

The TYNESIDE SYNDICALIST

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SUPPORTERS UNITED

On July 25th and August 8th organising conferences were held in Manchester to discuss, and with the aim of, the formation of a National Network of Support Groups.

Prior to these conferences another body was brought together on May 16th in Leeds where the idea of a Network was discussed. However at this meeting it was obvious that what was lacking was the initiative to be taken immediately to aid workers who were at the time involved in industrial disputes - Senior Colman, HFW Plastics, Ardbride, Trader Web and others -. This was not unfortunately to happen with those present voting in favour of a conference much later (organised for November 7th and 8th). The workers who were at the time fighting their employers in an attempt to gain re-instatement and greater conditions came together and discussed the idea of a national meeting for July. The result was the July 25th and August 8th meetings.

It is quite clear that there is a void in the working class which is in desperate need of filling - that being the lack of co-ordination and solidarity work that needs to be done. Groups of workers involved in dispute remain isolated and quickly become demoralised, especially given the reactionary role played by their unions in such disputes.

At present any 'tin-pot' employer can go around sacking his workforce in an attempt to rid the workplace of a union, drive down wages or stop complaint about bad working conditions. Backed up by governments anti-union legislation, public order acts and the 'firemen' that call themselves union leaders we can see why the bosses feel so confident. If Murdoch can do it with five and a half thousand printers why can't they do it with fifty.

Both conferences were well attended, though political bickering seemed to keep many workers away from the second meeting. Though both meetings overwhelmingly agreed to set up a Support Network many (on the 25th) had obviously just come along to push their ideas and cause trouble resulting in confusion and anger. If the Support Network is to succeed - which we hope that it will - then party political manoeuvring and bickering must be stopped.

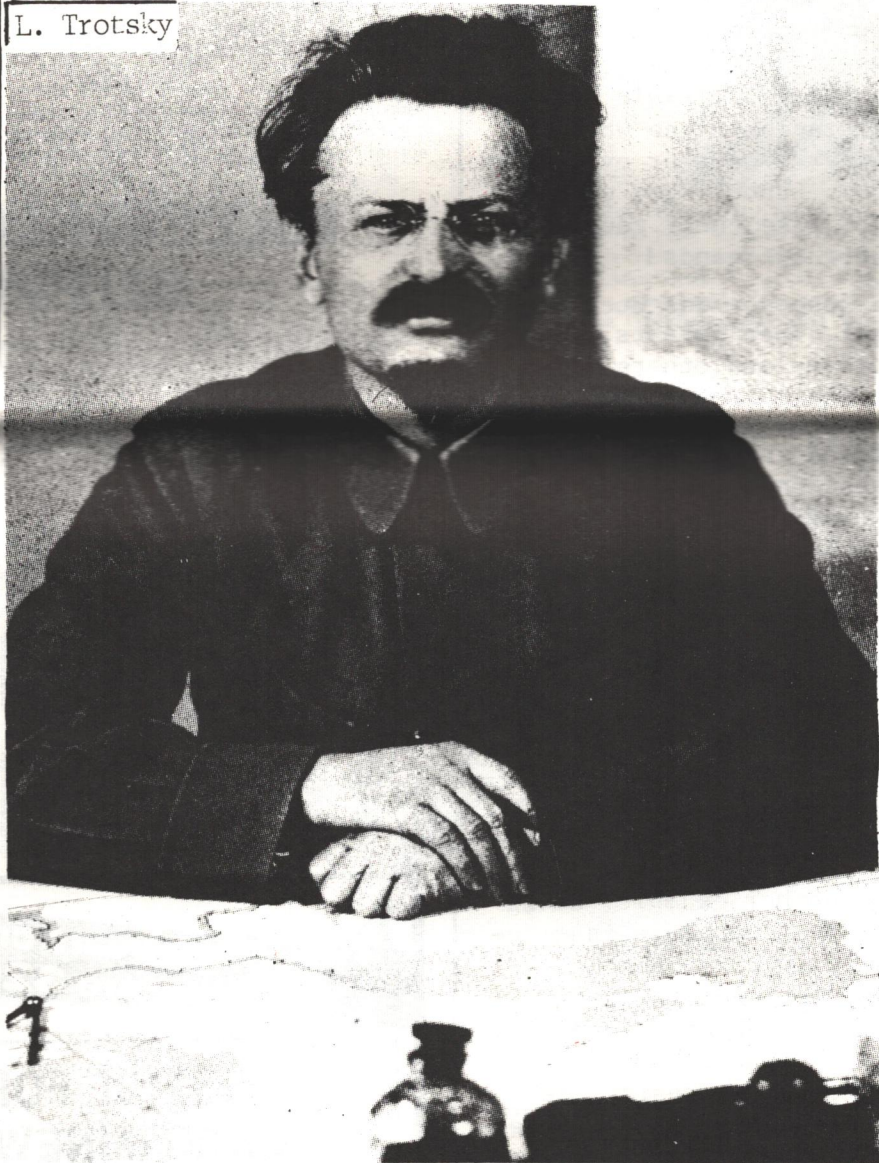
The conferences resolved to launch a national network of support groups immediately to aid the working class in struggle.

Whereas the 25/8th conferences agreed that NO-ONE should be in control of the Network - agreeing that all decisions should be made by support group and striker delegates the meeting on 7th and 8th of November (leeds) looks set to oppose such a Network structure. An organising meeting on the 22.8.87 voted against a motion by Senior Colman and Gateshead Workers Support Group for a delegate structure. As we go to press all the signs make it look extremely unlikely that delegates at the Leeds conference will go for delegation, leaving the organisation open to manipulation and political control.

No political parties was one of the more important decisions, along with delegations and recall of the editorial group (which is producing a Network Bulletin (see GWSG article) made >>

KRONSTADT SAILORS: "THE PRIDE AND GLORY OF THE REVOLUTION....."

L. Trotsky



....BUT WE WILL SHOOT YOU LIKE PARTRIDGES".

**70th Anniversary
of the 1917
Russian Revolution**

see

**Syndicalist
Supplement**

inside

ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST MONTHLY

T.R.S.

EDITORIAL

At the end of the summer term this year, some white kids at Rutherford School, Newcastle, aimed to repeat their obscene "paki-bashing-day" where black kids are systematically verbally and physically abused in an organised manner. Kids at the school know all about this, of course, and many black pupils stay away from school around the time that it happens (and can get into trouble as a result).

This year though, some of the black kids decided that they'd had enough white racism from their fellow pupils, and fought back. In the fighting that ensued, police cars arrived in droves, so called "ring-leaders" were suspended from school, stories appeared in local papers, hell was on.

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

Now we wouldn't expect the school authorities, police or Education Department to be happy about the Rutherford black pupils' admirable defence and resistance to the white racism they encounter every day at school. Schools get worried when kids take their education into their own hands!

But the response was much worse than that. When parents, community workers and others tried to take the matter further - to tackle the very serious racism to be found in schools - they found that they came up against a brick wall. The head teacher at Rutherford patronised and dismissed them, and wouldn't even agree that any racism had been involved. Likewise the Local Education Authority refused to acknowledge that there is any racism problem, at Rutherford or anywhere else in Newcastle schools.

RACISM RUNS DEEP

This is another example (among many) of just how deep institutional racism runs. Black people's experience in this white-controlled city (and society) is ignored. People who try to resist are treated with contempt or worse, can be isolated, ridiculed, victimised and abused if they persist. Newcastle City Council, schools etc. have "anti-racist" policies which look very nice on paper, but which mean nothing when something as serious as the racism at Rutherford school can so easily be pretended not to exist.

In this situation the only real option for black people is to organise themselves to struggle for what they want, without having faith in letter-writing, "going through the channels" or polite discussion. We support without reservation the black kids at Rutherford School, and any initiatives from black people collectively to fight for their interests.

Support Network Continued.

by the meetings of 25/8th and that all support groups should remain autonomous.

If the working class are to gain from such a national support network we must ensure that it is the working class that are actively involved that make the decisions and not a handful of politically correct or knowledgeable individuals. Workers must insist on full participation with decisions affecting them being left in their hands.

Let us hope that in the future the support Network flourishes and differences between those organising the Leeds conference can be worked out and a united support network can begin to give solidarity to those workers that need support.

NATIONAL SUPPORT NETWORK STRUCTURE AND BULLETIN

SUPPORT NETWORK STRUCTURE

1. The Support Network will be composed of National Delegate Meetings (NDM).
2. Each Support Group will have one voting delegate, likewise groups of strikers at the N.D.M.
3. Each group will remain Autonomous.
4. No political organisations may affiliate.
5. Delegate Meetings will be held once every two months. Observers will be welcome.

Contact: Gateshead Support Group for info.

NATIONAL NETWORK BULLETIN

1. The bulletin should spread information on strikes and tactics used both in favour of strikers and against.
2. To include reports from strikers and support groups.
3. The bulletin will be produced by a support group delegated by the National Delegate Meeting.
4. The Editorial group will be answerable to and subject to recall by the N.D.M.
5. No-one shall hold editorship for more than 12 months.

HFW PLASTICS: SMASH JACKSON

As everyone will know by now, the H.F.W. Plastics dispute has been ended with a negotiated settlement: by both union and the management.

The union, SOGAT 82, throughout the dispute did nothing to attempt to claim an all-out victory for the workers. We have explained in past issues the vociferous attack made by the union and their allies against the Workers Support Group attempted to aid the sacked workers and extend the dispute. We have looked at the lack of initiative or blatant irresponsibility of the union officials and their refusal to bring workers at Crawfords and other plants into the dispute - all in all a recipe for disaster for the sacked workers. The union relied on pickets, which had no chance of being effective due to the way they were organised, and negotiations with the owner Paul Jackson. The final agreement of 'compensation' (which was not as high as press reports made out and of which the strikers have seen non of it) had been brewing for a long while. It looked quite obvious that the union were attempting to find something with which to convince the strikers to accept such an offer. The Support Group was a thorn in their side, due to the fact that the sacked workers were actually now talking about their dispute

themselves. Finally after a few visits from national union officials the local full-timers along with other union officials informed the sacked workers that due to a rule which said strike pay could only be paid for 20 weeks, and this time was now up, they might as well accept Jackson's latest offer. Reluctantly the sacked workers were forced to agree. When picketing of HFW Plastics ceased Jackson received letters of congratulation from a Durham Branch of the Young Conservatives Association praising him for the stand he took during the dispute.

WHAT NOW FOR THE WORKERS

Most of those sacked have now found jobs (the union was involved in this - the same tactics were found to be useful at Trader Web) at local workplaces, which is very good for them in the wake of the dispute. The workers have continued to attend the Gateshead Workers Support Group (around 15 to 20 attending each weekly meeting) which is a healthy thing for workers in this area. They say, "It is not over yet" for the factory, HFW Plastics, is a scab firm and should be smashed. If Jackson is seen to have gotten off the hook and seen to be totally victorious in the dispute it will add incentive and confidence to local

employers, and those around the country who have watched the dispute carefully.

BLACK H.F.W.

A blacking campaign has continued against the company and is at present being stepped up. Their are rumours that the company may be going down the tubes. This would be an excellent development if true. Jackson would have been beaten, the workers will have gained experience, gotten themselves better jobs and the employers in the area will be set-back for a change.

The blacking campaign asks you to:

- * Continue to black HFW Plastics.
- * Keep the matter raised in your branch and union.
- * Aid financially the campaign.

THE DISPUTE IS STILL NOT ENDED YET -

SMASH PAUL JACKSON AND H.F.W. PLASTICS!

For more information, donations etc contact:

H.F.W. HARDSHIP FUND,
GATESHEAD WORKERS SUPPORT GROUP,
COMMON GROUND,
1, CHARLOTTE SQUARE,
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE,
NE1 4XF.

GATESHEAD WORKERS SUPPORT GROUP

Gateshead Workers Support Group has been in existence for around 6 months, for the first months coming to the aid of H.F.W. Plastics sacked workers and giving solidarity. Since the dispute was 'officially' ended they have, together with many of the sacked workers, continued to press the owner, Paul Jackson. Gateshead Workers Support Group was very involved with the attempts to set up the Support Network (see front page). Seeing this as a step towards united action and a strong working class body. Since the union pulled-out of the HFW dispute a 'Hardship Fund' has been set up by the Support Group to alleviate hardship felt by the sacked workers during the action. They are the main body behind the blacking campaign against the firm in the area.

WIDER SUPPORT

The GWSG have been active in supporting the Senior Colman strikers, who have identified the major scab transporters as C.P.S. Haulage Tyneside Ltd. As this is in the Tyneside

area, the GWSG have mounted pickets and leafletting sessions in support of the Senior Colman workers. Prior to the Salford Plastics company ceasing trading leafletting sessions were held at the Woolworths store in Newcastle, along with others that were held in other parts of the area. Future plans of the GWSG include the leafletting of Moat Rose Hotels in the area along with the production of a National Network Bulletin which they have been elected to do by the 'Support Network'. The first issue of this bulletin is available now from the GWSG.

For further information on Gateshead Workers Support Group, donations towards the work being done by the organisation etc should be sent to:

Gateshead Workers Support Group,
COMMON GROUND,
1, CHARLOTTE SQUARE,
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE,
NE1 4XF.

If you would like to see the continuation of the Tyneside Syndicalist we urge you to make a financial donation immediately.

The paper is produced on a shoestring and your support is needed. Please make all cheques and Postal Orders out to:

THE TYNESIDE SYNDICALIST

The 'Tyneside Syndicalist' publishes news, reports and information on industrial disputes, rank and file workers organisation and trade union activity and community and social issues in Tyneside and elsewhere.

If there is something happening in your workplace, community or trade union that you feel people should know about please write to us with details if possible an address or telephone number where we can contact you would be of help. All communications will be treated with complete confidentiality. If you would like to make any comment on the Tyneside Syndicalist, contact the Tyneside Revolutionary Syndicalists for more information or would like to contribute to the paper both financially and with information please contact:

THE TYNESIDE SYNDICALIST,
c/o Tyneside Free Press,
5, Charlotte Square,
Newcastle Upon Tyne,
NE1 4XF.

T & GWU SABOTAGE SCOTTISH DISPUTE

Since the last issue of the Tyneside Syndicalist the Ardris dispute at Ardris in Scotland has finally ended. This result was in the end inevitable due to the disgusting behaviour of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) who don't everything to sabotage the dispute - "The T&G is not here to become involved in this dispute, our role is simply to give advice and ensure you don't break the law", they later apologised to Laura Ashley over the international pickets mounted in solidarity with the sacked workers - The sacked workers wish to thank everyone who participated in the dispute.

Subscriptions

If you are finding it difficult to purchase a copy of the Tyneside Syndicalist on a regular basis, or would like to begin receiving the paper, subscriptions rates are as follows;

3 MONTHS £1.00
6 MONTHS £2.00
1 YEAR £4.00

All subscriptions include postage. Donations are welcomed.

Two years on and still there are 326 sacked!

JUSTICE FOR ALL
SACKED MINeworkERS

PUBLIC MEETING

Speaker:

TERRY FRENCH
KENT NUM

released jailed miner

VENUE - EASINGTON

MINERS WELFARE CLUB

SEASIDE LANE

FRI 20th NOVEMBER 7 pm

OTHER SPEAKERS

LODGE OFFICIAL

and

SACKED MINER

END THE VICTIMISATION
AND BACK THE JUSTICE FOR
MINEWORKERS CAMPAIGN!

N. E. Justice for Mineworkers, 1 College Street, Newcastle upon Tyne.



Terry French

October sees the 70th anniversary of the Russian revolution. In this section on

the Revolution and its decay we hope to show the real need for libertarian organis-

ation and true workers control if the working class are to rid ourselves of the

capitalist and statist scourge and create a society based on Freedom and Equality.

SYNDICALISTS IN THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

The following text was written by Gregory Perrovich Maximoff who was not only involved in the Russian revolution and the formation of Revolutionary Syndicalist structures but, in fact, played a major part. Maximoff is also the author of *The Guillotine At Work* a major study into the bureaucratization of Russian society.

THE REVOLUTION shook all classes and strata of Russian social life. A vast unrest had permeated all levels of Russian society as a result of three centuries of oppression by the Tsarist regime.

During the revolutionary explosion, this unrest became the force which cemented the heterogeneous elements into a powerful united front, and which annihilated the edifice of despotism within three days, a brief revolutionary period unprecedented in history.

Within this movement, despite the fact its component forces were actuated by different, and often mutually exclusive tasks and purposes, reigned full unanimity. At the moment of revolutionary explosion the aims of those various forces happened to coincide, since they were negative in character, being directed at annihilating the superannuated absolutist regime.

The constructive aims were not clear yet. It was only during the further course of development, through the differing constructions placed on the aims and tasks of the revolution, that the hitherto amorphous forces began to crystallize and a struggle arose among them for triumph of their ideas and objectives.

It is a noteworthy feature of the revolution that despite the rather small influence of anarchists on the masses before its outbreak, it followed from its inception the anarchistic course of full decentralisation; the revolutionary bodies immediately pushed to the front by the course of revolution were Anarcho-Syndicalist in their essential character. These were of the kind which lend themselves as adequate instruments for the quickest realisation of the anarchist ideal; Soviets, Factory Committees, peasant land committees and house committees, etc. The inner logic of the development and growth of such organisations led in November (October) 1917 to the temporary extinction of the state and the sweeping away of the foundations of capitalist economy.

I say temporarily, for in the long run the state and capitalism came to triumph; the logical development of the revolution having been openly frustrated by those who at first were instrumental in accelerating its course of development. Unchecked by the too-trustful masses, whose aims and course of action, though felt instinctively, were still far from being clearly realised, the Bolsheviks, to the extent that they gained the confidence of the masses, gradually enveloped the revolution within the chilling atmosphere of the state dominance and brute force, thus dooming it to an inevitable process of decay. This process, however, became noticeable only six months after the "October revolution". Up to that moment the revolution kept on ripening. The struggle became sharper and the objectives began to assume an ever clearer and more outspoken character. The country seethed and bubbled over, living a full life under conditions of freedom.

GRAND STRUGGLE

The struggle of classes, groups, and parties for preponderant influence in the revolution was intense, powerful, and striking in character. As a result of this struggle there resulted a sort of stalemate of forces; none was in a position to command superiority in relation to the rest. This in turn made it impossible for the state and government - the external force standing above society - to become the instrument of one of the contending forces. The State, therefore, was paralysed, not being able to exert its negative influence on the course of events, the more so in that the army, due to its active part in the movement, ceased to be an obedient instrument of State power. In this grand struggle of interests and ideas the Anarchists took an active and lively part.

The period from March (February) to November (October) 1917, was in its sweep and scope a most resplendent one for Anarcho-Syndicalist and Anarchist work, that is for propaganda, agitation, organisation, and action.

The revolution opened wide the door to Anarchist emigres returning from various countries, where they had fled to escape the ferocious persecution of the Tsar's government. But even before the emigre's return their arose, with the active participation of comrades released from prison and exile, groups and unions of Anarchists, as well as Anarchist publications. With the return of anarchists from abroad, this work began to pick up considerable momentum.

Russia was covered with a thick, albeit too loosely connected, net of groups. Scarcely a sizeable city did not have an Anarcho-Syndicalist or Anarchist group. The propaganda took dimensions unprecedented for Anarchist activity in Russia. Proportionately, there was a great number of Anarchist newspapers, magazines, leaflets, pamphlets and books. The bookmarket was flooded with Anarchist literature. The interest in Anarcho-Syndicalism and Anarchism was enormous, reaching even the remote corners of the faraway North.

Newspapers were published not only in the large administrative and industrial centres, like Moscow and Petrograd, which had several Anarchist newspapers (In Petrograd the circulation of the Anarcho-Syndicalist *Golos Truda* and the Anarchist *Burevestnik* was 25,000 each; Moscow daily *Anarchia* had about the same circulation), but also in provincial cities, like Kronstadt, Yaroslavl, Nizhni-Novgorod, Saratov, Samara, Krasnoyarsk, Vladivostok, Rostov-on-Don, Odessa and Kiev. (In 1918, Anarchist papers were coming out in Ivanovo-Vosnesensk, Chembar, Ekaterinburg, Kursk, Ekaterinoslav, Viatka.)

Oral propaganda was even more extensive than written - it was carried out in the army, as well as in factories and villages. The propaganda stressed the central task of bringing out and carrying to their logical end the Anarchist principles and tendencies inherent in the revolution. This propaganda, Anarcho-Syndicalist propaganda especially, was very successful with the toilers. The influence of Anarchism, specially its Anarcho-Syndicalist variety, was so great with the Petrograd workers that the Social Democrats were compelled to issue a special publication for the purpose of waging a struggle against "Anarcho-Syndicalism among the organised proletariat." Unfortunately, this influence wasn't organised.

'CENTRALISM VIA FEDERALISM'

The influence of Anarcho-Syndicalism showed itself creditably in the struggle for supremacy waged by the Factory Committees against the trade unions. The Factory Committees were almost completely swayed by a unique sort of Anarcho-Syndicalism; this is attested by all the All-Russian conferences of these committees. Moreover, the Bolsheviks in their drive towards seizure of power and dictatorship, were forced to cast away (for the time being only, as subsequent events proved), their orthodox Marxism and to accept Anarchist slogans and methods. Alas, this was but a tactical move on their part, not a genuine change of programme.

The slogans formulated by the Bolsheviks (communists) voiced, in a precise and intelligible manner, the demands of the masses in revolt coinciding with the slogans of the Anarchists: "Down with the war," "Immediate peace without annexations or indemnities, over the heads of the governments and capitalists," "Abolition of the army," "Arming of the workers," "Immediate seizure of land by the peasants," "Seizure of factories by the workers," "A Federation of Soviets," etc. Wouldn't the realisation of these great slogans lead to the full triumph of Anarchist ideology, to the sweeping away of the basis and foundations of Marxism? Wasn't it natural for the Anarchists to be taken in by these slogans, considering that they lacked a strong organisation to carry them out independently? Consequently, they continued taking part in the joint struggle.

But reality soon proved that all the lapses by the Bolsheviks from the revolutionary position were no casual things, but moves in a rigorously thought-out tactical plan, directed against the vital interests and demands of the masses - a plan designed to carry out in life the dead dogmas of a disintegrated Marxism. The true face of the Bolsheviks was revealed by the Commissar of National Affairs - Stalin (Dzhugashvili), who in one of his articles (April, 1918) wrote that their aim is, "To arrive at Centralism via Federalism." Persistently, cautiously, the revolution was being forced into Marxist channels in accordance with a preconceived plan. Such a channel is for every popular creed a Procrustean bed.

Thus, during the period of the Bourgeois and Bourgeois-Socialist Government, the Anarchists were (not organisationally of course) hand-in-hand with the Bolsheviks. How were the Anarchists situated during that period? The listing of the cities where Anarchist publications came out shows that freedom of the press was of the most extensive kind. Not a single newspaper was closed. Not a single leaflet, pamphlet, or book confiscated, not a single rally or mass meeting forbidden. Despite the seizure of rich private houses, like the Durnovo Villa and other mansions in Petrograd; despite the seizure of printing shops, including the printing shop of *Russkaya Volia*, published by the Tsar's minister Protopopov; despite

open incitement to insubordination and appeals for soldiers to leave the fronts; despite all that, only a few cases where Anarchists were manhandled might be construed as connivance by authorities, or premeditated acts. True, the government, at that period, was not averse to dealing severely with both anarchists and Bolsheviks. Kerensky threatened many times to "burn them out with red-hot irons". But the government was powerless, because the revolution was in full swing.

AFTER OCTOBER

How did the position of the Anarchists change with the triumph of the October Revolution, in the preparation and making of which they had taken such a prominent part? It has to be pointed out that during the Kerensky period the Anarchists had grown considerably and towards the October days their movement had already assumed considerable proportions. This growth became even more accelerated after the October revolution, when the Anarchists took an active part in the direct struggle against both counter-revolution and the German-Austrian troops. Not only did the voice of the Anarchists command attention, but the masses actually followed the appeals and directives of the anarchists, having come to see in them the concrete formulation of their age-long aspirations. That is why they backed the demands of an Anarcho-Syndicalist character, carrying them out in the teeth of hamstringing efforts, rather feeble at that time, by the Bolsheviks.

Under the influence of Anarcho-Syndicalist propaganda, there began in Petrograd a spontaneous process of socialisation of housing by the house committees. This extended to entire streets, bringing into existence street committees, when entire blocks were drawn in. It spread to other cities. In Kronstadt it started even earlier than Petrograd and reached even greater intensity. If in Petrograd and other cities, dwellings were socialised only on the triumph of the October revolution, in Kronstadt similar steps were taken earlier, under the influence of Yartchuk, who was enjoying great popularity in that town, and in face of the active resistance of the Bolsheviks. Measures of this kind were carried out in an organised way by the revolutionary workers and sailors throughout the town. The Bolshevik fraction left a session of the Kronstadt Soviet in protest against the socialisation of dwellings.



KRONSTADT 1921

(Much later in March 1921 the Bolsheviks launched an armed assault on the Kronstadt Soviet who were demanding the Freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, to free all political prisoners, the equalisation of rations for all working people - all of which had been eroded and taken away by the Bolshevik government. The Kronstadt sailors, who Trotsky had dubbed "the pride and glory of the revolution" shortly after the civil war were now being told by the same man we will "shoot you like partridges" if the revolutionary sailors refused to surrender and give up their demands. A great irony of the situation is the celebrating, by the Bolsheviks, of the 50th anniversary of the Paris Commune the day after the Kronstadt commune was destroyed and over 12,000 lay dead.....ed).

WORKERS CONTROL

In the field of the revolutionary struggle towards immediate abolition of the institution of private property in the means of production, the influence of the anarchists was even more pronounced. The idea of "workers control", carried out through the Factory Committees, an idea advocated by the Anarcho-Syndicalists from the very outset of the revolution, took root among the city workers, gaining such a strong hold on them as to force acceptance, in a distorted form, by the Socialist parties. The Social-

Revolutionaries twisted this idea of workers' control into that of state control over industry, with the participation of workers, leaving enterprises in the hands of the capitalists.

As for the Bolsheviks, they were quite vague about the meaning of the term "workers control", leaving it undefined, and making it a handy tool of demagogic propaganda. This is confirmed by A. Lozovsky (S. A. Dridzo), who writes the following in his pamphlet *Workers Control* (Petroburg, the Socialist Publishing House, 1918):

"Workers control was the fighting slogan of the Bolsheviks before the October days...but despite the fact that Workers' control figured in all resolutions, and was displayed on all banners, it had an aura of mystery about it. The Party Press wrote very little about this slogan, still less did it try to implement it in a concrete way. When the October revolution broke out and it became necessary to say clearly and precisely what this Workers' Control was, it developed that, even among the partisans of this slogan, there existed great differences of opinion on that score."

The Bolsheviks refused to accept the anarcho-syndicalist construction of the idea of workers' control; namely, taking control of production, its socialisation, and instituting workers' control over socialised production through the Factory Committees. This idea won out, workers having begun expropriating enterprises while the Bourgeois-socialist government was still in power. The Factory Committees and various control committees were already taken over the managing functions at that time. On the eve of the October Revolution this movement assumed a truly mass character.

FACTORY COMMITTEES

The Factory Committees and their Central Bureau became the foundation of the new revolutionary movement, which set itself the task of making the factories into Producer and Consumer Communes. The Factory Committees were to become the nuclei of the new social order gradually emerging from the inchoate elemental life of the revolution. Anarchistic in their essence, the Factory Committees made many enemies. The attitude of all the political parties was restrained hostility, their efforts centering on reducing the Factory Committees to a subordinate position within the trade unions. The Communists from the outset showed their suspicion of this type of organisation. It was only after they had become convinced that the trade unions were too strongly dominated by the Social-Democrats to lend themselves as instruments of Communist policy that, following the Anarcho-Syndicalists, they began to centre their attention on the Factory Committees, aiming to place them under their control and, through those Committees, ultimately to gain control of the trade unions. Despite this attitude, the Bolsheviks were forced by the course of events to assume a position toward the Factory Committees which differed little from that of the Anarcho-Syndicalists. Only gradually did they assume this position. At first they combated it.

"The Anarcho-Syndicalists entrenched themselves behind the Factory Committees. They created a veritable theory around it, saying in effect that the trade unions have died, that the future belongs to the Factory Committees, who will deliver the knock-out blow to capitalism, that the Factory Committees are the highest form of labour movement, etc. In a word, they developed in regard to the Factory Committees the same theory which the French Anarcho-Syndicalists developed in regard to the trade unions. Under these conditions the divorce between the two organisations (trade unions and Factory Committees) represents the greatest danger for the labour movement of Russia.

"This danger is the greater, that even among active people of the Factory Committees who are not Anarcho-Syndicalists we also see this tendency to oppose the trade unions to the Factory Committees and even to replace industrial unions and their local branches with respective organisations of the Factory Committees type." Lozovsky, *Workers' Control* (p. 37).

SEIZURE OF ENTERPRISES

Characteristically, only the Anarcho-Syndicalist press correctly evaluated the and significance of the Factory Committees. The first article in the revolutionary press on this problem by the author of these lines, appeared in the first issue of *Golos Truda*. (Incidentally, the article did not express the opinion of Golos Truda as a whole on this problem.) At one of the conferences of the Factory Committee held in Petrograd, during August, 1917, the article was hotly contested by the Bolsheviks, notably Lozovsky and others. But this idea, sound in itself and answering the mood and >>

needs of the workers, became dominant in the Bolshevik Party. Even Lenin declared in his speech at the All Russian Trade Union Convention (held in the spring of 1918) that "the factory is a self-governing commune of producers and consumers."

ture as well as an almost total lack of representatives of this movement among the Russian workers; despite all that, the labour movement of all Russia went along the road of decentralisation. It chose spontaneously the course of a unique

agana. The great majority of anarcho-syndicalists believed that, by working within the trade unions, they would succeed in imparting to the latter an anarcho-syndicalist direction.

list workers in unions considered "reliable" from their point of view. Thus went down a number of anarchist-minded trade unions; the union of Telegraph Workers in Petrograd, of perfumery workers in Moscow, of water transport workers in Kazan, the organisations of some important railroad junctions of Moscow and Kursk, where comrades..... played an important role.

Due to this measure and to intensified centralisation, coupled with unscrupulous juggling of votes and, in some places, the severe measures applied by the authorities, the administrative bodies fell into the hands of the communists. The Second All-Russian Convention of Trade Unions (1919) furnishes an apt example of this process of capturing the trade unions. At that convention the number of anarcho-syndicalist and sympathetic delegates was only 15. That is they represented only 52,950 at a moment when the workers sympathies for anarcho-syndicalism were noticeably on the increase, a fact accentuated by a concurrent lowering of the standing of the Bolsheviks in the eyes of the workers. The standing rules of the convention deprived the anarcho-syndicalists of the right to have their own speaker on the important questions on the agenda. At the Third Convention, in 1920, there were only 10 anarcho-syndicalist delegates (including sympathisers) representing only 35,300 people.

Those conventions fully demonstrated the failure of the tactics advocated by Golos Truda, which carried weight with the anarcho-syndicalists of Russia. (The author was on the staff of Golos Truda, but this does not deter him from acknowledging the errors made by the paper.) The lack of purely revolutionary unions hastened the destruction of the anarchist and syndicalist movements. Scattered throughout the Bolshevik unions, the anarcho-syndicalist forces could not show any resistance and were flattened by the iron policy of the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat".

At the beginning of 1920 only one union in Moscow held out for the anarcho-syndicalist line. This was the Bakers' Union, whose anarcho-syndicalist orientation was due to the work of our comrade N. I. Pavlov. (The latter, however, recanted his anarcho-syndicalist views under the pressure of the G.P.U., this being the price paid by him for his liberty. Pavlov made the statement disavowing his anarchist views on release from prison). A contributing factor to the persistence of anarcho-syndicalist influence in the Bakers' Union was the work of the Maximalists, Niushenkov and Kamsyshev.

At the Second All-Russian Convention, the Bakers' Union delegation contained a "Federalist" faction numbering 10-15 people whose following extended to nearly a third of the union membership. At that convention the first attempt was made (Maximoff, Niushenkov, Pavlov) to organise an underground revolutionary Federation of Food Workers. This was to be the first step towards organising a Russian General Confederation of Labour. The move was to have been a genuine attempt by the Executive Committee of Russian anarcho-syndicalists to carry out the basic points of its program. In view of the repressions which soon began, the Committee of the above-mentioned comrades elected at the meeting of the faction of the convention, did not even get a chance to start its work, as planned at the meeting. This was the last vivid manifestation of the struggle waged by anarcho-syndicalism within the communist State-controlled.



First All-Russian Conference of Factory Committees (October, 1917)

The results of this Anarcho-Syndicalist propaganda soon bore fruit. There followed a wave of seizures of enterprises and the organisation of Workers' Management. These began when the provisional government was still in power and it stands to reason, that anarchists played the foremost role in them. The most talked-of event of the kind at that period was the expropriation under the direct influence of the anarchist Zhuk, of the Shlisselburg gun powder mills and agricultural estates, both of which were then organised on anarchist principles. Such events recurred even more frequently, and on the eve of the October revolution they came to be regarded as a matter of course.

Soon after the triumph of the October revolution, the Central Bureau of the Factory Committees worked out extensive instructions for the control of production. These instructions proved to be a brilliant literary document, showing the triumph of the Anarcho-Syndicalist idea. The significance of this incident is the greater considering that the Bolsheviks were then predominant in the Factory Committees.

How greatly the workers were influenced by the idea of Factory Committees being the executive bodies of the Factory-Communes - the cellular bodies joining into a federative organisation, which unites all workers and creates the necessary industrial administrative system - is shown by the uneasiness the Bolsheviks revealed after the October revolution.

"In place of a 'Republic of Soviets', we are led to a republic of producers' co-operatives (artels), into which the capitalist factories would be metamorphosed by this process. Instead of a rapid regulation of the social production and consumption - instead of measures which, objected to as they may be on various grounds, do represent a genuine step toward a socialist organisation of society - instead of that we are witnessing something which partakes somewhat of the anarchist visionary dreams about autonomous industrial communes." - I. Stepanov, From Workers' Control towards Workers' Administration in the Industries and Agriculture (Moscow, 1918, p11).

The predominance of the Bolsheviks makes even more remarkable to successes achieved by our comrades, especially that of W. Shatov, in their work carried on within the Factory Committees. (Shatov led the attack on the Winter Palace, Petrograd in October 1917. He left the Anarcho-Syndicalist movement and became in fact a Bolshevik from the very moment when the capital was moved to Moscow early in 1918. He was arrested and probably shot without trial during the purges in the late 1930's). Even though dominated by the Bolsheviks, the Factory Committees of that period were carrying out the anarchist idea. The latter, of course, suffered in clarity and purity when carried out by the Bolsheviks within the Factory Committees; had the anarchists been in the majority they would have tried to eliminate completely from the work of the committees the element of centralisation and State principles.

SPONTANEOUS SYNDICALISM

We are not out here to give a detailed history of the Russian trade union movement, or a chronicle of the struggle of various political parties and groups within the trade unions. Ours is a purely informative task. We want to stress those moments in the life of the trade union movement highlighted by the work of the Anarcho-Syndicalist minority. The labour movement, like the revolution itself, arose spontaneously. It set aside trade unions, basing itself in the Factory Committees and their associations, especially in Petrograd.

Although the Russian proletariat was, as a whole, entirely ignorant of the ideas of Revolutionary Syndicalism and despite the scarcity of Anarcho-Syndicalist literature

Revolutionary Syndicalism. Unlike other periods, the one following the February revolution of 1917 was characterised by the active participation of Anarcho-Syndicalists - workers who had returned to Russia from the United States, where they had taken part in the struggles of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

FACTORY COMMITTEES vs TRADE UNIONS

Until January 1918, that is until the First All Russian Trade Union Convention, the labour movement sailed under the banners of the Factory Committees. These waged a fierce struggle against the bourgeois elements that fought silently for supremacy, as against the trade unions. This struggle assumed an especially strong character after the Third All Russian Trade Union Conference, which clearly revealed the gulf between the tactics and aims of the trade unions and those of the Factory Committees. The latter, united first in Petrograd, then throughout Russia, singled out their own central bodies and gave the keystone to the course of the revolution. The Anarcho-Syndicalists took an active part in both the Factory Committees and the trade unions. There was no unanimity in Anarcho-Syndicalist ranks about which of the two organisations should be preferred. The movement headed by the author of these lines was far from being supported by the rest of the anarchists. It was not even accepted by the group publishing Golos Truda. Likewise, many Bolsheviks were averse to the viewpoint favouring the Factory Committees as against the trade unions. At one of the conferences of the Petrograd Factory Committees, Lozovsky subjected this view, and the movement backing it, to a cruel and unscrupulous attack.

On the whole, however, the Anarcho-Syndicalist elements showed a preference for the Factory Committees, having concentrated their forces in that direction. They were represented in many individual Factory Committees as well as in the Petrograd Bureau and the All-Russian Central Bureau of Factory Committees. Likewise in influence exercised by the Anarcho-Syndicalists on the work of the conferences of the Factory Committees whose paper, *Novy Put*, was strongly coloured with a unique kind of anarcho-syndicalism, though no anarcho-syndicalists were on its staff.

In view of this direct and indirect influence of anarcho-syndicalists the bourgeois and socialist papers began to voice alarm: the newspapers *Dien* (bourgeois), *Novaya Zhizn* (socialist), *Izvestia Petrogradskogo Obshchestva Zavochikovy Fabricanotov* (bourgeois), *Izvestia Tsentralnogo Komiteta* (socialist), *Rabochaya Gazeta* (socialist), etc. Social-Democrats issued a special publication (*Rabochaya Mysl*) to combat anarcho-syndicalist influence among the organised proletariat.

In vain, however, the anarcho-syndicalists were conquering the masses with the slogan of "Workers Control". Ever greater masses of workers were swept under anarcho-syndicalist influence, which impelled them to proceed with the seizure of factories. The influence of the anarcho-syndicalist slogan "Workers Control" showed itself in the *Manual for the Carrying Out of Workers' Control of Industry*, edited and published by the Central Council of the Petrograd Factory Committees and which met a sharp rebuff from the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks at the First All-Russian Trade Union Convention. (see *The First All-Russian Convention of Trade Unions, Stenographic Report*. Also A. Lozovsky (Dridzo), *Workers' Control*.)

The anarcho-syndicalists at that time had their group organisations outside the unions and were publishing newspapers and magazines. In Petrograd *Golos Truda*, *Kharkov Rabochaya Mysl*, *Kranrasnoyarsk Sibirsky Anarchist*, in Moscow a revolutionary syndicalist organ *Rabochaya Zhizn*, etc. The anarcho-syndicalists were represented in numerous Factory Committees and trade unions where they were carrying on intensive prop-

SWEEP OF MOVEMENT

Before the First All-Russian Trade Union Convention, the anarcho-syndicalists succeeded in organising on the platform of the American IWW between 25 and 30,000 miners of the Debaltzev district in the Don Basin. The Cossack massacre, which led to the murder of comrade Koniayev, the organiser of this union, and the subsequent civil war, destroyed those beginnings. The same was true of anarcho-syndicalist work in the Chermkhovo mine, before the Czechoslovak rebellion. In Ekaterinodar and throughout Novorossiysk province the labour movement was adopting the anarcho-syndicalist platform. The movement was headed by B. Yelensky, Katia Gorbova and others. The movement embraced the entire Chernomorsky province, with the cities Ekaterinodar and Novorossiysk. The main contingents in this movement were portworkers and cement workers. In Moscow the anarcho-syndicalists had a dominant influence among the railway workers, perfumery workers and others. (The movement was carried on by comrades including *Preferansov*, *N.K. Lebediev*, *Kritskaya*.) To translate this influence into terms of definite numbers is difficult. We can only point out that, at the First All-Russian Trade Union Convention, there was an anarcho-syndicalist faction. It included a few Maximalists and other sympathisers totalling 25 people. And since the basis of representation was on the average of one delegate per 3,000 - 3,500 members, one may say the number of organised anarcho-syndicalist workers reached 88,000. This figure, however, might safely be increased two or three times to form an adequate idea of the actual sweep of the movement.

FACTORY COMMITTEES SUBORDINATED

At the First Trade Union Convention, immediately after the October revolution the Bolsheviks and Left Social-Revolutionists were in the majority. It signified the final victory of the trade unions over the Factory Committees. The Bolsheviks subordinated the Factory Committees, which were federalist and anarchistic by nature, to the centralised trade unions. With the help of the trade unions, the Bolsheviks succeeded in making the Factory Committees a tool in their policy of domination over the masses. Having achieved that, the Bolsheviks proceeded to strip the Committees of all their functions. And by this time, the Factory Committees fulfilled only one function, the police role imposed on them by the Bolsheviks.

In 1918, the Bolshevik terror still spared the trade unions. And thus we saw the development of an anarcho-syndicalist movement in the bakers' union of Moscow, Kharkov, and Kiev (very energetic work was carried on among the Kiev bakers by A. Baron, who if not executed... kept in prison or exile; ever since 1920, he was switched back and forth from various prisons to places of exile), and among Petrograd postal and telegraph workers, the anarcho-syndicalists exercised a powerful influence, more than half the delegates following their lead... The Petrograd branch of this union marched under the banners of anarcho-syndicalism. Its publication, *Izvestia Pochtovo-Telegrafnikh Sluzhashtchikh Petrograda* was edited by anarcho-syndicalists. The same was true of the Union River Transport Workers of Volga Basin where, due to the work of comrade Anosov, the union publication took a definite anarcho-syndicalist stand.

CAPTURE OF TRADE UNIONS

All that, however, was destroyed by the Bolsheviks. The industrial principle underlying the process of merging unions into large units became a useful weapon in the Bolshevik struggle against anarcho-syndicalism. In the first place the Bolsheviks began to consolidate those unions which they deemed unreliable, from the viewpoint of their basic drive for domination. The move was to merge such unions in the general name and scatter the leading anarcho-syndical-



Leon Trotsky, 1919.

CENTRALISATION AND TERROR

The programme of the Russian trade union movement was as follows: centralisation, compulsory membership, compulsory discipline imposed by disciplinary courts, the tutelage of the political party (the Communist Party in this case), militarisation of labour, compulsory labour service, labour armies, the attachment of workers to their places of work, nationalisation of production, individual management (instead of collective administration), graduated wage scales (36 categories), introduction of sweatshop system, Taylorism, Piecework, bonuses, premium system, etc. Workers' control and workers' management were proscribed.

THE AUTHORITARIAN PARTY

A persistent weakness of Marxism which has had disastrous consequences has been its failure to comprehend the subjective and organisational forces which can undermine a revolutionary state apparatus and government. For Stalinists the problem is of relatively minor significance. Despite shoptags and shoddy goods, the Soviet style system is basically sound and political oppositionists can always be labelled "Trotsky-Fascist" or less sinisterly, 'anti-party'. Trotskyists and their offspring, whilst accepting that the USSR is a monstrous perversion of virtually every principle of socialism, nevertheless argue away the problem by a convenient string of excuses - the backwardness of the young Soviet state, capitalist encirclement, civil war etc. They conveniently ignore the dictatorial arrogance of Trotsky and the bureaucratic manoeuvring of Lenin. It is the purpose of this article to indicate some of the factors which lead to political degeneration within 'Marxist' organisations.

Some of the anti-democratic, authoritarian and bureaucratic tendencies within Marxism are amply expressed in the organisations of the revolutionary movement today. As anarchists have argued for decades, 'revolutionary parties' tend to reproduce certain tendencies inherent in themselves upon seizing state power. Authoritarian, hierarchical parties based upon discipline and intolerance will bring about (despite a genuine desire to the contrary) authoritarian and intolerant societies. Political parties may well be the creation of human beings but these organisations in turn effect the consciousness and therefore the actions of these human beings. Organisations often take on a life of their own - people become trapped within them, acting out predetermined roles. Formal organisations of the working class... are extremely prone to oligarchic structures and acting in ways which are actually contrary to their avowed aims.

Leninist parties, which by definition must be democratic-centralist, almost inevitably and imperceptibly move away from 'democracy' towards centralism. It does not require very penetrating analysis to observe that, for example, the Socialist Workers Party (neo-Trotskyist) and the Communist Party (neo-Stalinist), negate any genuine intra-party democracy. The forms of democracy as represented in constitutions and formal party structures are devoid of real content. Simply stated, democratic-centralism requires that the lower bodies (cells, branches etc) should be subordinate to the 'higher' bodies (eg; Central Committee).

The 'supreme' body of the party is the annual (usually) conference at which non-mandated delegates from the branches decide on policy which is binding on the whole party. In between conferences it is the job of the full-time (often elected but not always) officers to lead the party and carry out policy. Within this collection of party organs the potential for subverting democracy are legion.

HIERARCHY

The first problem is the issue of hierarchy. Why should 'higher' party organs interpret party policy any more accurately than 'lower' ones? The pat answer is that the 'higher' bodies comprise the most capable and experienced members and are in a better position to take an overall view on a given issue. In fact, what may well happen is that, for example, central committee members may be more isolated from the outside world than mere branch members. (This might ordinarily be the case given the fact that many central committee members are full-timers and therefore detached from more real issues such as making a living in a factory). Furthermore, given that party leaders are concentrated into 'higher' bodies, there is often a tendency to view the membership within the lower bodies as troops on the ground to be directed when and how the leadership requires. 'Higher' bodies are necessarily smaller in membership than lower ones and thus the potential for manipulation is greatly increased. Added to this, once the 'rank and file' membership accept the 'general superiority' of the leadership and their 'sacrifices', they are much more likely to accept their dictats. An amazing feature of revolutionary militants who constantly challenge authority in the 'outside world' is their often unthinking acceptance of the whims of the party leadership, however absurd they may seem to other people (and perhaps themselves, upon reflection later).

FULL TIMERS

The second aspect of 'democratic-centralist' parties which tends to subvert democracy is their reliance on the energies of full-time organisers. Often, quite tiny organisations of a few thousand members can employ thirty or forty full-time officials. Whilst we should not necessarily denigrate the motives and sincerity of these people, (as many work very hard, are badly paid and have to bear heavy responsibilities) nevertheless it is these very factors seem to bring about high handed and authoritarian attitudes. 'They' are making the financial sacrifices etc, 'they', therefore are extremely keen to ensure that 'their' party (for which they have devoted so much) should be sidetracked

by 'Johnny-come-latelies' or subverted by mere 'rank and file' members, who after all, are only 'part-time' revolutionaries. Also, of course, full time officials are right at the centre of things and unlike 'rank and file' members (who are often kept uninformed about party developments, internal dissent, difficulties, etc) are usually fully informed about all matters concerning their organisation.

At 'lower' levels, branch members are often prevented from assessing developments in between conferences as 'horizontal' party groupings (factions) are normally prohibited. Additionally, we should ask "what are the subconscious motives which induce people to become leaders?". The ponds may well be small but nevertheless, some people still have an irresistible urge to become 'big fish'. The goal clearly is not pecuniary advantage but 'respect and adulation' from the membership. Intoxication with authority and self-righteousness (which usually results in abuses of such positions) certainly leads many people to seek 'leadership' positions.

CONFERENCE

Regarding the 'supreme' body of the party, the annual conference, an obvious weakness is that they only meet at very widely-spaced intervals. Clearly, not all (if any) future developments can be accurately predicted therefore remaining generally outside of the conference jurisdiction. It becomes the responsibility of the full-time officials to interpret, undertake and develop the organisations policies, etc.

The delegates who represent the 'lower' organs of the party are often chosen in such a way that the existing leadership is assured of its continuity in/via elections. Also, since delegates are not mandated by their branches, there is no compulsion to represent the 'grass roots' opinion. This gives entrenched leaders (who inevitably obtain a disproportionate amount of 'air' time) the opportunity to build up support. Party conferences are, as far as is consistent with the appearance of 'free' debate inevitably 'rigged'. The existing leadership normally occupies the platform separate from the rest of the delegates, giving themselves an 'air of authority'.

To ensure that it is the 'leadership' which guides the electoral process, a 'recommended list' of candidates is presented to the conference by the outgoing central committee. Unsurprisingly, the central committee 'slate' contains most of the names of the existing leadership. Given the existence of the central committee as a permanent faction, both before and during the conference, it is not surprising that its list of candidates succeeds in obtaining support without too much amendment. The ordinary membership, in contrast is in a very weak position to effectively challenge the existing leadership.

Syndicalists Continued.

ribed and unconditional support of the government was demanded.

The policy and programme of the trade unions was wholly determined... by the policies and programme of the "Communist Government"... The following is an apt illustration of this terrorist policy towards workers. Krasny Nabat and Uralsky Rabochy reported the following cases: for taking an unauthorised three-day leave from his factory, one of the workers was sentenced to unload 5,000 pounds (80.3 tons), during ten days. All that to be done after his regular work day. Many other workers were sentenced to compulsory prison work for the same "crime" of absenting themselves during work. This slave holding policy flourished, especially in the Ural region, during the administration of Trotsky and Piatakov.

A government inspection of the sanitary and technical conditions prevailing in the Central Coal District revealed a ghastly picture, by which even the most frightful capitalist exploitation pales in comparison. In the name of the "commonwealth", that is, the benefit of the State, workers had to live miles away from the mines in ramshackle barracks built of thin boards, and lacking elementary conveniences, where even doors and windows had fallen into disuse. In the winter the barracks gave hardly any protection against frosts and icy winds. There were no toilets, workers being compelled to use cesspools surrounding the barracks.

Moneworkers were getting half-a-pound of bread a day - on condition that they fulfilled their daily work norm. Failing that, they were deprived of this ration. In addition, overtime was exacted from the workers, who were paid for it with one meal a day. Workers who did not fulfill their norm were kept in the mine until they completed their daily task. And this leaves out the account of the flagrant tyranny and high-handed actions characterising the attitude of the administration of the workers.

(This data is taken from the unpublished report of the doctors who were carrying out this investigation.)

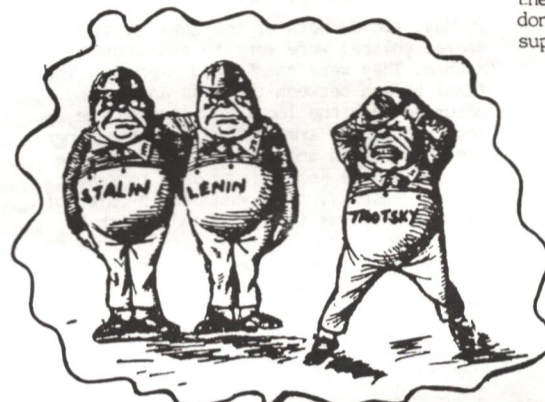
...Such conditions were especially prevalent in the life of the Ural workers during the administration of Trotsky and Piatakov. At the Izhevsk plant, for instance, an anarchist worker named Gordyev was shot for failing to submit to work discipline (see Golos Rossiyyi for the first half of 1922, Berlin). In Ekaterinburg (now Sverd-

lovsk) workers of the mint were sentenced to hard prison labour, their "crime" being "violation of labour discipline".

Another feature of conferences is the amount of 'behind the scenes' manoeuvring and politicking which goes on. Entrusted party members (in the Communist Party for instance), bully, cajole and plead with movers of resolutions to have them composited into pro or anti leadership positions while others are not prioritised for debate and therefore disappear. Finally, conferences are an effective instrument for identifying, isolating and ultimately expelling dissident members or branches.

PARTY PRESS

The leadership, as we have seen, is well placed to maintain more or less control over the ordinary membership. It is assisted in this by controlling the party press. New ideas, policies and orientations virtually always only appear in party papers, journals etc., if they have the sanction of the central committee. In this way the nature and rules of intra party debate can be firmly controlled. Dissident views, to be sure, do appear but only at the behest of the leadership and, in pre-conference discussion documents, such views inevitably take second to established leadership positions.



Despite Trotsky's tantrums through not being allowed to play, they're all the same really.

All in all, the factors outlined ensure that the party remains a firmly controlled 'machine'. The membership is, to a great extent, acquiescent to leadership manoeuvrings partly through ignorance and also partly from a subconscious, if not conscious, desire for a disciplined 'vanguard' party. Such matters might not be important if they were the sole concern of the 'leninist' parties themselves. However, all of the aspire to 'lead the revolution' and if miraculously, as in Russia, they happen to say the 'right things at the right time' then they may well find themselves in such a role. Then a party. (It is only the party) of the 'leninist' type would re-create all the attitudes, organisational forms and hierarchies etc., which typifies them.

Whatever excuses the Trotskyists and others now use for the 'deformed' Soviet state we must remember that these words are the same tactical manoeuvring as the statements of 'workers control' seventy years ago, in an attempt to gain credibility and trust to lay the ground for when they 'hope' to be 'dictating' to the masses.

Further reading on Russian Revolution:

History of the Makhnovist Movement - P. Arshinov.
The Bolshevik Myth - A. Berkman.
Bolsheviks and Workers Control - M. Brinson.
The Workers Opposition - A. Kollontai.
Guillotine at Work - G.P. Maximoff.
The Kronstadt Uprising - I. Merr.



Nestor Makhno.

Nestor Ivanovich Makhno was born on October 27th 1889 in Gulai-Polya, a large Ukrainian settlement.

In later life Makhno was to become the instigator of a revolutionary army in the Ukraine that was not only feared by the Red Armies and the Bolsheviks but which also played the major part in the destruction of Denikin and Wrangels White Armies.

On March 1st 1917, Makhno (and all other political prisoners) was released from prison (he had been jailed in 1908) and returned immediately to Gulai-Polya where he began to help organise a free commune and soviet with the local peasants. He soon became Chairman of the Regional Farm Workers Union and then President of the Gulai-Polya Soviet of Peasants' and Workers' Deputies. 'as head of the soviet, Makhno recruited a small band of armed peasants and set about expropriating the estates of the neighbouring gentry, and distributing the land to the poor peasants' (Paul Averich).

In March 1918 the German and Austrian armies marched into the Ukraine and set up a puppet regime of the Hetman Skorodpadsky. They soon began to terrorise the peasants.

Continued >>>

working class. It follows, therefore, that the first task of the trade unions should be to emancipate themselves from State captivity, to emphasise the significance of industrial organisation. In accordance with the premise the anarcho-syndicalists built their programme and tactics in the Russian trade union movement.

In March 1918 the German and Austrian armies marched into the Ukraine and set up a puppet regime of the Hetman Skorodpadsky. They soon began to terrorise the peasants.



Makhno continued carrying off huge quantities of wheat, livestock and poultry by the trainload. When the Ukrainian peasants began to resist many were flogged and shot. During this period insurrectionary acts started to occur against the gentry and the Austro-Germans. It was this that began the vast movement of the Ukrainian peasants which was later given the name of the Revolutionary Insurrection. A secret revolutionary committee came into existence which gave Makhno the task of creating fighting units of workers and peasants to defend themselves.

Makhno was forced into hiding (the bourgeoisie had put a price on his head) and arrived in Moscow in June 1918 where he met Lenin - the two disliked each other. 'The majority of anarchists think and write about the future' declared Lenin to Makhno, 'without understanding the present; that is what divides us Communists from you anarchists.' Makhno retorted, 'It is we anarchists and social revolutionaries who are beating back the nationalists and privileged classes in the Ukraine', 'Perhaps I am mistaken' admitted Lenin.

Makhno and the Insurrectionary armies were not only concerned with defending their communes, but with spreading the revolution and expropriating the property of the landed gentry and rich Kulak farmers. In July 1918 Makhno returned to Gulai-Polya - arriving finding his mothers house had been burned down by the Germans and his brother shot (another brother was shot by Denekin's White Army and the third was murdered by the Bolsheviks). Makhno was almost immediately captured by the Germans - he was caught carrying libertarian pamphlets. A Jew who had known him personally for a long time succeeded in saving his life by paying a considerable sum of money for his release. The news of his release soon spread. Meetings were held and leaflets distributed declaring that the workers and peasants should take their fate into their own hands.

INSURRECTION AND RED PACT

Makhno organised a detachment of partisans and launched a series of daring raids upon the Austro-Germans and Hermanites, and upon the manors of the local nobility. He began to attack the large estates in the region. In September his forces were strong enough to capture Gulai-Polya. Within two or three weeks the anarchist partisans operated over hundreds of square miles. By November (1918) the Austro-Germans withdrew from Russia and the Ukraine.

From the end of November, 1918, to June, 1919, Makhno's region east of the Dnieper was virtually free from external political or military authority. The Austrians, Germans, Hermanites and Ukrainian national-

ists had all been driven away. During this period the workers and peasants attempted to reconstruct their society on libertarian, free communal lines.

On January 23 1919, the First Regional Congress of Peasants, Workers and Insurgents took place. Its main concern was the likelihood of an invasion by the White forces of Denekin.

The Second Congress met three weeks later and established a Regional Military Council (Soviet) of Peasants, Workers and Partisans. In the early part of 1919 the Bolsheviks sought the help of Makhno. Relations between the Red Army and the Anarchist partisans remained reasonably friendly - on the surface. In March Makhno and the Red army entered into an agreement for joint action against the Whites. The insurrectionary Army was to maintain its own internal organisation, name and continue to fly the black flag.

On April 10th a Third Congress met in Gulai-Polya. There were over 70 delegates representing two million workers and peasants. Whilst the Congress was in session a telegram arrived from the commander of the Red Army in the Dnieper area, declaring the Congress 'counter-revolutionary' and therefore banned. The delegates ignored the telegram. The Communists - and particularly Trotsky - openly attacked Makhno as an 'anarcho-bandit'. He pronounced, "It would be better to yield the whole Ukraine to Denekin, a frank counter-revolutionary, who could be easily compromised," than let Makhno arouse the masses against the Whites and Bolsheviks.

RED ARMY MUTINEES

In May, two members of the Chka (Communist secret police) were sent to assassinate Makhno. They were caught and executed. The final breach between the Reds and Makhno occurred when the local Soviets and the Insurrectionary Army called a Fourth Congress for June 15 and invited rank and file members of the Red Army to send representatives. Trotsky, the commander-in-chief of the Red Army was furious. On June 4th he banned the Congress and declared Makhno an outlaw. He then sent Communist troops to destroy the 'Rosa Luxemburg' Commune (this was the first commune to be organised in the Ukraine, later many followed). They were only partially successful. A few days later Denekin's forces arrived and completed the job, wiping out all other communes in the area, liquidating the local (non-Party) Soviets and murdering many of the population. The Bolsheviks and the Red Army under Trotsky allowed Denekin to advance in the hope that he would destroy Makhno and the partisans for them.

During August and September, 1919, the Makhnovist insurgents were relentlessly driven towards western borders of the Ukraine. The retreat lasted for months. At first Makhno tried to dig in on the Dnieper at Alexandrovsk; but he soon had to abandon the city. During this period the Red Army in the Ukraine had become demoralised. In June,

nearly all the Red Army regiments in the Crimea mutinied. Makhno's forces once again became powerful.

The Insurrectionary Army then began to go on the offensive. Denekin was thrown back. Makhno's forces however soon ran out of ammunition, and Denekin counter-attacked with fresh troops. Finally, Makhno had to retreat again, this time over 250 miles into the department of Kiev.

THE FINAL ASSAULT

On the evening of September 26th, 1919, Makhno played his last card. For months they had been retreating west. They suddenly changed direction and during the night the entire Insurgent Army attacked the Whites. After a long and bloody battle Denekin's troops were routed. Soon the Insurgents had control of the whole of the Central Ukraine.

A number of divisions of the Red Army arrived in the city of Alexandrovsk at the end of December, 1919, whilst Makhno's general staff was there. The ordinary troops of the Red Army readily fraternised with Makhno's partisans. But a week later, the Military Council of the 14th Corps of the Red Army ordered Makhno and the Insurrectionary Army to move to the Polish border. They refused and called on the soldiers of the Red Army to repudiate their leadership.

In Gulai-Polya local non-Party soviets again started up and schools based on free, non-authoritarian principles began to function until the Bolsheviks unleashed an unprecedented attack of violence and repression throughout the whole of the Ukraine at the end of November 1920.

Between January and November, the Bolsheviks did not openly attempt to crush the Insurrectionary Army but they did attack many defenceless villages in the Ukraine. Mass arrests and executions soon began.

During the summer the Whites, this time under the command of Baron Wrangel, swept up again from the South. In the middle of October the Insurrectionary Army set out to attack Wrangel's forces. Within three weeks the whole of the region was cleared of Wrangel.

Throughout Russia and the Ukraine, anarchists, libertarian socialists and members of the Social Revolutionary Party were being hunted, jailed and executed by the Bolshevik Cheka and Trotsky's Red Army. On November 26th, Gulai-Polya was surrounded by Red troops. Makhno and many of the Insurgents were there at the time but were able to rout the Red troops and escape, pursued by thousands of Red troops.

At the beginning of August, 1921, it was decided that, in view of Makhno's wounds (he was shot in the neck and the bullet had left through his cheek) he would leave for abroad. On August 28th he left Russia. Following Makhno's escape abroad the Communists soon wiped out the remaining Makhnovists. Soon the Communists controlled all of Russia and the Ukraine, and were able to set up their State-capitalist dictatorship under Lenin, Trotsky and later Stalin.

News in Brief

SENIOR COLMAN DISPUTE CONTINUES

The dispute at Senior Colman continues though some strikers have been bought off the picket lines by the company. However those that accepted payment were not active in the dispute - the hard core of the strikers remains. Supportive action in the area has been carried out by the Gateshead Workers Support Group who have picketed and leafleted CPS Haulage Tyneside Ltd which has been identified as one of the major scab transporters to Senior Colman.

Roland Smith - Chairman of the Colman group - is non other than the former chairman of Silentnight. Smith has also recently been appointed Chairman of British Aerospace and may shortly become Deputy Chairman of British Rail.

Black all Senior Colman products and all dealings with the company. For more information, letters of support, donations and requests for speakers contact:

SENIOR COLMAN STRIKE (FUND),
43, CRESENT,
SALFORD,
M5 4PE.

MOAT HOUSE WORKERS STILL SACKED

The forty nine full time and 13 casual workers at Moat House (sacked from Paradise Street) remain sacked and the company has refused to hand out holiday pay owed to them.

The company sacked the workers for daring to join the TGWU but as usual this union has done almost nothing to gain a victory for those sacked.

The sacked workers are asking people not to stay at any Moat House Hotel and to let them know why. Cancel any union event etc booked at any of the hotels.

If your firm supplies Moat House black the chain and refuse to cross picket lines. Organise support for the workers and make a financial contribution to the strike fund.

SID PEARCE,
BAR STAFFS ORGANISER,
T&GWU,
37, ISLINGTON,
LIVERPOOL 3.

SALFORD PLASTICS CEASE TRADING

Salford Plastics has ceased trading and it seems as though the company will completely close down. There is wide speculation that Chapman (the owner) will "do a runner" to avoid paying compensation to the sacked workers.

On August 22nd the workers had occupied the plastics factory - erecting a 20 foot thick barricade of steel hoppers at the factory entrance - in an attempt to stop Chapman from selling machinery from the plant to outside buyers. The occupation lasted 24 until a court order was giving to enable the owners to get access rights.

For more information on the latest contact:

JIM BILLINGTON,
6/196 BRANCH SECRETARY,
43, ABBINGTON ROAD,
URMSTON,
MANCHESTER,
M31 1GW.

UNION UNDERMINE TRADER SACKED WORKERS

The dispute at Trader Web has ended and their seven month struggle for re-instatement. Their frustration and resentment of the printers towards their union, National Graphical Association (NGA), reached breaking point. Many of the printers felt that the union had done nothing but to undermine the dispute with millionaire boss Lionel Pickering. Dubbins (NGA General Secretary) had stated, "I want this dispute stopped" when workers had voted to continue the action. Dubbins also suggested that those printers who canvassed for the Labour Party at the last election should be given full strike pay and those that refused to get only half - luckily this was not agreed by the NGA Executive. In the final weeks a picket (unofficial) was mounted at Welshpool where fellow NGA members were scabbing - Dubbins demanded that this picket was lifted and never again mounted. One of the sacked printers stated when the dispute was ended and the union had withdrawn strike pay, "The NGA has just become a 'subs' collecting agency". However the sacked printers have informed Pickering that they will be back to picket in their thousands if he attempts to open up the Heanor Gate plant.

USA: I.U.M.S.W.A. LOCAL 61 appeal recieved

Dear Fellow Workers:

What does it take to keep a union independent and positioned to help its members defend themselves? For more than four years, the membership of Local 61 of the Industrial Union of Marine Shipbuilders of America (IUMSWA) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania have been battling the companies in which Local 61 is organised in over jobs and living standards. At the same time members of Local 61 and their allies have been in the front lines in Pittsburgh protests against bank disinvestment and deindustrialisation in the region as a whole. This activist group has used direct action tactics such as putting skunk oil and dead fish in safe deposit boxes of the Mellon Bank, in protest of the bank's lending policies to racist, union busting corporations.

Local 61's independent and activist style, together with their criticism of the National IUMSWA union for its passivity and bureaucratic rigidity in the face of a massive crisis in the American shipbuilding industry, provoked the National Union to attack Local 61 and try to prohibit its autonomy.

On two occasions, the National Union sought to have the elected President of Local 61, Darrell Becker, kept off the ballot and ruled ineligible in the election for local officers in 1983 and 1985. However, overwhelming rank and file support gave Becker both elections by huge margins, and even the bosses courts ruled that the National Unions manoeuvres were illegal and invalid. But, when Becker next challenged the National Union leadership by declaring and campaigning around the country for the National Presidency in 1986, the National Union bureaucrats retaliated this time by putting Local 61 under its control. Similar to the way the United Food & Commercial Workers (UFCW) did to Local P9 at Hormel.

At the National Convention of IUMSWA this past October, Becker was kept off the ballot, but the Department of Labor has since ruled that the election was illegal and another election will have to be called. With reduced membership because of factory and snipyard closings and layoffs, Local 61 have been sustaining a crucial battle for autonomy and independence of their Local union for over four years on a shoestring



budget. This is a local union that does not bow to politicians, mobsters, company officials or union bureaucrats, and acknowledges no authority but the will of its members. They urgently need your support.

Send contributions to:

UNION DEFENCE FUND,
c/o DARRELL BECKER,
5087, ELMWOOD DRIVE,
PITTSBURGH,
PA, 15227,
U.S.A..

Profile

ALEC McFADDEN

The day of the Durham miners Gala members of T.R.S. and other anarchists attended the morning picket at H.F.W. Plastics. We were informed that to get onto the coach (laid on by the Newcastle Trades Council) we must have tickets. McFadden, whom had been on the picket lines during the week and whom we had seen often, had not bothered to inform anyone of this fact and had not given pickets tickets. The H.F.W. sacked workers gladly gave us their tickets as "McFadden could not stop them from getting of the bus". As the bus moved up the hill to where we had gathered for the pick-up point Berit McFadden (Alec McFadden's wife and leading member of the Communist Party in the area) was heard to say, "Ha Ha theres the anarchists and they can't get on the bus cos Alec hasn't given them any tickets", needless to say the man himself didn't look too pleased when he saw we had tickets.

Sectarianism and lies have always been the strong point of the Communist Party and not to let the side down McFadden actually managed to get onto the seated section of the stage (a must for all bureaucrats) at the Gala by the use of his fathers name Alex McFadden, now retired Divisional Officer of the National Union of Railwaysmen! McFadden was also said to be upset at the fact that some people had called Kinnock a scab and class traitor during the march. McFadden had luv with this scab.

ALAN DONNELLY

Recently full-time GMWU official Alan Donnelly was banned from driving for having excess alcohol in his blood. On the night in question Donnelly had been called for negotiations after his members (?) were to possibly take industrial action. During the talks with management Donnelly succeeded in consuming vast amounts of wine and sandwiches (open to the negotiators) taking him almost three times over the existing legal limit. Donnelly was so drunk that he managed to loose complete control of his car and ramming another parked on the side of the road. The incompetence, stupidity and downright disregard for his union members (?) along with the blatant abuse of his position is surely a sacking matter! This however is at least one good reason for workers doing all their own talking.

SOUTH AFRICA: HANDS OFF COSATU



Campaign have been burnt.. Union offices in at least 14 cities have been burned, vandalised, attacked, raided or closed down by police. And of course thousands of union members have been detained.

CAMPAIGNING

In May COSATU launched their "Hands Off COSATU" campaign demanding the right to organise, meet, speak and campaign freely. The federation now has over 707,000 members re-organising into massive industrial unions. The re-organisation has been slowed down somewhat by the repression encountered, but still 5 industrial unions have been formed from many smaller unions. COSATU began with the following goals, industrial unions for:

- Food & Drink
- Textile, Clothing & Leather
- Paper, Wood & Printing
- Mining & Electrical Energy
- Metal, Motor Assembly & Components
- Chemical & Petroleum
- Commercial & Catering
- Transport, cleaning & Security
- Local Government & Public Administration (including Education, Health, Postal & Telecommunications)
- Domestic
- Construction
- Agriculture.

So far Food & Drink, Mining, Metal, Domestic and Construction have been achieved, attempts to unite Transport and Catering are still underway. Even in sectors resisting amalgamation into big industrial unions the smaller unions are caught up in the wave of militancy and are developing in the right direction, making eventual affiliation to COSATU likely. In some cases unions will not yet affiliate because they see the COSATU adoption of the Freedom Charter to be not political enough (not stressing revolutionary working class struggle enough).

UNION NEWS

The latest successes for COSATU have been the amalgamation of 7 unions (3 COSATU affiliates and 4 smaller unions previously hostile to COSATU and each other) into the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA); and the setting up of the CAWU (Construction and Allied Workers Union) from 6 unions.

In March 20,000 SARHU (South African Railways and Harbour Union) working for SATS (South African Transport System) were on strike for 6 weeks on the railways and buses, over the sacking of 1 member, Andrew Nendzaka for a minor misdemeanor. After rolling stock was burnt, union buildings bombed, 6 strikers shot dead, the strike

according to workers' needs and not bosses profits...We would work for ourselves and the future. We know it would not be easy...We would see how much we needed and where it was needed most. We would share among ourselves all the work. And we would share among ourselves fruits of all our work. We would not all be rich. No-one would be rich. We would not all be poor. No-one would be poor. We would be constantly working together to improve the quality of life."



ANDREW NENDZAKA

COSATU is also challenging employers to open their books - so that workers could see how much they are really robbed. Their method of determining what constitutes a living wage is to send a questionnaire to workers' so that workers' themselves decided how much they need.

METAL AND MOSES

MAWU (Metal and Allied Workers Union) and NAAWU (National Allied & Auto Workers Union)

In the wake of the limited victory won by the South African National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) at the end of August we give here a review of recent developments in South Africa's burgeoning trade union movement. The gains of the miners are less significant than the part they are playing as the COSATU federation begins to flex its consolidating muscle. As COSATU's policy of merging small unions into single mass unions organised industrially, we can expect more giant confrontations between blocs of employers and the entire workforces of whole industries. COSATU is at present following a generally syndicalist direction, and in addition to this is vocally political. Particularly the metalworkers, but also in other COSATU affiliates the linkage being made between workplace and struggle in the community and political issues goes far beyond anything the ANC ever imagined in its Freedom Charter. Indeed, COSATU unions are now adopting the charter, but only as a set of minimum demands, recognising that working class self-emancipation has to be the basis of real revolutionary change in South Africa.

SPEAKING AGAINST REPRESSION

Statements by COSATU leaders show why the apartheid regime will use all the weapons at its disposal to break the present tide of class consciousness among black workers. "We are totally opposed to the present regime...we do not apologise for this." (Jay Naidoo, COSATU General Secretary). "We make no apologies about connecting shopfloor issue with the issues facing workers in society as a whole. Politics and especially the lack of even the most basic democratic rights for the majority, is a bread-and-butter issue for the working class" (Elijah Barayi, COSATU President).

Meanwhile government and government/ employer backed vigilante attacks on COSATU are spreading, reminiscent of the emergence of the death squads in South America. The headquarters of COSATU were bombed in May, at least a dozen COSATU officials have been killed by vigilantes associated with the pro-government white United Workers Union (sic) of South Africa (UWUSA). Editions of COSATU news are regularly banned and seized, 100,000 of COSATU's programme for 1987 and leaflets about the Living Wage



Moses Mayekiso.

was won with the aid of solidarity action by other black workers. Black SATS workers have now won the right to permanent status and to elect their own representatives.

THE LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN

In March COSATU launched a campaign for a living wage, a 40 hour week (with no loss of pay, the establishment of May Day, June 16th and Sharpeville Day as paid holidays, job security, no tax deductions, 6 months maternity leave, and an end to the hostel system, decent housing near work and the right to decent education and housing. Even though 21 outdoor COSATU rallies were banned May Day has already been given (this could however be political maneuvering on the part of the Apartheid government. See Syndicalist 14, May 1987 for manipulation of May Day). In May of this year thousands of workers joined indoor meetings.

THE ECONOMIC PICTURE

Unemployment is above 55%, inflation also is at an all-time high (19% last year and already higher this year.) Real wages have fallen considerably, and despite a growth in population food consumption is falling. 110's of 1,000's of workers are being laid off as companies shut down or reduce production. COSATU's Living Wage Campaign issue asks, "Who wastes the wealth we produce?". 12 million workers produce all of South Africa's wealth - working up to 12 hours per day in extremely bad conditions. 1360 families own and control 80% of the wealth - ie less than 0.1% of the population. Through mergers and buyouts the 7 largest companies are continually strengthening their position. COSATU says,

"Imagine what we could do if just the big 7 companies were managed

merged with smaller unions to form a National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) in July. On 20th of that month 6,500 steelworkers at the Iscor plant at Vanderbiljt (south of Johannesburg) struck for wage increases and improved conditions. The confidence gained from the amalgamation is showing immediate results as instant solidarity in one big union replaces hostile bickering between many small unions.

The metalworkers have been at the forefront of the growing militancy of the last two years. In particular, MAWU's analysis of the need for linking the workplace and community struggles showed itself clearly during the BTR Sarmcol strike and in the Action Committees in the townships. Not surprisingly the state have done their best to crush the resulting movement, and now 5 militants active in the Alexandra Action Committee face the death sentence from charges of high treason, sedition and subversion. One of the charged is Moses Mayekiso, who has featured prominently in stories we have printed. He was detained when returning from Europe where he was campaigning in support of the BTR Sarmcol strikers (he was elected General Secretary of MAWU in 1986). The "Friends of Moses Mayekiso" are organising a campaign on his behalf and behalf of the others charged (Mzwanele Mayekiso, Paul Ndlovu, Richard Mzameni and Obed Bapela). The campaign included a well attended march in London on October 10th. For speakers, information etc. contact;

TERRY BELL,
FRIENDS OF MOSES MAYEKISO,
ACORN HOUSE,
314, GRAYS INN ROAD,
LONDON,
WCX 8DP.



International Attack on Dockers

This paper regularly reports on the struggles in Spanish docks of the rank and file dockers' union, the Co-ordinadora. But the situation in Spain is part of an international scene where multi-national companies are seeking to reduce the costs of moving goods around the world. So here we try to give a more global picture. Information is from La Estiba (the monthly paper of the Co-ordinadora) and the pamphlet 'International Dockers' Struggles in the Eighties', available from TRS (price £1.25).

completely automated - technicians and security guards being the only workers left. From a central control point container ships can be directed to national ports where conditions, prices etc. are most favourable to increasing profit margins, reducing delay etc. and nothing in the docks hinders this process.

(followed by other massive companies) have had to demand very large savings in their use of ports in Europe, and the traditional working agreements have had to be torn up if ports were to stay in business on these terms.

they are hampered by the reformist trade unions, who share the aims of the multinationals and national governments as far as containerisation is concerned (eg the profitability of national ports, and a subservient workforce).

PROFIT AND CONTROL

From the capitalists' point of view the container system is vastly preferable because as well as reducing the costs of moving goods from continent to continent, the predictability, measurement and regulation of movement is greatly increased. As multi-national capitalism relies more and more on playing off national industries and workforces against each other to drive down costs, this planning element will become more important. This explains why the introduction of containerisation is fought so bitterly by both sides - by bosses because they want to compete in the international market, and by workers because they seek to maintain their livelihoods.

CONTAINER COSTS

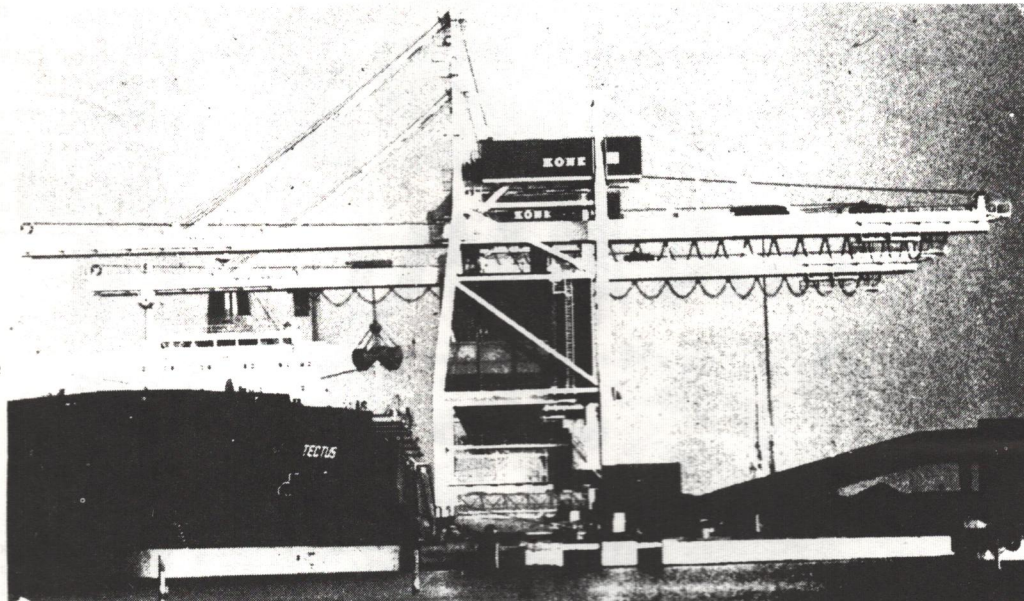
Despite its attractiveness, the container system is very expensive to install, and demands a complete overhaul of contractual and labour relations in the docks. The old working practices developed in response to an uncertain demand for dock labour (and therefore the need for a reserve force of dockers) and the militancy of dockworkers in maintaining their strategically powerful position. Those practices had been irritatingly expensive for port companies for years, only being kept by the high level of strike action by dockers and the baling-out by national governments. To introduce container ports meant new ports financed by multinationals and attacks on working agreements by governments to pave the way for the kind of workforce the new docks need.

SHIPPING TACTICS

The ports of Western Europe are in a crucial position in the routes between the consuming and producing countries. In fact, the top world transporter of containerised cargo, the American company Sealand, chose Algeciras in Spain for a private port employing non-unionised and totally flexible labour. The intention was for Algeciras to be a terminus for the Mediterranean, North Atlantic, Europe and Africa. With a base fully operational in Spain, the established ports in Western Europe were to be placed in competition with each other so that the container trade could reduce costs, switching to whichever port (or country) offered the most favourable terms at any given time.

ROUGH PASSAGE

But the multinationals and container companies have not had things all their own way. Firstly, the lynch-pin of the European operation, the port in Algeciras, has not been reliable since 1984, when the dockworkers there joined the Co-ordinadora. Secondly, the competition amongst container shippers has been fierce, not least because of the high costs to start with of container fleets and ports. One of the effects of this competition has been that individual multinationals - notably US Lines of America



DOCKERS RESISTANCE

THE STATE OF PLAY

Ports in Britain, France, Italy and Spain have had to rely on subsidies from government so as to not go under from the competing and contradictory demands of shipping companies and combative dockers. What has happened is mainly that traditional ports are being run down and new container ports

In all of these countries except Spain there is an uneasy truce, broken by rumblings of discontent dealt with by anti-union laws and police action and the frantic efforts of union bureaucrats to keep things quiet. In Spain the big bureaucratic unions have little membership in the ports - the dockers are instead organised into one of the most militant rank and file unions in Europe. For these reasons, as well as Spain's strategic position in the plans of big business, the success of the Co-ordinadora in resisting the onslaught of the Spanish "socialist" government needs to be matched by action in other European countries. The issue may be complicated by competition between national governments and between shipping companies. But the move towards containerisation is international, and has chilling consequences for workers. Here is a very clear example of the interests of workers and the interests of trade unions being very different. The T&GWU in this country and reformist unions abroad at most only half-heartedly oppose "free" container ports, and at worst support them and collaborate with the state in crushing militant rank and file action by those who see through the fog.



built up, but with still some militancy and organisation from their workers. National governments have also taken on the task of changing the nature of dockwork with changes in law, so that traditional ports could one day come back into their own without the slight hitch of dockers bringing trade to a standstill.

General strikes in docks in Denmark, England, Spain, and Italy have occurred repeatedly in the 1980's, and dockers are beginning to organise internationally to resist the multinationals' efforts. In this

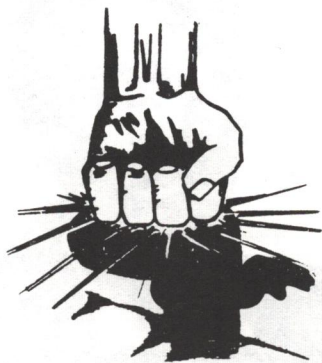
CONTAINERISATION AT BRITISH AND INTERNATIONAL DOCKS CHIMES THE DEATH KNEEL OF WORKERS RIGHTS, JOBS AND INDUSTRIAL STRENGTH.



WHERE WE STAND

1. We believe in independent non-hierarchical working class organisation. Political parties and bureaucratic trade union structures cannot represent the true interests of the majority of the people - those who create wealth by manual or intellectual means.
2. We believe that under capitalism the struggle for short term gains such as better pay and conditions and the rights of women and black people should be supported. But these should be seen for what they are. Limited interim reforms are no substitute for the total re-organisation necessary to achieve true democracy, equality and freedom.
3. We believe that the parliamentary system and the election of new leaderships will not solve the problems that we, the working class, face. The solution lies in the creation of new workplace and community structures which allow us all to have total control over decision affecting our lives.
4. As revolutionary syndicalists we believe that the only way capitalism can finally be removed is through a general strike accompanied by mass occupations and the implementation of workers' control. This can lead to a free, self-managed society where production and labour are geared towards need and not profit.
5. We oppose all forms of racism, sexism, fascism and nationalism - indeed any ideology which divides the working class or which imposes artificial barriers on people developing their potential.

FEDERACION ESTATAL ESTIBADORES PORTUARIOS



"LA COORDINADORA"

CONTAINER SHIPPING

The most important reason for the present position is the attempt to introduce container shipping into docks to replace the old system of work gangs loading and unloading cargoes more or less by hand. As dockers have realised, in the long run this will mean getting rid of dockers altogether, rather than simply changing the nature of the work and thinning out numbers.

Transporting goods in huge metal canisters - 'containers' - means that damage and theft are reduced to a minimum. Containers can roll-off ships and roll-on to lorries for immediate transport to the point of sale, so that in principle passage through the docks no longer obstructs the continuous flow of goods.

NEW WORKERS, OR NO WORKERS?

Containers can bypass dockworkers with their traditional militancy and solidarity. At container ports like Felixstowe in Suffolk, work is highly skilled and individual, as compared to the more co-operative work of dockworking gangs. The speed and productivity of container dockwork is regulated by machinery operators, security guards and computer programmers at the company's headquarters, rather than being strongly influenced by the activity of dockworkers themselves.

The ultimate in container docks so far can be seen in Siemens, Hamburg, West Germany, and this is an example that other port authorities will try to follow. Here, the movement of containers on and off ships is