Wildcat No. 6 Sept 85

BLACK YOUTH

10 July – Young Duduza boys dance round the burning car of a suspected informer

CLASS ANGER ROCKS S. AFRICA
NOT ANOTHER BLOODY UNION

Since the end of the miners' strike, the Coal Board has been pressing ahead with its plans to further "rationalise" the industry and increase the exploitation of the miners. Despite the defeat of the strike, these plans have not gone unchallenged. There have been short strikes right across the country's coalfields.

But the union's main concern as openly stated in the Yorkshire Miner is for "reconciliation" and a "return to normal working". Part of that return to "normality" involves re-building the damaged apparatus of the Union and re-establishing a firm power for the miners for "control" to pursue their claim to a share in the management of the industry.

Different leaders have different visions for this, none of which can be equated. The Notts leaders, their convictions strengthened by the national strike, believe that a moderate openly collaborative policy is best. With this in mind, and aware that their own position within the left dominated national union would be severely weakened after the strike, they have promoted a breakaway under their own control. The left union leaders, like Scargill, realise that their attempts to force the Coal Board to continue and increase share ownership of the industry have failed, they may be outflanked by a breakaway. Thus the stage is set for a new power battle between the union bosses over who should control the workers and represent them to the management.

Clearly there is an attack on the working class in all this. But it is not, as represented by the left press, an attack on trade union unity amongst workers, since the trade unions have always acted as a divisive force against the working class. Neither is it a matter of good versus bad trade unionism (re N.U.M v the Notts breakaway). The national union has after all, participated, over the last twenty-five years in a massive rundown of the coal industry, involving the closure of two-hundred pits and the loss of 500,000 jobs. Also, it was under Scargill's leadership "pit closures" consistently agreed between the N.U.M. and the Labour government in 1974, that the infamous bonus schemes were introduced that divided the coalfields into "profitable" and "less profitable" and mowed the basis for the Notts breakaway. The N.U.M. did its best throughout the national strike to keep it a purely "coal industry" affair and to spread it to other sections of the working class and thus out of their control. The N.U.M. itself is divisive.

The split is an attack on the working class because it is a means of strengthening their control and support for the coalfields, away from the real fight back against the union bosses.

Miners walk out over taxi murder sentences

By Paul Howland, Welsh Correspondent

Hundreds of miners walked out at two collieries in South Wales yesterday in protest at the three-year sentences to two neighbours in the murder of the two neighbours in the murder of the two murdered police officers on 9th February. David Williams, during the strike. Almost 700 miners in three unions, the miners pleaded the three miners sentenced for the murder of the police officers, to be set free. The miners stated that the police officers were killed on the picket line and that the miners would withhold support for the miners who had murdered the police.

Two thousand Yorkshire miners resigned their work-long strike over allegations for alleged verbal and physical attacks on union members who worked during the national strike. The N.U.M. instructions and called out their strike.

Warning letters dispute paralysis second pit

By Peter Rowbington

Northern Labour

The miners at Dawdon Colliery in Durham walked out in protest against the management's attempts to get higher production figures last week. Over 1,000 strikers at management threatened to suspend them unless they returned to work. The miners had been implementing a "go-slow" in response to the new production targets which affected bonus payments. However, at a union meeting, last Thursday, they decided to return to work after management agreed to produce figures on production levels after the negotiations on the "go-slow" were suspended. It is unfortunate that the miners' militancy was not backed up by junior officials and N.U.M. leadership in the area.

The Miners Struggle Goes On

Silentnight: Class Struggle Won't Lie Down

The current strike at Silentnight beds, at Sutton and Romford in Yorkshire, has been going on for 13 weeks. The strike started because the boss announced 52 redundancies after workers had agreed to a "no redundancies" agreement. Since then, the boss has been bussing in scabs, trying to recruit young people from the T.U.P, and has sacked all the strikers.

The main problem facing the militant minority on the picket lines is the passivity of the majority of strikers, who seem to think you can win by staying at home. This is reinforced by the leaders of the furniture union, the B.T.U., who say the workers will win if they just "hold firm".

All the militants know that this is rubbish. The only thing that will make a strike work is strike pay (£1-20 per week). One of the first things we heard on the picket line was a shop steward saying "Puck union. We've got to spread strike pay. Workers have visited factories in the same group, hanging out leaflets (not picketing, because that's illegal), P.U.T.A. officials in adjacent areas have convinced them of trying to recruit their members into the P.U.T.A. branch. The shop stewards faced the contradiction between their union and their existence as workers. They often meet with union bureaucrats away from the picket line, and absorb their reactionary attitudes. When someone proposed an occupation, one of the stewards opposed it because he couldn't go against his union. The top union officials have threatened union discipline against workers carrying out activities outside the picket line. The general secretary of P.U.T.A. turned up one morning. One of the strikers asked him what the strategy was for winning the strike, and he said he had no answer. At this point, the strike ended. There were fears about the future of the union, when some members proposed that the union should be liquidated. It is possible that the union may be liquidated, but it is important that the struggle continues.

The boys in red

One Friday afternoon, after a few beers, the strikers were exercising their democratic right to express disagreements with workers coming out of the plant. A policeman tried to arrest one of the strikers, but the strikers outnumbered them about three to one, so he didn't manage it. There would have been a very ugly situation, but suddenly D.C. Marshall, the P.U.T.A. local area rep, appeared with a red Labour Party tie on. He had a few words with the police, and agreed to something like "It's all right lads, I can control this". He literally shepherded the strikers back to the other side of the road, away from the police, and away from the piles of stones on the factory side. He was absolutely clear that the strikers were right over the worker than the police did. In this part of the world, the boys in red are more effective at controlling the workers than the boys in blue.
Year's haul for shoplifters

WHY'S haul for shoplifters

receives £1,000m

Women on

an 18-coach

robbery trip

EIGHTEEN coachloads of women took a day trip to the seaside for a mass shoplifting spree, a court heard yesterday.

The black women arrived in a resort on Monday afternoon and had stripped local stores by evening. They split up into small "roving parties" as soon as they left the coach. They went on a "professional, experienced and organized" spree, said the judge.

The judge, however, said that the operation was not a "伎y" and warrants the method of shoplifting.

HAUL

Shop houses were emptied of their contents, including gold, cash and thousands of pounds of goods.

By PHILO DANNY

Return Of The Scab

Crisis is biting both East and West. Russian leaders have just resurrected the heroic figure of Alexei Stakhanov, supreme scab of the "Soviet" Union, who was encouraged in the 30's to set up a new coal-cutting record as a model for other miners to emulate. Now it's his 50th anniversary and the Russian capitalist bosses are letting the miners of his home region in Komsomolsk celebrate his record feat by doing an EXTRA 50 HOURS WORK in his honor.

We hope our fellow-workers in Russia will have a good laugh over this. Their class, the imperialists, are dead. Things are hotting up all over. Russian workers, like British workers and people all over the world, aren't all conned by their ruling class!

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The violence in South Africa continues, according to official figures, with more than 650 deaths. The true figure is certainly much higher. Most of the deaths are the result of ferocious police violence against black rioters. But police have shown no hesitation in opening fire against peaceful protests by school children and others.

In addition, thousands have been jailed under the emergency laws. The South African bosses, like the ruling class the world over, imagine that working class revolt can be put down by picking off the 'leaders'.

But the struggle continues. A mass movement involving millions of people cannot be stopped by jailing a few thousand of them. State violence can succeed in putting down a struggle by a militant minority - as British miners found to their cost. But the South African security forces, well-armed as they are, are being swept aside by the tidal wave of mass struggle.

**WHITE BOSSES TREMBLE**

The S African ruling class is becoming an endangered species. S African businessmen fear for their profits and their lives. It is this fear, rather than a sudden concern for the welfare of black Africans, which explains their frantic calls for black involvement in running S Africa. The same fear makes capitalist leaders abroad put pressure on the S African government to make 'reforms'. So long as the S African government is terrorised and murdered blacks, they were quite happy. Now that the boot is on the other foot, they have suddenly become 'humanitarians'.

The hypocritical concern of world leaders to avoid a 'bloodbath' in S Africa is really fear of a bloodbath that the ruling class might lose. But S African blacks are out for the blood of the ruling class, of their oppressors, and of black collaborators, and rightly so.

In the same way, liberals used to hypocritically oppose sanctions because 'blacks would suffer most if the S African economy collapsed.' But S African blacks want to destroy the S African economy. Hence the widespread consumer boycotts and industrial sabotage.

Now virtually the entire international ruling class supports sanctions. This is part of a desperate, last-ditch campaign for 'peaceful change', being waged by Western governments and their mouthpieces in the media. However, Winnie Mandela is in no mood to negotiate. The ANC remains fully committed to armed struggle. But increasingly ANC leaders see violence as a means of forcing the white ruling class into negotiations which will bring them the power they want, or at least a share in it. On 30th August ANC leaders in Lusaka announced that they planned to meet a group of S African businessmen 'for talks on dismantling apartheid.'

**ROCKS AGAINST RACISM**

Mass violence works.

This was made clear in a Guardian lead article on July 22. It is very rare that such a clear statement of the nature of class power leaks out of the bosses' severe of liberalism -

By murdering African councillors and police officers, or hounding them out of the townships and butchering suspected informers, the youthful gangs in the forefront of the troubles have changed the balance of power in their areas by making alleged collaborators more afraid of them than of the State.

The youths of the townships have severed not only the official democratic channels of cooperation, but also the network of spies and collaborators, and to some extent, the ability of black police to operate in black areas without the army to protect them.

The reason Botha's much-heralded reforms were not forthcoming was because if he had granted anything at all on Aug 15, he would have confirmed that violence works. Whereas Western liberal capitalists rightly argue that holding firm will result in the death of apartheid and many of the white racists, both capitalists and wage labourers, who support it, Botha knows that yielding to riots will have the same effect, only sooner.

**BLACK BOSSES PREPARE FOR POWER**

There is no way out of this dilemma for the white ruling class. In this desperate situation, some of them are now prepared to consider what even a few months ago would have been unthinkable - negotiations with the African National Congress (ANC).

The ANC remains fully committed to armed struggle. But increasingly ANC leaders see violence as a means of forcing the white ruling class into negotiations which will bring them the power they want, or at least a share in it. On 30th August ANC leaders in Lusaka announced that they planned to meet a group of S African businessmen "for talks on dismantling apartheid."

The ANC, like other national liberation movements, does not advocate socialist revolution. At most some factions stand for "socialism that is possible for the future, but not today." All sections of the ANC agree that their immediate aim is a movement uniting all classes to create a black capitalist class in S Africa. As ANC leader Joe Slovo put it,

"We're not in favour of abolishing the middle class. Black traders will be better off with us than under the present regime with its apartheid restrictions.

Under an ANC regime, black capitalists will be free to grow fat on the exploitation of the working class.

The ANC wants to control the struggle and direct it to its own ends. One of its advantages is its possession of a military apparatus. But it is quite likely that some of the recent acts of terrorism are part of the class struggle, not controlled by the ANC. The workers are demanding arms from the ANC. They will need to organise to use these arms independently of the nationalist leaders to make a successful revolution, and defend themselves.
ERUPTS
against those who attempt to use working class insurrection to promote capitalist aims.

Conditions in the 'liberated' front line states bordering S Africa are no better than those suffered by S African blacks. One of Mugabe's first acts when he came to power in December was to suppress a wave of wildcat strikes. Unemployed urban workers in Rosamunde are being forcibly deported from the cities. Black workers in S Africa can expect the same sort of treatment if the ANC comes to power there.

When not long ago the regime in S Africa still fairly stable, governments in the front line states signed trade and cooperation deals with S Africa. Now they blithely say they will "make the sacrifices" necessary to bring about change in South Africa. What they mean is that the struggle there will be used as the excuse to impose yet more "sacrifices" on their own working class. Weakening conditions throughout Southern Africa mean that there is a real chance that the struggle in S Africa could spark off a generalised struggle against white and black capitalism in the region.

TRADE UNIONS - THE SAME THE WORLD OVER

In S Africa itself the most crucial issue now is: can the struggle in the townships link up with the struggle in the workplaces and above all in the mines. This is what the ruling class fears most.

The threat of a miners' strike is the main cause of the collapse of the Rand, the flight of foreign capital to Western banks, and the panic strikes calls of Johannesburg businessmen for Soweto to negotiate with Mandela.

As in Britain, workplace struggle in South Africa is held back by the trade unions. An inadequate pay offer was made to black unions at the beginning of July. The NUM threatened to call a strike - on August 25th. It hardly needs saying that giving the bosses 2 months warning of a proposed strike gives them time to prepare for it. Nor was it a surprise when on 23rd August the strike was postponed after last minute talk between the NUM and the mining companies. A compromise has been reached between the NUM and several of the companies involved, including the largest, Anglo-American. The strike is now underway against the remaining companies who refused to improve on their original offer. But the impact of this strike, involving less than half of NUM members, will be limited. It's the old story: Divide and Rule.

But the situation is still explosive. Many miners came out on wildcat strikes in advance of the official strike date. On the first day of the strike, 2nd September, police fired tear gas and rubber bullets at a large crowd of demonstrators outside a pit which has not been called out on strike.

World capitalism is trying to ditch apartheid. But British finance capital is stepping into the gaps left by the Americans pulling out. In the last year, merchant bankers such as Hambros, Hill Samuel and Guinness Mahon have increased their lending. Out of £4.4 million lent to South Africa between June 82 and Dec 84, $1,958 million - 46 per cent - was from Britain.

The British economy as a whole is too crisis-ridden and dependent on its South African connection to do a Pontius Pilate act on apartheid. Many of the products exported in bulk to South Africa have a high added value, and are thus essential to the UK economy. Most of this consists of machinery and chemicals. Invisible exports to South Africa amount to £1.3 billion. In addition, the UK reexports to S Africa processed raw materials which have added value added, such as South African diamonds and gold. Last year, this amounted to £300 million.

Direct investment by overseas nations in factories, plant and equipment in South Africa approaches £2 billion, and £5 billion of this, over 40 per cent of the total, is owned by British companies. US investment is only 20 per cent of the total, which means the US lends much less of its total lendings to South Africa than Britain. The other Western powers have less interest in South Africa - which is why they can impose sanctions more easily. Of the 2,000 overseas owned companies in South Africa, over 50% are controlled from South Africa. Two thirds of South African banking is controlled by UK banks. Standard Chartered and Barclays. This has tremendous significance for the future of British capitalism. Britain is tied hand and foot to the South African state.

The US has learned from Cuba and Nicaragua. It wants South Africa to stay in its imperialist orbit, and it sees that the ANC is not fully prepared to discuss terms. That is why the US is willing to talk to everyone. Dialogue is part of the struggle, although it has its menacing side.

The US is beginning to fear that everything it supports might be undermined. That is why it has begun to make overtures towards the ANC. On the right terms the ANC is willing to talk to anyone. Dialogue is part of the struggle, although it has its menacing side.

The US has learned from Cuba and Nicaragua. It wants South Africa to stay in its imperialist orbit, and it sees that the ANC is not fully prepared to discuss terms. That is why the left wing of US capitalist, the Democratic party, and many Republicans, have been pressuring Reagan to break with apartheid now. In American political terms, being for apartheid is like being against motherhood. Even a judge has been arrested on an anti-apartheid demo.
Since the end of the miners' strike, the ruling class has been preparing to take on other sections of the working class. British Rail responded to the resistance by guards in Scotland and Wales with the 'unilateral' imposition of driver-only trains, by sacking 500 and preparing another 1200 dismissal notices.

BR say that as long as the guards accept the driver-only working, then they won't be out of a job. This is obviously a load of rubbish. The introduction of driver-only trains is part of the plan to force through thousands of redundancies. Nowhere do the management come out and say where these jobs are supposed to be coming from. Guards will not be able to move to different areas since no more guards' jobs will be created. Nor for that matter will they be retained to do any other job in BR. The driver-only trains are supposed to be saving BR £27m. Being nice to your employees does not save money. Nor does being honest or truthful.

**PROPAGANDA WAR**

The media wasted no time in throwing its full weight behind BR's attempts to defeat its workers. Large notices placed in the papers by BR warned that the only result of strike action would be massive redundancies and closures. Editorials threatened guards with the misery of life on the dole, and the imminent collapse of the rail network in the face of road competition for both passengers and freight. Carefully selected testimonies by irate "customers" showed the lack of support from the public that the strike could expect. The spectre of the miners' defeat was waved for all to see.

**MEMORIES OF '82**

Memories of 1982 and the futility of following the unions were a powerful factor in defeating the strike. Then, rail-workers were attacked together, and though they had the same need to defend themselves, they were divided by their ASLEF or NUR membership cards. When BR unilaterally imposed flexible rostering, ASLEF struck. The NUR, instead of showing solidarity, (though many of its members did), actually distributed propaganda in support of flexible rostering, having already accepted it. ASLEF caved in and went to arbitration, calling off the strike. In June, the NUR struck in support of a pay claim and against redundancies. Its then general secretary Sid Weighell had already been secretly negotiating the scrapping of all guard jobs on trains with BR. ASLEF instructed its members to cross the picket lines! The strike collapsed. Then, amazingly, the next day, ASLEF came out on strike, as BR turned its attention on the drivers regarding flexible rostering, with the ultimatum 'accept it or be sacked'!

This is the same TUC who called the strike off. Divided and bewildered, the workers were easily defeated by their "own" unions!

The collective strength of the working class will not be realised by secret deals. In their struggle for real jobs, deciding whether or not to strike, one can easily be overwhelmed by personal worries of their family commitments, the bills to be paid, and the fear of taking a step into the unknown. But mass meetings give workers confidence in their collective power. It is only this collective power that will beat the bosses, both in the struggles of today, and in the worldwide uprisings we envisage tomorrow.

**DEAD LOSS LEADERS**

Sid Weighell was removed by the "left" of his union and branded "traitor". But, despite his rhetoric, Knapp is no better. He does not fool us with his calls for reinstatement or declarations against driver-only trains! It was his and his executive cronies who, while opposing the introduction of this new operation at the NUR's 1983 AGM, pushed through the McCarthy plan for restructuring the railways with the future loss of 54000 jobs - a plan which driver-only trains go partway to fulfill. The same NUR leadership defeated the 120 guards on the Bedford-St. Pancras line, forcing them after an 18-month struggle to accept the first driver-only operated service! Only 65 guards now work on that line. During the miners' strike we abolished any possibility of joint action between rail workers and miners. He accepted a measly 5% wage-rise when many rail workers were keen for strike action. He ignored and then condemned the courageous actions of his members at Coalville and Margam, for example. He instructed the guards in Scotland and Wales to comply with the BR ultimatum of August 16th by returning to work.

It is not just the political power or the privileges of the union leaders that makes the unions our class enemies. The unions are part of the capitalist system, selling our labour power to the bosses, and selling the bosses: "mastery programmes" back to us. They are capitalists' pawns and we must have no hesitation in striking at them as much as at the government or the state.

**STOP PRESS**

Unbelievably, as we go to press, the history of the '82 rail strikes repeats itself. This time, clearly, as farce! Despite the fact that ASLEF had already accepted driver-only trains in principle, 500 of its members were simultaneously on strike against it, with the guards. In fact more of its members refused to work than NUR members! Need we say it again?

UNIONS DIVIDE THE WORKING CLASS!! Workers must take responsibility not to let these bastards divide them successfully. If effective resistance on the railways is to continue, drivers must make common cause with guards currently in dispute, outside of and against the unions.

**REPEAT PERFORMANCE**

This time round, the guards knew that ASLEF had agreed to driver-only trains in principle. They also knew that the NUR had pushed this dispute as a "guards-only" dispute, rather than as a battle to be fought by and in the interests of all railway workers. Their isolation from other railway workers would be increased if BR carried out its threat to pay no rail workers during the strike - a cynical move aimed at turning drivers and other rail workers (who would be laid off as a result of the strike) against the guards. They could be sure that other unions would hang around and watch their isolated destruction. Memories need only go back as far as the miners' strike to see the reality of TUC solidarity as they sat there bleating about the need to observe legality", as if the law was there to help workers win strikes!

This strike started well. Gaullista actions from region to region, with rail-workers taking action on their own initiative. A guard from London Bridge said: "When we heard guards in Glasgow and Wales were sacked we decided at London Bridge that if BR went ahead with the sacking on Friday we would hold on Monday and the word would spread." This was how the guards should have continued, going out immediately to all railway workers.

The defeat of the strike came, not with the result of the ballot, but from the fact that workers accepted the idea of a ballot in the first place. Even if there had been a vote in favour of strike action, an NUR strike campaign along the lines proposed by Jimmy Knapp would have left the guards isolated, and, sooner or later, defeated.

Waiting for the ballot meant a de-fusing of the situation. It made it seem as if things were out of the hands of ordinary workers. It gave time for BR to wage its expensive propaganda campaign.