

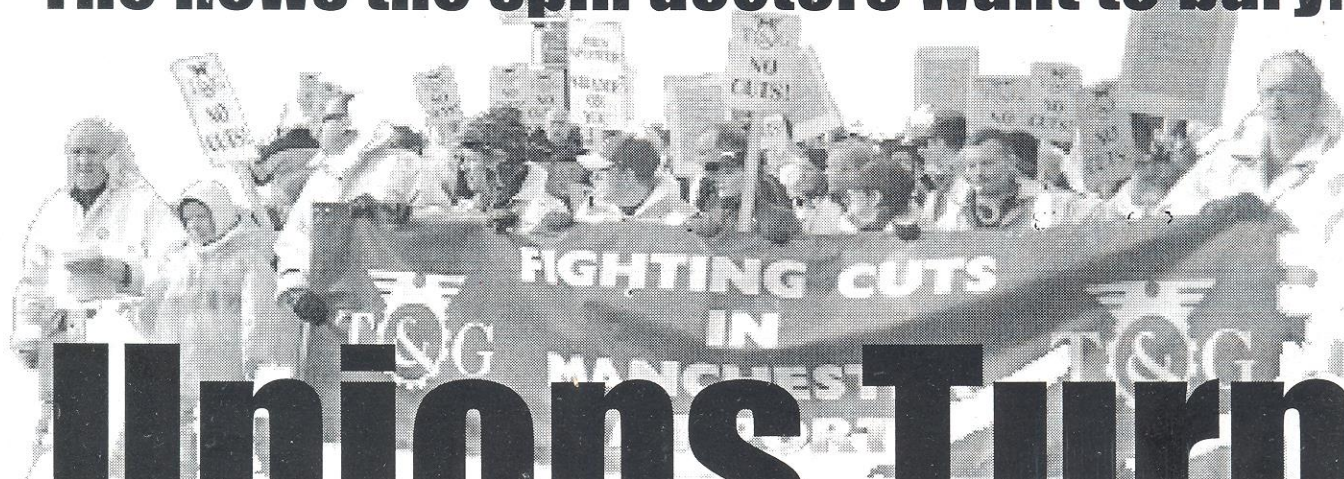
10th anniversary issue

# Socialist Appeal

The Marxist voice of the labour movement

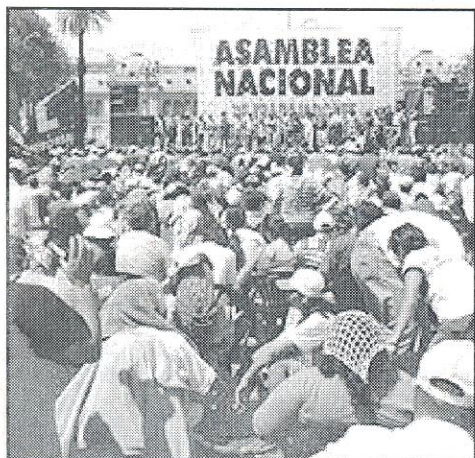
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The news the spin doctors want to bury:



## Unions Turn and Fight!

Left gains in union elections, strikes spread



in this issue

march 2002

□ **Argentina:** National Workers Assembly □ **Ireland special:** Workers unity can defeat sectarianism, review of Bloody Sunday □ **Enrongate** □ Is the world recession over? □ **Wales** □ RMT, CWU and much more

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# Contents

## editorial

Wreckers, Liars  
 and Stephen Byers .....3

## news

### Ireland

Workers unity alone  
 can defeat sectarianism...10

T&G election victory-  
 Dawn Stuart thanks  
*Socialist Appeal*.....1

Bloody Sunday.....24

### economy

Is the world  
 recession over?.....14

### 75 years of Trotskyism



The origins of  
 British Trotskyism.....16

### feature

Enrongate.....20

### women

Understanding a  
 sister's struggle.....23

### international

**Argentina:**  
 National Workers'  
 Assembly meeting -  
 a big step forward  
 (page 24)



Book review.....29

Postal crisis:  
 Workers respond.....4

BA butchers cut  
 quarter of staff.....4

Wales .....page 5

□ Wales TUC rallies  
 to support Friction  
 Dynamex workers

□ Welsh students grants

Car bosses  
 wield the axe.....6

RMT: Left victory.....6

NUJ Conference:  
 "Seeing Red".....7

Steel: Strike action  
 needed.....8

BP: Cost cutting fuels  
 more job losses.....8

Education: Keep  
 religion out of schools.....9

**Socialist Appeal Tenth  
 Anniversary Special**  
 £ 5,000 Appeal  
 (page 30)

**New book:**  
**History of British  
 Trotskyism**



order your copy now!  
 (page 19)

**Back Cover:**  
 Bradford strike  
 shows the way

# Wreckers, Liars and Stephen Byers

While our news broadcasts are dominated by the shenanigans of ministers and their spin doctors, Byers, Moore et al, the view of Britain from abroad tells a different story, and it's not a story Blair and co at the top of the Labour Party, or for that matter Monks and the leadership of the TUC, are very happy with. From New York to Melbourne the press are reporting the growing militancy of British trade unions.

"A resurgent labour movement is confronting the government of Tony Blair with the biggest threat of widespread industrial action in the two decades since Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher broke trade union power over the British economy", reports the *New York Times*.

"Railroad employees, mail deliverers, police officers, teachers, hospital workers and civil service unions are all threatening walkouts in the coming months, egged on by a new generation of radical leaders and playing to Britons' discontent with the state of their public services."

In fact there has been a marked upturn in the number of ballots taking place for industrial action and the number of actual strikes taking place over the last twelve months.

Such figures and statistics do not tell the whole story. Sometimes a simple anecdote can express more accurately the mood which exists among workers. The statistics for strikes in the police force are zero, yet the mounting mood of militancy and calls for industrial action within Britain's police are an extremely important barometer of the mood developing in society. In a recent ballot, Blunkett's proposed restructuring of pay and conditions was rejected by a majority of ten to one. The Police Federation have said they are considering going to the European Court to overturn the ban on police strikes introduced after the last such action in 1919.

Statistics lag behind events. If one were to base oneself on bald statistics alone then one would draw entirely pessimistic conclusions about the movement on the basis of the historically low levels of strike activity in recent years. Such an empirical approach, looking at the here and now only, seeing only the surface of events goes a long way to explaining the pessimism and defeatism which has devastated the left reformists in recent years. The superiority of Marxism however is its ability to see beneath that surface and understand the currents at work within society. There were important conclusions to be drawn from the

low level of strike activity. The role of the boom in the economy, the role of the trade union leaders, the role of past defeats and subsequent anti-trade union legislation. However none of this is permanent.

Changing conditions, the squeeze in work, whether in a factory, an office, a hospital or a school; the experience of and disappointment with the Labour government all conspire to change the outlook of workers. The current statistics for strike activity and for industrial action ballots shows a marked upturn. Seen in isolation these figures are still low compared to the past. We must not see them in isolation, but understand the trend and its connection to changing conditions. The growing mood of militancy which can be illustrated both through statistics and anecdotal evidence is closely linked to the shift to the left at the tops of some major trade unions. However this is not the simple relationship which one reads about in the red scare stories in the newspapers, where workers are presented as ignorant fools being led by their noses into unwise industrial action by dangerous agitators. In reality there is a dialectical relationship between increased militancy in the ranks, in defence of jobs and conditions which in turn is being reflected in the election of new left leaders. The willingness of some of these leaders to conduct a struggle has an effect on the rank and file and vice versa. Thus it is no accident that new left leaders have won elections in precisely those unions where the workers have been involved in serious struggles, the PCS, the CWU and the RMT. The election of left leaders in these unions reflects the growing militancy of the rank and file. This on a small scale provides the outline of a process which will take place throughout the trade union movement over a period. The prospect of the left candidate winning the General Secretary election in the AEEU is one that will be troubling Millbank and Congress House.

The growing militancy of the unions must be turned into united action in defence of jobs and services. The shift to the left in the unions reflects the mood of the rank and file. The unions have to take that fight into the Labour Party too. Tackle the real wreckers head on, with industrial action to prevent thousands of job losses in the Post Office, or any more privatisation, and with political action inside the Labour Party. Given the Tory policies being pursued by Blair, Byers and co, it is no wonder that some union activists sympathise with the idea of weakening union links with

Labour. That would be playing right into the hands of Blair and co. They want the links broken, they don't want the militancy developing in the unions to grow in the Labour Party too. Don't give them what they want on a plate. Reclaim Labour from the liars and wreckers. Imagine the impact a left force made up of ASLEF, RMT, CWU, PCS and perhaps even the AEEU can have inside the TUC, then imagine the impact they could have inside the Labour Party. Then stop imagining and do something about it.

Byers, the new evangelist of privatisation - more Blairite than Blair, more Thatcherite than Thatcher - is presiding over tubé privatisation. This is a disaster waiting to happen. We all know the catastrophic results of the privatisation of the railways, but they plough on regardless. The part privatisation of air-traffic control, the Railtrack of the skies, they confidently inform us doesn't raise any safety concerns. Yet a 400 hundred mile corridor across England and the North Sea had to be closed on the last weekend in February, because one worker was off sick. Fills you with confidence doesn't it?

It isn't really news that politicians and their assistants lie. Our opposition to Byers like our opposition to Blair is not because they are liars, but because of their policy, their 'wreckers' attack on unions, their plans for privatisation of public services, and above all their commitment to the capitalist market.

Ironically, the furore over the latest ministerial sleaze and spinning lies has served to bury the real news of growing militancy. But beneath the surface that militancy is burrowing away and spreading.

- ❑ Militant trade union action to defend jobs and services
- ❑ No to the wrecking of our public services through privatisation - Renationalise the privatised industries with no compensation for the fat cats.
- ❑ No to the bosses wrecking our jobs - Nationalise firms threatening redundancies and closure
- ❑ No to the Blairites wrecking of the Labour Party - Trade Unionists reclaim Labour!
- ❑ For a socialist plan of production based on taking the commanding heights of the economy into public ownership under democratic workers control and management. ◀

## Postal crisis: Workers respond

**P**ostal workers are now balloting 140,000 members over strike action, and such is the mood that one CWU spokesman said national industrial action is "almost inevitable". This will be the first national postal strike since 1996

The strike is ostensibly over a 5% pay demand which Consignia refuses to pay, offering only 2%, but this action also reflects wider issues which are now confronting postal workers. The ballot comes in the light of a £1.2bn cuts package which Consignia intend to implement this year, threats to sack up to 30,000 postal workers, and mooted privatisation of the 40,000 strong vehicle fleet.

In case you have not got used to the new name 'Consignia', and despite the fact that it cost a cool £1/4 million for a PR guru to dream it up, the company has decided to try and change it back to the traditional 'Post Office'. No amount of name changing however can dig them out of the mess the government and management have created. £1/4m is small potatoes for a company like Consignia which has managed to achieve the amazing feat of losing £1m a day.

The postal service made its first ever loss in 2001, profits have been steadily decreasing from £500m in 1998, although turnover has increased from £6.5bn to £8bn over that period. The government has been intentionally running Consignia into a deficit in the last period as a preparation for privatising it. Ironically by trying to run the post service as a private company management have shown us just how bad things will be if it does pass into private hands!

Postcomm, the post regulator, recently announced a rapid opening up of the market to private competition. This will allow private firms to 'cherry-pick' the most profitable sectors of the service leaving the loss making sectors in public hands. For loss making read, of course, the daily deliveries made to our homes. This move has provided the Consignia managers with new ammunition to hint at further attacks on workers conditions. The talk is now of steep rises in first and second class postal rates in line with the charges levied abroad where privatisation has already turned mail services into a sham. The proposed cancellation of Good Friday deliveries is just a proverbial tip of the iceberg. Daily deliveries are now clearly under threat - that is the price for privatisation which can only ever benefit the profiteers.

The trade union leaders must start a campaign against privatisation and for investment in public services. They must take a principled stand over job cuts.

☞ Only militant action will save the 30,000 jobs in the Post Office.

☞ Only workers democratic control of a publicly owned postal service can reverse the decline and inefficiency of the last few years. No to back door privatisation! ◀

by **Kris Lawrie**



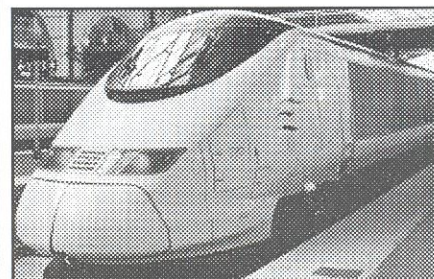
### BA Butchers cut Quarter of Staff

**B**ritish Airways have announced (14/2/02) plans for a further 5,800 redundancies over the next two years. This comes on top of the 7,000 already shed since September the 11th. BA has made it very clear that this new round of job cuts will have to be met through compulsory redundancies. The biggest areas for cuts are from the cabin crew, sales, and engineering - this will hit London hardest 10,000 jobs will be lost from Gatwick and Heathrow. In the space of six months they are sacking 13,000, that is a quarter of all staff!

Union reaction so far has been very weak; Bill Morris of the TGWU said that job cuts should be shared from top to bottom, "We expected mild surgery, what we got was butchery, we will not be rushing to the barricades, but we will be rushing to the negotiating table". Union leaders are taking a very pragmatic stance over the whole issue; by seeking to mitigate the impact of job cuts, rather than entirely opposing the measures, they aim to turn a catastrophe into a mere disaster! One union negotiator summed it up nicely: "We should allow the measures to bring BA back into profit, our members only benefit when BA is in profit"

Once again the workers will be made to pay for the bosses mismanagement, and bare the brunt of economic downturn. The position of the union leaders on this question is a sell out of the members interests.

The union leaders should negotiate, but they should do so from a position of strength. They should give a clear lead in calling an immediate ballot and threatening all out strike action unless their demands are met, this would persuade the bosses to think again. But such an approach can only achieve so much; in order to save jobs this will have to be backed up by militant action on the part of the workers. ◀



### Trade Union Unity Puts Struggle on the Rails.

**M**embers of the rail union the TSSA, which represents 170 ticket office staff working for Arriva Northern have indicated that they want to take part in the strike action, currently planned for March 1st and 2nd, in conjunction with the RMT workers at Arriva.

The TSSA general secretary Richard Rossner, has announced that although the TSSA is not a traditionally militant union (their last strike action was 25 years ago) "it seems Arriva only responds to muscle, so that is what we have resorted to". Members of the TSSA backed strike action 87% to 13%, the turnout was 60%. Ticket officers pay has not kept pace with the increases of train staff, they earn just half the salary of an Arriva driver. The company pay offer this year was only 3%, while drivers have been offered 18%.

400 RMT station retail staff are expected to vote heavily in favour of strike action in an up coming ballot, joining the 700 RMT conductors who already came out in favour. Recent strike action by the RMT at Arriva resulted in 1,600 services not running between the east and west coasts of England, and into the Midlands and the north east.

At a recent RMT strike rally in London, Vernon Hince and Bob Crow both spoke about the necessity of combining the actions of workers in different rail companies, and those organised in different unions. All rail workers are coming under the same pressure from the bosses, and we need combined action to fight these on a national basis. Workers in different workplaces and different unions must not be pitted against each other. The only solution for the problems of the rail network, is renationalisation, and reintegration of services under the democratic control of those who operate and use them. ◀

# Wales TUC Rallies to Support Friction Dynamex workers

It is an unwritten rule in Wales that you must never, never, convene a major labour movement event on the weekend of a rugby international. At least, not if you actually want anyone to attend. So, on a Sunday morning, (hours before any of the very limited public transport into Cardiff from the rest of Wales starts) on the day of Wales's first international of the season, the Wales TUC decides to hold the first major rally and march for ten years. To be fair, it was so timed to coincide with Labour's 'Spring Conference', which was taking place in Cardiff that weekend. Incidentally, is it not wonderfully typical of New Labour to call the local government and women's conference a 'Spring Conference' when it takes place on the first weekend of February in the middle of the worst weather of the entire Winter and when the whole of Wales is officially on flood alert? However, even New Labour's spin doctors could not persuade the River Usk to reconfine itself within its banks to allow the coaches of Friction Dynamex to arrive on time.

Once proceedings got underway it has to be said that there was a spirit of unity and defiance at the rally. In the strangely incongruous setting of the Art Deco style Temple of Peace well over 500 trade unionists were packed into the hall to hear the call to revolution from John Monks and Bill Morris. They were, of course to be sadly disappointed, but Bill Morris (leader of the Transport and General Workers Union, the Friction Dynamex union) did pay tribute to the 87 Friction Dynamex

strikers. Unfortunately his pledge to the strikers was; 'you've been on strike for 42 weeks, let me tell you, if it takes 42 years to win this dispute, we'll still support you. 'Definitely not what a striker or his family would want to be hearing!

The Friction Dynamex workers were sacked for taking strike action, which is legal for employers to do under the Employment Relations Act, because they had been on strike for more than eight weeks. They had accepted wage freezes for 4 years in succession but when long serving employees were sacked and replaced by non union workers, and many of their terms and conditions were slashed it pushed the union into strike action. Bill Morris contrasted the decades of service to the firm given by the trade unionists to the 'ten bloody minutes' at the firm of the American owner, Craig Smith. Widening the attack on the employer to the comments of Stephen Byers at the conference the day before, he then asked, 'how can these people be called 'wreckers'?

These trades unionists are not the wreckers, the wreckers are those who think September 11th is a good day to bury bad news! These are the people who will wreck our Party and wreck the government!' This provoked the first genuine passion from the rally, only bettered by the chair of the Friction Dynamex T and G Branch, who said that the Labour Party was created 100 years ago 'for many reasons, but it was not created to defend the likes of Craig Smith!' Unfortunately the general thrust of the 'top table' was merely a



change in the Employment Relations Act to get rid of the 8 week clause, no more.

The following march was the biggest trade union demo in Wales since the march for the miners in '92, but like ol' King Cole, the marchers arrived outside the conference, the Brass Band played 'Men of Harlech' and we were told; 'thanks for coming, you can go now'. Clearly, whilst public services remain the main focus of the moment, restoration of trades union rights must not be forgotten. The unions must intensify their campaigns for improved rights through the Party, at rank and file, policy forum and national levels to stop outrages rages like 'Friction Dynamex' happening 'in this day and age'. ◀

**Support Friction Dynamex workers! Support the Friction Dynamex boycott! Fight for trades union rights!**

by Mark Turner

For more information visit [www.frictiondynamex.co.uk](http://www.frictiondynamex.co.uk)



## Welsh students grants

Jane Davidson, Assembly Member and Welsh Labour Education Minister has announced that from the next academic year, people in Wales can apply for a means tested grant for any post 16 educational course. This also applies to part-time courses. The maximum grant will be £1,500 but it is expected the average award will be £750 - £800. This is a small but welcome reform and could put Wales in front of the rest of the UK on this issue. Not surprisingly the aim of the student grant is to encourage working class people to stay on in education at post 16 and to develop Wales as a 'learning' economy. However this reform does not go nearly far enough but it should encourage students to demand further reforms including the immediate abolition of tuition fees. This provides a golden opportunity for students to link up with the wider trade union movement to fight for this.

This latest reform comes on the back of others announced over the last six months. These include abolition of SATS for seven-year olds, free school milk for infant school children and free bus travel in Wales for pensioners and people with disabilities (from April 2002). However workers will be waiting to see if all this opposition to Blairism with its talk of the 'Welsh way' is just more pre-election hot air from the Welsh leadership. ◀

by Sion Corm

### Arriva Reprimanded by the ASA.

Arriva Northern trains have fallen foul of the Advertising Standards Authority. They claimed in a recruitment video that they ran a "fast and efficient service". The complaint was upheld and a reprimand was given. A spokesman for the Authority said Arriva should not make these unsubstantiated claims again without first providing some proof. Rather difficult we suspect! ◀

## Car Bosses Wield the Axe

A 95 year old proud history of car production will be ended at Vauxhall Luton on March 21st, despite all the work which has already been done refitting the production line to produce the new Vectra. This closure will result in the loss of 1,900 jobs in the factory and, in reality, many more in the local community. Vauxhall/GM claim that these job losses will be offset by new developments in its Ellesmere Port plant on Merseyside (if workers want to travel there and back everyday!). This argument does not appear to hold water however since they have simultaneously announced 850 redundancies in that plant as well - as part of a 'Europe-wide restructuring'. Meanwhile Fords delicately 'restructure their operations' by wielding the axe all round Europe. Workers in Ford's Genk plant in Belgium are to lose 1,400 jobs, 17% of the workforce. Since the start of the latest drive on costs Ford have shut 5 plants across Europe, reducing 20% of its capacity. Workers in North America are also suffering 5 plant closures and 22,000 job losses.

The world famous Ford Dagenham plant in East London has now finished full car production after nearly 70 years. Fords 'Europe-wide restructuring' will allow the worlds second largest car maker to break even in 2002, after losses of over \$1bn in 2000 - but at what a price.

Managers at the Dagenham plant are adamant; "There is little gloom on the assembly line. Indeed, the company has lost only two hours of production to stoppages since the closure was announced. Productivity and quality on Dagenham's Fiesta line has

never been better" claimed the plant's manager Mr Body.

Car workers produced super-profits for the bosses throughout the boom but, with the slowing of demand hitting the car market for some time now, the bosses are seeking to shift the burden onto the workers. They will cut jobs and increase the intensity and duration of work, to extract more profits from fewer workers.

In the case of the Luton plant, everyone accepts that it is one of the most efficient and productive plants in Europe. The Financial Times says, "Luton's closure has less to do with any shortcomings in productivity, efficiency or quality than with any financial and structural problems GM faces across Europe". In other words profits have been hit and now the workforce is expendable. A united plan of strike action is essential across the whole car production industry both here and abroad if the workforce is to be able to mount an effective response to these attacks. Time is now very short and Fords, Vauxhall/GM and the rest will only understand force. The demand for the nationalisation of the whole industry to safeguard jobs must be clearly made by all sections of the movement. ◀



Bob Crow was voted in as the new general secretary of the RMT last month with a large majority (12,051 votes to 4512) and immediately delivered a stunning rebuke to the government. Labour has "deserted its working class roots and supporters and jumped into bed with its big business friends" said Crow, "I won't be arguing that we come out of the Labour Party. What I will be arguing for is value for money."

Bob Crow is part of a crop of young left trade union leaders, who have quickly risen to top trade union jobs; notably Mick Rix at ASLEF, Mark Serwotka in the PCS, and Billy Hayes at the CWU. This has not escaped the attention of the bourgeois press who have labelled them the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, most dangerous men in Britain.

The Financial Times noted (14/2/02) that this represents a threat to the authority of Blair, and looks forward with some dread to the General Secretary election in Britain's most powerful manufacturing union Amicus (formerly the AEEU). The present leader, Blair's

## RMT: Left Victory

good friend, and right wing stalwart, Sir Ken Jackson has called snap elections after his attempt to stay in power unopposed until his 68th birthday was thwarted by court action.

The FT cites an unidentified top union official as saying, "If Simpson won, it would be catastrophic from the government's point of view. It would alter the direction of the union movement."

As Bob Crow said on coming into office, "I'm not after a utopia situation. I just want jobs for everyone, decent education, a decent health service and public utilities under public ownership." He warned that more stoppages will result unless the members demands are met at the negotiating table.

Workers should enthusiastically support the election of leftwing candidates who are prepared to fight for their interests. But we must ensure that once these people come to power they do as promised and faithfully represent the interests of the members. On the basis of capitalism reforms can only be given when the economy is doing well, they will always try to take them back when profits begin to shrink.

In the long run the only way to guarantee a good standard of living and a job for all, is for the working class to take the means of production and distribution out of the hands of the capitalist class and develop them for the benefit of society. ◀

### Stop Press

Despite all their efforts, notably the pressure brought to bear on delegates at last year's AEEU conference to allow Sir Ken Jackson to stay on as General Secretary of the union well past his retirement age, there will now be an election - and Jackson intends to stand. Sir Ken says: "I want to take on the Left and give members a choice between a progressive partnership approach or a return to the

bad old days of trade unionism."

The left in the union will be supporting Derek Simpson in the election. His campaign will be based on a return of union democracy, election of union officials, decentralisation of decision making and opposition to purchasing a £5 million headquarters in central London. In next month's Socialist Appeal we will publish an interview with him on the election and the future of the union. So, all AEEU/Amicus members order your extra copies now.

# NUJ "seeing Red"

The NUJ conference takes place at a time when a new mood of confidence is coursing through the union.

As a result of serious campaigning, there are now 4,500 more NUJ members covered by recognition agreements than there were 18 months ago. 50 new recognition agreements have already been signed and many more are pending.

by a NUJ member

**B**ut recognition is just the beginning. It raises members' expectations that things have to change. There is frustration when things don't happen, or don't happen fast enough, and this boiled over into the recent pay dispute at Bradford.

This significant development was the first industrial action over pay on local papers for more than 10 years. A full account is given in the Journalist (March 2002).

The good news is that we won in Bradford as a result of solid industrial action.

## Striking Victory

The Bradford Telegraph and Argus workers were the first to vote for NUJ representation 18 months ago, but little came of it at the time. When the company recently offered 2.5% against a pay claim for 7.5%, in a year when company profits had increased by 40%, the chapel saw red.

Despite management intimidation, votes for taking action increased, with a ballot showing 80% in favour. The vote was for three days of strike. The picket line was solid and supported by branches in Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham and Coventry. Support via email and donations came from around the world.

After just half a day of action, the company caved in and offered more money. Minimum rates were increased, giving rises of 14% for some of the lowest paid workers. The company has also now agreed to talk about improving other conditions.

Sarah Walsh, deputy mother of the chapel, said in the Journalist: "So our strike won us more money, solidified the chapel, raised morale and widened the scope of our recognition deal. I honestly can't see why everyone isn't doing it."

Other chapels are already taking courage from this experience with a number of chapels already in process of balloting for industrial action.

Jeremy Dear, General Secretary, believes that a new era has opened up in the NUJ, post January 16 - the day of the Bradford strike. He said: "Everywhere we go - people are saying, if Bradford can do it, why not here? They are seeing other unions take action, like on Arriva trains in the North. They don't resent their higher pay - but they say - why not us?"

Jeremy Dear, NUJ General Secretary



## Building for the Future

There is every possibility of building the Left in the union, provided that a bold approach is taken. Many new layers are becoming active - young people and women in particular. They do not have the baggage of past defeats, and are prepared to struggle to change things.

It is vital that the Left organises openly to attract these new activists and to take the union forward.

The past approach where a few like-minded individuals gathered to discuss together, is no longer enough. The Left in the union needs to broadcast its ideas throughout the union where they will bear fruit.

As a priority, it should organise and build for a conference to discuss ideas and agree a programme. There should be regular fundraising from supporters to fund regular email bulletins, a journal to publish our ideas and meetings to win support for our ideas in the local areas.

Some important gains have already been achieved - notably the election of the new General Secretary to succeed John Foster, together with other full-time positions.

There is a left majority on the NEC. But that is only the start! The responsibility now is to build in the union to support these positions.

The first step should be to boldly put forward candidates standing on a clear left programme for other positions - to allow members a left choice and to build for the future. It would be entirely wrong to allow a lack of confidence or memories of past defeats to hold us back from the opportunity to fight and win people to our ideas.

Recent history shows that bold campaigns can win - even where the candidates themselves are surprised at the victory! Wider moves in the trade unions are shown with recent left victories in elections for General Secretaries - like Mark Serwotka in the Public and Commercial Services Union and Bob Crow in the RMT.

Our members are already demonstrating their preparedness to fight. But they are continually hampered by employers being able to use legislation to thwart their campaigns.

- Therefore, we should demand:
- A decent living wage for all workers
- A 35 hour week, with no compulsory unpaid overtime
- Repeal of all the anti Trade Union legislation ◀

# Steel: Strike action required

Miles Todd looks at the threat of a one year wage freeze in the steel industry

In the last issue of *Socialist Appeal* (98) in an article on world-wide steel production, we commented that:

"Steelworkers...will have to fight every inch of the way to defend jobs and incomes. Any spark could lead to a concerted fight back, we remain confident those workers in Britain and internationally will rise to the challenge."

Now Corus, the former BSC, has thrown down the gauntlet with the announcement on February 11th that steelworkers are facing a year long pay freeze. Alan Johnston, Executive Director of Corus has told steel unions that the freeze was vital to the wellbeing of the company at a time when losses were reported to be running at £1 million a day. In a letter to the unions he continued:

"The current and forecast business climate shows no real sign of improvement in the short-term, particularly in the UK manufacturing sector and conservation of cash therefore continues to be the critical priority for the company to see us through this difficult period."

Steelworkers are entitled to ask where was conservation of money when £700 million was handed back to shareholders at the time of the merger with Dutch steel maker Moogovens? In the mid 1990's massive profits were being made. Where has that money gone?

It's almost certain that as we go to press the main steel union, the ISTC, responding to pressure from below will have announced a national ballot for industrial action. Eddie Lynch, assistant general secretary of the ISTC said the decision had further demoralised the workforce, adding:

"We shall be consulting with our members on this issue. ISTC members of Corus know more than anyone competition in the steel industry is intense. However the fact that they have

delivered year-on-year productivity improvements of 10% appears to have been ignored by the company."

He added that the decision by Corus to impose a pay freeze was a bitter blow for loyal employees who had endured a miserable 12 months following the announcement of plant closures and a further 6000 jobs to be axed by next year.

Steelworkers I spoke to were cautious about the prospects of industrial action, understandably so given the ISTC leadership. One steelworker told me "no pay rise, no job cuts".

The fact of the matter is that pay rises over the first few years have been dependent on job losses hence the productivity gains. Numerous deals by

the ISTC, including Japanese style team working have been agreed over the heads of the membership, but we remain convinced that steelworkers would respond to a militant call to action despite the most Blairite leadership in the TU movement. In our reports on the steel industry over the last few years we have consistently pointed out that the membership is far more militant than the leadership and as in the last national steel strike in 1980 the Marxists were alone in pointing out that steelworkers would rise to the challenge. This was despite denunciations to the contrary by the local and national leadership of the ISTC and those in the Labour movement in general who mistook the conservatism of the leadership for the real

mood developing amongst the rank and file.

In 1980 in one of the most bitter strikes since the Second World War, steelworkers fought valiantly for thirteen weeks not only against the Thatcher government and the employers but with one hand tied behind their backs as the leadership of the ISTC and other unions tried desperately to compromise. The defeat of the steel strike despite the pay deal was to cost 150,000 jobs over the next 20 years but the history of the labour movement the world over shows the workers will not be cajoled despite many obstacles, always returning to the theatre of the class war. This also requires a political struggle to demand that the Labour government take back the steel industry into public ownership under democratic workers' control. The steel industry will in the future be at the centre of a socialist planned economy. The commanding heights of the economy must be taken into public ownership to allow us to plan the economy in the interests of working people. The steel industry in private hands has been decimated. We must draw a line in the sand, this far and no further.

□ For all out industrial action under the control of local strike committees with mass meetings to keep the membership informed.

□ Open the books - let us see where the profits have gone.

□ For international solidarity, no steel must move.

□ If the bosses fail to retreat, occupy the plants.

□ For a wage claim democratically decided by the membership. No more job cuts.

□ For a 32-hour week with no loss of pay. Retirement on full pension at 55.

□ Re-nationalise steel under democratic workers' control and management. ◀

## BP: Cost Cutting Round Fuels More Job Cuts

**F**resh from a recent damning stint in a Scottish court for health and safety violations, linked with cost cutting, BP have announced another 2,000 job cuts (13/2/02).

**BP paid fines totalling £1m for two serious health and safety breaches which involved the release of toxic fumes into the atmosphere. The incidents happened within three days of each other in the plant in Grangemouth, Scotland.**

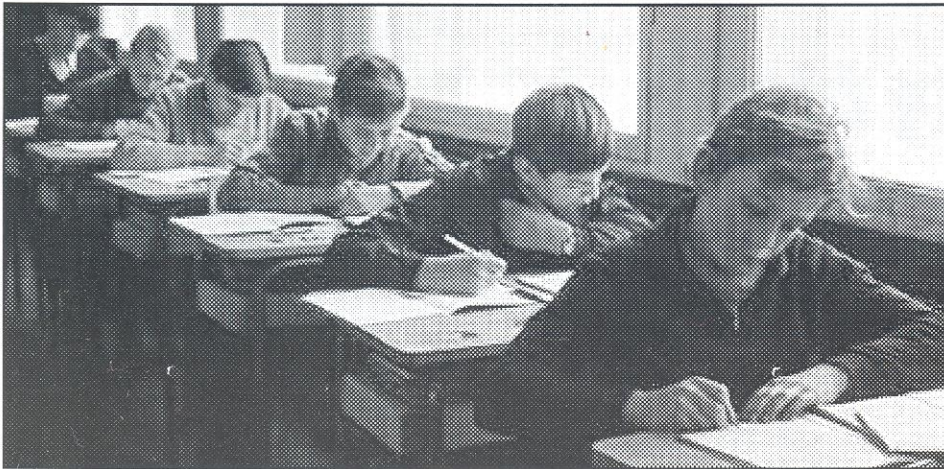
**The second of the two accidents culminated in a fire; three BP workers ran for their lives and one member of the public was seriously injured.**

**The unions at the plant warned of deteriorating health and safety in November 2001 after cuts of up to 40% in the workforce. A recent survey of its facilities makes disturbing reading detailing serious maintenance backlogs in many of its plants.**

**The ink is barely dry on the court's findings, yet BP is planning to slash another \$1.2bn from expenditure in 2002 (to compliment the \$2bn already cut in 2001) through cutting jobs and forcing the remaining workforce to work harder and longer. BP hopes that sacking workers will reduce the cost of producing oil by 6%, while also increasing its output.**

**Despite increasing production and outperforming its rivals (read 'out-cutting') in 2001, BP plans to sack at least 2,000 workers. Scotland is expected to bare the brunt, with 1,000 jobs going at Grangemouth, and many of the rest being lost in Aberdeen. The mood is there amongst the Scottish trade unions for action and central to this must be a call for strike action linked to the demand for nationalisation of BP. ◀**





# Keep religion out of schools

**There has been a debate raging in the media recently about the future of education and the role of so-called faith schools. The government would like to rapidly increase the number of autonomous, state funded schools; thus opening the running of the nation's schools to all kinds of religious, and corporate groups. The Church of England has made clear that it is willing to sponsor 20 schools and put up some £20m towards their running costs.**

by Kris Lawrie

**T**he idea of religious schools has met with opposition from many parents. In a recent poll for *The Observer*, 80% of parents asked, strongly opposed the idea, and do not support segregation of different religious and ethnic groups, and only 11% were in favour of more 'faith-based' education. Yet the government has opened 13 such schools since 1997.

Education minister, Estelle Morris, has voiced strong support for the creation of 'faith schools', on behalf of the government. In a response to criticism she said: "any single faith school must not be religiously divisive... We do not want a situation where in some cities and towns there are schools for white pupils and schools for Asian pupils". It is very difficult to see how this situation could be avoided if children are divided by religion to start with.

The Local Government Association (LGA), irritated by local government interference in local education, has condemned the plans: "The move is potentially divisive and would be another indication of central dictation of local education provision". The LGA wants local authorities and not individual schools to determine entrance policy. They would like to see a situation

where state controlled schools can provide facilities for religious education and worship for all religious groups.

There are two main issues raised here. The first one, very straightforward, is whether segregation of children from different religions becomes racially divisive. The second issue, neatly glossed over with no questioning by the government, and the LGA, is the question of the role of religious teaching in schools, and the position of the church.

Single faith schools regularly outperform state schools in league tables because they can use their freedom of selection to discriminate in reality on the basis of children's abilities and social background. In other words if you are bright enough then you are religious enough! This gives an advantage to children from affluent backgrounds who are likely to perform better in school, and the policy of 'our religion only', makes it practically impossible for people of different races to get in. On average, selective faith schools have a skewed balance of ethnic groups, a much lower number of special needs pupils and exclusions.

Lord Ousley, the former head of the Commission for Racial Equality led the

investigation into the 'Bradford race riots' of summer 2001. The reports on the race riots cite poverty in the areas affected as a contributing factor. In fact this is the major social cause; the collapse of traditional industries and decimation of local economy and jobs. The social tensions have built up, manifesting themselves in religious tension, because there was no class based lead which could unite the different ethnic groups. In the summer these exploded.

The report also damns the segregated schools in the area as a prime cause of racial hatred and intolerance. "There are signs that communities are fragmenting along racial, cultural, and faith lines".

The situation in Oldham is a similar one. A recent Guardian article cites the example of two schools standing side by side. Grange School which has 97% Asian pupils and, next door, Blue Coats Church of England School, which is almost exclusively white. The school authorities demand a letter from a vicar as proof of church attendance, and employ other selective measures. Such division combines with the social tensions to divide communities and stoke the fires of racism.

As Marxists we must oppose the teaching of religion in schools as though it were a science which it is not. We are in favour of the broadest teaching and acceptance of religious and cultural histories, and the promotion of tolerance towards different faiths. The Education Minister says the government is 'defending the parents' right to choose faith based education'. But it should not be the business of the state to ram religion down our throats. The purveyors of organised superstition should have no say in education policy or in any affairs of the state, and absolutely no hand in running schools. The state should not give money to any religious group. If people choose to worship and to hold religious beliefs, they can do so in their own time and with their own money.

We must oppose divisive ideas of segregation, and the splitting of communities on lines of religion and race. Workers of all races, and in all different countries, can unite around a class based programme to take control of the resources of society, to preserve and develop jobs, prevent factory closures, and rebuild local economies. Only this can remove racial tensions, and create a community of tolerance and brotherhood. ◀

# Workers Unity Alone Can Defeat Sectarianism

The recent broadcast of two unusually frank TV dramas exposing the horrors of Bloody Sunday in 1972, is a timely reminder of the role played by British imperialism in Ireland. If it is possible, the murder of those thirteen innocent people fighting for their rights is made even more tragic by nightly news bulletins thirty years later reporting the mounting toll of sectarian violence which shatters the myth of the so-called peace process.

by *Phil Mitchinson*

**T**he idea that there is peace is a sham. Official figures tell a very different story, with sectarian killings rising from 7 in 1999, to 18 in 2000 and 17 in 2001. The divide between Catholics and Protestants has never been wider. This gulf was created and nurtured by British imperialism in order to divide and rule, to protect their system in Ireland from the threat of united working class action. It is an unnatural growth. In carving up the living body of Ireland through partition British imperialism unleashed a carnival of reaction just as the great socialist James Connolly had predicted.

The blame for the current situation therefore lies at the door of British imperialism. They can never offer a solution to a problem they created. The history of the last eighty years proves that. The current promises of peace are just their latest cruel deception. They have created a Frankenstein's monster in the shape of sectarianism, which they cannot control. It has taken on a life of its own and they are powerless to rein it in. On the one hand they rely on it to maintain their rule, on the other they would like rid of the whole costly mess. This problem is insoluble for them; in fact it is insoluble on the basis of capitalism.

The poisonous weed of sectarianism planted by British imperialism has been watered and fed by the actions of sectarians and bigots ever since. For the last thirty years the situation has been aggravated by the failed policy of the Provisional IRA - which Marxists characterise as individual terrorism. This has not achieved a single one of its objectives and instead has succeed-

ed only in providing an excuse for reactionary measures from the British government and in driving a deep wedge between the unionist and nationalist communities of the North.

The reality of the North in 2002 is little peace but lots of peace-lines. Today there are 12 neighbouring estates divided by these brick walls or steel barriers, testimony to the failure and the inability of British imperialism, or the sectarian politicians on all sides to find a solution. Their latest effort, the Good Friday agreement, raised hopes of peace. But these soon proved to be cruel illusions - as the Marxists predicted at the time.

Figures released by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive show that in 1994 three thousand people moved into areas where the population was overwhelmingly made up of the other religious background, buoyed no doubt by the promise of peace. By 1996 this trend had more than reversed with more than six thousand families moving into areas dominated by their own religion. The 2001 census backs up these figures with the following statistic. In 1991 63% of the population lived in areas that were either more than 90% Protestant or more than 90% Catholic. The 2001 survey found that this figure had increased to 66%.

We have consistently pointed to the role played by the failed methods of the Provisional IRA, in driving a wedge between the population, and thus widening the gulf created by British imperialism. The experience of the last thirty years demonstrates this to be true. In reality the willingness of Adams and co to sign a deal that includes none of their demands, is a confirmation that their methods have failed utterly. They could not defeat British imperialism in this way if they continued for another 30 years, or even longer. They have accepted partition. There are 3000 dead, the new assembly is just the old Stormont, and the goal of a united Ireland is further away than ever. Many republicans will be asking what was it all for, and what next?

However this is only one side of the coin. We also consistently condemn the actions of the Loyalist bigots. The increase in their paramilitary activity, their attacks on children at the Holy



Cross school, their death threats against Catholic workers and the brutal murder of postal worker Daniel McColgan, are designed to provoke tit-for-tat attacks, to undermine a peace agreement they cannot accept. This despite the fact that the agreement represents little in the way of compromise other than cosmetic exercises. Just imagine the response of these reactionary bigots if there were even a single step towards uniting Ireland in any of these documents.

The greatest crime of these sectarians has been to sow division in the working class. The growing segregation of the population increasingly applies to the workplace too. A recent survey of 40,000 jobs in Belfast found that a mere 5% of the workforce in companies located in areas dominated by the Protestant community are Catholic and just 8% of workers in Catholic dominated areas are Protestant. No doubt this will be jumped upon by those who scoff at the idea of workers' unity as grist to their mill.

Yet there is hope to be found here. Despite the bald figures above, the one force capable of bringing lasting peace and tackling the problems of all working people in Ireland demonstrated its power to overcome the sectarian divide on January 18. In a remarkable demonstration of the potential for united working class action, thousands upon thousands of workers, Catholic and Protestant, staged a half-day general strike against sectarian attacks and killings.

The final straw was the murder of a young postal worker Daniel McColgan, shot dead by the UFF as he turned up for work. The teachers' unions were already under intense pressure from the membership to take some form of action. Then, when Daniel McColgan was murdered, the postal workers gave an immediate lead by walking out.

**Nationalism is a blind alley. Marxism is internationalist, not for sentimental reasons but practical ones. The workers of other countries are our comrades in the struggle against their bosses and our own.**

The papers report that McColgan had wanted a transfer from Newtonabbey postal centre on the outskirts of north Belfast. The 20-year-old postal worker apparently wanted to leave the sorting office in the centre of Rathcoole, one of the largest housing estates in Western Europe and a stronghold of the bigots of the Ulster Defence Association. Instead he became the latest victim of a conflict that makes a mockery of the media claim that the people of Northern Ireland are living in a period of unprecedented peace. McColgan came from north Belfast, where a quarter of all the deaths in the last three decades occurred.

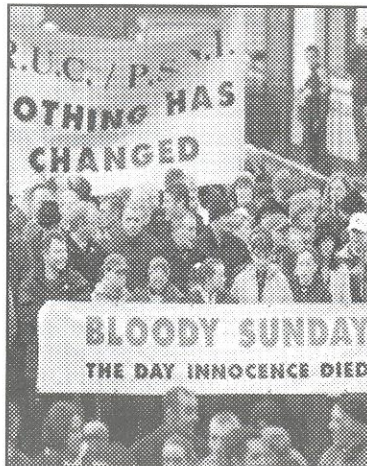
His neighbourhood is dominated by a 50ft 'peace line' dividing it from the Protestant White City area. He was singled out simply because he was a Catholic working in 'loyalist territory'. The bigots who killed him attempt to provoke a response, their sick graffiti, which we will not reproduce here, is designed to pour fuel on the flames. The response they provoked was a united movement of workers.

Under immense pressure from below the Irish Congress of Trade Unions was forced to call a twelve-hour strike to start at noon on Friday January 18. There was an immediate and overwhelming response from workers.

Thousands of postal workers turned out on the Tuesday for the funeral of their murdered colleague. Later that day a thousand turned up for a mass meeting which decided to maintain the strike until the death threat was lifted. There was not a single voice raised against this at the meeting.

On the Friday itself schools were closed for the afternoon and public transport ground to a virtual standstill. Hospitals, ambulance and fire crews were on emergency cover and members of the Communication Workers Union, Mr McColgan's workmates, marched from their headquarters in Belfast in their distinctive orange and black jackets

With 50,000 to 80,000 workers on the streets of Belfast this was



the biggest such trade union organised event in decades. Thousands more turned out in Derry, Omagh, Newry, Strabane and across the north. Perhaps 100,000 in total participated in marches and rallies. This from a population of around one and a half million!

What a demonstration of the power of the united working class, and what an answer to the cynics who deny the 'practicality' of a united workers struggle! The 'practical' solutions of these ladies and gentlemen have brought us to the current impasse. To believe that Blair's school playground diplomacy and pious speeches can solve the problem is utterly utopian. Those on the left who cling to the idea of solving the border question first and then struggling for socialism later have clearly learned nothing from the last thirty years.

The re-unification of Ireland is in reality the unsolved task of the national democratic revolution, which ought to have been solved eighty years ago. But it can never be solved by the bourgeoisie. They were the ones who created the division. Only the coming to power of the working class can solve this problem. We are for the unification of Ireland, but we are opposed to the Stalinist theory of stages, which says that we must postpone the perspective of socialist revolution "until Ireland is united". Ireland will never be united until the working class takes power north and south of the border. By subordinating the socialist revolution and the general interests of the workers to the border issue, the petit bourgeois nationalists have prepared a catastrophe.

Nationalism is a blind alley. Marxism is internationalist, not for sentimental reasons but practical ones. The workers of other countries are our comrades in the struggle against their bosses and our own. Marxism bases itself on a class policy. The national and social questions in Ireland, the question of unification and the struggle for jobs, housing etc., are inextricably linked as James Connolly explained 100 years ago. In both cases the enemy is the same, capitalism. Only the working class can solve these problems, because only the working class can defeat capitalism. We saw just a glimpse of that power on January 18.

The massive turnout on January 18 accurately reflected the anger of workers, Catholic and Protestant at the nightly sectarian fighting, the constant attacks on Ambulance personnel, Fire-fighters, bus drivers and on school children, Catholic and Protestant, travelling to and from school.

During the whole period since the ceasefire and the signing of the Good Friday agreement, there has in reality been no peace process on the streets of north Belfast and neighbouring east Antrim. Over the past two years there has been a sharp rise in paramilitary violence, mainly from the UDA and other loyalists opposed to the agreement. In the same period there has been

**On Friday afternoon, in freezing rain outside Belfast City Hall, tens of thousands of workers protested against Daniel McColgan's murder and the latest upswing in sectarianism. This is the music of the future.**



### **Loyalist provocations fuel flames of sectarianism**

a leap in pipe bomb attacks involving crude explosive devices.

Lead and copper piping, a soldering iron, nails, bolts and fireworks and gunpowder have been used in a wave of terror against Catholics. Last year 117 such devices were thrown at Catholic homes with the aim of driving them out of Protestant areas.

It is widely believed that the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the new name for the RUC, knows the identities of those directing the new wave of loyalist terrorism. But even though almost 100 people have been killed by paramilitaries since 1998, only one person has been convicted of murder. It seems they have to be careful not to upset their informants inside the loyalist groups. Just including a few Catholics and changing the name doesn't alter the basic function of the police as a means of maintaining class rule. These people can play no part in solving the problems of Northern Ireland.

On Friday afternoon, in freezing rain outside Belfast City Hall, tens of thousands of workers protested against Daniel McColgan's murder and the latest upswing in sectarianism. This is the music of the future. Those republicans looking for a way forward can find it here, in a class policy. This is the only force capable of solving the national and social problems of Ireland.

One of the demonstrators wore a gas mask and held up a placard with the legend: 'Sectarianism stinks'. The stench of bigotry still hangs in

the air in north Belfast and east Antrim. The UDA has called publicly for an end to attacks on public service workers. It took a matter of hours for the UFF - who use the cover name of the Red Hand Defenders to make such threats - to order the RHD to disband. No doubt in the weeks and months ahead the UFF will simply invent another cover from behind which to launch such attacks, nevertheless it gives us a glimpse of the real power a movement of the working class has to undermine these bigots. A movement of the workers imposed a defeat on them in twelve hours that no other force has been able to in years.

#### **A militant leadership!**

The only sour note in the proceedings was introduced by the union leaders' failure to issue clear calls for a strike, seeking permission from management for workers to participate, in some cases negotiating two hour breaks instead of a half day general strike.

There is an understanding that the sectarian polarisation is greater than ever and that what is happening across North Belfast could spread to other areas. Despite the confusion from the top, the response of the workers was magnificent. The postal workers naturally formed the backbone of the rallies, but there was a big participation by workers from all sectors, areas and backgrounds. If only the determination of these workers was matched by their leaders who

still fail to draw the lessons of this movement and offer a way forward.

Neither sectarian politicians, nor those from the South or Britain have any answer, but on the streets of Belfast and across the north we got a glimpse on January 18 of a real solution to all the problems of all the workers of the North, beginning with the problem of

sectarian violence. The trade unions should form the basis for defence organisations to protect workers from all communities against such assaults and murders. With a programme to tackle the day to day problems of workers, a united struggle could be waged against the bosses on jobs, wages, conditions and services.

But instead of calling for such an independent campaign the union leaders have followed the rallies with appeals to the "social partners" - the churches, employers and government to take things forward. However, the strength of the working class when it acts alone, under its own banners, has been shown. The trade union leadership may not have drawn any lessons from this but sections of the rank and file will have. One strike and one rally however is not enough. Since then the sectarian attacks have continued their frightening monotony, with petrol bombs, pipe bombs and firebombs, in spiralling tit-for-tat assaults.

January 18 shows the only way forward. A united campaign of workers fighting against these attacks can isolate and defeat the bigots. United around a programme for social change such a movement and such a movement alone can begin to tackle all the problems faced by the workers of the North. United with their brothers and sisters in the South and across the Irish Sea such a force would be unstoppable.

One thing is certain there

can be no way out on the basis of capitalism. During its best period, the period of boom, the capitalists were unable to solve one of the problems facing the workers of the north. In the south, as we've explained in these pages previously, the celtic tiger boom was created in no small measure by the increased exploitation of workers. The degenerate southern bourgeois do not want the north.

The best the British ruling class could offer was a new Stormont. This may have been good enough for one or two nationalist politicians, but how can the Assembly begin to tackle the problems of housing, education and health on the basis of capitalism? Any move towards positive discrimination will only fuel sectarianism. The resources exist to meet the needs of all, but in private hands they are employed to make profit for a few rather than meeting society's needs. The tinkering of British imperialism during the boom is preparing a catastrophe in the event of a slump in the economy.

The coming slump will hit the six counties hard. Without a united workers' struggle based on a class policy, rising unemployment will fuel the flames of sectarianism. It becomes clear that to tackle the problems facing workers requires a radical break with capitalism. That requires a united struggle of workers that cannot be confined by borders or divided by anything. A class policy of a united workers' struggle against the common enemy, the bankers, landlords and capitalists, for jobs, housing etc., undermines the social roots of sectarianism.

Such united action could defeat sectarianism and bigotry, the obstacles to real change in Ireland - socialist change, the only change that can bring peace, equality, jobs and housing. United with the workers of the South and of Britain no force on earth could stop the Irish working class. ◀

25th February, 2002

# T&G Election Victory -

## Dawn Stuart Thanks *Socialist Appeal*

Dawn Stuart, a young Belfast City Council worker, and Marxist, has been successfully elected to the national leadership, the GEC, of the T&GWU. Dawn stood on a programme of union democracy, and for a fighting campaigning union. The success of her campaign is an important breakthrough. After her victory Dawn spoke to *Socialist Appeal*.

**SA:** I believe that the turnout in this election was unprecedented. What was the exact outcome of the election in terms of votes, turnout etc?

**DS:** There is no breakdown as such, however, the union accepts that there were four times more voting in this election than in previous years. For example, in one count each candidate averaged between three and four thousand votes. In previous elections for Public Services, three to four thousand was the total vote. Our group as a whole gained more than twenty five thousand votes for the left in Ireland.

**SA:** What do you think this result tells us about the mood of the membership of the T&G?

**DS:** Workers are rejecting bureaucracy. 'We have the authority and it belongs to us,' is what the workers are clearly saying. They want a campaigning union also rejecting so-called 'partnership' with the employers. The T&G are campaigning for Best Value and PFI at the cost of our members jobs, indeed when I opposed Best Value, I was isolated by Bill Morris at the Local Government Committee meeting. The workers want a democratic, campaign-

ing union.

**SA:** I understand that the union leadership did not exactly help your election campaign. Could you say something about the campaign?

**DS:** No facilities as in no rooms, no photocopying, no material. Normally in my position as a local government member I should have had access to a mailing list, but this was refused me. I can appreciate the Data Protection Act, but there was an attempt to block even my own shop stewards. The bureaucrats thought that as an outside runner I would fail miserably. By the time the branches discovered that I was running it was too late for them to nominate me. It wasn't until the end of the campaign that word started to leak out and they fell in behind me. Also through the Socialist Appeal website many members contacted me.

**SA:** This was a big defeat for the "official" candidate and the apparatus. Why is the membership discontented with the leadership?

**DS:** The membership is discontented because they feel that they are not being listened to, and that the leadership are doing deals with the employers, not for the betterment of the members but for their own ends.

**SA:** What is your programme and how do you think the union should be developing? What changes would you like to see?

**DS:** I intend to bring about a change in our

union policies on public sector employment. I am totally against Private and Public Partnership that undermines our public services and our members. I want to see better relations with employers and our union but not at the expense of our members. My view is that 'best practice' suits us best. I will be joining my colleagues on the GEC to ensure that the union is controlled by the lay democracy of the members, through the GEC and not by officials elected or otherwise. I will be pushing for the reinstatement of Eugene McGlone and Mike O'Reilly who were democratically elected and undemocratically suspended.

**SA:** The workers' movement in the North of Ireland faces many difficulties as a result of sectarianism. How do you think this problem can be overcome?

**DS:** Parallel to all this sectarianism is the class struggle. What is loyalism but loyalty to Britain? That loyalism is created by British imperialism and keeps workers divided. Only the class struggle can defeat sectarianism by uniting the workers in a common struggle against capitalism and British imperialism.

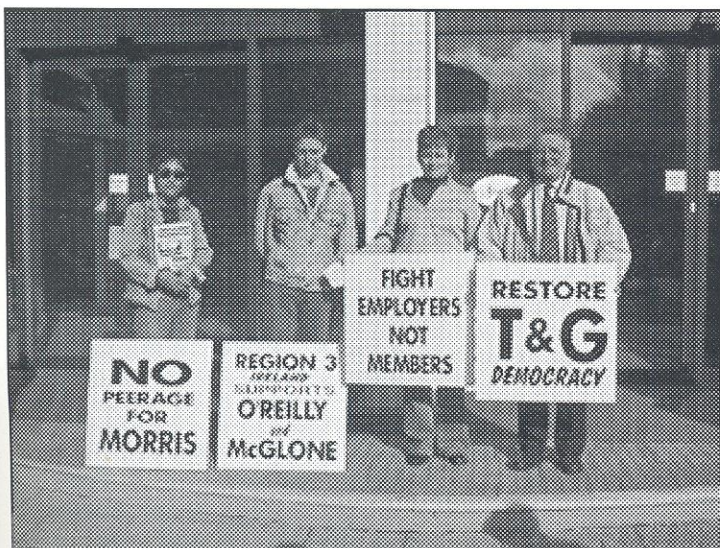
**SA:** You were elected by a big vote on both sides of the water. What implications do you think this has for the problems of Northern Ireland?

**DS:** I openly, in my campaign, expressed my Marxism which crossed all regions and boundaries. People should not be afraid to say that they are Marxists. People came out across national boundaries and that breaks down nationalism.

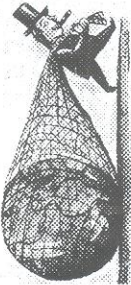
**SA:** Finally, how do you see the role of *Socialist Appeal*?

**DS:** *Socialist Appeal* have in many ways been instrumental in both the unity of the working class and the success of my election. We have much to do. The *Socialist Appeal* cadre has proved their strategy successfully, now it is time to implement it fully.

May I take this opportunity to thank all the workers of *Socialist Appeal* for their help. ◀



# Is the world recession over?



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The US has just suffered the steepest decline in economic growth ever - from a breakneck pace of 4.1% annually in the years 1998-2000 to a negative 1.1% in the third quarter of 2001. But now most capitalist economists forecast the US is on course for what they characterise as a V-shaped recovery, and along with it, the end of the world recession of 2001-02.

by **Michael Roberts**

There are some signs of an improvement. In the US, consumer confidence is up significantly. New home sales are still running at a strong pace and productivity rose by an astounding 3.5% in the fourth quarter of last year, although this was due to a reduction in the number of hours worked by all Americans as overtime was cut back and workers were laid off, not by an increase in output.

The US Purchasing Manager's Index is made up from comments collected from purchasing managers across the US. They announce what is actually being bought and sold in the manufacturing world. A PMI reading above 50% indicates that the manufacturing economy is generally expanding; below 50%, that it is generally declining. From a ten year low of 39.5 in October last year, it has climbed back up to 49.9.

The National Association of Business Economics supposedly houses the cream of the crop in predicting the US economy. They think that it will grow at 3.5% in the second half of this year. Of course, these are the same guys that told us that we would see a second-half recovery in 2001. And the NABE has never predicted a recession until there was one!

Ironically, the US government is less sanguine than the economists about the economy. They see the economy as growing at a slow 0.7% pace this year. And neither is the world's richest man, Bill Gates confident. Speaking at the World Economic Forum, the annual gathering of the rich and powerful, the founder of Microsoft said "I don't see any big uptick this year. Japan cer-

tainly won't be and the US won't be."

Stephen Roach, chief economist at US investment bankers Morgan Stanley, expresses a minority view among capitalist economists. But his words are chilling for the prospects of recovery: "I remain convinced that the US economy is only in the early stages of what could turn out to be a protracted post-asset-bubble shake-out - low saving, high debt, excess capacity and a massive current account deficit. As a consequence, vigorous growth will be much harder to come by in the years ahead than it was in the Roaring 1990s."

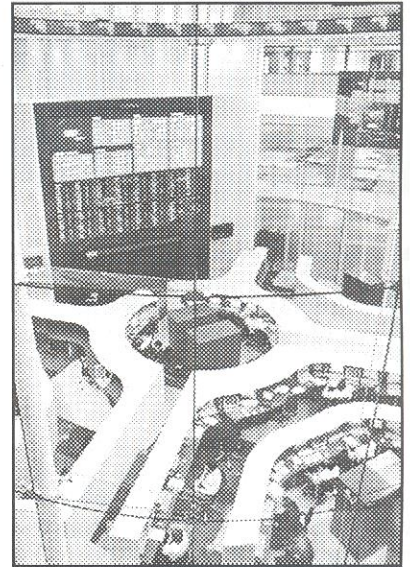
He reckons the world will go into another recession very quickly after a mild recovery - a double-dip, as in 1980-82. And there is evidence he can point to. European economic growth is now likely to be less than 1% for the year. Argentina has imploded. Japan is clearly in an economic deflationary spiral. World growth is slow to non-existent.

So who is right? A proper science of society can only draw out the trends and fundamental shifts. It cannot predict every change in a global economy that is the sum total of every single decision of six billion people on the planet. Nevertheless, we must try to draw on the trend of developments and the cycle of change and offer the most likely scenario of what is going to happen.

## Capacity utilisation

The most startling figure about the state of the US economy is capacity utilisation in industry. This is the measure of how much use is being made of plant and machinery. Economists usually associate a number above 80 as a signal of a healthy US industrial sector. Even in the 1991 recession, capacity utilisation did not go below 78. The figure has been dropping for the last 19 months - no brief upticks, no false starts, just straight down to 74%. It's now at levels only seen since records first began in 1868!

That means two things. First, businesses usually do not start to spend money to expand capacity when they have excess capacity. And second, when there is too much



excess capacity, it is hard for businesses to raise prices and thus increase profits.

In January, the yearly rate of inflation was down to 1.1%. And that number does not tell the whole tale. The entire amount of inflation over the last 12 months was in the first four months of that period. Over 1% of the inflation was in the first three months. For the last 8 months we have been in outright deflation! And Producer Price Inflation (PPI), which best describes manufacturing pricing power, fell 2.6% last year, the biggest drop in 50 years! PPI is a leading indicator of CPI direction - and it is saying: outright deflation.

Deflation gives no pricing power to businesses. In the second quarter of 2000, pre-tax corporate profits for US non-financial firms reached a peak of \$577bn. The latest figure is \$415bn - the sharpest decline since the Great Depression. For a rapidly increasing number of companies, profit margins are toast.

Now accounting scandals are exposing the true state of US corporate profits. *The New York Times* commented on the Enron scandal: "Until Enron's implosion, many investors, both individual and professional, ignored accounting issues. Wall Street's conventional wisdom held that, while a few companies might be inflating their profits, the market as a whole was essentially honest. That is now in doubt."

"Maybe I'm naive," writes Morgan Stanley's Stephen Roach again, "but I must confess to being amazed at how little we know about the possibility of more Enrons. There can be no mistaking the broader excesses of corporate leverage in the system. While that doesn't guarantee that

## So if the US is going to have a tepid and short-lived economic recovery characterised by low economic growth, rising unemployment and deflation, what does that mean for the world?

there will be more Enrons to come, it does speak of a business culture replete with risk."

"The same can be said of household sector leverage in the US," Roach continues. "Total consumer indebtedness currently stands at a record 73% of GDP. This, in my view, is an unmistakable legacy of the asset bubble. First stocks, now homes, American households have been unusually aggressive in borrowing to support lifestyles. In doing so, of course, they have depleted traditional saving balances and relied increasingly on readily available credit to extract newfound income from inflated asset values. The overhang of excess debt, however, remains a troubling aspect of the post-bubble hangover. Should income continue to weaken, or interest rates suddenly increase, it would be exceedingly difficult for the household sector at large to keep servicing this debt. The problem, of course, would be even more acute if the US were ever to experience a whiff of deflation. The debt-deflation trap is one of the most intractable dilemmas for any economy. Just ask Japan."

US companies are swamped with debt to the tune of 156% of GDP. That's 44% more than a decade ago. It's also bigger than the debt load Japan faced before their stock market bubble busted back in 1990. Back in 1989, one-time charges to earnings among the top 500 US companies totalled around \$10bn. That was considered pretty big in those days. In 2001, extraordinary charges reached \$360bn, or 36 times more than 1989! And some of the largest write-offs have been the prelude to major bankruptcies. In July 2001, Bethlehem Steel took a \$1bn charge to earnings to write off the value of a deferred tax asset. Three months later, it filed for bankruptcy. Excite@Home, a provider of high-speed internet access, took a \$4.63bn charge against earnings at the end of 2000. Nine months later it was in bankruptcy court.

By the time Enron went belly-up late last year, its stock price had

cratered from \$90 to just 26c a share. Over \$66 bn in capital and almost every single penny invested by 58,920 investors was wiped out. It was the largest bankruptcy in US history. When Argentina announced in the last days of 2001 that it was officially defaulting on its \$155bn in debts, it devastated the assets of hundreds of banks and tens of thousands of investors around the world. It was the largest debt default in the history of the world. Now, despite all this, Wall Street is saying that a recovery is around the corner.

**A**t best, US GDP will grow less than 1% this year, if at all. Corporate profits will show some growth in the second half, but overall growth will be in the small single digits, if we see any. The US may "technically" be out of economic recession by the summer, but it won't feel like it. This recovery is more of an L than a V. I reckon world capitalism is entering a 10-15 year period of slower than trend growth. This will just be the first of the recessions we see in this decade.

So if the US is going to have a tepid and short-lived economic recovery characterised by low economic growth, rising unemployment and deflation, what does that mean for the world?

Well, nearly every nation is on the verge of a debt-and-deflation blow-up, threatening to drive its economy into the gutter. For every dollar of GDP, the 12 nations of the European Union have piled up \$1.82 in public and private debt. Corporate profits are sinking. Industrial production has fallen 4.1% in a year. Unemployment in the Eurozone is 8.4% and headed for double digits.

The entire Japanese financial sector is on the edge of bankruptcy. The government says banks have Y43trn (\$320bn) in non-performing loans on the books. That's four times the size of Enron. Private estimates put the figure closer Y237trn (\$1.7trn). That's the equivalent of 20 Enrons! Company fail-

ures will close in on 20,000 cases this year, a level reached only once before, in 1984. "We are very afraid of Japan becoming another Argentina", says Taiichi Sakaiya, who was Japan's economics minister until recently.

At the same time, deflation rules in Japan. Consumer prices in Japan are dropping at 4% a year. "We are already in a deflationary spiral," says Takatoshi Ito, professor of economics at Hitotsubashi University. "This makes debtors' balance sheets much more difficult to manage so they join the ranks of non-performing-loan companies. They lay off workers further depressing aggregate demand, thus creating more deflation and so on."

The Nippon government has tried to spend its way out of the problem, Keynesian-style, to no avail. Instead, total government debt in Japan has risen to 140% of GDP, the highest in the OECD and an astounding 465% of government revenues.

The only answer appears to be to let the Japanese currency collapse so that Japan can revive by selling more goods abroad by lowering their prices. But if the yen falls sharply, Japan will cause competitive devaluations from currencies throughout Asia. That could lead to further deflation pressures in the US and a prolonged stagnant world economy. The land of cheap electronics and Godzilla movies is leading the world to the brink of disaster. ◀



# The Origins of British Trotskyism

Our 10th  
anniversary

In the 75th anniversary year of the expulsion of the Left Opposition in Russia, we intend to publish a series of articles examining the ideas, traditions and meaning of Trotskyism. This month *Rob Sewell* examines the origins of Trotskyism in Britain.

Trotsky's struggle with Stalin was a life or death struggle. It was a struggle to defend the clean banner of Lenin against the growing bureaucratic reaction within the Soviet state and party. While Lenin was on his deathbed, the triumvirate of Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin, waged a campaign to discredit Trotsky and prevent him taking over the Russian leadership. Matters came to a head after the tragic defeat of the German Revolution of 1923 when Trotsky wrote an article drawing parallels with the vacillations of Stalin and Zinoviev in regard to Germany with those within the Bolshevik Party on the eve of the October Revolution. In particular Trotsky drew out the lamentable role of Zinoviev and Kamenev who opposed the insurrection.

At the same time Trotsky formed the Left Opposition to organize the fight for party democracy and a return to a Leninist policy. The publication of this 'Lessons of October' served to intensify the conflict within the Russian leadership, and opened up a vitriolic struggle by the triumvirate faction against 'Trotskyism'. This was further accentuated after Lenin's death in January 1924.

Trotsky's fight to defend Lenin's ideas within the Soviet Union had international repercussions. News of the internal struggle within the Russian Communist Party gradually leaked out, and prominent individuals within the International began to rally to Trotsky's defence. The majority of the French Communist Party leadership for instance carried a resolution condemning the attacks against Trotsky. The same was true of the majority of the Belgium party. Early on, individuals like Alfred Rosmer, a leading member of the Communist International, raised support for Trotsky.

This situation could not be allowed to develop. Quickly, Zinoviev, the presi-

dent of the International, intervened on behalf of the triumvirate to eliminate opposition currents within the foreign sections. Under the banner of 'Bolshevisation', the Russian leadership intervened to undermine and remove leaderships that were not totally reliable to the triumvirate.

## British CP

Unlike on the Continent, there were no widespread opposition feelings within the British Communist Party. Traditionally on a low political level, the British party had little real interest in the great questions that had rocked European sections. This was a key reason for the swift obedience of the British Party. In the dispute within the Russian Party, the young British section felt obliged, despite some early hesitation, to line up behind the Russian majority. Loyalty to the Russian Party was clearly used to bring the British Party into line. Few of the British Party leaders had read any of the material of the Opposition. The first support for the Russian majority took place at the Party Council meeting in November 1924, and again at an extended Party Executive meeting in January, which endorsed the ECCI decision condemning Trotsky for publishing his *Lessons of October*. This decision, however, was questioned by the London District Committee, which complained about a lack of material. However, in the report given to a 200-strong London Aggregate on 17th January 1925, an attempt to delay the decision pending further information was defeated by 81 votes to 65. The main resolution condemning Trotsky's book as "an open attack upon the present leadership of the C.I.", moved by Murphy, was overwhelmingly passed, while 15 votes were received for an amendment supporting the fight of the 'Left Wing Minority' in the Russian Communist

Party against divergences from Leninism. (1) An Oxford Communist, member of the London District Committee, and business manager of *Labour Monthly*, A.E. Reade moved the amendment. Reade knew German and was able to read Trotsky's work at first hand. One of those voting for Reade's amendment was the young Harry Wicks, destined later to become a founding member of British Trotskyism. The decision was reported in the *Weekly Worker* under the title 'Trotskyism - a Peril to the Party' on 23rd January 1925. Reade himself was soon suspended from the District Committee and later expelled. He played no role in the movement after this.

At the Seventh Congress of the CPGB (May-June 1925), a resolution on Trotskyism was moved by Tom Bell again reaffirming the Party's position and declaring: "complete agreement with the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party in its estimation of the principles of Trotskyism and the measures taken to combat them." (2)



75 years of Trotskyism





A. B. Swales, President of the British TUC, enjoying the hospitality of Soviet trade unionists, 10 February 1926

At this time, the Party issued a book entitled 'The Errors of Trotskyism', which printed Trotsky's 'Lessons of October' and a series of replies from Zinoviev, Kamenev, Stalin, Krupskaya (who had initially flirted with the Opposition) and others. The book was not intended as an analysis of Trotsky's ideas, but as the title clearly indicates, as an exposure of "Trotskyism". J. T. Murphy, who was the British representative on the International Executive Committee, wrote the introduction. At this time, given the prestige of Trotsky in Communist ranks, those who attacked Trotsky had to be somewhat cautious. "It is undoubtedly true", states Murphy, "that it came as a great surprise to the British working class when they saw the Communist International in the throes of a great controversy with Comrade Trotsky."<sup>(6)</sup>

Murphy was forced to recognise, even at this time, Trotsky's colossal reputation and authority within the ranks of the Comintern. In his preamble he states: "Comrade Trotsky's name has always been associ-

ated in our minds with Comrade Lenin. 'Lenin and Trotsky!' These were the names with which we conjured in all our thoughts and feelings about the Russian Revolution and the Communist International. As the news of the Russian Revolution spread westward, these two figures loomed gigantically above our horizon and we never thought of differences... We saw only leaders, Soviets and masses, and over all the great historical giants, Lenin and Trotsky."<sup>(6)</sup> Nevertheless, a string of articles, which filled the majority of the book from Comintern leaders, were used to reinforce the myth of 'Trotskyism'.

At the beginning of 1926, Trotsky's book 'Where is Britain Going?' was published, which drew a wave of criticism from the British reformists, stung by Trotsky's analysis of their prejudices and hopeless approach to fundamental questions. So, as late as April 1926 in Labour Monthly, Palme Dutt, still not sure which way to jump, took up a robust defence of Trotsky's book. "Trotsky's book will be eagerly read, and will give stimulus and help; will help to break the chains of enslavement to old ideas and leadership, to give confidence and clearness and strength, and to show the plain path forward of the struggle", states Dutt. "The English working class has cause to be grateful to Trotsky for his book; and to hope that he will not stay his hand at this short sketch, but will carry forward his work of interpretation, polemic and elucidation, and elaborate his analysis further, which is so much needed in England."<sup>(6)</sup> Any hint of support had, however, completely evaporated by the time of Trotsky's criticism of the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee and his expulsion from the Russian CP in late

1927.

Trotsky completed "Where is Britain Going?" in May 1925, but was not in fact published in Britain until February 1926. Even then, it was published by a bourgeois publisher George Allen and Unwin Ltd., and contained an introduction by H.N. Brailsford, which sought to challenge Trotsky's ideas. It was only reprinted by the Communist Party in October 1926, substituting Brailsford's introduction with Trotsky's own 6th May 1926 preface to the second German edition. Although the book demolishes the ideas of gradualism and reformism, it also constituted a disguised attack against the then line of Stalin and Bukharin who were looking towards the left of the TUC General Council.

#### The most 'loyal'

A few months later, Thaelmann, the German Communist leader, remarked that the British CP was the only major party that had no differences with the ECCI.<sup>(6)</sup> It was regarded as the most 'loyal' and its leaders, after a period of selection, considered the most pliable by the Kremlin. Pollitt and Co. simply followed every change in the party 'line'. On all occasions, they were with the 'majority'.

In April 1926, under the pressure from the workers of Leningrad, Zinoviev and Kamenev split from Stalin and founded, with the veterans of the 1923-25 Opposition, the United Opposition. Their principal document was The Platform of the Left Opposition (1927), which served as a rallying point for opposition forces with the party, and was submitted to both the Politburo and the Fifteenth Party Congress. By this time, the British Communist Party was firmly in the anti-Trotskyist

camp, endorsing every dictate from Moscow. In fact it was Murphy himself who proposed the motion to expel Trotsky from the ECCI on 27th September 1927.

"... I went to the platform", recalls Murphy. "I expressed the view that the time had come for decision, and that Trotsky himself had made it abundantly clear that the struggle had reached the stage when it was no longer an internal fight concerning differences of opinion among members of one organisation, but a fight against the Communist International itself and all its sections. We had no option but to accept that challenge, and I moved that he should be no longer recognised as a member of the Communist International. It was carried with two dissents."

Murphy continued: "I did not dream when I moved that resolution that some few years later I myself would also be outside the Communist International."<sup>(7)</sup> The Moor had done his duty and was shown the door, expelled ironically on a charge of "Trotskyism"!

The development of a genuine Trotskyist current did not emerge in Britain until the crisis of 1929-31 and the rise of fascism in Germany. This took place when a group of comrades in the Communist Party in Balham, South London, moved into opposition to the leadership. As a group they came relatively late to the ideas of Trotsky, although some had read and were influenced by Where is Britain Going? and The Lessons of October. The leading lights of the Balham Group, Billy Williams, Stewart Purkis, and Reg Groves, joined the Party after the 1926 General Strike. They were soon elected to the London District Committee. During the inter-party controver-





Reg Groves

enlarged." (9)

It was then that the Balham Group became aware of the existence of the International Left Opposition. "True, we were woefully ignorant," states Groves later, "particularly about the situation in Russia, and as we struggle for enlightenment and understanding and clarity, some of us found help in the writings of Trotsky and, to a lesser extent, in the periodicals published by the American Left Opposition." (10)

At first, they wrote to the Americans for pamphlets advertised in *The Militant*. Later, Arne Swabeck on behalf of the International Secretariat sent them a letter from the United States proposing "that some concrete steps should be taken towards organisation in a preliminary sense", adding that Albert Glotzer, the youth representative on their national committee, after visiting Trotsky and the IS, would "stop over in England for the purpose of being helpful in bringing our various contacts together." Another letter told them that Max Shachtman was also coming to England "to do whatever possible to help towards the formation of a Left Opposition Group in England." (11) But the Balham Group didn't want to be rushed into any premature action or anything they would later regret.

According to Harry Wicks, "In November 1931 Max Shachtman visited London and at a meeting with Groves, Sara, Purkis and myself discussed the formation of a Left Opposition group in this country. Shachtman proposed that one of us should 'stand on the altar' for demonstrative expulsion as a declared Trotskyist. This we objected to. We saw our task as that of attempting to win a wider group of party members to challenge the leadership on the fateful line of the CI." (12) Albert Glotzer also tried to assist Shachtman's efforts, and con-

cluded: "Although no specific organisation emerged from this discussion, either during my stay or in the brief period that remained to Shachtman, the spadework had been done for its later emergence." (13)

### Critical moment

But events would drive things along. In May 1932, the Balham Group published *The Communist* anonymously, which reproduced Trotsky's main writing on Germany, *Germany the Key to the International Situation*. On the front page it proclaimed boldly: "The Communist International is unable to gain the leadership of the world proletariat. It is - at this critical moment - unable, unready and unfit to lead the world revolution, and there is no possible alternative. The Left Opposition - led by Comrade Trotsky - is fighting to win back the CI to its task of leading the world revolution; the British group begins its work by the issue of this bulletin." (14) Trotsky wrote to the group congratulating them on "this excellent duplicated publication." Throughout the summer of 1932, the Balham Group spoke out against the suicidal line of the party over Germany and called for a united front to defeat the menace of fascism.

At a London aggregate in which the issue of Germany was raised, Stewart Purkis identified himself with Trotsky's views and was confronted by Party's General Secretary Harry Pollitt. Soon afterwards Purkis wrote to Pollitt: "You have asked a straight question: you have a straight answer. You have asked how far I go with *The Communist*: bulletin... My answer to you and my comrades in the British Party is: 'I go with it all the way'." (15)

In August 1932 Purkis, Williams, Groves, Flower and Wicks were expelled for faction-

al activity against the party line. Henry Sara was 'suspended' and the Balham Group 'liquidated'. The expelled comrades issued an appeal against their expulsions to delegates attending the British party congress in November, but were denounced by Pollitt, who urged delegates "to go away from this Congress full of contempt, hatred and loathing for the miserable gang of counter-revolutionaries". (16) It was the crossing of the Rubicon for these comrades. There was no way back on the present basis. Their only road was the building of a viable British section of the ILO, as an expelled faction of the Communist Party.

As Groves put it later, they had "entered the world of international Trotskyism, which was beyond our control and often beyond our understanding." (17) Together with other sympathisers, they finally held a conference in December 1932 to establish the British Section of the International Left Opposition. By May Day 1933, the Communist League, as the group was now called publicly, issued a new publication called *Red Flag*. The work of British Trotskyism had truly begun. ◀

groups abroad." Then, in the spring of that year, Groves visited Henderson's left-wing bookshop, the 'Bomb Shop' in Charing Cross Road. "On sale in the shop on that day in 1931 were bundles of two American weeklies - *Labor Action*, run by Jay Lovestone, an expelled 'Rightist'; and *The Militant*, published by the American Left Opposition, with articles in it by Trotsky himself, which appeared the more promising publication", continued Groves. "The three or four numbers bought that day were passed round six or seven of us - and our little world was

### notes

1. See L. J. MacFarlane, *The British Communist Party, London, 1966*, pp. 140-41.
2. Quoted in Klugmann, *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain*, p. 327.
3. *The Errors of Trotskyism*, p. 5.
4. *ibid*, p.5.
5. *Labour Monthly*, April 1926.
6. *Imprecorr*, 17th March 1926, quoted in

7. J.T. Murphy, *New Horizons, London 1941*, p. 275.
8. See Reg Groves, *The Balham Group, London 1974*, p. 16.
9. *ibid*, p. 46.
10. *ibid*, pp. 11-12.
11. Quoted in *The Balham Group*, p. 48.

12. *International*, vol 1, no 4, 1971.
13. *Revolutionary History, Spring 1988*, p. 3.
14. Quoted in *The Balham Group*, p. 9.
15. *ibid*, p. 86.
16. Pollitt, *The Road to Victory*, p. 92.
17. *The Balham Group*, p. 73.

# History of British Trotskyism

Wellred Publications is proud to announce the publication of a new book by Ted Grant on the history of British Trotskyism. The book will be launched in April. This will coincide with the tenth anniversary of 'Socialist Appeal', as well as Ted Grant's 70 years in the Trotskyist movement. The book is a fascinating account of Ted's experiences in the Trotskyist movement, all the disputes, victories and difficulties. Rob Sewell takes a look at the contents.

There are individuals that make their mark on history. Without doubt, in the field of Marxism, Ted Grant is one of them. Over the last 70 years, particularly in terms of its ideas and their application, he has made a lasting contribution to the Trotskyist movement. Today, he is regarded by many as the foremost Marxist theoretician alive. Since his youth, he has constantly worked, usually under the most difficult circumstances, to develop and build a revolutionary Marxist tendency. Today, Ted remains an active and leading figure within the 'Socialist Appeal' tendency in Britain and the international Marxist current associated with the successful 'In Defence of Marxism' web site, which has attracted growing support internationally.

Ted Grant was born in South Africa, just before the First World War in a place called Germiston, then a suburb of Johannesburg. He was won to Marxism in the late 1920s by a close friend of the family, Ralph (Raff) Lee, six years his senior. Lee had been a member of the South African Communist Party since 1922, but was expelled for 'Trotskyism'. Lee, with others including Ted Grant, had made contact with the international Trotskyist movement in 1929 via the American 'Militant' which had been dispatched to South Africa by the American Trotskyists. "It changed our lives completely", says Ted, "and I started on a political road that spans more than seventy years."

Lee organised a group composed of a handful of people, including Ted Grant, Purdy, Millie Khan, who later became Lee's wife, Raymond Lake, J. Saperstein, Max Basch, as well as Ted's sister Zena. In April 1934,

they constituted themselves as the Bolshevik-Leninist League of South Africa.

## Leon Sedov

In September Ted left for Britain with Max Basch. On their journey to Britain, they went to Paris to meet with the French Trotskyists, who had just had entered the French Socialist Party. They met among others, Trotsky's son, Leon Sedov, who was a member of the International Secretariat and coordinator of the work of the International. Sedov discussed a number of things with these enthusiastic young visitors, including the 'French turn' and the situation in France and Britain.

Ever since Ted Grant entered political activity he has actively participated in the Trotskyist movement. On his arrival in Britain in October 1934, he joined the Marxist Group inside the ILP. Within a few years, given the decline of the ILP, he joined the Labour Party. During the war, Ted became the chief theoretician of the Workers International League and then the Revolutionary Communist Party. These early

years are fully covered in the book.

With the break up of the RCP in 1949, Ted once again joined the Labour Party and launched a magazine called 'International Socialist'. The 1950s were extremely difficult years for the Marxist tendency. In 1958, Ted established the 'Socialist Fight', which was the forerunner to the 'Militant', set up in 1964. The patient work of the tendency resulted in the building of the strongest Trotskyist tendency since the Russian Left Opposition.

Unfortunately, the boom of the 1980s and the emptying of the mass organisations adversely affected the leaders of the Militant tendency, who abandoned their past approach and ended up as a sect on the fringes of the movement. It was left up to Ted and a small number of comrades to preserve the real traditions of the past, culminating in the establishment of 'Socialist Appeal'. Ted Grant's contribution has served to preserve the unbroken thread of genuine Trotskyism. This book tells of the life of a Trotskyist pioneer, and will be an inspiration to all.

Ted Grant in 1938

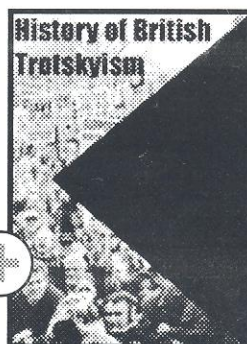


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# Enrongate

**The collapse of Enron is the biggest crash in corporate history. In a matter of months the total share 'value' of energy firm Enron, the seventh biggest company in America, went from \$80 billion to next to nothing. Mick Brooks analyses these events**

**T**housands of workers have been made redundant. To add insult to injury, their pension plans were locked in to holdings of Enron shares, and are therefore worthless. Meanwhile Enron executives, aware of the coming shipwreck, sold \$1 billion of their own holdings to outside suckers and started desperately shredding incriminating documents. At the same time they were syphoning off all the remaining assets through a vermicelli of holding companies fronted by Enron execs. In fact Enron's accounts were all fur coat and no knickers. They overstated their profits by \$400 million and built up \$40 billion in 'off-balance sheet' debts.

This could be the beginning of something bigger. The next casualty is likely to be Arthur Andersen. One of the world's big five accounting firms, AA was paid \$25 million each year to give Enron accounts a clean bill of health. Last year they received an even bigger sum for other non-auditing services to the firm. Commentators regard this as over the odds - perhaps a bribe to turn a blind eye. AA, supposedly a blue chip firm, have a history of incompetence - or worse. This is one set of accountants who don't want to be lion tamers. In 1982 they were sacked by the Thatcher administration for failing to notice while they were auditing the books that the de Lorean plant in Northern Ireland was not actually producing any cars. The whole operation was a vast scam to cream off taxpayers' money in the form of regional subsidies. Andersen was confronted with a bill from the government

of £200 millions as a result. Luckily for them, New Labour came to the rescue. As a reward for some 'free' work on the details of Gordon Brown's 1997 economic policies, the incoming Labour administration settled the dispute for about £20 million, less than a tenth of what the government had been asking for. So charity is its own reward! Andersen then did a 'study' that came up with the figure of 17% savings on Private Finance Initiative now widely quoted by New Labour hacks. Guess what? - under Labour AA have now got £10 billion in PFI projects to play around with.

## Destruction of evidence

•At Enron headquarters AA 'impartial' auditors enthusiastically joined in destruction of evidence of what is almost certainly a criminal conspiracy. This time it could be the end of the road. Arthur Andersen's 85,000 employees have been warned their firm could cease to exist within a year.

'Contagion' could spread further in the world of high finance. Enron owes Barclays Bank \$126 million. This is peanuts compared with the \$1.9 billion Chase are chasing, the \$3 billion Citigroup won't get back or the \$2.5 billion Bank of New York can whistle for. Knock-on effects could cause the whole financial world to take a heavy hit.

This is not just an isolated financial scandal. A big finger is pointed at the White House. Criminal investigations into Enron has begun. But Bush's Attorney General has been marched

off the case as he has taken the Enron shilling. He is not alone. Thirty-five members of the Bush administration (and more than two hundred members of Congress in total) are either on the payroll, or have received campaign backing from the bad guys. It will be interesting to see if the politicians got their money out in time. Enron made donations of \$500,000 billion to the Bush 2000 campaign fund. Bush and the Republicans have been on the payroll for years. Then, just to show there are two capitalist parties in the USA, they gave the Democrats a handout. This money is usually described as a political donation. Enron saw it as an investment, and the best investment they ever made. When the Bush administration hit town, Enron executives were celebrating payback time! In the first part of 2001 they had six meetings with Vice-President Cheney. What were they up to? They were writing the government's energy policy.

In the first months after taking office Bush dobed out of the Kyoto restrictions on greenhouse gas emissions to prevent global warming. He cut the budget for the Environmental Protection Agency civil enforcement to zero - so they can't take anyone to court. He appointed Pat Wood, the Enron nominee, as Chair of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. He proposed to allow drilling in the protected areas of Alaska's National Park, one of nature's last wildernesses and home to the caribou and the arctic fox.

We are not arguing that Bush and Cheney were just on the take from the oil and energy companies. Cheney himself is a big cheese in the corrupt symbiosis with big business that is American politics. Cheney left George Bush senior's administration to become Chief Executive of Halliburton, the biggest maker of oil drilling equipment in the world. Naturally he supports drilling in Alaska. Naturally he uses his post as Veep to advance his own interests. Bush, too, like his father before him, is a major player in the world of Texas oil, and Kenneth Lay, CEO of Enron, was his political fundraiser in chief.

The Enron story allows us to nail a few of the lies they tell us about capitalism. They try to tell us that capitalists are wealth creators and innovators. Fortune, the US business magazine, was still calling Enron 'the most innovative company in America' last year. The Economist last June was hailing Enron's enterprise as 'the most successful internet venture of any company in any industry anywhere.' (Have

you ever wished you were better informed?) They try to tell us that elected politicians get in the way of all this wealth creation with misguided attempts to regulate big business and tell it what to do. They try to tell us that markets are the most natural things in the world. In fact Enron's main asset was political influence. Until twenty year ago, there was no energy market for firms like Enron to play in. As an energy company, they only found a market because it was deliberately 'innovated' by corrupt or crazy politicians.

Fact - Enron never innovated. Enron never actually made anything. Enron was basically a middle-man. If occasionally the Enron octopus was actually involved in generating electricity, it was usually because they had acquired the plant from someone else as part of their relentless search for money. Enron was a trader. What they traded in was irrelevant to them. Their profits were the fruits of speculation, and last year they started to dry up.

What does Enron know about? Here's the philosophy of former CEO Skilling. "You must cut jobs ruthlessly by 50 or 60 per cent. Depopulate. Get rid of people. They gum up the works." This is what presumably passes for management 'science' as it taught on expensive courses to create Masters of Business Administration

The mass generation and transmission of energy, without which big business and mass markets would be impossible, has in every country been the creation of the state. Doesn't that tell you something about capitalism? Think of all the capitalists that make a living by selling you things you have to plug in. None of them would be in business without the best efforts of the state. The grid was set up either by nationalisation or by wholesale regulation. In the USA electricity generation was not publicly owned, but tenders were put out by public bodies. In other words companies came into existence only because the states or federal government said they were prepared to buy their electricity if the capitalists could build the plant. The electricity generators, in turn, were carefully reg-



Some of the members of the Enron board of directors include Ronnie C. Chan, chairman of a major Hong Kong real estate conglomerate; Herbert S. Winokur Jr., chairman and chief executive of a Greenwich, Conn.-based investment firm; Norman P. Blake, a turnaround specialist and Robert K. Jaedicke, a professor at Stanford University Graduate School of Business.

ulated and not allowed to make big profits from a monopoly position that had been artificially created for them by the state. The generating capacity was knit together by the grid, an example of state planning. Since it is difficult to store energy, it had to be shared to deal with peaks in demand.

The system worked. California, since electricity deregulation, is not working. The state is blighted by 'brownouts' and cursed by escalating energy bills. Instead of a co-operative grid, a 'pool' of spare electricity which functions as a market (actually a pseudo-market), was set up. This lets in the middle-men such as Enron. The profit-gougers have certainly learned how to manipulate prices in the pool. As peak demand leads to price 'spikes', the cost of electricity in California leaps from \$30 to \$1,000 per megawatt hour. Energy analyst Jerry Oppenheim explains, "Deregulation created volatility, which is what the energy traders want." So there is capitalist 'progress' for you. Who was daft enough to dream up energy deregulation?

The idea was made in Britain. Economists have tried to argue it was about efficiency, but actually it was about smashing the miners, and it cost us taxpayers and energy consumers billions. Usually economists talk about the

importance of marginal cost calculation, working out the cost of producing an extra unit of energy. The rationale is that, even if it could be proved that gas-fired power was cheaper from a standing start, it wasn't if you had to scrap functioning coal-fired generators and buy expensive new plant to burn gas. But, under energy deregulation, that was what happened. To Cecil Parkinson, the Energy Secretary of the time, marginal cost was as alien a concept as marital fidelity. All his speeches were about Arthur Scargill. The Tories were prepared to spend as much of our money as it took to smash the mining communities.

#### 'Efficiency'

The energy distribution companies for their part were not interested in enhancing 'efficiency'. They felt the generating companies had them by the short and curls. They built gas-fired generators at our expense in order to improve their bargaining power vis a vis the big generating firms. And coal burning went into decline.

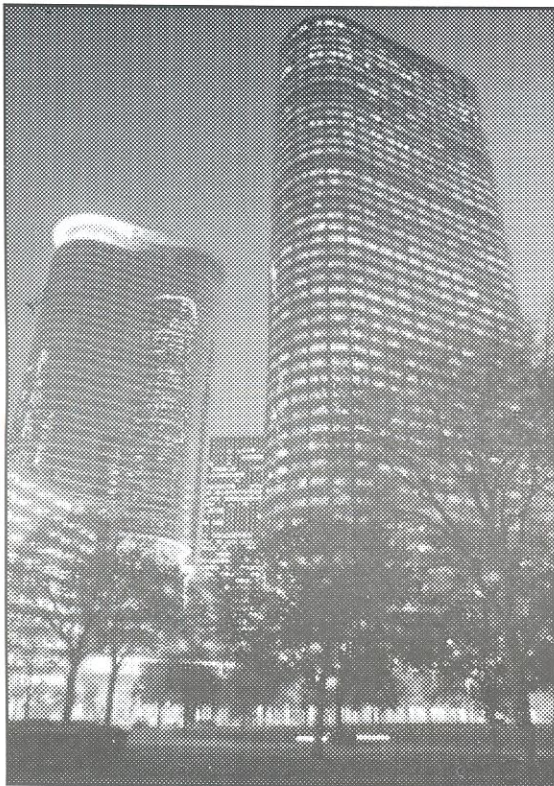
A later Tory Energy Minister was responsible for the privatisation of energy supply that let Enron in. This was Lord Wakeham. When he retired, he took a job on the board at Enron. Once again the energy trading giant was finding buying political influence the best

investment it could make. Further large dollops of dosh came Lord Wakeham's way as he took responsibility for auditing Enron's books. As the firm's destitute former workers and pensioners will testify, he didn't make a very good job of it.

Enron had global reach. They were responsible for about a quarter of all Europe's power supply. All these markets were opened up to them by political lobbying from Washington.

Take the case of the Dabhol plant in Maharashtra state in India. This monstrosity is likely to cost local people \$2.9 billion. It will generate electricity at three times the usual cost. The company explains this is because the plant is 'state of the art'. This is an unusual claim. We would not expect a 'state of the art' racing car to travel three times as slowly as an ordinary family saloon, but that is what we are being asked to swallow. The Clinton government lobbied hard for Enron to get the contract.

Enron is the only corporation that has been the subject of reports into human rights abuses by both Amnesty and the US-based Human Rights Watch. To build the Dabhol plant, villagers had to be expelled from their homelands. In 1997 they peacefully demonstrated against their eviction, and were met with a police riot. Maharashtra police ran amok,



beating up pregnant women and wrecking villagers' huts. They were aided by Enron placing its helicopter at the disposal of the cops to spy on the protesters and footing the bill for the police rioters' wages. Things are no dif-

ferent under the Republicans. Last year President Bush was scheduled to visit India. Top of his list of things to do was to lobby Indian politicians to pay a \$64 million debt allegedly owed to Enron. The most powerful man in the world moonlights as a debt collector!

It doesn't just happen in India. A few years ago Bush's father (President during the Gulf War) went to Kuwait with his former Secretary of State James Baker. They were there to bat for Enron to get a big energy contract. Enron offered to deliver at 11c per kilowatt hour. Deutsche Babcox could do 6c per kilowatt hour. The existing state subsidised rate was 1/2c. Obviously Enron got the job. If any reader can suggest a reason for this success apart from bribery and corruption, they should contact the 'Socialist Appeal' office to receive a small prize. In the Philippines, Argentina, Panama and throughout the third world Enron has made waves through bullying and pressure from the White House.

Another banana republic Enron operated in was Blair's Britain. When Labour was elected in 1997, the government maintained the last shreds of the coal mining industry in existence by imposing a moratorium on the further building of gas-fired electricity generators. They stopped the 'dash for gas' in its tracks and, as we explained

earlier, there was complete economic justification for the policy. But Enron now had its foot in the door, and they wanted to build new gas-fired capacity at Teesside. Documents discovered in the States under the Freedom of Information Act there reveal that the US government placed unremitting pressure on the Cabinet to reverse the moratorium - all for Enron. The documents show that White House officials were aware when the crucial Cabinet meetings would be - in other words that they were spying electronically on the British government. When the September 11th attack came, the US 'intelligence' forces didn't have a clue. It seems they were too busy acting as gumshoe to a bent American firm to bother. Of course Blair gave in to American pressure and the last hopes of the mining industry were snuffed out. Guess what? Enron sponsored the Labour Party Conference.

Now Enron has collapsed. "How are the mighty fallen!" (2 Samuel 1). Bush will no doubt swear that he 'didn't have improper relations with that company'. One of the disgruntled sacked workers commented, "It wasn't a couple of rogue trades. It was systemic."

That system is called capitalism. ◀

## may day greetings

Socialist Appeal  
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To all Labour and Trade Union Organisations.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It is the intention of the editors of Socialist Appeal to carry a May Day supplement in our May edition, containing greetings from Labour and trade union organisations in Britain and internationally.

2002 is a very important year for Socialist Appeal. It is our tenth birthday. We are celebrating ten years of defending the ideas of socialism within the labour movement, and reporting on the struggles of the workers in Britain and across the world.

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Yours with fraternal greetings,

Alan Woods,  
Editor Socialist Appeal

# Understanding a sister's struggle

## "In The Name Of Tradition"



**After numerous conventions, declarations and acts, slavery has been officially declared abolished. However, for millions of women, particularly in the "third world", slavery is worse than ever before. In the name of "tradition" women still live their lives in slave-like conditions.**

**by Gaye D. C.  
Lagos, Nigeria**

Consider the case of Nkechi, a 14-year old Ibo girl who is just one of the many girls serving as "slaves of the gods" in a shrine in the bush. Nkechi is forced to be a "slave" to atone for a crime she had no hand in: "illegitimacy". Her duties include unpaid household chores, religious duties and providing sexual services to the fetish priests under the pretext of being married to a deity. All these girls are "atoning" for what is referred to as "Nso-Ani" - sacrilege. As they get older, they are replaced by younger ones - while the priest remains unchanged. Like the others, Nkechi is not free to change her place of residence or work and may remain in servitude for many years.

Some years back, the nation woke to the shocking story of Hauwa Abubakar who was withdrawn from school at the age of 12 by her father and married off to a man fit to be her grandfather. That same year her two legs were chopped off with a poisoned axe by her husband - for constantly running back home. Two weeks later she died. In spite of the public outcry that greeted this inhuman act the practice of child brides still goes on.

Another example of traditions with gender-specific dangers is the case of a Hausa woman killed in the western part of the country for being out while the Oro was passing through (a masquerade that women are forbidden from looking at).

All these acts, it is true, are perpetrated by men against women, but they take place within a def-

inite socio-cultural milieu.

Significantly, these acts are not happening somewhere in the remote past, but in 21st century capitalism. Lenin described capitalism as "...horror without end". The brunt of this horror is borne most cruelly by women, especially in tradition-steeped "third-world" countries. After its conquest, the forces of finance capital could not institute in the backward regions it conquered those institutions already put in place in its birth place which, compared to those previously existing, marked a step forward. Rather, as it expanded into the colonies it adopted and adapted these feudal-medieval institutions and traditions to its rule.

It failed to improve the condition of "third-world" women, in relation to those in the advanced capitalist countries, even in a formal sense. She was, instead, subjected to a more



remorseless oppression and exploitation. Thus, today, the Nigerian woman continues to suffer centuries-old torments

in addition to more brutal subjugation.

Notwithstanding the various conventions guaranteeing her rights she continues to be fettered by a thousand and one traditional rites that degrade her; deep-seated rites that erode her freedom and dignity.

The barbaric practice in which she was bequeathed to her husband's relative; forced to drink corpse water; shave her head and sit naked for days, etc, in the event of her husband's death still exist for her and refusal to perform these rites is met with the severest cruelty. Those not killed outright or driven to suicide are treated as outcasts and pariahs - they are not "seen" nor "heard".

However, compared to her northern counterpart the southern Nigerian woman lives in "paradise". The northern woman is incomparably more fettered. She is the "slave of slaves"; to be disposed of as her parents and husband see fit - like the case of Hauwa, cited above. She is deprived of all rights whatsoever and confined to the home or purdah, as the case may be; given in marriage and made to bear children at a very tender age, etc.

The complete subjugation of women is enshrined in the society. The church and mosque supports it - "submit yourself to the will and desire of your husband," they command.

Tradition, like morality, has a class basis. It serves the interest of the ruling class. The struggle for emancipation of women is part of the struggle of the working class to transform society, because the subjugation of women is rooted in the subjugation of one class by another. Only the overthrow of class society can put an end to it. It is not just a struggle for women. It is not a struggle against men. It is a struggle against the root cause of all human baseness; all indignities to which the human soul is subjected - the capitalist system. Make it your struggle. ◀

In next month's *Socialist Appeal* we will publish a major article on International women's day, so order your copy now!



## National Workers' Assembly meeting - a big step forward

**On Saturday, February 16, thousands of workers, unemployed and members of the popular assemblies, met in the Plaza de Mayo square in the Argentinean capital Buenos Aires. This was the beginning of the National Assembly of Workers (employed and unemployed). By *Jordi Martorell***

**T**he day after, two thousand elected delegates met at the Avellaneda Colonial Theatre, representing unemployed workers' organisations from all over the country, but also local trade union branches, groups of workers' in struggle, neighbourhood popular assemblies, etc.

This meeting is the highest point so far of the movement towards the creation of an alternative power of the workers and the masses in Argentina. The movement, which started with the revolutionary events of December 19 and 20, has advanced very rapidly not only in its organisational forms but also in the political conclusions that it has drawn.

The popular assemblies, which meet weekly in every neighbourhood, now cover most areas in Buenos Aires and its periphery and are also spreading to other provinces. Starting on January 12, the popular assemblies in Buenos Aires have started weekly meetings every Sunday to co-ordinate their actions and discussions in common. These meetings of delegates from different neighbourhood assemblies

("interbarrial") have grown in size and now are gatherings of 3 to 4,000 people. There are reports of similar meetings taking place in the provinces.

These meetings discuss both the programme of the assemblies and the actions to be taken and are run on extremely democratic lines. Everyone is allowed only three minutes to speak and at the interbarrial meetings only elected delegates from neighbourhood assemblies or groups of workers in struggle are allowed to speak. At the end of the meeting all proposals are put to the vote.

The assemblies which at the beginning were mainly concentrated on the struggle against the "corralito" (government imposed freeze on bank account withdrawals) have now adopted a very advanced programme of demands which challenges every aspect of capitalist rule. These include the repudiation of the foreign debt, the nationalisation of the banks, the renationalisation of all privatised utilities, popular election of Supreme Court judges, the taking into state control of pension funds (AFJP), etc.

The popular assemblies and the workers' movement

Most important of all, the movement of the popular assemblies has taken important steps towards linking up with the workers and the movement of the unemployed. For a few years now Argentina has witnessed a movement of very militant actions on the part of unemployed workers, which take direct action and organise road blocks demanding jobs and subsidies. These piqueteros organised two national meetings to co-ordinate the movement in July and September last year.

The interbarrial in Buenos Aires decided to join the two piquetero marches called on January 28 and February 5, greeting the arrival of piqueteros in their neighbourhoods. A new slogan was coined which expressed the unity between the assemblies and the piqueteros: "Piquete y cacerola, la lucha es una sola" (pickets and pans, same struggle - this refers to the pickets organised by unemployed workers and the "pots and pans" protests organised by the assemblies). Furthermore the assemblies established links with groups of workers in struggle in their neighbourhoods.

The workers' movement has so far not participated in these protests as an independent force. This does not at all mean that workers are passive. In the last three years there have been 8 very militant general strikes. Workers also participate in the popular assemblies in their neighbourhoods. One of the reasons why there has been no mass strike movement so far is the fear of unemployment, which has now reached an official level of more than 20%. Another important factor is the stranglehold of the trade union bureaucracy of the main CGT federation.

This is why the calling of the National Workers Assembly is such an important step forward. The September National Piquetero Meeting of unemployed workers' organisations agreed to call a new national meeting which would be composed of elected delegates, one for every 20 organised unemployed workers. This meeting never took place since the two organisations with the greatest influence in the unemployed workers movement consistently refused to call it. These organisations are the CCC (Class Struggle Militant Current) led by Alderete and the Housing and Jobs Federation (FTV, linked to the CTA union federation) led by D'Elia. The leaders of both these organisations are now involved in talks



with the government about the management of unemployment subsidies, which is basically a manoeuvre to pacify the unemployed workers' movement.

Calling the National Workers' Assembly

But in a period of radicalisation of the class struggle, the more militant sections of the piquetero movement decided to go ahead with the calling of a Third National Workers' Assembly on their own. These included unemployed workers' organisations from all over the country, many of them linked to left wing parties like the Communist Party, the PO, the MST, the PTS, etc. They issued an appeal to employed workers, militant trade union branches and the popular assemblies calling on them to send delegates to this meeting.

The calling of this meeting provoked a split in the CCC. One of their leaders, Raúl Castells of the MIJDP, who is now under house arrest, came out publicly in favour of the National Assembly, and was expelled from the CCC for that reason.

Thousands of people were already crowding the Plaza de Mayo when the delegations of the different unemployed workers' organisations started to march in amid cheering and the chanting of slogans.

Two of the most significant delegations were those of the workers from two factories which have been occupied by the workers: the Brukman textile factory in Buenos Aires and Zanón Ceramics from Neuquén. With a banner reading "Zanón and Brukman: under workers' control" they marched into the Plaza de Mayo, to the roar of the crowd, beating their drums. According to all reports the mood was electric. Delegations came from all over the country, from the provinces of Santa Fé, Neuquén, Chaco, Tucumán, Río Negro, Córdoba, La Rioja, Salta, Jujuy, etc. At one end of the square there was a podium with a big banner reading 'National Assembly of Workers (Employed and Unemployed)'. At the front there was a space reserved for accredited delegates which was guarded by a line of workers armed with batons and metal pipes.

On Sunday, a delegates only meeting continued the debate. Two thousand delegates were present, all of them representing at least twenty people. These were not only unemployed workers, but also popular assembly delegates and, most importantly, trade union delegates as well.

One of the main focal points of the debate was the question of how the workers could solve the crisis facing the country. A resolution sent by the Union of Ceramic Workers and Employees of Neuquén (SOECN, which is occupying the Zanón factory) and the Neuquén

Movement of Unemployed Workers (MTD), made it clear that "the effective unity between employed and unemployed workers... is the first condition for the workers to be able to head the necessary alliance with the ruined middle classes and the only way we can impose a workers and popular solution to the national crisis." Correctly, the Zanón workers also made an appeal to work amongst the rank and file of the trade unions to win organised workers away from the trade union bureaucracy.

### Workers' power

The meeting finally voted a resolution which stressed the idea that the Duhalde government is an enemy of the working class and that a popular solution to the crisis means "expelling Duhalde and the class of looters which put him in government". Point 4 of the resolution states: "We must take into our own hands the solving of the most pressing problems of the masses: jobs, health, education, housing, which means spreading and promoting these organisations [popular assemblies, piquetero organisations and workers' assemblies], up and down the country as an alternative which belongs to the workers. We define the strategy of the piqueteros and the more militant trade union sections organised in this National Assembly as one of incorporating the industrial workers' movement and that of the privatised utilities to the struggle of the piqueteros. Any serious attempt to defeat the current government and the ruling regime cannot avoid the fundamental role of the working class which today makes the main production centres and services work, such as electricity, gas, telephone and transport"

This is basically a recognition of the potential power of the working class to paralyse society. One of the

slogans on Saturday's open rally was precisely "Luchar, vencer, obreros al poder" (Fight, win, workers to power).

The resolution also calls upon the leaders of the CCC and the FTV-CTA, who refused to call for this National Assembly, to break any negotiations with the government and to join the plan of struggle which had been approved. The meeting rejected any attempt to foster illusions "in governments which basically represent the interests of the exploiters, native and foreign".

The programme approved was the following:

- Freedom for Raúl Castells, Emilio Alí, Peralta and all the other imprisoned comrades. Withdrawal of charges against the fighters.

- The organisers and perpetrators of the murders on December 19/20 must be put on trial and punished. The murderers of the comrades in Salta (Justiniano, Gómez, Verón, Barrios and Santillán) and Corrientes must be put on trial and punished.

- Repudiation of the foreign debt.

- Nationalisation of the banks and main companies.

- Statisation of the AFJP (pension funds).

- Outlawing of lay-offs and suspensions.

- Statisation under workers' control of all companies that close or sack workers, and reopening of all closed companies under the same conditions.

- Immediate return of bank deposits to small savers.

- Struggle for genuine and permanent jobs, through the sharing out of working hours without reduction of pay.

- Minimum wage and unemployment benefits to be linked to the cost of living.

- Out with Duhalde and the IMF. For a workers' government.

This programme, which is basically a programme of socialist revolution, was passed by these workers' delegates together with a plan of struggle. This includes, amongst other measures the reinforcement of the road blockades, a national mobilisation of pickets and cacerolazos for February 20 on the second anniversary of the popular uprising, a national day of action against the privatised oil companies. These were singled out since they have been the most profitable privatised

pictures:

◀ National Workers Assembly meeting

▼ Final voting of resolution, passed unanimously



companies in the last few years. The demand is that these profits should be used to create jobs and that the companies be renationalised. A national workers' march on the capital on March 4 to 8. And finally a new date was set for the next National Workers' Assembly which will take place on April 2.

On Sunday evening, representatives from the National Workers Assemblies attended the 6th meeting of the Buenos Aires interbarrial to explain their decisions and get support for their plan of struggle. The interbarrial decided to support the plan of action and also passed a number of other programmatic demands. The most significant of them are:

e) The calling of a National Popular Assembly with representatives from the popular assemblies, the interbarrial and assemblies from the provinces for March 16 and 17.

k) Duhalde and its economic plan must go. For a government of the popular assemblies, the interbarrial, the workers and the piqueteros.

The resolutions of the National Workers' Assembly and the interbarrial are basically a programme of workers' and people's power.

### Ruling class terrified

The key question is that this is not just a programme which has been passed, but that sections of the organised workers are being won over to this programme. The deepening economic crisis will force more and more sections of active workers to join the struggle to defend their jobs, and it will become clearer that this can only be done effectively by replacing the capitalist system with a system of nationalisation and workers control.

As the leader of the CGT, San Lorenzo put it at the Saturday rally, "the working class, and specifically the industrial proletariat must regain the centre stage in the Argentinean political scene". The leader of the Union of Ceramic Workers and Employees of Neuquén (SOECN) insisted that the key was winning over the organised workers to the struggle, "having a picket outside the Repsol-YPF refinery is very good, but it would be better if we can get the oil workers to come out, if we can get the electricity workers [also present at the Workers' Assembly] to switch off the power. Having a protest outside a bank is good, but it would be much better if we can get the bank workers out on strike".

The car industry workers have already announced strike action against threatened redundancies. Civil servants in the provincial governments up and down the country have been taking strike action demanding the payment of their wages. The government has also just intervened to stop the threatened oil workers' strike. The Argentinean ruling class is trapped in a contradiction. On the one hand they can only maintain the system of capitalist exploitation by launching



▲ Meeting of the *interbarrial*

ruthless attacks on the living conditions of the workers and the middle class. But at the same time, in doing so this threatens to provoke a revolutionary movement in which they could lose everything.

In the meantime the economic crisis continues to deepen, with the peso falling to 2.10 to the dollar, its lowest level since the beginning of flotation just a few weeks ago. Industrial production collapsed by 18% in January, a record fall after an already steep fall in December. All sectors of the economy were affected, but amongst the worst hit were the textile industry (-56,1%), car production (-65%) and engineering (-54,1%). And this is despite the fact that in theory devaluation should have boosted exports.

The Argentinean bourgeois can also see the dangers involved in this whole process. In the last few days they have published two hysterical editorials in *La Nación*, denouncing the movement of the assemblies. On February 14 they declared that "although the rise of these assemblies appears as a consequence of the public being sick and tired of the untrustworthy conduct of the political class, we must also take into account that such mechanisms of popular deliberation present a danger, since because of their very nature they can develop into something like that sinister model of power, the 'soviets'". And the article continues: "Experience shows that these assemblies are sometimes taken over by agents of extreme ideologies, which take advantage of the legitimate indignation of the majority for their own purposes, trying to achieve in this way what they could never achieve through the ballot box. It is not a bad thing that people want to express themselves... But it is important to

point out that it is one thing to engage in noisy protest and it is something completely different to take government decisions that touch on public interest and the common good."

What they are basically saying is that the people have the right to say what they want... as long as they do not threaten the rule of the capitalists and the bankers!! As in every revolution the bourgeois media raises the spectre of "extremist agitators" as the cause for the revolutionary mood amongst the masses. In reality it is the complete bankruptcy of their own system which has created a fertile ground for revolutionary ideas to be adopted by the masses, as we see in Argentina in these days.

Harping on the same theme, *La Nación* of February 17, accuses the movement of assemblies of organising an "undercover coup d'etat". The editorial insists that "it is necessary for Argentineans to calm down and recognise that a country cannot work in a state of permanent popular deliberation." (Why not?) "It is not reasonable that [a neighbourhood assembly] meets to declare the illegitimacy of the president of the Nation, to declare null and void the mandates of all members of parliament without exception and to demand the resignation of all members of the [Supreme] Court." Once again this exposes the real character of what bourgeois democracy means. The people can participate, as long as this participation is limited to voting every few years. But once the people start to actually take affairs into their own hands, then that is a coup! The problem is that the majority of the people in Argentina have voted for every available political option over the last 20 years and none of them has been able to solve the problems facing the majority. Now the masses of workers, unemployed and middle layers have said enough is enough and have started to take matters into their own hands through democratically elected and accountable committees.

The editorials of the bourgeois papers are calling on the government not to make any concessions, since, they argue, this would only further encourage the movement. After violent protests of small savers, who attacked a number of banks in the financial district of Buenos Aires, the government warned that if such actions continued they would use repressive measures. The police has already been used in a number of clashes with the piqueteros. It is clear that this time the ruling class is more prepared than it was in December. This is why it will take a more organised movement to take the revolutionary process forward. The main tasks are those voted at the National Workers' Assembly: the strengthening and spreading of the assemblies and above all the organising of the industrial working class into workers' committees capable of organising a general strike. ◀

# The way forward

A footnote by Alan Woods

**F**rom the above information it is clear that the revolutionary movement in Argentina, far from dying down, is advancing and acquiring an increased breadth and depth. The bourgeoisie and its government are unable to halt it, and are reduced to making dire warnings and threats from the sidelines.

The quotes from La Nación clearly show the growing alarm of the ruling class. They understand from their class point of view what we understand from the standpoint of the working class. It is no accident that La Nación in its editorial columns rages against the popular assemblies, which it correctly sees as embryonic soviets - that is to say, embryonic organs of workers' power. Yes! That is just what they are. The only difference between our analysis and that of La Nación is that this bourgeois paper sees in this something dark and sinister, whereas the working people see in it the only hope of salvation.

The masses, having begun to move, will not stop until all their just demands are met. They have found the appropriate organisational forms through which to express these demands. Moreover, the demands themselves are daily becoming clearer, more concrete and more conscious. The programmes adopted by both the National Assembly of Workers and the meeting of the interbarriales are excellent and correspond exactly to the needs of the moment. Taken in their entirety, they add up to a programme for workers' power. We see here the birth of a new power - a proletarian power - that is growing up within the womb of the old society.

What is the next step? That is also stated implicitly in the above resolutions. It is necessary to spread the movement to every town and village, to every factory, mine and farm. Everywhere the slogan of popular assemblies must be advanced and popularised. But in order that the popular assemblies and the movement of the piqueteros should acquire its full force and sweep, it is imperative that it should be firmly linked to elected workers' committees in the factories.

When we say that the popular assemblies are embryonic soviets, what that means is that they do not yet fully express the movement in the workplaces. But without this, their scope will be too limited to achieve their objectives. The next step must therefore be linked to a serious campaign to step up the formation of elected committees in the workplaces.

This demand will meet with the firm resistance of the trade union bureaucracy. They will not want to see their power undermined by the establishment of rank-and-file committees. But the power of the union apparatus is not absolute. The workers are faced with serious problems. Their wages, conditions and jobs are all under threat. The union leaders can hold back the discontent of the workers for a time - but only for a time.



Sooner or later, the critical point will be reached where the workers will say: So far and no further!

What is absolutely necessary is to link the vanguard firmly to the masses, and to understand that different layers will draw conclusions at different rhythms. The vanguard, active in the popular assemblies and the piqueteros, is in the first line of struggle. They are the shock troops of the revolution. But the heavy battalions of the working class have not yet moved in a decisive way. Of course, they will catch up, but in the meantime it is necessary to avoid going too far ahead of the mass.

The decision to put demands on the leaders of the CCC and the FTV-CTA, who refused to call for this National Assembly, to break any negotiations with the government was very good. But the majority of the organised workers in Argentina are under the control of the Peronist CGT. It is not possible to carry through a revolution in Argentina unless this decisive layer is won over.

The Left in Argentina is traditionally hostile to Peronism, which is quite understandable. But it is one thing to combat the Peronist leaders politically, and quite another to ignore a large part of the organised working class. In the past there have been divisions and splits in Peronism. In the present situation, with a right wing Peronist government carrying out the policies of the IMF there must be serious divisions within the CGT. We must find a road to the rank and file of the CGT workers and win them for the revolutionary road by a skilful application of the united front tactic.

In all this, a key role is being played by the Trotskyists of the PO and other organisations and parties. The convening of the National Assembly of Workers was a great success for the revolutionary vanguard. We salute this success with every possible enthusiasm. We are pleased to say that, whereas we disagreed with the slogan of the constituent assembly, we are in complete agreement with the slogans that were approved last weekend. This gives us every confidence that, on the basis of the above demands, the Argentine revolution is now moving in the right direction. ◀

February 20, 2002



In the last few weeks we have witnessed a debate in the media about the events on Bloody Sunday. Both Sunday & Bloody Sunday were released about the massacre 30 years ago.

### By Brian Conlon

Predictably, right-wing media started a hysterical campaign against these films for provoking the debate around the issues. The Daily Mail was claiming that the TV programmes were only "bloody fantasy", while the more respectable media just call for reconciliation.

The films added fuel to the fire of the most reactionary elements in the ruling class, who started screaming about the outrageous investigation into Bloody Sunday, which simply casts a slur on the glorious role of the British army in Ireland.

The truth is that the British ruling class did not bother to justify the murders of Bloody Sunday, and weren't even interested in maintaining the "facade" of British democracy.

The Labour government promised a full investigation and that has now taken place. However, any genuine independent investigation in Northern Ireland would certainly conclude that the army 'overreacted' (a euphemism for the killing of 14 innocent civilians) during Bloody Sunday. It would also expose the real role of the army in defending the interests of the ruling class.

Both films (Sunday & Bloody Sunday) show the real behaviour of the paras based on the accounts of more than 500 eyewitnesses. The basic evidence

# Bloody Sunday

is that the 1st Parachute Regiment opened fire on unarmed civilian demonstrators on January 30, 1972, killing 13 and wounding many others, one of them died later of his injuries.

The excuse for that massacre (also clear in both films) was a 'banned' march called by the Civil Rights Association against Internment. The British Tory Government in August 1971 introduced internment.

During the civil rights campaign in 1968, the forces of Protestant reaction in the form of the B Specials, started a campaign of violence against the Catholic areas, aimed at splitting the unity between Catholic and Protestant youth and workers.

The RUC, B-Specials and Unionist paramilitaries attempted to suppress the civil rights marches. These campaigns ended up in actual pogroms in the Catholic areas. In Derry especially, the bigoted forces of 'order' clashed with the Derry Citizens Defence Association (DCDA), a self-defence militia led by the apprentices and the youth, through the labour associations.

The Labour Government in 1969 sent in the British army to restore order in the Catholic areas. They were sent to control the situation. Every 'left' trend under the sun, except for the Marxists, supported the deployment of troops. From right wing to far left, all believed that the British army was going to sup-

port the Catholics. The left of the Labour Party, 'Tribune', even said that the 6,000 troop reinforcements were not enough. The sectarian groups on the fringes of the labour movement also praised the troops because "the troops do not have the same ingrained hatreds of the RUC and B Specials" and they "will not behave with the same viciousness..." They were later forced to eat their words given the brutal repression dished out by British troops. They forgot the real role of the British army. Just as in Kosovo or now in Afghanistan, they are there to defend the interests of the British ruling class, even if that means killing innocent people.

Only the Marxists and the Derry Young Socialists understood at that time, the British army was incapable of achieving anything except the defence of the interests of the British ruling class.

### 30 years later...

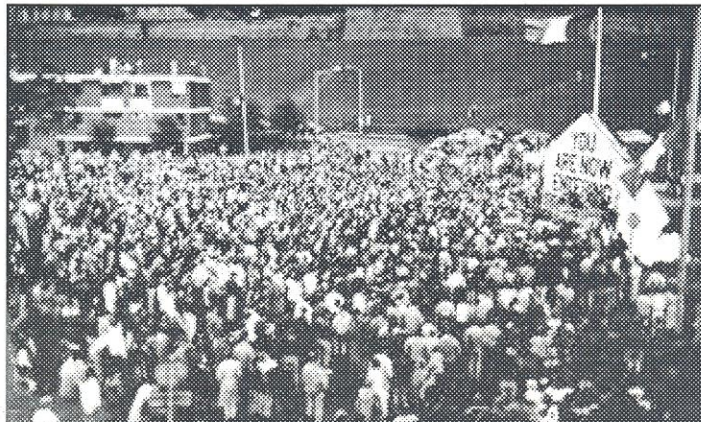
The enquiry into Bloody Sunday has started 30 years late. Vital evidence has disappeared. The rifles used on that day were destroyed by a "computing error". The two films demonstrate - though not consciously - that only a united movement of the working people can solve the problems of Catholic and Protestant. Tom Paulin, a Protestant poet, in a debate following the film pointed out that

the temporary solutions tried in the past do not work. He also talked about Palestine and the "temporary" solution in Afghanistan. Bloody Sunday was an important landmark in Irish history. Thousands of youth driven to a frenzy by the actions of British imperialism, and betrayed by the Labour leaders, flooded into the Provisional IRA. Their policies of individual terrorism, rather than offering a solution, simply created a greater sectarian divide and the strengthening of the state.

Only a united movement of the working class and the youth can offer a way forward. In 1968/69 the struggle for civil rights involved the big majority of the population, Catholic and Protestant. The fear of such a united class movement was the real motive for the British ruling class sending in troops.

In the last few weeks we have again seen a massive movement in the North against sectarianism. There were huge demonstrations in January of 30,000 in Belfast, and 5,000 in Derry, marching against the assassination of a Catholic postal worker by Unionist paramilitaries. Both marches contained Protestant and Catholic trade unionists. In Omagh, a 40,000-strong march (the biggest ever) against the closure of a hospital showed the potential of the united working class struggle in the North.

Capitalism cannot provide jobs, decent housing, health-care, or decent education for the working people of Ireland. Labour must put forward a class based programme to unite the workers of Ireland, to take power from the hands of the corrupt capitalists, and smash their poison of religious sectarianism. Only when the workers run society for the benefit of society and not for the profit of a few, can we begin to eradicate the social problems, and put an end to religious bigotry and sectarianism once and for all. ◀



# Trotsky and the origins of Trotskyism

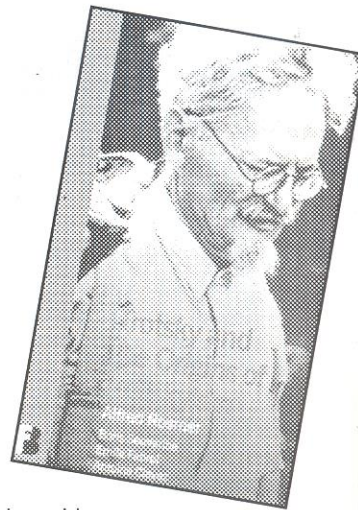
(Alfred Rosmer, etc.)  
Francis Boutle 2002

When Trotsky wrote his autobiography 'My Life' the account stopped at 1929. So it made sense when a French edition was being prepared in 1953 to fill in the missing years up to Trotsky's death in Mexico. Since Trotsky himself could not obviously do this, the task fell to his great friend and supporter Alfred Rosmer. Rosmer himself was well positioned to do this. Coming from a syndicalist background he had joined the French Communist Party and played a leading role in it, attending a number of the important international congresses (recounted in his very readable book 'Lenin's Moscow'). Joining the Left Opposition from the start, he was one of the first to alert the world to Stalin's battle to consolidate power. Although he was only briefly a Trotskyist as such, he nevertheless remained personally supportive and friends

with Trotsky up until Trotsky's murder in 1940. As such he felt it was important that the updating of My Life should, as far as possible, reflect what Trotsky would have written had he been in a position to do so. The additional five chapters of the book prepared by Rosmer by and large use Trotsky's own words (culled from various speeches and articles) to tell the story. Where this was not possible, Rosmer writes from what he would have considered Trotsky's position to be, even if (as the introduction notes) it was not a line he personally would have held.

Until now these additional chapters have not been available in English. With the publication of 'Trotsky and the Origins of Trotskyism' this has finally been rectified under the title of 'On the planet without a visa.' Also included in this book is a number of articles by Emile Fabrol, also trans-

lated from French, on the early struggle against Stalinism in France and Russia alongside articles from the period itself written by Rosmer and Boris Souvarine, etc.. As such this book represents an excellent addition to the core of available books on this subject as well as an important supplement to Trotsky's 'My Life' itself. Certainly anything which helps combat the mass of academic pot-boilers which have been knocked out over the last decade, from the likes of Figes, Pipes and so on, whose sole role is to belittle the Russian Revolution, is to be welcomed. ◀



## Surrealism Against The Current

(Edited by Richardson and Fijatkowski) Pluto Press 2001



Published to coincide with the recent retrospective on Surrealism

held at the Tate

Modern in London, this new collection of Surrealist writings and documents attempts to correct the imbalance of that exhibition. By concentrating on desire and the way in which that emotion could unlock the unconscious mind, the exhibition - intentionally or otherwise - sought to diminish the political side of surrealism. Yet as we see from a reading of these documents the Surrealists themselves did not see politics as being anything other than central to their thinking. Arising out of the post World War One wreckage of Dadaism, the Surrealists sought to give order and purpose to the ideas of internal exploration raised by that anarchic movement and its application of irony and contradiction as a means to spark new chains of thought. Surrealism is not noted for any one particular style but rather for their belief in the

heightening of reality and the need to have a collective view on all questions. This belief in coming to a joint point of view was linked to the importance of the revolutionary struggle. Although, as the book notes, they moved from Anarchism to Communism to Trotskyism, they themselves maintained a largely consistent political point of view during the 1920s and 30s. For those artists who were organised as Surrealists rather than just influenced by it, this was an essential part of their work. To liberate the mind they had to change the material world, "... to smash its fetters if necessary with material hammers" (French Surrealists 1925).

The temptation is to believe that since the world of surrealism is on the face of it so weird (the very word is after all used as a shorthand description for anything odd or out of the ordinary) they were stuck in some sort of permanent dream world. In fact they saw the exploration of dreams, the use of language and the application of chance and spontaneity as a means to make everything real and material. Rather than separate the different levels of existence they wished to

link them together, seeing in them an expression of the dialectic and the struggle of contradiction. During the 1930s the Surrealists attacked both the rise of Fascism and the criminal acts of Stalin, attacking the Moscow trials and defending Trotsky, with whom Andre Breton - one of the leading thinkers of surrealism - would collaborate on a number of projects and statements. Given the strong links between the French intelligentsia and the Stalinized PCF, this stand was nothing if not admirable.

Today it is possible to see Surrealism, along with Cubism and Abstract Art, as one of the most influential art movements of the 20th Century. However this book serves to remind us that the political conclusions drawn by the surrealists were as important as the art itself. As the 1930 statement of the Yugoslav surrealists put it, quoting from another revolutionary thinker, "... the philosophers have until now only interpreted the world. The point, however, is to change it." ◀

Reviews by Steve Jones

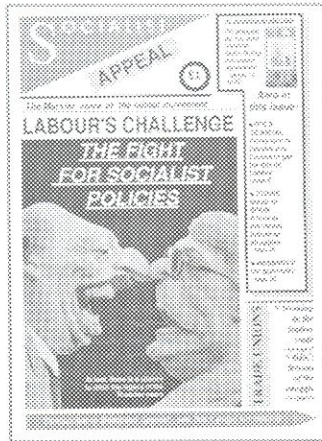
# 'Socialist Appeal' Tenth Anniversary Special £5,000 Appeal

Ten years ago this month a small group of activists gathered in a small smoke-free North London office to wait for an important delivery. As the evening wore on nerves started to set in. The reason? they were all awaiting the arrival of the van carrying copies of the first ever issue of *Socialist Appeal*. Phone calls were received reporting on the progress: "they are all bundled up... we are on the motorway... with you in about an hour." Finally at about 10.00 pm there was a hooting of a horn followed by the sight of comrades coming through the door carrying batches of journals. With an hour the first sale had been made, to a trade union activist at Liverpool Street Station.

We were on our way. At the time all we had was that small office in Islington and our ideas. Many wondered if we would get past issue one let alone get to issue one hundred. The very idea of producing a serious Marxist journal written by and for Labour Party and trade union activists and youth seemed crazy to some. A journal which would seek to defend the best traditions of Marxism as seen in the Labour Party Young Socialists, in Merseyside around the struggle of the City Council, in the Miners strike of 84-5 and beyond that wherever workers and youth had moved into conflict with the capitalist system - both here and internationally.

Despite the odds against us, we were confident. We were standing on the traditions, methods and ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky and more recent Marxists such as Ted Grant. However that confidence had to be matched by sacrifice. Our forces were few, our resources fewer.

Over the next ten years we would have to dig deep to



issue no 1

achieve what we have now. First we moved to larger offices although with the journal still being printed in Leicester. Then following a further move of offices in 1994 we obtained a copier printer with which we could print the journal and other material ourselves. Soon after our friends at Wellred books began the job of starting to produce such works as 'Reason In Revolt.' Finally as the decade drew to a close - and following yet another move of office! - we obtained our first proper printing press, achieved on the back of a major fund raising drive and some much needed loans from supporters. With this we were able to print journals, pamphlets, posters and leaflets to a much higher level than before. It also meant we could - and can - take on commercial work. At the same time the world famous website 'In Defence Of Marxism' was established at [www.marxist.com](http://www.marxist.com), followed later by other linked sites and the setting up of an online socialist book shop. During this time YFIS started to develop as a focus for youth seeking an alternative to the lies of big business and Blairism. At the end of the millennium year we completed, again after a massive financial drive, our most recent move of office - this time to a two storey premises



issue no 50

complete with purpose built print shop.

Of course that is not the end of the story. During the past year we have spent a lot of time and money on improving our premises and bringing them up to scratch. Our Xmas appeal had a target of £4000. This was needed to cover some urgent building work and essential purchases. At the end of January we had reached £2939 which with the various pledges still outstanding of £1090 pounds would mean we had hit the target. But those pledges need to be redeemed. More importantly we now turn to the target for our 10th anniversary appeal.

We are launching a drive, around the series of events and meetings to mark our anniversary, to raise £5000 towards building up the capital reserves of our journal. A major meeting is planned for May 2nd at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, London. Adding on the outstanding pledges from Xmas gives us a total figure to be raised of £6090. This can be reached if everybody contributes. Already we have in 654 quid towards it. Please send what you can to us at Socialist Appeal, PO Box 2626 London N1 7SQ



issue no 87

(cheques made payable to *Socialist Appeal*)

The task is clear. Around the world workers are moving into struggle. The events in Argentina shows that the new world disorder is indeed worldwide in its character and the response undeniable - the need for socialism. In Britain we can see workers in the Post Office, Railways, Tubes, Civil service, schools and colleges, etc. moving into action to an extent not seen for over a decade. The watered down Tory policies of Blairism are also under attack as workers ask - why are we still being offered privatisation as a solution? what about our schools and NHS? They have no answer. *Socialist Appeal* is here to provide that answer. Why not help us. To mark our 10th anniversary we are asking both for donations of financial support and for physical support - to help sell *Socialist Appeal*. Why not join us. Contact us now to arrange a bulk order of *Socialist Appeal* to sell at your workplace, school or college, Labour Party or union branch or just to your mates. Even a few sales will help - it all adds up in the fight for socialism. Forward to the next 10 years! Forward to Socialism!

Steve Jones

# Socialist Appeal Fights for



- ✎ **For a Labour government with a bold socialist programme!** Labour must break with big business and Tory economic policies. Vote Labour and fight to reclaim the party.
- ✎ **A national minimum wage of at least two-thirds of the average wage.** £6.00 an hour as a step toward this goal, with no exemptions.
- ✎ **Full employment!** No redundancies. The right to a job or decent benefits. For a 32 hour week without loss of pay. No compulsory overtime. For voluntary retirement at 55 with a decent full pension for all.
- ✎ **No more sell offs.** Reverse the Tories privatisation scandal. Renationalise all the privatised industries and utilities under democratic workers control and management. No compensation for the fat cats, only those in genuine need.
- ✎ **The repeal of all Tory anti-union laws.** Full employment rights for all from day one. For the right to strike, the right to union representation and collective bargaining.
- Election of all trade union officials with the right of recall. No official to receive more than the wage of a skilled worker.
- ✎ **Action to protect our environment.** Only public ownership of the land, and major industries, petro-chemical enterprises, food companies, energy and transport, can form the basis of a genuine socialist approach to the environment.
- ✎ **A fully funded and fully comprehensive education system under local democratic control.** Keep big business out of our schools and colleges. Free access for all to further and higher education. Scrap tuition fees. No to student loans. For a living grant for all over 16 in education or training.
- ✎ **The outlawing of all forms of discrimination.** Equal pay for equal work. Invest in quality childcare facilities available to all. Scrap all racist immigration and asylum controls. Abolish the Criminal Justice Act.
- ✎ **The reversal of the Tories' cuts in the health service.** Abolish private health care. For a National Health Service, free to all at the point of need, based on the nationalisation of the big drug companies that squeeze their profits out of the health of working people.
- ✎ **Reclaim the Labour Party!** Defeat Blairism! Fight for Party democracy and socialist policies. For workers' MPs on workers' wages.
- ✎ **The abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords.** Full economic powers for the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly, enabling them to introduce socialist measures in the interests of working people. P No to sectarianism. For a Socialist United Ireland linked by a voluntary federation to a Socialist Britain.
- ✎ **Break with the anarchy of the capitalist free market.** Labour to immediately take over the "commanding heights of the economy." Nationalise the big monopolies, banks and financial institutions that dominate our lives. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of need. All nationalised enterprises to be run under workers control and management and integrated through a democratic socialist plan of production.
- ✎ **Socialist internationalism.** No to the bosses European Union. Yes to a socialist united states of Europe, as part of a world socialist federation.

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The Marxist voice of the labour movement



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# Socialist Appeal

Marxist  
voice of the  
labour movement

## NUJ Bradford strike shows the way

**F**ive industrial action ballots at national and local newspapers have been announced as journalists step up their pay campaign in the wake of the successful recent action in Bradford.

NUJ members at the Bradford Telegraph and Argus won significant concessions following their stoppage last month and news of their success has spread to other workplaces where journalists are now set to ballot in a bid to win improved pay.

At the *Wakefield Express*, where a number of junior reporters still earn under £10,000, management have already come up with two new offers faced with the mere threat of action.

Journalists at the *Yorkshire Post* have voted to ballot over the company's refusal to negotiate a pay banding structure and at Greater Manchester Weekly Newspapers union members have rejected the company's pay offer and are set to ballot.

It is the same story at the *Lancashire Evening Gazette* in Preston where NUJ members are set to ballot over the company's imposed pay award.

Ballot papers are to be sent to 260 union members at the *Daily Express*, *Sunday Express* and *Daily Star* with a result expected in mid-March. The NUJ has rejected the company's 1.8% pay offer.

These ballots show a new confidence among NUJ members. This is the first time in a decade that journalists have threatened strike action at local papers over pay. With thousands more journalists now covered by recognition agreements there is a determination to begin to address the low pay issue. Recent surveys show one in seven journalists earning under £12,500 a year.

As *UK Press Gazette*, the trade paper said recently, "Bradford has become the focal point for an issue that isn't going to disappear. Whatever the outcome, one thing seems certain: that journalists want their voices to be heard over pay."



Stalingrad O'Neill

NUJ General Secretary Jeremy Dear said: "Bradford has been an inspiration to many young local newspaper journalists who have tried to secure better pay by working hard, seeking merit rises and by individual negotiation.

"They've seen all their hard work go unrewarded while companies continue to make considerable profits. In Bradford the company made £6 million profit last year.

"Now many are saying we will have to take action to improve pay. Bradford has shown that where members stand together and act together they can succeed. They will have the full support of the union in fighting for better pay." ◀

by a NUJ member



### T&G election victory

Dawn Stuart, a young Belfast City Council worker, and Marxist, has been successfully elected to the national leadership, the GEC, of the T&GWU. After her victory Dawn spoke to *Socialist Appeal*.

[www.newyouth.com](http://www.newyouth.com)

Youth for International Socialism