



Inside
Keeping
hospitals
open
Centre pages

Speke fight stabbed

LEYLAND



PARTICIPATION

REPORT

ATTACKS JOBS

Top Leyland convenors have played a central part in drawing up the confidential report that has fingered the Speke sports car plant for closure, and backed up management calls for speed-up and "voluntary" redundancies.

The report trots out all the tired old employers' clichés about Leyland workers only producing 45% to 65% as much as car workers on the continent.

Plants operate productively on average for only 45-55% of a normal working week, it declares. Some plants are worse than others. The Speke Assembly Plant, it claims, is one of the worst performers.

Weapon

It is hard to imagine a handier weapon to present to management almost on the eve of crucial mass meeting decisions on resisting closure at Speke.

Yet every one of the report's proposals carries the approval of the stewards on the study committee, which was set up under the 'worker participation' scheme.

Leading advocates of participation within the unions include Longbridge convenor and top Communist Party member Derek Robinson, along with open right wingers like Triumph convenor Eddy McGarry.

Management recognise the set-up as a means to destroy the independent strength of

the shop stewards movement in Leyland and suck even former militants into "joint" management committees with the sole task of attacking conditions on the shop floor.

The result is now a report that does not beat about the bush on the need to increase exploitation and cut jobs.

"Leyland Cars cannot afford the luxury of lengthy debate over the unpalatable results contained in this report: there has to be action now by all parties" [ie, management and unions].

Management have already commenced their side of this -announcing the closure of the Speke factory at a cost of

3,000 jobs, and the slashing of 1,800 jobs at Longbridge through "natural wastage".

Speed-up

And throughout Leyland, manning levels are under attack in a concerted drive for speed-up.

This attack is combined with added pressure on two fronts.

On the one hand management are attempting to force through a job-cutting incentives scheme, using the device of a ballot of all 100,000 manual workers in order to over-ride the verbal opposition of Leyland

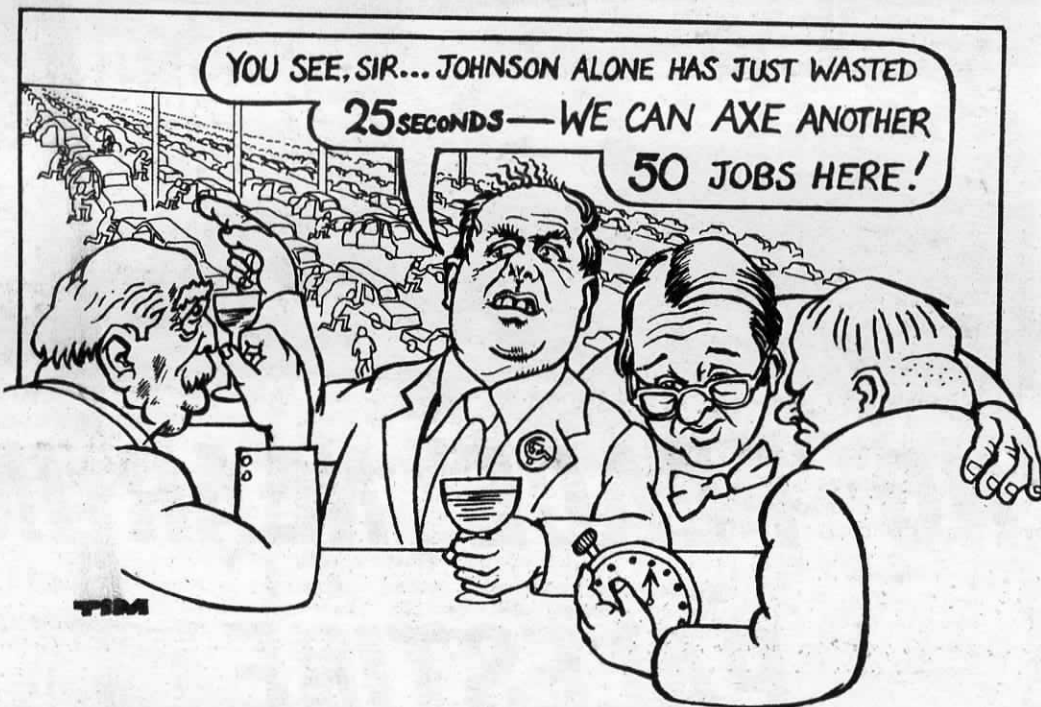
convenors.

Since these same convenors refused to fight the imposition of the 10% pay limit, management are confident they can offer no lead against the incentives plan.

On the other hand Industry Secretary Varley has announced that a further £850 million of government backing will be available—providing the Edwardes plan for speed up and rationalisation goes through.

Profits

Once again the political bankruptcy of Leyland convenors—who have consist-



FIGHT TGWU FRAME-UP

In a campaign to prevent a McCarthyite political witch-hunt within the TGWU, delegations including TGWU convenors, stewards and branch officers will travel to Oxford this Saturday for a special conference.

The conference, sponsored by over 90 prominent TGWU members, is to hear the full facts surrounding the moves by Regional Officials to discipline nine militant TGWU members at British Leyland's Cowley Assembly Plant.

All nine are seen by membership in the plant and by TGWU officials as leading opponents of the Edwardes plan for speed-up and sackings and of 'worker participation'.

They include the newly re-elected convenor, Bob Fryer, and three newly re-elected deputy convenors—Alan Thornett, Frank Corti and Tom White.

Thornett has been recommended for expulsion from the union and Corti and White face a life ban on holding office in the union as a result of a District kangaroo court inquiry.

The charges include having "a depth of political disagreement" with the TGWU Executive over pay policy, walking out of a District Committee meeting and revealing the size of the 5/293 Branch secretary's commission!

But with Leyland jointly planning with TGWU officials a wholesale offensive to impose speed-up and sackings throughout the corporation, those forces likely to form a firm focus of opposition are seen as an obstacle to be disposed of at all costs.

For the past four years, national, regional and local officials have tried every possible manoeuvre to muzzle and suppress those in the Cowley Assembly Plant who have fought for a clear programme based on the defence of the independent interests of the working class.

Every previous attempt has come up against the problem of the solid support for the left wing from workers in the plant.

Hence the desperate moves to bureaucratically oust these convenors and stewards who only three months ago were victorious in shop floor elections.

Saturday's conference must be the beginning of an intensified and broadened campaign throughout the TGWU to force the Region 5 bureaucracy to drop the trumped-up charges.

This fight for democratic rights within the biggest union in the country is an essential part of the fight for a programme and a new leadership capable of defending the jobs, conditions and living standards of TGWU members.

CONFERENCE

'Democracy Under Threat in the TGWU'

Saturday April 8, 1pm.
Cowley Community Centre,
Oxford.

TGWU cards must be shown

COACHES to the conference:

NUNEATON: 10am, Bus Station
COVENTRY: 10.30am, from
Pool Meadow.

BIRMINGHAM: 10.30am from
Hall of Memory.

LONDON: 10am, Stratford Bdwy
10.30am Kings Cross, York Wy



Robinson

PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

If productivity is lower in Leyland than elsewhere, then that is the result of the overall crisis of an antiquated, degenerate British capitalism attempting to compete with the high technology forced upon workers in other countries.

Force down

Capitalism can only "solve" these problems through intensified attacks on the working class, attempting to force conditions here down to the lowest in the world.

Workers must reject this approach. All jobs in Leyland must be defended, through the fight for work sharing on full pay. The Speke plant must be occupied to prevent closure.

The Lib-Lab coalition, which stands behind the job-cutting plans, must be broken by working class action.

Participation, incentives schemes and the Edwardes plan must be thrown out, and the fight taken up to open Leyland's books and those of the privately owned suppliers to elected trade union committees to prove the need for an integrated, nationalised motor industry under workers management.

These policies provide a fighting programme for the Liverpool Trades Council 9 April conference.



INTERNATIONAL

IRELAND

'Not the end of the world'

When it comes to suppressing democracy, the union bureaucrats of Ireland are no more squeamish than any other specimens.

Members of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union recently voted by a majority of more than two to one to reject the wage deal proposed by government and employers.

As the ITGWU is the country's largest union, this threatened a further rejection by the subsequent Irish Congress of Trade Unions, which threw out a similar package last year.

Cynical

But as Senator Fintan Kennedy, ITGWU President, and other officials cynically pointed out, such a vote would not be 'the end of the world'.

As happened last year, Congress Executive would simply press on regardless to negotiate mild reforms and a more attractive presentation.

In the event, such tactics were unnecessary as Congress accepted the deal by a tiny majority.

Some form of government wage control is vital to the Fianna Fail's strategy of reflation to boost capitalist profitability in Ireland. But the proposals agreed by the labour leaders also include compulsory 'cooling off' periods to freeze strikes.

Jack Lynch's government has been made all the more eager to force through this attack by two major disputes which are at present severely disrupting Ireland's communications and trading.

The best efforts of Labour Party leaders and union officials have so far failed to crack the strike by telephone and telex operators, protesting against attempts to impose new manning levels and speed-up through the introduction of new technology.

In a blatant move to discredit the action, state employers have ignored the strikers' offer to operate emergency services for hospitals.

Workers at Aer Lingus are also resisting pressure to end their strike for higher wages. As hostesses are refusing to cross the pickets of clerical and supervisory staff, the airline has been forced to lease aircraft to continue its flights.

Haven

Successive governments have sought to transform Ireland into a peaceful haven of capitalist exploitation.

But the co-operation of union bureaucrats has not managed to produce a class of docile workers.

Increasingly workers have taken strike action to fight low wages and oppressive conditions.

As they enter into these struggles, the bourgeoisie has sought with desperation to attract international capital by more repressive labour legislation and growing attacks on workers' basic rights.

The ICTU's vote for wage control has created new problems for Irish workers, but it has done nothing to solve the problems of the bourgeoisie by delaying for even a little longer the end of the capitalist world.

Metal workers at mercy of union leaders

Emotional television appearances are a standard feature in the sales routine of the social democrats as they peddle class collaboration in every shape and form.

When Helmut Schmidt took to the air recently, the medium had a special significance—the West German Federal Chancellor's aim was to end the printworkers' strike, which was severely disrupting newspaper production.

Schmidt's well-timed intervention brought about renewed negotiations and a compromise between employers and the bureaucracy of IG-Druck, the print workers' union.

Rationalisation

Predictably, the agreement avoids the central question of the dispute—the attacks on workers which capital must make to restore profitability by 'rationalising' industry.

Instead, a bargain has been struck on the terms under which new technology can be introduced.

These are far more demanding than the employers would have liked. But they represent a complete betrayal of the union leadership's pledge 'to refuse rationalisation at the expense of our jobs, our health and our professional qualifications'.

Metal workers

Eugen Loderer and the other officials of IG-Metall are now carefully steering the metal workers' strike in the wake of this sell-out.



Begin

The visit to Cairo last week of Israeli defence minister Weizman did nothing to bring nearer a 'peace settlement' between the Zionist settler regime and the sections of the Arab bourgeoisie led by Anwar Sadat who are trying to sell out the Palestinians to them.

Weizman's visit was clearly an attempt to rescue something for the diplomatic disaster of the

Although only 85,000 members of the world's largest trade union have been called out (all of them in one region), the strike has had a major impact nationally.

Employers have locked out a further 146,000 workers in North Wuerttemberg-North Baden.

The block in supply of components to the motor industry has already produced short-time working in Daimler Benz's Berlin plant, and threatens lay offs throughout Volkswagen.

Leading the way

The strike's significance is not confined to the outcome of the metal-workers' own claims for a wage increase, and job protection.

In the past, they have led the way for all sections of the West German labour movement in gaining

increased wages and improved conditions.

The dispute has become a crucial trial of strength—nominally between the unions and the employers.

The true line-up behind this sham is of course very different, with capitalists, social democrat politicians and union bureaucrats all working in different areas but united by the common aim of defending capitalism.

It was only the determined militancy of rank and file workers which led to even this partial strike.

But militancy alone cannot generate the political clarity which the metal-workers need to combat the alliance ranged against them.

Without a Trotskyist leadership to direct their struggles, these workers will be finally powerless as their present leaders move to sell them out down the line into speed-up and unemployment.



West German print workers during their strike

NO 'PEACE' NEAR IN PALESTINE

recent visit of Begin to Washington.

However, it showed all the same intransigence of the Zionists, their refusal to even consider withdrawal from most occupied territories or to support even the setting up of a puppet regime on the West Bank.

This ultra-right wing government in Israel is turning to Sadat, as one of their most important friends now, to bolster up every military conquest they make.

Independence

They will attempt again to use this relationship, if possible to buy some independence from their American sponsors.

The Carter regime has bridled at the way naked Zionist aggression has cut across US lines of diplomacy in the Middle East. Meanwhile in South Lebanon,

the Zionist forces have shown no more inclination than after previous conquests to move out.

UN force commander Emanuel Erskine has said that his role has remained uncertain in the area.

However it is said that they will do nothing to push back the Zionist invaders.

The shaky state structure of Lebanon is now only maintained by courtesy of the UN, the Zionists and Syrian troops.

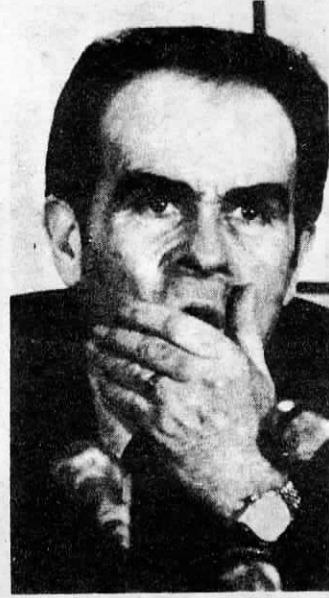
Sections of the former Lebanese army are now fighting side by side with the Palestinians against this new invasion force.

Refugees formerly hostile to the liberation struggle told *Le Monde* correspondents "we are all Palestinians now".

This new situation poses vital questions of leadership in the liberation struggle.

The vain hopes of PLO leader

Workers leaders pay homage to Giscard



Marchais

In a procession of unashamed treachery, the working class leaders of France have trooped to visit President Giscard d'Estaing.

The meetings were in stark contrast to the arrangements of 1974 when Mitterand refused a similar invitation after his defeat by Giscard in the presidential election.

After the Socialist Party leader, the heads of the major union confederations and CP

leader Marchais all filed in for their audiences at the Elysee Palace.

There were no furtive rendezvous, but an occasion to declaim carefully-prepared public statements outside the Elysee.

These pronouncements were no doubt very different in content from the promises exchanged, or the unspoken agreements reached within the palace itself.

Formal

Marchais and Seguy (secretary-general of the Stalinist-led CGT union) confined themselves to formal repetitions of the CP's version of the 'common programme'.

It was left to Mitterand and Maire (secretary-general of the socialist-dominated union CFDT) to suggest the real significance of this spate of interviews.

With characteristic pomposity, Mitterand enlarged on his belief that the 'national interest' should be placed above differences of political opinion, and that the opposition should respect the 'national community' which it represents.

His humble request for reforms in the 'daily practice of democracy' were given backing by Maire.

This determined collaborator argued urgently for greater flexibility from employers in confronting workers' demands, and brandished the threat that intransigence would only provoke the development of revolutionary consciousness beyond the reach of the long arm of the bureaucracy.

Overworked

This dire warning is of course not a fantasy from the fevered imagination of an over-worked traitor.

But French workers have now been shown in concrete terms what future the 'Union of the Left' holds for their interests, and what 'leadership' for their struggles they can expect from these avid bargain-hunters.



Arafat

defeat the Zionists and their Arab bourgeois friends.

It is the raising of socialist demands to mobilise the Arab masses independently of their bourgeois rulers that will make possible the defeat of national oppression in all the states of the area.

Determination

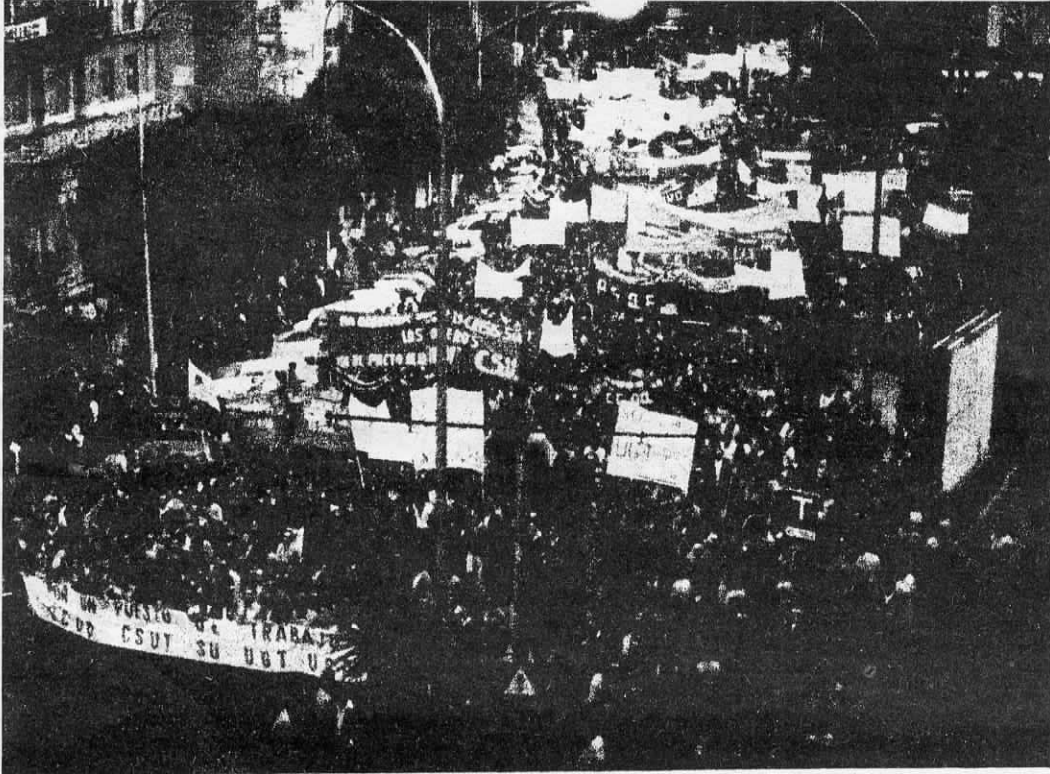
Such statements clearly reflect the determination of the Palestinian movement to continue the struggle.

However more and more sections of this movement are now seeing the necessity to turn towards independent political struggle in the Arab world to develop the forces necessary to

LEEDS
Palestine Solidarity Committee and Leeds Trades Council
Public Meeting
Palestine or Israel?
27 April at 8pm
Trades Council Club
Saville Street

INTERNATIONAL

SPANISH WORKERS OPPOSE LEADERS' TREACHERY



Thousands of workers marching against the Moncloa Pact.

MAOISTS BACK BURMA PURGES

Last week the Burmese military dictatorship headed by President Ne Win claimed to have wiped out a sizeable proportion of the rebel Communist Party guerrilla army which has for years been fighting a war against the regime.

The guerrillas, who operate from bases in China, are said to number 8000. The regime last week claims to have killed 800 of them in one operation.

Of course, it would not be improbable that the Ne Win regime should exaggerate such figures since its own survival has been increasingly threatened in the last few months by a series of events, one of which is the growing military success of the CP rebels.

Alliance

They have been forming alliances with a number of the peoples of the interior of the country who have been traditionally opposed to rule from Rangoon.

But the event may have a broader significance. If the defeat for the CP guerrillas was anywhere near as great as the Ne Win regime claims, it could be one of the bitter fruits of a new unprincipled opportunist turn in the foreign policy of the Chinese bureaucracy.

The government of Hua and Teng has recently been conducting a campaign for anti-Soviet allies around South East Asia. The Chinese make no stipulation about the ideological complexion of their potential allies.

They have been wooing

with equal ardour the right wing anti-communist dictatorship in Thailand, the 'left' anti-communist dictatorship in Burma and the Stalinist regime in Cambodia.

Anti-Soviet

Having forged alliances with these governments, the Chinese leaders have set about trying to reconcile the regimes with each other in order to produce an anti-Soviet alliance.

As far as the Chinese leaders are concerned, the fate of the Burmese CP seems to be of no importance. What is more important is for Ne Win to weed out all pro-Soviet elements from his regime.

That is part of the meaning of the series of wholesale purges of the government and Ne Win's bureaucratic 'party', the Burma Socialist Programme Party.

In 1976, 50,000 oppositionists in the party were purged. These included a right wing group in the cabinet who favoured a more openly pro-imperialist economic policy; and they were followed by another group with reputedly pro-Soviet positions. They were arrested last September.

What Ne Win has preserved between these two 'extremes' is not socialism. It is the strengthening of his own dictatorship and his ability to manoeuvre in an unprincipled way in foreign and domestic policy.

This trend is confirmed by the latest government purge in which Ne Win has appointed a new cabinet, the majority of whose members are from his trusted military intelligence service.



Hua

Ne Win's economic needs are urgent since both agricultural and industrial production have been falling, and prices and unemployment both rising fast. Unless he can reverse this his leadership will soon be under threat again.

Isolation

The gigantic economic hardships suffered by Burma's worker and peasant masses have been worsened by the regime's policy of isolation from the world economy and the development of a corrupt and woefully inefficient state bureaucracy which controls much of the non-agricultural production. This situation has been absurdly characterised by the 'Trotskyist' Militant group for example as a workers' state.

Burma, however, shows that workers' states cannot be defined on the basis of static and non-political criteria such as the proportion of industry which is state owned. Burma's form of petty state capitalism represents no gain whatever for the working class.

No solution

The way to a workers' state in Burma lies neither through 'left' military dictatorships, nor through the guerrilla struggle of the CP in alliance with traditionalist, anti-centralist forces, but through the construction of a Trotskyist party able to fight for a programme of democratic and transitional demands and thereby lead the working class and peasantry to power.

When is an opposition not an opposition? That is one of the easiest riddles in the world. Two of the many possible correct answers to it would be 'When it's the Spanish Socialist Party; or the Spanish Communist Party'.

The last month in Spain has seen a whole series of manoeuvres by the main workers' parties in Spain both in relation to each other and in relation to the Suarez government, composed of the rotting remains of Francoism.

The new phase started when Suarez was faced with a small storm inside his Cabinet on the question of economic policy.

'Right shift'

In what was widely interpreted by the capitalist press as a shift to the right, the economics minister was replaced in a Cabinet shuffle.

'A shift to the right' in the special vocabulary of Spanish capitalism meant a move away from the policy of incorporation through the Moncloa Pact of the workers' parties and the main trade unions.

Suarez denied that anything like that was implied and declared his loyalty to the Moncloa Pact of agreed anti-working class measures to get Spanish capitalism back on its feet.

All the non-government parties, however, decided to vote for a harmless resolution which declared that the explanation of the change of economics ministers given to the Cortes was 'insufficient'.

Thus the Suarez government suffered its first parliamentary defeat (159-134).

Growing gulf

A few days later the Socialist Party (PSOE) moved into what it called 'opposition'.

This new tactic was largely concerned with the draft of a new constitution which has been produced by a Cortes committee, and is due to be voted on soon by the whole Cortes, and then to be submitted to a referendum.

The original draft of this constitution was produced by the PSOE. The governing Union of the Democratic Centre, however along with the even more right wing Francoist party, the Popular Alliance, used their majority in the committee to make important changes to the section on education and the church.

These restored special privileges of the Catholic church in relation to the state which the PSOE had tried to eliminate; and they referred to Spain's 'nationalities' as 'autonomous regions'.

Walk-out

When faced with these modifications the PSOE representatives walked out of the committee and have not returned since. At the same time the PSOE made strident demands for the immediate convoking of the municipal elections which the regime seemed to have decided to postpone indefinitely.

Party Secretary Felipe Gonzalez even called for mass mobilisations to demand that the elections be held.

All this was declared very unseemly by the class collaborationist leaders of the CP.

After the defeat of the government, CP General Secretary Santiago Carrillo went so far as to state the obvious that 'in this government the employers are

represented but not the workers'.

"Constructive"

But he hastened to reassure the bourgeoisie that the CP would continue to pursue its policy of 'constructive opposition' (i.e. abject collaboration with the capitalist class).

Carrillo made disapproving noises about the PSOE's walk out from the constitutional committee and called for the continuation of 'consensus and concentration' which, he says, should culminate in a broad national coalition government including the Popular Alliance and the CP.

Despite this apparent tactical difference between the CP and the PSOE, it predictably took only a matter of hours to demonstrate that the PSOE's talk of opposition and mobilisations was a smokescreen.

At the beginning of March they opposed, along with the CP, a demonstration in Euskadi demanding the immediate convocation of the municipal elections. And they have made it clear that while they don't like the constitution, they certainly will not go so far as to campaign against it.

Opposition

But the PSOE's need to throw up this smokescreen at the present time is instructive because it is an expression of the growing gulf between the leaders of all the main workers' parties on the one hand and their rank and file and the masses of the working class on the other.



PSOE leader Gonzalez

In a distorted way this is reflected in the extreme difficulty that the leaders of the small Popular Socialist Party have had in imposing on their rank and file a bureaucratically arranged fusion with the PSOE.

In Euskadi the party executive accepted the move by only 19 votes to 18.

And in the party assembly in Madrid opposition was so strong that the whole executive were forced to resign, admitting that they could no longer control the meeting, which then went on to oppose fusion by 140 votes to 37.

But the gulf is to be seen in a much more direct and significant way in the Communist Party which is now preparing for its Ninth Congress to be held later this month.

The perspectives proposed to the Congress by the Central Committee include not only the policy of class treason which the CP leaders are pursuing but also a number of constitutional changes the most important of which is the abandonment of the term 'Leninist' from the characterisation of the party.

This, of course, represents no change of policy from the CP leadership, but only a further symbolic reassurance to the Spanish ruling class of the CP's trustworthiness as a policeman of the working class.

Unfortunately for Carrillo however the legacy of Lenin is also seen as an important symbol by large sections of the working class base of the party.

The resistance to this move, therefore, has surprised the CP leaders. In the Madrid regional meeting of the party the leaders, who had hoped to beam down on a dutifully unanimous gathering, found it necessary to make several unscheduled, sharp interventions to defend the leadership's line.

Contentious

Of the 11 theses presented by the leadership only one was accepted by the Madrid meeting without major alteration.

On the abandonment of the 'Leninist' label, the vote was 453 in favour, 115 against with 62 abstentions.

This majority, though large, is completely different from the virtual unanimity which the party leadership had been counting on.

In Asturias in the north it appears that the local party has rejected the leadership's plans completely. And the Asturian party leaders have been openly critical of the national leadership both on the question of Leninism and on the party's acceptance of the monarchy.

This opposition in the CP is only half-formed politically

but it has arisen with great speed, and is creating a profound crisis with the party.

Crucial moment

Now is a crucial moment for the intervention of Trotskyists in Spain to present an uncompromisingly clear alternative to the class collaborationism of the PSOE and CP leaders.

More than at any other moment since the death of Franco the leaders of these parties are at this moment finding it difficult to conceal their anti-working class and counter revolutionary role.

*Down with the new constitution!

*Down with the Moncloa Pact!

*For a general strike to bring down the Francoist regime!

*For free elections to a constituent assembly!

*For the building of workers' councils!

*For a PSOE-CP government based on workers' organisations!

Students must defend rights

At this week's NUS conference, the union executive plans to produce the punch to knock out its opponents.

After dealing a series of crippling blows to students' vital interests, the Stalinist dominated Broad Left leadership has now moved in to attack the shreds of organisational and political independence within the union.

Stripped of their fancy dress, the Executive's proposals on 'autonomy' are revealed as a call for "All power to the executive!"

This core demand is tricked out with deceptive suggestions of strengthening unionisation in small colleges, and increasing the financial resources of individual unions.

But these apparently progressive aspects are in reality essential to the general aims of the Stalinists and reformists, which they refer to as the revision of 'priorities'.

What this means is a full-scale campaign to stifle any opposition from students to the attacks launched against them from the Labour leaders in their coalition for the defence of capitalism.

In past years they have consistently displayed their refusal to give any direction to students' militant hostility to falling grants, increased fees, deteriorating standards and every move to restrict access to higher education.

Where silence and passivity have failed to defuse struggles NUS President Sue Slipman and crew have resorted to

direct sabotage, as with the occupations against the closure of teacher training colleges.

Parody

Now they hope to dispense with these rough-and-ready methods by their grotesque parody of autonomy, which would give the Executive enormous bureaucratic power.

In this scheme, the area organisations of NUS would be built-up—not to strengthen the ability of students to fight for their interests, but to provide the means of firmer bureaucratic control over opposition and militancy in any area.

The Broad Left's refusal to defend those students unions which are attacked by the

PHOTO: John Sturrock Report



Last year's NUS Conference

state and the bourgeois media for giving funds to strikes or campaigns against government policy would be enshrined as national policy.

The Stalinists and reformists are confident of their ability to push through these attacks with the willing support of the Tories.

Such confidence does not seem mis-placed at a conference where the most vocal opposition will be voiced by supporters of the SWP—hell-bent on apolitical 'fightbacks'—and those elements wallowing in the opportunist mire of the Socialist Students Alliance along with the IMG.

In contrast to all this organised confusion, we call for students to take the vital step of rejecting the BroadLeft's proposals and replacing these persistent traitors by a principled leadership that will defend the rights and interests of students.

Homeless used for Tories' GLC witch-hunt

Top Tory exposed as 'deep throat'

This week, County Hall saw the opening of a bizarre public enquiry into complaints by a housing activists group against GLC housing staff.

The group claims that GLC officers planned to demolish a group of houses at Crystal Palace that they wanted to take over and that the Council had ordered should be renovated.

They also complain that they were denied access to Council documents that they have a legal right to see.

Their complaints are contained in a pamphlet produced by Ron Bailey, a well known organiser of the squatters movement.

Turn to Tories

Much of the evidence he puts forward was obtained during a break-in which he claims to have committed at County Hall last December.

Bailey's action on the basis of this evidence was to turn to the Tory administration at County Hall to defend the houses against GLC employees!

This presented the Tories with a splendid opportunity for a propaganda campaign against their staff at a time when they are seeking every chance to cut jobs.

Investigation

They called a full scale public investigation, overriding rights in the officers' contracts about answering complaints from the public.

At a launching press conference, Tory leader Horace Cutler was able to make sweeping accusations of corruption and dishonesty against County Hall workers:

"At any time there are about 12 mini Crown Agents situations at County Hall and everyone knows this" he claimed.

So, by a neat transformation, the libertarian demands of the activists are turned into a public witch-hunt against council workers by the Tories.

Evictions

The recent wave of evictions against squatters by the same Tories is neatly camouflaged and attention is

directed away from the Tory policies which lead to housing shortages and lousy housing conditions.

What a gift for the Tories with the London Borough elections less than six weeks away.

The investigation is likely to last three months but the first day produced its fair share of surprises.

In his pamphlet, Bailey refers to an unnamed 'very senior person at County Hall' who had given him information as to the GLC's plans for the houses in question.

Trap

Under pressure from the investigation he stated that the 'deep throat' was no less than Horace Cutler himself, the politician with most to gain from calling the enquiry!

How is it that people with obvious and serious concern about London's housing problems can fall into this kind of trap?

The answer to this lies in the conception of the state common to many non-political housing activists.

The squatting movement developed into a widespread

phenomenon in the mid 1960s heavily influenced by the anarchists.

Faced with the appearance of vacant housing existing side by side with enormous deprivation of housing their understandable response was to seize it directly.

But their inability to analyse the reasons for simultaneous shortage and over-production led inevitably to their failure to build support in the labour movement as a whole.

Left to work out their confrontations with the state

(in the form of bailiffs, police and local authorities) with the anarchists it is not surprising that many adopted the reformist views of the liberal journalists and academics who seemed to be the only people left taking any interest in them.

Bailey calls for expanded legal rights to information about local government decisions—not for council plans and accounts to be opened to elected trade union committees representing council workers and the local labour movement as a whole.

He has failed to realise that the function of the state, both at national and local levels is to support the system of production for profit which itself causes the problems that he campaigns against.

No amount of moral demands on Tory councillors or Labourites will change this. As the affair of the Crystal Palace demolitions shows clearly, without such an analysis, not only will housing campaigns fail, but they will be used by the ruling classes for their own ends.

PRESS GANG Unimpressed

Thousands of readers during most of the past week will have missed the daily mixture of paranoia, hysteria and entertainment that passes for a daily paper.

The cry of pain from the newspaper barons has been considerable, and was echoed respectfully by print union leaders.

Owen O'Brien, general secretary of NATSOPA, went to the lengths of appearing on a Radio 4 phone-in to reassure the frantic petty bourgeoisie, who seem to have a monopoly of air time on these programmes.

The papers themselves have been cautious about how to react to their little local difficulties. But there are already signs that the editors are prepared to launch a public witch-hunt against the militants in the machine rooms.

Two weeks ago the *Sunday Express* launched a peculiarly feeble attack on the SWP. Based almost entirely on an after dinner speech by Percy Roberts, Mirror Group chairman, it was mainly notable for its lack of penetration and comic generalisations. (For example

The SWP "Makes no secret of its ambition to change the whole character of society in Britain today".)

Roberts complained that remarks made by O'Brien at a meeting with management had been handed out in leaflet form to workers the very next day, and had been published in *Socialist Worker* the same week.

He also stated that he had "every reason to believe" that strikers had been paid a full day's pay, before going on strike!

Significantly, this article, which has caused more mirth than consternation among newspaper workers, was reprinted in the newspaper trade paper *UK Press Gazette*, where it was dubbed "an important contribution to investigative journalism."

To give a further sign of the times, the same issue reported that Anton Betz, publisher of the West German paper *Rheinische Post* had categorized the strike against redundancies arising from the introduction of new technology as a political strike.

In its own more considered style, the *Observer* has been giving the same warning.

"Britain has the most competitive newspaper press in the world, offering readers a wide choice in political attitudes, analysis or entertainment... And we would add without false modesty, our belief that the breadth of choice and of opinion represented by our newspapers is an important factor in making Britain one of the most stable democracies."

After a long editorial bemoaning the problems besetting the poor capitalist on all sides, the paper concluded with a series of warnings, of which the most significant was that the "will and spirit of those who own and manage newspapers" would not last forever.

Despite the differences in style this is essentially the same warning as the *UK Press Gazette* made when it billed the *Sunday Express* witch-hunt as "a contribution to the coming bonfire of malpractices which undermine union officials and managements alike."

Managements are arming themselves for the major battles to come. Already their newspapers are sounding the charge.



Picket outside Camberwell magistrates court at beginning of trial of Kim Gordon, editor of SWP's *Flame*, paper for blacks. A thorn in the flesh of local police for some time, Gordon faces three charges arising out of Lewisham, carrying possible sentences of 6 months jail. Trial is by stipendiary magistrate.

Why Callaghan puts the Militant group on show

"Give us our head, put us on show, and we will win the support, the allegiance, and the enthusiasm of young people".

This plea, addressed by Labour Party Youth Officer Andy Bevan to the right wing Callaghan-Healey leadership from the platform of the Labour Party Young Socialists Conference, sums up the objective role of the 'left' talking, thoroughly opportunist politics of the Militant group.

In practice they end up cheerleaders for Callaghan and the Lib-Lab coalition.

"Give us the means and we will broaden Labour's support; bring in youth in their thousands", Bevan went on.

Rhetoric

Yes, the "socialist" rhetoric, the anti-capitalist facade, the appearance of concern with workers struggles in contrast with the brazen contempt shown by the other Labour Party leaders are all attractive selling points through which the Militant group draws certain layers of young workers towards the Labour Party—and denies them any perspective for a real fight.

In putting the Militant group on show Callaghan knows he has nothing to fear.

He knows that Militant's 'left wing' programme is no more than window-dressing to conceal a long standing accommodation to the Labour bureaucracy.

This is why the extreme right wingers in Downing Street and Transport House were quite content for the self-styled "Trotskyists" of the Militant group to completely dominate the conference of nearly 2,000 Labour Party youth in Llandudno last weekend.

Will to fight

The turn-out is a reflection of the increasing willingness of workers and youth to fight back against the determination of the employers and the Lib-Lab government to make them pay for the crisis of capitalism.

Resolutions were passed against a number of reactionary government policies, and calling for socialist policies of nationalisation.

Speaker after speaker reiterated the ways in which workers are bearing the brunt of the crisis and the need for socialism.

Yet, for all these hours of

seemingly revolutionary verbiage, the LPYS perspective of first winning the mass of workers to a socialist programme, and thus forcing the Labour leadership to implement it, attempts the impossible task of converting the Labour Party into a party of social revolution.

And in the meantime Militant turns a blind eye to the anti-socialist Lib-Lab coalition, and insists that a Labour government—still susceptible to pressure from the labour movement—remains in office.

Thus one delegate spelled out the abject confusion peddled by the Militant group:

"Either the Labour government breaks out of the confines of capitalism or it is forced to do the bidding of the bosses—even if that means driving down the living standards of the working class.

The Labour government must carry out socialist policies—it has tried everything else!"

Anti-Socialist

The absurdity of the notion of the reformist Labour Party "breaking out of the confines of capitalism" is matched by the inability to recognise that the terms of Callaghan's coalition deal with the Liberals excludes the enactment of any socialist policies.

A precondition for a socialist programme must therefore be the breaking of the Lib-Lab coalition.

But on this and every political question the Militant group diverts from the key issue of working class leadership.

Their idealist attitude is exemplified in the approved slogan "The workers united will never be defeated"—a slogan which ignores the whole historical experience of the working class movement and in particular the betrayal of the British General Strike of 1926.

However united the rank and file workers may be they remain vulnerable to the

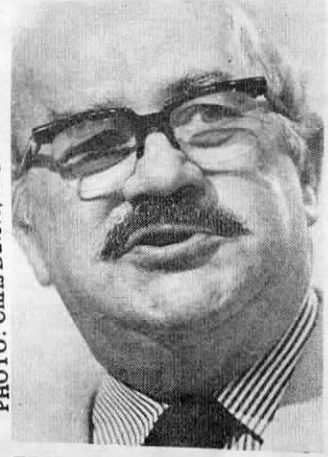


PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report.

FBU leader Parry - the firemen united were defeated

betrayals of their mass leaders. British firemen, US coalminers, West German metalworkers and countless other sections in recent struggles have shown this in bitter experience.

Unity is necessary, but so is a principled and politically developed leadership if workers are not to find themselves outmanoeuvred and sold out.

In the debate on wage control, delegate Alan Morgan, an NUR member, illustrated the complete inability of the Militant group to grasp this issue:

"Well I work for British Rail and I'm low paid. The NUR reckons that to restore our fallen living standards we need a rise of 66%, so how has the Social Contract helped me?"

We must tell the bosses that if they can't provide us with a job, a house and a decent wage we'll take over industry to provide these basic rights and build a better society".

Bureaucrats

Morgan gave not a mention to the betrayal of the NUR 63% pay claim by its bureaucratic leaders, or the productivity dealing by NUR General Secretary Weighell that is cutting jobs.

Instead he trotted out simply the old abstract Militant blather about "telling the bosses" and "building a better society".

But the harsh fact is that unless Weighell, along with his TUC cronies, are challenged and removed in struggle there will be no social revolution—and the bosses will go on laughing all the way to the bank.

It is not only trade union bureaucrats who find themselves let off the hook by Militant: there was not even a call at the conference for the removal of the Callaghan-Healey right wing leadership of the Labour Party.

Tribunites

Nor did the conference attempt in any way to expose the left talk of the Tribune Group of Labour MPs, who posture as opponents of Callaghan while loyally voting support for every policy of the Lib-Lab coalition.

In the conference itself Tribune and "Clause 4"

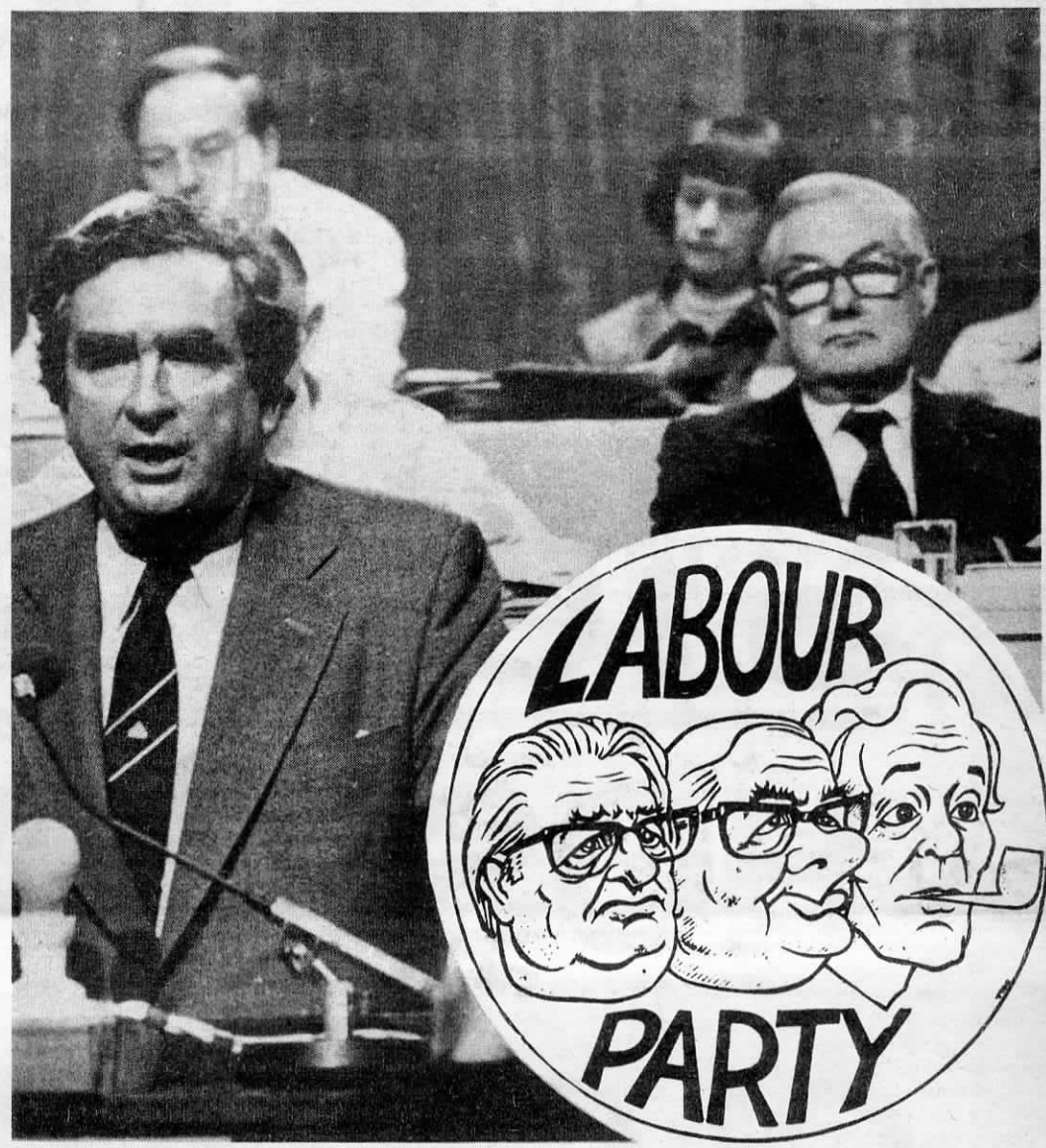


PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

supporters found their left reformism trumped by the more extravagant gestures of the Militant, and were relatively isolated, but this does not reflect the situation in the workers' movement as a whole.

The LPYS shows this by continuing to invite left talkers like Heffer to speak at its meetings in order to "use them to pull a big crowd".

But unless this is combined with efforts to expose the real nature of the 'lefts' to the crowds they attract, by demanding that they turn their verbal "socialism" into practical action to break the Lib-Lab deal and oust the right wing leaders, this can only build the common illusion that Benn, Heffer, Skinner and their fellow 'lefts' do represent an alternative to Callaghan.

Numbers

In spite of their inability to measure up to the tasks posed for revolutionaries inside the Labour Party, the Militant group point proudly to the numerical size of their forces as 'proof' of the "correctness" of their policies.

If this peculiar method of argument were seriously accepted, then clearly no left wing forces can challenge the right wing Labour leaders who mobilise more "support" than their opponents!

But in reality the argument is only used to dismiss Militant's left wing opponents.

Conference delegates were told that the LPYS was the leading group involved in the struggles at Lewisham,

Digbeth, Ilford, Grunwick and Trico.

To concede that any other political tendencies were in the front rank of these struggles or had achieved any mass support for a programme of action in the working class would of course jeopardise this argument.

For this reason every other left group is branded as "petty bourgeois sectarians".

But the fact that it is possible to combine principled agitation for the demands of the Trotskyist programme with a continuous struggle to expose and remove the bureaucratic leadership of the working class is born out by the record of the Workers Socialist League.

The Workers Socialist League is a Trotskyist organisation fighting to construct a principled revolutionary leadership in the working class in Britain and internationally, and for the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International on the basis of the Transitional Programme.

The WSL fights at every step against the existing leaders of the trade unions and the Labour Party — now firmly harnessed to the bourgeois politicians of the Liberal Party in an unspoken coalition arrangement.

Against their policies of class collaboration we put forward instead a programme which points to the independent class interests of the working class, its need to organise independently to overthrow capitalism, destroy its repressive state machinery and establish a socialist planned economy.

Only in this way can workers resolve today's problems of tumbling living standards, mass unemployment, slashed social services, racial, national and sexual oppression.

For more details on the WSL and its work, fill in the form below.

Name
Address
Trade Union/Occupation

Send to WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NWS 1HR



Andy Bevan

PHOTO: Andrew Ward Report.



PHOTO: Mark Risher (IFL)

LPYS Delegates



PHOTO: Angela Phillips (FTL)

The EGA occupation - only the sign outside hints at real workers' control.

thousands of pounds on worthless publicity campaigns approaches to MPs, and petitions.

It was not until the local labour movement became involved, first when the anti-cuts sub-committee of Camden Trades Council persuaded the NUPE stewards to hold a joint meeting with them at the hospital, that the first important development took place.

Occupy

WSL members from the sub-committee, and from the parent NUPE branch at University College Hospital argued that ultimately, the only way to defend the hospital would be for the workers to occupy it, and for the occupation to form the basis of a campaign for a workers' enquiry into the state of the hospital, and for the opening of the books of the Area Health Authority to reveal details of expenditure and health service needs in the area.

It is this aspect of the work-ins, the need for independent class action, which is central to the defence of the NHS, and it is this central aspect which is missing from the pamphlet.

It is not possible here to deal with the pamphlet's every paragraph, some of which retell useful experiences.

Betrayed

Much more important is to understand how failure to grasp this central point has weakened and at times betrayed the fight to defend the threatened hospitals.

A study of the work-ins, and especially that at the EGA reveals three major questions which the pamphlet refuses to deal with, or at best skirts round.

Workers' control.

Although at the time of the joint meeting with the Trades Council sub-committee, unionisation at the EGA was very patchy, within a few weeks, all the laboratory staff had been recruited to ASTMS, NUPE had the bulk of ancillary workers in membership and a few individuals had joined NALGO and COHSE.

It was this involvement of the organised labour movement which proved the turning point. It allowed WSL members and their allies in the union branches covering the EGA to press for an occupation, and to raise the necessity of a workers' inquiry into the state of repair of the lift, which management were now using as an immediate reason for closing the hospital.

Limited experience

The main problem at that time, however, lay in convincing the EGA workers that they could win support for an occupation from other hospitals in the area and from the wider union movement.

Their limited experience of trade union leaders had convinced them that if they took action, they would not be supported by the bureaucracy, and would become isolated and defeated.

This understanding was reinforced when the Stalinist-dominated Area Joint Stewards Committee and the full time officials refused to commit themselves to support in advance the EGA workers themselves taking action.

Work-in

Nevertheless, within a few weeks, a mass meeting of EGA workers had declared that unless their demands were met, they would occupy the hospital and run the services themselves.

The purpose of the work-in would be to demand the repair of the lift, that private beds should be turned over to NHS use, that full services in



EGA supporters picket AHA

the hospital should be restored and the hospital upgraded.

In these demands, the workers were not only defending their own conditions and jobs, but clearly saw themselves as defending the NHS as a whole.

Most importantly, they called for the Area stewards together with other EGA supporters to organise a full



NUPE has provided copious

analysis of the structural and other requirements needed to run and upgrade the hospital.

This last clause, which counterposed a workers' enquiry to the statements of management about the run-down state of the hospital, implied that the way forward for the hospital was through workers' control.

Challenged

And even whilst the meeting was drawing up its list of demands, individual workers had already challenged management's right to give them orders which would ensure the hospital's closure.

A heating engineer, employed to work at a number of hospitals in the Area, refused an instruction to move to another hospital after he discovered that the EGA's heating was faulty, and could be used as an excuse to evacuate patients.

Instead, he spent six weeks repairing the heating so that with the arrival of the October cold weather, all the important departments were

STOPPING HOSPITAL CLOSURES

REVIEW of the pamphlet *KEEPING HOSPITALS OPEN*, published by the Campaign Committees of Hounslow, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, Plaistow Maternity and St. Nicholas' Hospitals. Price 10p.
By Dai Stephens

The most important development in the defence of the National Health Service against the social spending cuts has been the wave of work-ins, the first of which, at the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital, has been in progress since November 1976.

This pamphlet is an attempt to gather together experiences of the workers in this and three other London hospitals threatened with closure.

Inevitably it reflects all the weaknesses as well as certain strengths of the campaigns to defend some of the first hospitals to be threatened by the cuts.

Unionisation

The work-in at the EGA began on November 15, 1976 a few days before 80,000 workers took to the streets to protest against the cuts. It started in what might have seemed the most unlikely of conditions.

The NHS has traditionally been one of the least militant sections of the working class. And although unionisation had proceeded rapidly during the nurses' and ancillary

workers' strikes during the early seventies, smaller hospitals like the EGA had been largely untouched by this movement.

Thus when Barbara Castle, then Minister for the health

service announced that the EGA should close, the bulk of the workers were unorganised, and although NUPE had members in the hospital, their organisation was for practical purposes moribund.

For this reason the first moves against closure came from the consultants and well-intentioned 'friends' of the hospital.

Over a period of months they raised—and spent—



The giant November 17 demonstration, 1976. Then the leaders derailed the fight.



PHOTO: Mark Rubner, IFL

ing well heated. This indication of the way forward for the occupation was soon ignored. Demands advanced by WSL members, which posed the question of workers' control were shorn of their class content.

Inflated

An inquiry into the cost of repairing the lift was carried out by a firm of local



PHOTO: Laurence Spatham, IFL

Hounslow Hospital Emergency Fightback conference last November.

that the EGA was cheaper to run than many other hospitals in the Area.

Even though the inquiries into the lift, and into the costing of the hospital had not been carried out under the direction of the stewards committee, their findings could still have been used to win fresh support from the labour movement.

Instead the information was used to make fresh appeals to the AHA or to the Minister of Health, though the EGA workers had declared six months previously that these same people had no intention of saving the hospital.

Again and again in the different hospitals this question of independent class action raised its head.

Clearly, with management sabotaging a hospital by falsifying figures, and even by removing or refusing to

At all events, management must not be totally excluded from the premises.

This line is usually argued in terms of not wishing to 'alienate support' from the consultants.

But behind it lies an unwillingness to recognise that there is a fundamental difference between the interests of the workers in the hospital and those of the management which can only be resolved by one side or the other controlling the premises.

Bogus argument

If the workers do not have control then management does, and must use it to defeat the work-in.

In any case, the "mustn't alienate the consultants" argument is a bogus one. At each stage of the EGA work-in, the consultants have shown firmest support when the shop stewards committee

At the EGA, the union officials had refused to call supportive strike action on any scale; but with the idea of a work-in being taken up by the workers, both NUPE and ASTMS promised to make it 'official'.

NUPE full-timer Taylor even went so far as to produce a blue-print for the occupation, advocating workers' control:

"the essential feature of an occupation is the establishment of a Hospital Council representing all layers of staff, which is entrusted with the day-to-day management and operation of hospital affairs.

All matters concerning staffing, patient admissions, supplies, etc. should be channelled through the hospital council"

He also anticipated that in the event of a shortage of essential supplies, that union members in other hospitals would be prepared to send supplies to the EGA.

Development

Perhaps it is a measure of the political development which had taken place at the EGA that such left phraseology was needed to win the confidence of the stewards and workers who only weeks earlier had been totally unorganised.

Now, as soon as a mass meeting had voted to work-in, the full-timers were able to take the reins. ASTMS official Dowling now spoke for the first time of a one week occupation.

Limited

Within 30 minutes of the vote, he and Taylor had assured the hospital management that it was not the intention of the unions to usurp their functions, and control of the hospital by the workers was to be limited to control of a room for pickets at the main entrance.

Far from a hospital council representing all staff, it was many weeks before a further mass meeting was called.

Within days, the only evidence of "workers' control" was a notice pinned to the railings "EGA: Hospital Under Workers Control". Soon even this was removed under instructions from management.

Sporadic

Taylor's attendance at the hospital became sporadic as the threat vanished, and he shortly stopped visiting his members altogether.

The lesson here, as at the Hounslow, (where, even after management had led an attack on the hospital, kidnapping the patients, both the full time officials and Stalinist leaders of the TUC refused to call strike action) is that a consistent fight against these careerists is



lacards but no lead in action to stop the cuts.

engineers, not the local AUEW or EETPU lifts branch. Even so they found that the AHA's estimates for repairs were inflated.

In response to the calls for an opening of the books of the Area Health Authority to assess the real costs of the EGA in relation to health needs in the area, and into the profits made out of the NHS, a firm of accountants, acting under the direction of Lord Bowden, a friend of one of the consultants, went through the AHA's accounts for the EGA.

There they found gross overestimates of the running costs for this hospital—estimates of salaries for nearly all staff 50-80% up on true figures; inclusion in the running costs of salaries of individuals who worked most of their time in other hospitals.

Fresh appeals

These and other figures had been used to argue that the cost per bed at the EGA were too high.

The true figures proved

replace essential equipment, the question of who makes the decisions is a primary one.

Yet the pamphlet consistently refuses to meet the question of workers control head on. Its attitude is that control is sometimes forced upon the work-in, but as little as possible should be done to antagonise management.



PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Castle

have decided on a policy and pressurised them to support it.

Whenever the consultants have been allowed to give a lead they have wavered towards a compromise with the AHA.

Full time officials

The full role of full time officials is less clear at the EGA than at other hospitals, notably the Weir Maternity.

There, NUPE officials informed shop stewards that support of the work-in by NUPE was conditional on supporters of CLASH, the organisation of NHS stewards in London and of Hospital Worker, the SWP rank-and-file paper, being kept out of the hospital!

Posters

In exchange, NUPE officials provided posters and lapel badges, refused to mobilise support from surrounding hospitals, and, at the first opportunity, declaring that the main demands had been met, called off the work-in, leaving the stewards in confusion.

essential if the work-in is not to be defused and betrayed.

Yet the only mention of full time officials in the pamphlet is that they provide a link with the national executives of the union and that it is only through them (it is more true to say against them!) that actions can be made official!

Strike action.

A key demand which must be advanced by workers staging hospital work-ins is the need for supportive strike action, both from other hospitals, and from industrial sectors.

All-out strike

At the EGA, an important development took place when the shop stewards' committee at University College Hospital called for an all-out strike in July 1976, in support of a lobby of Parliament around the closure of the EGA.

The strike of 3,000 workers under the leadership of CLASH following the rape of the Hounslow hospital also represented an important step forward in the attempt to build united action against the cuts.

On each occasion, the strikes took place in spite of and were curbed by the activities of the full time officials and their Stalinist hangers on.

Poor coverage

Perhaps it is for this reason that the strike tactic receives such poor coverage in this pamphlet.

Furthermore an orientation towards other hospital workers necessarily means that the campaign to defend a particular hospital must be based on the defence of the NHS as a whole.

Yet St. Nick's, whose Campaign Committee are jointly responsible for this pamphlet, was 'saved' only at the expense of four neighbouring hospitals, and the 'special case' theme constantly reoccurs in the campaigns of the other hospitals in this venture.

No doubt the writers of this work-in manual would argue that it is meant as a practical guide, and not to provide ideological leadership.

The truth, however, is that it represents the authors' own confusion and, worse, a conscious attempt by some of

them to divert workers away from the most important tasks facing them.

Because of the authority established by the work-ins, this pamphlet will be taken seriously by many hospital workers seeking a way of defending the NHS.

Important tactic

It can only be hoped that this does not mean that those who follow it as a manual end up in the same boat as the Hounslow (now closed), the Weir, (closed) St. Nick's (saved at the expense of four other hospitals) and the EGA (now reduced to campaigning for public subscriptions and special funds).



NUPE leader Fisher

Nevertheless, the importance of the work-in as a tactic remains.

As Arthur Churchley from the EGA says:

"I've got one advice. Do the same as us. I've talked to others who are getting up pickets and petitions, but we've been through all that jargon.

We've had pickets/ (lobbies) and petitions. We've been to see Ennals. We've had a one day strike, and they're just not interested.

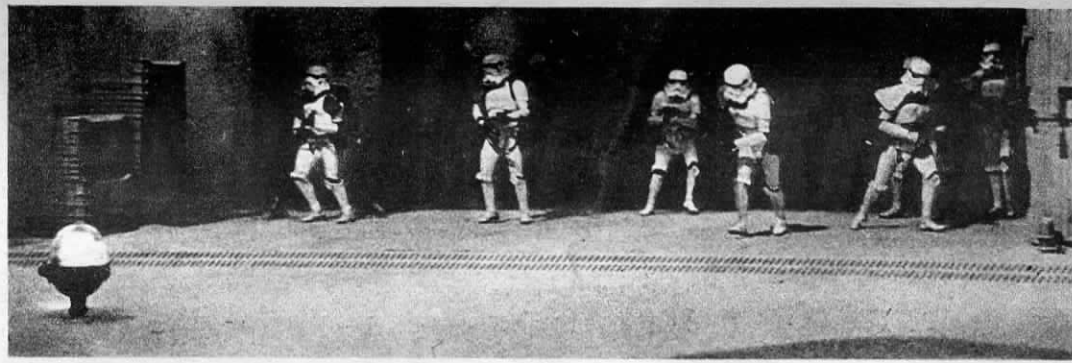
So I say you're just wasting your time. You've got to take the action we're taking"

The work-ins are a rich source of experience. It is a pity that this pamphlet fails to draw out the right lessons.



PHOTO: Laurence Spatham, IFL

IN REVIEW



Star Wars author was only programmed for profit

The only originality in capitalism's greatest commercial success for years is the particular nature of its plagiarism.

If this film was not written by a computer then the artistic sub-humourists who conceived it were, at the very least rigidly programmed.

The objective is to make as much profit as possible.

To do this the trick is very simple. You look at all the most commercially successful films or genres of film ever produced, take the most characteristic clichés and climaxes, put them all into the context of one story, which in this case is an interplanetary war. With any luck this should produce a film, the total of whose profits is even greater than the sum of the profits of its component plagiarised parts.

Supremely competent

Of course it all has to be done competently. And this film is supremely competent—in the camera work, in the special effects (as effective as, but much less self-indulgently used, than in Kubrick's *2001*) in the imaginative design of weird space creatures and monsters.

But although its technical effects are responsible for several of the tens of millions of dollars spent already, they can hardly be the key to the astounding overall commercial success of the film.

The secret of that must be in the combination of well tried formulae.



First of all, the film is dominated by a very basic good guys versus bad guys story. The bad guys in the command post of their ultimate interplanetary weapon, a machine which can destroy whole planets, look and behave—not accidentally—rather like Nazi generals in World War II films.

And one of the many resemblances possessed by the good guys is to the film version of World War I

British pilots. The penultimate scene, in which the good guys destroy the enemy's interplanetary V2 by pin-point bombing is a masterly summation of the climaxes to the *Battle of Britain*, *The Dam Busters* and *633 Squadron*.

Space-age mystic

One almost expects Sir Michael Redgrave to be in the background working out the technology. Instead, almost as good, we have Sir Alec Guinness as a space-age mystic, telling the pilots to abandon their inhibitions and 'The force' will guide and protect them (a deft touch of the biblical epic here).

The two entirely characterless heroes of the film slip effortlessly, however, into many stock roles. Both of them spend most of their time trying to rescue a princess of Hollywood-medieval appearance (both modelled by the computer, no doubt, on the money-spinning *Ivanhoe* and its successors).

Tarzan-like

One of them is a Sinbad-style space pirate, and the

other an expert at escaping from his pursuers by making Tarzan-like leaps on strands not of lichen but of reinforced nylon rope across chasms, clutching his Jane, or rather in this case, the same medieval cosmic princess.

Jaws

The heroes get involved in just about every kind of fight the cinema has known—fisticuffs, a shoot out and



(another medieval epic touch) a sword fight with space-age lazer beam swords.

Our inspired heroes and the icy princess at one point get stuck in a pool of water in which lumps of scrap metal float and which, is inhabited by an unseen snapping monster, the computer's passing nod in the direction of *Star Wars'* predecessor at the top of the profits league, *Jaws*.

Wizard of Oz

While the princess is nothing like Judy Garland, there are several other characters whom the computer has picked out of that tireless commercial success *The Wizard of Oz*. The lion in there (toughened up a bit as the first mate on the pirate space craft): the scarecrow is substituted by a three-legged computer; and the tin man (as a gold plated robot) is transferred complete with exactly the same personality.

In fact it is these two latter characters which tend to confirm the suspicion that *Star Wars* is the creation of a computer, since they are portrayed with a sentimentalised affection usually reserved by the commercial cinema for animals and children.

Theme for sale

Even the theme music, attributed to John Williams, which you can buy on the way out to swell the profits, in the same spirit—a clever musical anagram of themes of which that from *Lawrence of Arabia*, and *Somewhere Over the Rainbow* from the *Wizard of Oz* were the most obvious.

Star Wars represents the opposite of creativity in the cinema. It is the cultural equivalent of standardised TV dinners—predictable and effortlessly digestible. It is the lowest common denomination of film culture.

Its characters are faceless figures, only there as hooks

on which to hang the plot.

It is a totally escapist film. The viewer need not suffer the slightest twinge of psychological, emotional, social or political concern. The only speculation on the social life of the *Star Wars* universe is a brief reference to 'racial' discrimination against computers (further proof of the authorship?) and the only reference to its politics is the completely spurious 'anti-imperialist' nature of the war.

The 'ideas' of *Star Wars* never get beyond technological and visual fantasy. . . .

Of course it is nothing exceptional for capitalism to make profits through producing escapist entertainment. Those responsible for this most profitable movie of all time, however, have

brought to a new level the techniques by which this is done.

Natural disaster

This concerns not only the cynicism of the construction of the plot, but also on advertising campaigns before the film's release whose only precedents were the previous record-holder *Jaws* and *The Exorcist*. In this kind of advertising dramatic audience reactions are predicted in such a way that it becomes 'news'. BBC correspondents meet audiences coming out of the first performance to report on their condition as if they had just endured some transport accident or natural disaster.

This trend is something of

a breakthrough for the advertisers since it succeeds in blurring the difference between 'biased' publicity and 'impartial' news media.

A challenge to *Star Wars'* world profit record has already appeared. Directed by the creator of the deposed champion, *Jaws*, it is called *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

Royal family

In addition to using the same successful advertising tricks as its predecessors, it has also succeeded in bringing the royal family into the publicity machine by getting the film chosen for a "command performance".

But it remains to be seen whether the semi-documentary pretensions of the new challenger will be an obstacle to its commercial success.

As for *Star Wars* it is a significant irony that today as in the 1930s, capitalism—beset by a massive crisis of profitability and unable to resolve any basic problems of the masses, still manages to rake in some money by selling mindless fantasies to audiences made more receptive by the problems which the capitalist crisis itself has created.

This commercial triumph for capitalism is a step backwards in the cultural history of the cinema.

By
Geoff
Piggott

BOOKS

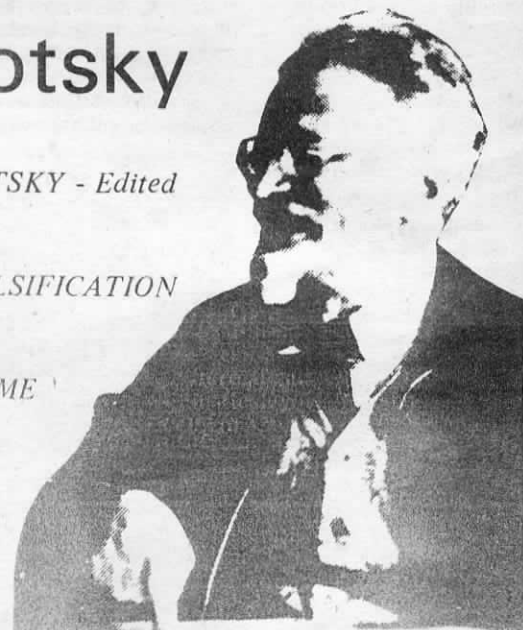
By Leon Trotsky

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All available from WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1JR.

Labour's arms pedlar praises Shah

"His (the Shah's) perceptive leadership is not merely a great national asset for Iran but also of great benefit for all those countries which share an interest in the continuing peace and prosperity of this part of the world. I have been tremendously impressed by the obvious signs of real progress and achievement in every aspect of life here".

That is not the statement of just any old venal arms dealer. This support for one of the most reactionary and cruel dictatorships in the world reportedly came from a man who claims to be a socialist—from British 'Labour' Defence Minister, Fred Mulley.

Discussions

Mulley's 'very full and friendly' discussions with the murderer Shah were part of an attempt to step up British capitalism's already enormous arms sales to Iran.

No doubt there was some friendly chat about the plans to start British-Iranian co-production of the Shir, a special desert version of the Chieftan tank and of the Rapier ground to air guided missile.

It has not been reported

whether Mr Mulley took a 'friendly' interest in some of the Shah's other examples of 'real progress and achievement'.

The 'achievement', for example, that under the 'perceptive leadership' of the Shah there are estimated to be at least 40,000 political prisoners in Iran.

SAVAK

That trade unions and all independent workers' organisations are banned. That arrests of hundreds of workers are a daily event; that torture is commonplace.

That the Shah rules through the enormous secret police known as the SAVAK whose tentacles stretch all round the world in order to persecute opponents of all this 'perceptive leadership' wherever they may be.

Some of the Shah's most recent 'achievements' consist of the brutal repression of a series of demonstrations against his tyranny which broke out in Shiraz, Qum and Teheran last November.

Last month alone 14 people were killed by the state authorities during demonstrations in Tabriz in the west of Iran.

Brutality

Since then other demonstrations have taken place in several towns and they have

all, as usual, been broken up with brutality and many arrests.

Such 'achievements' were partly made possible by British weapons sold to the Shah by Fred Mulley and his predecessors.

But it is not just for money that Mulley and the British government have been so anxious to arm the Shah. Nor is it merely to help him repress his own subjects.

Mulley, as a representative of imperialism, wants the reactionary Iranian government to act as a bulwark of counter-revolution in the Middle East and beyond.

"Stabilising"

Already the Shah has very concretely played this role in relation to the revolution in Dhofar.

And the massive build-up of armaments by his regime implies a direct threat to any revolutionary development in that part of the world.

Fred Mulley, the 'socialist' finds all this very satisfactory:

"The determination of Iran and other states in the region to get good defence equipment is a stabilising factor".

Virtually every 'left' MP in the Labour Party has made some statement in the past against the Shah's regime.

Most of them are sponsors

of such organisations as the Committee for the Restoration of Trade Union Rights in Iran and the Committee Against Repression in Iran.

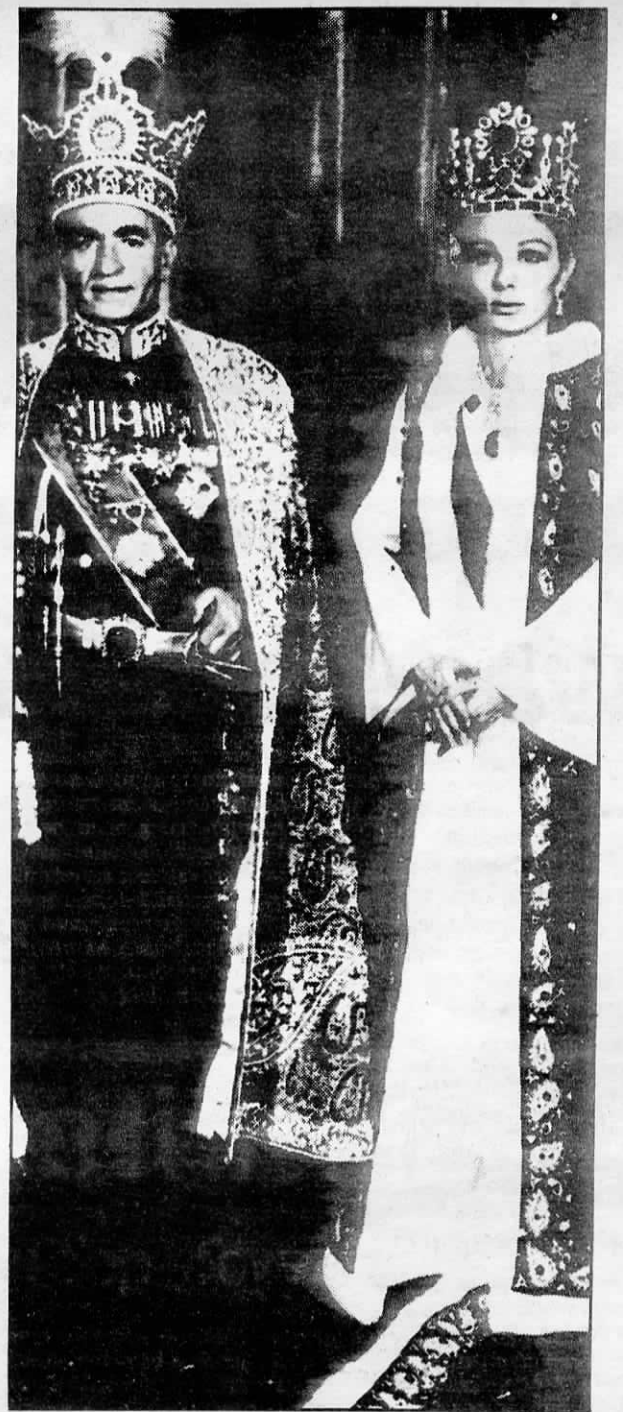
If they had the slightest political courage or honesty then Mulley's remarks would already have ignited an explosion of protest within the Labour Party.

Tyrannical

So far we are still waiting to hear the first feeble whine of protest from these fake 'lefts'.

Mulley's visit and the whole filthy relationship between the Callaghan coalition government and the tyrannical regime of the Shah must be given the widest publicity.

Resolutions must be passed in trade union branches and local Labour Parties demanding the breaking of this relationship, the immediate implementation, by labour movement blacking action, of an embargo on all arms deliveries to the Shah, the identification and expulsion of all SAVAK agents in Britain, and the building of material assistance from the British labour movement to organisations of the Iranian workers and peasants who are fighting the Shah's dictatorship.



OUR POLICIES

Defend basic rights

By Mark Hyde

PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report.

As the capitalist crisis deepens the democratic rights of the working class increasingly come under attack.

This general tendency takes many forms. Legislation is prepared which gives the police a free hand to harass the immigrant communities.

Efforts are made to remove the elementary right to mount an effective picket in an industrial dispute.

Laws like the 'Prevention of Terrorism Act' are introduced, and we see the increased use of troops alongside the police force.

The WSL and *Socialist Press* have fought to show what lies behind such developments.

International

The assault on basic rights is an international one. In Italy the Moro kidnapping has been used to increase repression against the workers' movement in general—yet the state still receives the eager support of the Communist Party Stalinists.

In countries like Chile the onslaught on basic rights has been taken to its conclusion with the imposition of military-police Bonapartist regime on the working class.

The WSL, and genuine Trotskyists internationally, stand at the forefront of every workers' struggle in

defence of basic rights.

This holds true whether the attacks of the ruling class are fronted by Tories or reformists, Stalinists or fascists.

Decades of bitter struggle have been necessary to win the right to vote, the right to organise, the right to publish, march, and so on.

Sham

The working class must now defend these rights, however limited they may be, and use them in the battle to establish socialism.

Of course in one sense 'democracy' for the working class under capitalism is always a sham.

While the capitalist class dominates economic life it dominates all other spheres of society.

To put it simply, 'freedom of the press' means much more to the man with the capital to set up and run a print shop. For the working class such 'rights' and 'freedoms' are chronically restricted and limited.

Moribund

Yet even these rights come into conflict with the requirements of moribund capitalism. The system demands the elimination of all obstacles to a dramatic increase in the rate of exploitation. It is this need of capitalism

which stands behind the increased reliance of governments upon the strengthening of the state apparatus, and the growing independence of police and army.

For this reason the WSL stands opposed to all measures which strengthen the hand of the state against the working class—even when they appear to be of a 'progressive' type.

The recent example of the Ilford by-election proves the correctness of this. The call by reformists, Stalinists and revisionists for the state to act against the fascists ended up with the Public Order Act being used against the labour movement itself.

'Democrats'

Democratic rights can *not* be defended today by appeals to the state. In fact the so-called 'democrats' are the people least of all capable of defending democracy.

The working class must defend itself as part of the overall struggle for its revolutionary political independence from the ruling class and its agents.

The defence of democratic rights is a complete fiction if it is separated from the overall programme of transitional demands necessary to prepare the working class for the seizure of power. From time to time ultra-leftist groupings and



Gays on the march demanding basic democratic rights.

individuals have said that it is not necessary, and even wrong, to defend democratic rights. After all, they say, isn't the whole thing a sham under capitalism anyway?

Lenin long ago answered such critics:

"But Marxists know that democracy does *not* abolish class oppression. It only makes the class struggle more direct, wider, more open and pronounced, and that is what we need."

The fuller the freedom of divorce, the clearer will women see that the source of their 'domestic slavery' is capitalism, not lack of rights.

The more democratic the system of government, the clearer will the workers see that the root evil is capitalism not lack of rights".

The case cannot be put any more clearly than this. Democracy creates the best conditions for the struggle for socialism.

Though this may not always appear obvious in bourgeois-democratic Britain, it will be so to anyone who has tried to organise the revolutionary struggle under conditions of fascist dictator-

ship.

But Marxists can never approach the class struggle from the standpoint of abstract 'pure' democracy. All democracy has a class basis.

In this system bourgeois democracy is merely one way, one form through which the capitalist class exercises its dictatorship over the working class.

'Progressive'

When the Stalinists and Labour reformists talk of defending democracy through an alliance of 'progressive' forces (that is, hand in hand with the capitalist class) they seek to hide the class content of democracy from the workers.

The WSL is not at all interested in the defence of bourgeois democracy, only in the defence of those basic rights of the working class which have been won under bourgeois democracy.

These rights will be made much more real and taken to a far higher level when bourgeois democracy has been done away with and replaced by a system based upon

workers' democracy—the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Thus we defend the Soviet Union (which lacks democratic rights) against 'free', 'democratic' capitalism—not through any love for the parasitic rulers of the Kremlin, but because the planned economy established by the 1917 revolution represents a historic gain for the working class.

Despite these important qualifications however, in a country like Britain, where the working class has become used to exercising basic democratic rights, the struggle in their defence against the police, the fascists, repressive legislation and all forms of attack can acquire great importance.

In the class battles to come, the working class will come to learn that its basic rights can no longer be compatible with capitalism, or be defended by the reformists.

As with decent living conditions and the right to a job, their defence and extension poses the building of a revolutionary leadership and preparation for power.



INDUSTRIAL NEWS

Govan workers' bitter harvest

In a bitter lesson for all those who argue that class collaboration and no-strike clauses save jobs, Govan shipbuilders are to make 250 workers redundant and lay off 700 workers immediately after the Easter holiday.

All the scabbing, bootlicking and grovelling by Stalinist convenor Jimmy Airlie in accepting the Polish ship order withdrawn last year from the Swan Hunter yard on Tyneside together with stringent no-strike clauses has simply encouraged British Shipbuilders management to put the boot in.

As if all this did not hand over the Govan workforce to the bosses like lambs to the slaughter, the Stalinist-led stewards have already co-operated in cutting the man-hours per ship from 850,000 to 600,000—with a target figure of 400,000 next year.



Basnett

joint wage negotiations as a "realistic" response to continued government attacks on the public sector.

The NEC's conference white paper on pay policy also sets out the Basnett proposals at great length, despite the rejection of a resolution by last year's annual conference in favour of creating a joint negotiating procedure.

This same paper concludes that: "A pay policy will always operate in NALGO services and that free collective bargaining has never been a reality".

A fine way for trade unionists to talk. There is an obvious need for a major campaign against the Basnett plan and in favour of trade union independence in the public sector.

Campaign

The GLC Branch of NALGO has resolved to start such a campaign, initially with resolutions to the Metropolitan District Council and to Trades Councils in the London area.

Other NALGO branches should support this campaign. In the other public sector unions there should be similar campaigns in preparation for annual conferences this summer.

Full use should be made of joint shop stewards committees and trades councils to carry these policies into as many branches as possible.



Drain

A co-ordinating conference of branches of all the unions involved will be needed at an early stage to put forward a clear alternative policy. This policy should include:

- *Free collective bargaining now—against Basnett and Whitley.
- *Against cash limits, wage controls and the 12 month rule.
- *For full accountability and recall of elected union officers.
- *For sliding scales of wages and expenditure on public services to protect against inflation.

Stop the Basnett wage control plan

Plans for permanent wage control in the public sector took a step forward last month when the general secretaries of six public sector unions met to discuss the so-called Basnett plan.

Basnett, present Chairman of the TUC and General Secretary of the GMWU, first announced his proposals in the *Sunday Times* on 4 December last year. The main aspects of the plan are:

- *Recognition of continued pay policy in the public sector.
- *Joint bargaining by the unions involved.
- *Synchronisation of wage settlements, effectively giving permanence of the 12 month rule.

*A permanent pay research system to draw up comparisons with the private sector. In the first instance this would provide information to negotiators, but the obvious intention is to use this system to limit claims by public sector workers to levels obtained outside.

To operate this system, Basnett proposes to replace the TUC Committee on Local Government and Health with a single Public Services Committee to include the Civil Service.

Excluded

This would, he hopes, exclude the possibility of joint action with other parts of the public sector such as the Post Office, the transport industry and the nationalised

industries.

The February discussions were attended by Basnett, Drain of NALGO, Fisher of NUPE, Spanswick of COHSE, Thomas of CPSA and Christopher of the Inland Revenue Staff Federation.

Agreement

These six reached broad agreement and decided to approach other public sector unions.

It is clear that the bureaucracy are wasting no time in mounting a massive propaganda campaign in support of the plan.

NALGO's monthly paper *Public Service*, carried a headline story on the February discussions, a lengthy editorial in its favour and an even longer article supporting

NUT-agreement to do nothing about anything

The major distinguishing feature of the 1978 conference of the National Union of Teachers has been its pledge to do nothing whatever about anything.

The Executive had done its best to prepare for this by introducing postal ballot elections for delegates—heavily biasing conference in favour of the right wing.

But still the Executive had to fight to uphold its proposals on every major question that arose—salaries, education cuts, racialism and control of the curriculum.

Many passionate words were spoken, and much "deploring" and "urging" went on, while any call for the Executive to do more than "negotiate" was treated with derision by the platform, and thrown out.

Two and a half hours of votes of thanks, at an estimated cost of £9,000 per hour, squandered thousands of pounds of subscription money.

Then Fred Jarvis, General Secretary successfully moved acceptance of the latest sell-out offer on pay.

He was backed up by the newly-installed president, who

refused to accept any amendments to the motion calling for acceptance, thus preventing any discussion of the original inadequate claim.

The settlement was accepted by a large majority, while Jarvis emptily insisted that the NUT "does not recognise" and "would not be bound by" government-imposed limits.

The Executive's determination to connive in cutting teachers' living standards was further detailed in the Salary Policy 1979-80.

Vague remarks on "increases in salaries to improve real living standards" were combined with wheeling out ex-Stalinist Max Morris to help knife any more specific proposals on wages.

An amendment in the name of East London and Wandsworth called for increases of not less than £1,000 per annum for all teachers and inflation-proofing.

It also called for a Salaries Conference and a campaign of action, including strike action, to win the claim.

Morris attacked this, put on a fine comic act designed to have delegates rolling in the aisles.

He based his attack entirely on the needs of capitalism to introduce cuts in the social services and for teachers and the whole of the working class to put the "economic good of the country" in front of everything else.

Morris also presented the 'Action Report 1978' which accepts redeployment and school closures—as long as "adequate consultation" takes place!

Again an amendment from East London calling for the full restoration of the social services as they existed before the cuts and for full employment for teachers was ridiculed since it put forward a policy to campaign for

these demands.

This included the implementation of no-cover, establishment of joint action committees with other trade unionists and the granting of support to school groups which voted to take action in support of union policy.

One motion which was amended was that on racialism, which opposed immigration controls and pledged support for members who refuse to work with active racials in the schools, such as National Front members.

It called on union members to prevent harassment of teachers and children by racials, the distribution of racist leaflets in school and the use of school premises for NF and fascist meetings.

This motion brought out some real red-baiting statements from Executive members.

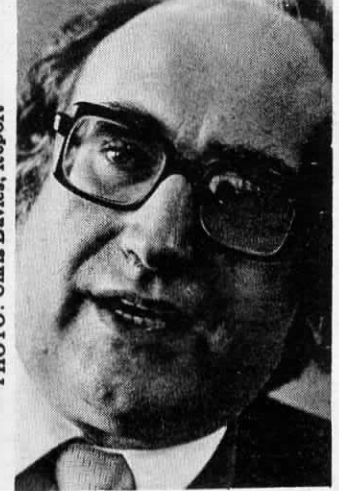
They blamed the so-called "extremists" of both the left and right for the rise of racialism and counselled reliance on the police.

The Executive speakers were clearly much more concerned to try and discredit those who want to defeat the racials than in trying to deal with the growth of racist activity.

A motion was passed calling on the government to introduce legislation making it a statutory duty on LEAs to provide nursery places for all 3-5 year olds whose parents wish them to receive it.

Unfortunately a vicious witch-hunting speech by J. Steadman ensured that a discussion on the occupation of the South Oxford Nursery Class was refused.

Almost in parting, the chairman threatened legal action on the Rank and File group for asking whether speakers cards had been taken in the correct order. An appropriate witch-hunting note on which to end.



Jarvis

Hundreds of workers on Tyneside already face the sack as a result of Airlie's scabbing. Now Govan workers too are to feel the lash of the bosses' whip.

"Reduce Imbalance"

Govan managing director Archie Gilchrist said that the redundancies were part of the company's search for ways to "reduce the imbalance" of workers in the yard.

Already Clyde Confed. district secretary Archie McAlpine has declared a willingness to discuss manpower problems "intelligently" with the employers.

Nor will Airlie mount any opposition despite his bluster last week about refusing to accept the redundancies.

"Our cooperation on the Polish order is based on job guarantees for all the workforce", he declared.

But in fact the agreements he signed last November included not only "complete mobility of workers between yards", "introduction of work study and work measurement techniques", and mobility between trades, but also a cover-all clause:

"Any changes required that will help make the company more efficient will be introduced at any time, subject only to the normal processes of consultation and mutual agreement".

Inevitable

Such cuts must inevitably create redundancies.

But for Airlie the jobs of his members rate a poor second to making the industry "viable".

Interviewed by the *Observer* in February he declared that: "You have to make workers realise they are part of the industry if it is to succeed".

Now Airlie's job is transformed into making workers realise that they must be part of the dole queue if profitability is to be raised at Govan which the head of British Shipbuilders has termed the "jewel of the corporation".

This collaboration and its Stalinist advocates must be decisively rejected by Govan workers.

Work-sharing

All jobs must be defended through the fight for work-sharing on full pay, backed up if necessary by occupation of the yard.

The books of British Shipbuilders and its suppliers must be opened to elected trade union committees to reveal the way shipyard workers are being exploited in the interests of private profit.

NUJ talks start

Talks take place this week between the NUJ, the Newspaper Society and Westminster Press over the two month dispute about backpay.

It is the first time in the dispute that Westminster Press have agreed to talk at national level. They are now the only employer to be refusing to backdate this year's 10 per cent rise, and nine offices in the group have been operating sanctions for the past nine weeks.

The Newspaper Society as a whole capitulated after the sanctions were imposed and are now in the unenviable position of forning the employers' side of the talks.

The NUJ for its part has set the meeting up without any representation from the chapels still involved, although at the time of going to press, it was not clear whether the chapels would allow

this to happen.

Work by NUJ members on the nine papers has virtually come to a halt and members of thescab organisation, the Institute of Journalists, are enthusiastically filling in the gaps.

The bitterness of the dispute, given the relative apparent pettiness of its cause, is an indication of the real will on the one side to fight over wages, and the determination by the employers not to give an inch to a union they are dedicated to destroying.

Frustrated by the lack of any clear perspective for being able to fight on their pay claim, NUJ members have diverted their militancy to a battle which has now become an important test of their ability to resist management attacks.

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PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Garners: the mass picketing begins at last

Last week Jack Dromey hopefully announced to the press that the Grunwick strike was all over bar the shouting.

But the union recognition strike at Garners Steak House which he recently adopted as a gastronomic Grunwick, has begun to challenge the kind of class collaborationist policies which have left the Grunwick strike unguarded against a planned attack by the APEX bureaucracy. Dromey, of course, speaks for the interests of the TUC and the APEX and TGWU bureaucracy—not for the workers who have been 18 months on strike.

Denounced

The Grunwick strike committee was quick to denounce his statement and declare their determination to fight on.

Meanwhile the policies of the recently formed Garners strike committee demanding blacking and mass picketing have signalled all-out confrontation with NAFF-backed Garners owner Margolis.

But the problems which have dogged the strikers' capacity to fight this anti-union boss remain.

The union bureaucracy have remained determined as ever to prevent any independent mobilisation around these policies in order to win the strike.

No accident

The non-appearance of demands for blacking and mass pickets in the strike bulletin and elsewhere is no accidental omission.

Deliberate obstruction by the union bureaucracy against democratic decisions of the strike committee is now the order of the day.

The call for mass picketing strongly denounced by Jack Dromey and by TGWU Catering Officer George Abrahams, is being sabotaged, and a vague call for building "a regular picket" substituted in its place.

The argument against mass picketing is that the strike might "lose public support".

Yet the winning of the strike demands first and foremost a turn to mobilising the massive strength of Region 1 of the TGWU, not abstract appeals to the public.

Chief fear

A mobilisation of the working class sufficient to achieve victory is the chief fear of TGWU officials and their hangers-on who have no intention of taking up the demands of workers on wages and working conditions that lie behind the fight for organisation.

So rather than fight for the demands of the strikers for a Regional levy, full blacking, and Saturday mass pickets, the union officials have slandered and fought against those who support these legitimate demands.

Simultaneously they have moved behind the scenes to secret talks with Margolis for an unconditional return to work in exchange for an ACAS inquiry.

Smash and defeat

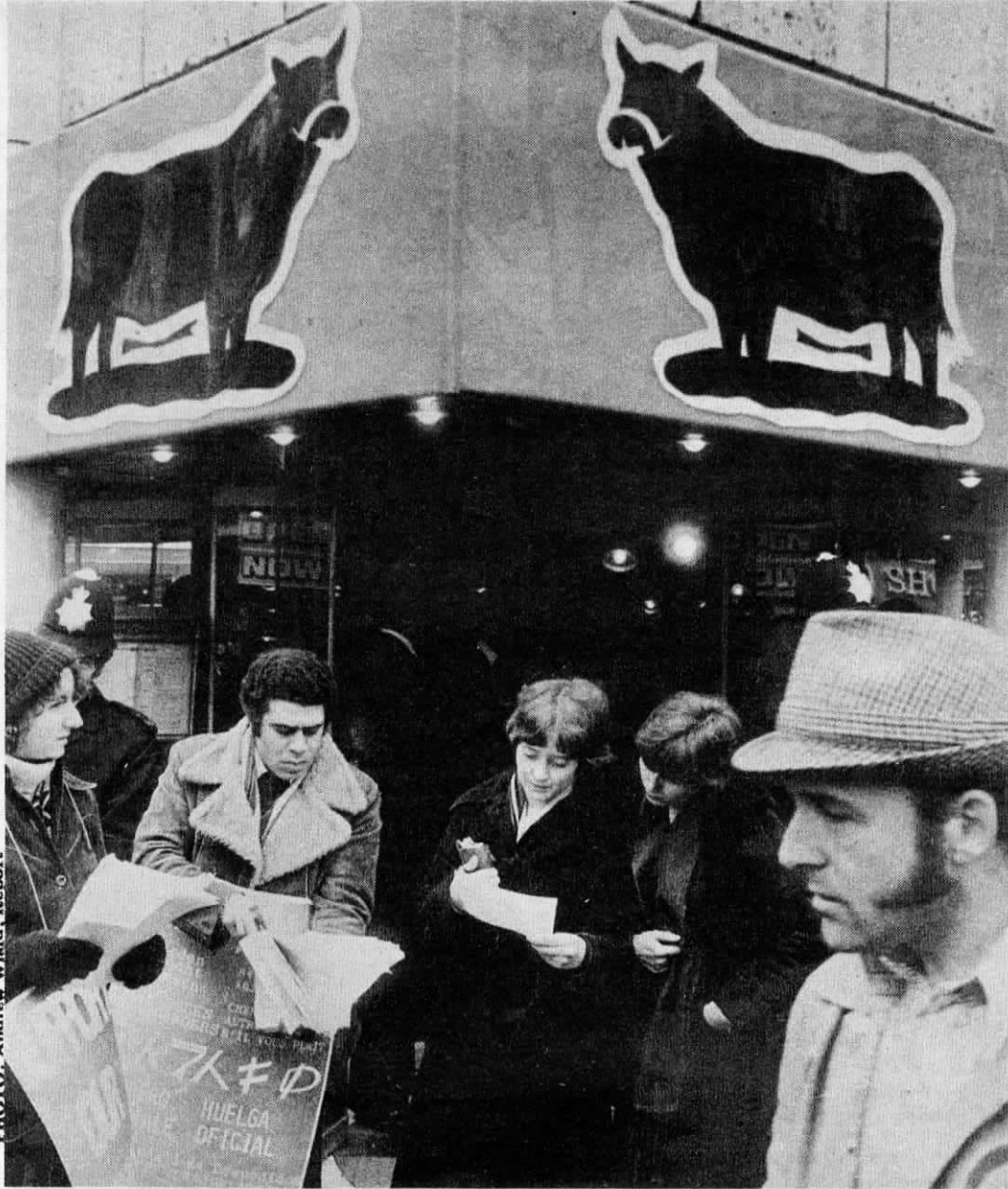
It is the officials and their lackeys who are determined to smash and defeat this strike.

Despite this sabotage the newly elected leadership gave substantial impetus to last Saturday's mass picket—which drew considerable support, including a delegation of TGWU members from Tottenham Bus Garage and other trade unionists from the London area.

The conference called by the SE Region of the TUC and the Greater London Association of Trades Councils as well as the Grunwick Strike Committee must be based on such policies and fight to extend active support for this strike throughout the labour movement in London.

Delegations

It is essential that delegations from the Grunwick and Sanderson unionisation



Pickets outside Garners last Saturday

struggles are invited to the conference to discuss the lessons of these disputes as a starting point for a strategy to win all three struggles.

Send delegations to the conference on Thursday 30 April, 7pm, Transport House, Smith Square, London SW1.

Donations to the Garners strike fund and messages of support should be sent to: TGWU, Room 84, 12-13 Henrietta St. London WC2

DESPITE MOVES by Jack Dromey, the APEX bureaucracy and the TUC to kill and bury the Grunwick strike, the Strike Committee is calling a delegate conference of supporters, to be held at the Wembley Conference Centre on May 14.

Two delegates per union branch will be allowed to attend the conference, which is in a small room at the giant Centre.

Socialist Press urges all readers to fight for delegations to this crucial conference which must launch a renewed fight for blacking of essential services and mail.

Credentials, £1, are available from the strike committee headquarters.

NUR FIGHTS NF

NUR leaders have voted to take severe action including fines or expulsion from the union against known members of the National Front.

General Secretary Sid Weighell said last week that the aims and tactics of the National Front were inconsistent with the duties of officers and members within the union.

Such measures—no doubt spurred on by rank and file hostility to extravagant NF claims of membership in the railway industry—are necessary in every union to outlaw membership of this

fascist grouping. But the way the case was argued by Weighell opened up the prospect of a dangerous extension of these measures.

Weighell centred his argument on the fact that NF propaganda had attacked rail union leaders. Apparently, NUR bureaucrats vigorously object to being called 'communists'.

Railwaymen must ensure that the measures taken against the NF do not become a pretext for an attack on the democratic rights of socialist opponents of Weighell and his treacherous cronies.

Anti-fascist injured

Roger Prouse, TGWU bus driver in High Wycombe, escaped with minor burns and shock when a parcel bomb blew up in his face last week.

Prouse has been linked with the popular front group the Anti Nazi League and, (which may be more to the point) has been working in

his union branch for the expulsion of fascists.

This attack by fascists is being 'investigated' by police but shows the need for constant vigilance and self-defence measures by the working class.

Such attacks will obviously increase as the National Front become more desperate.

CP backs anti-union hotelier

Mr. Kilpatrick who owns the Allesley Hotel in Coventry is well known in the area for his anti-trade union views.

During the bakers strike he is reported to have imported bread from Jersey and the hotel workers are still not organised despite persistent efforts to start a union there.

Kilpatrick is also known for his somewhat less than exemplary role in the struggle against racism:

With this in mind his hotel is hardly the place to hold a TGWU May Day Social.

Up in arms

Trade unionists in Coventry are therefore up in arms at the TGWU district committee's plans to do just that on April 28.

At the March meeting of the Coventry Trades Council a motion protesting against the use of this particular hotel was passed—despite opposition from, among others, one Eddie McCluskey TGWU convenor at Chrysler Stoke and a member of the Communist Party.

Amongst the choice arguments used by the right wing at the Trades Council were two particular gems.

Steel band

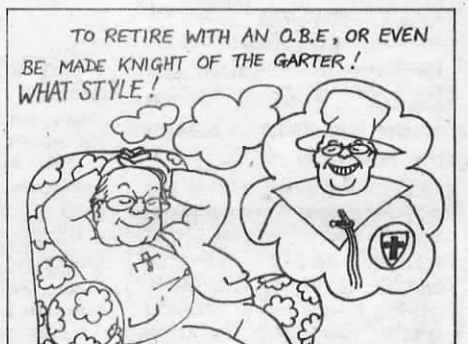
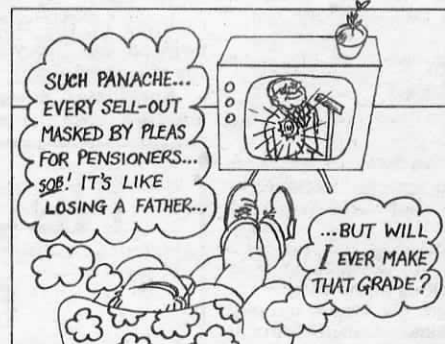
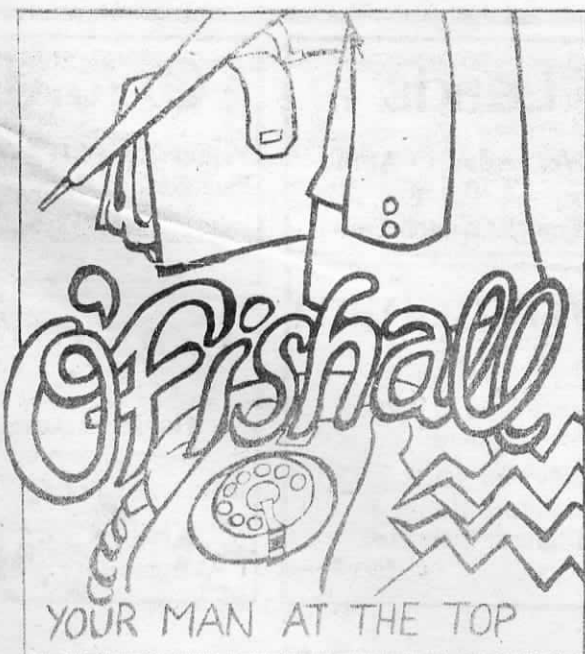
In answer to charges that Kilpatrick is a racist it was argued that since he allowed steel bands to play at his hotel and employed black workers this could not be so.

(These pathetic attempts must rank with the efforts of a right-wing Labour Party member who, casting about for an argument to defend last year's budget finally came up with the point that raising the price of cigarettes, which are after all dangerous to your health, could not be considered an anti-working class measure).

Lobby

As we go to press plans are underway to lobby the TGWU District Committee meeting on April 4 in an effort to force a change in policy.

If the committee persists in its intention to hold the May Day Social in the Allesley, those attending can expect to face a picket of trade unionists on the way in.





Fleet St flare up

The sudden outbreak of militancy in Fleet Street last week which stopped production of the *Times* and *Sunday Times* and prevented

distribution of all daily papers in the London area is a sign of the battles to come.

Newspaper owners are clearing the decks to cut jobs by up to 50% and union officials are preparing a new attempt to persuade their members to accept it.

Last week's disputes can be expected to grow rapidly in number as outbreaks of chapel militancy clash with a deliberate policy of management intransigence.

The major onslaught will come over new technology.

Already Rupert Murdoch is reported to have bought new presses in preparation for expanding the print run of the *Sun* and the *News of the World*.

Scab paper

He has been preparing the ground for running an entire scab paper in America—no doubt with the hope of putting his lessons to good use on both sides of the Atlantic.

The particular disputes which stopped production last week reflected continuing frustration over wages and manning.

The *Sunday Times* instructed engineers to operate with a greatly reduced staff and no extra money.

When the workers imposed a limit on the number of pages they could manage they were locked out.

Management then said they had struck over a wage claim.

The intervention by Reg Birch, AUEW Executive member has brought defeat to the chapel.

They have apparently been forced back to work without any increase in manning on pay, although details have not been released.

Birch has maintained his reputation as the bosses' favourite Maoist.

The SOGAT handlers (who are also in danger of major attacks on manning—were also forced back to work without money after the intervention of Len Murray, although in their case talks continue.

Hatchet man

O'Brien is unabashed by his role as hatchet man for the management. On a BBC phone-in on Sunday he said:

"I don't approve of anything that creates a situation where newspapers are not printed..."

"My own union made its position clear last year. They (*Times* members) were expelled from the union until such time as they agreed to abide by the constitution. I think I did the right thing".

On technology he said simply that it would not be stopped any more than King Canute stopped the waves but that it should be done 'humanely'.

O'Brien says openly what a comparative left talker such as NGA leader Joe Wade also accepts. The workers of Fleet Street stand in severe danger of going into battle disarmed.

Their militancy of course will be no defence against attacks by employers and union leaders alike.

Programme

Only a fully worked out programme based on the Transitional Programme can turn a defensive action on jobs into an offensive class movement.

The only programme that can be adopted in defence of jobs and living standards is one which points the way to the expropriation of the presses from the bosses under workers' management of content and production.

Work sharing on full pay! Open the books! An end to Fleet Street's secrets!

For working class management of the press!



Last Saturday's march through Oxford

NURSERY FIGHT: THE WAY TO STOP THE CUTS

One day before the NUT conference passed a motion at Blackpool condemning authorities who did not expand nursery provision, delegates refused to discuss the one fight in the whole country effectively opposing closures.

Oxfordshire Secretary, Jack Stedman, famous for sabotaging last year's fight over teachers jobs, witch-hunted delegates who attempted to raise the occupation of South Oxford Nursery Class and to seek support.

Apologising in the name of Oxford Stedman called the occupation "this disgraceful invasion of Congress time".

"As one of those members who has been responsible over the years for building

the Union's strength, I resent the action of a small minority of activists whose primary allegiance is to an external organisation".

Later on a Radio Oxford phone-in Stedman soft peddled claiming to be against the closure of the 30 places.

Stedman's treachery, in the haven of his Blackpool conference contrasts sharply with the response of local parents and trade unionists.

About 200 parents,

teachers and children—many of them in carnival-style fancy dress—marched through Oxford on Saturday afternoon to demonstrate their support for the occupation.

That so many supporters turned out—especially on a rainy, Grand National afternoon—is an indication of the extent of local support that the occupation has gathered.

The speakers at the end of the march included the leaders of the occupation, and trade union and Labour Party representatives.

The President of the Oxfordshire Association of Trades Councils Ted Cooper, attacked the Tory Council's policies of cutting nursery and other educational services but did not mention that the Council is carrying out the policies of the Lib-Lab coalition government.

Political realities

Some of the speakers were more aware of the political realities of the situation and pointed out the way forward for the campaign.

Sue Lister, a health service worker and member of

ASTMS, pointed out that this occupation has to be seen as the beginning of a fight against the cuts. The way parents and supporters fought back against the threatened closure, serves as an example of how the cuts can be challenged by the action of workers.

Ted Eames the press officer for the campaign, rejected suggestions made in the local press that the Council should allow the nursery to be reopened as a play-group, run on a voluntary basis.

Pressure

He stressed the importance of constantly pressuring the Council into re-opening the class as a nursery and restoring the jobs.

The local NUPE official, George Anderson, and the President of Oxford Trades Council, John Power, both pledged support for the occupation. But the pressure will be kept up within their unions and on the Trades Council by supporters of the nursery campaign so that they are forced to put their demagogic words into action.

Traitor Kapuuo cops a bullet

Few tears will be shed at the assassination last Thursday of black politician Clemens Kapuuo, leading figure of the collaborationist 'Democratic Turnhalle Alliance', gunned down outside his shop in Kattatura, Namibia.

Kapuuo was tipped as the likely president of the puppet 'independent' state of Namibia, planned by the Vorster regime and it is likely that his killers were SWAPO militants from the liberation movement inside Namibia.

But the killing has upset external SWAPO leaders who deny responsibility.

In opposition to any independent mobilisation of the masses, SWAPO's external leaders concentrate on diplomatic negotiations through the UN.

The killing is a stern warning that there are militant forces at work in Namibia

who have grown impatient with the diplomatic manoeuvres of these external 'leaders'.

Individual acts of terror such as this assassination are legitimate insofar as they are a part of an armed struggle strategy based on the independent mobilisation of the masses.

SWAPO leaders, however continue to swing between such acts and diplomatic manoeuvres around the Organisation of African Unity and 'progressive' capitalist countries.

The struggle for a truly independent Namibia will be achieved only through a truly independent programme around which the masses can be mobilised.

Central to this programme is the demand for a constituent assembly—a demand which must be tied to the dissolution of the existing state: namely the army, the civilian administration and the courts.

National youth meeting

The Economic Crisis and the Way Forward for Youth

SUNDAY 7 MAY at 2.00 p.m.
Lecture Room 2
Digbeth Civic Hall

Birmingham

FUND

The March Monthly Fund closed at a total of £577.70 and was an improvement on previous months. However, it still fell short of our target of £600 a month.

So far this month we have received £31.50 from Oxford and £4 from London.

This is a much slower start than we are used to. Can we make sure that by next week there has been a big improvement on this figure.

Readers and supporters are urged to send a donation to:
Socialist Press Monthly Fund
31, Dartmouth Park Hill
London NW5 1HR

WSL Public meetings

Leeds

Wednesday 19 April
7.30 p.m.
Trades Council Club

Birmingham

"The Struggle for Leadership in British Leyland"
Sunday 16 April, 7.45
Lecture Room 4
Digbeth Civic Hall

Oxford

Friday April 21, 8.00pm
East Oxford Community Centre
Princes St.

Coventry

"The Fight Against Unemployment"
Friday 7 April, 8.00pm
Hertford Tavern, Butts