

SOCIALIST VOICE

**Journal Of The International Socialist League
British Section Of The IWL (FI)**

The Energy and Determination of Youth, 30,000 Strike Against Workfare.



- This Issue**
- ★ P&O Fight Continues
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Seafarers' Maintain The Fight

The seafarers are determined to maintain the strike in spite of refusal by the leadership of the Labour Party and the Trade Unions. The very pattern of this dispute has copied the pattern of the situation of the working class in this country as a whole.

The formula is a very simple one. It starts off with the Capitalist Class through employers sympathetic to the Government enforcing oppressive and unacceptable demands upon the workers. The leaders of the organisations representing the workers, instead of confronting the government and industry over these measures, scramble for ways to capitulate or sell off its work force. The rank and file is left to rebuild their organisations not as before but as real class organisations.

STATE TRIES TO KILL OFF STRIKE

The latest development in the seafarers' struggle had been centred on the legal definition of picketing. The NUS, under the leadership of Sam McCluskie, attempted, on their knees, to reclaim the sequestered money from the courts. Their greatest surrendering point has been the calling off of the national strike (in order, perhaps, to ensure the continuation of their wages). The courts, however, rejected the reclaiming of the assets of the NUS on the grounds that the scene at Dover on the picket line could be seen as intimidating. This resulted in the courts and the NUS leadership agreeing with the recommendation of having only 6 pickets on a picket line.

After a number of secret meetings between the NUS and the striking seafarers at Dover, the leadership failed to get the strikers to agree to this further regressive and capitulatory step. It has resulted in the police increasing their numbers and denying access to certain areas used by pickets in an effort to snuff out the dispute.

However, the seafarers refused to give in to these forces and have continued daily pickets of 500 people, weekly meetings, the running of soup kitchens and the successful maintenance of support groups. At least one NUS leader in Dover has resigned over the radical stance of the strike.

In Belgium a one day strike on the 3rd of June took place on P&O ships, over the same issue that P&O tried to enforce in Britain. The Social Security has, throughout the dispute, refused to pay any money to the strikers and also refused to give a reason why. The NUS are now proceeding legally in an attempt to claim for unfair dismissal (this is after being fired at least three times in the dispute).

BOYCOTT THEIR SHIPS

One of the mutually agreed areas for proceeding has been to call for a commercial war against P&O. To this end, we must inform the public of the danger involved in traveling on vessels where one third of the working seafarers are new to the industry. Clearly the company is more concerned with profit than with safety (recently we have seen the results of this, when a fire occurred at sea).

On 15th June, the striking seafarers struck a blow to the management of P&O following a TV broadcast the preceding day which quoted the P&O director saying that the strike was over and everybody has returned to work. At midday on the 15th there was a mass picket of over 600 people. Two hours later, a coach-load of fellow seafarers, disguised as a rugby team, boarded one of the boats to take videos and make interviews. The seafarers came from all over the country.

The resulting video highlights the lack of safety procedures followed on board the understaffed vessels. For example, the fire extinguishers had not been checked for eighteen months. Furthermore members of the crew said that they would tell passengers to report to the information desk in case of emergency because they were unsure about proper procedure.

Until the ordinary members decide otherwise, the strike is not over! Regardless of the pronouncements of the Labour Party, the TUC only the seafarers can decide. They have decided to fight on.

- * Boycott all companies connected with the P&O (contact seafarers for the full list).
- * For a national delegates port committee conference with the six seafarers support groups.
- * For a national strike of seaman.
- * Build workers support groups.

P&O
European Ferries
JOB OFFER



- * 16 hours work minimum per day
 - * no payment for overtime
 - * statutory holidays to be worked as normal with no extra pay
 - * no guaranteed rest
 - * must be available for recall when off duty
 - * £25 per week less than last year
 - * no guarantee for a summer holiday
 - * must be able to cross picket lines
- and if you don't accept you will be SACKED!**





Don't forget what the strikers face every day

Warm Reception For P&O Strikers

In June four seafarers from the Thanet support group visited Greater Manchester. They were given a warm reception in all the factories, and the labour movement meetings they attended and spoke at, raising nearly £1500 during their visit.

Socialist Voice believes that every worker has a duty to maintain and deepen support for the seafarers. It became obvious during the visit that not all the support is reaching the seafarers. The TUC hardship fund is receiving money donations from the labour movement, but that money is only reaching the strikers in drips and drabs.

The addresses of the support groups are not apparently widely known amongst workers. We are therefore printing them on this page.

Robert Hoble of the Thanet support group made the following comments on the strike and his visit to Manchester, "I enjoyed my visit very much. It was my first time in Manchester and it has been an experience to see the amount of support and money we are raising here. I believe we are going to win the strike and for this we need the support from all the areas throughout the UK".

On the strike itself Robert Hoble went on to say, "The strike is very solid 900 people are involved and their spirit is very high. A lot of people were upset by the calling off of the national strike. When the lawyer came down and told us to leave the picket lines he was told where to go! He had to say it but if he had said it one more time he would not have been standing there much longer".

On the question of safety the striker commented, "Just two years ago the company told ACAS (Arbitration and Conciliation Advice Service) that twentyfour hours without rest would compromise the safety of the ship and its passengers and its crew. So how can it be safe today? The twenty four hour on / twenty four hour off without annual leave could only increase tiredness. During the twenty four hours on board ten hours and designated for rest meals and sleep but this is not guaranteed and in practice would be virtually impossible. Another one they had thrown in is to detain the crew on board if any relief do not report for work. It would be a floating prison.

When they use the new ferries two thousand people can be on board and we would have one hour to clean before the new load arrives"

On the question of the organisation of the strike he said, "we have six support groups and we meet every week to discuss how things are going and to organise activities. The spirit among the families is very good and we are getting complete support".

The names and addresses of the support groups are as follows:

Aylsham Support Group, 61 Castle Drive, Whitfield, Dover, Kent. Tel: 0263-840202.

Canterbury Support Group, 75 Tenterden Drive, Canterbury, Kent. Tel: 0227-66768.

Deal Support Group, Magness House, Mill Hill, Deal, Kent. Tel: 0304-367840.

Dover Support Group, 210 London Road, Dover, Kent. Tel: 0304- 214113.

Folkestone Support Group, 7 Tennyson Place, folkstone, Kent. Tel: 030351997.

Thanet Support Group, 147 High Street, Ramsgate, Kent. Tel:0843- 587990.

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For This Issue

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Peter Money

John Owen

Martin Ralph

Simon Cohen

Editorial

One story featuring in this issue of the Socialist Voice is the increasingly sharp struggle of the youth and the unemployed against the slave labour schemes of the Tory Government.

The TUC role in snaring and enslaving the youth on government schemes has been the worst betrayal of all. Instead of fighting to maintain and develop apprenticeships under trade union control, they have used the trade unions to help keep the youth under government control.

On this issue they have been betraying the youth for at least fifteen years. Many union officials have made a living out of the sweat of the youth, they help monitor one of the most dangerous of all work places. It was the MSC schemes that were the original green sites perhaps where Hammond took his inspiration from.

They have worked hand in glove with an army of hired "professionals", eager to ride the gravy-train of super-exploitation.

What they started Hammond is finishing in trying to establish a force for union busting

Truly those on the dole are beginning to feel the brunt of capitalism as in Latin America or any of the semi-colonial countries. International monopolies search the globe for and demand cheap labour.

Yet government survives because of the bureaucracy and on having an open house for all the predatory capitalists going. In some of these monopolies they are openly paying the wages of trade union officials. Yet imperialism has no choice, it is driven to survive itself by the most depraved attacks on workers and the oppressed. It is this example that Thatcher follows.

There is no way back to full employment, only a continuous struggle will put an end to the Government and regenerate the trade unions as the organisations of a proud class.

All the union leaders, all workers should be asked which side are you on, for or against the youth and their campaign for dignity and proper training.

For these attacks will increase, not decrease. Bourgeois economists try to conjure up a thriving economy based on the statistics of wages growing by more than 8 per cent, the economy growing at a good rate and inflation at a 'low' level. But we are not living in a boom. Whatever gains workers achieve they can only be maintained by a continuous struggle against this government and the bureaucratic leadership of the unions, any stability is short lived.

The October crash of the American stock exchange revealed a number of trends that will crush any remaining independence of the

British economy. **The United States shake out benefited the multi-nationals, the dollar has been allowed to fall in order for the American imperialist to gain ground in the fight against the economies of Japan and Germany.**

They have been temporarily successful, Japan's exports to America have fallen by over 20%. In Europe of course the exports have been maintained.

In Britain imports exceeded exports in April by \$1.1bn and by \$4.86bn in the first four months.

In this development of imperialist rivalry these countries will develop more and more protectionist measures. As for instance in the high tech industries of America. Yet any such moves will only exacerbate their crisis.

The only way to understand what is really hitting at workers time and again is to understand that imperialism is in crisis world wide, Britain reflects some of these crisis in a sharp form. Certainly there can be no British solution to the problems facing workers.

Yet time and again we find the British exceptionalism within the workers movement. At the socialist conference at Chesterfield it appeared again, what we got was a British solution to the crisis facing workers not that there were many workers there. And possibly even less discussion of the struggles of the working class now taking place. At trade union discussions or at the international sections how the workers movement is built to defeat Thatcher and what stage the movement is passing through never really got mentioned. It was more a left version of 'new realism'.

Workers in every continent are suffering the same fate, the same conditions. As the youth on slave labour schemes will have to develop the slogan on the sites where they work "if one scheme is attacked workers on all schemes hit back" so workers internationally will have to give each other increasing support.

MINERS SPEED-UPS

Super-exploitation is not only hitting the youth, all workers are facing the same threat. In the mines the coal board is insisting on seven days working, 24 hours a day and flexible rostering. Injuries are on the increase as miners strive to keep money coming into the family. Meanwhile the right-wing are organising to force the miners to accept the new practices.

Yet while the majority of miners are against this, the right-wing have taken control of the national executive. So to defend wages and conditions miners are facing the same fight

for union democracy as is coming up in so many other unions. This forces the issue of the fight for leadership of the union - in whose interest is it run?

YOUTH IN THE FOREFRONT

As we see from Palestine to south Africa the youth are in the forefront of the fight. The regeneration of the trade unions, the winning of new members is connected with the youth. It is the youth that have the determination and the energy to rebuild the trade union movement.

Unions should open their doors and place the unions at the disposal of the youth in their fight against the hated schemes. It is the only way they can regain their honour and more important the support of the youth. Already they are leading the workers movement in the fight against workfare - 30,000 went on strike in June.

By that fact alone they have placed themselves head and shoulders above the union bureaucracy, when was the last time that they lead a movement of even thirty against the schemes. Many of the left union leaders have also accepted the betrayal of the youth, yet they can have no solution to the questions now facing the working class without the turn to the youth - that is the responsibility of all workers and Socialist Voice will assist all forces that are making that turn.

News from Germany

News from Germany puts emphasis on the vicious nature of capitalism. Germany is one of the leading the capitalist nations on the planet, leading that is in exploitation. Many readers will have seen the terrible disaster of a west German mine. Now we learn that the families of the dead Turkish miners have another trial reminiscent of Germany 40 years ago. Since they can longer be supported they are being deported to Turkey. Europe - advanced capitalism, advanced 'culture' and advanced cynicism.

Listings :- Socialist Voice

S.O.S Swim or Sink N.U.S. social and fund-raiser, on Thursday 7th July 8pm. At the AEU Club, Eccles (behind bingo). Salford seafarers support group. Donations to :- SSSG c/o AEU, 43 the Crescent, Salford 5.

Mersey-side Anti-Apartheid Weekend. 16th July - Sat. - 12.00 noon. Assemble at St. Georges Plateau - For Solidarity March to Granby Fields - Speakers + excellent bands.

17th July - Mandela Freedom Festival - Takes place on Granby Fields - Bands and good food be there.

ARGENTINA - TROTSKYISM UNITES WORKERS IN STRUGGLE. VIDEO OF: VIBRANT MAYDAY RALLY OF 20,000 - NATIONAL ARGENTINA TEACHERS STRIKE AGAINST 'WAGES OF HUNGER'.

NUT Broad Left Shift Right

Our aim is to "reduce militancy" Doug McAvoy has said during the run-up to the National Union of Teachers special conference, giving the lie to all those claims of the bureaucracy concerning the 'deep financial crisis' of the union.

The voting at the conference in June shows that to impose the will of the majority of the national executive on the membership will be no easy thing.

They did get through the regional changes, centralised collection of dues and the reduction in legal services. Yet how these will be implemented is still to be determined, the size of the vote against shows important struggles lie ahead.

The final vote of 101,000 to 80,000 for the package does show the widespread opposition in the union. If the bureaucracy had allowed more time for discussion in the run



Teachers fighting against governments and bureaucracy everywhere

up to the conference they may have been defeated. They were defeated on the proposal to change the structure and occurrence of national conference.

BROAD LEFT TAKE OVER

As the Campaign for a Democratic Fighting Union said: "The real objectives of the re-organisation are to shift the balance of power in the union from ordinary members to senior full-time officers and the controlling political group on the Executive".

The political group here is the broad left, which has taken over, or rather become, the right wing in the NUT.

Education however is continually under attack by the Tory Government. They are determined to dismantle what has been achieved in education. Their system demands it.

As can be seen from Italy, Spain and Argentina, where teachers have been involved in struggles over pay conditions, class size and many other issues, today capitalism is forced to attack the gains of the international working class embodied in the welfare state and education.

That is why new levels of attack will be on the agenda and the attacks by the NUT lead-

ership is only a welcome sign by the Tories for increasing the rate of dismantling of education sooner rather than later.

It is not only the new power for governors, opting out but how these developments will be viciously built on. The privatisation of education is based on strict centralisation by government with strict local control of education by the tory hatchet. Are the plans for union restructuring based on these ideas?

The threat to colleges in Hereford and Worcester is one example of this form of control where the county council is demanding:

An extra 5 hours a week

An eight week increase in the working year

The right to change an individuals working conditions.

All this is sold for £530 a year. We are seeing the opening moves to rapidly increase the exploitation of teachers and as a part of

this develop for education the sort of job flexibility in Japanese car firms and deals made by the EEPTU.

SELF PROTECTION

It is not that the ruling group is demoralised and under estimates the fighting capacity of the membership as some say.

On the contrary the question for them is how to keep the membership under control. In other words it now feels the need for new structures in order to police the membership. It will act, rule changes or no rule changes, in an increasingly undemocratic manner.

The ruling group is on the same path as Jordan of the AEU. No one should have any illusions as to where these anti-democratic moves are leading the union.

This is why the Campaign for a Democratic and Fighting Union is an important development. In the campaign over the fight for union democracy and accountability it makes common cause with one of the principles that is at the heart of all workers struggles- who controls? The membership or the bureaucracy.

* Fight to keep control of the local areas.

* Maintain union democracy at all levels.

Jim Stead

Bank Union Goes For Profit

BIFU the bank clerks union, at its Annual Delegates Conference in May, decided amongst other things to change its position on profit related pay. Previously the union had maintained the principled position of opposing any deals which linked its members take-home pay to its employers profits.

During the debate on this issue delegates highlighted that no-profits would mean no pay. Banks also have never given anything for nothing and clearly they know that profit related pay is good for them.

At one time a bank clerk counted bank notes and balanced ledgers nowadays some of their employees expect them to be high-pressure salesmen in the world of credit. Their pay will be increasingly determined by the number of loans and services they arrange.

In the event BIFU has decided to sell out its members. Its has decided to follow a line of least resistance. The pro-profit related pay argument is that the banks are implementing such schemes without union recognition and it is best to bring schemes into negotiations: BIFU's form of 'new realism'.

In reality bank staff have become increasingly under pressure and wholesale implementation of profit related pay will result in unendurable degrees of pressure on staff. Union staff should discuss how this can be opposed and organised against.

* Fight the pay-profits deal.

Peter Windeler

£500 I.S.L. Fund

We are part of the International Workers League (Fourth International), which is based on the international struggles of workers and oppressed.

We urge all our readers and sympathizers to make a donation or pledge, if you agree with the paper and want to help us build in this country. Please make all postal orders/cheques payable to :-

Socialist Voice and send them to -
P.O. BOX.18. Stockport, SK6.4DH.

Non-intimate Body Samples

Socialist Voice applauds the heroism of the I.R.A. members who went deep into the heart of a loyalist area in the North of Ireland to plant the Lisburn bomb. The policy of I.R.A. is aiming at legitimate targets such as the British army stands in stark contrast to the British ruling class who is waging war on the entire nationalist community.

Tory spokesman, Tom King, said after the bombing: "The I.R.A. have no depths to which they will not sink". He was echoed in this sentiment by those worthy 'socialists' in the Labour Party with Kevin McNamara, Labour's Northern Ireland spokesman, leading the cries of condemnation within the 'opposition'. These Parliamentary defenders of so-called democracy were curiously silent during the trial by bullet in Gibraltar by forces of the British state against 3 unarmed members of the I.R.A.

But the depths to which the British ruling-class will sink in its attempt to suppress the Nationalist community in the 6 counties knows no bounds. The latest 'democratic' proposal by the Tories is an amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill which would enable the R.U.C. to force prisoners in the North of Ireland into genetic tests. In practice this would mean forcing down the lower lip of a prisoner and taking mouth swabs for genetic testing. This barbaric action would remain illegal in England, Scotland and Wales, where mouth swabs are considered 'intimate body samples'. However the proposal, in the words of a spokesman from the Northern Ireland Office "would make them non-intimate in Northern Ireland only".

RACIST

The apologists for British imperialism in the Labour Party have gone as far as openly supporting this racist proposition. It has been left to the traditionally conservative British



Medical Association (BMA) to condemn the proposal as against medical ethic and advice their members not to comply with it..

Under the proposal it would not even be necessary to obtain a court order for the police to take this action - **authorisation would come from the police themselves.**

As a further demonstration of the commitment to democracy within the British establishment, samples would not be destroyed even in cases where the prisoner is released without charge. The National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCCL), in condemning the proposal, said: "Most people held under the prevention of terrorism are released without charge". They are concerned that the security forces would use power to build up their data bank on hundreds of innocent people.

This latest proposal is one in a long line of measures, like strip searching of women prisoners, made in attempt to crush the resistance of the Irish people, in Britain's oldest colony.

All class conscious workers should unreservedly condemn the British enslavement of Ireland and fight for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland in their trade union and Labour Party wards, alongside supporting the struggle for a United Ireland.

Sue Wilson

Break Links with Zionism

A reader of the Socialist Voice, who supports the Palestinian struggle, declares that our journal is wrong to describe the Israeli Government as a "racist" government.

Really our reader cannot be serious. First, the policies of the Israeli government are dominated by the ideology of Zionism, a backward collection of ancient prejudices which declares one small group of the world's inhabitants to be the "chosen people": what is that but a racist ideology? **The right wing fanatical Zionist groups to whom the Government defers are not only racist, but genocidal.**

The Israel state is an apartheid state, it operates two separate systems of laws, a system of arbitrary repression by police and settlers for the Arabs, and a bourgeois democratic system for the Jewish population.

More than 2,000 Palestine community leaders have been interned, Jewish settlers can kill Palestinians with impunity. In one example five Jewish settlers armed with machine guns strolled through an Arab village and killed a shepherd. That was on June 3rd and no one has been arrested.

When a Jewish girl settler was killed near Nablus, all the men in the village were rounded up, thirteen homes were demolished and eight villagers were exiled to the Lebanon.

Like all societies of police rule and brutal repression it must build and encourage racist and reactionary backward ideology, the ideology of slave owners, of concentration camps guards, of South African torturers and priests who bless the "superior" race.

It is important that now more than ever that the labour and trade union movement call upon their organisations to sever all links with the Histadrut (the trade union and employing bureaucracy) and to disaffiliate from Trade Union Friends of Israel such a move has already taken place by NALGO.

The I.S.L., together with other sections of the International Workers League (LIT) takes an unequivocal stand: Israel is an Apartheid racist state. We call on British workers to give unconditional support to the oppressed Palestinians.



Action Needed To Prevent Apartheid Murders

The racist Apartheid regime of South Africa is murdering African leaders abroad, killing and torturing children, trade unionists and fighters at home. Over fifty people now face execution in South Africa for their opposition to the Government. This is the State organised terrorist activity - in addition to that union offices are bombed and leaders abducted and detained. Some have disappeared. Vigilantes, assisted by the regime as well as police, kill workers.

The Government increased its terror with the latest regulation against trade unions and organisations opposed to Apartheid. 17 organisations were banned.

Cosatu is banned from political activity. It cannot campaign against the ban on organisations or for the release of detainees or political prisoners. It cannot, for example, legally participate in the campaign for the release of Moses Mayekiso, General Secretary of the National Union of Metal Workers and chairman of the Alexandra Action Committee. It cannot call for the repeal of death sentences.

The Government is introducing a Labour relations bill to make solidarity strike action illegal and which will legally curb strike action in other ways.

In some cases workers have won a closed shop. The Government is now forcing the rights of minority unions.

The increased terrorism of the South African Government was a response to the surge forward of the masses last year. **Nearly six million workdays were lost since 1985 in strikes and workers formed defence committees in factories, mines and townships.**

A representative of that surge forward was Moses Mayekiso, who has now been in jail for almost two years. Together with four others he faces charges of treason, sedition and subversion.

Mayekiso and his four comrades are attacked by the state for their activities in the Alexandra Action Committee, which was set up by the residents of this black township for their defence.

The state alleges that the accused set up a group of Marshalls which assumed the role of policing the town and that they maintained law and order through 'Peoples courts'.

They are accused of launching rent, consumer and business boycotts and of changing names and streets to Steve Biko, Soviet, Mandela, ANC Lusaka and so on.

Moses Mayekiso's union activity goes back



to 1976. He became a shop steward and after nine years he was elected general secretary of the Metal and Allied Workers Union.

In Short the state has accused him of promoting the view that the working class as the vanguard for liberation should be in the centre of, and in control of, the struggle. He is said to have expressed the view that "the capitalists must be forced into a situation where they are unable to exercise control" and also that "South Africa was ripe for social, economic and political revolution" and that the existing social and economic system should be replaced with a socialist political order.

The state seeks to destroy the most forward leaders of the working class. As well as that it seeks to terrorise the mass of the population. The barbarous South African regime now prepares to bring the Sharpeville Six to the gallows. Their murder will have nothing to do with justice, but everything to do with the plans of the white ruling class of South Africa to protect their rule.

Let us establish first of all that the I.S.L. in common with all those who really support the struggle for African freedom do not consider it a crime if African masses kill collaborators with a regime that is oppressing them. But that the death sentence on the Six is a violent act of oppression is shown very clear by the

fact that none of the Six were directly involved in the killing of the collaborator with the regime.

The plan now to hang these martyrs to African freedom is part of the whole violent and terrorist activity of the Apartheid state against the masses.

Advanced workers in Britain must find ways to move their organisations against the barbarous plans of the Apartheid regime. We could fight for the unions to organise stoppages against the murder of those framed in Sharpeville.

Stop the murders!

Solidarity with South African workers!

STOP PRESS.

6/538 branch of the T&GWU passed a resolution - calling for a one hour stoppage in Liverpool in opposition to the trial of the 'Sharpeville Six' This has gone to an Emergency Trades Council meeting on the 8th. July. Other organisations should follow and build on this lead.

ARGENTINA: FOUR DAYS OF

The biggest workers' party on the left in Argentina - the Movement towards Socialism (M.A.S.) - held its Third Congress in Buenos Aires at the end of May.

The Congress was a lively affair. In the discussion on political perspectives there were over sixty delegates who spoke from the floor. 200 delegates and 700 observers attended the Congress. The gallery of M.A.S. visitors enlivened the intervals with their political songs, many of which commented to the issues before the Congress.

The Movement towards Socialism was formed by Argentine Trotskyists at the end of the murderous military dictatorship in 1983. In the "Balance Sheet of Activities", before the Congress, it was reported that there had been a big advance of the party since the last Congress of 1985. The M.A.S. was the only Argentine Party on the left that grew in this period.

In 1983, the Communist Party was three times the size of the M.A.S., in membership and influence. In the 1987 elections, the Communist Party united with several small parties in an electoral front, but the front polled slightly fewer votes than the M.A.S.

The M.A.S. achieved 230,000 votes

throughout Argentina and made striking successes in the factory belt of Buenos Aires. The Balance of Activities could report an increasing influence in the trade unions.

The Congress agreed that the national situation in Argentina was "*characterised by the fact that the revolutionary situation is becoming more acute and it is deeply expressed by the workers and popular struggles.*" It declared that a new political and trade union leadership of the working class was emerging.

The agreed perspectives concluded: "**A struggle for the leadership of the workers' movement is taking place. In this struggle the party holds a privileged position, the best position of the left, and the best it has held since Alfonsín came to power.**"

NEW TASKS

There was no doubt about the enthusiasm of delegates (and visitors) for the main conclusions of the Congress. The M.A.S. was defined by the Congress as being a "*vanguard party with elements of trade union and political influence on the masses.*" Should now set the task of becoming a mass party.

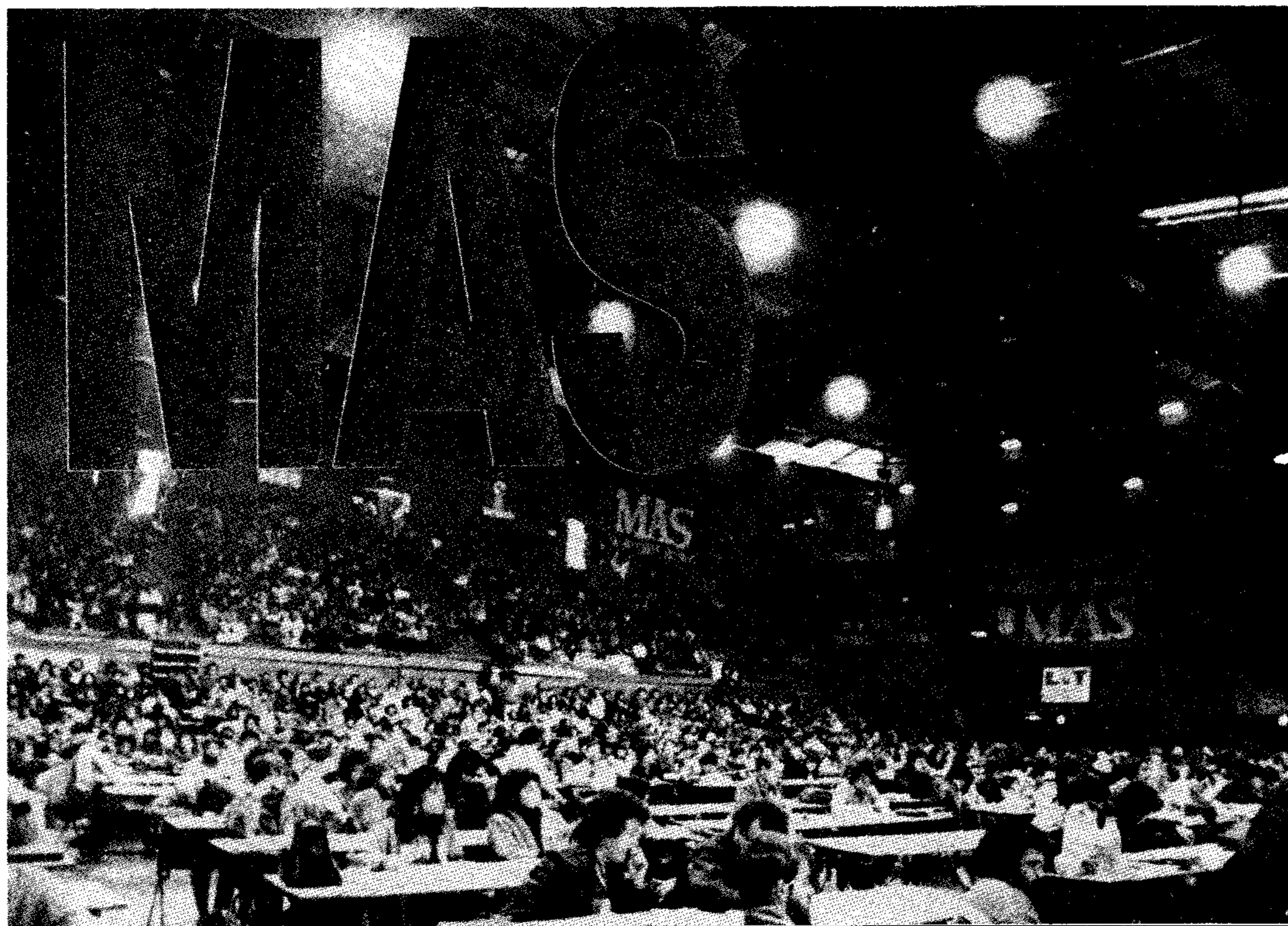
One of the most important and fundamental reasons for the growth of the M.A.S. has been

its participation in almost all of the Argentine workers' and mass struggles. The delegates were able to discuss the prospect of a mass party, seriously and concretely, in the light of their own experiences and in the context of the international and national developments and as part of the International Workers League - Fourth International (I.W.L.-F.I.).

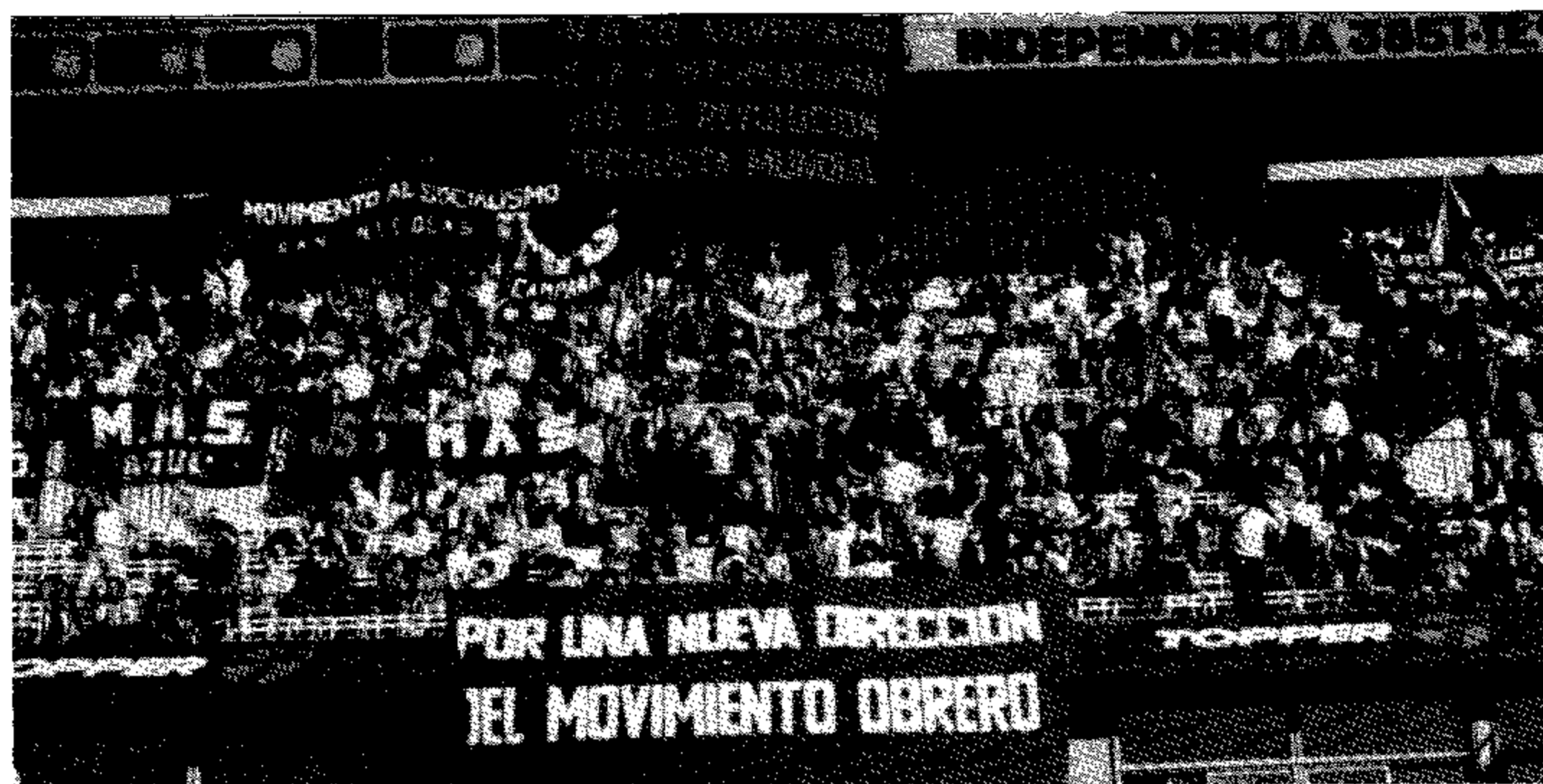
A Central Committee document which had been circulated to the membership in the pre-Congress period declared:

"Insofar as the revolutionary situation deepens and the party gains more strength; insofar as we are leadership, co-leadership, or alternative leadership in some of those struggles, the the greater is our responsibility. For every cell member, for the district and branch leaderships, it is crucial not only to gain involvement in the struggles that emerge, but also to study carefully - wherever we lead, co-lead, or act as an alternative leadership - the slogans, the right time for mobilisation, the workers' actions and the tactics to be applied - solidarity, unity in action, united front, etc. We should remember that thousands of workers are looking to us for alternative leadership."

The Central Committee's statements to the Congress showed in their own nature that this



THE M.A.S. CONGRESS



For a new direction in the workers movement where the base decides

was a party that had taken Trotskyism deep into the masses, they reflected a confidence that could face reality, its own weaknesses and the overcoming of them.

"Agitation must not only be carried out by means of the central leaflets" said one of the documents agreed by the Congress, "we have to complement them with leaflets produced by each cell, by graffiti on the walls, by meetings at the door of the factory or in places where a lot of people meet and by mobilisations. Agitation must be a permanent everyday activity and not only part of the great campaigns. It is the only way that it can 'light every aspect of life' (Lenin: "What is to be done"), so that we can patiently explain to the masses what is going on in the country and also the party programme, starting out with the events reality produces.

"Although the party has made progress in taking up agitation as a constant activity, we are still far behind in the field... Nor do we carry out permanent agitation in squares, railway stations, etc. We'd rather carry out the agitation in strongholds or prospective ones. That is logical, but it is important to understand the decisive role of agitation - it should not be selective but should be for the whole population at this stage. It should enable to us to hold a dialogue with the mass movement in its broadest sense: i.e. so that everybody knows about the party positions in relation to this or that event of national or international policy, as regards to this or that struggle, or this or that problem. Agitation contributes to the political presence of the party and makes it known, so that everybody can comment on its positions and discuss them. Agitation opens up thousands of possibilities and in this way we can politically work in new sectors. It systematically, constantly and persistently strikes into the mass movement, proposing alternatives against the policies posed by the traditional parties.."

PRINCIPLED STRUGGLE

The press in Argentina reflects the concern of its rulers at the growth and influence of the MAS. They contrasted its powerful May Day rally with the inability of the Communist Party to hold a rally and the small meeting of the trade union bureaucracy.

The scribblers could not make much impact when they reported on a minority, supported mainly by students of the MAS in Buenos Aires, which criticised the leadership for not placing sufficient emphasis on the divisions in the trade union bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie.

The delegates were angry that the leaders of the minority went to the bourgeois paper, "Clarín" before the Congress, then refused to attend its sessions and set up a national organisation. When they discussed the minority it was without invective or slander, their aim was to bring out the political questions in the manner of Lenin and Trotsky.

ON THE ROAD TO A MASS PARTY

The Congress discussed the way to a mass party through extending and building up the "strongholds" or "bastions" of the M.A.S. in places of work and neighbourhoods.

In the light of the party's tasks, the Congress decided that local and area revolutionary leadership had to be developed. To this end, it was agreed that the autonomy of the cells (branches in communities and places of work) should be increased, with the purpose of building political leadership in struggles and producing leaflets, and papers and educating the numbers of sympathisers around the party.

In one session of Congress the delegates discussed the M.A.S. tactic for elections of a "Workers and Left Front". They reviewed the experience of the "Front of the People", the electoral front which the M.A.S. had with the Communist Party over two years and which the Stalinist leaders broke when the supported Alfonsín's negotiations with the mili-

tary leaders during their revolt in Easter of last year.

As the central congress document said: "It is a historical opportunity, an opportunity Argentine Trotskyism has never had before. A victorious revolution would have an enormous repercussion on the IWL(FI) and on great sectors of the Latin American vanguard for which the MAS has begun to be a point of reference since we out numbered Stalinism and became the main alternative within the left in Argentina"

• VIDEO • VIDEO • VIDEO • VIDEO •

Video of the May Day Rally and teachers strike in Argentina, filmed by the M.A.S.

20,000 workers and youth celebrate Internationalism in a football stadium in Buenos Aires, plus a vibrant and colourful report of the 600,000 strong teachers fight, that lasted 37 days, against the government's and I.M.F. economic policy.

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Self-determination on the boil

The national question is one of the most explosive ingredients in the crisis of the Stalinist bureaucracy. In the Soviet Union, the bureaucratic repression of national culture over the years now threatens acute struggle and open armed conflict.

There is ferment in Latvia, Armenia and Crimea. Since 1923 all nationalities that have been suppressed will now be pressing for their legitimate demands.

Gorbachev can only answer their demands by the method of the bureaucracy. That is why the Red Army is mobilised against the Armenians.

Internationalism here means there can be no use of force, the Red Army must remain on Russia soil.

ARMENIA OUT OF CONTROL

Since the beginning of the year, there has been in the Armenian Republic a vast popular demand for the return of the region of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan.

Last month, a state of "virtual anarchy" was reported in the Armenian capital. There was a three weeks General Strike. Gerandy Gerasimov, a government spokesman said quite bluntly that the "Soviet and Party bodies have lost control". People patrol the streets and food rationing is in force.

Every morning there are marches of thousands and tens of thousands. The Communist Party youth paper reports that the Theatre Square has become a "speakers' corner". People mount the platform and "say what they like".

A people's insurrection paralysed the bureaucracy, and created a "dual power".

The Armenian Supreme Soviet on the 15th of June voted unanimously to support reunification with the region of Nagorno-Karabakh. Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators were outside the Supreme Soviet building. The intense national feelings in Armenia have brought the Armenian Communist Party leadership into conflict with Moscow bureaucracy.

A ferment on the national question exists throughout the Soviet Republics. Three Soviet provincial party bosses have been sacked recently, the latest being Karl Vaino, CP leader in Estonia.

There have been attempts at demonstrations by Tartars who are demanding to be given back their homeland in the Crimea. 300,000 Tartars were forcibly deported in 1944. A Soviet Government Commission has stated that there is "no grounds" for a separate Crime Republic and declared, with bureaucratic blindness that "the present administrative-territorial division of the country makes it possible to provide for economic and social

development of all ethnic groups."

BUREAUCRATIC SOLUTIONS

For sixty five years the stalinist leadership of the Soviet Union have made such empty statements as they attempted to resolve the national question by bureaucratic centralisation, which, in fact, blocked the "economic and social development of all ethnic groups".

This discontent in the Armenian enclave has behind it years of economic stagnation. The stalinist leaders are incapable of planning development with an open ear to national culture or workers' wishes. Quite the contrary! Gorbachev's measures for resolving the crisis must collide with national aspirations and with the working class.

The problems which the brutal dictatorship of Stalin appeared to suppress are now bursting to the surface. With marxist realism, Trotsky quite clearly outlined the problem of the nationalities which faced the Soviet Union.

He outlined the contradiction, with great clarity: "*The cultural demands of the nations aroused by the revolution require the widest possible autonomy. At the same time, industry can successfully develop only by subjecting all parts of the Union to general centralised plan.*" ("Revolution betrayed").

However, as he declared, the contradiction was "*far from irreconcilable*". The solution he saw, was in the participation of the masses. The contradiction could be overcome in practice, given the "*resilient will of the interested masses themselves*" and their "*actual participation in the administration of their own destinies.*"

"*The trouble is, however*" he concluded, "*that the will of the population of the Soviet Union in all its national devotions is now wholly replaced by the will of a bureaucracy which approaches both economy and culture from the point of view of convenience of administration and the specific interests of the ruling stratum.*"

So that now the solution to the national question, as of the further development of the Soviet Union, is ever more urgently bound up with the removal of that ruling stratum. But it has been demonstrated both in theory and in the actual practices of the bureaucracy in its post war crisis, that this ruling stratum will **not voluntarily liquidate itself**. It is not going to voluntarily hand over power.

FOR A PRINCIPLED LEADERSHIP

The "*resilient will of the interested masses themselves*" and their "*actual participation in their own destinies*" is first going to be developed in the Soviet Union now in turbulent clashes with the bureaucrats.

In these the masses will build a new leadership based on the revolutionary principles in

relation to the national question and internationalism.

Even in the difficult days of the civil war, the Bolshevik leadership of the Russian Revolution stood for the self determination of the nations that had formed part of the Russian Empire.

The trotskyists in the Soviet Union who will be fighting for workers democracy, internationalism and the political revolution will also fight against national oppression.

Before the war Trotsky raised the demand for an Independent Soviet Ukraine, declaring the separation of the Ukraine "*an unquestionable asset compared to the bureaucratic strangulation of the Ukrainian people. In order to draw together more closely and honestly, it is sometimes necessary first to separate.*" (Writings. Leon Trotsky - 1939-40).

As against the bureaucratic oppression of all national populations we stand for the **Democratic Federation of Workers States in a freely planned relationship, linked together with the international working class against imperialism.**

Bill Hunter

El Salvador: No One's Back Yard.

No country in Latin America better shows the nature of the aggression of imperialism than El Salvador. The attitude of the United States that Latin America is merely its back yard can be clearly seen in the continued oppression and violation of the workers and peasants in EL Salvador.

Historically imperialist invaded Latin America has replaced one decaying imperialist force with another. The present situation in El Salvador shows this method clearly, since Duarte took power in 1981 people and organisations have been calling for the resignation of President Duarte. There is now the situation of his impending death. Does this mean a change for the workers of El Salvador? The answer is obviously NO! Already this year the shift of power (not least because of the blatant corruption of the Duarte Government) has moved to the far right party of Arena.

Arena is a neo-fascist party whose leader D'Aubuisson was the creator of the death squads in El Salvador. The recent elections however even in terms of capitalist democracy were a farce, because only 33% of the population voted in the election and many of these were either bribed or forced to vote. Nationally it was compulsory to vote, and those that did, decided to because they were too scared not to following the history of repression in the country. The elections were conducted in a clear glass boxes a further sign that "Democracy" had been swept under the carpet.

NO MIDDLE GROUND

Since the beginning of the regime workers, under the umbrella organisation of the FMLN, have struggled against military authority and external support for the government from the U.S. They have now gained control of 1/3 of the country. With the likely rise to power of Arena, the new puppet organisation of CIA, the social problems of 3 million people living in sub-human conditions will worsen. The ability for many people to maintain economic independence in this civil war will decrease.

Over recent years British trade unions have taken a more active role in the field of Central America. This has been shown by the sending of a delegation of N.U.T. and an impending one by NALGO.

We call upon all rank and file to develop and keep control of solidarity campaigns in order to show REAL support for the workers and peasants of El SALVADOR.

Mark Wilson



Latin American Tories

The European Social Democracy, the leadership of the Second International, is giving almost unconditional support to the Latin American bourgeois and pro-imperialist governments such as Alan Garcia in Peru and Alfonsin in Argentina.

The masses have dismissed most of the Latin American military dictatorships. And within this process has appeared the democrats that represent a manoeuvre of imperialism to divert the revolutionary struggle of the masses into bourgeois-democratic channels.

This is the role played by Alan Garcia, Alfonsin and many others: To stop the mass mobilisation against the dictatorships, imperialism and the bourgeoisie and at the same time guaranteeing the continuation of the exploitation of the Latin American peoples

THE MASSACRE

Not even in the Human Rights front are they what they are supposed to be. Alan Garcia keeps in jail hundreds of political prisoners. In July 1986 **he ordered the Army and the Navy to repress a revolt of the political prisoners** that were demonstrating against the living conditions in the Peruvian prisons. The result of this order was between 260 (according to the Government) and 400 (according to relatives) prisoners were murdered. And according to some witness, 60 of them were murdered after they had surrendered. The exact number of deaths is very difficult to establish because many of those prisoners were illegally in jail. Anyway, **the participation of the Government in this massacre is proved by the fact that two years later they are just discussing the possibility (or not) of beginning an investigation.**

ASSASSINS GO FREE

On the other hand, Alfonsin, who is presented in Europe as the champion of the Human Rights and the Democracy, is given

praise and congratulations from every Social Democrat European party, and who is invited as a guest of honour to the meetings of the Second International, is exactly the opposite. He is responsible for passing the "Obedience Duty Law" resulting in **less than twenty of the eight thousand accused for violations of the Human Rights being imprisoned in Argentina. The others are all free, walking in the streets.**

One typical example is the case of commissar Etchecolatz, who had been a high level chief of the Buenos Aires Police Department, who was already condemned to 23 years in prison because it was proved that he had ordered 91 tortures and 23 murders. After a short time in prison he was liberated in June 1987, **because according to the new Alfonsin's laws these assassins are not considered criminals because being members of the Armed and Security Forces they are supposed to have been obeying orders from their superiors.**

In fact, at the present, these governments are the new instrument of imperialism and the bourgeoisie helping to apply austerity plans, to collect the external debt and to strength the Armed Forces in order to repress when it is "necessary". As were the dictatorships a few years ago, the bourgeois democrats today are the enemies of the Latin American workers and people.

The support received by these bourgeois governments from the Second International is the result of the imperialist policy of Mitterrand and Felipe Gonzalez.

The Labour Party a member of the Second International, and with an impeccable history of fighting the tory's, it is easy to imagine that they will be with Mitterrand and Felipe Gonzalez: on the same side as Alfonsin and Alan Garcia.

But the Left Wing of the L.P. must expose its position on this issue. **On which side are they? Are they with the Latin American masses or with those Latin American Tories?**

Slave Labour looking after elderly

There is a link between the Government's proposals for the training of nurses and the big increase of untrained Nursing Aids and the effect there will be on the care of elderly and long term sick in residential homes which cater for old people.

The Community Health Council Centre in Liverpool and the Southern Annual Report of 1987 gives considerable information on this and many other health questions. An article says there is confusion in the public mind because there are two types of 'Private Homes' and each are regulated and inspected by different Statutory bodies.

Private "Nursing Homes" are registered with Liverpool Health Authority and Private "Residential Care" Homes must be registered with the Social Services Department in Liverpool. Both Authorities have their own standard for Homes which has made it impossible to produce a single set of guidelines about what should be provided in terms of accommodation, services for residents and staffing levels.

Similar differences exist throughout the country with different Authorities setting different standards. The 1984 Act covering Registration of Homes leaves Authorities to interpret the meaning of terms such as "adequate provision".

In Liverpool there are about 18 Nursing Homes and 22 Residential Homes providing over 650 nursing and 377 Residential care beds. The cost of such accommodation has risen from £6 million in 1978 to an estimated £500 million in 1987 and this could increase to £800 million in 1988. From 15,000 claimants in 1982 there are now 80,000.

Registered Authorities were given no new resources for carrying out inspection of Private Homes. Neither the Health Authority, nor the City Council have enough staff to effectively monitor the Homes.

Homes are not required to state exactly what level of care is needed from General Practitioners, Chiropodists, Dentists and Opticians in the area. Proprietors are not required to have any special qualifications or skills to open a Residential Home.

From the practical experience of the writer in what is superficially a well-run Home all Homes are run as a money making scheme that is why the following developments have taken place.

YOUTH EXPLOITED

Youth on Y.T.S. work in their thousands in Residential Homes for the elderly. They have been used as a testing ground for the Government's new nursing Bill. Girls as young as 16 years are often employed by the Managers of

these Homes. Youth who apply to these Homes for work do so because they want to care for the elderly. They have little or no experience of the needs of the elderly, but they are eager to learn.

What does happen, however, is they learn very little of the human side of this work and are reduced to domestic slaves. The appearances must be kept up - the Home must be scrupulously clean. Most of their



Will they sell your bed ?

tasks are domestic ones. Very little time is left for any real human contact with the elderly, who are, in the main, treated like cabbages.

Many problems arise with old people, especially if they feel bored or uncared for. The young worker is expected to deal with them but is not trained for this task and the situation becomes an unbearable burden to the youth.

When the old become ill or are dying they need nursing care. The appearance of the Home must be still kept up so many old people die alone and unhappy. I know of one case when an old lady died. She shared a room with two other senile ladies. Their room was at the top of the house. It often

happens that when old people become senile they are put in rooms at the top of the house.

The manager found it difficult to sell the bed of the lady that died. No elderly lady of sound mind would accept this room. The bed had to be filled so an old lady, who had suffered a stroke, was moved from a more comfortable room so that her bed could be sold - and it was! She had no visiting friends or relations to speak up for her. The young girls, who had nursed both of these ladies, were very upset and angry but their protests were ignored.

TREATED AS OBJECTS

Many elderly people suffer chest complaints, heart conditions, rheumatism, diabetes and depression. As long as they are not completely beridden, they are considered well enough for Residential Homes not "nursing Homes".

This means that drugs must be given out by untrained staff. Staff in general do not know what these drugs are, or what their side effects can be. Mistakes of giving the wrong drug to the wrong person can be made. Many elderly people suffering depression and senility are given drugs to quieten them. This has the effect of elderly people losing their spirit and their death is hastened.

The youth, treated like domestic slaves, see all this and it can have a demoralising effect on them as well as on the elderly. This method can and will be used in the hospitals. **THIS WORKFARE IS NO ACCIDENT**, it is part of a plan to use youth as untrained cheap labour in hospitals and "caring" community work and must be stopped.

Rose Martin

T.U.C. Friends Part Company

Speaking to a TV interviewer immediately after the electricians union, the EEPTU, was suspended from the TUC, Norman Willis felt compelled to say that the suspension had not taken place because of single union deals or no-strike agreements.

Serious trade unionists knew that the policies pursued by Hammond and company were not the important things for the leading bureaucrats of the TUC. We have had several years of quite consistent pro-big business, strike breaking and extreme right wing policies of the EEPTU. Other trade union leaders have sought desperately for a compromise with them and an adjustment to their policies.

It is the rules that are important and the EEPTU have not followed them said Willis. What he meant was that the EEPTU has disrupted the rules that protect and regulate the power and income of the top trade union bureaucracies.

FEATHERED NESTS

There has been a drop of three million in union membership. The bureaucratic club now finds its own position and power threatened by a decreasing revenue. The EEPTU leadership consolidated its independence from the rank file as a hardened bureaucratic clique over many years of anti-communism.

It wants to keep its share at the expense of trade union principles, this together with corporate agreements with the powerful capitalists. Other bureaucrats would like to follow them but have to overcome the rank and file.

Like their fellow bureaucrats in the Soviet Union, however, their fear of the force that brought about the conquest of trade unionism and advances of workers is greater than their fear of big business and a tory government. For example last March they were very concerned to keep the real movement of working class anger out of their controlled protests at the tory attacks on the Health Service (see Socialist Voice April). They will never treat the EEPTU in the way they treated nurses and health workers then.

The test for bureaucratic cynicism about the future of trade unionism is in the way that trade union leaders have completely ignored the problems of youth, allowed hard won rights of training and safety deteriorate and assisted in the tory government plan to provide a vast pool of cheap labour.

SUPPORT FOR ALL STRUGGLES.

The fact that the bureaucracy has been compelled to suspend the EEPTU even though the Electrician's union has only gone along the same road they themselves are traveling. It is a distorted result of a movement in the working class towards struggle as expressed at the beginning of this year in the hospitals and in the Ford strike.

If the bureaucracy of the trade union movement has been forced to this position then militant workers can only welcome that and support the expulsion.

But it is to be welcomed in so far as it assists the struggle to defeat the entire right wing and its policies. The trade union organisations of the British working class will only be developed and maintained by building a movement that stands for the complete independence of workers organisations from the state and from the multi-nationals. The issue with the EEPTU leadership is therefore certainly of no-strike agreements and sweetheart deals.

In this day and age the future of trade unions depends on removing their bureaucratic leadership and building a leadership which stands on policies of independence of the working class and on international struggle against the multi-nationals and which will support the struggles of the working class and develop their initiatives. Such a leadership free from paternalism will encourage and assist youth to organise themselves.

The ISL is prepared to assist all forces which seek to build such a leadership in the trade unions.

Which Way For The Engineering Union?

Bill Jordan, the president of the engineering workers union (AEU), is trying to make an alliance with those who are clearly out to destroy trade unionism in going for a ballot to fuse with the sparks union, the EEPTU. He has said on TV "we will go ahead with the fusion".

In mid-June the national committee of the AEU carried an amendment to stop Jordan and his coterie from fusing at any price. The amendment of the lefts, on the committee, to guarantee the democratic structures of the union was also supported by sections of the rightwing fearful of where Jordan is leading them.

However it now appears that Jordan has decided to go against his own national committee and go ahead with the ballot. It is widely known amongst the rank and file that Jordan is determined to join the two unions and rumours abound of secret meetings to set up the ballot.

The national committee vote shows that he is now coming up against the great traditions of struggle and members democracy of the AEU even though those traditions have been undermined in recent years.

It was a proud saying amongst members of the AEU that their union was the most democratic. Now it is faced with the gallows as a trade union organisation.

UNHOLY ALLIANCE

Jordan is being driven by the necessity to maintain members and money. He would align with those forces prepared even to recruit the clergy. 'New Realism' would be carried to its logical Hammondite conclusion.

He would unite with forces now determined to break, not just with the TUC bureaucracy, but with the organisations of the class.

The broad mass of members will want to oppose this cancer and Jordan can be defeated-but only by the boldest campaign.

Such a campaign should unite all those who want to return to the traditions of their union, rebuild shop stewards democracy and stay within the TUC.

This campaign should be based on:

- * Defend and extend AEU democracy.
- * No break with the TUC.

Electrical Electronic Telecommunication and Plumbing Union

Rule 28(1)(a) reads:
"The Union shall be represented at:
a) The Trades Union Congress, Scottish Trades Union Congress, Irish Congress of Trade Unions and Wales Trade Union Congress"
The Executive Council are proposing that the following words be added:-
"provided that the Union's continued affiliation to such bodies does not prevent the Union from entering into and maintaining agreements consistent with its Rules and policy of the Union, or from otherwise properly representing its members"

DO YOU VOTE IN FAVOUR OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL'S PROPOSITION?

YES

NO

X

X Marks the grave Trade Unionism

Workers Look At History

Under the title of "Workers Look at History" we intend to publish an occasional series of articles by workers who lived through important struggles of the working class.

The article will be written by workers or come from interviews with them. Here John Magginnis writes about a struggle which forced the repeal of legislation forbidding strikes which had been imposed on British workers during the war - the notorious "Employment Arbitration Order 1305".

All trade dispute had to be reported to the Ministry of Labour. No strike could take place legally unless the dispute had been reported to the Ministry and they had failed within twenty one days to report it to an Arbitration Tribunal. Any decision of the Tribunal became legally enforceable. The Order was thus intended to make strikes entirely illegal.

Editorial Board

THROWN IN AT THE DEEP END

I started on the Liverpool docks in February 1951. My father was a docker and he got me a job through the union.

With the rest of the "new intake", I went to a Control on the docks to pick up my registration book. I found myself in the middle of a strike. That morning after we picked up our books, we went on the picket line.

There was no question of us going to work. We were all the sons of dockers and had grown up in a time of one struggle after another on the docks.

All strikes, large and small, and there were some very large ones at the end of the war and after, were unofficial. They were led by portworkers committees, members elected at the dock gates. **Trade union officials, from the highest to the lowest were hated.**

We worked in dirty, unhealthy, dangerous conditions. But if the men had a grievance and sent for the delegate (trade union official) he would walk through the sheds, straight into the office, come out, walk past the men without saying a word and you would find out later from the employers representative that nothing had changed. The favourite phrase of delegates was: "My hands are tied what can I do?".

FIGHTING CONDITIONS AND 'LEADERS'

Yet, conditions were terrible. Pay was low. You were not given industrial clothing. You would unload containers made of cardboard with notices on them saying masks must be worn - but masks on the docks were unheard of. Often for ten days down a hatch we worked on rotten bags of asbestos, which

would burst open.

You could go home soaked and/or stinking, especially if you had been working on hides, with other passengers in trams or overhead railway refusing to sit by you. In fact, it was not until the six weeks strike of 1967 that we got industrial clothing, rainwear and decent washing facilities.

These were the conditions in which the big strike of 1951 took place. The trade union bureaucracy in reality welcomed the restrictions on the trade unions which had been carried over from war time, and which helped them to control their own members. We can see the same tendency in trade union leaders and leaders of the Labour Party today. There is nothing new in their class collaboration - against the interests of their own rank and file.

The dockers were at war with both the employers and the union bureaucracy. The bureaucracy of the T&GWU expelled three London dockers in April 1950 for "acting against union policy". They had led a strike against working on a scab ship during a Canadian seamen's strike.

When they were expelled, London dockers stopped work. The Portworkers Defence Committee demanded that the union hold a ballot on the expulsions among all its London members.

Deakin refused and the Dock Labour Board threatened to sack the striking dockers. The men returned to work without gaining the reinstatement of the three into the union. But the dockers' militancy prevented Deakin from achieving his aim of removing them from the docks.

THE ROAD TO VICTORY

The strike which I landed into, started on February 3rd 1951, in Birkenhead. It was called by the Birkenhead Portworkers Committee against a wage agreement that had been signed by the dockers unions. The Birkenhead Portworkers Committee was fighting for the 'Dockers Charter', which included demands for a daily minimum of twenty five shillings, a fortnight's paid holiday and a pension scheme.

The Birkenhead dockers spread the strike to Manchester and Liverpool. Arthur Deakin, General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union told the press that his union had turned down the 'Dockers' Charter' as it was 'impractical'.

On February 9th four unofficial leaders from London and three from Liverpool were arrested and charged with conspiracy to "incite dockers to take part in strike in contravention of the Employment and National Arbitration Order 1305".

Immediately, 6,000 dockers stopped work in London. Later, they returned to work with a decision that they would take 24 hour pro-

test strike action each time the unofficial leaders appeared in court.

In protest at their first appearance in court on April 20th, 17,000 dockers stopped work throughout Britain.

After that, London dockers came out seven times on twenty four hour protest strikes, including the days of the trial. Thousands of dockers demonstrated outside the court on the day the trial ended.

The dockers were prosecuted by Hartley Shawcross, Attorney General. The Labour Government employed him also to prosecute African leaders who fought for colonial liberation.

In the end the jury could not agree on the first charge against the seven dockers. They were acquitted. It was not only the end of the trial but the end of 1305, which the Government repealed.

On the last day of the trial, incidentally, was the funeral of Ernest Bevin, former General Secretary of the T&GWU. Ernest Bevin was Minister of Labour in the Coalition Government in 1940 and he it was who imposed Order 1305!

The dockers will to struggle defeated legislation in 1951 in spite of leaders who declared anything impractical which involved a fight with employers or government. There is a lesson for today. The struggle must be taken up again by the rank and file.

A GOLFING STORY

On a golf links one beautiful morning
Right in the middle of Spring,
Lay a poor down-and-out, gently sleeping
Whilst the birds overhead they did sing.

When over the links there came striding
A "toff" in a terrible rage,
He'd biffed a small ball from a bunker
And right out of bounds he had played.

As he gazed at the recumbent
~~his wrath burst forth like a dam~~
And he prodded with vigour that figure
Then bawled at the poor sleeping man:

"Oh, why do you lie there asleep-
ing
When Old England's in pawn to the
Yanks,
Whilst we shipowners, and many
more like us,
Can't get enough cash in the banks.
Then the figure it rose, like a
phantom,
And in voice soft and low, it then
said:

"I'm just a down-and-out docker
With no place to lay my poor head

Part of a dockers poem from 1952

PORTWORKERS' CLARION

2nd
FEBRUARY, 1952.

On we march we the workers, and the rumours that we hear
Is the blunder of every creature is the banner that we bear.
For the hope of every creature is the banner that we bear.
And the world goes marching on. —Will Morris

ORGAN OF THE BIRKENHEAD PORTWORKERS' COMMITTEE

No. 4.

ARBITRATION ?

BY THE EDITOR

Since our last issue events have moved fairly quickly in respect to our wage claim and other incidental matters.

The Press now informs us that negotiations have broken down. As a consequence the matter has now been referred to the Ministry of Labour and the Minister has decided, with the approval of the parties concerned, to refer the whole question of the differences to arbitration.

Three persons whose names appear on this page are established as a Tribunal, and at the time of writing it is anticipated that the Tribunal will meet very shortly to consider the case and in due course give a decision.

What It Means To Us

course of negotiations. What differences have arisen and what should be the best course to adopt as the next step. This would certainly create a feeling of confidence among the men in regard to their negotiators ideas as to the general feeling of the membership upon the matters in question. Docket Such a course we believe would commend itself to every Docket throughout the length and breadth of the country.

Membership Ignored

But what has happened? Our negotiators have entered upon a course without any consultation as far as the membership is concerned and further seek to bind the membership to a decision in which they have had neither part nor lot. We consider a grave situation has

1951 Tonnage Figures Highest In Post War Period

During recent months the Press campaign against the Dockers has reached new heights or sunk to lower levels according to how you view the matter. We have been assailed on all sides, and have been called slayers, shirkers, traitors, Reds and any other form of abuse which could be imagined. We have had warnings from Mr. Deakin who threatened to remove agitators from his union, the Leggatt report was largely anti-docker, and we had the crowning insult from Lord Minister who publicly declared that dockers were only averaging

However, such is not the case, for we see, when perusing the 1951 statistics reported in the "Board of Trade Journal," which is the official organ of the Board of Trade, that 156,740,000 net tons of shipping entered and left U.K. Ports in 1951, as against 143,456,000 tons net in 1950. This is an increase of 13,284,000 tons (13 1/2 million tons). This figure consists of 7 million extra inwards and 6 1/2 million extra outwards. These are the highest figures since the end of the war, with just over 49 million tons of the shipping

1914, with the collapse of the Second International.

THE DIFFICULT YEARS

Reg Groves describes how he was a "reluctant delegate". Forty years later what sticks in his memory is the news placard which he saw in the Paris street announcing 250,000 in a demonstration in Britain while he was walking "with aching head and jaded spirits". "There was something unreal", he writes, "that evening in that retrospect about the Left Opposition conference solemnly pronouncing on those controversies of the comintern." For his part Trotsky described the meeting as a

"Great Success" (Writings 1932-30).

At the end of 1933, the British trotskyist group split over a proposition that they should join the Independent Labour Party which was advised by Trotsky. In 1934, Reg Groves and a small group joined the Labour Party.

In 1938 Groves stood as Labour Party candidate in a Parliamentary bye-election in Aylesbury. The Communist Party issued an infamous statement urging workers to support the Liberal Candidate. Groves received double the former Labour vote. At that time, the official section of the Bureau for the Fourth International gave him full support in its paper "Fight" although it declared he did not "unequivocally give the revolutionary socialist position on war".

He helped form the "No Conscription League" which cancelled a national conference and collapsed, when the Nazi armies began their "blitzkrieg" on France in 1940. After Dunkirk he decided that "national defence" had become progressive and worked as a script writer for the Ministry of Information.

He had taken part in the work of the Trotsky Defence Committee in 1936-38 and when the present campaign to clear the names of all those falsely accused in the Moscow Trials was begun by the WRP eighteen months ago (see June "Socialist Voice") Reg Groves was one of the first to sign.

Reg Groves: A Founder Of Trotskyism in Britain

After our last issue had gone to press, we received news of the death of Reg Groves, one of the leaders of the first trotskyist group in Britain.

A group of twelve communists formed themselves as the British Section of the Left Opposition in May 1932 and issued a bulletin declaring:

"The Left Opposition is fighting to win back the CI (Communist International) to its task of leading the world revolution."

The twelve were members of the Balham Group of the Communist party, with an average membership of over seven years in the party - most had joined at the time of the General Strike of 1926.

Reg Groves himself, has given a brief account of their development in his book "The Balham Group - How British Trotskyism began".

THE BEGINNINGS

At the time they were not rebuked. Later as Stalinism tightened its grip on the Third International and they became critical of its

policies, they were denounced and expelled.

It was their struggle for Communist principles in relation to war and their advocacy of a united front against fascism that brought about their expulsion from the Communist Party and the dissolution by the party of the Balham Group. Most of the first issues of their bulletin was given over to Trotsky's "Germany the key to the International"

BRITISH EXCEPTIONALISM

Groves and his comrades laid the foundation of British Trotskyism. His weakness was the one that has impregnated the labour left in Britain and one which the British Trotskyist movement has always found difficult to overcome - the ideology of British Exceptionalism, which prevents a real grasp of the meaning of internationalism in all its concreteness.

A certain populist Britishism is in his books - very readable and worth reading - on working class struggles in British history. He wrote: "But we shall rise again" which he called a "narrative history of Chartism"; "Rebels Oak", a history of Kett's peasant rebellion: "The Peasant's Revolt of 1381"; and "The Strange Case of Victor Grayson", among others.

There is a very revealing two paragraphs in his "The Balham Group", where he describes his attendance at a meeting of the International secretariat of the Left Opposition held in Paris in February 1933. A few days before, Hitler had been appointed Chancellor of Germany. The C. I. had politically collapsed - an event, in its importance for the world working class and socialist movement only equalled in

No To Slave Labour Schemes

Over 30,000 Community Programme workers all over Britain took strike action on June 15th to show their total commitment of opposition to ET. The demonstrations which took place in Sheffield and Edinburgh were attended by over 3,000 rank and file members of six unions: TGWU, NALGO, NUPE, GMB, UCATT, CPSA, who united to highlight the growing opposition to the Government's new scheme which will force the unemployed into Slave Labour.

After many months of rank and file members of the TGWU calling for the leadership to launch an active campaign of total opposition to the Government's new scheme Employment Training (ET), in line with Biennial Delegates Conference Policy of outright opposition to benefit related schemes, they organised themselves.

The Rank and File members within the Union set up the TGWU CP Shop Stewards Combine which organised a mobilisation of CP workers for a day of strike action and demonstration in Sheffield, headquarters of the MSC. The Edinburgh CP Worker Group also organised strike action and demonstrated in conjunction with the CP combines opposition to ET.

It is clear that the Rank and File members of the Trade Union Movement are united in their opposition to ET. The leadership of the Trade Unions must make a stand in supporting their members and the unemployed in Britain in the fight against Slave Labour, and overturn the TUC decision to support the scheme.

One union, NALGO, has voted at its conference total opposition to the new E.T. programme. But if this is to be more than just paper opposition NALGO, as all other unions, must release all the necessary resources that the C.P. workers need and place the union at the disposal of its members fighting the scheme.

If ET is not stopped it will not only be used by this Government to force the unemployed into Slave Labour, it will also be used to undermine the conditions and wages of all workers and destroy all that the trade unions have achieved.

What the rank and file members are building can be a focus for the whole labour movement. We propose that:

- * All scheme workers be united to fight against any attack.
- * control and initiative of the campaign remain with the CP workers.
- * Break all links with the MSC.

Tim Pearson

Colombia On Fire

The kidnapping of the leader of the Conservative Party, Alvaro Gomez Hurtado, has provoked a very grave political crisis in Colombia. This kidnapping took place during a period of general political violence which day by day is claiming more victims, most of them workers and popular fighters.

AN EXPLOSIVE COMBINATION

In Colombia there are two explosive Latin American developments. On one hand, the extreme misery which is characteristic of Central America. It has one of the lowest incomes per capita on the Continent and a very poor and landless peasantry; in these conditions a powerful rural guerrilla movement grew and took root.

On the other hand, the industrial development that began in the 1950s has transformed the country into the fifth richest economy of the region. A large urban proletariat has developed and the National Civic Strike of 1977 showed the working class was leading all other oppressed classes, as in the other South American countries.

In addition to this in the last few years strong drug trafficking organisations have emerged which are economically and militarily very powerful.

In this explosive situation, the liberal government of Virgilio Barco is applying the plans of the IMF and Reagan's policy on Central America. This is like holding a lighted match close to a barrel of gunpowder.

THE DIRTY WAR

The kidnapping of a bourgeois right politician must not hide the real meaning of the present political violence. Its main protagonists are the fascist bands of military and para-military personnel from the state forces.

The Minister for the country has said that he knows the existence of more than 140 of these bands, how they operate and where they are.

The objectives of these bands are to eliminate the activists and leaders. More than 550 members of Union Patriótica - the strongest left party - were murdered since 1985, among them the ex-candidate for president, James Pardo Leal.

There are trade unions, such as the "Banana-workers" of Uraba or the "Teachers' Federation", with the majority of their leaders dead or threatened with death. Recently James Cardona, the oil-workers' leader of Barrancabermejo, was killed.

It is a real "dirty war" to behead the mass movement and stop its struggle against the plans of the IMF and the collapse of the country. Barco's Government knows the identity of the murderers and yet they do not detain one person. They are therefore accomplices.

TO STOP THE MASSACRE

The kidnapping of Gomez Hurtado was attributed by the Government to the guerrillist group "M-19". If so, we think that it is the wrong way to strike back. It is not with individual terrorist actions that the "dirty war" will be stopped. But with the massive mobilisation of the workers and the people.

The workers had already begun to confront the "dirty war" with the mobilisation. Last year there was a general strike before the assassination of Pardo Leal. And there were strikes in Barrancabermejo and Uraba.

"Immediate National Strike before each assassination" is a slogan the workers have taken as their own. They know that the defence of their leaders is a part of the struggle against the austerity plans of Barco and the IMF.

The world workers and trade union movement must support and bring the widest solidarity to the workers and people of Colombia.

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