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FREE

MANDELA V WORKING CLASS

If you thought Nelson Mandela was a great heroic leader of the oppressed masses of South Africa who, now risen like Christ after 27 years in the underworld and poised to lead said masses, if not to life everlasting, at least to freedom in the here and now, you might be a little puzzled.

Surely that can't be right. Mandela condemning the schools boycott and 'ordering' students back to school. Mandela supporting the use of South African state forces to suppress riots. Mandela and de Klerk singing each others praises. Etc.etc. What's going on?

If you were surprised by all this, it's because you didn't realize what the ANC was all about. The ANC has always been a capitalist organisation.

THE STRUGGLE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The working class in South Africa is probably the strongest on the continent, and has been increasingly showing this strength in the last few years.

There have been major strikes by both coal and gold miners, in the hospitals and on the railways. This in addition to the resistance in the squatter camps, the rent strikes and school boycotts. All of these struggles are a shining example to workers everywhere and show that the workers in South Africa are among the most advanced in the world in combativity. However, they face a serious threat from the ANC.

THE CLASS NATURE OF THE ANC

The ANC is one of many similar groups around the world, such as the PLO, IRA, SWAPO, Sandinistas etc. who claim to be fighting against oppression and for, usually, 'national liberation'. All of these organisations are simply the latter-day equivalents of the nationalist, bourgeois democratic movements of the historical period following the French Revolution. At that time the emerging capitalist powers needed an ideology which would bind the whole population to the ruling class. They found it in the idea of the 'nation' - a unity of both rulers and ruled, oppressors and oppressed, capital-

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a meeting of Bromsgrove District Council on Tuesday to win the reinstatement of

bers of Croydon social services for the mentally handicapped to win the

ming people in east London, were on strike for two days last week, the first strike in

services resulted in a partial victory. All scale one clerical

ballot for last week's NALGO meeting, activists in Haringey council, north

COUNCIL WORKERS

All over the country small groups of public sector workers have been striking, occupying council buildings, demonstrating and protesting against the impact of cuts in their workplaces.

Against the background of a deepening economic crisis, a combination of grant cuts, changes in housing and education finance, competitive tendering and of course the poll tax is pushing all councils, of whatever political flavour, onto the offensive against their workers.

As each of these attacks has come along the unions have argued for co-operation with the employers and "saving our strength" for the bigger battles to come. But each decision to co-operate has simply weakened and demoralised us further. Only when councils have tried to make cuts "without fully consulting the unions" have those unions protested. Some token consultations conceded and they have soon been satisfied. They have then united with the employers in trying to squash any flames of militant resistance by sections of workers most affected by the latest round of cuts.

Many of the small groups of workers now taking action to defend their interests have in previous years, or even months, voted at union meetings for co-operation with the employers, only to find now exactly what that means in terms of job losses, cuts in services, and reductions in working conditions. This apparent contradiction is being exploited for all it's worth by the unions who wave the flag of "democracy" against anyone who refuses to co-operate, implying that these 'refuseniks' are "out of step" or "on their own". The unions deliberately hide the widespread nature of the anger and revolt that is building up, hoping to keep each section of workers isolated and under their control.

But workers are learning to combat these union manoeuvres. In Barnsley for instance thousands of teachers went on a wildcat strike against job cuts despite all



sorts of dire threats from both the employers and the unions.

We have to understand that whilst the immediate causes of particular disputes might vary - poll tax capping in one place, privatisation in another, grant cuts elsewhere etc. - that these are all part of one co-ordinated employers offensive. If we are not to be worn down by endless rearguard sectoral disputes, attempts must be made to link all the main disputes together in a single fight against the cuts.

That doesn't mean passing resolutions appealing to the union 'leaderships' to organise something or sitting on our arses waiting for the next 'big' fight. It means using the time released by being on strike to go directly to other workers involved, or in dispute themselves, and arguing for combined and united action. It means controlling any strike ourselves through regular mass meetings, which cut across union and sectoral divisions, and directly elected strike committees.

In this way we can turn the current defensive actions into an offensive against the employers and the government and take a small step towards building the confidence, solidarity and organisation necessary to take on the whole rotten system.

It's time to fight

THE UNION'S CAMPAIGN

As Manchester City Council goes about implementing the government cuts a number of small disputes have arisen in the libraries, housing departments and elsewhere over things like collection of the poll tax, covering for vacancies and so on. In each case the union (NALGO) has sought to keep them isolated and avoid any generalised resistance to the cuts. Their job has been made easier because the majority of workers have previously been persuaded to co-operate with the Labour council rather than oppose them outright.

When you consider the effects of the current cuts this seems surprising, so how did the union pull it off? Basically they manipulated the membership in the following way:-

1. First of all they called a mass meeting early in the year before the practical effects of the cuts were widely known.

2. They deliberately kept the membership ignorant of those effects.

3. They suggested mass redundancies around the corner but only if the council wouldn't negotiate seriously to "sort things out". This tactic combined fear with an easy way out.

4. They made militant sounding noises about strikes but only to secure negotiations not actually against the cuts themselves.

5. They warned that total opposition to the council and the poll tax would leave us isolated. This was a self-fulfilling prophecy to the extent that other union exec's elsewhere were saying the same thing.

6. They also warned against being provoked into 'precipitate' and 'futile' action by politically motivated groups like the SWP, who are generally not very popular (conveniently ignoring their own political motives in supporting the Labour Party mainstream!).

7. They had their own ready made, glossy 'do nothing' campaign against those who argued for non-implementation.

8. And of course they controlled the meeting in the usual biased way towards the platform, restricting opposition speakers and resolutions.

This combination enabled them to get a majority in favour of their line, although a substantial minority refused to be brow-



beaten. That majority vote is now ritually produced anytime someone argues for spreading some action against the cuts. So far their tactics have worked, but they can't keep the lid on the growing anger amongst council workers forever. We must turn the increasing number of small streams of resistance into an irresistible tide of opposition.

GERMAN UNITY

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main concern of the East German working on the other hand is simply a straightforward struggle to obtain the basic necessities of life, with the cost of rents and basic food-stuffs such as milk and bread now doubling and tripling in price.

The strikes may be over for the time being, but worsening economic conditions will force the East German working class to resume and intensify its fight - as the ruling class know only too well. On 1st July the Sunday Correspondent reported that "East Germany's Minister of the Interior, Peter Michael Diestel, is taking no chances given all the uncertainties surrounding monetary union in the East. He has announced plans to equip the East German police with more effective anti-riot gear". Let's hope his lack of faith in the subservience of the East German working class is fulfilled beyond his wildest nightmares...

Welcome to freedom — you're fired

Ever since the Berlin Wall was breached back in November, the West German stock markets have been booming in anticipation of the profits to be reaped from investment across the border in East Germany. On the other side of the class divide, however, the prospects look none too bright for the East German workers who will be expected to produce this wealth.

The West German Economics Minister Helmut Haussman stressed recently that it was "essential for investment that over the next three to five years low wages and longer working hours prevail in East Germany."

Even so, during the next six months up to a third of all East German enterprises are expected to go out of business, unable to sell their products in competition with the more glamorous and better quality goods produced in West Germany.

As a result, the level of unemployment in East Germany, currently standing at around 224,000 or 2.5%, is widely predicted to rise to as much as 1½ or 2 million, out of a workforce of around 9 million. As many workers again are expected to be put on to short-time working, while hundreds of thousands could be forced to migrate in search of work.

On 2nd July, the first working day of monetary union, the Business Page of the Guardian reassured its readers that "Trade union leaders are issuing ritual warnings of strikes" (surprise, surprise!) "but there is no tradition in either part of Germany of wildcat stoppages."

This assertion was immediately proved wrong as that very same day 28,000 workers from 26 factories in and around East Berlin staged 3-hour walkouts. Demonstrations and staged 3-hour walkouts. Demonstrations and wildcat strikes continued for the next fortnight, involving at their height around 120,000 workers, concentrated mainly in the metal and electrical industries.



The demands formulated during these actions were for:

- a guarantee of no redundancies for the next two years;
- a reduction in working hours from 43 to 40 hours a week; and
- pay rises of up to DM400 (£137) a month (current metal and electrical industry wages in East Germany are around DM250 or £86/week).

The deal eventually negotiated to end the strikes fell short of meeting these demands. True, a 40 hour week was granted, but such a figure is purely nominal, because, like everywhere else, many workers have to put in extra hours in overtime to make ends meet. A guarantee of no job losses was extended only to next summer while the maximum pay rises granted were DM300 (£103) a month.

It is interesting to note that this settlement was negotiated by the West German-based trade union IG Metall, which has been busy setting up branches in East Germany. Their main interest has been in extending their own bureaucratic control over a section of the German working class who no longer trust their 'own' unions. In the process they have sought to stabilise the situation for capitalism in Germany.

While this is the union's primary reason for getting involved in East Germany, the

ABOUT OURSELVES

subversion

THE REVOLUTIONARY SCENE IN BRITAIN

'SUBVERSION' is published by a small group of revolutionaries based in the north of England. We started working together in 1988 after the dissolution of the old 'Wildcat' group.

Though small in number, we are not alone in some of the basic political views we express.

We share with a number of other groups and publications the common objective of a new, genuinely communist society, based on production directly for use (not profit); the abolition of the state and national frontiers along with the whole money-wages system; and the establishment of a world demand community.

We also share our opposition to: -

1. The Labour Party and its Trotskyist hangers-on as the left wing of capitalism.
2. Nationalisation and co-operatives as variations of capitalist property relations
3. The Unions as the capitalist enemy 'within' the working class.
4. 'National Liberation' as the ideology of would be new rulers.

Included amongst these groups and publications in this country are: -

'RED MENACE' published by the RM collective BM WILD, London wcln 3xx.

'ORGANISE' published by the Anarchist Communist Federation.
p.o. Box 263, Sheffield S1 3EX.

'WILDCAT' (New Series) published by the new, London based group using the name 'wildcat' BM CAT, London wcln 3xx.

'THE COMMUNIST BULLETIN' published by the Communist Bulletin Group. Box CBG c/o Boomtown Books, 167 King st, Aberdeen.

'WORKERS VOICE' published by the Communist Workers Organisation. BM Box CWO, London wcln 3xx.

We don't agree with everything that appears in these publications. Much of the material is still weighed down by a lot of irrelevant historical baggage and political jargon.

Groups like the C.W.O. and the C.B.G. are still hung up on outdated Leninist notions. The C.W.O. in particular still has fantasies about transitional societies where capitalist property relations are overseen by 'workers' states', an idea which would be EXTREMELY DANGEROUS for the working class if it ever became accepted in a future revolutionary situation.

The new 'Wildcat' group is obsessed with opposition to anything remotely 'democratic' to the point of applauding every violent minority action within the working class as a major step forward.

The A.C.F./Organise are still unable to make a firm break from the rest of the Anarchist scene, which remains dominated by a mish-mash of liberal and leftist ideas and are obsessively anti-marxist.

Despite all this, we are sure our readers will be able to gain something by applying a critical eye to these publications. For all their faults they are light-years ahead of anything else you might pick up on the radical fringe!

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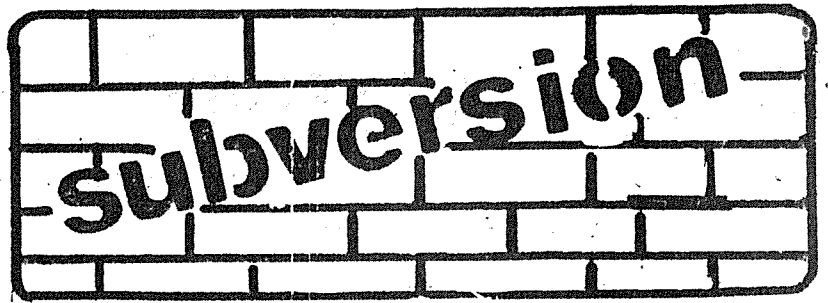
THE CRISIS IN EASTERN EUROPE

7.45 pm Friday 21st September 1990

Upstairs. 'The Millstone' pub.
Thomas St., via Shudehill or Hilton St or
Oldham St, Manchester city centre.

ALL WELCOME. PLENTY OF TIME FOR DISCUSSION

...MANDELA



ists and workers who, because they lived in the same area of land and spoke the same language, supposedly were a single unit with a single interest.

THE BIGGEST CON IN HISTORY

It has worked well for the capitalists. The ideology of nationalism has always meant that the working class has accepted the aims and interests of its exploiters, the capitalist class, as though they were its own. It is perhaps the biggest con in history.

Today, capitalism is dominant throughout the world, but there are always conflicts between rival capitalist powers large and small, both between countries and between different factions within a single country. The weaker capitalist factions make use of the same old lies about democracy and 'national liberation', usually coupled with the left-wing capitalist policy of Nationalisation, i.e. direct state control - thus the rhetoric of these groups like the ANC, PLO etc.

BUSINESS AS USUAL

When they come to power the result is always the same. They get on with the business of running capitalism and exploiting the working class.

When the MPLA, Frelimo, Zanu, Sandinistas etc. came to power the masses discovered the same thing they did after the French Revolution - plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose (the more it changes, the more it stays the same).

When the ANC comes to power it will be exactly the same, only they're being a bit more obvious about it than most. This is because of the dovetailing of interests between them and the Nationalist Party at this moment in history.

MENE MENE TEKEL UPARSIN

The growing world economic crisis has hit South Africa badly - especially since the greater part of the international capitalist class has mounted the campaign of sanctions (this latter because they

can see the writing is on the wall for the Apartheid regime, and they want to get in the good books of the non-racial regime whose accession to power is only a matter of time anyway). The more intelligent and forward looking faction of the white bourgeoisie, represented mainly by the Nationalist Party, realizes that a non-racial capitalism is necessary - and as this is also the aim of the ANC, hence the increasingly pally relationship.

For the working class, in South Africa as elsewhere, no form of capitalism, whatever fancy phrases it uses, will change the relationship between exploiters and exploited - it will just be an exchange of one lot of exploiters for another.

THE WORKING CLASS ALTERNATIVE

The working class must not allow itself to be conned by the ANC's version of capitalism. Our class can only free itself by abolishing wage-labour itself and taking the means of production - the factories, mines, land etc. - into its own hands, running them collectively for the collective needs of society. This is the basis of what we call Communism. In contrast to the widespread use of the term Communism to mean state-capitalism, as in the Eastern Bloc, we mean a classless society without national boundaries, without inequalities or oppressions, where money, markets and commodity production have been abolished and replaced by production for need, with free access for all. It will be the first genuinely free society in history. To achieve this genuine liberation, the working class must fight resolutely against all factions of capitalism. The ANC is just one more gang of capitalists confronting us

DOWN WITH DE KLERK
DOWN WITH MANDELA

FORWARD TO COMMUNIST REVOLUTION