

# BULLETIN

## April 2013

PO box 68375 London E7 7DT,

UK email: [info@workersinternational.org](mailto:info@workersinternational.org)

### UK: Teachers unite to defend education



**March 13, 2012:** Hundreds of teachers march through central London against coalition government attacks on education and on teachers. Two major UK teacher unions have launched a joint campaign building up to strike action later this year.

### Inside this issue:

France: Defend trade union rights.....	page 2
UK: Healthcare privatisation.....	page 5
UK: Left Unity.....	page 7
UK: People's Assembly.....	page 8
Southern Africa: WASP considered.....	page 9
Croatia: Trade union jobs conference recalled.....	page 10

## **France**

Hand in glove with employers and tame "partner" trade unions, the Hollande Socialist Party government has launched a sweeping attack on workers rights enshrined in the country's Labour Code. We reproduce here an article from *Lutte de Classes*, the publication produced by members of Workers' International living in France. This article was timed to address participants in a national day of action on 5 March this year. Events have since moved on very swiftly, but we publish this translation now for information purposes. We apologise for the delay caused by the need for translation and other time pressures. We will reproduce more recent material in subsequent issues of *Workers' International Bulletin*

### **Strikes and demos 5 March**

**Stop the massacre of employment rights! The bourgeois socialist government is getting ready to strike a treacherous blow together with the employers**

**All out behind the CGT and FO unions!**  
**We are the majority!**

Watch out! The government is getting ready to gut the Labour Code! On instructions from the bourgeoisie, it is preparing its parliament to turn the appalling agreement between the bourgeois leaders in MEDEF\* and the tame minority unions into a law binding everybody. Long decades of frontal attacks alternating with endless attrition have already considerably eroded workers' legal rights.

The leadership of the CFDT\* signed an agreement with the bosses' organisation to extend flexible working as early as 1984. But the workers' movement of the day was strong enough to force the middle-ranking cadres of the CFDT to reject this agreement, and the Edmond Maire leadership had to back off. In 2003 François Chérèque – who has just quit the CFDT for a well-paid job working for the state – lined up behind the Filon plan to reduce civil service pensions. Even then he provoked "the most serious internal crisis since 1964" in the CFDT (to quote *Le Monde*, 15 January 2013).

As regards flexibility, nothing has stopped the continual erosion of legal rights at work through the growth of individual and fixed-term contracts and other means. The bourgeoisie are determined to get this, governments are willing to help them, and there are few limits to the union leaders' readiness to let it happen.

On this, too, the crisis came along at just the right time for the bourgeoisie to get its plans carried out. No more half measures!

Now they are all -- the government, economists, journalists -- clamouring that to get out of the crisis and have a better life, the country has to be competitive, so (?) you have to "cut labour costs" and reduce what the employers have to spend. Of course, that means landing some big hits on workers' rights; this time ravaging workers' legal right – which have already taken a fair old battering – completely beyond repair.

#### **Media diversion**

We already firmly condemned this "agreement" in issue 1 of our paper, *Lutte de Classes*. While there is no point going over that again, it should be emphasised that

having welcomed this "historic pact ... what MEDEF has demanded for years" *Le Monde* newspaper and all the rest of the press and TV started a deafening campaign for "same-sex marriage". Starting on 13 February, the whole enormous propaganda machine did everything it could to use a secondary matter to evade the real issue of what was, in fact, an historic attack on the working class. To distract the attention of the public and prevent the rise and spread of social protest, they had to wind people up over something that could not do much damage.

Hollande's decision to win back support by intervening in Mali also came easier precisely because it meant he had something else to talk about. This did not escape *Le Monde*, but they put it down to pure luck for Hollande and the government and did not see it as a deliberate diversion.

In their view, there was "... a gap of a fortnight during which the President's agenda was dominated by the war in Mali and the government's by the debates around gay marriage. A gap during which the left of the left was a bit more discrete in attacking the government's 'social-liberal' drift." But now, with the Goodyear management going on the offensive, all that "is about to be wiped out in the face of what remains French people's main concern: the crisis and unemployment." For all the journalist's assumed naivety, his words betray the obvious truth.

For weeks, in fact, two high-powered campaigns monopolised peoples' feelings and passions, taking up all the available space and distracting people from seeing and thinking about preparations for a social massacre. But unlike its various puppets and official and semi-official helpers, the bourgeoisie itself was not distracted from the job in hand by any masquerade.

#### **Bosses' blackmail**

Entirely re-assured by Hollande's promise to "faithfully write the arrangements (of the agreement) into legislation", it went openly onto a large-scale offensive. Just a few days after the agreement had been signed, the Renault bombshell went off. The firm announced it

wanted to cut 7,500 jobs (out of 44,000), closing factories where the unions refused to sign up for its demands. This is how Renault hopes to reduce its production costs considerably by introducing widespread mobility on the workers' part, increasing working hours and freezing wages. Need we add that the state owns 15% of Renault shares? But as *Le Monde* also noted, "The government does not want to get too closely involved in this poisoned chalice".

Comforted by the agreement and the government's promise to turn it into law, the bosses got more insolent, resorting to massive blackmail.

### **Workers' Struggles**

It was Renault management which announced the decision on 15 January, but PSA Peugeot-Citroën workers who downed tools the following day, led by the CGT, (backed by the votes of 60% of the workforce) into a very combative struggle aimed at forcing the management into concessions during negotiations.

But here, too, the management felt strengthened and reassured by the Hollande-Ayrault government's desire to turn the anti-working-class agreement into law and reacted brutally, mobilising huge numbers of middle-management and its "house-union" to attack the strike and harass the strikers. This simply and openly made a mockery of the right to strike!

And while middle-management whine about workers' legitimate use of force, the firm are doing everything they can to block those workers off from any avenue of defending themselves, including going to court.

And then on 31 January, Goodyear announced the closure of its Amiens factory (1,173 jobs), where workers have been thwarting management's plans since 2007-2008. Management wanted to impose working conditions that amounted to harassment, and faced with workers who voted 86% for the CGT union, which rejected these conditions, it opted for sackings. However, the courts kept declaring the sackings invalid. But, unless backed up by a workers' mobilisation able to overcome passivity and properly prepare the workers, this tactic by the local CGT branch can run out of steam. As the "enlightened" organ of the bourgeoisie, *Le Monde*, wrote on 13-14 January 2013: "The rules for contesting collective economic redundancies have been overturned. The aim is to limit the courts' control". Exactly! The bourgeois offensive seeks to eliminate this legal obstacle too, this barrier which labour legislation still offers to the power of the bosses.

In general, the stakes are immense. The struggle that has started will decide if we can repel a global attack on workers' rights and win better employment conditions, or whether there will be a defeat that prepares the ground to destroy employment rights.

In either case, the conditions under which workers struggle will change: Either they will get better, opening the way for further progress, or the Labour Code will suffer a mortal blow and the bourgeois offensive will be strengthened.

### **5 March demonstration**

Fortunately the leaderships of CGT and FO have announced their decision to organise a working-class response against this alarming and concentrated aggression. Workers should welcome and support this decision. They are organising "demonstrations and work stoppages" on 5 March to put pressure on parliament, who are discussing this matter the following day. It is vital for all workers and their organisations to play their part massively in this. It is worth repeating what CGT leader Bernard Thibault said: "If this text gets written into legislation, wage-earners will go from a position of subordination to a position of submission."

Neither leading bourgeois, nor the government and its allies, have wasted a minute in starting the great onslaught from every angle to get this nefarious agreement passed into law. The MEDEF leaders have even lobbied the leadership of the "socialist" party to head off any idea the government might have of taking over any of these factories facing closure, something they said would be "restrictive". And indeed, factory closures have speeded up recently, with every day bringing its batch of woe. These violently refute the government's reassuring arguments that the gifts and concessions to the bourgeoisie are the price you have to pay for economic recovery. But the facts prove that the more they favour the bourgeoisie with public wealth, pamper them with privileges and cosset them with advantages, the more these leeches enrich themselves and the harder they hit workers.

The old slogan is the only right one: You only get what you fight for! That's clearly what the government believes, anyway! They have done everything they can from the outset to secure and control by all means available the way its deputies (MPs) vote in parliament on 6 March, since several deputies on the left wing of the party have openly criticised the infamous agreement for containing what they call "numerous steps backwards socially".

Members of the various currents within this left wing oppose it all the more strenuously because up to now they have approved all the measures against the working class. While claiming adherence to this left wing, they nevertheless voted for Hollande's flagrant volte-face in accepting the reactionary budget treaty imposed by the European Commission and the 60 billion euro present offered to business, including firms like Mittal, PSA-Aulnay and Renault. Now all of them, from Guejd to M-N. Lienemann, from B.Hamon to H.Emmanuelli, have gone into open or veiled opposition. And so the government and the whole leadership of the "socialist" party have shown their claws, unmasking the true nature of their internal "democracy".

The spokesperson for the socialist deputies, Le Roux, has revealed that he has already sold the bearskin to MEDEF and co. well before killing the bear. He said, and I quote: "I have been engaged for several weeks in discussions with all the social partners ... to make sure that if there is an agreement, we will re-inscribe it precisely,

faithfully, loyally in the act of parliament" (*Le Monde*). This braggart gentleman seems completely unconcerned about one tiny detail: He has committed the votes of his group in advance without any mandate! Obviously there is something wrong with the way the basic rules of democracy work in this party.

For example, Le Roux innocently digs himself even deeper into a hole in the same statement: "For every amendment, we will put the question to the trade union and employers' signatory organisations for their feedback ..."

You have to rub your eyes at suchchutzpah. It really exposes his servile role as a mouthpiece for MEDEF and his disloyal attitude to his fellow deputies.

To top it all, there are those who talk about the possibility of getting the legislation through without a vote, referring to Article 49 of our "most democratic" constitution.

### **Workers' United Front**

In any case, the big split in the Socialist Party left wing should not prevent it from uniting against the agreement reached with the minority unions, and joining together to oppose the attempt to pass it into law. All working people and their political and trade union organisations should support them. That also goes for the other deputies and members of the government in other parties who have also backed all the anti-working-class measures without flinching. Above all, here is an opportunity for the ecologists to make their mark at last as a genuinely left-wing party.

As for working people and all the parties and organisations which claim to support the working class, besides unfailingly supporting the union demonstrations on 5 March, they must urgently develop a sustained joint struggle. It is important to seize the opportunity offered by preparing this demonstration to bring about a United Front of all organisations, with no exceptions, something that we are all called upon to do by the dangers implicit in this menacing situation.

Now at last it seems imperative to go back to and develop the old, effective methods of the workers' movement, which have abundantly proved their worth. Workers' leaders hostile to Marxism, as well as the defeats and the general retreat of the workers' movement, have pushed these methods of class struggle into the background, favouring procedures which are distant from it or even squarely alien to it. In particular they have easily given up on the direct and many-stranded mobilisation and organisation of workers themselves, their own activity and the forms it takes. Instead, workers' leaderships and most of the leaders prefer to use the measures and means that bourgeois democracy and its institutions can offer (parliament, press, pacts with other formations, etc.) instead of organising their own struggle themselves. Faced with bourgeois attacks, for example, they love to resort to bourgeois justice. Of course, you have to use every means to defend workers' causes, even bourgeois institu-

tions. But it is wrong to use them simply as substitutes for the activity of the working class itself.

### **Bourgeois justice or class struggle: Where do you put your money?**

Of course there is no guarantee that even class activity like that will bring victory. In any case, working class struggle was never ever started on the basis that success was certain. But collective struggle by the working class has always been what strengthens its class consciousness, raising its level and thus preparing it to win. No cunning manoeuvre or subterfuge can replace this. Class struggle has its own methods.

It was recently revealed that the CGT team at Goodyear has managed to hold off management's schemes for five years using the courts. But as one of the CGT reps there said recently: "It's not easy explaining our strategy to one of our lads who is feeling the pain".

But in fact it's about more than that. The delegate of the smaller independent union federation at Goodyear (Sud – "Solidaires Unitaires Démocratiques") was closer to the truth when he said: "Legal quibbles don't necessarily make sense to a rank-and-file worker who is suddenly no longer the master of his own fate" (*Le Monde*, 2 February 2013).

So what can they do now to stop the plant from closing? The CGT reps at Goodyear would be well advised to follow the example of PSA-Aulnay, where the leaders of the CGT, Jean-Pierre Mercier and his team have built up collective action by workers against the decisions of the factory bosses.

In general, the leaders of the CGT and FO could draw a great deal of inspiration from their militant members and activists in preparing for the day of action on 5 March through mobilising collective and persistent action involving the whole workforce.

This involves all of us. We could and should contribute collectively and everywhere to block what the government is trying to do and so marginalise the minority "agreement" to mangle workers' rights at work. Hold discussion meetings to arrange inter-union liaison committees, organise local public meetings, print leaflets, campaign from door-to-door – do everything you can to mobilise working people to make a success of 5 March!

*Balazs Nagy, March 2013*

### \*Glossary:

MEDEF – French employer's federation

CGT – Main French trade union federation, traditionally Communist-led

FO – French trade union federation traditionally linked to the Socialist Party

CFDT – Originally a breakaway from the catholic trade union body, foremost proponents of social partnership.

SUD – Independent trade unions formed in a break away from the CFDT.



## **UK**

*The implementation of the Health and Social Care Act has unleashed further waves of opposition as it becomes ever clearer that these "reforms" affecting the National Health Service (and the care of the elderly) are basically intended to spearhead wide-reaching inroads by private capital into this public service. At the same time, the economic crisis is deployed as an excuse for deep cuts in provision, closures of hospital departments, etc. The report below from a campaign in Hackney, in north east London, explains some of the issues*

## **Warning: giant private healthcare companies decide how local health services are provided. Beware Regulation 75!**

Three years ago our local City & Hackney General Practitioner Out of Hours Service in London was taken away from local doctors, and handed over to Harmoni (a company on which the *Guardian* newspaper recently ran a series of articles, questioning the quality of its service).

Harmoni was recently taken over by giant private healthcare company, Care UK, which in turn is run by private equity firm Bridgepoint. (See information on Care UK from Corporatewatch website:

<http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/?lid=4319>).

Our local City & Hackney doctors have worked for two years to put together a new not-for-profit social enterprise (City & Hackney Urgent Healthcare Social Enterprise - CHUHSE) , which involves City and Hackney doctors varying their contract in order to provide an Out of Hours service.

These are hard-working GPs who have decided – on the principle of providing a quality local health service – that they will resume the responsibility for Out of Hours Care. The service will be non-profit - i.e. local doctors are prepared to give up their evenings and weekends to ensure local people get the quality and continuity of service they need.

This new Out of Hours Service was discussed with our Primary Care Trust (PCT) Cluster (North East London & the City NHS) and with the City & Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) at every step of the way, and was due to come into operation on 1 April 2013.

Now - suddenly - upon "advice from lawyers" - the outgoing PCT Cluster says our Out of Hours service cannot be given to CHUHSE.

Our local health campaign (City& Hackney Coalition to Save the NHS – launched by Hackney Keep Our NHS Public, and including some dozen local groups, City & Hackney BMA, NPC, Hackney LINK, patients' groups, local Labour party, unions, etc.) has drawn up an Open Letter to (prime minister David) Cameron and (health secretary Jeremy) Hunt about this, pointing out the blatant deceptions in the claim that the Health and Social Care Act would give local doctors and local people a choice over what happens to local health services.

In City & Hackney's case this has been a joke. The power deciding what our local healthcare will be is the threat of giant private healthcare companies with huge resources and motivation taking out pro-competition cases. The consultation with "stakeholders" organised by the outgoing PCT cluster involved the chairpersons of the City & Hackney LINKs and one person from the Older People's Reference Group – all of whom expressed their opposition to the plan of commissioning the service out to private healthcare companies like Harmoni. Nonetheless the outgoing PCT cluster steamed ahead. So much for consultation!

City & Hackney's local communities have expressed their opposition to privatisation of local health services many times :- in a 3,000-signature petition we collected in 2009, in an 1,800-strong petition we collected in 2012, and in a series of public meetings and demonstrations - most recently a 200-strong meeting at which a "Community Pledge" against NHS privatisation was passed (see report in Hackney Gazette of this meeting [http://www.hackneygazette.co.uk/news/hackney\\_doctors\\_go\\_out\\_on\\_a\\_limb\\_to\\_fight\\_government\\_s\\_nhs\\_reform\\_plans\\_1\\_1652580](http://www.hackneygazette.co.uk/news/hackney_doctors_go_out_on_a_limb_to_fight_government_s_nhs_reform_plans_1_1652580))

This is an indication of exactly what will happen nationally once Regulation 75 of the Health & Social Care Act has been passed (we are also hoping that you will be able to take action in parliament to stop the passage of those regulations). In our case it is the outgoing PCT that has taken the decision, in future it will be all CCGs.

We think this is a blindingly obvious case of local democratic decisions being ripped from the control of local doctors (contrary to Cameron and Hunt's weasel words) and local people, and handed over to a huge private company, about whose services there are and have been many complaints, and even deaths which can be ascribed to poor quality services.

We are being told (basically) that we have to wait until someone dies before we can object to this service - let alone the prospect of the fate of the Southern Cross Care Homes when the private equity company controlling Care UK rips off the profits it

(Continued on [page 6](#))

## Reviews

Two UK trade unions – the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and the Communications Workers' Union (CWU) have produced pamphlets dealing with key political issues: control of the banking sector and public ownership

---

Taking on the finance industry: A timely contribution from the Fire Brigades Union.

## **“It’s Time to Take Over the Banks”**

pdf available at: <http://www.fbu.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/s-time-to-take-over-the-BanksLR.pdf>, or go to [www.fbu.org.uk](http://www.fbu.org.uk) and click on campaigns. Review by Nick Bailey

At the 2012 Trade Union Congress a resolution, put forward by the FBU, was passed calling for the banks to be placed under public ownership.

Now the FBU have produced an excellent pamphlet outlining the case for a publicly owned, democratically controlled finance industry.

In 22-odd pages the authors produce a highly readable and clear coverage of the behaviour of the banks since the crash of 2008 and what some implications are for the labour movement and indeed the whole of society.

The principal conclusion is the possibility and the need for full public ownership of the banks, big insurance companies and pension funds. They continue:

“It is not the only thing that needs to be done, but it would be central to any serious plan to rebuild the economy in the interests of the majority.” What

is stressed from the start is the need for a debate in the movement and the wider community about the financial crisis and its implications:

“Working people and their organisations need to set our own agenda for a way forward.” And that this debate cannot be separate from the fight against the 'austerity' program.

Other important points covered are:

- the international dimensions of the finance industry and the consequent “need for much greater collaboration between workers internationally”;
- the limitations and complete inadequacy of proposals put forward by the main parties for regulation or the breaking up of the banks.

The FBU are to be congratulated for beginning this vital discussion. It is to be hoped that all labour movement websites will provide a link to this pamphlet as it deserves to be read by millions.

---

Telecommunications-

## **“The Case for Public Ownership”**

by the Communications Workers Union Greater London Combined Branch,  
Available from [office@cwuglc.org](mailto:office@cwuglc.org), <http://www.cwuglc.org>. Review by Simon Burgess

Since the Privatisation of the the UK Telecoms industry in 1984 and it's subsequent fragmentation, workers in that industry have seen over 120,000 jobs lost and worsening employment conditions.

Bullying and victimisation are rife and Union membership has declined from 90% to less than 50%.

---

(Continued from [page 5](#)) **Healthcare privatisation**

wants and then dumps the company and the services it provides.

Our campaign has produced an open letter (<http://www.scribd.com/doc/126616153/open-letter-to-david-cameron-and-jeremy-hunt>) publicising this flagrant breach of local democracy to Cameron and Hunt for which we are gathering signatures from local people, politicians etc. Doctors involved in the local out of hours enterprise are appealing the decision.

The new owners and top bosses share millions of pounds in bonuses and shares handouts, while the UK Falls further behind other countries in terms of broadband and telecoms infrastructure.

This new pamphlet from the GLC Branch of the Communications Workers Union (CWU) presents a critical look at the damage done to the industry and its workers driven by anarchy of competition and profit seeking.

### **Resonate**

*Telecommunications the case for Public Ownership* will resonate with many workers who have witnessed the destruction of their own industries and working conditions and who are looking for a way forward.

This is a much needed and well argued pamphlet which raises vital questions about the way society should be organised.

# **Left Unity and the People's Assembly Against Austerity**

Statement by members of Workers International in the UK on efforts to establish Left Unity

How has the working class responded to the Labour Party and TUC's pro-capitalist policies in the 1960s and 70s, the massive defeats inflicted by the Tories in the 1980s and 90s and then the betrayals of the Blair/Brown governments?

Some, a minority, express their frustration by moving to the right, looking towards the likes of UK Independence Party (UKIP) and the British National Party (BNP); others have shown their disappointment and hostility in mass abstentions in local, national and European elections; and the most conscious workers in trade unions have elected left trade union leaders to represent their interests whilst continuing to vote Labour against the Tories. Apart from a very few special instances, socialist and single-issue campaigning candidates have not won significant support.

## **Responsibility**

These left trade union leaders have a big responsibility. They go towards the 2015 general election, having inherited anti-trade union laws and a fall in membership from 14 million in 1984 to 6.5 million today, and facing huge political and economic attacks on a confused and disoriented working class. We are therefore called upon to take a position on the response of these main leaders of the trade unions.

They call for a general strike and campaign on an anti-austerity programme, demanding policies:-

- in defence of the welfare state and the NHS,
- for re-nationalisation of services,

- for repeal of the anti-trade union laws
- for rights to apprenticeships,
- for decent wages and pensions;

They actively support single issue and local campaigns, and to win wider support and broaden their appeal they are now putting financial and human resources into the People's Assembly Against Austerity, at the heart of which they call for a Labour

vote in the election and call on Labour to adopt a programme based on their policies.

Since the working class has not gone through a conscious, definitive break with Labour and has not given serious consideration to building an alternative party to represent its interests, and since growing numbers are coming into struggle against austerity and insofar as the trade unions are in the forefront of organising that struggle based on the

above policies, we consider that it is right to support their campaign for a Labour vote in the next general election and demand the implementation of those policies.

## **No confidence**

Therefore, because we can have no confidence whatsoever in Labour, which is consistently pro-capitalist, it is vital to encourage and organise a widespread discussion towards building the socialist alternative to Labour which has been initiated by United Left.



*Trade union banners on a TUC-organised march against austerity*



# People's Assembly Against Austerity

**Saturday 22 June 2013 at 09:30-17:00 Central Hall Westminster, Storey's Gate, Westminster, London SW1H 9NH**

The People's Assembly Against Austerity was launched – by Tony Benn and with Len McCluskey and other trade union leaders – with a call to all those millions of people in Britain who face an impoverished and uncertain year as their wages, jobs, conditions and welfare provision come under renewed attack by the government.

With some 80 per cent of austerity measures still to come, and with the government lengthening the time they expect cuts to last, a People's Assembly Against Austerity will bring together campaigns against cuts and privatisation with trade unionists in a movement for social justice. The People's Assembly Against Austerity aims to develop a strategy for resistance to mobilise millions of people against the Con-Dem government.

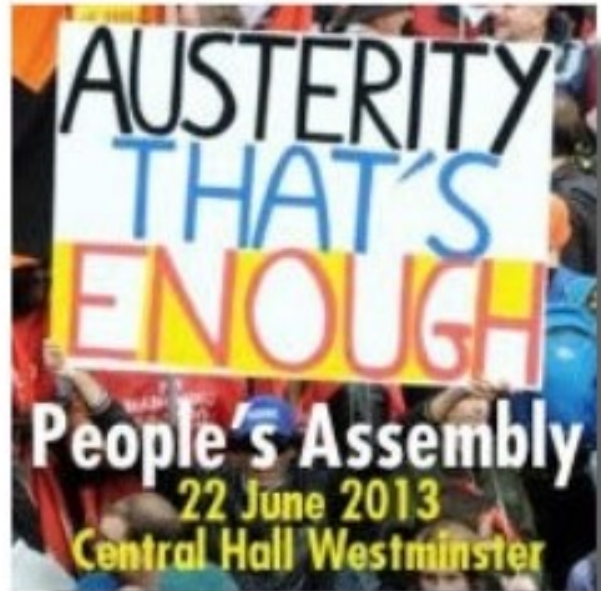
## National forum

The assembly will provide a national forum for anti-austerity views which, while increasingly popular, are barely represented in parliament.

A People's Assembly can play a key role in ensuring that this uncaring government faces a movement of opposition broad enough and powerful enough to generate successful co-ordinated action,

including strike action. The assembly will be ready to support co-ordinated industrial action and national demonstrations against austerity, if possible synchronising with mobilisations across Europe.

**The People's Assembly Against Austerity will meet at Central Hall, Westminster on 22 June 2013.**



*Unite General Secretary Len McCluskey (right) helped launch the People's Assembly Against Austerity*



## **Our position after having read and discussed articles/reports on “Mineworkers back launch of WASP”, and “Democratic Left Front”**

***Workers International members in Namibia considered the launch of Workers And Socialist Party in South Africa and the need for working class political organisation***

*Dear Comrades,*

The following is a summary of the points on which we have unanimity.

We agree with the Workers And Socialist Party (WASP – recently launched as an independent party in South Africa) that what is at stake is the political independence of the working class, and their political organisation necessary for this last phase of the struggle for total political power and thus to open the road to begin to solve the insoluble and rapidly deepening problems within capitalism of the working class and society.

### **Bluntly**

We agree that the situation and developments since 1994 until Marikana and beyond clearly and bluntly so reaffirms this as the only outstanding issue. For the Democratic Left Front (DLF) to dodge this question disqualifies it in our standpoint.

We have reservations with WASP pronouncements that the ANC had abandoned the working class and that the ANC, the NUM and Cosatu had betrayed the workers.

ANC has never concealed its position as bourgeois nationalists with the sole demand to join the national bourgeoisie. The working class leadership (without a proper party) was always led into the popular front by petit bourgeois tendencies not unlike the DLF to be butchered by the nationalists on behalf of capitalism.

We suspect that what we consider a very basic misconception in this regard will probably reflect itself in the emerging politics of the WASP.

Nevertheless, if the report is accurate, in our estimation the WASP will make an enormous statement against left opportunism, obscurantism and cowardice and will draw a very crucial and interesting line between the classes.

The DLF’s statement on the other hand leaves us with very serious questions:

### **Pressure**

On what serious grounds does the DLF call for mass action to pressure the “pro-capitalist” ANC to use its political power to stop the retrenchments? Cyril Ramaphosa is a shareholder of the Platinum Mines. He was flown around the country by the bourgeoisie in 1994 to diffuse workers’ mass action around the country to usher in the deal between ANC and the international bourgeoisie. He is now vice-president of the ANC.

What stupid call is it to mass action while the mineworkers have been in continuous mass action since Marikana? We believe the existing mass action directly implies the call for political organisation to co-ordinate the struggle of the working class against their class enemies and mass murderers. First for their immediate defence and then simultaneously to direct their fight-back, not to remain in permanent protest.

How will workers take control of industry while the capitalist ANC is in power?

The DLF position seems to us as no different from the Communist Party’s two-stage strategy.

The ANC has never concealed its position as being capitalist. Why should the working class’s organisation conceal its political position of being against ANC and capitalism and as being socialists? Why should it conceal that its struggle is to take power as the only means to put the working class in control of industry, and so ensure full employment and generally safeguard society?

### **Dangerous**

The call on the ANC to use its political power (what political power?) to save the working class is a very dangerous call to drag them back into the fold of the nationalists and to use them to keep the ANC in administration.

Greetings,

*Hewat Beukes*

*Below: former employees of TCL copper mining and refining company march through Windhoek, Namibia, demanding the restoration of their pensions*



## **Second Trade Union conference against plant closures**

Continuing the work of the first trade union conference: “Working class resistance to plant closures” and the statement it adopted, the second trade union conference, organised by *Radnicka Borba* in collaboration with and with the assistance of the HEP-Tech-nos trade union (national electricity distribution company), represented a step forward in relation to initial objectives.

It established links between ever-growing numbers of trade unionists independently of their affiliation to one or other of the national trade union federations; put different working-class struggles into touch with one another; enabled a mutual exchange of experiences in the defense of workplaces, and created a network of trade union solidarity (mutual support in cases of industrial action). There was also a discussion on workers’ control and how to strengthen it. It should be noted that this conference, held in Zagreb on 2 and 3 March in the premises of HEP, was also attended by new union members with significant experience who did not attend the first conference.

Besides guests, attendance consisted of Bojan KOVACIC (Dioki), Sinisa MILICIC and Dragutin VARGA (Regional Industrial Union), Lukica BUCAT (Dalmaciovino), Mario IVEKOVIC (New Union), Milan NEKIC (Feniks Union – Croatian postal service), Zeljko KLAUS and Davor RAKIC (EKN Kutina Petrochemicals union), Ivan TOMAC (EKN – Croatian energy, chemical and non-metal union), Bruno BULIC (Istria and Kvarner Union), the SING petrol company union and TECHNOS, the HEP union.

Discussion by all participants following individual reports had a particular role, as did discussion on concrete topics. Particular emphasis was given to strengthening union links, solidarity, increased resistance to negative company management, as well as the organisation of a general strike in Croatia by the national union confederations. Towards the end of the conference, the discussion was entirely devoted to the adoption of concrete steps with a view to setting up a trade union solidarity network in the immediate future.

*Radnicka Borba*

### **Workers International Publications Fund**

Faced with the challenge of presenting the way forward for the working class and all working people in the face of the crisis of imperialism, comrade BALAZS NAGY is engaged in writing a three volume study taking in the development of economy and society since 1945; the struggle of Marxists to grasp and explain this, particularly in relation to Marx’s political economy; the unfolding characteristics of capitalism in its imperialist phase; the often neglected history of class struggle throughout the period and the fight for revolutionary leadership.

Work on translating and editing the first volume is almost complete. It should be possible to produce a suitable print run in paperback for about £1,200. We are therefore appealing to comrades and readers of *WIRFI Bulletin* to contribute to a fund to meet these costs.

Please send donations – however modest – to: Workers International, PO Box 68375, London E7 7DT. Please make out cheques to “Correspondance”