Vorster in Bavaria



PHOTO: Socialist Worker

African school student carrying murdered school friend.

Last week. South Africa has a crucial role in US strategy to 'stabilise' the situation in Southern Africa outlined by Kissinger in his Lusaka speech in April.

Kissinger is relying on Vorster to pressure Smith to make a settlement to prevent a long liberation war in Rhodesia.

Kissinger hoped that by stopping the war in Zimbabwe he could prevent it spreading into South Africa itself. Now just this is happening!

Small wonder that after two days of talks with Vorster all Kissinger could find to say was that "all the major problems affecting Southern Africa have been dis-

cussed".

While the bourgeoisie discuss their strategy to repress the struggle of the black masses in Southern Africa, the events in Soweto must be the starting point for a renewed campaign of support in the labour movement for the armed liberation struggle.

In Britain this means not only forcing the Labour government to break its many links with the racist Vorster regime, but demanding that active assistance and material aid, including arms, is provided to those liberation forces now fighting for self determination.

BOLIVIA: BANZER FORCED BACK

The Bolivian working class is winning its confrontation with dictator General Hugo Banzer.

For two weeks, the indefinite strike by 35,000 tin miners has held totally firm in the face of Banzer's military occupation of the mining districts, his arrest of political and union leaders of whom 57 (including mineworkers' leader Victor Lopez) were forcibly deported to Chile, and his attempts to get a return to work through an offer of a 20% wage increase.

Their other demands include the release of all political prisoners, the withdrawal of the army from the mining regions, the return of the occupied radio stations to the miners and a commitment to take no reprisals.

The granting of such demands would be a crushing blow to Banzer's increasingly isolated dictatorship.

Last week factory workers staged a one-day general strike in support of the miners' demands and virtually all the country's university students are on indefinite strike.

the defence of the rights and the just aspirations of workers".

Banzer's forces are under continuous attack. Three of them were killed when a military patrol was ambushed.

The army in its turn, however, has been responsible for killing several workers and students since the present conflict began.

Latest reports are that 3000 miners in two districts have returned to work after Banzer agreed to open wage negotiations and to accept all their other demands.

There is little doubt that this

ITALY: CP SUPPORTS JOB AND WAGE CUTS

"The most difficult parliament in the history of the republic"; "Italy is ungovernable". That was how the principal capitalist newspapers assessed the outcome of the June 20th elections.

The corrupt and discredited Christian Democratic party (DC) is still clinging onto power, but their fingerholds are crumbling.

The election results have only deepened the political crisis which produced the election in the first place.

The DC held on to the same 38.7% they polled in the 1972 elections (a recovery of 3% since the regional elections last summer).

THREATS

They were helped, no doubt, by the implicit threats of the Pope (who, the Vatican announced, didn't vote because he "does not participate in Italian politics"), and of President Ford, and of the US Congress which passed a gratuitous resolution supporting "democracy" in Italy.

But they were also helped by the strategy of the Communist Party (PCI) and Socialist Party (PSI).

By refusing to advocate a government independent of the Christian Democrats even if they won a majority, these parties helped to sabotage the possibility of such a majority.

They prevented voters from casting a clear vote against Christian Democratic government; workers could merely express a preference on the terms on which the DC should stay in power.

BASE

Nevertheless, the parliamentary base on which the DC have dominated Italian governments for 30 years has dramatically shrunk.

This is partly due to the continued advance in the PCI vote which reached 34.4% - 2.4% up on last year and over 7% up on the 1972

election; and partly to the sharp cutback in the vote of the smaller capitalist parties, including the Fascist MSI.

DEADLOCK

The parliamentary situation is, therefore, even more deadlocked than ever. The Christian Democrats have no majority of their own, nor in alliance with the Liberals, Social Democrats and Republicans (the "Centre-Right coalition").

Assuming for now they exclude any accommodation with the fascists, then the only possible majority which excludes the Communist Party is the old centre-left formula of coalition between the DC and the PSI.

But the PSI has stuck to its pre-electoral position that, in the words of its leader de Martino, the centre-left is "finished, finished for ever".

The PSI refuses to enter any government with which the PCI is not "associated".

DEAL

But this does not exclude some deal whereby the PCI will remain as a "governmental opposition" to a centre-left coalition in exchange for the enactment of some PCI-sponsored 'reforms'.

The Stalinists of the PCI too, are careful not to exclude this possibility, though their priority remains the emergency "national coalition" between all parties except the MSI.

They are, as Party General Secretary Enrico Berlinguer says, "in no hurry" to have the matter settled.

For one thing further revelations about the Lockheed scandal can be expected to weaken the Christian Democrats.

Ex-premier Mariano Rumor (now Foreign Minister) is at present the most deeply implicated.

And, meanwhile, the caretaker Premiership is expected to pass from Aldo Moro (who is likely to become speaker of the Chamber of Deputies) to Sig. Cossiga who is a relative of CP leader Berlinguer.

While the "doctors" argue, the incurable disease of Italian capitalism gets rapidly worse: inflation and unemployment accelerate; the lira holds up uneasily and only through the caretaker government's emergency trade and monetary controls; numerous firms escape bankruptcy only through mounting government subsidies.

And for this and other reasons the deficit in the State budget rockets out of control and is now even higher than the British deficit.

LOANS

It is clear that the Italian government will have no further access to desperately needed international loans until it implements new economic policies satisfactory to the International Monetary Fund, the US government and the world's bankers.

Those policies centre on massive real wage cuts along with tax increases and government spending cuts to reduce the budget deficit.

These are also the policies of the Italian capitalist class and they have been spelled out most starkly in recent statements by Central Bank governor Baffi and Republican Party leader Ugo la Malfa.

La Malfa insists that they cannot be implemented without new legal restrictions on trade unions, including in particular on the right to strike.

These are also the policies of the Italian Communist Party! Like the capitalists, the PCI calls for cutbacks in spending to cure the budget deficit.

SPOKESMAN

PCI economic spokesman, Luciano Barca, says that Baffi's proposals on this are "hard but realistic".

Like the capitalists, the PCI supports wage cuts, though, Barca says, they should be implemented not through a statutory freeze and anti-strike laws, but through "self-discipline by the trade unions".

Like the capitalists, the PCI wants, as part of "a very intense

period of austerity", to "modify" Italy's so-called "sliding scale of wages".

This limited "sliding scale" was gained in the struggles of the "hot autumn" of 1969. It has offered some, but incomplete, protection of wages against inflation.

And independent PCI candidate, economics expert Luigi Sparenta, has gone along with the demands of the capitalist class that it be severely curtailed if not abolished.

Italian capitalists are desperately in need of these economic policies; so is imperialism on a world scale which increasingly sees Italy as the vulnerable "soft underbelly" of European capitalism.

Either in or out of government the Stalinist leaders of the PCI will not only support such policies but propose them independently.

Italy's immediate political crisis not, therefore, about whether the PCI leaders will make what they euphemistically call a "historic compromise" with the capitalist parties - that has already been done - but over just what form that compromise should take in the immediate future.

Both sides to this filthy deal, however, will be equally disturbed by a growing realisation that the Italian working class is not prepared to make any such compromise.

OPINION

This was strikingly supported by a public opinion poll published in the magazine *Tempo* which showed that the great majority of intending PCI voters wanted major changes in the Italian government.

No more than a quarter of them supported any form of coalition between the PCI and the Christian Democrats.

The Stalinists so-called "parliamentary road to socialism" has thus in practice proved to be the parliamentary road to capitalist policies, in complete defiance of the wishes of their members and supporters.

British Stalinists advocating the parliamentary road must now find new ways of explaining the Italian betrayals to their own members.

EUROPEAN STALINISTS CONFER

After a year's haggling, deadlock and delay, Moscow's long-awaited 'Conference' of European Communist Party leaderships was scheduled to meet yesterday and today in East Berlin.

Tito leads a Yugoslav delegation to an international Stalinist gathering for the first time in almost twenty nine years.

The 'Conference' will, of course, decide nothing. Tito, backed by the Rumanians and the French, Italian and Spanish Communist Parties, refused to attend unless every letter and dot of the 'final communique' were agreed in advance - a drafting committee has been horse-trading phrases in East Berlin over recent months.

Now they have arrived at a 36-page formula (in secret, so as not to embarrass, for example, the Italian Communist Party during the recent elections), and the leaders can safely 'confer' and annoint it.

This formula will, as all involved well understand, mean even less than the little it appears to say.

The Soviet Communist Party - which made such an issue of the 'sacred principle' of 'proletarian internationalism' and the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' at their recent Congress - have decided to drop these.

Instead the Italians' expression 'internationalist solidarity' will be used, and the CPSU will content itself with undertakings to 'defend the socialist countries, starting with the USSR'.

These problems of Stalinist 'diplomacy' are understandable. While Brezhnev takes his stand on the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' the Italian Communist Party embroils itself in behind-the-scenes negotiations for a coalition with the hirelings of Lockheed in the Christian Democratic Party, and other 'democrats'.

And Santiago Carrillo's Spanish CP has gone even further - opening up direct contacts with leading figures of the Fascist government, including Interior Minister Fraga Iribane.

The Workers Socialist League

The Workers Socialist League was formed in December 1974 to struggle for the continuity of the principles of Trotskyism in Britain and towards the rebuilding of the Fourth International.

In the daily struggle to take the demands and principles of Trotsky's *Transitional Programme* into the trade unions, the WSL has been at the forefront of the fight for the sliding scale of wages, and work sharing on full pay - demands which at the 1975 T&GWU Conference were the only alternative to Jones' £6 pay plan and the wholesale acceptance of redundancies by the bureaucracy. In today's fight against the TUC's 4% pay cutting proposals this demand for a sliding scale of wages (rising according to the rising cost of living as assessed by trade union committees) is the essential basis of consistent opposition.

In the Health Service WSL comrades have led the struggle for a sliding scale of NHS spending, for the start of workers' control of the service (beginning with opening the books of the Health Authorities), along with the fight to end all private practice. Perhaps more important we have led the growing call for *strike action* to defend the NHS against the cuts and to implement these policies, fighting those like the ASTMS leadership who substitute the words for the action.

In local disputes also, WSL comrades have tested and developed the demands of the *Transitional Programme*, putting forward in every case the only real opposition to the Stalinists and the right-wing. Our struggle for the "open the books" demand in the motor industry has won a mass response.

At the same time we have put forward a policy to fight unemployment, calling for unity of employed and unemployed through the fight to mobilise the trade union movement.

The WSL is the only movement that fights consistently for transitional demands, going beyond mere trade union militancy to pose the political issues to workers.

In doing this our comrades have been forced also to lead struggles for trade union democracy against the bureaucratic manipulation of the Stalinists and right-wing.

While these interventions have developed the League's grasp of Trotsky's *Transitional Programme* there has been a consistent drive to deepen and enrich the movement's understanding of the history and the present crisis of the Fourth International, as an essential part of any serious initiative towards its reconstruction.

We urge all readers who agree on the need for revolutionary leadership and the demands we put forward to find out more about the WSL and join our fight in the labour movement.

VIETNAM: UN AID SOUGHT

The formal unification of Vietnam was carried out last week, when the first session of the National Assembly met on June 24th in Hanoi. It set up a commission to draft a new Constitution and declared Hanoi the capital of the reunified nation.

Yet the country - and especially the south - remains gripped by an intense social and economic crisis.

The official decree that Saigon is to be called 'Ho Chi Minh City' cannot alter the fact that the old capital of the south remains a centre of unemployment, corruption and speculation that is strengthening the bureaucracy within the Party apparatus itself.

As Tran Trung Tan, head of the Party's education commission in Saigon, admitted:

"When the revolution triumphed the reactionaries said 'All the cadres are perfect.' Now, having seen that certain cadres enjoy women, money, villas, cars, they say that the whole world is like that, and that all the cadres are corrupt".

Tran Trung Tan is a veteran of the revolutionary struggle in the south. He spent five years in the 'tiger cage' torture chambers of the Thieu regime's Con-Son concentration camp.

But his words reflect a situation where the material conditions that feed bureaucracy are rife in the south, and have been little reduced in the year since liberation.

Black markets in consumer goods and petrol, the reappearance of prostitution, the illegal appropriation of houses and cars for Party officials, expensive restaurants while a severe food shortage continues - all these have forced the Provisional Revolutionary Government in the south to issue public warnings against abuses by the Party cadre itself.

But, far from attacking the problem *politically*, by placing real power in the hands of democratically elected committees of the workers, soldiers and peasants, the Stalinist leadership in Vietnam is looking for administrative solutions with the help of massive imperialist 'aid'.

United Nations Secretary General Waldheim has launched an appeal to member states for 430 million dollars to finance a resettlement programme.

Following the report from a Swiss diplomat, Victor Umbricht, to the UN after he toured South Vietnam in March, the UN is to back a policy aimed at shifting 40% of the population of the south. The large majority of these are peasants who fled from the countryside during the final stages of the war in the south and have been stranded, almost all unemployed, in the cities since then.

The main *economic* aims of the UN-backed programme will be to bring abandoned land back into cultivation, and to repair the heavily-damaged transport system in the south.

Like most UN 'aid' it is aimed at propping up and reforming an underdeveloped, agricultural economy. But one of the main causes of unemployment in the south is also the bottlenecks facing industry.

Many factories are small plants, set up to assemble parts and materials imported from the major capitalist states - especially the US and Japan.

With the defeat of imperialism in 1975, many of these supplies were cut off, and a number of technical and administrative staff - tied to the US and the Thieu regime - fled the country.

The Provisional Revolutionary Government has been able to do little to cut down the power and privileges of those who remain.

And some of them have clearly found political niches for themselves in the new regime. At the same time industrial plant remains seriously under-used, and many of the old wage differentials persist.

The crisis in Vietnam underlines the importance of political struggle for workers and peasants democracy against the bureaucracy in all the Stalinist dominated workers states.

The workers and peasants of Vietnam, who carried for decades the harsh burden of the war against imperialism, will not hold state power in their own hands except through democratically elected councils, in which all tendencies of the labour movement are free to be represented.

INDIA: 1 YEAR OF GANDHI DICTATORSHIP

By Rick Robson

June 26th marks an anniversary that will not be celebrated by the Indian working class and peasantry except in tears and anger.

It is one year since Prime Minister Gandhi declared a national State of Emergency that has developed into a persistent and brutal persecution of the workers' movement and oppressed masses, with over 200,000 political prisoners now in jail.

On June 12th 1975, Gandhi was convicted of using corrupt electoral practices and was barred from public office for six years; on the same day election results in the State of Gujarat showed the latest of six defeats for the Congress Party, that time to veteran Gandhian Jaya Prakesh Narayan's Peoples' Front.

The ensuing clamour for her resignation included a rally of 50,000 in the capital, urged by JP to start a nationwide campaign of civil disobedience.

promoted a profitable industrial base for private capital and bought middle class support by state employment.

This resulted in inefficient public spending and vicious private sectors and a parasitic agriculture dominated by massive corruption, especially of Congress officials, and inflicting an inflationary system of shortages on the masses.

INFLATION

The cost of the Bangladesh war, crop failures and the oil crisis combined to stoke inflation as these were financed without touching the rich. Severe shortages of essentials like cooking oil, soap and cloth meant that these were only available at black market prices.

At the same time as over 50% of the population was thrust below the official subsistence level, unemployment soared to an estimated 60 million.

This included many of the urban

After the arrests, the Emergency was not surprisingly ratified by Parliament, which also ensured that courts could not challenge any government action and granted the Prime Minister legal immunity.

On 21st July Gandhi announced a 20 point reform programme which offered everything to everybody. Radical land reform, a minimum agricultural wage, redistribution of urban property and reduced prices stayed on paper.

Only the ban on strikes, reductions in control of private industry and tax exemptions were carried out.

A promised crack-down on the black market and smugglers achieved only temporary success. It was broken by the economic stranglehold of the surplus-producing farmers, Mrs. Gandhi's rural base.

Just as in 1973 these had sabotaged the attempted nationalisation of wholesale food grain trade, by withdrawing supplies. Black market profiteers are now exempt from legal action if they just declare their profits!

The political repression which was a constant feature of Congress rule, with some 40,000 under indefinite detention before the Emergency, has sky-rocketed. An estimated 200,000 political prisoners languish in jail without trial.

JAILED

More parliamentary representatives are imprisoned in India than any other country including even Chile and Brazil. Reports of murder, torture and police atrocity are commonplace.

The attacks and arrests are carried out increasingly by paramilitary forces responsible to the Prime Minister and the Secret Service.

The 250,000 strong Border Security Force is now quartered in all major cities and form a palace guard in the capital, New Delhi. They collaborate with the feared Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), a secret police formed by Mrs. Gandhi in 1967 at the time of the spreading Naxalite peasant revolt in Bengal.

RAW agents infiltrate every union, party, association, college and even the army. Large numbers of riff-raff called 'anti-socials' are protected by the police in using violence, intimidation and kidnapping against political and trade union opponents of the regime.

STALINISTS

Virtually the only party untouched by arrests is the pro-Moscow Communist Party of India, which has continued its criminal and treacherous support of Congress to this day (as does the Morning Star, paper of the British Stalinists), lending credibility to Gandhi's 'left' and populist rhetoric.

In this they follow the policy of Stalin in China in the 1920s to use the peasantry to support the bourgeois nationalists. Trotsky wrote then:

"Stalin and Bukharin preached that thanks to the yoke of imperialism the bourgeoisie could carry out the national revolution in China. The attempt was made. With what results? The proletariat was brought under the headman's axe. Then it was said: the democratic dictatorship will come next, the petty-bourgeois dictatorship proved to be only a masked dictatorship of capital."

The dictatorship of capital in India has dropped its mask. Though most of the jailed oppositionists, united only by their hatred of Mrs.

the struggle against her contained those who spoke for the three quarters of farmers working uneconomic holdings and sliding further into debt, the hundreds of millions of the most severely oppressed landless labourers, and the low-wage urban workers starved by inflation.

Despite Gandhi's propaganda against reactionary plotters, it was these masses that were further disciplined under Emergency powers.

NO APPEAL

The Maintenance of Internal Security Act gives the police the right to arrest and imprison anyone without charge or trial or right of appeal, or even the right to know the reason for arrest.

This may be exercised if the individual has not paid his local Congressman. Even, civil rights associations and legal aid committees were declared illegal and their leaders arrested.

The only trade union federation opposed to the regime, the CITU led by the independent Communist Party of India (Marxist) has endured violence and destruction of its officers from Congress supporters and their union, the INTUC.

The 'anti-socials' under police protection occupied 300 of CITU's union offices.

Normal trade union activities are virtually impossible. Unions are not allowed to hold meetings except for supporting the government, or to raise army demands. Strikes are banned.

Management have taken advantage of this to declare a wage freeze. In Madhya Pradesh, a mining area, union leaders were arrested after writing a letter of protest to the authorities.

offset their miserable wages was halved, and Congress is now considering its abolition, saving private industry £75m.

The CITU alone protested and 3 days later mass arrests started which now claim 2,000 of its membership. Wages and 'dearness allowances' to the value of £625m have been impounded.

It was therefore no surprise when a recent World Bank report recommended increased aid to India because 'conditions are once again ripe for an upturn in the growth rate of the economy', praised 'vigorous Government action' to control inflation and noted 'improved labour discipline' since the ban on strikes.

But though profits are up, the recession in industry is growing. Inflation has slowed due to a record food harvest but prices stay high and average food grain consumption is the lowest since 1967.

UNEMPLOYMENT

With the masses' purchasing power crippled and unemployment so high that the Government refuses to publish figures, any home market is wiped out.

Production has been cut back with wholesale factory closures, laying off 475,000 workers and leaving £3,750m worth of equipment lying idle.

Investment is stagnant, the employers and landlords retaining their high profits. The regime's current attempt for an export-orientated growth relying on foreign investments and markets will lead to a semi-colonial dependence on fluctuating foreign demand and solve neither economic nor political problems.

Any failure in agriculture will renew inflation and threaten to



A mass meeting of Indian railway workers

By 5am the next morning, police had dragged some 700 oppositionists from their beds to jail and Gandhi announced the State of Emergency.

The whole of the Indian press was placed under censorship, JP himself was jailed, on the 4th July 26 opposition parties were banned, and a series of presidential ordinances suspended civil liberties including the right to strike, right to freedom of speech and association, and the right of appeal to the courts against arbitrary arrest.

The Emergency was Gandhi's response to an economic and political crisis which had been accumulating for some years and still remains unresolved despite the furious repression of the working masses in the last year.

LANDOWNERS

The backbone of Gandhi's bourgeois nationalist Congress Party, which has held power continuously since independence in 1947, is the rural large landowning class.

Its support is guaranteed by government assistance to big farmers at the expense of increasing landlessness and poverty of small peasants, up to the eyeballs in debt to moneylenders.

These Indian 'kulaks' kept prices high even though the Green Revolution increased production, and withheld their surpluses.

middle class, now with no prospects, the former base of the Congress Party, who now began to be wooed by an amalgam of opposition parties including that of JP.

These mouthed the same socialist pretensions as the Congress Party, aimed for power at the same sections of the ruling class and were mostly led by disgruntled ex-Congressmen.

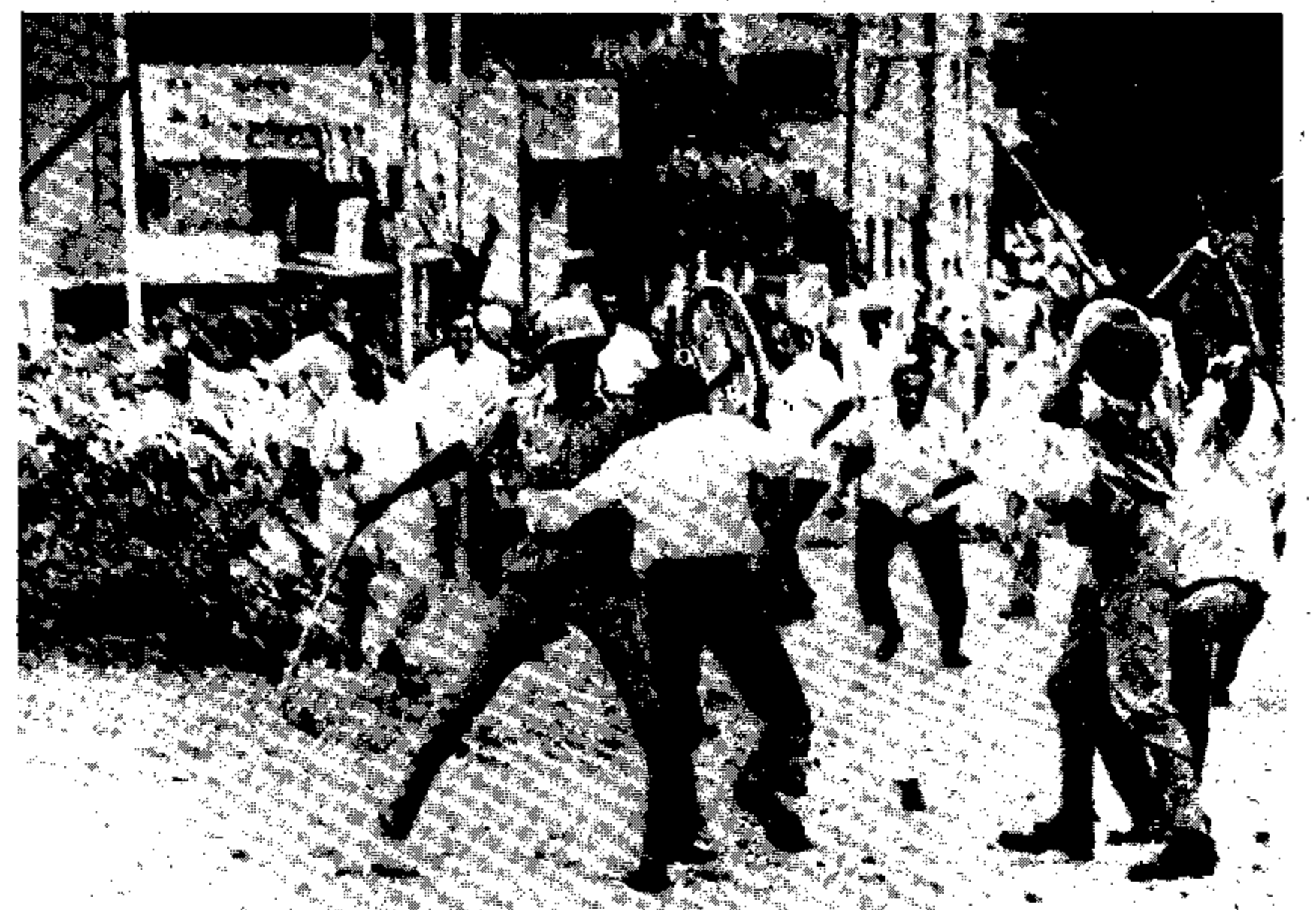
They appealed less to the peasantry, weighed down with casteism, religion and exploitation (though with the fresh example of Vietnam before them), and to the small working class, but they attracted some following for want of any other leadership.

They voiced demands for decentralisation of government (Peoples' Power), a fight against corruption, electoral reform and 'fairer' land ownership.

At this time the black market was unprecedented in extent, the upper classes richer than ever before and the legislatures under their thumb.

This meant a travesty of government, keeping order only with an average of 25,000 armed police in each of the 22 states.

Gandhi's popularity was waning fast. At several meetings in Gujarat she was pelted with shoes and stones. With a general election due in 8 months, she dealt with the revolt in her own camp by sweeping and dictatorial suppression under



Police attack rioters in New Delhi food riots

Negotiations take place under threat of arrest if the trade unions do not toe the line of the authorities. The CITU is denied any role in negotiations. Student unions are abolished.

The Congress slogan is 'Production first and distribution next'. The AITUC, federation of the Stalinist CPI calls on workers to produce more, and enthrone over the collaboration machinery which it calls 'workers participation'.

FINED

This line will be familiar to many British workers. On the railways staff are fined for failure to maintain the timetables or for excessive use of coal. Speed up is rampant in every industry.

On 25 September the yearly

ignite the mass discontent that smoulders under the policeman's club.

There has been resistance. The state Governments of Gujarat and Tamil Nadu protested against the Emergency and refused to implement its repressive measures, and large protest demonstrations were held there last August. These governments have now been removed and 'Presidential rule installed.

The main opposition front, the Lok Sangharsh Samitais, was formed last October from the Congress (Organisation), BLD, Indian Socialist Party under George Fernandes, a rail union leader recently escaped from jail, and Jan Sangh, the main party in the bloc and conservative-nationalist. Between November and January it



demonstration of Gandhian passive resistance which resulted in 80,000 arrests. In May it was joined by JP's followers and restricts itself to pressure and protest.

The CITU also calls for 'joining hands with other democratic forces' and for an approach to 'the ranks of all political parties'.

We must stress clearly that there is no solution in the forming of popular fronts across class lines with the parties of the employers and landlords, however 'progressive' may be their rhetoric. We say the lessons of pre-war Spain and France must be shown to the Indian masses, and call for a *united front* of all trade unionists and workers' and peasants' parties to campaign for the smashing of the dictatorship.

TROTSKYIST

We call for the building of a Trotskyist movement which fights for the method of Trotsky's Transitional Programme, recognising that the choice is not dictatorship or bourgeois democracy, but that only the struggle for workers' power can solve the problems of the Indian masses and serve as a real alternative to Gandhi's dictatorship of capital and land.

Trotsky states: "The present programme is completely applicable to colonial and semi-colonial countries, at least to those where the proletariat has become capable of carrying on independent politics. The central task for the colonial and semi-colonial countries is the agrarian revolution, i.e. the liquidation of feudal heritages, and national independence, i.e. the overthrow of the imperialist yoke. Both tasks are closely linked with each other." (p. 42)

The working class in their defence of jobs and wages must take the leadership of the peasant movement with a programme of nationalisation of land and the collectivisation of agriculture.

The moneylenders must be abolished and cheap credit provided to small peasant farmers from nationalised banks under the management of workers' committees.

BROUGHT DOWN

The Congress government must be brought down by all means of struggle available to the workers' movement and replaced by a Government of workers' and peasants' parties, while at the same time workers', peasants' and small farmers' committees must be built to fight for the above socialist programme and unite the struggle against Gandhi.

In Britain workers should demand an immediate end to all aid to and investment in Gandhi's dictatorship, and that the Labour Government denounce the dictatorship and pressure for the release of political prisoners and return of basic workers' rights.

In particular they should demand the end of scandalous support for the Emergency by Labour Ministers Michael Foot and Peter Shore, both of whom have spoken at meetings organised by the Indian High Commission, and by 'left' Sid Bidwell who said in India that at least (like Mussolini in Italy) 'Gandhi made the trains run on time'.

The enormous forces of repression used by Gandhi are a symptom of her political weakness and isolation. On a socialist programme uniting them with the peasants, the working class can end her dictatorship and prevent her replacement by any more authoritarian regime or by the army.

ANTI-RACIST FIGHT FORM WORKERS DEFENCE SQUADS!

More racist attacks are going to take place. The necessity for developing defence squads in those areas where attacks are already taking place is therefore becoming more urgent.

The task of revolutionaries is both to defend those being attacked and show that these attacks are a class issue. Fascism is about breaking up the organisation of the working class as a whole.

Those immigrant organisations or individuals who have started the formation of vigilante groups have taken an important step forward in breaking from the reformist position of appealing to the police, the capitalist state, to defend themselves against fascism - which itself is just another form of capitalism.

But, unlike the International Marxist Group and other groups we do not say it is simply a question of "Build labour movement support for black self-defence" (*Red Weekly* front page statement 10.6.76) or "Only the defence of the black communities by blacks themselves are any guarantee for protection against racist attacks" (IMG national leaflet).

We of course support the right of immigrant workers to defend themselves in whatever way necessary against racist and fascist attack.

But we also have a political responsibility to attempt to direct these self-defence groups towards calling on the strength of the organised labour movement as a whole so that the most united class attack can be launched against fascist provocation and violence.

If black workers and youth have been the first target of the fascists, picket lines and trade union meetings will be next. Fascists have already attacked meetings on Ireland.

WSL members and supporters in areas affected must therefore propose at their union branches, trades councils and Labour Parties that a fight is waged for workers defence squads organised jointly between immigrant and trade union organisations.

Where possible, we must fight for this within immigrant-organised defence squads by attending as delegates from the trade unions and urging that they unify with trade union bodies, particularly trades councils, in their fight against fascist attack.



There was a considerable setback to the fascist supporters of Robert Relf in Leamington last weekend, when 350 workers marched through the town in a Trades Council anti-racist demonstration - while the British Movement could only produce 30 people.

The Trades Council demonstration, supported by Coventry and Oxford Trades Councils and including a 40-strong WSL contingent, was carried through despite the manoeuvres of the right-wing and the Tory press to witch-hunt the anti-racists, but encountered no opposition at all on its way through the centre of the town to a rally.

There a number of local speakers, including Tom Litterick, local 'left' MP, and an ASTMS official made general statements against racism, avoiding the key issue of a programme of action to unite the working class.

It was left to Alastair Green, speaking on behalf of the Workers Socialist League, to link the fight to defend against racist attacks with the struggle for work sharing on full pay in defence of all jobs and a sliding scale of wages in place of the TUC's reactionary 4½% wage-cutting deal.

IMG AND WORKERS SELF DEFENCE

The real meaning of the International Marxist Group's call simply to "support black self-defence" came out at a public meeting of the Sheffield Anti-Fascist Front last Thursday.

Tariq Ali, IMG spokesman, mentioned not a word of programme to

defend jobs and wages. Nor did he once attack the trade union and Labour leaders for their lack of fight.

Instead his main emphasis was on racism within the working class itself - "on the shop floor".

This led him to claim that Barbara Castle and other Labour ministers had simply "given in" to "pressure" from the racist British working class.

This of course turns the question of leadership on its head. The working class is the historically progressive class whose struggles provide the material basis for the building of a conscious leadership which can fight racism and seek to develop class consciousness.

BASIS

Yet the Labour and trade union leaders rest on the continued existence of capitalism. Their inaction against racism has a historical and a material basis.

This is why Lenin did not blame the working class for their support for their "own" ruling class in World War I - he blamed their Social Democratic leaders and split from them when the outbreak of war revealed their class betrayal.

But Ali's speech went further, to voice the reactionary demand for "anti-racist" candidates in local elections. This attempt to turn racism into a single issue divorced from jobs and wages plays only into the hands of the racists.

Ali never even suggested that such "anti-racist" candidates should be socialists!

For the IMG, in other words, the slogan "Support Black Self-Defence" is simply another one of their ways of ducking out of the fight for principle, programme and leadership in the organised workers' movement.

FALSE CLAIM

Against this, Ali falsely claimed that the WSL policy - fighting to turn local black self-defence groups towards the labour movement as a whole - meant inaction.

"OK. Go ahead. Form your defence squads of mainly white trade unionists", said Ali. "But we can't wait for that".

The WSL has never suggested black workers wait passively until broad-based defence squads are formed.

But we insist that only if the question of defence is approached politically can it be successfully carried through.



ROTHERHAM MARCH

Rotherham last Saturday was the scene for the National Front's latest attempt to parade through a working class and immigrant area and whip up a reactionary racist campaign.

Significantly, this was the National Front's first attempt to march through the strong working class areas of South Yorkshire.

The march of 5,000 white and immigrant workers in a counter-demonstration called by the AUEW District Committee showed the determination of workers in Sheffield and Rotherham to prevent the fascists gaining any foothold.

The fascists were able to go ahead with the display for one reason above all others - the policy of the local AUEW District Committee and its Communist Party leadership.

Despite widespread support for a mobilisation to prevent this fascist march, the Communist Party insisted that the demonstration be kept well away from the Front's march so as to pursue a pure "battle of ideas" with the fascists.

To crown this attempt to divert away from the class issue of

defence of the working class from the fascist thugs, they mobilised in a classic 'popular front' together with local Vicars and representatives of the Tory Party, including a well-known slum landlord.

AUEW District Secretary, Stalinist George Caborn's desire for 'racial harmony' does not prevent a colour bar being operated by management in some factories with the knowledge of the AUEW leadership.

In sharp contrast to the pious wishes of the AUEW leadership for 'racial harmony' was the attitude of the majority of the demonstrators who marched under the banner "Smash Fascism! For Workers Self Defence!"

Answering the request of local immigrant organisations, 300-400 black and white workers went to defend the immigrant area near where the National Front were holding their rally against any attempted intimidation by the departing fascists.

Other defence groups went to the bus station to ensure no attacks could take place by fascist gangs on isolated black workers boarding their buses home.

The defence of the immigrant area had been planned in advance with anyone going in being checked

from early morning. Every street was guarded against attempted incursions by the fascists.

The groups of immigrant and white workers who defended this area with the full backing of the local community were a first step towards the formation of workers' defence groups.

DEFENCE GROUPS

The immigrant organisations are to consider setting up defence groups over the next week, and have welcomed support from the Sheffield Anti-Fascist Front.

The local AUEW leadership have given no backing to these developments. Instead Caborn has proposed an ongoing campaign for 'Racial Harmony' on a "broad" basis involving not only vicars, Liberals and Tories, but representatives of the police!

The demand must be taken up in every trade union branch for the AUEW District Committee and the Trades Council to take on responsibility for the organisation of workers defence organisations together with the immigrant workers organisations.

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION



Lenin and the leaders of the Left Opposition



Lenin in Red Square in 1920

or leased by capitalists or petty producers. But, since these were all very small, 85% of all industrial workers were still employed in the state or cooperative enterprises. And these produced as much as 93% of total industrial production.

The inflation had been traumatic. Over a period of 6 years prices had risen by something like one and a half million percent! Money, as Kamenev remarked, had become simply 'coloured pieces of paper'.

The economist Bazarov added that 'the time is not too far distant when the sum of those nominal roubles will exceed the number of all atoms or electrons of which our planet is composed'.

PRINTING NOTES

At one time during 1920 as many as 10,000 workers had been employed simply printing rouble notes!

So a necessary part of the NEP was the stabilisation of the currency. This was done through the introduction of a new currency the *chervonetz* and the balancing of the state budget. The state bank was authorised to make loans, but on commercial terms, to both private and nationalised enterprises. The nationalised ones were expected to operate on the principles of profitability and had to pay for what they bought both from the private and state sector in money.

A labour market was restored along with local collective bargaining, though this was in theory supposed to conform to a national 17-point wage scale. The state continued to guarantee a minimum wage and reforms such as the eight-hour day and two-weeks annual paid holiday.

CONSEQUENCES

The full consequences of NEP did not appear for some time. After a few weeks it became clear that the 1921 harvest would fail. There began painful months of famine during which thousands of people died. Neither NEP nor any distribution system could solve this crisis. Some respite was obtained by grain imports, including famine relief supplies from the United States.

But in the following year the agricultural situation improved. Industrial production began to recover fast and the market started to operate. Supplies improved throughout the country and some of the more acute economic problems of the previous years were genuinely alleviated.

By 1923, however, NEP was to show that it was no general solution to the economic problem. It reproduced earlier problems in a different form. One of these was the 'scissors crisis' which came to a head in 1923.

"SCISSORS"

The 'scissors' referred to the relative movements of the prices of industrial and agricultural goods. In order to induce the peasants to market a large amount of grain it was necessary to bring industrial prices down in relation to grain prices - to bring the blades of the

NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

by Bob Sutcliffe

PART 13 OF OUR SERIES ON THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION.

The policies of war communism, which were necessary to meet the emergency of the civil war and imperialist intervention, posed in the longer run grave dangers for the revolution.

The methods used to secure a surplus of grain in conditions of general shortage produced political as well as economic distortions.

Lenin inveighed continually in this period against the twin evils of bureaucracy and profiteering which accompanied war communism.

INFLATION

The rapid inflation accelerated the move away from the use of money to distribute labour and goods in the economy. But money could not at this stage be replaced

Instead it came increasingly to be replaced by arbitrary criteria from which all calculations of value had disappeared. It was a long way from the careful accounting and husbanding of all economic resources which Lenin stressed as so important.

DISTORTIONS

The effect of these distortions, along with the exigencies of the political emergency, was to cut back production even more.

In 1920 the amount of factory production was down to as little as 14% of what it had been in 1913. Coal production was less than 9 million tons compared with nearly 30 million before the war. The grain harvest in 1920 was 46 million tons, about two thirds of the average of pre-war years.

It was clearly the intention of

soon as the emergency would allow it.

Trotsky was the boldest in that direction. In spite of the fact that at the height of the civil war he had gone furthest of all in his advocacy of the militarisation of labour and other war communism measures, he proposed some months before the civil war ended that a grain tax be imposed and the market restored as a means of distribution.

His proposal was rejected then. But the measures introduced some months later under the title of the New Economic Policy (NEP), had a great deal in common with it.

WORKED OUT

NEP, unlike war communism, was a cohesive set of policies which were worked out in advance more or less as a unity. They were introduced from the early months of 1921, only weeks after the victory

of imperialist troops.

The food problem was tackled by imposing a tax in kind (later in money) on the peasants, based on the size of their land holding. The tax amounted in total to much less than the surplus extracted in the previous year. Once the tax was paid, peasants were free to sell any extra produce on the open market.

This implied not only increasing differentiation among the peasantry but also the legalisation of internal traders who bought grain from the peasants, sold it to urban workers and were also the vehicle for the reverse trade in manufactured goods as well as a certain amount of trade between the private sector and nationalised enterprises. These merchants were known as Nepmen.

The large industries remained nationalised under NEP; but many small plants were leased to capitalists. Very few were returned to private ownership. In 1923, 89% of



What in fact happened was the opposite: the blades of the scissors moved further apart as industrial prices rose and agricultural prices fell.

By October 1923 a sack of grain exchanged for about half the amount of manufactured goods it had exchanged for one year earlier. This was largely because agricultural output recovered from the civil war much faster than industrial output. By 1923 agriculture was producing at 75% of the pre-war level, industry at only 25%, though heavy industry rather than consumer goods was most sluggish. This fact however, was yet another problem produced by NEP.

The "scissors" crisis was overcome partly through state intervention but was in continuous danger of reappearing. And the reduction of industrial prices transferred the difficulties of food supply problems into another problem - unemployment.

UNEMPLOYMENT

The necessity for even state industry to operate profitably when cost were still very high meant that lower prices led to unprofitability and the growth of unemployment, which was around 1 million throughout the rest of the 1920s.

This was a concrete fulfilment of Lenin's frank admission that NEP in many respects was a tactical retreat. 'Freedom of trade', he said, 'means in a certain measure a development of capitalism'. But he added that 'this capitalism will be under the control, under the supervision of the state'.

NEP always remained, in the eyes of Lenin and Trotsky, a necessary tactical solution to basic economic and political contradictions whose real solution could only be found in the international proletarian revolution.

In introducing NEP, Lenin had said that 'only an agreement with the peasantry can save the socialist revolution in Russia until the revolution has occurred in other countries'.

But that did not mean that even under NEP Soviet economic policy could make no progressive advances. Lenin said that NEP had been introduced 'seriously and for a long time' but, Trotsky added, 'not for ever'.

PLANNING

Hence in 1922 Trotsky increasingly became an advocate of national economic planning in the context of NEP.

This would have been a step towards the social accounting and control which was so important to the material defence and advance of the revolution. Despite some initial doubts, Lenin became convinced that Trotsky was right - that even at that stage a major advance towards national economic planning was possible.

In December 1922 he dictated a memorandum from his sick bed in support of Trotsky's proposals.

Partly through the influence of Stalin, who in 1922 had become general secretary of the party, Trotsky's proposals for economic planning were rejected. What is more, Trotsky was forbidden by

the Politburo to publish Lenin's memorandum. This was one sign among many of an ominous new approach to economic and all other problems in the Soviet Union.

DISCIPLINE

Lenin had looked to a time when "with the beginning of the socialist revolution, discipline must be built on entirely new principles; it must be a discipline of faith in the organising power of the workers and poor peasants, a discipline of comradeship, a discipline of the utmost respect, a discipline of independence and initiative in the struggle".

In post-revolutionary Russia the material basis necessary for such discipline scarcely existed. It was frequently necessary to use instead the pre-socialist disciplines of compulsion and of money. But on the whole in the early years of the revolution virtues were not made of these necessities.

While it remained under the guidance of Lenin and Trotsky, the Bolshevik Party consistently held up the socialist and internationalist objectives in contrast to the necessities of survival.

This attitude is shown up in what has become probably Lenin's most famous remark on economic questions. Writing in *Pravda* on the fourth anniversary of the revolution he said that:

"When we are victorious on a world scale I think we shall use gold for the purpose of building public lavatories in the streets of some of the largest cities in the world.... Meanwhile, we must save the gold in the Soviet Union, sell it at the highest price, buy goods with it at the lowest price. When you live among wolves, you must howl like a wolf".



Stalin

The introduction of the NEP was the last major change in Soviet economic policy in which the distinction was made between internationalist objectives and immediate necessities.

By the time of the next major change in 1929, Stalin had explicitly abandoned the conception that Russia's problems could only be solved through the international revolution.

He had begun the systematic sabotage of that revolution. He had devalued 'socialism' to mean the brutal policies with which he tried to solve problems that his own policy of 'socialism in one country' had created.

MANDEL REWRITES TROTSKY

The very opening words and the focal point of Trotsky's Transitional Programme - the declaration that "the world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterised by a historical crisis in the leadership of the proletariat" - has been rewritten by Ernest Mandel, leader of the so-called "United Secretariat of the Fourth International".

In an article in the June 10th edition of *Inprecor* (fortnightly journal of the USFI), Mandel puts forward what he terms the "Fourth International's analysis of the important changes that have occurred in the world situation during the past eight years".

IDEALIST

But his method soon makes itself plain. Mandel approaches the world workers movement not as a Marxist analysing a material process of movement, but as a crass idealist, attempting from outside to judge the level of "class consciousness".



Mandel

In this Mandel echoes the approach of the IMG's Tariq Ali who in his book *The Coming British Revolution* made the notorious statement that "consciousness determines history".

Ali of course (just like Mandel today) omitted to tell baffled readers the material origins of such "consciousness".

The reason for this omission is simple. For the Pabloites of the USFI the fight for revolutionary leadership is reduced to generalised propaganda aimed at counterposing their "correct" ideas to the "incorrect" ideas of the mass of the working class, while at the same time they cast around for a ready-made group - a "mass vanguard" - of people with a high level of "class consciousness" who are supposedly more open to revolutionary ideas.

CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

Mandel's article informs us that "a rising level of class consciousness on the part of the entire class" is a necessity for building soviet power, soviet democracy and for the construction of socialism.

But the article's approach is one of contemplation of events not one of leadership. When Mandel talks of a "rise" in consciousness, he is talking of a spontaneous rise and not one produced by the intervention of revolutionary leadership.

To lend a bogus prestige to this position Mandel feels obliged to usurp the authority of the Transitional Programme, paraphrasing Trotsky while inserting his own personal position - and putting the whole jumble into quotation marks to make it

sound plausible:

"The crisis of humanity is the crisis of revolutionary leadership (and of class consciousness) of the proletariat." [emph. added]

The words in brackets have been added by Mandel. Trotsky never referred to class consciousness in this way, for very clear reasons.

Trotsky, like Lenin, saw the political backwardness of certain sections of workers as the product of their corrupt and reactionary reformist union and labour leadership which made deals with the employers and the state.

Lenin and Trotsky never ceased to pin the blame for nationalism and chauvinism in the workers movement on the bureaucratic "labour lieutenants of capitalism" who were then as now the main prop of imperialism - the capitalist's means of controlling the working class.

There was never any doubt that given a revolutionary leadership built in struggle on a firm base of support in the workers movement putting forward a programme of principled demands in line with the method of the Transitional Programme, that the struggles led

the consciousness of the working class.

Yet to Trotsky this was crucial. In several discussions on the Transitional Programme with leading members of the American Socialist Workers Party in 1938 he stressed the importance of the demands in heightening the militancy and mobilising even the comparatively politically backward American working class:

"These demands are transitory because they lead from the capitalist society to the proletarian revolution, a consequence insofar as they become the demands of the masses as the proletarian government. We can't stop only with the day to day demands of the proletariat. We must give to the most backward workers some concrete slogan that corresponds to their needs and that leads dialectically to the conquest of power". (*The Transitional Programme for Socialist Revolution* p119.)

"The programme must express the objective tasks of the working class rather than the backwardness of the workers. It must reflect society as it is and not the backwardness of the working class. It is an instrument to overcome and vanquish the backwardness". (p 125, emphasis added).

NOT FIXED

The level of consciousness of the working class at any particular point is thus never seen by Trotsky as something fixed - but as something which continually changes and must be changed by the material intervention of Marxists.

Mandel however simply speculates on the growth of class consciousness in the working class - asserting that there is a:

"...growing [spontaneous] understanding by broad vanguard layers of the proletariat of the fundamental bankruptcy of "classical" Social Democracy and Stalinism".

He is tactfully vague as to where these "broad vanguard layers" are to be found - and what should be done to mobilise the masses through such a vanguard.

He goes on to tell the reader that the whole problem of revolutionary strategy revolves around how to generalise and centralise:

"...soviet-type bodies of self-organisation of the toiling masses".

Hold on Mandel! First we have to discuss how we fight to mobilise the working class to the point of building soviets as such!

If there were some clear method of action laid down to get this far, then we could get interested in what to do with the new-formed soviets.

But the central problem for Marxists in Europe and on a world scale today is not that there is lack of clarity on what to do in soviets - but that there are no soviets!

There are no soviets because the fight for revolutionary leadership is at a fairly elementary stage in the mass movement.

PRINCIPLED

It can only pass beyond that elementary stage by the principled intervention of Trotskyists in the daily struggles of the working class along the lines of the Transitional Programme.

Until Mandel is prepared to direct the forces of the USFI along such a path, his concluding talk of the demand for a "Socialist United States of the World" and a "world planned economy" remain pointless abstractions, fit only for the daydreams of woolly-headed idealists.

PRACTICE

And it fails to recognise that if workers are mobilised around transitional demands they can be brought in practice into conflict with their own reformist and Stalinist leaders learning the political lessons necessary before taking the road towards soviet power.

Indeed Mandel nowhere mentions the role of programme or any positive intervention by Marxists in the mass movement as a means of starting and developing

by Terry Clarke

GOLD AND IMPERIALISM

HISTORY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA. PART TWO: THE LABOUR MOVEMENT. By John Lea.

The nature of the Boer War was summed up by the liberal historian of imperialism, J.A. Hobson, who wrote in the middle of the war (1900):

"If this war can be successfully accomplished and a 'settlement' satisfactory to the mine owners can be reached, the first fruits of victory will be represented in a large cheap submissive supply of black and white labour attended by such other economies of 'costs' as will add millions per annum to the profits of the mines.

It is no extravagance to argue that the blood and the money of the people of Great Britain are being spent for this purpose; that at present no other definite tangible result of the conflict can be shown.

The men who, owning the South African Press and political organisations engineered the agitations which have issued in this war are the same men whose pockets will swell with this increase; open eyed and persistent they have pursued their course, plunging South Africa into temporary ruin in order that they may emerge victorious, a small confederacy of international mine owners and speculators holding the treasures of South Africa in the hollow of their hands".

Hobson was right. After the Boer war poor white Afrikaners, driven from the land by war devastation and inflation drifted to the towns to swell the ranks of the working class.

SOCIALISTS

The small band of revolutionary socialists in Cape Town - in the main, English immigrants bringing organisations like the Social Democratic Federation with them - thought that these poor whites would form the basis of a strong class movement of white and black unskilled workers.

The opposite happened. By the mid 1920's an alliance of the labour aristocracy of skilled mineworkers, Afrikaner poor whites and Afrikaner farmers had formed the basis of the regime which has tyrannised South Africa to this day. How did it happen?

The mineowners used the poor white and African labour in an attempt to undermine the conditions of the skilled miners.

The miners reacted with a campaign to strengthen the colour bar in the mines.

ARISTOCRACY

This was the policy that naturally occurs to the labour aristocracy - strengthening its position through restrictions on entry into the trade.

The miners still had however, to defend elementary trade union rights against the employers' onslaught. A massive strike in 1907 and a general strike in 1913 for trade union recognition resulted in Prime Minister Smuts sending British troops against the miners.

The defence of the colour bar and the defence of trade unionism had become intermingled. Despite this, many African mineworkers joined in 1913, in defence of the right to organise and were brutally dealt with by Smuts.

The Labour Party, founded in 1910 echoed the sentiments of the white miners. It won 4 seats in the 1911 elections on a programme of defence of the colour bar.

LAND ACT

Labour also supported the notorious Native Land Act of 1913 which restricted the mass of Africans to 8% of the land of South Africa!

Revolutionary socialists had entered the Labour Party on its foundation but the party's refusal to take seriously the organisation of African workers alienated the left.

The Labour Party capitulation to the war along with the British Labour Party was the last straw and



May 1900 - the South African republican flag is taken down in surrender

the socialists split to form the International Socialist League - (to become the Communist Party in 1921) and pledged to fight for a class based united movement of black and white workers.

In 1912 Tom Mann had visited South Africa and warned strongly that there could be no mass trade unionism in South Africa without the African workers.

STRIKE

The Rand strike of 1922 - one of the most famous events of South African labour history - spread like wildfire and was only defeated after the declaration of martial law and the bringing in of aircraft and artillery by Smuts.

The Miners Union saw itself fighting to "maintain a white standard of living" and produced the notorious slogan "Workers of the World Fight and Unite for a White South Africa".

This slogan cemented the relationship between the skilled miners and the Afrikaners.

The Afrikaners were in economic terms in an identical position to the unskilled African miners. Although there were various small instances of joint action on this basis (eg on unemployment committees in the 1930's) the dominant tendency was in the opposite direction.

URBANISED

The poor whites, rapidly urbanised from the rural society of the Boers which had been based on enslavement of Africans, resented 'sinking down' to the same employment situation as African workers and remained under the domination of their traditional racist ideas.

Before these had a chance to be whittled away through common experiences with the Africans, the Afrikaner farmers and petty bourgeoisie under whose political domination the poor whites remained, saw their chance.

The farmers, still smarting from the defeat of the Boer War, saw the chance to win over the English labour aristocracy to the cause of the Afrikaner 'Volk' and away from the Empire, hitherto so dear to the hearts of the Labour bureaucracy.

Accordingly the Afrikaner farmers mobilised the poor whites into militia to defend the strike and even had the 'Red Flag' translated into Dutch for the occasion!

The strike threw the infant

Communist Party into confusion. Blind to the fact that the vast majority of the miners, the Africans, had been shunned by the white unionists and of the fact that black workers were beginning to reveal a strong sense of trade unionism, the Communist Party was able to make no attempt at intervention, but resolved to find something progressive in a strike to defend the colour bar!

The Communist Party characterised the strike as "reactionary in form but progressive in content" and argued that as the strike proceeded, racism would of its own accord be replaced by class consciousness and the white strikers would turn to African workers for support. Meanwhile the Communist Party refused to take a stand against the "White South Africa" slogan.

The Communist Party ignored the role of the Afrikaner petty bourgeois leadership and its opportunism in allying with the prejudices of the English workers.

MULTI-RACIAL

Under other circumstances it might have been possible to win a section of the white workers to a multi-racial struggle against the mineowners.

As it was, the white working class set itself on a course of co-operation with the Afrikaner Nationalists which it has maintained to the present.

Trade union activity was in any case difficult in the mines for African workers.

The mineowners kept the African migrant workers locked in compounds closely guarded by company police - a system that exists to this day.

African trade unionism thus tended to develop outside the mines at first.

The first, and for a time highly successful, African trade union was the famous Industrial and Commercial Workers Union led by Klemens Kadalie, a black worker from Nyasaland (Zambia).

The ICU was constructed on the lines of the American IWW by whom Kadalie was much influenced.

SYNDICALISM

Syndicalism was thus a strong element in the ICU which after a successful African dockworkers strike in Cape Town in 1920 gained

in strength, opening up branches in Rhodesia.

The ICU tended to concentrate on industrial workers, as yet only a small percentage of the African oppressed classes, failing to tackle in any systematic way the land question and the peasantry.

CONGRESS

This left African political leadership in the hands of the African National Congress, founded in 1912 and by 1919 carrying out the first of a long series of campaigns against the notorious pass laws.

The pass laws besides being a method of direct state control over all the movements of the African, were a crucial barrier to trade union rights.

Although it was legal for African trade unions to exist, the pass laws exclude Africans from the definition of 'employee'. And only employees have the right to bargain over pay, and to strike!

Again the wrong policies of the Communist Party prevented it from playing a leading role in the struggle for African trade union rights.

Black workers remembered the

Communist Party's vacillation in supporting the 1922 colour bar strike.

In 1926 Kadalie expelled African Communist Party sympathisers from the ICU without much resistance and then moved sharply to the right, affiliating the ICU to the British TUC, following the advice of Walter Citrine to keep the ICU "out of politics".

Kadalie, in London in 1927 was treated disgustingly by Citrine who denied him attendance at the 1927 TUC conference as a guest lest the white unions and the South African Labour Party take offence! By 1930 the ICU was dead.

MISTAKE

The Communist Party also made the elemental mistake of equating African nationalism - the nationalism of the oppressed workers and peasants against a vicious colonialist regime, and Afrikaner nationalism - the reactionary nationalism of the rural white petty bourgeoisie, as the same thing!

Thus during the 1920's flying in



African gold miners

the face of Lenin's teachings, the CP isolated itself from any united front work with the ANC, and the latter remained under the leadership of the miniscule African middle class of lawyers and teachers.

The CP was obsessed with the idea that revolutionary initiative would come from the most reactionary section of the working class - the white labour aristocracy now hand in glove with the Afrikaner nationalists.

The Labour/Nationalist cooperation, begun in 1922 found its political expression in the 'pact-government' of 1924-29 in which Herzog, the Nationalist Prime Minister, took several Labour members into his cabinet, having ousted the government of Smut's pro-British, pro-capitalist South Africa Party.

The pact government laid the foundations of the present system of apartheid under the name of a "civilised labour policy".

This strengthened the industrial colour bar, reserving whole categories of jobs for whites only.

BETTER PAID

In this way, thousands of erstwhile poor white Afrikaners were 'raised up' to better paid jobs in the railways and the police.

The government also passed the Industrial Conciliation Act which made it virtually impossible for African trade unions to operate. The Nationalist Party proved such good defenders of the privileges of the labour aristocracy that the Labour Party went into sharp decline having outlived its purpose!

Similar processes were underway to the north, in Rhodesia. After a similar phase of trade union struggle between white workers and capitalists in the 1920's the Reform Party was returned to power in the colonial parliament under the premiership of Godfrey Huggins, a surgeon from Bexleyheath, and similar, in some cases identical, legislation was pushed through to defend the white bloc.

The Reform Party remained in power until 1962 when it was ousted by the even more reactionary Rhodesia Front party led by Ian Smith.

COALITIONS

These coalitions of farmers and labour aristocracies were to a certain extent opposed by the mineowners and international capital in general.

The entrenchment of the colour bar for example prevented the capitalist from employing the cheapest labour in all circumstances.

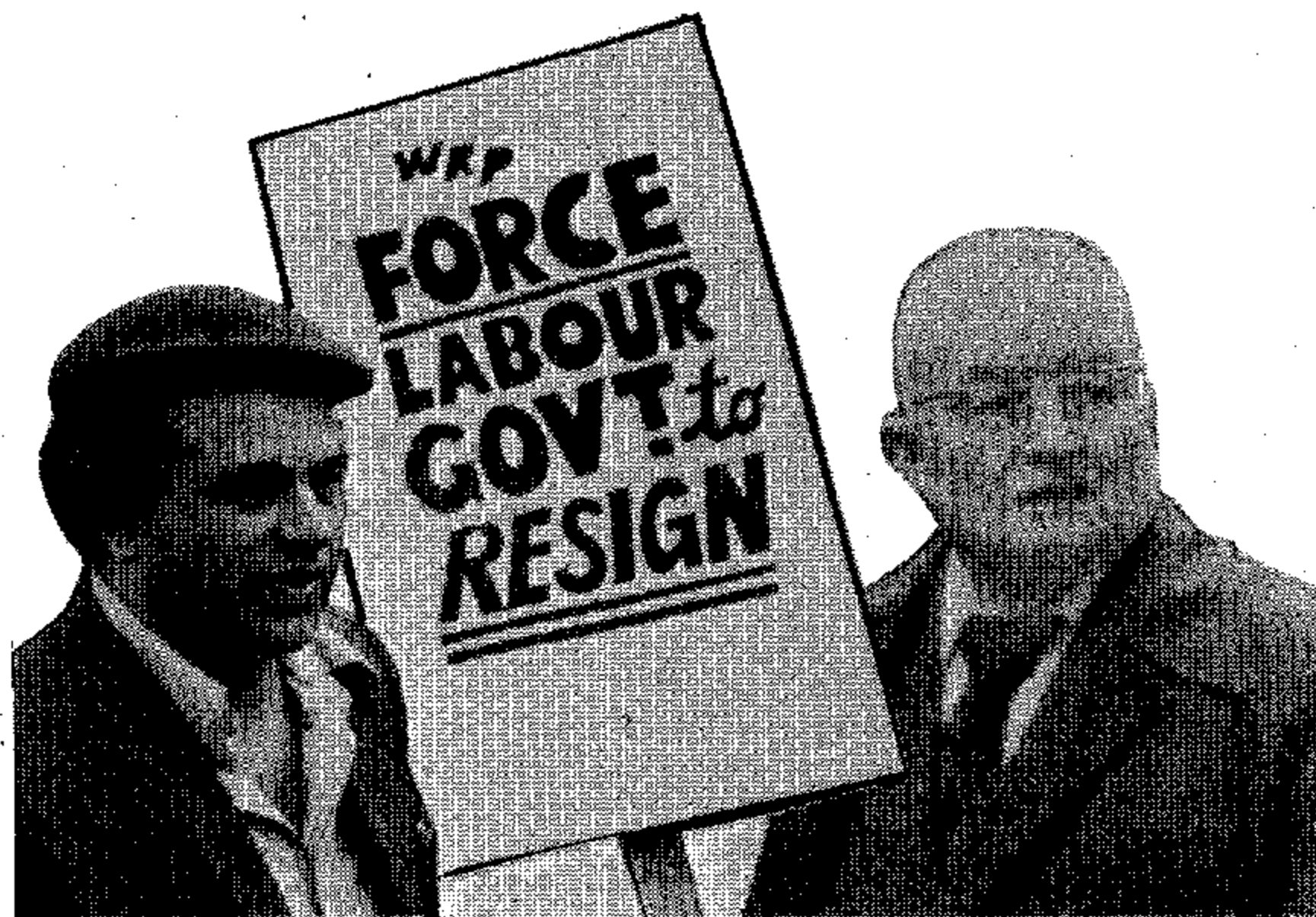
However, all qualms were forgotten for the time being since, as the mineowners soon realised, concessions to skilled whites and Afrikaners were amply repaid in profits by a solid stable white regime, armed to the teeth, and dedicated to the exploitation of the African workers and peasants.

The wages of African miners, in real terms, a South African government commission discovered in 1948, had remained unchanged since 1911!

ANATOMY OF SECTARIANISM

A Review of "Behind the Smokescreen", an analysis of the sectarian politics of the WRP

Folrose Books, 40p. By John Lister.



Healy and Banda

Sectarianism is one of the most misunderstood terms in left-wing politics. This booklet seeking to analyse the sectarian politics of the Workers Revolutionary Party, sets out to give some guidelines towards an understanding of what sectarianism is, where it derives from, and the degeneration it can lead to.

The most widespread misconception, fostered by revisionist groups such as the International Socialists and the International Marxist Group, is that somehow sectarianism is to do with not joining common blocs with other left groups on specific questions.

But when Trotsky wrote the section *Against Sectarianism* in the Transitional Programme, this was not even considered worthy of mention.

ISOLATION

What Trotsky wanted to attack was ultra-left isolation from the mass organisations of the working class - in particular the mass trade unions.

"At their base lies a refusal to struggle for partial and transitional demands, ie, for the elementary interests and needs of the working masses, as they are today. Preparing for the revolution means to the sectarians convincing themselves of the superiority of socialism."

They propose turning their backs on the "old" trade unions, ie, to tens of millions of organised workers - as if the masses could somehow live outside of the conditions of the actual class struggle! They remain indifferent to the inner struggle within reformist organisations - as if one could win the masses without intervening in their daily strife!

But the ultra-leftism of the sectarian is just one side of his political profile. The other is always the interlinked vice of opportunism. The Programme goes on:

"The political prostration of sectarianism serves to complement, shadowlike, the prostration of opportunism, revealing no revolutionary vistas. In practical politics, sectarians unite with opportunists, particularly with centrists, every time in the struggle against Marxism".

"MASS PARTY"

When the articles in this booklet attempt to probe beneath the airy rhetoric of the WRP's declared object of building "a mass revolutionary party", to the real practice concealed by their flurry of words we begin from this standpoint.

Sectarianism is destructive to the revolutionary movement because it first isolates the revolutionary cadre from the main bodies of the working class, then rationalises this isolation, and finally institutionalises the isolation, building it into the very structure and functioning of the party itself.

The WRP exemplifies all these positions to an extremely high degree, and the fight to penetrate to the roots of the Healy leader-

ship's method is closely linked to the fight against sectarianism in other movements and tendencies towards it within the WSL itself.

CLIQUE

Perhaps the clearest facet of sectarianism within the WRP is its institutionalised nature - taking the form within the party of a tight-knit leading clique surrounded by myths and illusions in the infallibility of the leadership.

The WRP's rigorous suppression of free discussion and criticism becomes necessary to uphold these ideas.

The first article in the booklet, *The WRP School of Falsification* takes this question head on - questioning the role of then WRP General Secretary, Gerry Healy in the major split in world Trotskyism of 1953.

The WRP had just published its four volumes of documents and letters on the history of the International, with an introduction by Cliff Slaughter which simply lied about the events and about the content of the documents in order to fabricate a leading role for Healy in 1953.

To support this they had also suppressed a key letter written by Healy only a few months before the split in 1953 which completely backed the revisionist views of the secretary of the International, Michel Pablo.

OBJECTIVE

In reprinting this suppressed letter, and exposing the obvious distortions based on the WRP's four volumes, the WSL launched the public fight for an objective reassessment both of the history of the WRP leadership itself and of the Trotskyist Fourth International as a whole.

None of the points made against Healy and the WRP leadership in this first article have ever been answered.

Aside from supposed historical infallibility, another central plank in the platform of authority erected by the Healy leadership was the abuse of the Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism.

It is used by them not as a theory of knowledge but as a sophisticated means of giving Healy the fake prestige of a "theoretician".

As soon as a political challenge to the sectarian positions of the WRP began within the movement therefore, (based around Alan Thornett and the forces later to be expelled and to found the Workers Socialist League), it was clear that such a political fight had to be argued through not simply in political terms, but in head-on conflict with Healy's "philosophy".

ROLE

Two articles in this booklet therefore tackle this aspect of the fight against the WRP leadership. Their importance is that they do not as do sceptics and revisionists deny the crucial role of dialectical materialism as the necessary theory of knowledge of a revolutionary party.

Rather the articles set out to show how Healy's method turns the formal verbal trappings of Marxism into idealist phrasemongering.

As Trotsky points out:

".....though he swear by Marxism in every sentence, the sectarian is the direct negation of dialectical materialism which takes experience as its point of departure and always returns to it."

BANDA

An example of the WRP's revisionism is quoted in the second article dealing with philosophical questions - *Marxism on the Rack*. It quotes a passage by Mike Banda (now the new WRP General Secretary) who had written defending Healy's "philosophy":

"Dialectical thought concepts are now entering matter through us via the self impulse of the universal movement of matter. As this takes place we arrive at the moment of actuality which is causality. Lenin explains that 'The unfolding of the sum total of the moments of Actuality NB equals the moments of dialectical cognition (Lenin CW Vol 38 p158)."

At this dialectical moment of causality, the cause (essence) cancels itself into the effect (abstract thought already posited in us as a part of a previous dialectical process). Likewise the effect cancels itself into the cause. This is the only way to grasp the dialectical relationship between man and nature". (emphasis added).

NO REPLY

The article (first published in May 1975) challenged Banda or Healy to explain in intelligible language what this passage meant. There has of course been no reply.

Marxism on the Rack goes on to show the link between these revisions of Marxist philosophy by the Healy leadership and the WRP's sectarian abstention from the fight for transitional demands in the organised working class.

It stresses the importance in Trotsky's Transitional Programme of the concept of the "bridge" between the daily trade union struggles of the working class and the social revolution - a "bridge" constructed out of the fight for transitional demands to politically mobilise the working class.

The WRP's abandonment of this method and approach and their rationalisation of their isolation from the working class is taken up again in two later articles *Behind the Smokescreen* - challenging the WRP's "Make Labour Resign", slogan - and *Lessons of Our History* which attempts a serious balance sheet of the record of the old Socialist Labour League (forerunner of the WRP).

DEGENERATION

This is valuable in showing the real process of degeneration which has taken place in the movement to reach today's sectarian positions.

The opportunist side of this sectarian degeneration is taken up sharply in the article *Vietnam: WRP on the Road Back to Pabloism*.

This shows how a four part series of articles on Vietnam in the WRP's *Workers Press* systematically

distorted the history of struggle of the murdered Vietnamese Trotskyists in order to uncritically praise the Hanoi Stalinist leadership following the overthrow of the US puppet regime in May 1975.

We now know that this revisionist position adopted by the WRP (never altered) was only the beginning of a move towards an uncritical political support for the PLO including Yassir Arafat, along with other Arab nationalist leaders like Gaddafi of Libya - as expressed in the new and thoroughly opportunist paper *The News Line*.

WRP on the Road Back to Pabloism brings out clearly the connection between distorting the history of the Trotskyist movement (and the 1953 split in particular) and turning one's back today on the most elementary principles of Trotskyism.

"The present leadership of the WRP correctly opposed Pablo (after having supported his bureaucratic expulsions of those who disagreed with him) in 1953. But they never fought on the basis of a political opposition to him. Now, disoriented by the world-wide offensive of the working class, they jump, as did Pablo, from impression to impression". (p 25).



News Line journalist Jack Gale - defender of their line on the Labour government

This article, written nine months ago, preserves all its importance today, linking completely with *News Line - The Rot Goes On* - an up-to-date assessment of the new WRP paper.

While the WRP's rhetoric becomes more and more hysterically ultra-left, its real politics drift further to the opportunist right.

And under the strict bureaucratic control of the central leadership no dissent, challenge or change is permitted.

This booklet, then, in charting the process of the WRP's degeneration, compiles the most ruthless and thoroughgoing critique of sectarianism, its methods and its effects.

It does so from a standpoint impossible for other groupings calling themselves Trotskyist - from the Workers Socialist League's continuous record of struggle in the workers' movement for the demands and principles of Trotsky's Transitional Programme, and struggle for an objective grasp of the history and problems of the Fourth International.

For this reason every reader who has not followed these articles in *Socialist Press* or who wants to return to them in a convenient collected form would gain by a study of *Behind the Smokescreen*.

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INDUSTRIAL NEWS



CUTS PLANS HIDDEN BY TUC

The TUC leaders knew well before the Special Congress acceptance of the 4½% pay deal that huge public spending cuts are to follow.

And one of Callaghan's first jobs as Prime Minister was to commission a list of proposed cuts to be implemented as soon as the pay deal was forced through.

These facts emerged from week-end speculation in the Tory press as to when and how much the cuts will be.

There is no question, however, that there will be huge cuts or that they will focus on the already hard hit social services.

This is in line with persistent demands from the international bankers over recent weeks.

PRESSURE

This week it was the United States administration and the EC putting on the pressure as they underlined that further support for the pound would be conditional on reduced government expenditure.

At home, more cuts are already under way as Shore, the Environment Secretary, takes steps to

impose a cutback of £400 million this year from the present level of expenditure by local authorities.

There have been so many cuts and plans for cuts by this Labour government that it is hard to keep track of the guillotine strokes.

RESTORED

When Labour were swept into office on the wave of working class militancy in 1974 they almost immediately restored the cuts imposed by the Tories in 1973.

By November 1974, though, Healey was announcing cuts in planned spending for the next four years.

These were spelled out in detail in January 1975. In April of that year further cuts were announced.

Early this year the White Paper announced even more drastic cuts. The plans for 1978-9 were for a cutback on current expenditure on Health of 3%, Housing 8%, Education 9%, and Transport 21%; this from the already twice pruned plans.

Investment in the social services was to be decimated. School building, for example, was to fall by

the late 1970's to only one third of the level of the early years of the decade.

Now Shore's measures mean further cutbacks and the pressure grows daily for cuts in next year's plans of around £2,000 million!

This is approaching 10% of total public expenditure. Since the government have no intention of cutting back expenditure on defence, the police and so on and many other areas, like pensions, would be very difficult to cut, this implies a massive axing of the social services.

"ALTERNATIVE"

Workers must be prepared to fight both these cuts and the nationalist 'alternative' of import controls, which the Labour 'lefts' are certain to push.

A fight to defend the social services must be waged around the demands for an immediate cash injection to replace all provisions already cut and a sliding scale of social service expenditure to prevent inflation reducing provisions in the future.



The TUC Special Congress, June 16th. (Above: Fisher (NUPE), Jackson (UPW) and Drain (NALGO)).

'LEFTS' GESTURE EXPOSES TUC

A timid move by Labour 'lefts' on the Party's National Executive has exposed still further the TUC leaders' active support of public spending cuts.

The 'lefts' succeeded by 11 votes to 8 in inserting a number of amendments to the new social contract - a document already accepted by the TUC leaders the day before.

These amendments included one to delete a sentence on spending cuts which states that "there will be no scope for any further overall increase [in public expenditure] in real terms" - though they offered no clear alternative perspective.

The sentence had been inserted at the specific request of Callaghan and Healey as their *carte blanche* for the coming further cuts in social service and other public spending.

But it had been endorsed by the TUC General Council by 20 votes to 3 - despite the devastating impact further cuts will have on jobs and living standards.

Small surprise the TUC were embarrassed when the 'lefts' feeble gesture of opposition to government policy highlighted this aspect of the social contract.

While postmen's leader, Tom Jackson, had given explicit support to spending cuts in his speech at the TUC Special Conference, Fisher of NUPE and Drain of NALGO have until now been forced to give an impression of muted opposition.

But as our lead article in the last *Socialist Press* stressed, the TUC

leaders were not just voting to accept the 4½% pay cutting deal when they lodged their 17-1 vote on June 16th.

If the highest priority is not defence of the working class but to "save the pound", as argued at the Special Conference, then acceptance of spending cuts is an automatic response by the union bureaucrats.

In this climate the puny protest of the Labour 'lefts' does nothing but preserve their shallow consciences - enabling them to say they "fought" the cuts.

What is necessary for these 'lefts' is to launch a campaign throughout the mass Labour and trade union movement to expose and defeat the right-wing leaders who are carrying out the Tory policy of cutting public spending.

Their continued refusal to do so means the right-wing simply treat their gestures with contempt. The *Financial Times* made this clear, commenting on last week's vote:

"...neither he [Callaghan] nor the trade union leaders who have worked together to agree on a statement of policy are likely to be amused by this latest piece of attitudinising".

Nor will workers whose jobs are at stake.

The need is clearly not for 'left' words and manoeuvres but to take forward the fight for a sliding scale of social service spending, for defence of all jobs in public sector industries, and for the opening of the books in these sectors to elected trade union committees as the first steps towards workers' control.

MOVE TO OCCUPY LONDON HOSPITAL

Workers at the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson (EGA) hospital in London have voted to occupy the hospital in response to threats to close it.

At a mass meeting called by UPE and ASTMS, the main unions in the hospital, a motion to occupy the hospital if the DHSS did not agree to a series of demands including the upgrading of the hospital on its present site, the removal of private beds, and full access to the hospital for trade unionists moving into the structural state of the hospital - the reason given for closure, was adopted nem con.

STEWARDS

The motion also called on the Health Authority Joint Stewards Committee to organise strike action in surrounding hospitals in support of the occupation.

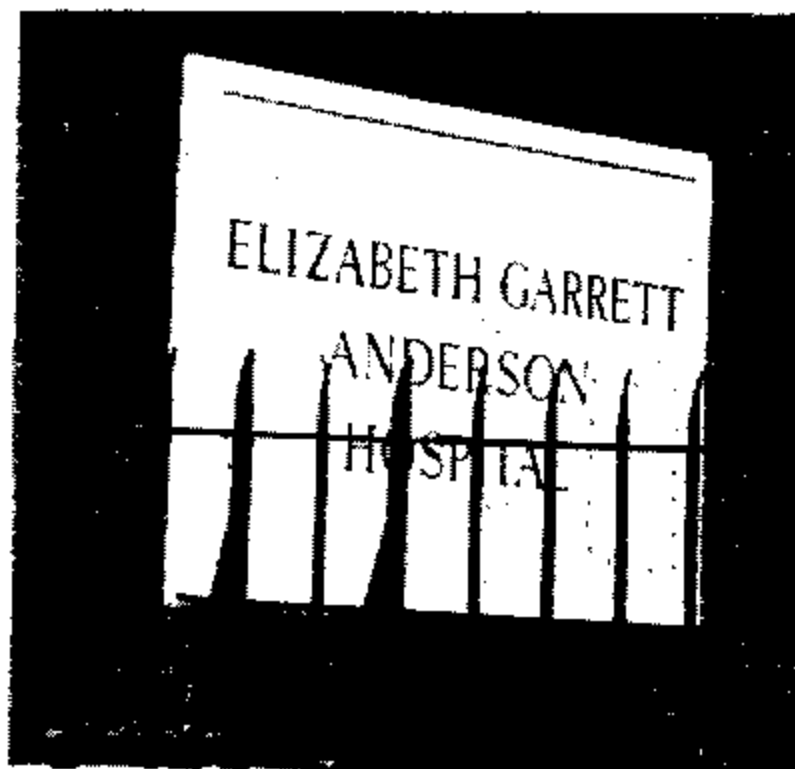
Already University College hospital COHSE, ASTMS at the Royal Free Hospital and the North London Health branch of the UPE have pledged support.

Although the hospital has been scheduled for closure for some time - along with another 130 local hospitals in London - the present crisis has occurred because management say that the lift in the main building is dangerously unsound.

The unions have responded to the demand by workers' inquiry into the lift, and the local UPE branch has approached the DHSS.

assessing the alleged damage.

Two weeks ago management closed the hospital's maternity annexe, ostensibly because a doctor was leaving and no replacement could be found, although the trade unions have since discovered that the doctor who left had offered to stay on so that the annexe could stay open. Management refused.



With medical staff at the main hospital reduced to nine, and with holidays and study leave granted to most of these for the next few months, staff fear that the main hospital will be closed using the same excuse.

The tactics adopted by management raise the question of the opening of the books of the Area Health Authority, to reveal the manoeuvres of management, to give prior warning of closures, and to reveal the need of the local and national population for this special

This demand, together with that for a workers' enquiry into the lift can be used to mobilise support for the defence of the EGA from all sections of the working class.

It is around policies such as these that the strength of the EGA campaign lies. Its weakness lies in the domination of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee by Stalinist and Labour Party self-styled "lefts".

These people have already postponed any action in defence of the EGA even though a full stewards' committee had voted in favour of strike action to support the EGA occupation.

Instead, they proposed a delegation to David Ennals, the minister responsible for implementing the NHS cuts, together with a one hour picket of the EGA!

Chairman of the committee, Councillor Jim Warner also announced that it was in any case impossible for the joint stewards to become involved at this time because he was going on holiday!

WSL members and their allies who challenged this abject retreat were accused of "splitting" the committee and wanting to destroy it, ignoring the fact that it was these comrades who had fought for the establishment of the committee in the first place.

Certainly, if the EGA is saved, it will be in spite of the activities of the dominant bloc on the stewards' committee, who see that a fight to save the EGA could become a rallying point for the working class.

COVENTRY BUS STRIKE

Coventry's buses were stationary last week following a walk-out by bus crews.

Due to unpaid breaks transport workers in Coventry are forced to work an average of 9 hours a day.

For some time they have been demanding a cut in the lunch break from 60 to 35 minutes.

The strike occurred after several workers including a steward were suspended for "too close interpretation of a work to rule".

In the background to this dispute lies the threat to bus services from public spending cuts in the West Midlands.

Subsidies are threatened by the cuts and the next period will see speed-ups, demands for flexible

A mass meeting of several hundred busmen was held on Friday 24th June and, despite lifting of the suspensions, voted to continue the strike until management arranged a meeting to discuss the shortening of hours.

OUT AGAIN

If after a week of discussions there was no improved offer they would be out again.

Within hours management had arranged a meeting for Monday afternoon and the buses were due to start Monday morning.

Coventry busmen must link up with other workers to fight all these developments.

UCATT BALLOT FRAUD

A combination of outright fraud and complete contempt for union democracy are the main weapons being used by the leaders of the building workers union, UCATT, to force through acceptance of the TUC's 4½% pay cutting deal.

And at the same time they have suggested that whatever the outcome of the ballot they will carry on with their present policy.

Despite a clear vote at the union's conference to reject the deal, General Secretary George Smith refused to accept the conference decision - claiming it was "unrepresentative".

He announced there would be a ballot of the membership on the issue. But the proposal on the ballot form not only avoids mentioning the 4½% deal, but is written to give the appearance of accepting a £6 increase!

Workers are being asked to endorse the proposition that: "The Building Industry increase of £6 in June 1976 be maintained, together with the relationships which this union has with other Trade Union Federations or groupings".

Only the most astute worker, coming to this for the first time, could work out that it is a vote for a 4½% pay limit!

And the right-wing's attempt to

force through the vote on the basis of confusion is backed up by the union's journal, which, with absolute scorn for the democratic conference decision, carries a front page story which only puts the right-wing case - and claims that the conference vote itself was a "mis-understanding"!

PRETEXT

The flimsy pretext for this argument is that the resolution passed at Conference endorsed the UCATT vote against the £6 limit at the TUC last year.

This, the right-wing attempt to make out, is a "direction" to "cancel the NJCBI agreement, which in line with the Social Contract, would give a £6 rise on June 28th". Quite obviously such an argument is ludicrous.

But they go on still further, suggesting that the correct call in the resolution for the UCATT Executive to "disregard any bodies setting a ceiling on wage increases":

"...would mean UCATT embarking on a head-on collision course culminating in dispute situations, without help or assistance from friends and associates, inevitably leading to failure, financial ruin and disorganisation".

This attempt to scare off any opposition to the 4½% is a million miles away from reality. Workers

know to their cost how little support is ever forthcoming from the "friends and associates" of Smith and his fellow full time union bureaucrats whenever a real struggle breaks out.

The support which is readily and unstintingly given is from rank and file members of the labour movement - who would without doubt rally in support of any section which gave a lead against the pay laws.

DEFEAT

To mobilise UCATT in such a fight however requires more than a rejection of the leadership's fraudulent ballot proposition. The present leadership must be defeated.

The right wing shows this when they conclude their Journal article by baldly stating that, although they abstained on the 4½% at the Special Conference of the TUC, because the ballot was pending,

"...we will abide by the policy in 'The Social Contract 1976-77', which it is universally agreed will be adopted by an overwhelming majority".

Regardless of the ballot, therefore, Smith and company will continue their reactionary course until stopped by the movement of the rank and file and the building of alternative leadership in UCATT.

NATFHE witch hunt launched

The National Executive Committee of NATFHE, the further education teachers union, wants the rank and file paper 'NATFHE Action' to change its name.

No attempt to stop members saying what they think, claim the NEC; just an attempt to end the serious and general "confusion" they say exists about whether *Natfhe Action* is an official union paper or not!

Lots of people ring up headquarters to ask, they say, and that is a nuisance.

Well, if that were all there was to it, you would think a tactful letter to the editors of *Natfhe Action* would be just the right treatment.

But no, the NEC has sent absolutely no communication to *Natfhe Action*.

RESOLUTION

Instead, it has tabled a resolution to the next National Council meeting demanding that "...any member who assists directly or indirectly in the production, sale, distribution or circulation of any publication or written material (other than official business) which includes the forbidden letters 'NATFHE' in its title or heading be 'dealt with' under the disciplinary rules.

And they couple this with a resolution outlawing the sale or distribution of any paper or literature anywhere on the premises in which any NATFHE conference or National Council is taking place (except when authorised by the President whose decision is final).

It is just a little hard to believe that all this is just to save hard-pressed officials a few annoying phone calls rather than to begin the systematic suppression of democratic rights inside the union.

Dictatorial

The leadership can only be in need of such dictatorial measures at this moment because, as in so many other unions, they want to stifle all pressure for a fight against the Labour government/TUC wage controls and spending cuts.

These proposals have already scandalously been given public support by several Communist Party members on the NEC or the National Council.

The Stalinists happily conspire with the right wing to introduce just the kind of attack on union democracy from which the Communist Party itself suffered in the past, when it was seen as a threat to the right-wing.



Oxford Trades Council banner on an anti-cuts march

TUC TIGHTENS NOOSE

A sharp tightening of the bureaucratic noose round the necks of Trades Councils is indicated by the TUC move to publicly attack Bradford Trades Council for daring to hold a meeting entitled 'Trade Union and Labour Party Democracy' addressed by Newham NE Labour Party Secretary, Tony Kelly - who has recently been unconstitutionally expelled from ASTMS.

Kelly is plainly well qualified by his experience to speak on the abuses of democracy by the right-wing and their fake-left hangers on in the labour and trade union movement.

COMPLAINT

This factor was not lost on Bradford's right-wing Labour MP, Ben Ford, who lodged a complaint with the TUC, suggesting that the Trades Council was exceeding its normal function - and that the activities of Trades Councils should be monitored.

The TUC bureaucracy obligingly swung into action. Mr K. Graham, secretary of the TUC's Organisation and Industrial Department, despatched a letter to the Trades Council which virtually threatened it with disaffiliation if they should attempt to hold another such meeting.

The letter stated: "As you know trades councils are industrial bodies which exist to provide services to affiliated trade union branches on a wide range of industrial, social and community issues. However, apart from cooperation with the local Labour Party, the model rules for a trades council do not give trades councils any direct political role, which in any case would be outside the objects for which trades councils are recognised by the TUC. If a union branch wishes to raise and pursue political issues it can do

views on political subjects to its own national executive.

The public meeting organised by your trades council deals with a matter which is internal to the Labour Party and is therefore something which does not concern you or any other trades council. Trades councils will not be permitted to be used for local or national political purposes or to provide a platform for groups or individuals to discuss internal Labour Party matters. The TUC takes a very serious view of the activities of your council in this matter and its breach of the model rules.

In these circumstances I must ask for an assurance from your council that in the future it will adhere strictly to the model rules and will not involve itself in any political activities. If no such assurance is received from your council this matter will be referred to the TCJCC, which is responsible for the recognition of all trades councils.

So while the TUC leaders discuss nothing but politics, and collaborate day in and day out with the right wing anti-working class policies of the Callaghan government, Trades Councils are forbidden to discuss these questions. Their's not to reason why - their's but to accept massive wage cuts in dutiful silence!

And the new model Rule 14 attempts to prevent any actions opposed to TUC Conference policy.

HEAD ON

The Bradford letter shows that if Trades Councils are to be any more than the shoe-shine boys of the bureaucracy, they must fight head on such bureaucratic dictatorship.

If fighting these actions means risking disaffiliation - as with Oxford Trades Council - then still the fight must go ahead. There is nothing to be gained by capitulation to the bureaucrats.

Instead there must be a turn by threatened Trades Councils back into the union branches and the rank and file to build a firm base of political support on which to carry through the struggle for trade union democracy.

* Meanwhile in Aylesbury Trades



Tarmac strikers lobby TUC Special Conference

TARMAC STRIKE

Fighting for official backing from UCATT delegates to the TUC Special Conference was a group of workers from the Tarmac Brixton Road development who have been out for over ten weeks in a victimisation dispute.

On 5th April, workers had taken strike action against the sacking of seven workers made "redundant". Among the seven was the site convenor, and the move was clearly a preparation to attack conditions on the site.

After two weeks on strike, the employers moved to sack the whole workforce, turning the strike into a lock-out. Despite official backing from the T&GWU Building Group

Committee, Tarmac have refused to even discuss the dispute.

This struggle is clearly a part of the current offensive of all employers against jobs and conditions - seizing on the weakness of leadership from the union bureaucracy, their refusal to spread and follow through local disputes, and their daily efforts to suppress resistance to speed-up and sackings.

Full official support must be extended by the UCATT leaders to this battle, and the two main unions must be forced to mobilise action in defence of the Tarmac workers.

adoption of the "gag" Rule 14, which was proposed by the Stalinist President, who warned of "possible disaffiliation" if the rule were rejected.

Yet while in this way opposing democratic rights for workers within Trades Councils, the supporters of the rule were quite prepared to tolerate the local Tory chairman of the County Council being invited as the main speaker to a Trades Council public meeting against the cuts.

This gives the employers a direct voice on a labour movement platform - while the National Coordinating Committee Against the Cuts, for instance, with socialist policies opposed to the TUC

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MINERS Cont'd from front page

Daly speaking at TUC - supporting the 4 1/2% plan

lead a fight against it (though he had throughout the ballot offered no lead, and stressed that the NUM "should not fight alone").

Also at the Scottish NUM conference came a sharp attack on Gormley and Daly from one delegate who pointed out that while they claimed £100 a week was unattainable for face-workers they themselves were paid more than £150 per week!

This shows that these questions are being discussed within the working class, and that if the full facts had been revealed to the miners, the 4 1/2% deal could have been thrown out.

salaries.

The tax, insurance and repair bills on these cars are also paid by the union, on top of 6p per mile travel expenses! And at the end of his period of office an official can keep the car.

Gormley, of course, along with other officials enjoy further "perks". When the *Daily Mail* sought a comment from him and Daly after the TUC Special Conference they were both already at a miners' conference in the south of France!

What is true of the NUM bureaucracy is also true of the bureaucracy of the other unions. Minimum rates for union officials are often several times the maximum wage of the workers they represent.

BENEFITS

And free cars, meals and all kinds of other benefits are liberally provided. All this to officials who more often than not are completely out of the control of the rank and file, and who now see their principle job as one of assisting management to enforce speed-up and redundancies without confrontation.

Action must be taken to bring this state of affairs to an end. Gormley and Daly and those who support them must be removed from their positions in the NUM and the vote retaken on the 4 1/2% deal.

SLIDING SCALE

The fight must be stepped up for the £100 a week demand, linked to a sliding scale of wages to defend the increase against further inflation.

Officials must be brought to heel by the membership. In the NUM and all unions there must be a policy of regular election of officials.

And there must be moves launched to limit the salaries of officials to the average level of earnings of the members they represent. Only in this way can the careerists be driven out and a principled leadership be built within the unions.

LETTERS

We welcome letters from readers. Letters for publication should be kept as brief as possible and sent to:

Socialist Press, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

MORE DETAILS

I would like more information about the Workers Socialist League.

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WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE

PUBLIC MEETINGS

London

Italy: Class Struggle or Coalition?

Friday 9th July at 7.30pm
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square
London WC1

Coventry

Our Policy to Fight the Labour Government's Cuts

Wednesday 7th July at 7.30pm
Hertford Tavern, Junction St.

Birmingham

Revolutionary Work in the Trade Unions

Monday 5th July at 7.30pm
The Wellington
Bristol St.

CALLAGHAN DEFENDS HIRED BUTCHERS

The disgraceful move by Labour Prime Minister Callaghan to call for the Angolan government to show "clemency" to the thugs now proved guilty of carrying out paid murders as imperialist mercenaries must be condemned by every socialist.

Callaghan speaks not for the workers' movement, but only for the extreme right wing within the Cabinet, who see their allegiance as to capitalism and its most

reactionary defenders, not in any way to the working class.

Callaghan of course has a notorious record as an ally of every kind of barbaric and blood-stained regime.

COLLABORATION

In the last year he has been involved in collaboration and political support for the Shah of Iran, the Spanish fascist dictatorship, and the Geisel dictatorship in Brazil, among many other tacit arrangements.

The attempts by Callaghan and the Tory press to whip up tears of sympathy for the group of fascists and lumpen reactionaries who (with considerable cooperation and complicity on the part of the government itself) were recruited to the motley army of South African racists, CIA killers, and pro-American nationalists which attempted to prevent the overthrow of direct imperialist domination by MPLA forces.

NO SYMPATHY

None of those accused deserves the slightest sympathy or leniency. The four executions and the other long jail sentences are correct - if anything, too generous - and are necessary to stand as a clear warning that such reactionaries will not go unpunished after the victory of the working class.

Nor must the betrayals of Callaghan and the Labour traitors be forgotten. They must be driven from the Labour movement, where they simply sully and spit on every principle of socialism and internationalism.

Workers in union branches and Labour Party meetings should pass resolutions disowning Callaghan's action, demanding his resignation as Labour Party leader and his replacement by a leader prepared to defend the working class.

Anti Gandhi Demonstration

About 750 mainly immigrant workers attended a rally and demonstration in London last Sunday against the dictatorship in India.

The three main groups in this country which claim to be organising on a progressive basis against the Gandhi dictatorship came together for the rally.

Of these, the Committee for Civil Liberties in India - a body of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) which is seeking an alliance with some supposedly progressive elements of the bourgeoisie - had agreed under pressure not to open the platform to speakers from the so-called Friends of India, the Maoists of the CPML of course refused to recognise any such question of principle and threw most of their weight behind the rally held by this right-wing religious revivalist group the day before.

Although it was agreed beforehand that there would only be labour movement speakers, the CPM brought a speaker from the Aikali Dal, a Sikh separatist party onto the platform.

When the speaker from the Oxford Action Group protested about this, he was told that the Campaign for the Release of Indian Political Prisoners (CRIPP) had agreed and that to prove this Tariq Ali was lining up to be one of the speakers and he was wearing a CRIPP headband. It turned out later that CRIPP had not agreed to Ali speaking.

Virtually all the speakers spoke about "Soviet imperialism" and the "fascist" state in existence in India. These terms can only sow

confusion in the opposition movement. Only the speaker from the Oxford Action Group Against Dictatorship in India gave a class position of opposition to any landlord parties and that the opposition to the Gandhi dictatorship has to be on a socialist basis.

END AID

On the demonstration after the rally the Oxford Action Group slogans were "Indira Out! Sanjay Out! Workers and Peasants In! British and Imperialist Aid Out! Nationalisation of Factories and Land In! and Fight for the Right to Organise, Fight for the Right to Strike!"

These were the only effective slogans as the CRIPP contingent (which comprised IMG, IS Asian Socialist Forum and others) didn't appear to have any slogans at all.

Trawler Sackings

Further details are emerging on the loss of jobs resulting from the Labour government's imperialist adventure in confronting Iceland over the 200 mile fishing limit.

The latest information reveals a planned loss of jobs far in excess of previous estimates.

Half of the national deep sea trawler fleet is to be cut, throwing up 1,500 dead going jobs - and many times more this number will go in the processing and distribution industries.

Worst hit is to be Fleetwood, where fishing is almost the only industry in the town.

There Borton Deep Sea Fisheries are to reduce their 28 strong trawler fleet to six.

The fight to defend jobs against these attacks is crucial. It must begin by demanding the books of the major employers be opened to elected union committees - to prove the case for nationalisation and planned development of the industry.

POLAND Continued from front page

capitalist economy, they turn first to attack the working class and drive down wages.

The events of the last few days will not end with Gierek's tactical retreat. The crisis remains unresolved - and cannot be resolved by the bureaucracy.

It goes too alongside similar economic crises in other E. European states - in particular Hungary.

And the upheavals, while questioning the rule of the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy in Poland also throws right into question the stability of the Kremlin bureaucracy itself.

The Polish working class can break down the Stalinist distortions of the economy - ending shortages, queues, black markets and bureaucratic privilege.

But to do this they will have to sweep aside the rotten caste of functionaries and parasites who control the state party.

Only the political revolution against Stalinism will achieve this. In this the key political role must be played by Trotskyists in preparing conscious revolutionary leadership.

The working class of Europe - East and West - face common political tasks.

The struggle in the capitalist states against the employers, the Stalinists and reformists is inseparable from the struggle for workers' democracy and control in the Stalinist-ruled states.

Only with democratically elected workers' councils, with an end to all forms of bureaucratic privilege, an end to rule by secret police and army, and the opening up of political activity to all tendencies of the workers movement, will the Polish working class set itself once more - together with the workers of the rest of Europe - on the road to socialism.

FUND

We have received the following further amounts towards the £600 Monthly Development Fund for June.

Oxford Assembly, £13; Winsford, £1; NHS, £20; North London, £10; Coventry, £13; South London, £30; Oxford PSF, £13.65; Aylesbury, £1.90; Oxford General, £19; East London, £19.25; Leamington, £4.20; Birmingham, £15; Leeds, £6.50; Hull, £7.50; Liverpool, £8.50; Banbury, £2.03; South Yorks, £17; Collections, £16.34; Oxford bookshop, £25; JW, £30.

Total so far: £490.21
This has left us with three days to raise the last £110. The full total for the June fund will be published in the next issue of *Socialist Press*.