



—INTERNATIONAL

ITALY'S STALINISTS HELP TO DESIGN POLICE STATE

"If the Italian Christian Democrats want a strong state, why aren't they turning towards the fascists?"

"Because they already have an agreement with the Communist Party".

The quip contains much more than a grain of truth. In undignified haste to use the political breathing space provided to them by the wake for Moro, Andreotti's government are greatly strengthening the police powers of the state.

Unprecedented

What is unprecedented is that this is being done with the active cooperation and support of the Communist Party, whose own militants are destined to be among the victims of the apparatus of repression they are busy refurbishing.

The Italian Stalinist leadership are now lashing out, politically, exclusively to their left.

Their behaviour through the Moro crisis provides a clear signal of the paths which the other 'eurocommunist' parties of western Europe are preparing to tread.

The Party's specialist on internal 'security', Senator Ugo Pecchioli is presently offering detailed advice (which he is doubtless well qualified to give) on how the bourgeois forces of 'order' should best be reorganised to attack the left.

"The police", he proposes, "should be immersed in society so that they know the population better and so that the people are better able to collaborate with them".

Pecchioli and the Party leadership are also right at the centre of discussions on the reorganisation of the intelligence service (SID), which is to be split to provide a separate body devoted to internal spying and repression.



Luciano Lama

The reorganisation follows—very belatedly—the sacking and arrest, in 1975, of the head of SID, General Vito Miceli, for conspiring with fascists for a coup d'etat.

Efficiency

Pecchioli, however, is concerned not about dangers to the working class, but only about the efficiency of this most reactionary arm of the state.

SID, he says, must be "rebuilt completely".

"All its members were clearly not criminals". (An opinion for which there is very little evidence). "We must use the experience they have acquired".

The support offered by the CP to the extreme right in the state apparatus is truly unprecedented.

It is as though the American CP were to volunteer its help in streamlining the CIA and FBI.

The main difference is that no director of the CIA has (yet) been arrested for plotting a coup in America itself!

In addition, the Italian Stalinists have voted in Parliament to give the government carte blanche with other means of repression.

There is to be a national 'information bank' to enable the various police and paramilitary forces to combine their files.

New powers

They have also given full parliamentary backing to the 'Reale law'—new legislation to give the police much wider powers of search, arrest and interrogation, and to make a wider range of crimes subject to summary trial.

The only parliamentary opposition to the Reale law (which the Stalinists themselves opposed when it was first put forward almost two years ago), has come from the small Radical Party, and the fascists.

The Stalinists and Socialists are, however, embarrassed by the prospect that if the law is too long delayed in Parliament it may go to a referendum, which would involve them in campaigning for a mass vote for it if they were to fulfil their commitment to the Christian Democratic government.

Taking advantage of the kidnapping of Moro by the Red Brigade, the existing police apparatus has been and is being used to the full.

The police have demonstrated their wide and long-standing spying and surveillance of the left and labour movement by thousands upon thousands of arrests and searches.

The vast majority of these could have no purpose but harassment and intimidation. Against all this the CP raised not a whisper of protest. On the contrary they have reacted violently to try and suppress any resistance within the labour movement.

They have attacked workers and students taking protest action against the witch-hunts. And they have used their control of many trade union bodies to launch their own bureaucratic purge of left critics.

As Luciano Lama, Stalinist boss of the CGIL, Italy's biggest trade union federation put it:

"Those who support the slogan 'Neither with the state nor with the Red Brigades' cannot be part of a united trade union. Either they go or they must be put out".

Members of the centrist party 'Proletarian Democracy', which has adopted this line have already been expelled in Trento and Calabria.

Cudgels

The cudgels which the CP leaders are so enthusiastically handing the Christian Democratic leadership will be used for their own backs.

It was, of course, the political right and the traditional centre—the Christian Democrats and Socialists, not the Stalinists, who gained in the recent round of local elections.

The resignation of Interior Minister Cossiga after Moro's death was a concession to the fascists, who had singled him out for attack as part of their campaign for a full police state.

One episode reveals the trap into which Italy's 'eurocommunist' are leading their members and themselves.

Shortly after Moro's body was found, Lama, along with other leading trade union officials, arrived hotfoot at the Christian Democratic headquarters in Rome to offer their



CP leader Berlinguer

condolences.

On the way to the door they were jostled and booed. When they got to it the book in which official visitors were to sign their respects was lying on a national flag, which had embroidered on it "Remember Reggio Emilia, 1955".

The reference was to the killing of some Christian Democrats in the town in Italy's 'Red Belt'—a killing which was never cleared up but which was blamed by the right on the Communist Party.

Lemons

Thus Lama and his fellow-bureaucrats, just as they knelt at their most obsequious, were publicly and arrogantly insulted by the political chiefs of the ruling class.

At the moment the Stalinist lemons are being squeezed. But when they have yielded up all their juice, when the 'historical compromise' has served its purpose to the capitalist state, they, too, will be tossed aside without a 'thank you'.

Jamaica prices up

Jamaican workers are to be handed the bill presented by the International Monetary Fund to the Jamaican Government as the condition for granting a three year \$240 million loan.

Sharp increases in the price of petrol, tobacco, beer and other alcoholic drinks, and a 15% devaluation of the currency were announced by Finance Minister Eric Bell in the House of Representatives on May 9th.

This latest devaluation is the fourth in 15 months and will be followed by further devaluations totalling another 15% during next year.

The government, clearly concerned about the effects of these measures on the "peace" which broke out in Jamaica in January and on the attempts of Manley to "unite the nation" behind his drive for more production, delayed the final announcement while they attempted to draw further concessions from the IMF.

But the IMF refused to budge.

So rather than risk the "chaos" that would have resulted without the loan, the Manley government prepared for the worst and accepted the IMF's conditions.

By this act, Manley once again gives the lie to the myth enthusiastically fostered by the right wing that he is somehow directing the Jamaican economy towards Cuban style "socialism".

Meanwhile, despite the efforts of the Peace Movement led by the two most notorious gangsters in Kingston, the murders of the rich and famous continue.

This week's victim was Jack Anderson, a former City Editor and leading sports journalist. He was shot down by unknown gunmen at his home.

PSOE DROPS MARXIST LABEL

Not to be outdone by Santiago Carrillo in his abject compromise with the bourgeoisie, Socialist Party leader Felipe Gonzalez has announced that he intends to propose at the next party congress the dropping of the label "Marxist" from the statutes.

Gonzalez, an "unashamed electoralist", admits that this is an attempt to win votes on the right.

But although the "Marxist" label was only inserted in the statutes in 1976, it looks as if it may be very difficult for Gonzalez to get rid of it now.

First reactions in the PSOE were universally hostile—not only in the "left" of the party but also among the leadership whom Gonzalez had not bothered to consult before making his suggestion.

One executive member said that "to drop Marxism at the present time was like dropping the law of gravity."

But Gonzalez claims in effect to be inspired by the thoughts of Marx himself.

"Marx," he said, "wouldn't like the word 'Marxism' if he were alive today."

Well, if it is "Marxism" the way Felipe Gonzalez practises it, he can only be right.

Six Socialist MPs have signed a statement declaring their undying loyalty to "Marxism".

In Barcelona, PSOE leaders are describing Gonzalez's statement as "treason".

Even Juan Reventos, the

right wing leader of the Catalan Socialist Party (shortly to fuse with the PSOE) has admitted that if there were a vote on the question in the party, Gonzalez would undoubtedly lose.

Frankly expressing his opportunism, Reventos said that:

"It was without doubt a mistake for the party to define itself as Marxist. But it would be an even bigger mistake to want to renounce it."

As well as defining itself as "Marxist", the PSOE has made much, especially in recent weeks, of its republicanism.

This it has used in an entirely opportunistic way to attract votes from the left.

But, as the PSOE slavishly showed last week, its "republicanism" is as skin deep as its "Marxism".

At the end of the constitutional discussions in the Cortes on the monarchy, the PSOE abstained while the right, the Basque and Catalan bourgeois nationalists and the Communist Party voted for the monarchy.

As if the abstention was not feeble enough, the PSOE spokesman Gomez-Llorente conceded everything to monarchism.

"If the monarchy is set up in a democratic way," he said in the debate, "and if it works in a constitutional manner, we will accept it."

If the PSOE hopes that these concessions to the right will increase its electoral support, it

must have been disappointed by the results of last week's two by-elections for the senate in Oviedo and Alicante.

Though the PSOE won both seats, its share of the vote fell compared with the elections last June.

The gainers were the Manuel Fraga's hard-line Francoist Popular Alliance and most dramatically the Communist Party which roughly doubled its share of the vote to 16% in Alicante and 23% in Oviedo.

The working class, however, is showing increasing signs of impatience with the parliamentary compromises and manoeuvres of its leaders.

A new strike wave is hitting Spain. Following the militant stoppage by hotel workers in the South, 800,000 workers in Barcelona last week went on strike to demand full trade union rights and labour amnesty (the reinstatement of workers sacked and blacklisted for union or political activities under Franco).

This was a strike against a leadership which claims, less and less convincingly, that these rights can be gained through the Francoist-dominated Cortes.

These tensions between the working class and its collaborationist leadership can be expected to show itself next weekend at the 31st Congress of the UGT, on which Socialist Press will carry a special on-the-spot report in two weeks' time.



Mengistu welcomed by Castro in Havana

The Ethiopian military dictatorship has now launched its offensive against the liberation struggles of the Eritrean people. With massive bombing raids across the whole country, Ethiopian troops are attempting to break out of their besieged positions in the few towns not controlled by the Eritrean Popular Liberation Front and the Eritrean Liberation Front. Although reports are confused, it seems likely that Cuban forces are also involved in this counter-revolutionary war. As the bloody attacks of the Derg meet with the determined resistance of the Eritreans the threat of genocide looms daily closer.



INTERNATIONAL

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC POSES

PROBLEMS FOR U.S.

IMPERIALISM

The chaotic outcome of last week's presidential election in the Dominican Republic has created a major dilemma for American imperialism.

Having supported the ultra-right wing incumbent Joaquin Balaguer for the last twelve years, there are some signs that in the last few weeks the Carter administration was prepared to drop this long-time US protege and switch horses if necessary to his main electoral challenger Antonio Guzman.

In any event the Carter administration seemed ready to accept a victory for either of these two candidates as being compatible with the lucrative interests of US imperialism in the Dominican Republic.

Respect results

And it was partly under US pressure that the two candidates had made an agreement that they would respect the result of polls whatever it was.

After this, the actual outcome was just what Carter and his advisors wanted to avoid.

As soon as the count began to show a decisive lead of 158,811 for Guzman against 66,730 for Balaguer a section of the army moved in to stop the counting and, temporarily at least, seized power.

Whether this move was with the approval of Balaguer remains in doubt.

There is little doubt that it gravely embarrassed Carter who wanted to see an apparently democratic election even if it meant the election of a candidate like Guzman who was committed, though very half-heartedly, to "reform".

The military have reportedly allowed the count to resume and now both Guzman and Balaguer are claiming victory, the latter saying that Guzman's apparently unassailable early lead had been reversed—"by late results from the countryside"—one of the oldest tricks in the election riggers' book.

So a process which was supposed to help the stabilisation of imperialism in the Dominican Republic has apparently turned into a major crisis of authority.

Spectre of 1960s

This, of course, is nothing new for the American imperialists, and they are haunted still by the spectre of the history of the Dominican Republic in the 1960s—events in which both Balaguer and Guzman played a pernicious role and which, as a prelude to the climax of Vietnam War, exposed the full venom of American imperialism.

Balaguer was a trusted political ally of the bloody tyrant Rafael Trujillo who, with US support ruled the Dominican Republic from 1930 until 1961.

In that year, in the unstable aftermath of the Cuban revolution of 1959, Trujillo appeared to the new Kennedy administration too like the old Cuban dictator Batista—a provocation to revolution.

In fact, in mid 1959 Castro had aided a completely abortive rebellion by a group of Dominican exiles.

Kennedy withdrew support from Trujillo and in April 1961 the dictator was assassinated by a group of right-wing military officers in league with the CIA.

Kennedy stated at this time: "There are three possibilities in descending order of preference—a decent democratic regime a continuation of the Trujillo regime or a Castro regime."

Formula

We ought to aim at the first, but we really can't renounce the second until we are sure that we can avoid the third".

In 1961 the application of this formula for counter-revolution led Kennedy to adopt (in the absence of any "decent democrats") Trujillo's son Ramfis and Joaquin Balaguer whose loyalty to the old dictator had won him the headship



Carter

of state.

The Dominican people had other ideas and street riots forced Trujillo and Balaguer into exile.

Right wing

The anti-Trujillo/Balaguer forces then consisted of the right wing National Civil Union (UCN) led by the opportunist new president Rafael Bonelly (Trujillo's former interior Minister and Police Chief), the Castroite and nationalist Fourteenth of June Movement and the reformist Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) led by a novelist Juan Bosch, who now returned from many years of exile.

In addition there were two tiny "communist" parties, the pro-Moscow Popular Socialist Party, (the majority of which later re-adopted the name Dominican Communist Party) and the pro-Peking Dominican Popular Movement.

Popular frontist

Both of them have consistently pursued popular frontist policies.

These parties were used by all the right wing bourgeois

politicians and the USA as evidence of impending Castro-style revolutions which justified all manner of repression.

They were also cynically used by the anti-communist, reformist Bosch to warn the bourgeoisie of what might happen unless they supported his brand of reformism.

The American administration backed anti-communist repression by the Bonelly government but also prevailed upon it to hold elections which took place in early 1963.

Popular majority

Juan Bosch, though the Catholic hierarchy had denounced him as a "Marxist-Leninist", won an enormous popular majority on a programme of "revolutionary democracy" which consisted of a ton of radical-sounding rhetoric for every ounce of reforms.

The main reform which went ahead was a land reform based on the distribution to the peasants of the vast estates of the Trujillo family.

The Minister of Agriculture who supervised this was none other than last week's other main presidential candidate Silvestre Antonio Guzman.

The Bosch government introduced a few minor tax increases on American firms and tried to re-negotiate long term trade agreements.

But Bosch was emphatic that there would be no expropriations on the Cuban model.

Decent democrat

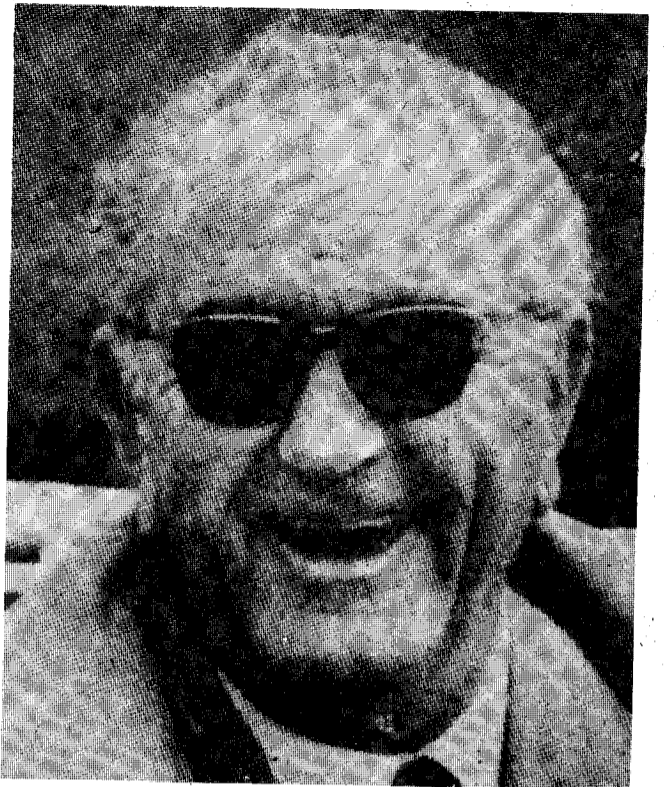
His temporary reward was the support of the Kennedy administration which hoped it had found a "decent democrat".

But the masses who had voted him into office expected much more from Bosch and began to express their impatience.

US capitalists increasingly saw danger signs and began a ruthless campaign of denunciation of the 'communist' Bosch.

They were directly aided by the American trade union bureaucracy.

The union federation, the AFL-CIO, through its inter-American network known as the American Institute for Free



Johnson

Labour Development set up the National Confederation of Free Workers (CONATRAL), a rival union federation to the existing Dominican union which were part of Bosch's political base.

One week before Bosch's overthrow CONATRAL put an advertisement in the papers urging the people to trust in the army to defend them against communism.

The military overthrow Bosch in September 1963. The US administration connived at the coup though for form's sake Kennedy (in one of his last acts before his assassination) cut off aid until constitutional rule was restored.

The Dominican Communist Party had no such scruples and supported the new military junta.

A few weeks later Lyndon Johnson had restored relations again and began to flood the country with "aid", though the US was still searching for a more stable form of pro-imperialist rule.

Plot

Meanwhile by 1965 Bosch (in exile in Puerto Rico) had made a plot with his allies in the army, notably a Colonel Caamano, to get rid of the new government.

The two communist parties and the Fourteenth of June Movement independently decided to support the plot.

On April 25th 1965 the rebellion began and met with popular support and almost instant success.

The president, Reid Cabral gave way to a Bosch nominee called Molina Urena.

After a moment of hesitation, the US decided that this move was potentially dangerous for imperialism and cooked up a pack of bare-faced lies about the rebellion being led by 53 named communists (most of whom were in exile or jail) in order to justify a massive US invasion.

Crush threat

US marines invaded the Dominican Republic "to crush the threat of international communism".

This was the launching of the so-called "Johnson Doctrine" under which the US publicly awarded itself the unrestricted right to intervene militarily anywhere it wished.

The US invasion led immediately to the replacement of the pro-Bosch government by a new military dictatorship under General Ibert.

But Johnson still wanted to restore a regime of more democratic appearance.

Fighting

During the next few months

of fighting between US forces (aided by other Latin American countries) and anti-imperialist fighters, the Johnson administration also tried to set up a "constitutional" government led by either Bosch's former foreign minister Garcia Goday or by the former agriculture minister Antonio Guzman.

Favoured candidate

At one stage Guzman was the favoured candidate in the US State Department.

He was at length rejected as lacking in sufficient authority because of his identification with what an Under-secretary of State called that "unclean Bosch crowd".

The US finally rediscovered Trujillo's old trusty, Joaquin Balaguer.

In June 1966 Balaguer won (against Bosch) a rigged presidential election. He was 'elected' again in 1970 and 1974.

For 12 years with American support he has headed a repressive dictatorship in the Dominican Republic.

It is estimated that since 1966 his regime has murdered 2,000 oppositionists.

In recent months, however, the declining authority of US imperialism has been reflected in the weakening of Balaguer's position.

In last week's election he faced ten other candidates though only Guzman had any chance of winning since his (and Bosch's) PRD remains the only mass party in the Dominican Republic.

Memory of past

But the PRD continues to get the votes of workers and peasants not because of its present programme (which is hard to distinguish from that of Balaguer's Reformist Party) but because of the memory of its past, largely undeserved reputation as an anti-imperialist party.

If by any remote chance Guzman were allowed to succeed to the electoral victory he undoubtedly won last week, he would open up expectations which in no time at all would be shattered.

It is for this reason that, harmless as are Guzman's intentions, Castro may still be happier with another few years of the ageing dictator Balaguer.

Whoever the imperialists and their local agents allow to "win", the interests of the Dominican workers and peasants will be equally passed over.

But the election fiasco and subsequent internecine squabbling with the bourgeoisie could, given an authentic revolutionary leadership, open the way to a successful independent struggle for power by the oppressed classes.



The latest round of anti-Shah demonstrations in Iran were by far the largest of the mounting opposition to the dictatorship of the last year.

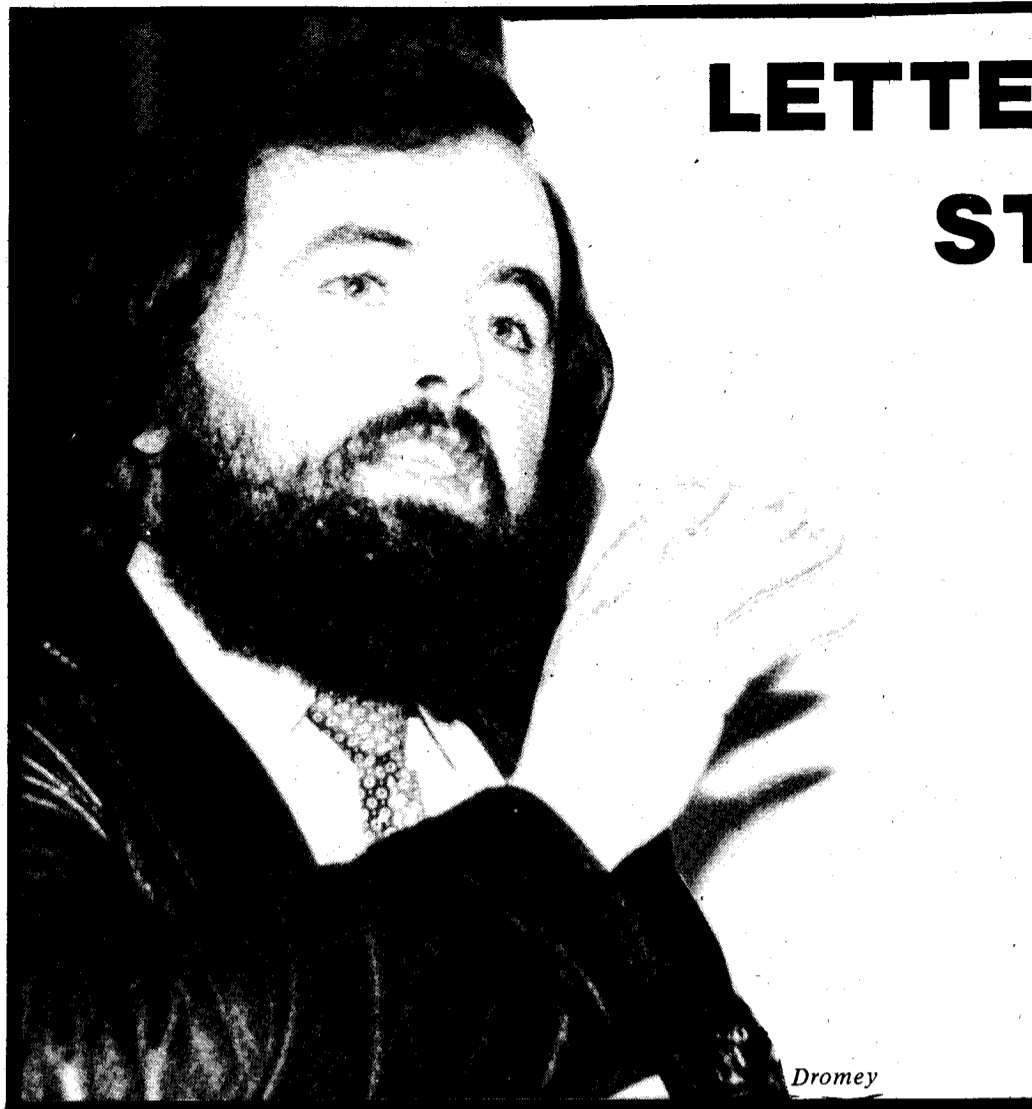
strike last week was contained only by a full scale occupation of the streets of Teheran by tanks and armoured vehicles.

out on his trip to Hungary and Bulgaria whose "communist" governments like that of the Soviet Union have consistently given material aid to the Shah's reactionary and brutal

regime. But he will return in terror to face the next round of opposition mobilisations which are being planned a month from now.

A move for a general

The Shah eventually set



LETTER from GRUNWICK STRIKE COMMITTEE

Friday 12 May, 1978

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am writing to you as a result of a unanimous decision by the Strike Committee.

For some time, we have been very concerned at the attacks in your paper on Brent Trades Council and its Secretary Brother Jack Dromey. In our view, the attacks have been misinformed and malicious and we can only conclude that your motives are sectarian ones.

We wish to make it clear that Brent Trades Council and its Officers, particu-

larly Jack Dromey, have been our loyal allies throughout our historic dispute. They like us can hold their heads up high because they have done everything possible in our support. Your attacks have been shameful and we regard them as attacks upon ourselves. We believe that your actions have only aided the right wing in the strike and we would ask you to print this letter in your next paper.

Yours fraternally,
Mahmood Ahmad, Secretary.



Thousands of workers braved police violence to join the Grunwick pickets

We reply:

DROMEY: WE

STAND BY OUR POSITION

Dear Comrade,

We reply to your letter of May 12 as a newspaper which has supported the Grunwick strike from the outset, and which has fought to mobilise resources behind you at each stage of the strike.

We have at the same time set out to point to the policies needed to win the strike.

The attitude of *Socialist Press* to the leadership given to your strike by Jack Dromey and the leadership of Brent Trades Council has been consistent for the last year and a half.

We find it significant therefore that we should receive your letter the day before you stood on the platform of the Grunwick Conference and publicly accepted that the strike is effectively finished and that you are waiting now for Grantham to officially wind it up.

In our view this leads to the conclusion that in attacking *Socialist Press* and giving unqualified endorsement to Jack Dromey's role in the strike your letter signals a shift of position by your committee.

Direction

The main problem with the Grunwick strike was not and is not George Ward. Employers with powerful friends have been defeated before. The problem has always been the direction and leadership of the strike itself.

The crucial point was to use the strength of the mass movement generated around the strike in order to force APEX, TGWU and the TUC to black all services—the only action that could have won the strike.

We have never questioned the physical efforts and organisation contributed by Jack Dromey and the Brent Trades Council in the mass mobilisations and throughout the strike.

political leadership and direction they gave to the action.

It is not enough to say as you did at the May 14 Conference that the strike was sold out by the right wing.

Role of right wing

Everyone who has ever been within a stones' throw of a strike knows that this is always the role of the right wing.

The question is always how the leadership fights the right wing treachery.

This cannot be done by general exhortations to the right wing to act in this case, to black supplies.

It can only be done if the strength of the working class is directed towards those who stand as an obstacle to victory.

Yet even at the height of its influence over a broad layer of the trade union movement, the Strike Committee made no calls for mass mobilisations against APEX and TGWU, UPW, G & M and EPTU officials or the TUC to force them to act on blacking.

The question of how this strike in which Dromey played such a key role remained completely under the control of right wing officials has never been answered.

Even at the biggest mass picket on July 11, Jack Dromey, Arthur Scargill and Strike Committee members could be seen personally to intervene—on TUC instructions—to disperse the picket on the gates and divert it onto the TUC demonstration.

General call

At the Grunwick Conference in the Friends Meeting House prior to the crucial TUC Conference last September your Committee was prepared only to put forward a general call for the TUC to implement a black

Jack Dromey, actually shouted down those—including the TGWU Grunwick drivers—who tried to propose that moves be made to demand Grantham move such a motion and Jones second it on behalf of the two unions in dispute, and also that the official TGWU and APEX spokesmen present at that meeting make a commitment to fight for this.

Then at the lobby outside the TUC, Tom Durkin attempted to prevent the WSL delegation from shouting slogans declaring that "Scarman means sackings!"

He argued that the slogan should be no more than "support the Grunwick strikers". The TUC, with their talk of a "secret plan" and their meaningless resolution *did* of course "support" the Grunwick strikers—while doing nothing to win the fight.

Hunger strike

When the Strike Committee attempted to force the TUC into action with a hunger strike outside Congress House, the action (though itself inadequate) offered the possibility of a turn to fight the bureaucracy.

Unfortunately it was not to be so. After APEX officials suspended and fined the participants the hunger strike was called off, and from then on there was no attempt by the Strike Committee to expose and fight the officials.

We argued at that point that the suspension of strikers should have been made the basis for calling a mass picket of the TUC, to focus the attention of the workers' movement on the bureaucrats who were preventing victory.

The strike leadership's attitude to the officials was paralleled by their attitude to the state.

On the 21 of June Callaghan established a Cabinet Sub-

comittee. This body, which maintained close liaison with police chiefs, army advisers and TUC leaders, had a mandate to defuse the action at all costs.

The method they chose was to divert the strike into legal procedures.

Failure of the strike leadership to prepare an adequate response left them at the mercy of this new weapon—the Scarman Court of Inquiry.

'Left' & right

The 'left' and right converged. Dromey and APEX leader Grantham pledged their support.

Socialist Press alone among the whole spectrum of political tendencies, argued for it to be boycotted.

When the Scarman Report was published, Jack Dromey on behalf of your Committee, went on television and called for its implementation—although implementation would not have secured reinstatement.

We alone called it what it was, a sellout and you should have done the same.

Your actions gave credibility to the very same legal processes which were being used to divert the strike into what you have belatedly called a "legal morass".

'Glorious defeats'

This is our difference with Jack Dromey. We are not concerned with his personality, his career, his reputation or his ego.

If he feels it is to his advantage to boast of 'glorious defeats' he will no doubt continue to do so. We would sooner take steps to ensure that he engineers no further such defeats.

We are concerned therefore with exposing the way in which his 'left' talk headed off any confrontation between strikers

union officials.

It was not *Socialist Press* with articles critical of Dromey that helped the right wing. The strike was weakened by the misleadership given by Jack Dromey to the strikers, in his role of major spokesman and chief policy maker.

Formality

Unlike the WSL, both Dromey and the strike leadership now regard the strike as defeated and its winding up by APEX a formality.

As various obituaries to the strike begin to be prepared most without doubt, will take up the theme he voiced at the recent Wembley Conference—that the lesson is the predominance of the right-wing leaders over the 'left' within the trade unions.

This argument, the stock-in-trade of the Communist Party for every occasion will find a

sympathetic response in the columns of papers such as *Socialist Worker* and *Socialist Challenge*.

This analysis is in our view a guarantee that subsequent struggles, whether on basic democratic rights or other issues, risk meeting a similar fate.

For though the APEX and TUC bureaucracy, ACAS, the 'Labour' Government and the sinister and deliberate build up of police operations which they organised, conspired to sabotage the strikes' success, no less significant was the total inability of the 'left' labour leaders, and first and foremost Jack Dromey, to provide an independent way forward.

Yours fraternally,

Socialist Press
Editorial Board



STUDENT UNIONS IN THE FIRING LINE!

Funds freedom under attack

The Department of Education and Science published on Monday a series of proposals to impose stringent controls on student union activities.

These came in the guise of a document on S.U. financing, which proposed that a new maximum limit of S.U. subscriptions should be imposed.

This will be between £15 and £20—about one third of the present level in the larger universities, and about £5-10 less than the average level for polytechnics.

At present this capitation fee is determined by negotiation between individual college authorities and student unions, with the Local Education Authority automatically paying it for every student who receives a mandatory grant.

Begging

Under the new scheme, if student unions want more than the maximum level of funds, they will have to beg for it from the university or college authorities, and present accounts of how they wish to spend the money.

The whole scheme is an obvious attempt to prevent student unions using their funds for any sort of political activity, whether this be fighting for better grants to combat rising prices, fighting the cuts, or in giving donations to workers in industrial disputes like Grunwicks.

The funds available for clubs and societies will also be severely curtailed.

The reaction of the NUS bureaucracy to this vicious attack on S.U. autonomy

has been both predictable and alarming.

The Broad Left have progressively abandoned any pretence of defending S.U. autonomy over the past year.

By accepting that student unions must be "publicly accountable" for the way they spend their money, the Stalinist-led

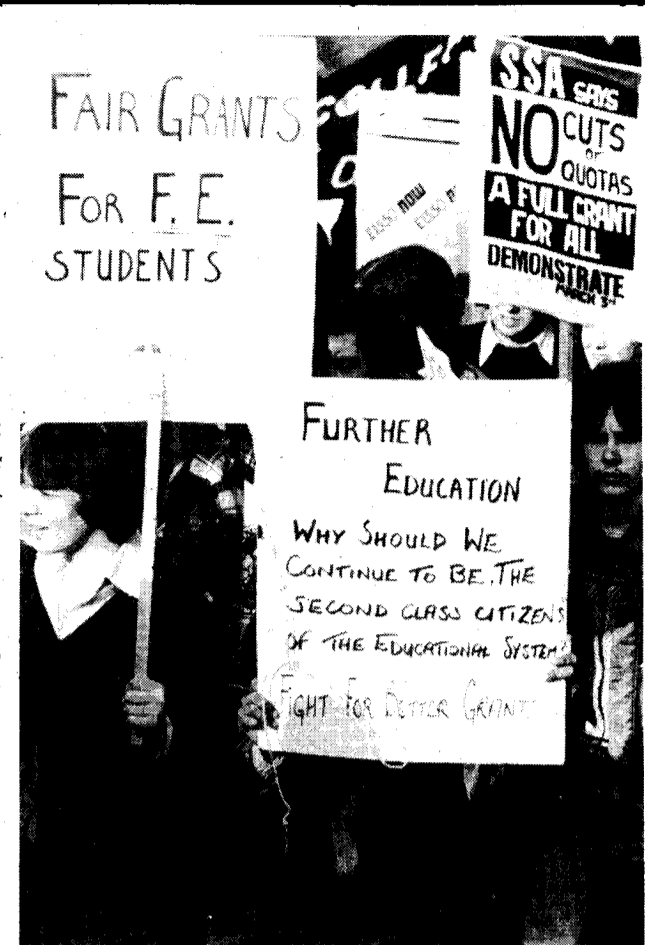
fee of £1.25, as a great advance for the weaker colleges.

No doubt, the smaller student unions who at present have no regular automatic income will be slightly better off with some money, but Slipman is forgetting that NUS's own original proposal was for a £15 minimum fee.

Students must now call an emergency national conference of NUS to discuss S.U. autonomy in the light of these proposals.

They must be thrown out, as must the Broad Left NUS leadership, who have indicated that they are more than willing to see the existing political organisation of students destroyed.

PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report



Students demonstrate for higher grants



PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Williams

NUS executive has opened the way to these attacks.

Instead of preparing a fight against these proposals, Sue Slipman, NUS President, has welcomed them, claiming that the DES "does not wish to impair S.U. autonomy."

She has seized on the "concession" in the document: a proposed *minimum*

Racist quotas bite

The outright racist measures being taken against overseas students shows the lengths even one-time 'progressives' like Shirley Williams, Secretary of State for Education, are prepared to go to, to carry through cuts in public spending.

Already the massive increase in fees, from £270 in 1974 to £732 in 1978, with £1,500 for post graduates, has severely restricted those who can apply.

These figures are for North East London Polytechnic, where increases imposed in the middle of courses, £200 last year alone, have caused immense hardship and insecurity.



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Some of those unable to pay the increase, have, after pleading and bureaucratic wrangles, had the additional fees waived.

But others have been

summarily issued with expulsion notices.

Revoked

121 students received such letters this term including 46 about to take their finals.

After threatened joint union activity and threatened occupation and after hasty consultations with the DES these have been revoked—for the time being.

But now the Polytechnics have been asked to cut student numbers by introducing quotas.

Overseas students, defined as those who have been in Britain less than three years, must be reduced to 1975/6 levels—a cut of 3,587 students in 30 Polytechnics.

Undoubtedly whole departments will have to close. At NELP the cut of 400 students would also mean the loss of 40 academic staffing jobs, quite apart from other staffing.

Not forbidden

It is not that Poly's are forbidden to take more students.

The local authorities simply will not get the £2,000 per student rate support grant for any student in excess of their quota.

Clearly our Labour politicians are relying on local hostility to paying the 'extra' to enforce these

quotas. They are hoping that nationalist prejudice will gloss over their betrayals.

A governors' document at NELP has taken this up. While expressing 'concern', it confirms:

"Clearly there should be no case where a British student is displaced by the admission of others from overseas".

Nationalist

This scandalously nationalist argument directly parallels that of import controls.

Similarly divisive ways of cutting higher education are proposed in the Oakes Report on the financing of higher education.

Pay more

This suggests that local authorities should pay a higher contribution, perhaps 15%. Obviously many workers in areas like Newham and Waltham Forest, who have never themselves benefited from higher education, and where primary and secondary education is starved of adequate funds, are likely to resent increased local spending on higher education.

This is the smokescreen that the Labour traitors are trying to create to conceal further, future rounds of cuts.

PRESS GANG Hanging judges

Television cameras, unable to be present outside the Moscow court room where Soviet physicist Yuri Orlov was sentenced to seven years labour and five years exile, contented themselves with shots of the "shadow trial" in London.

John Macdonald, QC, 'defending' Orlov faced the camera, denouncing the Soviet Union in ringing Churchillian tones.

British Athletes, he suggested, who went to compete in the Moscow Olympic games in 1980 would be giving credibility to a regime of exactly the same kind as athletes honoured with their presence in Berlin in 1936.

He would go down well on Any Questions—that radio discussion programme seemingly held in some eternal Tory party conference.

The Orlov case was that kind of a subject. The 'pop' papers discovered a taste for foreign trials and all British capitalist

papers devoted acres of space to a description of the scene outside the courthouse "sandwiched between a busy rail junction and a military barracks well away from the city centre". (*The Times*).

Why all this interest in the fate of Orlov? Certainly there is no sign of a principled defence of him against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

For the capitalist press Orlov is an object, a stick to beat the workers' states.

"Look", they shriek, "You deal with the Soviet Government, you sign Helsinki agreements, you refuse to expand armaments as fast as we would like, and now you stand helpless while the Soviet Union flaunts the fine words it signed on human rights".

The Telegraph "Yuri Orlov defies his accusers" boosted the dissident physicist to pride of place in their paper.

Leaders in *The Telegraph* and *Mail* linked the trial to soviet moves in Africa and the

need to combat the Soviet Union everywhere.

What do they care, these rage ridden rags, for Orlov or any other victim of the Soviet bureaucracy?

While their front pages howl about Orlov, their back pages send Scotland winging to Argentina with the tartan blessings of borrowed patriotism.

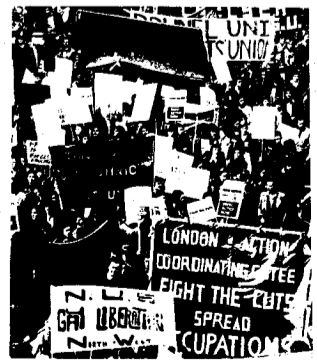
It is not oppression in the Soviet Union they find distastful—it is the property relations, the fact that though socialism has not been achieved, capitalism has been buried.

That is why Trotskyists—the only people capable of defending people like Orlov—make no half gestures towards the ravings of the British and capitalist bourgeoisies.

We stand for the defence of the Soviet Union against every imperialist attack — unconditional defence. The capitalist press reports of the Orlov trial must be recognised as part of that attack.

MARXIST STUDENT

Student bulletin of the Workers Socialist League



Issue No. 6, May 1978, includes an assessment of the NUS conference as well as articles on students in the 1960s, the ANL, and Revolutionary Way Forward for Youth. Available from WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR, Price 10p plus 9p postage.

THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION

The violent events that paved the way for 'parliamentary traditions'

PART THREE by Mark Hyde

Naturally, the most prosperous bourgeois areas went over to Parliament, providing a strong base in the southern and eastern regions.

Not a few country gentlemen, concerned mostly for their property, deserted Parliament when it came to armed conflict.

Such men had no stomach for standing at the head of the rabble, challenging order and authority.

By no means all merchants were revolutionary fighters—but the bulk of the middle class rallied.

Richard Baxter, who lived through these great events, spelt out the balance of forces.

With the King were: "A very great part of the knights and gentlemen", their tenants and the "rabble" whom they commanded.

With Parliament was a section of the country gentry:

"and the greatest part of

the tradesmen and freeholders and the middle sort of men, especially in those corporations and counties which depend on clothing and such manufactures".

Yet while it was easy for contemporaries to socially define the basis of Parliament's support, the men now ranged against Charles were by no means a politically homogeneous grouping.

Social storm

On the one hand the growing social storm brought a proliferation of innumerable radical sects, on the other, the bulk of the Parliamentary leadership regretted war, and feared too decisive a victory over the King!

In the counties leading gentry controlled Parliament's armies. This essentially conservative layer wanted only a defensive war and hoped for a negotiated settlement as early as possible.

While fighting the King they always looked nervously back over their shoulders at

the poorer yeomen in their ranks.

They had no desire to take actions so revolutionary as to unleash social forces that they could not control.

Even tried and tested leaders like Pym and Hampden had no notion of the war ending with the death of Charles—they hoped to force him to recognise the supremacy of the Commons over himself in taking state decisions.

Yet the small tradesmen, artisans and farmers who joined the cause did not trouble themselves with such niceties.

They wanted a war that would redress their grievances and would stop at nothing—they would find their spokesman in Oliver Cromwell.

Not distinguished

The man who was to become the leader of the English Revolution had not distinguished himself by 1640.

A God-fearing squire from Buckinghamshire he had sat in Parliament once before in 1628—a thing which, in this period, was a fairly common practice of many country gentlemen and by no means indicative of political ambition.

Perhaps this background helped, for Cromwell's mind was cluttered with the constitutional and legalistic baggage that obscured the outlook of so many of his associates.

Cromwell had no time for those who justified taking up arms by reference to 'ancient rights', claiming that they were fighting to save the misguided King from bad counsellors.

He said of Charles: "I would as soon discharge my pistol upon him as upon any private man".

The current within the Parliamentary side which shared this outlook was to be known as the 'Independents' (after the more radical independent congregations); the more hesitant and conservative tendency, eager to maintain social control, were known as 'Presbyterians'.

Gulf

As the war dragged on, the gulf between these two groupings deepened.

Not unexpectedly, the Royalists proved a serious adversary and could not be

defeated by a half-hearted military and political command.

The differences between Presbyterians and Independents did not arise as the names seem to imply, over religious matters, but over the conduct of the war.

Promotion on merit

The Independent view was summarised by Cromwell:

"I had rather have a plain russet-coated captain that knows what he fights for and loves what he knows than that which you call a 'gentleman' and is nothing else".

Cromwell's Independents wanted an army that knew its job and fought to win—they called for an end to the system of local forces (which the controlling gentry kept at home to defend their property), and for the promotion of officers according to merit and talent, not social standing.

Cromwell attacked his general, the Earl of Manchester, in the House of Commons for his handling of the war.

Parliament had actually won its first victory at the battle of Marston Moor but had failed to follow through its opportunity.

Incompetent

It was this experience that gave the impetus to Cromwell's construction of the 'New Model Army', to the exclusion of incompetent gentlemen from high-ranking posts, to the 'Self Denying Ordinance' of 1645, which forced MPs to resign officers' commissions and make way for better men.

These changes led to the Parliamentary military victory at the Battle of Naseby.

The conflict between the Presbyterians and the Independents is of central importance to Marxists, because it underlines one of the basic laws of revolution in general, and bourgeois revolution in particular.

Engels himself saw the parallel between this split and the split between 'Girondins' and Jacobins in France one and a half centuries later.

In both cases the bourgeoisie, the class which revolution will benefit, must mobilise the aid of much more radical and desperate petty bourgeois forces to

attain its ends.

Engels noted simply: "The middle class of the towns brought it on, and the yeomanry of the country districts fought it out... the peasantry furnishes the army..."

In each case the bourgeoisie (which unlike the lower orders has very much to lose in a revolutionary upheaval) is inclined to hold back, and is only victorious in the end because it cannot restrain its followers.

In *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Engels draws the conclusion:

"... had it not been for that yeomanry and for the plebeian element in the towns, the bourgeoisie alone would never have fought the matter out to the bitter end... In order to secure even those conquests of the bourgeoisie that were ripe for gathering at the time, the revolution had to be carried considerably further... This seems, in fact, to be one of the laws of revolution of bourgeois society".



Sir Thomas Fairfax The Earl of Man

Cromwell was ready to give leadership to those prepared to "fight the matter out to the bitter end".

It was this that made him a great revolutionary. As Trotsky observed in attacking the Labour bureaucrats of the 1920s:

"... British workers can learn incomparably more from Cromwell than from MacDonald, Snowden, Webb and other such compromising brethren".

It is in this spirit that we must look at Cromwell's army.

The New Model Army (of which Cromwell was in command of the cavalry, Fairfax being the overall commander) went on after the battle of Naseby to 'mop up' the remaining resistance.

Charles gave himself up to the Scottish allies of Parliament, who duly handed him over.

Disciplined

The rapid victory was entirely a consequence of the nature of the New Model Army. With officers selected according to talent, highly-trained and disciplined, it was a modern fighting force that could easily outmatch the sloppy Royalist forces, based on men who lacked conviction or firm leadership.

Cromwell frightened his Presbyterian allies by selecting officers purely on the basis of merit.

Even members of the greatly feared revolutionary

Anabaptist sect were admitted to responsible posts.

The job of destroying the old hierarchy and values began in the army.

Conservatism

It was no accident that Charles I chose to surrender himself to the Scots. He wisely chose to avoid placing himself in the hands of the New Model. (The Scots, by

CHRONOLOGY

- 1640 Charles I forced to call Parliament—ending 'eleven years tyranny'. Dissolves 'Short Parliament' after three weeks, arresting leaders. Scottish army enters England. Peace made at Ripon; England pays £850 a day to Scottish army. Charles forced to call Parliament again. 'Long Parliament' meets November 3.
- 1641 Strafford executed under an Act of Attainder reluctantly signed by the King. Reforms, including abolition of Star Chamber, forced through by Parliament. Rebellion breaks out in Ireland. Grand Remonstrance adopted. Charles fails in attempt to arrest five MPs. Leaves London.
- 1642 Civil War breaks out. After Battle of Edgehill Charles advances on London but is stopped by Trained Bands.
- 1643 Parliament makes alliance with Scots.
- 1644 New Model Army formed.
- 1645 Self-Denying Ordinance. Charles I's army smashed at Naseby.
- 1646 Charles surrenders. Laud executed.
- 1647 Independents use army to occupy London. Putney debates on tasks of revolution reveal splits in army.
- 1648 Scots again enter England—this time to support Charles I. Defeated by Cromwell at Preston. 'Presbyterians' in Parliament negotiate with Charles. Pride purges Parliament.
- 1649 Monarchy and House of Lords abolished with Charles I's execution.



Cromwell

A Description of His MAJESTY'S ARMY of Horse and Foot, and of his Excellencies S^r THOMAS FAIREFAX, as they were drawn into several Bodies at the BATTLE of NASBIE, June the 14th 1645.



virtue of their Presbyterian religion, which involved strict control of the lower classes, were naturally more closely aligned and identified with social conservatism).

Charles even hoped for a possible alliance with his erstwhile Scottish enemies against the monster Cromwell had created.

Of course, to describe Cromwell's force as a mere military machine does not do justice. Trotsky called it an 'armed party'.

The New Model had also given the political leadership of the revolution which no longer came from the House of Commons.

This fact was completely interconnected with its military efficiency. Like the troops of Trotsky's Red Army, the Roundheads believed in the cause they were defending.

Class enemies

The army rank and file was gripped with a desire to bring about the political, social and economic ruin of its class enemies.

Significantly, with the king defeated, the Presbyter-



ian leaders proposed the dissolving of the New Model Army without back pay—but offering the opportunity of service in Ireland!

The Presbyterians valued the military capacity of the army—they feared it politically.

Naturally the New Model Army resisted this attempt, and Cromwell, despite the doubted pressures upon him from the members of his own class, stuck with the

army he had created.

The common Royalist enemy having been vanquished it was now a question of where the revolution would end.

Engels' 'law' was working its way through.

Disbandment

Parliament tried to disband the army—the army would disband Parliament.

Within the army, rank and file Agitators—representatives—were elected. The unprecedented step of establishing a General Council of the Army, composed not only of generals and officers, but also ordinary soldiers, was taken.

Charles I was then taken out of Parliament's hands and placed under military control.

London was occupied and eleven leading Presbyterians forced out of the House of Commons in August 1647. The army had shown its power.

This was a period of enormous political ferment.

As in any revolution, each stage of the struggle leads to the separation of those who want to go further and those who desire to hold back or consolidate.

No sooner had the conservative Presbyterians been dealt with than a new struggle opened up within the Independent ranks.

Limited monarchy

The generals, including Cromwell, were still ready to negotiate for a limited monarchy in which real political power lay with Parliament.

A general plan for such a system was contained in the famous 'Heads of the Proposals'.

London radicals (Levellers) and rank and file soldiers drew up an 'Agreement of the People'—a democratic constitution.

Behind this position lay of course, the desire of the great newly-awakened masses to guarantee their political influence and rights for the future.

Such a move was too much for Cromwell who remained—however determined and forceful—a bourgeois revolutionary concerned with establishing and defending a bourgeois social system.

Curb discussion

Moves were therefore made to restore 'normal' military discipline, that is, to

curb political discussion.

Even at this stage Cromwell may have agreed on a monarchy.

Charles I, however, would not be dictated to.

He escaped, regrouped some forces and renewed his military campaign for a brief period until defeated at Preston and subsequently recaptured.

Convinced, like his father, of his 'divine right' to rule, Charles did not give up easily.

Even at this point Presbyterian MPs hoped for a settlement. The monarchy would, it is true, have provided 'legitimacy' and 'continuity'.

Rallying point

On the other hand Cromwell now saw the King mainly as a dangerous rallying point for reaction.

The army reoccupied London and a Colonel Pride (without Cromwell's knowledge but with subsequent approval), politely but firmly expelled one hundred MPs from the Commons.

With the conservatives out of the way, Cromwell set up an illegal High Court, to which Charles refused to plead—his last act of principle before his head fell in January 1649.

Cromwell, Levellers and Sects.

The killing of the King inevitably opened the way for a sharp conflict over what form of government would take the place of monarchy.

The remaining 'Rump' of the Long Parliament was still seen as the legitimate organ of power, and this body now came under pressure from both the Independents of Cromwell and the so-called Leveller forces in the army and the capital city.

The latter still hoped to see the adoption of their democratic Agreement of the People.

Imprisoned

Cromwell and the Rump had no intention of taking such a step and soon the Leveller leaders found themselves imprisoned; or as Trotsky put it "Cromwell ruthlessly put down the 'lunatics'".

Cromwell did not defend the Rump as the best form of government—his later actions proved this.

But consolidation of the bourgeois revolution meant a struggle against the Levellers

who would have burst its banks with their actions and demands.

When the Bolshevik revolution in Russia faced civil war and famine, harsh measures had to be taken against all those who threatened the revolutionary discipline and single-mindedness necessary for a victory.

Ireland

Similarly, the English bourgeois revolution, facing the imminent threat of rebellion in Ireland; posed with the threat of an alliance between the Scots and Charles II eager to avenge his father's decapitation, and requiring the all-out aid and support of merchant and gentry, could stand no nonsense from such as the Levellers.

Unity of forces in the revolution was sufficiently preserved to defeat the new Royalist bid for power at Dunbar in September 1650, and finally one year later at the battle of Worcester.

The Leveller movement never rose to prominence again in the next period—yet the tradition they left and their complex and contradictory nature makes a worthy object of study for Marxists.

In so far as it had a coherent outlook and programme the Leveller movement reflected the class interests of the petty bourgeois layers radicalised and thrown forward by the revolution.

Fearful by men of property it was accused of wanting to 'level' all inequalities and social ranks and distinctions. Trotsky himself refers to the Levellers as 'equalitarians' and 'communists'.

In fact, though matters must have looked like this to the well-to-do, this is not an accurate characterisation of the Levellers.

'Free men'

From their pamphlets, the Agreement of the People and from the famous records of army political debates held at Putney it is clear that the Levellers sought not 'communism' but the defence of all 'free men'—a category which specifically excluded the propertyless wage earning and 'servant' classes.

Their main base of support came from among small masters and apprentice craftsmen. Through extension of the franchise to such layers

(probably the entire group which were considered 'free' amounted to about one-third of the population) they hoped to carry out a radical programme.

Abolish monarchy

Leveller demands raised at one time or another included the abolition of the monarchy and House of Lords, the election of sheriffs and magistrates, the separation of church and state.

It is not surprising that a hostile writer accused the Levellers of turning the 'poor against the rich'. Yet the social base of the Levellers did not have this aim. Far from being for the overthrow of private property it stood for the defence of the property of the 'little men'.

The democratic revolutionary demands just mentioned went alongside the fight against land enclosures, against the power of trading companies—demands which reflected the fears of the small farmers and craftsmen at their big competitors, yet would have made the development of capitalism impossible.

Cavalry

Naturally, the Levellers won support from the cavalry (yeomen who provided their own horses). They were bitterly opposed by the army generals who represented the progressive bourgeoisie.

Ireton, who took up the cudgels against the Levellers, on behalf of the Independents said:

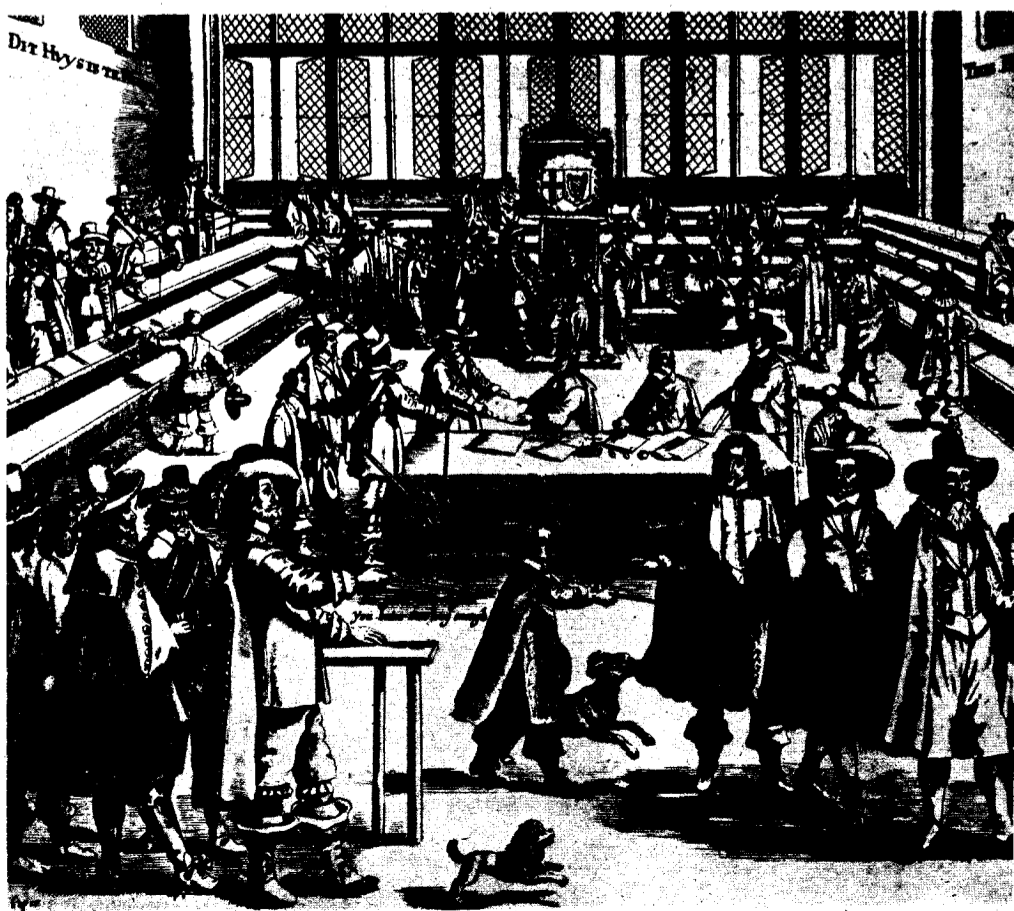
"I would have an eye to property".

He feared the implications of radical Leveller doctrine. He represented the future, while the Levellers were only the heroic death-agony of a doomed class.

Yet their hopeless inability to take power and create a new social system in no way diminishes the importance of the insights of Leveller leaders, or the legacy they left for democratic political theory.

The same qualification applies to one degree or other to the plethora of movements and sects thrown up by the English bourgeois revolution.

The final part of this series will appear in next week's edition of *Socialist Press*.



Cromwell dismisses the Rump Parliament

IN REVIEW

'The Palestinian'— no lessons drawn

"O Zaatar, Arab leaders who betrayed you now praise your fight".

These words, in a song sung by an old Palestinian man are the only attempt in this film to sum up the political lessons of the slaughter of thousands of Palestinians by Lebanese fascists in the camp of Tel-al-Zaatar.

Both the film's director—Roy Battersby—and its chief "star" Vanessa Redgrave—are Central Committee members of the "Trotskyist" Workers Revolutionary Party.

But in 2½ hours of repetitive and rambling footage, the only political insight provided by the film comes unprompted from this old man:

"The bourgeoisie are afraid. They want to stop the Palestinian revolution".

The old man, of course, is right. The Arab bourgeoisie recognises that a successful struggle by the Palestinian people to destroy the imperialist, racist state of Israel and establish a secular Palestinian state would involve and unleash a wave of revolutionary anti-capitalist struggles throughout the Middle East.

While many of them may pay lip-service to the Palestinian cause, this fear of revolution in their own countries prevents the Arab bourgeoisie giving full backing to the Palestinian freedom fighters.

Hampered

And while the Palestinian Liberation Organisation is at present the only organised force championing the national rights of the Palestinians, it is hampered at each point by its bourgeois leadership, dominated by Yasser Arafat, which appeals for support not directly to the oppressed working masses of the neighbouring states, but to their reactionary bourgeois rulers.

Arafat is now recognised by the bourgeois press as the 'military policeman' essential to ensuring a smooth takeover of UN imperialist troops from the Zionist forces in South Lebanon.

The film avoids any examination of these political questions—which are so central to understanding the need for a Trotskyist party to give independent leadership to the Palestinian struggle.

Nor does it deal with the positions of imperialism and Stalinism in the Middle East.

Contending elements

The Palestinian makes no assessment of the different political elements contending for leadership within the PLO itself, or the policies fought for by the existing leadership.

Nor do Trotskyism, Marxism or even socialism rate so much as a mention from start to finish.

WRP policy is to stand uncritically in defence of Arafat and the bourgeois leaders of the PLO. They therefore make no call—in the film or in their daily paper *Newsline* for the building of a Palestinian Trotskyist party.

Genuine

Nobody could doubt the genuine emotion or the revolutionary conviction of many of the Palestinians interviewed in the film.

They have lived day by day through the most horrific and testing struggles against the full weight of Zionist and imperialist oppression.

They have been deserted by supposed "allies". They have seen relatives, friends, acquaintances maimed, beaten or killed in 30 years of struggle.

Their cause demands the full active backing of the international labour movement.

But it also stands in dire need of principled leadership.

The film contains a number of moving scenes.

But with no political comment to make on the lessons of such experiences, the film as a whole can only remain at the level of romanticised nationalism.

Part-playing

Worse still, while the unfeigned emotion of the Palestinians is obvious, Redgrave seems to regard the film as yet another part to be played.

From our first glimpse of her—embarrassingly playing the part of a near-tearful interviewer talking to a doctor from Tel-al-Zaatar—to her final performance (posturing before a crowd of Palestinians and holding a machine gun above her head) Redgrave hogs virtually every scene while at no point raising a political question or offering a shred of political explanation.

Shambles

And Battersby, whose ability as a film-director is beyond doubt, is so consumed by the grovelling political line of the WRP that he turns out a ridiculously over-length, undisciplined shambles of a film with no coherent structure whatever.

It would indeed be interesting to know whether any footage was actually discarded in editing the film, since a whole series of embarrassing scenes (which had the audience squirming in their seats) were included in the finished version.

Whether it be Vanessa desperately pretending to understand rapidly spoken Arabic; Arafat seemingly unable to terminate an "interview" in which he was the only speaker and the cameras kept rolling; or a Palestinian guerrilla leader mockingly

JOHN LISTER reviews the Vanessa Redgrave Productions film "The Palestinian", directed by Roy Battersby. Now showing at WRP recruitment meetings.



Palestinian militants lobby the Egyptian Embassy last November

urging his troops to "fire a few bullets in honour of the English"—all was grist to the Battersby mill, and loyally spliced into what became a 157 minute endurance test.

Strengths

Not that the film is without its strengths. Certain sequences show that Battersby has not been completely numbed by the WRP. A riveting opening sequence showing the map of Israel, dripping blood, leading into still pictures of the brutal dispossession of the Palestinians by Zionism in 1948 seems to promise a much better film than *The Palestinian* turns out to be.

A breathtaking prolonged pan around the utter devastation of the destroyed Tel-al-Zaatar camp spells out the bitter hatred of the Lebanese



Arafat

fascists—most vicious section of the Arab bourgeoisie—have for the Palestinians and their struggle.

Fascists

Astonishing interviews with Lebanese fascist leaders bring out the same point. But the film soft-pedalled the massive military support given to these fascists by the Syrian bourgeoisie.

Unless the fascist forces are seen in the context of the hostility of the whole Arab bourgeoisie to the Palestinian struggle, these points fail to connect into any pattern.

Nothing however could illustrate the WRP's belly-crawling to Arafat better than the protracted "interview" with Redgrave which ends the film.

Without being asked a question Arafat rambles on unchallenged, talking about his view of the Palestinian struggle. He suddenly embarks on some general points about "theory".

"Without a strong platform of theory you can't carry on".

Marxism

At such a point a Trotskyist would immediately have probed behind Arafat's statement. *What theory? Marxist theory? Is Arafat a scientific socialist?*

What impact has the WRP-led "International Committee" had on Arafat and the PLO leadership?

Here too was a golden opportunity to get Arafat to state publicly his position on the Arab bourgeoisie which has so consistently betrayed the Palestinian struggle.

But even when Arafat ran out of things to say, stopped and invited her to disagree or to ask a question, the most Redgrave could say was "Thank you very much".

Embarassed

She sat silent while the camera whirred on.

Arafat, clearly embarrassed by such subservience from an 'interviewer' began to talk again. There are three key things, he said: "an idea, the people who believe in the

idea, and the gun".

Even this implicit attack on Leninism and explicit distortion of the class struggle (in which there is also another side—the bourgeoisie, with its ideas, its forces and its guns) did not rouse Central Committee member Vanessa to ask so much as a question.

Arafat's was therefore the final word in a film which at no point attempted a Trotskyist assessment of the Palestinian struggle.

Barred at door

It is no coincidence therefore that Trotskyists of the Workers Socialist League have been barred by WRP leaders at the door of each showing of the film in a vain bid to prevent us seeing and challenging its political capitulation to the PLO leadership.

The WRP leaders have been aware for some time that members and supporters of their party in a number of areas have already had political discussions with the WSL, in which the WRP's abandonment of the Trotskyist programme has been the central issue discussed.

A succession of frenzied and slanderous articles against the WSL published in *Newsline* have signalled a bid by the WRP to wall their members off from political discussion on these questions.

Abandoned

But now the showing of *The Palestinian* at a series of WRP recruitment meetings will bring home to even more layers within the WRP the extent to which their leaders have abandoned in practice every principle of the Transitional Programme and reduced themselves to the rank of cheerleaders for Arafat.

The fight for the absolute principle of the political independence of the working class in Britain and internationally means a struggle against such methods and the fight to reconstruct the Fourth International on the basis of a practical reaffirmation of Trotsky's Transitional Programme.

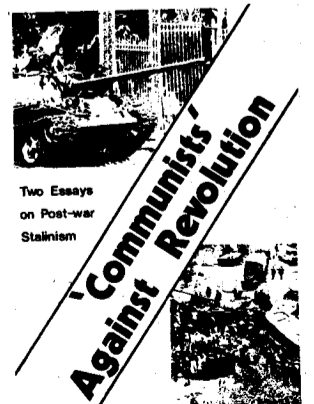
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UNITY AGAINST TROTSKYISM

"Unity is an excellent thing. But demarcation on the question of the Marxist programme must precede unity (fusion of the mass newspapers) in order for that unity to be honest and long lasting".

Trotsky

"Before we can unite, and in order that we can unite, we must first of all draw firm and definite lines of demarcation. Otherwise our unity will be purely fictitious, it will conceal the prevailing confusion and hinder its radical elimination".

Lenin

Flying in the face of this advice from the great revolutionaries of our epoch *Socialist Challenge* was launched a year ago by the opportunist International Marxist Group in the hope of finding a programme sufficiently minimal to permit the fusion of the IMG with a wide range of centrist and anti-Trotskyist groups.

Foremost among these anti-Trotskyists courted by the IMG is the biggest grouping on the left—the Socialist Workers Party.

Expelled

The SWP's founders were expelled from the Trotskyist movement for refusing to defend the Soviet Union against imperialism in the cold-war period—arguing that it had been transformed into a "state capitalist" regime.

They still hold this reactionary position—which denies the gains of the October 1917 revolution.

And in keeping with this superficial method of analysis the SWP today consistently pulls back from struggles against the trade union bureaucracy, relying on the syndicalist hope of 'outflanking' them by "rank and file" action.

Despite the fact that these positions not only run directly counter to the Trotskyist programme but have also been crushingly refuted by every event in working class history (which demonstrates that "the workers united can be defeated—by their leadership") the IMG have gone overboard in a bid to adapt to the SWP.

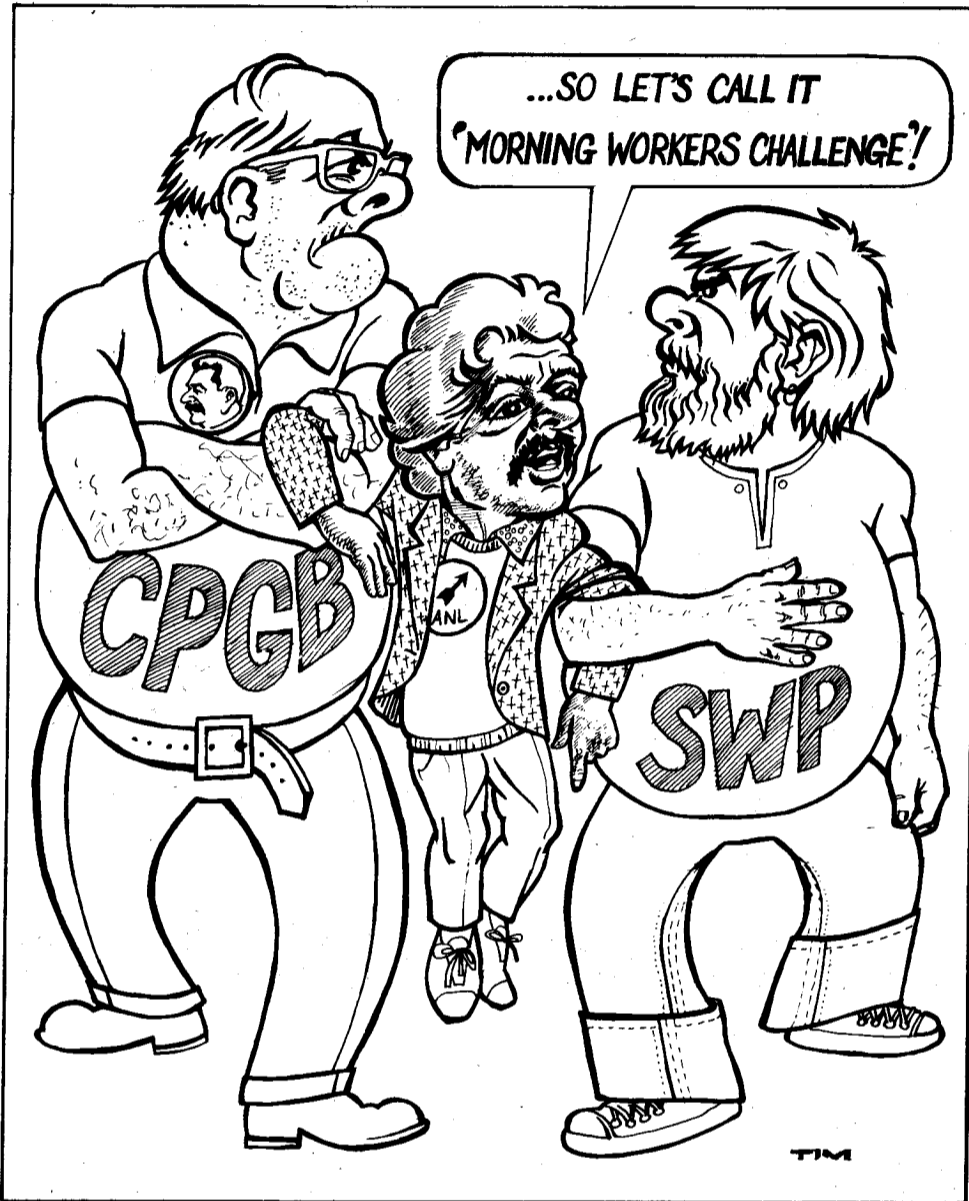
Toothless

IMG backing for the large but toothless Anti-Nazi League (whose heterogeneous class content excludes essential demands for socialist policies and workers defence) is simply the latest shape of this adaptation.

It was more fully elaborated late last year in an IMG document "Our Common Ground" which was published in *Socialist Challenge*.

The IMG in this platform for 'unity' threw overboard not only the specific demands of the Transitional Programme, but also any call for unconditional defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism, and any call for unity to take place with the context of an international movement.

The irony is that all of these sacrifices used as bait by the IMG have netted not fusion with the big fish—the SWP—but a bloc with a modest shoal of worthless small fry (Big Flame, the Workers League) and a handful of plankton (the Marxist Workers Group of



Bolton and Leigh).

But apparently the IMG leaders remain undeterred. They are convinced that rather than carry through the hard fight to build a movement by recruiting workers and others to the Trotskyist programme, a shortcut can be found through dropping the programme and swallowing up ready-made centrist layers—no matter what their political positions.

This, together with the continuing inability of the IMG impressionists to analyse the development of the class struggle has produced *Socialist Challenge's* utter political confusion, spiced with occasional adventurism and sensationalism.

From its first appearance its record on key issues has been abysmal.

Socialist Challenge failed for months to call for blacking of

Grunwick, peddled illusions in the Scarman report and carried uncritical interviews with 'left' demagogue Jack Dromey; it has consistently refused to confront or call for a break in the Lib-Lab Coalition; in revealing speeches and documents by Leyland bosses *Socialist Challenge* made no attempt to use this material to direct workers towards a programme for action on jobs and wages;

Booth backs print traitors to axe jobs

A major Commons debate on the newspaper industry last week took place to the sound of Government and opposition leaders tip-toeing on eggs.

Virtual unanimity of views expressed by Tory opposition spokesmen, James Prior, and Labour Employment Minister, Albert Booth, had been guaranteed by the tough statements from managements at both the *Observer* and the *Times*.

Both men recognised the crucial role being played by the print union leaders. As they waited for Joe Wade, the NGA General Secretary, to work out the correct formula for attacking *Observer* print members, they were both extremely anxious to say nothing to embarrass him.

Prior set the tone with some mild criticism of new-

spaper managements who lacked some of the 'qualities' of the old fashioned Press barons, which enabled them to avoid some of the disputes.

He praised the union leaders for their 'responsible attitude' and urged them to use their strength and 'if necessary they must act together to do so'.

A joint union management effort to get accepted the once rejected blueprint for new technology (Programme for Action) should be made.

His speech could have been cleared with Booth. Almost the only thing that the Labour Minister could find to object to was that Prior had been too explicit about his desire to declare

print union closed shops illegal.

Booth attacked managements for being too soft. If they gave in to unofficial action they reduced the authority of the print union leaders on whose cooperation they depended.

Disintegration

In a reference to the disintegration of the Newspaper Publishers Association he called for the strengthening of the employers organisation.

Booth backed the threats by *Observer* and *Times* managements to cease publication. There was no 'immutable law' which said that there should be national papers centred on London.

"How many times have we met a smug centrist, who reckons himself a "realist" merely because he sets out to swim without any ideological baggage whatever and is tossed by every vagrant current. He is unable to understand that principles are not dead ballast but a life line for a revolutionary swimmer."

Trotsky *Writings 1935-6*, p27.

"The idea of 'parity of formations', that is, of tendencies, is inherently absurd and vicious. The tendencies are not equal in numbers; but what is most important is the different ideological and political value of the tendencies. There are right and wrong tendencies, progressive and reactionary ones. Adventurists, who hold nothing sacred, may well accommodate themselves with all the possible tendencies. But Marxists are obliged to mercilessly fight the unprincipled tendencies and not to make an alliance with them on an equal basis. The parity of tendencies means the parity of Marxism, centrism, adventurism, etc. One could easily find in Marx, Engels, Lenin, a mountain of sarcastic quotations against analogous pretensions from petty-bourgeois formations of the time."

Crisis of the French Section pp 122-3.

and throughout the firemen's strike *Socialist Challenge*aped the SWP in focussing on calls for "solidarity" and picketing, when the sharpest political fight centred on the struggle against TUC-policed wage controls.

In between these wrong and dangerous positions an array of non-Trotskyists and anti-Trotskyists have been given page after page to display their hostility to programmatic clarity and the concept of a Leninist vanguard party.

Sucked in

Socialist Challenge cannot be 'reformed' to produce a Trotskyist paper. Its policy on each issue is tied to that of the anti-Trotskyists that have been sucked into Socialist Unity and to the current line of the Socialist Workers Party.

With the SWP moving to the right in its grovelling to Liberals and bourgeois supporters of the Anti-Nazi League, *Socialist Challenge* must be drawn in the same direction.

Meanwhile letters from three leading IMG members in recent issues of *Socialist Challenge* indicate a public split in the organisation on the question of Stalinism.

Orthodox

Robin Blackburn and Tariq Ali are both moving towards further accommodation to the British Communist Party, while John Ross is trying to sound like a voice of orthodoxy.

But there can be no prospect of a return to orthodox Trotskyism without the scrapping of the *Socialist Challenge* adventure, an accounting of the historical origins of these revisionist positions, and a thorough break from them in practice in the fight to reconstruct the Fourth International.

By Terry Smith

Labour leaders mourn dead butchers

We note, without the slightest regret, the untimely passing (several decades too late) of two major figures of post-war imperialism.

Selwyn Lloyd was the British Foreign Secretary who in 1956 in league with "socialist" government in France and with the Israeli Zionist regime, organised the British invasion of Egypt in a vain attempt to seize the Suez canal which had been nationalised (with compensation) by Nasser's government.

Lloyd later went on to be, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, an architect of the Tory attack on working class living standards in the 1960s.

His invention of the six month "pay pause" in 1961 was later made use of by Harold Wilson's Labour Government in 1966.

And last week, of course, no one was more unctuous in their praise of this imperialist and enemy of the working class than the Labour Party leaders.

They also had nothing but praise for the other belated casualty of the week Robert Menzies, former Tory Prime Minister of Australia.

Aside from his numerous acts of hostility towards the Australian working class, Menzies should be remembered as the man who alongside Johnson and Nixon sent troops to Vietnam in an unsuccessful attempt to crush the Vietnamese revolution.

Though forced in the end to retreat humiliated, this was not before the Australian army had notched up its share of brutal murders.

Selwyn Lloyd and Menzies—both these imperialist butchers lived many years after their crimes, to be honoured and revered by the British and Australian state and by those who claim to lead the working class.

We are shedding no tears.



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.

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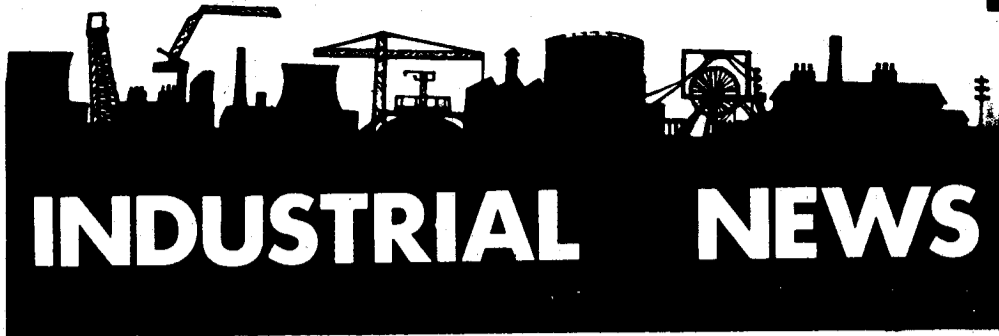
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INDUSTRIAL NEWS

GARNERS TURN PROMISES INTO ACTION

As the strike at the Garners Steak Houses enters its seventeenth week, support and sympathy for the strike has built up to a new level, and the strikers are as resolute and determined as ever.

In a week which ended in the 500 strong demonstration of support through Central London on Saturday May 20th, many new groups of workers were seen on the picket line including delegations from the Southall Trades Council and Fords Chloride which included one member of the TGWU Regional Executive. The regular delegation from the Wandsworth Trades Council was also there last week, along with a new one from Brent Trades Council.

Earlier in the week there were a number of interesting meetings. On Monday the blacking committee (including Jack Dromey), announced the dispatching of a large number of letters to suppliers.

Sceptical

Strikers were sceptical of much coming out of this in the light of past experience. This was especially because Pyke's butchers, who were allegedly blacking, were said to have been seen delivering that very morning. The strikers will watch with interest to see if Pyke's shops in West London and elsewhere are now picketed, as promised by Dromey.

A strike committee meeting on Tuesday organised for the Saturday mobilisation and discussed a recall support conference to follow it.

A third meeting was the press conference on Thursday run by full-time official Abrahams, and Rachman for the strike committee, and attended by most of the capitalist press

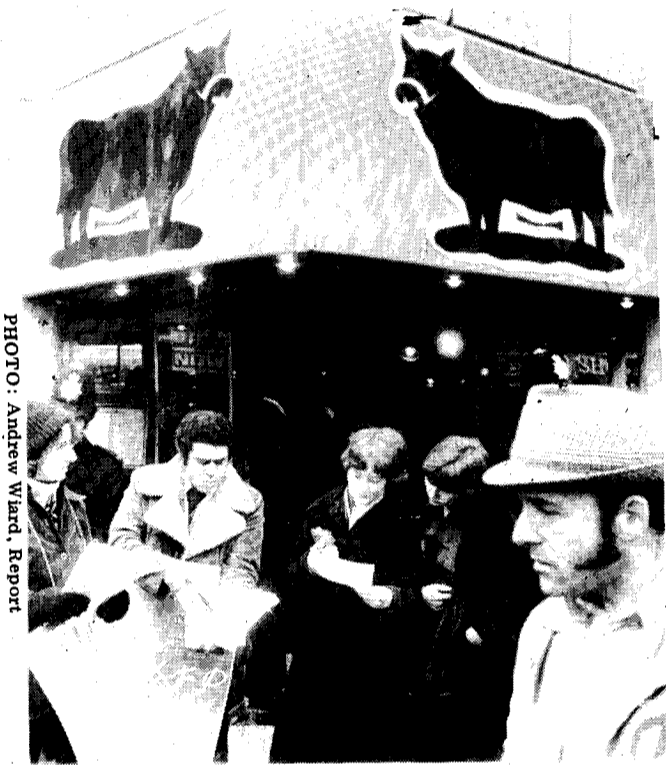


PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

Garners pickets

together with some workers' papers.

At the press conference the continuing strength of the strike was portrayed and the extended blacking was described. The reporters present were naturally sceptical about the fact that it had taken almost four months to get moving on these matters, but dutifully took down the rather dated figures of profit and loss which had been obtained by the TGWU about the Garners operations.

More sensitive questions concerned the parallel with Grunwicks, whose funeral rites had been announced a few days earlier. Abrahams said this was nothing like Grunwicks, and with picketing would be much easier to win.

When asked about financial aid to the strikers—they are still only getting £6 a week from the union—Abrahams repeated the usual excuses about how

difficult it all was, despite the £30 which had been obtained at Grunwicks.

On that very same day, the Regional Finance and General Purposes Committee met to consider the matter and agreed on the princely sum of £10 per striker as a once for all payment. Some strikers are inclined to throw this back in their faces; they should press for more than this derisory sum.

Regional Secretary, Ron Todd's call for 'effective picketing' is no answer to the increasing police harassment which has resulted in at least 11 arrests. Police refuse to allow union banners outside some of the restaurants, and have reduced numbers of pickets, as and when they choose.

Pressure will continue for the strikers for real mass picketing with trade union delegations, for properly organised blacking and for adequate strike pay.

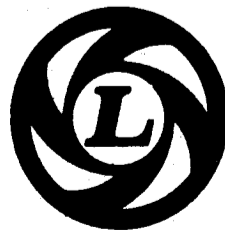
PRESSED STEEL SPEED UP

The Edwardes/Ryder speed-up plan in Leyland is continuing with the aid of collaborating convenors and officials.

In the Cowley Body Plant the right wing leadership of the TGWU is the method of leaving individual sections to combat problems on their own.

Ever since 1971 the rank and file has managed to stop the company using stop watches and so the industrial engineers have had to rely on arguments of effort not being enough.

Six months ago one of the leading right wingers allowed the stop watch onto his section



on the Marina final-lines.

Since then everywhere over the rest of the plant the company has been quoting this precedent. But they have been successfully resisted up until last week.

The company declared they were going to force the use of the stop-watch on the Maxi-Princess final lines.

The right wing successfully isolated the section which in reality had tremendous support all over the factory, so that when they held their meeting they were given a false position of the lack of support and they voted by a narrow majority to accept the stop-watch.

This shows the problem is clearly one of leadership. While the members remain strongly opposed to speed-up, the right wing continue to use their position to force through the company's plans.

NUJ PICKET SHUTS PAPERS

The strike by journalists on three small London suburban papers against victimisation had a major success last week, when printers refused to cross their picket line.

Printers at King and Hutchings at Uxbridge supported the NUJ members on the Acton Gazette who had organised a mass picket in support of their three week old strike.

They refused to cross the picket line last Tuesday and on Thursday received official backing from the NGA National Council to stay out till Monday.

The immediate impact was to stop umpteen publications—including an Arab daily *Al Arab* and the *Jewish Chronicle*, several weekly local papers and, for a time, the *International Herald Tribune*.

But after a management threat that the *Herald Tribune* would be lost if it was not published for the third night the NGA chapel agreed to send in a skeleton staff to work on it.

The *Acton Gazette*, *Hendon Times* and *Watford Times*, three Westminster Press papers, are the last in the country to be refused the national £7.09 wage deal in a blatant piece of victimisation.

Journalists at the *Bucks Free Press* have refused to cross a picket line there and some other WP papers are in a mandatory session.

The pickets must now be strengthened and the NGA should ignore management ultimatums to stop work on all papers in King and Hutchings.

Left turn for CPSA

Militants in the Civil and Public Services Association will have their eyes firmly on the new left wing Executive, expecting them to give a lead in coming struggles on pay and public spending cuts.

Certainly the heavy defeat suffered by Truamid-backed right wing in the Executive elections is a substantial indication of the readiness of CPSA members to fight in defence of jobs and conditions.

But the new Executive, peppered with Broad Left, Communist Party Stalinists, 'Militant' supporters, SWP and IMG members, has to prove in practice that it represents a qualitative improvement.

The last left-wing dominated Executive climbed down ignominiously in the face of a government lock-out threat. And the new Executive has no coherent policy for resisting the cuts.

A principled leadership is needed to fight for strike action wherever jobs and conditions come under renewed attack.

LEEDS BUS WORKERS WIN ROUND ONE

Leeds bus workers go back to work today (Wednesday) after a six week strike stopped cuts in bus services and staff being carried out.

The six week strike ended with the bus workers going back on the old schedules and Leeds Metro management defeated in their attempt to break agreements over the change of services.

But the victory is only the first round in the campaign. Union officials, ACAS and management are to start talks on the basis that new schedules will be introduced on July 2.

Flight to Leeds

Larry Smith, TGWU National Passenger Officer, flew to Leeds to conduct negotiations.

The return to work gives him a dangerous opportunity to deflect the bus workers from their determined fight. Already the local official, Allison, has appeared on TV to say that new schedules will operate from July.

But stewards determined to fight all cuts in staff and services will have been strengthened by this victory.

For more than a week ACAS had been trying to find a way of selling the deal to the bus workers. Their first effort was rejected by 800 votes to 300 last Wednesday (May 17) and they finally concluded that unless the company backed down, the strike would continue.

An attempt to mobilise clerks at Leeds Civic Hall to stage a demonstration against the strike ended in miserable failure when only eight protestors turned up.

Moves had been building up to black petrol to private companies carrying out scab work during the dispute and approaches were planned to other bus companies in the West Yorkshire Metro area asking for supporting action.

Despite a series of vicious articles in the Yorkshire Evening Post and the Yorkshire Post 'proving' that the

strike would reduce the need for buses, businessmen were being hard hit by the strike, spending tens of thousands of pounds each week ferrying people to work.

Shopkeepers in the city centre were also losing money.

To build on this success strike leaders must be shifted from their conception that the fight is confined to stopping the new schedules.

The workers have proved how effective united action can be.

Management requires the new schedules in order to impose cuts in services and jobs.

This must be brought out clearly by a direct appeal to workers in the public sector—in NALGO, NUPE and the GMWU—who are facing similar cuts.

There must be joint strike action to defeat the cuts.

Speke: bosses take no chances

The majority of the workforce at Leyland's doomed Triumph plant at Speke, Merseyside were laid off on full pay last week—though total closure of the plant is not due until May 26.

Clearly management wanted to take no chances of workers' smouldering hostility to the cynical bureaucratic sell-out of their jobs kindling into the flame of an occupation at the point of closure.

Conspiracy

Officials of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and Leyland Combine stewards' leaders had conspired to ensure that no direction was given to militant Speke workers who openly demonstrated their willingness to

A new element has been brought into the campaign by TGWU officials to victimise militant stewards in British Leyland's Cowley Assembly Plant.

Thomas Quinn, a supporter of right wing ex-convener Reg Parsons and District Secretary David Buckle, was acquitted in Oxford Crown Court of maliciously wounding Frank Corti—Secretary of the 5/293 TGWU branch.

Quinn was found guilty of common assault and fined £100 with £100 costs.

Corti received 15 stitches in his face when, according to over a dozen witnesses, Quinn walked over to him at a union organised social in the works canteen and shattered a pint mug on his jaw.

Mr Louis Barrett, prosecuting said:

"There was no provocation of any kind and nothing done to give rise to this very nasty and vicious assault".

Corti said he was standing up talking to the dance organiser, Cy Blake, when he saw Quinn approaching him from the bar.

"He had won some money that evening and I assumed that as I knew him quite well he was going to come over and invite me to have a drink", said Mr. Corti.

"Then without any warning I felt his presence on my left hand side, I saw the mug and he brought it up and hit me in the face.

fight the closure.

While Leyland management obviously appreciated such efforts they also took their own precautions against shop floor resistance, arguing that an early lay-off would give the 3,500 workers a chance "to find work".

30 per job

In an area where Lib-Lab policies of speed-up and sackings, combined with the collaboration of union officials, has brought a 13% unemployment rate—with 30 workers chasing each vacancy—this amounts to no more than a cruel joke.

The political fight to oust the reactionary union leaders that have paved the way for the Speke sell-out and to construct a Trotskyist leadership in the unions must now be stepped up.

WITCH-HUNT WINS COURT ACQUITTAL

"It shattered on my jaw bone. There was blood and glass everywhere and I was in a bit of a state".

Cy Blake, a deputy senior shop steward and a supporter of Parsons said he was talking to Corti when Quinn approached.

"I thought he was coming up to talk to me. He then hit Frank in the face with a glass", he said. "I got splattered with glass and blood".

The defence counsel turned the trial into a political witch-hunt.

The first question he asked Corti was "Are you Alan Thornett's secretary?". Alan Thornett, well known as a Trotskyist, is chairman of the 5/293 branch.

Quinn said in his defence that because of the "hysteria" "whipped up by militants in the plant" he had thought Corti was about to punch him and therefore he decided to hit first.

Although witness after witness had testified to the use of the glass, the judge in his summing up directed the jury to acquit Quinn of malicious wounding if they had any doubts about the use of the glass.

The outcome—an acquittal on the more serious charge and a fine for assault—is tantamount to an encouragement to right wingers to launch brutal physical attacks on militants.

It stands in sharp contrast to punitive sentences meted out by the courts to pickets and anti-fascist demonstrators.

Nor is there any sign that the right wing TGWU bureaucracy will take any disciplinary action against Quinn for this admitted violent attack at a trade union function—though Corti and eight left wing Cowley workers are currently subject of a TGWU Regional Inquiry, accused of infinitely more trivial acts.

Ford strike

Resistance to speed-up and company pressure on the shop floor brought about a strike last week by 2,000 workers at Ford's Halewood plant in defence of a victimised workmate.

The worker was sacked after allegedly assaulting a foreman, but strikers pointed out that he had been in conflict with the foreman over the speed of operating a machine.

A mass meeting of the transmission plant saw a unanimous vote for strike action last Thursday, and pickets manned the gates of the plant.



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Firemen lobby their leaders at the January Conference at Bridlington

FBU FIGHT

In the wake of the TUC sell-out of the firemen's pay strike the emphasis has shifted to the fight to defend and improve manning levels.

In London and elsewhere employers have done nothing to increase manning preparatory for the scheduled introduction of 42-hour week working in November.

Indeed most forces are undermanned even for the existing 48-hour week.

Growing awareness that a fight is looming on this issue brought 1,000 firemen from brigades all over Britain to demonstrate through the streets of Lincoln last

Friday in support of the fight there against fire authority plans to cut the county brigade by 30%.

It is obvious that strike action both in Lincolnshire and nationally could well be necessary if the bosses' offensive on manning levels is to be defeated and the 42-hour week secured.

As preparation for this fight firemen must struggle for the removal of those union leaders that allowed the TUC to isolate and defeat the pay strike last winter, and who are now clearly ready to concede cuts in service and manning levels sooner than confront the employers.

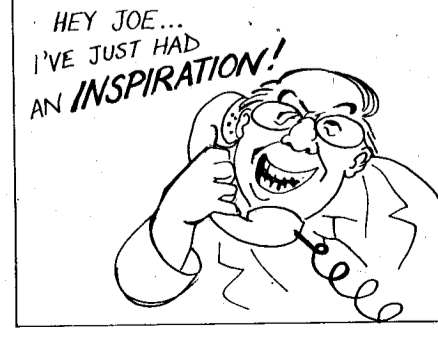
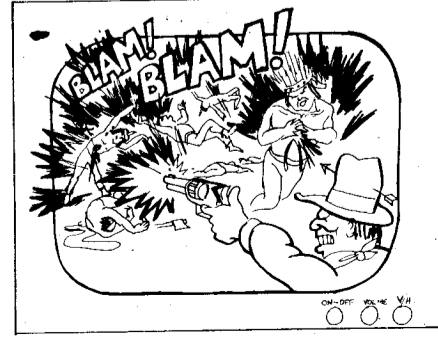
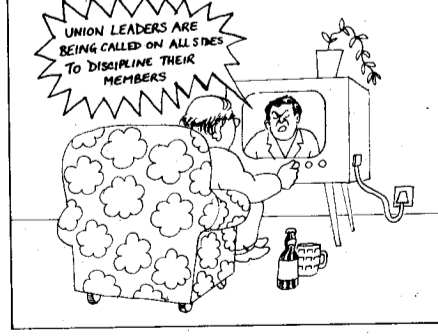
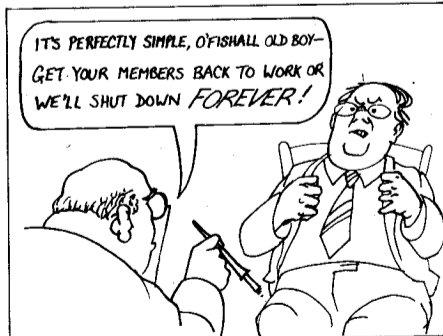
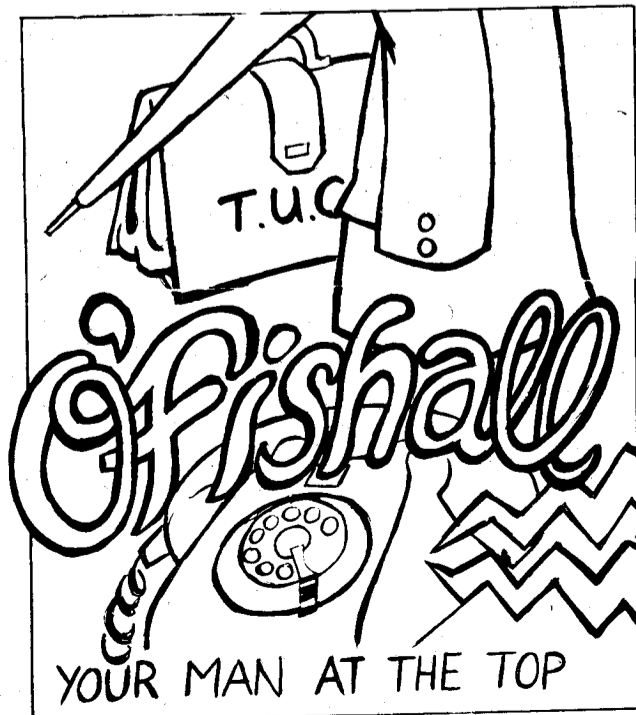
FUND

We're on target this week with £101.40 arriving over the last seven days, bringing our total so far to £950.67 towards our £2,000 special fund.

£100 a week is the minimum we need coming in each week if we are to reach our target on time by the end of July.

By next week we need to go well over the first £1,000. So don't delay! Send your contribution to:

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STEWARDS CALL : STRIKE TO STOP EGA CLOSURE

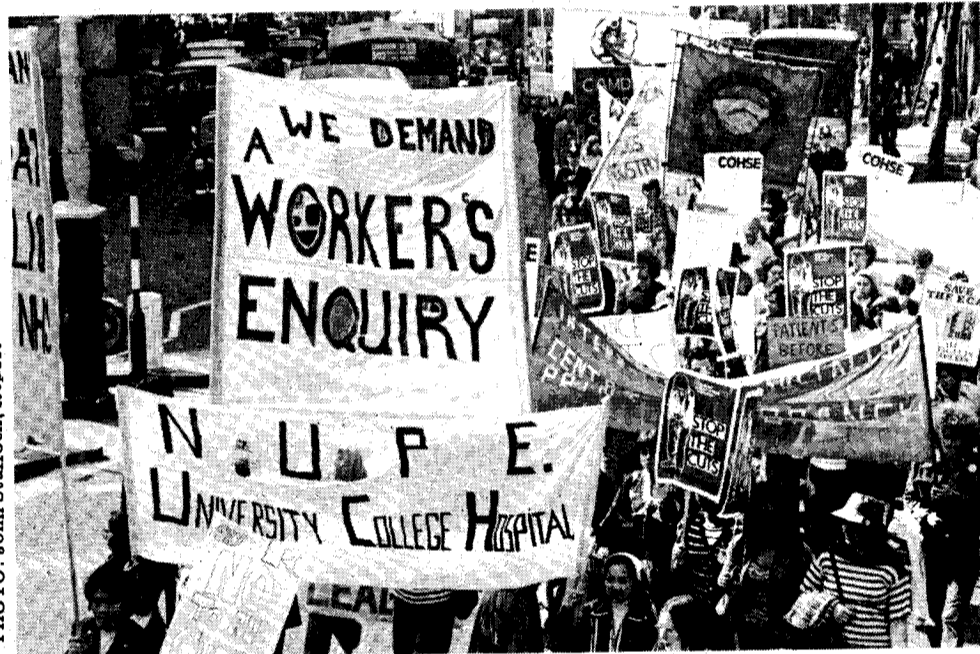
Indefinite strike action—extended onto a national basis—is now essential if the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital is to be saved from closure at the hands of the Lib-Lab government.

This is the message spelled out in resolutions adopted last week by EGA stewards, and by health stewards of the South Camden Joint Shop Stewards Committee.

Occupation

Two years ago strike action in London hospitals, followed six months later by a tenacious workers' occupation that still continues at the EGA, succeeded in staving off government moves to axe the hospital, and made the EGA the main focus for the fight against health service cuts nationally.

But the announcement last week in Parliament by Health Secretary David



21 July two years ago - workers strike and demonstrate in support of the EGA.

Annals that the EGA is to be closed on July 21 shows that unless fresh action is taken to halt the cutbacks, this 2-year struggle could face defeat.

This announcement provoked an immediate response from local trade

unionists and supporters, which was strong enough to prompt NUPE regional official Mike Taylor to threaten "rotating one day strikes" among London hospitals.

Support was also reaffirmed during the week

and at a meeting between EGA stewards and staff and representatives of NUPE, COHSE, ASTMS and NALGO.

On Friday the EGA Campaign Committee organised a 300-strong rally which blocked Euston Road for

The most flagrant attack on union members by their own union leaders that Fleet Street has ever seen is being carried out this week.

Observer machine minders who refused to sign a legally binding pledge never to take unofficial action again, stand to have their union cards, their jobs and their future livelihoods stripped from them.

But the body carrying out this assault is not an employer but the National Council of the National Graphical Association!

The machine minders' crime? They demanded the Observer management honour a pledge they made when they bought the newspaper to restore manning levels.

In an atmosphere of mounting witch-hunt the machine minders took action two weeks ago to press a claim for improved manning that had been outstanding for several months and had already stopped production last year.

When the American oil giant—Atlantic Richfield—bought the Observer more than a year ago, workers were persuaded to accept drastically reduced manning levels to 'save' their jobs.

The 25 machine minders demanded that numbers be made back up to 30.

The Observer management's response was to travel to Bedford to tell General Secretary Joe Wade that they would close forever if the machine minders did not guarantee uninterrupted production.

The Observer's threat to close is, in the context of increasing circulation, lower wage costs and rising profit, ludicrous.

But Wade and 29 out of the other 30 National Council members were fully prepared to act on it.

NGA members at the Observer were given a form to sign by the union pledging that they would not disrupt production.

If they refused, Wade promised the Observer management he would provide scab labour to do the work and discipline the members.

The ultimatum persuaded 12 of the workers to sign. Incredibly—given the pressure they were under—the rest held firm.

The Observer's threat proved to be empty. They ran on two presses and produced 400,000 copies of a small size paper—about half their usual print run.

The attack demands immediate solidarity by other print workers.

It demonstrates the need to reject all the phony arguments about 'viability' and the need for the immediate nationalisation of Fleet Street under workers management.

Drop disciplinary action at the Observer and Reveille!

No union scabs! Workers committees to decide pay and manning levels!

Demand access to all company finances and secrets!

Nationalise Fleet Street papers under workers management!

some 20 minutes.

But the scale of the reaction has been enough to force Ennals to change tactics. On Thursday he reaffirmed his determination to shut the EGA, but refused to put a closure date.

This means that instead of a definite date for an all-out struggle, Ennals hopes now to run the hospital down and defuse resistance from trade unionists.

The situation is now more, not less, dangerous for the EGA. The process of running down the hospital has already been stepped up by the authorities during last week.

It is now more urgent than ever that strike action is organised—especially amongst Health Service workers—in defence of the EGA.

If Ennals finally succeeds in closing the EGA then the rate of cuts and redundancies in the Health Service will increase drastically.

Strong lead

A strong lead has been given in this by South Camden District Joint Shop Stewards Committee which includes the hospitals in the same group as the EGA.

A resolution calling for indefinite strike action in support of the EGA was passed last week.

It is vital that all trade unionists, especially hospital workers, demand that their leaders put out a decisive call for action in defence of the EGA and organise emergency branch meetings to adopt resolutions similar to that passed by South Camden JSSC:

"1. The branch fully supports the struggle by workers in the EGA to keep the hospital open.

2. The branch will give support on the picket line under the direction of the

EGA stewards.

3. The branch resolves to take indefinite strike action from the moment the running of the EGA is interfered with.

4. The branch calls on the TUC and national union leaderships to call for national action in defence of the EGA."

Only action along these lines can save the EGA and EGA stewards, most of whom agree with the above resolution, must give a clear lead in this fight.

Cuts strategy

Protest rallies and appeals for "public sympathy" are not enough to stop the Lib-Lab coalition's determined bid to close this hospital, which they see as an obstacle to their strategy of public spending cuts.

Workers must demand that union leaders and Labour MPs declare support for indefinite strike action in defence of the EGA, and fight to break the axe-wielding anti-socialist Lib-Lab coalition.

The Workers' Socialist League has campaigned since the very start of the EGA fight for a clear programme:

*Strike action and occupations to stop the cuts.

*Restore health service spending: protect the service against inflation through a sliding scale of spending.

*Open the books of the Health Authorities to expose the planned cuts, and the profits made by private suppliers.

*Nationalise the drug monopolies and private medicine without compensation under workers management.

*EGA stewards have called a meeting of all London health stewards at the EGA on June 10 at 1.30 pm.

Action against the cuts rally

This Saturday (May 27) marks an important step forward for the Oxford City Nursery Campaign with the holding of an "Action Against the Cuts" Rally in East Oxford Community Centre.

The Rally seeks to draw out the lessons of the campaign so far and in particular, the six week occupation of South Oxford Nursery Class which was ended three weeks ago when police and bailiffs smashed their way in whilst the class was in progress.

CLASH

Speakers will include Colin Kenny, Secretary of the Committee of London Area Stewards in the Health Service (CLASH), and representatives from Hounslow Hospital, the EGA, "Fightback", Bethnal Green, the FBU and the Youth Service.

Occupation is clearly

going to be an increasingly important tactic in fighting the cuts as the Lib-Lab government steps up its attacks on the working class.

Actual struggles

The Rally will provide clear proof that the way forward on the cuts is to draw workers into action through actual struggles, such as the Nursery Campaign, not through generalised amorphous bodies like "Anti-cuts Committees".

The cuts must be fought on the policies of occupation, opening the books of local authorities to committees of trade unionists to reveal planned cutbacks, and work sharing on full pay wherever sackings or redundancies are threatened.

Groups fighting particular cuts must carry the fight into the trades council and individual unions to provide a base for industrial action, the only effective tactic in combating cuts.

The Oxford City Nursery Campaign is continuing its fight to force local union bodies to take action to back up their 'left' talk.

This week the Occupation Committee is to meet a delegation from the Trades Council to force the issue with the local Education Committee.

Next week a special NUPE executive meeting will consider strike action, though Divisional Officer George Anderson and County branch secretary Eric Millar are doing their best to wriggle and squirm their way off the hook of their own members' growing militancy.

Nursery campaigners travelled to Margate to the NUPE Conference last week to leaflet delegates when nursery education was

scheduled on the agenda.

Amidst huge banners proclaiming "NUPE Fights the Cuts" Alan Fisher and fellow treacherous bureaucrats hogged the stage until any chance to raise the occupation had been talked out.



Fisher