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Fight for a
socialist
economy
CENTRE PAGES

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PRODUCTIVITY DEALS SELL JOBS AND CONDITIONS

Even as Fords' latest offer reached more than double the government's pay limit, the dangers of so-called "phony" productivity deals are looming larger than ever.

At Vauxhall's Luton and Dunstable plants, management talk of possible 'easy money' through a productivity deal combined with weak leadership, the prospect of a long strike like at Fords and a vague pay claim to produce a mass meeting defeat for a strike call.

Cut in labour

And in British Leyland management have gone one step further, and centred their whole pay offer on "self-financing" 'parity' payments, which threaten some plants with a 12% cut in labour.

In doing so, the employers are trading on the reluctance of the trade union bureaucracy to lead serious action to destroy the 5% policy once and for all.

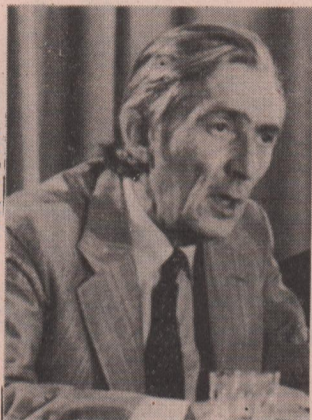


PHOTO: Andrew Wiard, Report

Murray

The sabotage of the hospital works supervisors' pay struggle by TUC bureaucrats including Len Murray will certainly strengthen employers and particularly management throughout the public sector.

It will redouble their determination to concede not an inch beyond the 5% limit unless each further penny is paid for by

cuts, closures and speed-up.

As claims from 1.4 million public sector workers and 120,000 BL carworkers fall due for settlement, and as union negotiators prepare if possible to abandon the remainder of the Ford £20/35 hour week claim in exchange for a rewording of the 12.5% offer, workers everywhere must be on their guard against any form of productivity dealing.

"Attendance allowances" may seem innocuous, but are in effect a means of cutting labour pools and further disciplining and intimidating the workforce, penalising them for disputes, and whipping up hostility against sections that cause lay-offs.

If any employer wants to pay more than the 5% limit, then union leaders must insist that this is paid openly, without productivity strings of any kind.

Ron Todd, TGWU chairman of the Ford negotiators, is on record dismissing productiv-

ity deals as offering workers no more than "a raffle ticket" for possible money in the future.

The price of the "raffle ticket" is the axeing of shop floor jobs and the end of working conditions hard won in years of struggle.

The possible "prize" is a few measly extra pounds in the pay packet, produced through increased exploitation, and rapidly eaten away by inflation.

But, while their leaders toy with such ideas and continue locked in talks on wage-cutting with Callaghan, workers continue to show that, given a perspective and a firm lead, they

are prepared to fight in defence of living standards.

Only the day after the Luton vote last week, a mass meeting at Leyland's Cowley Assembly Plant voted to give the management seven days ultimatum, demanding they make a response to the plant's £27 across-the-board pay claim.

Yet to meet

But in the nearby Body Plant and in many other Leyland plants stewards have yet to meet to discuss the company's failure to respond to similar claims.

The struggle against the Phase 4 pay limits and its tacit defenders in the trade union bureaucracy is one which faces workers with the inadequacy of right wing and Stalinist convenors and officials who have accepted three years of rigid wage controls, and who now have no strategy or perspective to offer.

The fight must be taken up for the pressing of claims designed to regain lost living standards and protect this year's increases against inflation through cost of living clauses, with no loss of jobs or conditions.



PHOTO: Mark Risher, IFL

Todd

Iran judges slam Owen

If British Foreign Secretary and world crusader for "human rights", David Owen, were any better than a careerist hypocrite he would have died, or at least resigned, in shame last week.

In the southern Iranian town of Afwaz a group of lawyers, reflecting the feelings of the oppressed masses of Iran, risked persecution by issuing a statement condemning Owen's total political support for the murdering Shah expressed last week in an ITV interview.

"Can you take their money" asked Owen "and then just back off? That is the kind of political leadership for which I have total contempt."

Owen's kind of political leadership evidently involves the systematic denial of all democratic rights and the mass murder of protesters.

Fiendish dictator

Owen, Mulley, Callaghan and the rest of the Labour traitors have the blood of Iranian workers and peasants on their hands as well as the fiendish dictator they furnish with arms

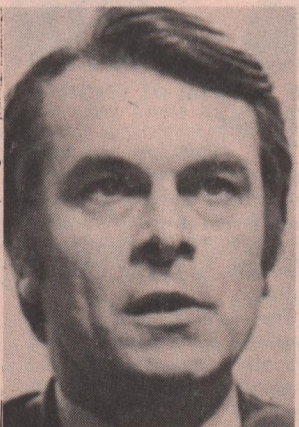


PHOTO: Andrew Wiard, Report

Owen

and political support.

Of course, as Owen said, it is all to protect "British and Western interests"—the same interests that led the Wilson government to support in Vietnam some of the worst atrocities ever committed.

These are not the interests of any workers but those of the exploiters and the arms dealers.

Anger against Owen's arrogant reaction has grown rapidly in the labour movement.

Last week, even the National Executive of the Labour Party was moved to condemn Owen's latest support of the Shah and sent a delegation to see him.

And "left" MP Russell Kerr came back from a delegation to Iran accusing Owen of "public school rubbish".

But none of these protestors showed the remotest signs of making a serious stand on the question of taking the elementary step of demanding Owen's dismissal from the government.

The serious life-and-death struggle, however, has gone on all week in Iran and the Shah's position looks less secure than ever.

Further anti-Shah demonstrations by workers and, in Tehran especially, by students have occurred in every major city on virtually every day of last week.

There were also reports that the disturbances were spreading increasingly through the small towns and villages—indicating that the peasants are taking a more active part in the campaign to overthrow the reactionary tyrant that British Labour ministers are trying to keep in power.



Scenes from last week's mass picket at Sandersons—see article: page 11



INTERNATIONAL A 'PEACE DOVE' THAT DROPS BOMBS

The award of a 'peace' prize established by a gun-powder manufacturer to ultra-right terrorist leader Menachem Begin last week has all the panache of a macabre episode of Monty Python.



Zionist bomb damage on Palestinian refugee camp

The award of a peace prize to Al Capone by J Edgar Hoover would have been more appropriate.

This same Begin, as a leader of Zionist terror squads, organised the murder of many innocent Palestinians in the past and also incidentally that of British servicemen and civilians.

He is now organising the predatory Zionist regime which

daily increases its grip over whatever new territory it thinks

worth taking over.

Last week it was two small settlements near East Jerusalem. Next week it may be a bit of South Lebanon, Syria or Egypt.

Meanwhile 'peace' negotiations will go on, related less to the realities of diplomatic intrigue than to the public relations needs of an American president faced with the need to gain electoral popularity at the same time as attacking the conditions of American workers.

These changes have recently been related to the Syrian Ba'athist government which often acts as a stalking horse in the region for the Soviet Union, and which has already tightened its hold on the Lebanon as recent fighting has shown.

It is said that Henry Kissinger, who is in a position to know about such things, told the Israelis that in return for secure boundaries, Israel would have to accept Syrian hegemony in Lebanon.

This may well be a solution for which the imperialists are now prepared to settle.

Real significance

The most astonishing alliance of all has been the agreement between the Syrians and their sworn enemies—the regime in Iraq.

The real significance of these moves among bourgeois governments will be seen in the Bagdad summit talks this week.

The Palestine liberation struggle will not be resolved by these governmental manoeuvres but by the mobilisation of the Arab and Palestinian peoples in the struggle for socialist revolution.

Who is this man?



He is one of the most obscure politicians in Europe—but since last week he has been a Prime Minister.

Of where? Of Portugal. Carlos Alberto Mota Pinto was scraped from the bottom of the political barrel and appointed premier by military President Eanes in one further effort to give credible leadership to Portugal's ruling class now without an effective government for four months.

Justifiably obscure as he may have been, Mota Pinto is nonetheless a hardened Tory politician.

Disagreements

In 1975 he was parliamentary leader of the right-wing bourgeois party the Social Democrats (PSD)—the only party to have voted in parliament in favour of the previous government of former fascist technocrat Nobre de Costa.

Mota Pinto left the PSD leadership after disagreements with its notoriously arrogant top leader Sa Carneiro.

He is now believed to favour a coalition of Social Democrats and the right wing of the Socialist Party but he has yet to

announce his proposed cabinet.

The leaders of the Communist Party, who two weeks ago were making hypocritical noises about a CP-SP parliamentary government, are now saying they will reserve their position on the new regime until they find out what kind of government it is.

But that is a fact they already know only too well. It is a government of the bourgeoisie entrusted with the task of further undoing and reversing the limited gains won by the masses in 1974 and 1975.

But despite the treachery and collaboration practiced by the Stalinist and reformist leaders, the Portuguese ruling class continues to show its extreme weakness.

Mota Pinto's appointment is a sign of that. It is an implicit declaration of fear of permitting a general election (which if called now would be followed by another regularly scheduled general election barely a year later).

All the political leaders fear that elections will simply worsen the splits and enmities within the working class and re-arouse the expectations and activities of the workers and peasants and so weaken the bourgeoisie's best friends, the Stalinist and reformist leaders.



Carter

Unwillingness

If Judas Iscariot could get a 'peace' prize then clearly Anwar Sadat is perfectly entitled to one also.

However, the utter unwillingness of the Zionists to even pretend to make serious concessions makes Sadat's position more and more untenable.

Electoral gimmick

Sadat's failure to withdraw from the talks may succeed as an electoral gimmick for Carter, but it will simply embolden the Zionists to demand yet more concessions in return for tiny tracts of Arab territory without military significance.

The main success of all the bogus talk of 'peace' from the point of view of the imperialists and Zionists is to have prised the Egyptian regime away from the alliance of forces against Israel.

This in its turn has produced important changes in the Arab world itself.

pressure from members finally forced the bureaucracy to call a strike from midnight 16/17 October.

By late afternoon of the 17 October, new legislation had been approved by parliament to break the strike: enormous automatic fines on the strikers, the union officials and the union itself, with the additional possibility of prison sentences, and compulsory arbitration to 'settle' the dispute (the CUPW has over 52,000 grievances unanswered).

Unconstitutional

The Federal Court itself declared the legislation unconstitutional, since it violated the postal workers' legal right to strike. But this minor embarrassment did nothing to deflect Trudeau from his purpose.

As the strike continued, pickets were established outside sorting offices and members of the letter-carriers' union refused to cross. Faced with this total disruption of the postal service, the state began to throw out injunctions, and then ordered police raids on union offices throughout the country to seize documents.

While the government threatened to sack all the strikers if they did not return to work, Parrot and other union leaders were charged—with breaking the law passed after the strike began!

This assault proved sufficient for Parrot to order the lifting of pickets and a return to work after nine days of action. This was no tactical retreat.

Although the CUPW alone did not have the strength to smash government wage-controls in the public sector and the new strike-breaking legislation, the postal strike could have formed the basis for national action from all sections of the labour movement.

Cowardice

But Parrot preferred to betray his own members rather than call on other workers in the public sector to strike alongside the CUPW on their own outstanding claims, and mobilise all Canadian trade unions in action against Trudeau's vicious new laws.

Such cowardice and treachery has weakened every section of the Canadian proletariat in the struggles it will now have to wage against a bourgeoisie desperate to survive its own crisis.

By their own actions, such bureaucratic leaders point towards the necessity for workers to replace them with a new leadership prepared and able to advance the independent interests of the working class as part of the revolutionary struggle for the seizure of state

New laws to break strike

Canada's 'playboy' prime minister has other talents besides an ability to offend Her Britannic Majesty's refined sensibilities.

Pierre Trudeau may still be sporting 'casual' clothes, but he has been hard at work over the last month, making frantic preparations against a hard winter of confrontation with the Canadian working class.

Postal workers have been the latest target for his energetic activities. The 23,000 sorters and clerical staff of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers have been without a contract for 15 months, as management has attempted to impose the kind of mass speed-up and redundancies sought by the management of postal services internationally.

After months of evasion and delaying tactics from union president Jean Claude Parrot,

Spanish seamen black arms

Imperialist governments last week suffered a nasty setback in their smooth arrangements for the international distribution of arms.

Mass meetings of merchant seamen at four major Spanish ports (Bilbao, Valencia, Cadiz and Las Palmas) voted to impose blacking on all arms shipments to the Latin American dictatorships, Southern Africa and Morocco.

Their action comes after a spate of revelations of the Spanish government's involvement in arms dealing. As part of its programme to 'democratise' the Francoist dictatorship, the Suarez regime has plunged enthusiastically into an orgy of weapon buying.

After satisfying their own soaring demand for arms to use against the working class 'domestically' these lovers of freedom and democracy planned to siphon off the surplus (at a comfortable profit, of course) to their friends and allies who gun down workers in other realms.

This project now seems to have misfired as the Spanish seamen gave other European workers their fine example of



Sadat and Begin at Camp David

Comeback for Mr Liu

Again the season of the 'reversal of verdicts' in Peking.

The signature of the Sino-Japanese peace treaty by restored deputy premier Teng Hsiao-ping in Tokyo was marked by a significant ceremony near the Chinese capital.

The 'East is Red' People's Commune was officially 'debaptised' and re-named the 'Sino-Japanese Friendship' Commune.

Japan, US imperialism's main outpost in the Pacific, thus joins a select group of Stalinist states—North Korea, Cambodia and Rumania—thus honoured.

More significant than the relabelling of Communes is the 'rehabilitation' of the demonstrators at Tien An Men Square, in Peking, in April 1976, which brought the last, short ascent of the Maoist 'gang of four' and their (then) close ally, Hua Kuo-feng, now in uneasy tandem with Teng.

The official press may maintain a stony silence on how Teng came to be cast down as a 'capitalist roader' in April 1976 but Teng himself can hardly have forgotten that Hua, then Mao's 'favourite son', joined enthusiastically in the slanderous chorus against him.

It is probably the growing momentum of Teng's faction within the Chinese Communist Party bureaucracy that has brought official leaks to French journalists in China of the possible rehabilitation of Liu Shao-chi.

Liu, then a close associate of Teng, and a veteran of the civil war, became Mao's number one 'Cultural Revolution' victim.

The former head of state disappeared in 1967 after orchestrated mass denunciations as 'China's Kruschew'.

He is now reported still alive; his 'rehabilitation' would represent a reverberating repudiation of Mao.

INTERNATIONAL



Migrant worker in Namibia

Castro's friend fails in Eritrea

Last month in Addis Ababa, Fidel Castro and other representatives of world Stalinism gathered with their 'left' allies from the leadership of African nationalist movements.

Brought together by Colonel Mengistu, they 'celebrated' the fourth anniversary of the Ethiopian revolution—a revolution now frozen in the grip of the Derg's military dictatorship headed by Mengistu himself.

While Castro led the Stalinist hymns of praise to the 'socialism' of this 'progressive' Bonapartist regime, Mengistu's armies were working under orders to massacre the Eritrean revolution.

Equipped with Soviet arms and jets and trained by Cuban advisers, the armies of the Derg are probably the largest mobilised by any African state.

In June, they finally moved forward in a major offensive against the Eritrean Liberation Front and the Eritrean Popular Liberation Front.

But the initially rapid advance into the areas defended by the ELF was soon checked, as the battlefield extended to cover the territories controlled by the EPLF.

As the ELF forces regrouped to launch guerrilla warfare, the

EPLF made what it called 'tactical retreats' before the invading army. The defence of the city of Keren was central to this strategy.

North-west of the capital Asmara, Keren is a crucial town to the military control of western Eritrea.

Repeated attacks have failed to dislodge the EPLF, and the Ethiopian offensive has ground to a halt.

The Red Sea port of Massawa remains encircled by the liberation forces, while 50,000 of the Derg's troops are still trapped under regular siege in Asmara.

This situation has clearly strengthened the struggles of the Eritrean people for self-determination against the attacks of Ethiopian colonialism.

At the same time it has dealt further blows against Mengistu's attempts to consolidate his dictatorship.

For all their sophisticated equipment, the armies of the Derg are almost entirely composed of ill-trained peasants seeking to escape from the colossal poverty and increasing starvation of rural Ethiopia.

Mass demoralisation, widespread desertion and gathering agitation for higher wages are adding every day to the military problems created by Mengistu's adventure into imperialism.

Owen central to Namibia betrayal strategy

The after effects of Foreign Secretary David Owen's failure to convince the South African government to abandon plans for holding its own election in Namibia are continuing to make themselves felt.

Owen and the other imperialist leaders want UN-supervised elections next year to incorporate petty bourgeois leaders of SWAPO into a "settlement" which ensures continued imperialist control.

After having appeared to be co-operating with the UN-imperialist plan, the South African government has now finally rejected it and announced the holding of elections under South African control at the beginning of December this year.

Greater assurance

This, South Africa feels, will provide greater assurance that the parties they support will "win" the election.

Not, of course, that the imperialist plan neglected South African interests in Namibia.

It accorded *de facto* recognition of South Africa's retention of the strategically and economically vital part of Walvis Bay.

The plan also provides for the disarming of SWAPO guerrillas and their restriction to selected bases, while South African troops will be allowed to remain in Namibia.

Imperialism has made little objection to South Africa appointing an Administrator General with what amounts to full dictatorial power.

Far smaller

And, in accordance with Pretoria's objections, assurances have been given from all sides that the quoted figure of 7,500 UN supervising troops would in reality be far smaller.

Co-operation from Angola is, of course, essential to the Western plan.

Imperialism has wooed President Neto from his 'left' rhetoric by playing on the economic and political crises facing his regime.

The bait of economic investment was most likely coupled with an offer to limit or even stop supplies of imperialist arms

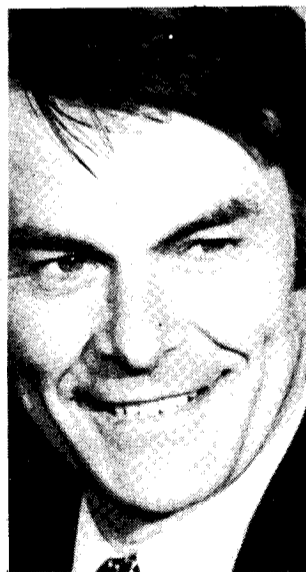


PHOTO: Derek Speers, IPT

Owen

to the rebel forces of UNITA which still wages a guerrilla campaign against Neto.

Opportunistically sacrificing the interests of the Angolan and Namibian masses to the short-term benefits of co-operation with imperialism, Neto gave his support to the UN plan.

He became the key force in pressuring SWAPO leadership to ignore its own rank and file and accept this plan.

While this "Marxist" was doing imperialism's dirty work in urging SWAPO to neutralise its army, South Africa struck deep into Angola to destroy a key SWAPO camp at Kassinga housing Namibian refugees and guerrillas.

Even the miserable capitulation on the part of the SWAPO leadership, it would seem, has not been enough for South Africa.

Overtly it has broken from the UN plan because of disagreements over troop numbers and election dates.

Registration

However, it would seem that the apartheid regime fears a SWAPO victory in uncontrolled elections and is unwilling to risk

that even with a bourgeois parliamentary government system.

The South Africans have made maximum use of SWAPO's betrayals and equivocations on the question of elections.

A massive registration of voters has been force-organised. Aware that SWAPO would refuse to participate in South Africa-controlled elections, they have contrived a situation in which its two pet political fronts Aktur and the DTA are assured of an electoral victory.

Both fronts have been receiving massive financial aid from capitalist and bourgeois political organisations in South Africa and the imperialist countries.

The DTA in particular has established a vast and extremely well financed organisational structure throughout the country and a virtual monopoly of the mass media.

It remains, however, an inherently unstable formation—both coloured and Herero leaders are rumoured to be contemplating a shift of alliance from the DTA to the Namibia National Front, which is less overtly compromised by South African support.

Early elections

The dominant leader within the DTA, Dirk Mudge, clearly believes that the only way to retain the allegiance of the key black leaders is by involving them, however illusorily, in the exercise of power.

With Aktur and the DTA pressing for early elections and with the likelihood of a SWAPO victory in elections controlled by anyone other than itself, South Africa has now decided to fall back on its own plan.

The capitalist crisis makes it increasingly difficult for imperialism to produce reforms which effectively head off mass struggle.

So it turns more and more to a reliance upon the repressive reactionary activities of its most powerful and stable agent in the

area—the South African government.

The political reliance on South Africa, responding to the strength of the forward movement of the oppressed masses—which persistently outflanks the Stalinists and casts aside the paltry offerings of reformists—means that imperialism will inevitably stop short of any action which might threaten the stability of its key agent.

Accompanying this support for South Africa is the equally inevitable left rhetoric and posturing of Owen and Young, which, it is hoped, will disguise the reactionary politics of imperialism.

Owen therefore went to South Africa with other representatives of imperialism to bring pressure to bear on the South Africans to shelve their plans.

Vague prospect

Beneath this posturing what was intended was to provide the smokescreen of "continuing negotiations" to justify avoiding even nominal imperialist support for UN sanctions against South Africa.

The imperialists returned without a South African undertaking to hold elections according to the UN plan.

Quite the opposite. But they did bring the vague prospect of UN controlled elections after the South African sponsored ones which will undoubtedly put a reactionary government in control of Namibia.

This government, if it fails with the card of reformism, will be equally willing to play the others—massive reaction and repression.

(The DTA can confidently assume that major investors will ignore and evade any UN sanctions call).

But the possibility of "continuing negotiations" is enough for Owen to continue denying the need for any action.

All that South Africa requires is that the prospect of UN elections is delayed until there is strong right-wing "internal" control over



SWAPO leader Nujoma

And while the imperialists negotiated, the South African army and police continued their campaign of terror, with unlimited powers to detain indefinitely anyone whose actions were held "to promote violence or intimidation".

Internal opposition leaders have been faced with stepped-up repression.

This, coupled with the political confusion sown by the SWAPO leadership, made internal SWAPO mobilisations almost impossible.

Tribal guards

While the SWAPO leadership compounds its betrayals and connives with the "front line" states to hold the guerrillas in check, the South African authorities continue to pick off key SWAPO leaders.

Indeed, if SWAPO militants succeed in breaking the conservative leadership stranglehold and step up guerrilla activities it should surprise no one if a systematic programme of murdering militants did not start.

Black tribal guards loyal to the DTA leaders have been re-

organised and black units of the South African army have been formed inside Namibia.

These have been active on the borders against SWAPO.

A paratroop battalion comprised of whites from Namibia has recently been formed and trained by the South African army.

There are also strong indications of the emergence of right wing terror squads.

Programme

Now as the SWAPO leadership slithers along the path of betrayal, the extreme right uses the opportunity to organise and arm itself against internal leaders who despite many years of 'armed struggle' are left totally defenceless.

In the face of this situation a clear defence of the oppressed masses must be fought for:

*Root the armed struggle in the oppressed masses by developing workers' militia as part of a programme around which the masses can be mobilised.

*Use the cadres with military training to build workers defence squads as units of that militia inside Namibia.

*No negotiations with imperialism.

*No secret diplomacy.

*Councils of Action inside Namibia to mobilise against the South African/imperialist plans.

*Fight for a revolutionary programme of democratic and transitional demands:

1) Constituent Assembly tied to the demolition of the state apparatus.

2) Independent union and workers committees.

3) Nationalise all multi-nationals without compensation under workers management.

4) Committees of peasants and agricultural workers—land to the peasants and agricultural workers. Smash reactionary tribal rule structures.

*Maximum material aid from the international labour movement. (In Britain remove Owen, imperialism's left-talking errand boy).

Region 5 snubs Buckle

Officials of TGWU Region 5 have been pressed into a response to mounting calls for the removal of Oxford District Secretary David Buckle from his present responsibility for BL's Cowley Assembly Plant.

Two of the three TGWU branches in the plant—representing a clear majority of members—and the TGWU shop stewards committee (which voted 150-3 for the replacement of Buckle) had

revealed his isolation from the membership.

And his relentless witch-hunting campaign against the elected leadership of the plant means that nine leading stewards, including three deputy convenors and the TGWU convenor himself still face trumped-up disciplinary charges with recommendations that some be banned from office for life or expelled from the union.

At a meeting last week with Regional Secretary Brian Mathers and Regional Chairman Arthur Davis, officers of the two branches—5/293 and 5/55—accompanied by Assembly Plant convenor Bob Fryer were told that a "Divisional Officer" is to be drafted in to Oxford.

The official concerned will be Coventry District Secretary Bill Lapworth. His terms of reference will be to "resolve the problems in the Oxford area".

The refusal of Regional officials to give unconditional support to Buckle's conduct over the last period and the introduction of a new official who will become Buckle's senior, will be widely recognised as a blow to his authority.

against any damages they might suffer through strikes arising from their operation of the check-off system!

Untenable

Mathers' decision last week to pull back from such an untenable position and uphold the union's rule book now means that the built-in advantage given by Buckle to the 5/837 branch he created at such labour and company expense is now gone.

Every TGWU member in the Assembly Plant now has the right to choose which branch he or she will be in.

The coming months will show how many workers choose to remain in the witchhunters' branch—the 5/837.



Mathers

computer.

Management then revealed that they had an agreement signed by Buckle which promised to fully indemnify the company



The founding meeting of the 5/837 branch, held in the works canteen

Right wing plans upset as Mathers upholds union rulebook

The long running efforts of right wingers in the TGWU Oxford District and Midlands Regional Committee to establish a right wing dominated TGWU branch in Leyland's Cowley Assembly Plant have met a further setback.

For the right wing such a branch was envisaged as a means of hopefully isolating the militants in the factory and as a base from which to launch renewed attacks on them.

Now, following strong representation from TGWU branches in the Assembly Plant and the shop stewards' movement, Midlands Regional Secretary Brian Mathers has ruled that clause 20A of the TGWU rule book—giving members the right to transfer from one branch to another—must apply.

Series of events

Behind this seemingly innocuous and unnecessary ruling lies a series of events connected completely with the witch-hunting moves against the Cowley 9.

The right wing knew full well that before moving to expel and ban leading militant stewards through the union's discipline procedure it was necessary first to destroy the main TGWU branch in the Assembly Plant—the 5/293.

Alan Thornett—who was to be recommended for expulsion from the union—had been elected chairman of this branch as long ago as December 1975.

The right wing plans can be traced back to the autumn of 1976, when the then right wing convenor of the Assembly Plant, Reg Parsons, and District Secretary David Buckle arranged the introduction of the "check-off" system for the payment of union subscriptions.

Programmed

The new system meant that pay roll deductions were programmed into the company computer.

Nearly a year later, in August 1977, a Regional "inquiry" into four victimised shop stewards on the plant authorised the creation of a new TGWU branch, designed to destroy the 5/293 Branch.

This was the second time within the space of three years that such bureaucratic

moves against branch organisation within the plant had taken place.

Huge problems

But this time the right wing encountered huge problems from the start.

A mass meeting called to endorse the move broke up in disorder when Parsons refused to allow a vote once it was clear that it would go against the platform.

Despite this setback Buckle and Parsons went ahead to set up the new branch—with huge backing from Leyland management.

30 hand picked right wing shop stewards—supporters of the new branch—were released from their jobs on full pay for three months to personally visit every TGWU member on the plant and attempt to browbeat them into joining the new branch—the 5/837.

But even this massively expensive exercise failed miserably. It did not even achieve the minimum objective of the right wing—to make the 5/837 the majority branch on the plant.

Refused to transfer

Only 1,900 of the 4,700 TGWU members in the factory joined. The rest refused to transfer out of the left-wing led 5/293 branch.

Buckle then made a further desperate move, which made the importance of the check-off system clear.

He instructed management not to switch union subs payments on the computer from one branch to another without personal authorisation from himself.

He hoped that this, together with the pressure exerted on new members by Parsons, would guarantee the survival of the new right wing creation.

False pretences

Effectively it meant that any member could transfer from the 5/293 to the 5/837—but that all applications to reverse the process were refused.

Within weeks of the new

branch being set up a total of 300 members made written application to transfer back into the 5/293 branch, claiming either that they had been switched over without their knowledge or on false pretences.

All of these applications were refused!

As the situation simmered, some members recently reached the point of threatening strike action if management continued to support Buckle and blocked the transfer of their subscriptions on the

The refusal of Soviet authorities to allow Jews to leave and go to Israel has provided the capitalist press with one of its richest sources of anti-Soviet propaganda.

The 'human rights' campaign of such great humanists as Jimmy Carter and David Owen—who praise or condemn bloodshed depending on which way it is flowing—has often quoted the case of Soviet Jews as an example of the 'moral inferiority' of the Soviet Union.

Poor second

But the press, Carter and Owen have studiously looked the other way this week as the Zionist state of Israel made it crystal clear that for them the 'human rights' of Soviet Jews comes a poor second to the strengthening of their state.

Israel is planning to stop Jews in the Soviet Union from using Israeli entry permits as a method of leaving the Soviet Union when they have no intention of ever going to Israel.

A staggering 67% of those who leave the Soviet Union with Israeli entry permits go to America or elsewhere and according to Arye Dulzin, Jewish Agency chairman—the

numbers who do not in fact go to Israel is growing.

This report—unrecorded by a majority of the capitalist press in Britain—was published in nine paragraphs on Page 5 of the *Daily Telegraph* and was ranked on that page of far smaller importance than an article on the economic problems of Siberia.

Its cynical attitude to the Jews seeking to leave the Soviet Union would have been front page news and merited pompous editorials had the country in question been a workers' state rather than Israel.

The *Telegraph* reports that Israel is considering two moves against Soviet Jews referred to as 'drop outs'.

"The first would be to grant Israeli citizenship to all Russian Jews as soon as they arrive in Vienna, their first disembarkation point outside the Soviet Union.

This would deprive them of the status of 'stateless persons' and of the privilege of obtaining almost immediately entry permits to the United States granted to such persons..."

The second step is even more drastic. Relatives of 'drop outs' would be denied entry permits

Remand prisoners scandal

The Association for Legal Justice is to raise with Amnesty International and the European Court of Human Rights the growing scandal of remand prisoners in Northern Ireland.

There are currently more than 600 remand prisoners awaiting trial. One solicitor alone has at least 40 clients who have been more than 15 months on remand.

To be held on remand for more than 18 months is not unusual—and one man, John McAlister, recently completed 2 years of jail without trial.

These remand policies are effectively a back-door restoration of internment.

"This is a truly scandalous situation," said the Association, "especially when it is considered, by all civilised considerations, a prisoner must be presumed innocent until his case has properly come to a fair trial."

"Yet hundreds of these men are languishing in prison for many months and even years, denied the opportunity of proving their innocence."

It went on to demand that these prisoners be given the opportunity of a fair trial immediately, or released for lack of evidence.

The British labour movement bears a heavy responsibility in the struggle to end military repression in Ireland.

It is Labour minister Mason, backed by the entire Callaghan leadership who is at the forefront of army/police savagery and the maltreatment of prisoners jailed for their struggle against imperialism.

Every union branch and Labour Party must be pressed to send a strong delegation on the Day of Action in solidarity with Irish Prisoners of War organised by the Prisoners Aid Committee on November 26.

This support must be linked to a campaign in the labour movement for the immediate withdrawal of troops from Ireland, the removal of torture chief Mason along with the reactionary Callaghan cabinet.

The march assembles at Hyde Park at 2.30 p.m. and will march to Clerkenwell Green.

PRESS GANG

Drop outs on the rise

by Israel thus achieving precisely what Israel and its 'human rights' supporters are supposed to be campaigning against—the enforced residence in the Soviet Union of relatives of those who have left.

Blandly the *Telegraph* reports: "This step might be considered 'somewhat cruel', Israeli sources said, because it would prevent many Jews from leaving Russia in the first place.

"But it has been shown that most of the relatives of 'drop outs' themselves become 'drop outs'."

"Needed immigrants"

Israeli authorities said the country was losing "thousands of needed immigrants".

Needed for what? Well for one thing, to ensure that the Palestinians are never permitted to return to their own land, that Zionist expansion can continue, and that a regime built on racism and supported by imperialism can trample the very lives—let alone the 'human rights'—of the Palestinians.

But then the Palestinians—like the Jews who refuse to go to Israel—lose their 'human rights' at the same moment as they decline to serve the interests of imperialism and Zionism.

Jellyfish meet the mad axeman

Just picture the scene at last week's encounter between Labour's National Executive and Jim Callaghan.

The newly re-elected NEC, sporting a couple of shining new 'lefts', turned up at 10, Downing Street.

Arrogant

They were hoping desperately that Callaghan would offer them *something* in the General Election manifesto that could be claimed to represent if not a socialist, at least a 'progressive' policy.

They didn't ask for much—a hint of a wealth tax or an animal welfare bill would have sent them away smiling.

But Callaghan and his gang were not only adamant—they were arrogant; they were insulting. Far from building up the 'left' image of the NEC, they shot it full of holes.

No concessions on the 5% pay limit; workers really like it, Callaghan declared.

No concessions on unemployment—it has fallen to only 1½ million already,

announced side-kick Denis Healey.

Not even the Lucas Aerospace stewards' reformist plan to switch from arms production to peaceful products got off to a hearing, as henchman Eric Varley brushed it aside.

Then things really got nasty for the 'lefts'.

Callaghan announced that he was pressing ahead to an election on his package of anti-working class policies, and if the NEC wanted to change them, then they had to remove him from office!



PHOTO: Laurence Sparham, IFL

'Left' new boy Neil Kinnock

You can well imagine the pink colour draining from the scrubbed faces of Labour's timid 'lefts'... the nervous silence... someone anxiously clearing his throat... how *embarrassing!* New boy Dennis Skinner, the "Bolsover Bolshevik", apparently lost his usually nimble tongue. This wasn't what he expected at all!

Callaghan went on to



suggest that those 'opponents' who refused to take up such a fight should take a running jump.

Highlighted

None of them seem to have taken up this invitation. But the 'lefts' refusal to fight Callaghan has now been highlighted twice in only a few weeks—once last Monday and once in the pre-conference NEC meeting where 'Jim' threatened to resign if they pressed ahead with opposition to the 5% pay limit.

Labour Party members should take note of such collapses. They invariably occur when a stand is needed.

The collapses give the full measure of the real fighting capacity of these self-styled "socialist" opponents of Callaghan.

And workers should also take note of Callaghan's advice which struck such a chill into the hearts of the NEC—the only way to defeat his policies is to remove him.

The campaign should start right away!

BENN WOWS THE U.S. REPUBLICANS

Speaking to a congenial audience of US Republican Party supporters—some of whom no doubt make even Callaghan seem left wing—cabinet 'left' Tony Benn last week spelled out his vision of 'socialism'.

Eulogy

Matching the dihard anti-communism of his listeners point-for-point he launched into a eulogy of Labour's class collaborationist policy on industry.

"Democratic socialism," he declared, "which combines direct public investment in industry and expanded public expenditure with self management, does offer a real prospect of resolving the present deadlock and protecting personal freedom."

Not much here for those demoralised souls who cling on to the fading memories of 1973-74, when Benn was portrayed as some form of red terror by a largely cynical capitalist press seeking to whip up hysteria among Tory voters.

As architect of the unsuccessful move to shelve discussion of the 5% pay policy at the Labour conference, Benn now seldom bothers to pose as a 'left'.

Collaboration

Falling short of even the Clause 4 parliamentary line of socialism through nationalisation, Benn now proposes only more advanced forms of class collaboration and state aid for capitalist industry.

And his empty cant about

"democracy" and "personal freedom" must be seen in the context of his cabinet responsibility for the government's policies which attack both: the vicious military repression in Northern Ireland; the use of picket-busting SPG thugs at Grunwick and elsewhere; the so-called 'Prevention of Terrorism' Act; the new Criminal Trespass Law; the bans on labour movement demonstrations in London and Leeds; and—notwithstanding his support for the Anti Nazi League—the massive police protection of the fascists whenever and wherever they march.

Indeed Benn's stand on "democracy" does not even reach as far as the Labour Party NEC.

When he declared last Monday that he had received no official information on the proposed European Monetary

System, and that, as a result he felt able to air his views on what he thought it was all about, he was abruptly told by Callaghan that he must be prepared to toe the cabinet line or "face the consequences".

There are no reports as to Benn's abashed reply—but the post of Energy Secretary has not yet become vacant.

Bumper year for bosses

While you were slogging your guts out and watching your living standards plummet last year, it might have been some compensation to know that the executives of your firm were coining it in hand over fist.

Their living standards went up over 8% last year—excluding the increasing numbers of company cars, bonuses, free insurance schemes and other, undeclared 'perks' handed out to dodge the third phase of wage controls.

The bosses got all those a as well!

At least 67% of business executives now have company cars.

That explains why the motorways now throng with gleaming new Rovers, Jaguars, BMWs and Granadas, the HP payments on which are virtually a week's wages, while ordinary wage packets are stretched to maintain modest family cars.

These are the "top" people of course, the ones who supervise the imposition of speed up and mass sackings; who send out statements deploring strikes, absenteeism, and workers' legitimate pay demands.

At least they are doing all right for themselves.

After all, with all this sacrificing going on, *somebody* must be better off!

Those interested to know more might like to purchase a copy of the Inbucon salary survey containing all this and further information. But you'd need an executive's salary to afford it—copies are £60 each!



Callaghan

PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

"TOO BUSY" TO FIGHT CRIME

Red faces could be seen under blue helmets as the news spread of the controversial speech ten days ago, by former Metropolitan police commissioner Sir Robert Mark.

He blew the gaff on the old fairy story that the police force exists primarily as some kind of benevolent force to "fight crime" and help the "public".

The belief that the state can—or even wishes to—protect people from burglary and theft should be abandoned, said Mark.

Why? Because "inadequate numbers" of police have other and more demanding priorities," declared Mark.

"Responsibility for safeguarding property must now rest with the individual," he went on.

What are these "more demanding priorities" which prevent the "crime fighters" fighting crime?

Lavish protection

Of course regular attenders at the Grunwick or other strike picket lines

—where police have never been in short supply—or at anti-fascist mobilisations, in which thousands of police willingly sacrifice weekend leave to give lavish protection to handfuls of National Front thugs, should be able to answer the question at once.

Computer

The new police computer on which only a token handful of files will relate to criminals, but 1½ million files will be Special Branch dossiers on trade union and left wing militants, also gives us a fair clue.

Trained thugs

The top priority for the police, as the over-paid armed repressive force of the capitalist state is what it has always been—the maintenance of the capitalist system, and control of the working class.

The Labour leaders, supervising the creation of the Special Patrol Group as a specialised squad of trained thugs for use against picket lines, know this full well.

But it is bad public relations form for Mark to



go blurting out the facts so openly.

So when the new Metropolitan Commissioner, Sir David McNee was invited to speak to the Police Federation last week, he went to

some trouble to dissociate himself from Mark's comments.

To listen to him, one might almost think that the police are on *our* side!

Of course the police care,

THE FIGHT FOR A SOCIALIST PLANNED ECONOMY

A socialist planned economy is not a pipe dream for wide eyed idealists, nor is it a baseless abstract theory.

Over the last 200 years the contradictory development from early "free enterprise" capitalism has led to the emergence of huge, multinational monopoly corporations, and immense banking and insurance conglomerates, whose efforts at centralised, integrated planning of production and investment offer workers a ready made starting point for the application and development of socialist management.

The obstacle that prevents the advanced technology, the gigantic productive forces and these massive concentrations of capital wealth from being utilised for the benefit of the population as a whole is the fact that they remain shackled to private ownership and harnessed to the drive for profit.

As a result, as previous articles on nationalisation have shown, whole sectors of industry are producing below capacity and laying off workers at a time of world-wide want and poverty, and mass unemployment.

Enrich

The expropriation of such burgeoning multinational giants as Unilever, Shell, Courtaulds, Lucas or ICI would offer workers the opportunity to step almost at once into the control of productive forces which, if set free from the narrow constraints of capitalist profitability, could dramatically improve and enrich the lives of millions of families throughout the world.

Lenin wrote in *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*:

"Capitalism in its imperialist stage leads right up to the most comprehensive

socialisation of production; it, so to speak, drags the capitalists, against their will and consciousness, into some sort of a new social order, a transitional one from complete free competition to complete socialisation.

"Production becomes social, but appropriation remains private. The social means of production remain the private property of a few. The general framework of formally recognised free competition remains, but the yoke of a few monopolists on the rest of the population becomes a hundred times heavier, more burdensome and intolerable".

Indeed such technical changes and planned production techniques that the monopolies now introduce serve not to benefit the working class, but further to exploit and oppress workers through speed up and redundancies.

The emergence of monopoly capital flows out of the

system of free competition.

As each individual employer fought against his rivals for a greater share of the unplanned free market, he found himself driven to introduce the latest, most advanced technical innovations in a bid to cheapen his commodities against those of his rivals.

Unable to compete

As this process escalated, and production techniques became increasingly sophisticated and expensive, new would-be producers found themselves unable to set up on a sufficient scale to compete with the established firms; and individual firms began to band together through mergers or take-overs in order to finance new techniques and economies of scale that would strengthen their hand against their opponents.

Power of banks

This same process can be traced through in any of the major industries—whether it be cars, computers, construction or chemicals. But another aspect of the growing scale of investment necessary to maintain profitable production is the rising power and size of the banks, and their interconnection with industrial capital.

Just as industrial concerns have grown and developed with the expansion of the productive forces, so the banks, initially merely the middleman in money transactions, have taken on an enormously increased significance as the creditors of all firms large and small.

The banks are now the mechanism through which the small deposits of a host of individuals are channelled into the productive process through loans and investment.

Powerful monopolies

Again Lenin as long ago as 1916 highlighted this process which has galloped ahead still further since then:

"As banking develops and becomes concentrated in a small number of establishments, the banks grow



Shipyard workers vote for strike action: nationalisation under

from humble middlemen into powerful monopolies having at their command almost the whole of the money capital of all the capitalists and small businessmen and also the larger part of the means of production and of the sources of raw materials of the given country and in a number of countries."

"Single capitalist"

The concentration of capital in the banks means, shows Lenin, that scattered capitalists are transformed into "a single collective capitalist", which then presides over and supervises the subsequent development and rationalisation of industry.

According to the bankers' judgement of prospective profits or losses, whole factories, whole sections of industry can find themselves either stimulated with new investment or summarily shut down. As Lenin points out, the bankers:

"... obtain the opportunity—by means of their banking connections, their current accounts and other financial operations—first, to ascertain exactly the financial position of the various capitalists, then to control them, to influence them by restricting or enlarging, facilitating or hindering credits, and finally entirely determine their fate, determine their income, deprive them of capital, or permit them to increase their capital rapidly and to enormous dimensions."

There are no business secrets, therefore, within the world of business—only secrets withheld from the working class.

Handful

And of course while the banking system is an enormously powerful control mechanism for the economy as a whole, it remains firmly dedicated to the interests of the capitalist class, which owns, operates and is in turn governed by it.

While a few enormously wealthy monopoly firms, banks and finance houses hold the key to possible future full employment, and they in turn are controlled by a handful of extremely wealthy capitalists, the working class as the propertyless class of society and the middle class—for all its delusions of "independ-

dence" and self-help—form no more than the raw material for exploitation in the drive to accumulate capital.

Nor, of course, is this antagonism between capital and labour in any way abolished by the intervention of the state—whether through shareholdings or loans in ailing firms (as in the case of the National Enterprise Board), or through "nationalisation" of sections of industry which cannot be operated profitably under private ownership.

In these instances the state machinery created by the capitalist class in the furtherance of its interests acts very much like a bigger-than-ever bank: it siphons off money through taxes on individual workers, small and larger businesses and other sections of monopoly capital; and it channels that money into financing the rationalisation and modernisation of industries which otherwise might fail.

Integral part

Whole sections of British industry have now been dealt with in this fashion, unable to compete against high technology rival firms in Germany, Japan and elsewhere.

Even in "nationalising" industries, however, capitalism takes care to ensure that the new concern remains an integral part of the system through which the private bosses accumulate profit.

Often the old capitalist owners stay on as managers. Sometimes they are replaced with new capitalist managers.

But never are the workers allowed access to the full books and accounts; never are they allowed to control or to manage the newly "nationalised" firm, or a full insight into the way it is milked by profitable private suppliers and contractors.

But if workers in the advanced capitalist countries find every aspect of their lives determined by the decisions of bankers and tycoon monopoly industrialists, this is even more true of millions of workers in colonial and underdeveloped economies who find themselves subjected to imperialist exploitation.

The search by finance capital for the highest rate of return on investment, and the search of manu-



Lenin took up Marx's concept of demands that lead beyond workers' immediate struggles



PHOTO: Ray Smith, IFL

capitalism offers no relief from exploitation

facturing industry for the cheapest sources of raw materials have forced the bourgeoisie in the major industrial nations to direct considerable portions of their domestic wealth into overseas holdings.

And the native population—whether they be Irish, Asian, African or Latin American—finds itself not only nationally oppressed but super-exploited as a source of cheap sweated labour while every natural resource of their country is plundered and its economy hopelessly warped by ravaging capital.

Crippling interest

After "independence" is granted, financial dependence often increases, with crippling interest payments owing to the imperialist banking houses.

As such monopoly capitalism has already led to countless bloody wars of national liberation, to countless millions of deaths through poverty and starvation, and in the scramble of the advanced imperialist powers to corner the lion's share of the markets and colonies, to two appalling world wars.

After World War 2 the globe was once more carved up between the rival imperialists. "Peace" seemed restored. But, beneath the surface, the contradictions of capital continued to disrupt the equilibrium of the post-war "boom", and with it the whole post-war balance of forces.

Further attacks

Now, with the latest plunge of the dollar bearing witness to the scale of the economic crisis that now plagues imperialism internationally, monopoly capitalism is already beginning to unleash yet further attacks on the rights, jobs, living standards and lives of countless millions of workers.

If such attacks are not resisted, and if the working class in the advanced capitalist nations is defeated, the danger of a further imperialist war—possibly even a bid to reconquer the Soviet Union and the other degenerated workers states—remains as a very real, horrific threat.

Monopoly capitalism thus tantalizingly shows to workers the power that could be theirs; and at the same time it menacingly shows and desperately uses

its teeth as the system wracked by its own countless contradictions, confronts its death agony.

The task therefore is to mobilise the working class in the struggle for the expropriation of the capitalist class, both in Britain and internationally.

Reformist illusion

No more than a straightforward look at the scale of the wealth, power and privileges enjoyed by the capitalist class—even in the midst of international poverty and unemployment—is necessary to reject out of hand the reformist illusion that an Act of Parliament would be sufficient to deprive them of their position.

And the Labourites and Stalinists who peddle this illusion have in reality abandoned any thought of establishing socialism.

Most people realise that the ruling class represent no more than a tiny minority of the population as a whole.

What is at stake is of course *not* the gesture of sharing out their ill-gotten gains among the oppressed masses, but the necessity to liberate the productive forces from their grasp and open up the possibility of production for human need, not profit.

Action needed

To carry out such a fight workers need more than pious words offering the vision of "socialism" as something for the distinct future.

Action now is needed to begin the fight.

But trade union militancy alone—which is almost invariably restricted to struggling to improve conditions under capitalism—is not enough either.

For the working class, the propertyless class, to become conscious of the task that it must undertake—the conquest of state power, the seizure of the major industries, and the construction of a socialist planned economy—a revolutionary leadership must be built.

Such a leadership must organise itself as the vanguard party of the working class—featuring in the forefront of every major and minor struggle workers undertake against the employers, and fighting to show the connection

between these struggles and the fight for socialism.

In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels described this struggle:

"The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement."

The Communist International, formed on the gains of the Russian October Revolution, put it this way:

"The revolutionary character of the present epoch consists precisely in this, that the most modest conditions of life for the working masses are incompatible with the existence of capitalist society, and that therefore the fight for even the most modest demands grows into the fight for communism." (3rd Congress: *Theses on Tactics*).

The founding programme of the Trotskyist Fourth International spells out the same orientation:

"It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist programme of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."

(*Transitional Programme*)

Unlike those opportunists of the International Marxist Group who have thrown aside any thought of fighting for transitional demands in their search for "unity" with other "left" groups; and the sectarians like the Workers Revolutionary Party who regard the struggle in practice for any demands that actually advance the consciousness of the working class as "reformism", the Workers Socialist League adheres to the method of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

We fight in the daily struggles of the working class for transitional demands which draw out the independent class interests of the working class, expose the class collaboration of its traditional leaders, and



Banks, like manufacturing industry, have been driven towards monopoly

direct workers even in partial struggles towards the forms of organisation that are needed in the struggle for state power.

Thus while opposing all redundancies and demanding instead that the work available be shared among the *whole* workforce, without loss of pay, the WSL at no point leaves this demand as simply a bland abstraction.

We spell out the necessity for workers to assert their independent interests in the fight to *control* the actions of management, as a preparation for full-scale *workers' management*.

Thus we link the 'work sharing on full pay' demand to the call for the election of trade union committees with the task of examining the books and accounts of the management—refusing to accept the bosses' pleas of "bankruptcy" or "empty order books".

Open all books

We call for action by the threatened workforce—strike action or occupation—to force management to make this information available and to open *all* their books for inspection.

As Trotsky writes in the *Transitional Programme*:

"The immediate task of workers' control should be to explain the debits and credits of society beginning with individual business undertakings, to determine the actual share of the national income appropriated by individual capitalists and by the exploiters as a whole; to expose the behind the scenes deals and swindles of banks and trusts; finally, to reveal to all members of society that unconscionable squandering of human labour which is the result of capitalist anarchy and the naked pursuit of profits."

Should the committees—with the help, where necessary of sympathetic professional workers—discover that a particular firm is, in fact, bankrupt, then this confirms *not* the need for workers to pay the price, but the necessity to struggle for its immediate *nationalisation*, without compensation to its parasitic owners, under the management of these elected committees.

Occupation

Indeed, even if the firm proves to be "viable" in the capitalist sense, then the revelation that it has been seeking to lay off workers to further boost healthy profits makes a similar case for it to be nationalised, and highlights the necessity of driving back the attack on jobs.

In campaigning for nationalisation we do not call for the workers concerned merely to lobby Parliament or write letters to local MPs: we insist that such a fight must centre on the *occupation* of the plant to prevent its sale or destruction by the existing owners, and a campaign throughout the trade union and labour movement for supporting action.

At the same time the 'open the books' committee would be drawing up proposals of useful public works which could be undertaken at the plant in order to guarantee the future of the jobs at stake.

Impose control

In this way workers are shown—through demands which have a mass appeal—the necessity to impose control over the management, shown their organised strength as a class, and prepared for the task of direct management of nationalised industry.

As their frightened "leaders" run from such demands, workers see exposed in practice the necessity of a new leadership that will fight for their independent interests.

And as monopoly capital's attacks on jobs and living standards escalate, workers' various struggles must be combined in each area through councils of action—drawing delegates from every labour movement body.

Such councils of action—growing in strength as the mass movement develops—will provide an arena in which key issues of leadership can be fought out.

As the councils of action locked in struggle against successive attacks begin to exercise increasing control over production, transport and public services in each area, they will emerge as a rival source of power to the capitalist state.

Not automatic

An unstable situation of 'dual power' will arise, in which the revolutionary party will have the task of preparing and leading the working class in the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism, the destruction of its repressive state machine, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and a planned, socialist economy.

From wages struggles to such a level of struggle is not an automatic evolution. In the fight, day in and day out, for the demands of the Trotskyist programme, the Workers Socialist League is thus opening the door from trade union militancy to the struggle for socialist revolution.

By John Lister

TROTSKY'S MURDERER DIES IN HAVANA

Last week in Havana Ramon Mercader died of cancer of the bone.

Thirty years ago in Coyoacan, Mexico, Mercader was the man who smashed an ice-pick into Leon Trotsky's skull as the murderous climax to Stalin's campaign to physically liquidate all who stood for the defence of the October Revolution against its bureaucratic degeneration.

Both within Russia as the leader of the Left Opposition and outside Russia in the years of exile after 1929, Trotsky had kept up an uninterrupted exposure and principled attack on every aspect of the growth of Stalinism.

He had fought relentlessly for the revolutionary heritage of Marx and Lenin, uncompromisingly flying the banner of proletarian internationalism against the combined forces of Stalinism, fascism and imperialism.

From August 1936 through to 1938 Trotsky was tried in his absence in the carefully stage-managed Moscow Trials.

Framed and murdered

Untold numbers of Old Bolsheviks and all shades of oppositionists were framed and murdered.

Trotsky was sentenced to death in his absence and the GPU were ordered to carry out the execution.

Before this took place, eight of Trotsky's personal secretaries were murdered, his son Leon Sedov was poisoned in a Paris clinic and several key figures amongst his supporters and friends were gunned down or simply disappeared.

Only three months before Mercader finally carried out the brutal assassination, Trotsky had survived the GPU's most determined attempt to kill him when 25 Stalinist gunmen raided the house in Coyoacan at 4 a.m. on the morning of May 24, 1940.

Over 200 bullets were pumped into the house by a gang of GPU agents and accomplices from the Mexican Communist Party.

Trotsky's bodyguard, Sheldon Harte, who had been on guard at the gate disappeared with the attackers and was found months later buried in a lime pit with bullet holes in the head.

Grimly exultant

Trotsky himself defended Harte's reputation but the true facts of this incident remain shrouded in mystery.

Trotsky himself was grimly exultant over the GPU's failure and he immediately produced the damning pamphlet "Stalin Seeks My Death", in which he mercilessly exposed the role of the GPU and the Mexican CP.

After initially seeing the raid as a "put-up job" the Mexican

police later factually corroborated Trotsky's testament.

He concluded the document with a recognition that his death was in the interests of both imperialism and Stalinism:

"In a reactionary epoch such as ours, a revolutionist is compelled to swim against the stream. I am doing this to the best of my ability.

"The pressure of world reaction has expressed itself perhaps most implacably in my personal fate and the fate of those close to me".

Even as he wrote this, and the exhaustive study *The Comintern and the GPU*, the eventual assassin was finalising his plans to silence Trotsky for ever.

Ramon Mercader had first appeared on the scene in July 1939, arriving as the friend and lover of Sylvia Ageloff, an American Trotskyist who had attended the founding conference of the Fourth International.

Mercader posed as an agent of an oil company with business in Mexico City.

He acted out the role of a non-political fringe character for a while, showing no great interest in visiting Trotsky's fortified house but happy to do small favours for Trotsky's friends.

He assumed the name Jacques Mornard and claimed to be Belgian.

In fact he was the son of Caridad Mercader, a Spanish Stalinist known for her connections with the GPU during the Civil War.

To complicate matters further he arrived in Mexico with a Canadian passport in the name of Frank Jacson, saying that this was simply a ploy to avoid military service in Belgium.

Cementing links

He remained in Mexico after Ageloff returned to New York and began a gradual process of cementing links with the Trotsky household by helping out Trotsky's close friends the Rosmers when Alfred Rosmer fell ill.

At this stage it is quite possible that he was merely acting under orders to help plan the armed assault on the night of May 24, 1940.

When that attack failed, Jacson-Mornard-Mercader became the lynch-pin in the GPU's strategy for murder.

Four days after the raid he arranged his first, very "innocent", meeting with Trotsky when he came to Coyoacan to drive the Rosmers to Vera Cruz to board ship for Europe.

He gave a glider to Seva, Trotsky's grandson, who was still limping from a bullet wound in the toe inflicted by one of Mercader's own Stalinist accomplices.

For the next four months Mercader travelled back and

forth between Mexico and New York, both with and without Sylvia Ageloff.

The carefully kept records of the house in Coyoacan show that he visited ten times, and of these only saw Trotsky on two or three occasions.

Ageloff had sided with Burnham and Schachtman on the question of the nature of the Soviet state in the split with the American SWP, the largest section of the Fourth International, but she was still welcome at Trotsky's table.

On one occasion Mercader let it be known that he opposed Ageloff and the state capitalists, and on the 17 August appeared at the house with an article he claimed to have written attacking Schachtman's positions.

In her "Life and Death of Leon Trotsky" his wife, Natalia, records that Trotsky had begun to be suspicious of "Jacson" and his suspicions were compounded by the confused and amateurish nature of the article.

When Mercader reappeared on 20 August having rewritten and typed the article Trotsky grudgingly agreed to check it over.

As Trotsky read over the article in his study, Mercader drew out an ice-pick and "closing my eyes, brought it down on his head with all my strength".

In a spasm of violent reaction Trotsky, his skull smashed, and covered in blood, leapt to his feet and fought his assassin desperately.

He hurled anything he could get his hands on and then threw himself at Mercader, biting and punching.

The GPU agent was so shocked that he could not even strike another blow or use the revolver and dagger he had brought with him.

The guards rushed in and clubbed Mercader to the ground as Trotsky was helped away by Natalia. He died 22 hours later in hospital with splinters of bone embedded in his brain.

Mercader was obviously picked by the GPU for his task. Throughout the trial and throughout his 20 year imprisonment in Mexico he stuck to his flimsy cover story, though it was conclusively blown apart even by the bourgeois authorities and media.

He stated at one point that he would never talk "even if you cut my skin off inch by inch".

On his release Mercader was smuggled into Cuba by the Stalinists and from there travelled to Prague.

Eventually he moved to Moscow. As cancer of the bone set in he returned to Havana, where he died last week at the age of 64.

All that has been pieced together of the wretched existence of this pathetic tool of



Trotsky



Mercader

Stalinism reveals a blood-stained career of penetration into the Trotskyist movement by GPU agents.

There are direct links through Caridad Mercader to Stalinist thugs implicated in every murder of Trotsky's secretaries and associates.

Fresh air

The mother was given the Order of Lenin by Stalin, her son was given the Order of Hero of the Soviet Union.

Earlier in 1940 Trotsky had written his Testament and it comes as a gulp of fresh air to return to this document after dwelling on the vile perversions of Stalinist degeneration.

Here Trotsky declares: "I have been a revolutionary for 43 years of my conscious life; and for 42 I have fought under the banner of Marxism . . . I shall die a proletarian revolutionary, a Marxist, a dialectical materialist, and consequently an irreconcilable atheist. My faith in the communist future of mankind is not less ardent, indeed it is firmer today, than it was in the days of my youth."

In the Testament he also asserts that a new "revolutionary generation will rehabilitate the political honour" of himself and the other victims of Stalin's assassination squads.

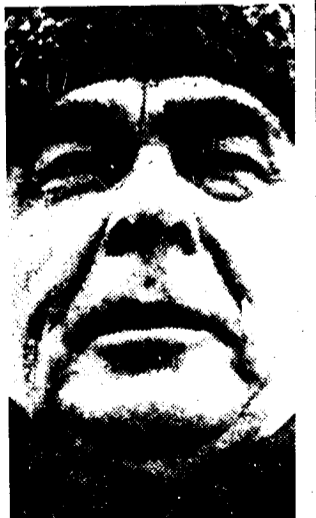
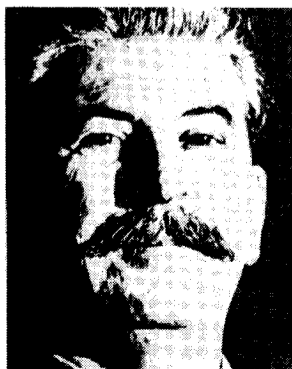
The Workers Socialist League stands firmly on the

principle of the need for a reconstructed Fourth International based on the Transitional Programme.

The ice-pick that ended Trotsky's life is a symbol of the counter-revolutionary force represented by Stalinism in all its forms.

The central task of a reconstructed Fourth International must be to develop a full theoretical analysis of Stalinism as it has developed in the post-war period as a guide to the revolutionary action needed to destroy it once and for all and construct in every country of the world revolutionary parties to lead the working class forward to socialism and communism.

'Communists' Against Revolution



The key book in attempting to understand the role of post-war Stalinism. Includes Tim Wohlforth's little-known booklet *The Theory of Structural Assimilation*. 166pp, £1.75 plus 20p post and packing, from WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

A NON-MARXIST LOOKS AT MUTINY

Ernie Stubbins reviews "Mutinies: 1917-1920", a Solidarity pamphlet by Dave Lamb.



A soldiers' committee formed by the Russian forces at the front during World War I

This is a deeply anti-Marxist pamphlet which revolutionary Marxists will find of considerable interest.

Manifestations of class consciousness within the machinery of the state will always be of great interest to us, but the same machinery of state operates to obscure the history of such manifestations.

Excavating

This point is also made by Anthony Wedgewood Benn, a leading participant in the machinery of the bourgeois state, in the foreword to a recent Spokesman pamphlet on the Soldiers' Revolt of 1795.

Dave Lamb has done us a service therefore by excavating what material he can on a series of mutinies in the British forces during a period of history crucial to the working class.



Russian workers crowd outside the Duma

involved. In both cases Marxists would seek relationships between developments in the forces and the offensives being taken by the civilian

working class.

In the 1917-1920 period, the central fact in the consciousness of the world proletariat was the Bolshevik revolution.

Mutinous incidents

In British civilian life the Trades Councils mounted an enormous campaign against Government efforts to attack the emerging Bolshevik state and this found responses among the armed forces.

In the navy there was a series of mutinous incidents when ships were ordered against the Russians.

Similar events occurred among the army sections

sent into Russian territory.

In February 1919, men of the Yorkshire Regiment refused to march against Seletskoe. The mutiny spread rapidly into the French Battalion at Archangel.

By June the Hampshire Regiment was refusing to give battle at Dvina, and in July the Slavo-British Legion mutinied, killing 7 officers.

Deserted

A number of mutineers actually deserted to the Bolshevik side. During the autumn of 1919 the British troops were withdrawn.

The evidence for an

element of emerging class consciousness is not always as strong as in those mutinies directed against the war in Russia.

Nonetheless, the history which Lamb presents does show a significant development from basic protests against the appalling conditions and corrupt officers in the events of the 1917-18 period to a more clearly class-conscious opposition to the efforts to destroy the Bolshevik revolution in 1919-20.

This is an important and inadequately-known aspect of the history of the British working class. For all its defects, Lamb's pamphlet provides a starting point.

The great 'price control' fraud

Since the Labour Party conference overwhelmingly threw out Callaghan's 5% pay limit efforts to derail the wages struggle have been going on both in public and behind locked doors.

The ideas bandied around have all been unacceptable—but one common thread running through many of them is the idea of substituting price controls for adequate wage increases.

There is more to this than the obvious manoeuvre of using talk of prices to draw in the TUC to continued talks on wage controls.

The very concept of holding down prices is designed to weaken the wages struggle.

"Cost cutting"

Imposing price controls on the employers would transform their drive towards bigger profits into a pure, unadulterated onslaught on their workforce in the factories through speed-up and rationalisation.

This is what they mean by "cost-cutting".

Also implicit in every form of price controls under capitalism is the notion of a "fair" profit to which the employer is somehow entitled, a "fair" level of exploitation of his workforce.

This has already been the case during three years of the social contract in which every sector of industry has been able to obtain massive price increases to "compensate for inflation"—while workers' wages have been consciously made to lag behind the rise in the cost of living.

Substituting price controls for free wage bargaining also has the effect of taking the defence of working class living standards out of the hands of the workers themselves—who would obtain a strictly regulated pay increase and then be forced to watch, as helpless spectators, while platoons of "special case" employers troop up to the price commission to claim thumping increases.

Workers' living standards cannot be defended through price controls. Even if prices were to be controlled by elected workers' committees—which is certainly not proposed!—the private ownership of manufacturing and retailing industry means that price restrictions are merely reflected in increased exploitation of particular sections of workers.

Sliding scale

The only policy that can defend living standards is one that directs workers to ensuring that wages keep pace with inflation. This means a fight for the sliding scale of wages, under which every wage contract would include a

now being dropped left and right by union bureaucrats who have no serious intention of fighting for the defence of workers' living standards.

And many sections of the union bureaucracy, including the Stalinists of the Communist Party, remain implacably opposed to such a demand, because it points towards independent working class action to defend wages against inflation.

Moss Evans, falling back from the brave words which hailed the start of the Ford strike, has now become a leading advocate of price controls, and tried to forget his talk of cost-of-living clauses.

But now is the time for these sections of workers whose claims are not yet finalised to fight most

strongly for the inclusion of cost of living clauses, and those who have already demanded them to insist that their leaders fight to win them.

At the same time the demand must be raised for an immediate end to the treacherous back-stage talks now taking place between TUC leaders and Callaghan.



Evans

PHOTO: Laurence Spatham, IFL



Benn—a participant in the machinery of the state

This must have been a singularly distasteful task, necessitating as it did prolonged sifting of memoirs, diaries and other outpourings of the privileged officer caste of World War I.

The value of this pamphlet lies in the dedication with which Lamb has carried out this task.

Weakness

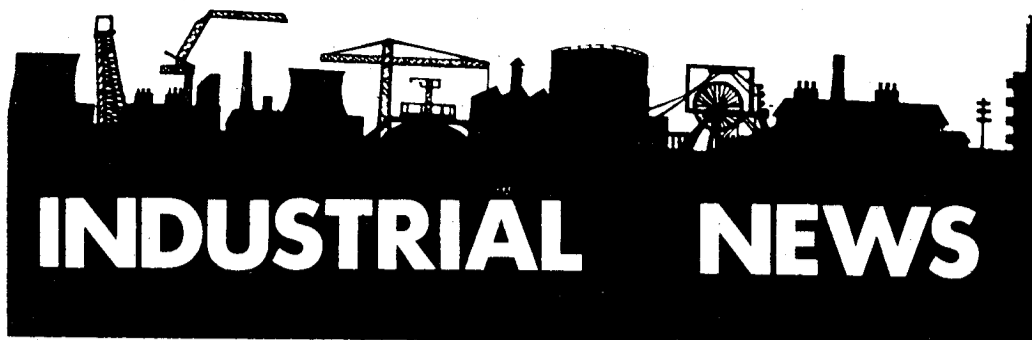
The crippling weakness of the work flows from the libertarian, anti-Marxist view that Lamb takes of the history of the working class.

Thus, for Lamb, the mutinies at the end of World War I, just as the resistance within the US forces to the Vietnam war, are no more than responses to the immediate conditions experienced by the troops



PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

Labour conference delegates



INDUSTRIAL NEWS

Plans to close AEC

The true face of BL and its plan for its workforce shine through in proposals to close the entire AEC factory, Southall, in the early 1980s and make the 2,500 workers redundant.

The management is calling for 250 redundancies from 3 December.

Total flexibility

In order to increase production with this decrease in workers, plans to make "a fundamental change in working practices" are being put

forward.

This is to include total flexibility and interchangeability of employees of any grade or pay level; employees doing the work of someone on a lower pay grade; and the movement of workers within departments and from one department to another.

The company also wants a free hand to move work between departments and even plants.

Socialist Press will carry a detailed report on the situation at AEC in the next issue.

Efforts of management and the TGWU official contrived to get a vote to end the strike at Thorns Southbury Road plant at a mass meeting on Friday.

Over 1,000 workers had been on strike for a week in defence of a victimised steward.

Preparation

Paul Green, a militant TGWU steward was sacked for supposedly bad time-keeping.

This victimisation was clearly an attack on union organisation in the plant in preparation for speed-up and redundancies.

In fact the production manager Phil Hart has been quoted as saying that there were six stewards he wanted to get rid of. This steward is the first.

A 24 hour picket was maintained on the gates and a good response was got from most lorry drivers.

"Inquiry"

The District Officer Tom Knowles, after meeting management, had a 3 hour meeting with the stewards on Tuesday *inside* the factory so that Paul Green was not able to attend.

Knowles was in favour of a return to work pending an "inquiry".

When he couldn't sell this line he tried one of the oldest tricks in the bureaucrats' book.

He had received complaints, he claimed, from unnamed members, that they had not been able to vote properly at the original mass meetings.

What was needed, he said, was a recalled meeting of members to retake the vote.

This was to include the scabs on the 6pm-10pm shift, mostly women, who had crossed picket lines throughout the dispute.

This was accepted by the stewards and gave management their opportunity to act.

The 350 workers on the evening shift were called together and offered £7 each, equivalent to 3 hours overtime, plus the use of the canteen to park their children if they attended the Friday mass meeting and voted against the strike.

Gravely mistaken

The outcome of the vote was a foregone conclusion.

Paul Green remains outside the gate.

But if Brother Knowles thinks that he will now receive less criticism at the 1/1530 branch meetings he is gravely mistaken.

Lobby calls for action

Brothers Shorter and Abrahams were welcome visitors to the Garners picket lines late on Friday night.

This pre-Regional Committee stroke by the Regional Organiser and the TGWU Catering Officer served two purposes.

One was to allay the criticisms to be raised at the lobby of the Regional Committee on Tuesday about their failure to picket; the other was the vain hope that they would find no pickets and could use this as grounds for ending the strike.

However, despite the refusal of the Regional leadership to mobilise its membership, the strike remains very much alive and the strikers as determined as ever to win.

This week the Greater London Association of Trades Councils liaison committee finally met with members of the strike committee.

They have called for members of all London Trades Councils to join a picket on Friday December 8.

The group refused to take a position on sponsoring a Defence Fund for those arrested on the recent Day of Action—maintaining that a motion would have to come from the floor of GLATC.

A lot of criticism has been levelled against GLATC for its criminal inaction on this nine-month strike, right in the centre of its area.

Even more condemnation can of course be levelled against Region 1 of the TGWU who will hold their third committee meeting this week while this strike has dragged on and still have no proposals on how to win the strike.

The Building Trade Group last week spoke out against this

sabotage and have agreed to support the lobby.

The picketing continues to drastically cut Margolis' profits in this slack post-summer period.

Students have begun to picket the Oxford St. and Argyll St. restaurants in the lunchtime.

This picketing will be increasingly important as the Christmas shopping season starts and more support is urgently needed.

The scabs usually react violently to effective picketing, and last Tuesday lunchtime a chain-waving waiter chased youthful pickets at the Haymarket branch.

Once more the police have demonstrated their 'neutrality' by arresting someone on Friday for filming the picketing!

As soon as a decision is made on a date for the TGWU conference on Garners, proposed by the strike committee for 30 November, all TGWU branches should decide on their delegations, and pledge support for strike committee policies.

The strikers are sticking by their determination to have no return to work without full reinstatement and recognition of the union.

Trade groups should each pledge themselves to maintain a picket on a restaurant.

The strikers should be given £36 per week, to be raised by a levy or any other appropriate means.

How is it that Fords strikers can be given £9 a week strike pay when the Garners strikers have for nine months been told the rules insist on only £6?

All these questions will be raised at the lobby of the Region and will form the basis of the TGWU conference to win the strike.

WSL

JOIN OUR FIGHT!

The Workers Socialist League is not a movement for the faint hearted. We do not offer any peaceful back-water of abstract discussion and armchair revolution.

The fight we carry through each day in the workers' movement has often been shown to have a major impact in inflicting setbacks on the labour bureaucracy.

But it does so only because our members are prepared to fight tenaciously—sometimes against heavy odds—and in the teeth of bitter hostility from union officials, Labour fakery, Stalinists and all manner of "left-wing" opportunists.

But in arguing and fighting in practice for the building of a Trotskyist leadership capable of mobilising the working class for the struggle for state power and the establishment of a

socialist society, we are carrying through a struggle that is essential for the working class.

Unless workers are shown the necessity to break from their present leaders, they go unarmed into the fight for their independent interests.

Forefront

Understanding this, our movement has from the start, stood at the forefront of agitation to break Labour's wage controls, and for action to prevent the sale of jobs at Speke, in the steel industry, and elsewhere, by TUC bureaucrats in cahoots with management.

Time and again WSL members have deflated fiery speeches by 'left' windbags who talk of opposition to the social spending cuts but lift not a finger to mobilise strikes or occupations.

And our members have

played a key role in every major cuts struggle.

We have championed every major unionisation fight, from Grunwick to Garners and Sandersons, highlighting and fighting each step of bureaucratic betrayal and sabotage.

And the Workers Socialist League has been at the forefront of the fight in British Leyland and throughout industry to oppose the erosion of the independent shop stewards' movement through class collaboration in 'workers participation' bodies.

Stalinists

In each of these struggles and in our international work the WSL has fought to reveal and to explain the counter-revolutionary role played by the Stalinists of the Communist Parties—whether these be 'Euro-communist' parties or those

adhering to Moscow.

Our principled stand on these issues has also vividly exposed the opportunism and confusion of the various other left groups who claim to offer workers a 'revolutionary' alternative.

And the practical experience we have gained in the fight for the Trotskyist Transitional Programme has convinced us of the necessity to reconstruct the Fourth International as the World Party of Socialist Revolution, on the principles established at its foundation in 1938.

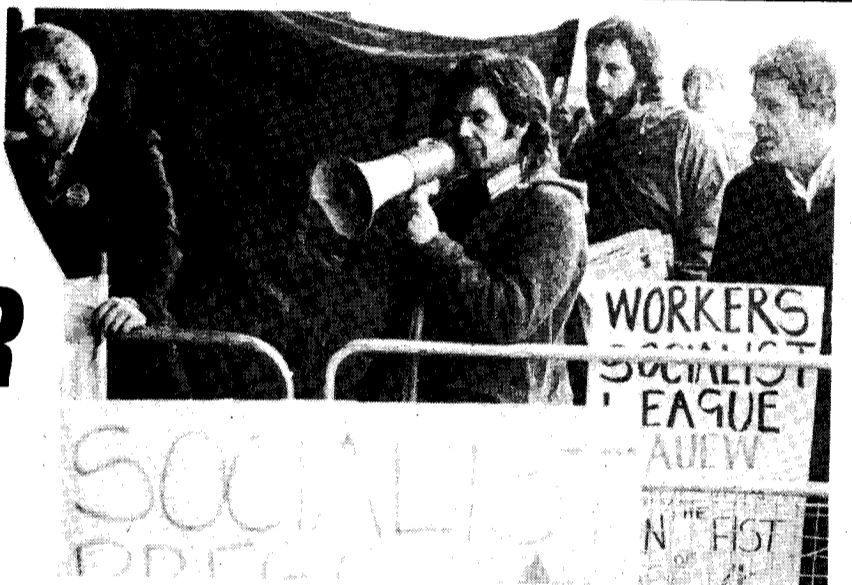
Whether fighting falling living standards, unemployment and the attacks on democratic rights at home or mobilising in solidarity with international struggles against imperialism in Ireland, Iran and Southern Africa, the Workers Socialist League has a practical and a theoretical contribution to make.

Join us

We call on *Socialist Press* readers and supporters to consider the coming struggles, the problems they face, and the necessity of a principled lead in each day-to-day fight.

Only our small size prevents our work having still greater impact on the class struggle. You can play a role in changing that!

Why not join us? Our local branch would be pleased to tell you more about our programme, policies and perspective.



On the picket line at Garners

DON'T GO INTO THE FIGHT BLINDFOLD!

GET SOCIALIST PRESS For a clear lead in the struggle against wage control, cuts and redundancies

MORE DETAILS

Please send me more information about the Workers Socialist League.

Name

Address

Send to: WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR

PHOTO: Mark Risher, IFL

PITCHED BATTLE AT SANDERSONS

After 18 long months on strike for union recognition the TGWU members at Sandersons Forklift factory near Skegness were given their biggest boost yet by an extremely successful mass picket held last Friday.

Amid scenes of militant picketing difficult to imagine following Grunwick and the now usual presence of the Special Patrol Group of strike-breakers, the company were forced to close the factory gates early on.

Unprepared

With the police clearly caught completely unprepared and greatly outnumbered by pickets, and a mixture of inexperience, disorder and lack

House of Holland fights on

The TGWU strike for recognition at the House of Holland warehouse in Chipping Warden near Banbury is now eight weeks old.

The company say that they will not recognise the TGWU because they have a "national agreement" with USDAW (the shopworkers' union).

But even after USDAW was totally discredited at a meeting between the TGWU, USDAW, ACAS and House of Holland management where they had to admit that they did not have one single member in either the warehouse or one of the 80 or more shops, the TGWU are still using USDAW's involvement as an excuse to withhold official backing and are openly giving the go-ahead to unionised drivers to cross the picket line.

This is despite the fact that there have been circulars sent out (dated 2 October) describing the dispute as official and appealing for financial support from branches.

The TGWU's attempts to ditch the strike by creating conditions where demoralisation can set in have had some success but the strike committee, members of which took part in the Sandersons mass picket last Friday, are determined to fight on.

They are trying to organise a branch meeting where policies to win the strike such as mass pickets, and blacking at Felixstowe docks can be decided.

Financial donations, which are crucial for the continuation of the strike and offers of other assistance should be sent to: House of Holland Strike Committee, 15, Plowden Close, Aston-Le-Walls, Daventry, Northants.

of conviction, the main characteristic of the forces of 'law and order' who were there, the majority of scabs were forced to find their way into the factory across neighbouring potato fields.

The picket's effectiveness was due primarily to its strong worker composition, with TGWU delegations from many of the Midlands car plants including Chrysler, Stoke and British Leyland's Rover, Jaguar, Longbridge and Cowley factories.

Workers Socialist League members and supporters represented a sizeable proportion of the 200 or so total.

Yet these forces represent nothing like the numbers that can and must be mobilised.

The TGWU leadership regionally and nationally continues to pay only lip service to this struggle.

The contingent from Hull docks, for instance, numbered only four people, though they are by far the biggest section of the union in the vicinity.



Police pushed to the front rank of the mass picket

Yet Pat Ruane, a General Executive member for their Region, speaking at a brief rally afterwards, spent the whole time stressing how much the union leadership was in support, adding that Moss Evans would have been there but for Fords!

The Strike Committee are making moves for Sandersons Support Committees to be set up throughout the country and

have agreed to set a date for a further mass picket.

As with Garners, the other long-running sore in the TGWU's side, the campaign within the union must be stepped-up, centring on mass picketing and linked to blacking of supplies and financial assistance.

Donations and details of next mass picket from 24, High St., Burgh-le-Marsh, Skegness, Lincs.

Ink firm strike under attack

Production at the Daily Telegraph, Mail, Sun, News of the World and Express could be seriously hit soon by the strike at the Usher Walker printing ink plant in East London.

The plant produces about 30% of the ink used on national papers.

The strike, against compul-

sory redundancies which union members fear are aimed at sacking militants at the undermanned plant, has come under fire from NATSOPA officials.

Despite a statement from the works manager that redundancies would go ahead, NATSOPA bureaucrat Dave Hutchinson has insisted there is "no threat" of sackings.

Instead, last week saw attempts to summon chapel

members to a special branch committee meeting—aimed at forcing a return to work.

*As we go to press strikers have received recorded delivery letters from the NATSOPA bureaucracy summoning each individual to attend disciplinary proceedings on Tuesday 31 October under union rule 32.

Fight EETPU mergers

As EETPU General Secretary Frank Chapple forges ahead with his plan to cut London plumbing lodges from 17 to 4, many members face loss of access to branch, Labour Party and Trades Council activity.

Appointed officials

Many would have to travel up to 30 miles to their own branch meetings, and with branches numbering over 5,000 the new plans would replace present elected secretaries with appointed full time officials.

Yet the plumbing trade, involving small groups of workers in dispersed sites requires many local negotiations as new jobs are undertaken.

Merger drive

EETPU militants see the new moves as part of Chapple's drive towards merger with the AUEW and the formation of a union bigger and less democratic than ever before.

Chapple of course recently hit the headlines by protesting at the TUC about the lack of union democracy in the USSR.

But when in 1972 a 400-strong meeting was called at the Friends House to fight the

closure of plumbers' District Committees, Chapple's henchman Gannon was sent down to close the meeting, threatening expulsions if it went ahead.

And rules introduced since then have outlawed contact between branches of the EETPU.

Plans are being laid for a meeting to fight the closure of the plumbing lodges.

Socialist Press readers are urged to help in preparing this by contacting EETPU members and branches locally and helping to mobilise support and to pass resolutions opposing the mergers and demanding a special conference on the issue.

Warning for hospitals claim

The Health Service supervisors dispute, which ended last week with a promise of a productivity deal has important warnings for the coming conflict over health service wages.

The settlement has not been a 15% deal—as reported widely in the press—but the promise of an opportunity to negotiate a productivity deal worth 15%.

The supervisors are a conservative layer of middle

management cordially hated by the maintenance workers they give instructions to, in the way that foremen are cordially hated everywhere.

Had the witch-hunt throughout the press had its desired effect on NHS workers, the supervisors could have been dispensed with.

The breakdown of laundry equipment and sterile units had by far the biggest impact and work on both these pieces of equipment could have been carried out on the instructions of administrators.

But the fact is that maintenance workers and laundry workers refused to take any action designed to break the action of the works managers.

Readiness

With the works managers digging their heels in and opinion hardening after the witch-hunt, it took the interest first of Clive Jenkins and then Len Murray to break the dispute.

The readiness of such 'opponents' of wage control as Jenkins to mediate in an attempt to sell the dispute out shows clearly the way that ASTMS, NUPE and COHSE leaderships will refuse to call action in the hospitals, either to fight against the cuts or to win wage increases.

Jo Beckles, Vice-chairman of St Mary's Hospital, London W9 Joint Shop Stewards Committee told Socialist Press precisely how the media and consultants conspired to blame the dispute on laundry and maintenance workers.

"They came down into the laundry at 12.15pm one day and switched off the machines—we were just going for lunch. Then in came the ITN and the Daily Mail and filmed the empty laundry!"

"They were called in by the consultant Harris. That same lunchtime they photographed the theatre and the caption was that workers were on strike".

Jo Beckles said the action of Harris in calling in the media was part of the campaign to support the moves to close St. Mary's.

Test of strength

When the hospital supervisors cut laundry back to 20% Harris and his consultant cronies ensured that this was used for private patients' laundry from St. Mary's Hospital in London W2!

But Jo Beckles also told Socialist Press she didn't believe that the outcome of the action was crucial for the future of other hospital claims.

This Socialist Press cannot accept. The government used the dispute as a test of its strength in the public sector; the press showed what role it was willing to play, and the union leaders showed that they were ready to capitulate to both.

Health service workers will need to break their stranglehold as they prepare to fight for their wage claims.

No prod deal at Vauxhall!

Whilst TGWU convenor John Farrel and other leaders at Vauxhall, Ellesmere Port, bask in the reflected glory of the Luton and Dunstable defeats, the productivity deal sell-out is being perpetrated by these same 'left' posers.

Farrel, at the mass meeting which voted for strike-action after 14 days notice, advocated an "attendance allowance" and the possibility of a productivity deal, saying he was in favour of us "getting more cars out".

What at first sight seems a harmless "attendance allowance" of 1½% is potentially a very dangerous deal which could trade hundreds of jobs for a miserable few pounds.

Farrel informed the meeting that the absentee figure of 16% was "unacceptable" and that he did not see any harm in a scheme to reduce this figure.

What he failed to realise is that a reduction in the absentee figure would enable the company to reduce the labour "pool" and would pave the way to a loss of jobs through "natural wastage" or redundancies.

On any one day at Ellesmere Port 16% of 8,500 men are absent, that is approximately 1,275 men.

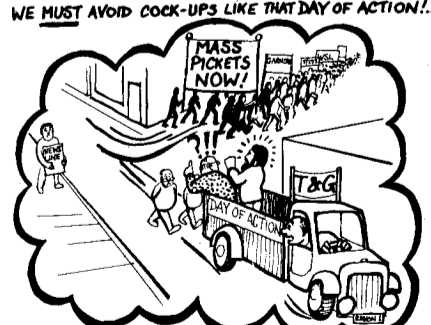
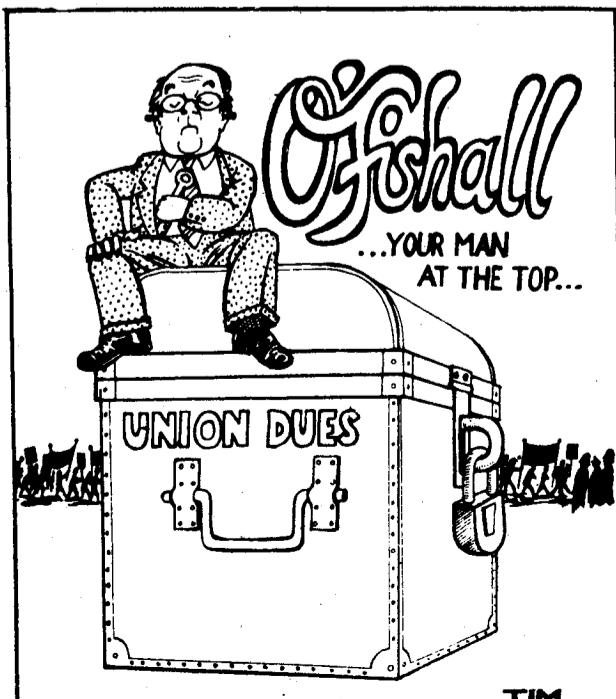
If the attendance scheme can reduce this by even a quarter it would mean the company could do away with approximately 300 jobs!

If this is just the so-called "lead-in" to the "phony" productivity deal then watch out for the "genuine" productivity deals!

Meanwhile the decision to delay the strike action for yet another fortnight is playing right into the company's hands.

Christmas is getting closer and the company are well aware of the fate of the craftsmen's strike last year which caved-in at Christmas.

There must be no further delay. Ellesmere Port must take unilateral action now and force the other plants out.



SOCIALIST PRESS



ABC show trial fiasco

CARTER BID TO APE CALLAGHAN

President Carter last week made his strongest attempt to date to force the deepening problems of American capitalism onto the backs of the working class.

But in doing so he was forced to reveal a little more of the weakness and lack of direction and leadership of the American ruling class.

Two weeks ago a sadly diluted version of his energy-saving plans finally passed through Congress.

"Voluntary"

Carter has now proposed a programme of "voluntary" wage controls and public spending cuts which are almost the spitting image of the Callaghan-Healey policies in Britain.

Wage rises are supposed to be restricted to 7% (below the present rate of inflation), price rises to about 6% and 20,000 Federal jobs are to be slashed at once.

Even the White House, which must by now be accustomed to a feeling of being out of control, seems to have been shocked by world reaction to its latest move.

The immediate effect was not the hoped for recovery of the dollar but a new 5% plunge in its international value, despite massive attempts by the Japanese, European and US Central Banks to support it.

And this plunge came after a week in which the stock market index fell over 7%.

The effect of last week's fall in the dollar alone is to give a sharp new twist to US inflation just ten days before the Congressional elections in which the whole House of Representatives and one-third of the Senate seats are up for election.

The weekend was spent trying to patch up an emergency rescue operation through which the IMF and the Japanese and European Central Banks would try to prop up the dollar, even if only until polling day.

But even if Carter manages to plug the hole in the dyke for a while and catch the foreign

and US speculators, he still has to contend with the lack of enthusiasm with which even the right wing of the US labour bureaucracy greeted his new policy.

Veteran reactionary bureaucrat George Meany called it "a cruel joke".

Fear of militancy

As in Britain, the bureaucrats' refusal openly to go along with Carter's wage limits stems from their fear of the militancy and resentment of their rank and file.

This has been reflected in the recent bitter disputes in the coal mines, railways, postal service and the newspapers.

Carter's search for new anti-working class policies and the dramatic new dollar crisis provide more evidence of the

profound and completely unresolved problems of the world capitalist economy—the perilous imbalance between its component states, the constant threat of disintegration of the currency system (illustrated by last week's soaring price for



gold and other commodities) and the menace of worsened economic warfare and slump.

These are the only prospects offered by the capitalist system today. The interests of the world working class demand its

overthrow.

A necessary step towards this goal is the rejection of all wage controls whether they come from capitalist Carter or the almost indistinguishable "socialist" Callaghan.

The farcical proceedings in the Aubrey, Berry, Campbell "secrets" trial reached a new pitch last week with the judge's decision to waive the main charges, raised under Section One of the Official Secrets Act.

The four remaining charges all relate to Section Two of the Act, which the last Labour manifesto pledged to repeal, but which a recent White Paper would, if anything, strengthen.

Under this legislation the three defendants could face sentences of up to two years in jail for taking part in a private conversation early in 1977 in which the hush-hush military surveillance network known as SIGINT was mentioned.

Attack

Meanwhile after his show of "impartiality" in refusing to allow the prosecution under Section One—the "spying clause" of the Act—to continue, and proposing that some of the mound of documents in the case be thrown on the bonfire, the judge has swung round and implicitly attacked those still campaigning for the dropping of the charges.

This now includes not only the ABC Defence Campaign and the National Union of Journalists but presumably the National Council for Civil Liberties, which has called for the resignation of Attorney General Sam Silkin, on whose responsibility jointly with Home Secretary Rees, the prosecution was initiated.

COWLEY WARNS LEYLAND ON PAY

Lack of preparation is what marks the events in Leyland around the wage review—which is meant to be paid in every Leyland car plant on November 1!

Only in the Cowley Assembly Plant have negotiations been pressed forward and the company been forced to reply—offering nothing, not even the 5% permitted by Phase 4.

And only in the Assembly



Longbridge convenor Robinson

Plant have mass meetings been held on the claim. The second of these, last Thursday, saw 6,000 workers vote—with only 3 against—to give the company seven days' notice 'or else', to come up with a serious reply to their £27 claim.

Further meeting

At the end of this seven days a further mass meeting will be held.

But throughout the rest of Leyland convenors have hoped that the company's newly offered grading scheme could be brought forward and that this would provide an escape hatch to dodge a fight on the review.

As a result many convenors have been spending two days a week negotiating at national level on next year's grading structure, while this year's review is supposed to be settled on the day we go to press.

As late as last weekend the Leyland Cars Joint Negotiating Committee and convenors were meeting in a bid to get the company to bring its "parity" payments forward to May.

Questionable

But the chances of the scheme ever coming in must be seen as questionable.

The new structure is to be "self-financing"; the company is demanding a 12% cut in staff to

pay for it; and it would only be introduced if all the gradings were accepted by everyone.

What is the situation so far on plant claims? The position reported at last Wednesday's meeting of the ad-hoc Leyland Stewards Committee for the Annual Review was as follows:

Cowley Body Plant: reply given on Thursday, of no offer. Stewards' meeting to be held, maybe on November 1.

Longbridge: stewards and members had "no information" whatever, and were being told to wait for a mass meeting on 3 November.

Rovers: no stewards' meeting even held to formulate the claim. No mass meeting.

Jaguars: sectional meetings still being held to decide the claim—due for settlement next week!

No claim!

It is clear that some Leyland plants will not even have submitted a claim by this year's review date.

Only in the Cowley Assembly Plant has the leadership argued a principled position in relation to parity, and fought for a straight pay rise with a cost-of-living clause.

And only in Cowley has the membership been involved in preparation for a struggle to defend living standards.

ANNIVERSARY RALLY

SOCIALIST PRESS RALLY

To commemorate the 1st anniversary of the weekly Socialist Press.

Speakers to include Socialist Press Editor John Lister

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FUND

With one day to go the October fund stands at £486.13, an increase of £80.19 on last week's total. This is still well short of our target of £600.

A good start to the November Fund will be important if we are to do better next month.

Donations should be sent to: Socialist Press Monthly Fund, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

OXFORD WSL

A series of classes on Permanent Revolution Sundays at 8 p.m. at B Block, East Oxford Community Centre Princes St, Oxford