

SOCIALIST PRESS



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MARCH
Against racist laws!
Sun. NOV 25
 12 noon, Speakers Corner
 Temporary tenants fight p.6-7

17 PER CENT!

PHOTO: Andrew Wiard, Report



Angry workers heckle Thatcher in Milton Keynes would bring further sackings.

PROFIT DRIVE DEEPENS SLUMP

So acute is the crisis of British and world capitalism that its survival now depends on policies which on top of heaping untold misery onto the working class, will bankrupt whole sections of weaker capitalists.

This is the message from the Tory decision last week to raise the Bank of England's Minimum Lending Rate to a record, crippling 17%.

The effect, after a week in which the Treasury itself had already forecast a drastic rise in unemployment, 20% inflation and a slump in output of 1-2% next year, will be shattering.

As one banker told the *Observer*, "This is the signal that the recession has now arrived and the consumer boom is at an end."

What does the new rate mean?

*Mortgages must rise to 14% or even 15%—further clobbering those workers struggling to keep a roof over their heads. At the same time rates and rents will soar.

*New investment plans in industry will grind to a halt, as firms face interest rates of up to 20% on borrowed money. Other firms struggling on the borderlines of profitability will be driven to the wall. Thousands of jobs will be axed.

*This new constraint on employers is consciously designed to force them into resisting pay claims that seek to protect workers' living standards. In this sense it is the counterpart to the savage cash limits imposed on local councils last week by Environment Secretary Heseltine, which will also axe some 150,000 jobs.

*And the 17% lending rate will also bring about a renewed round of spending cuts in the social services as the cost of local authority borrowing is driven up.

Many of the bigger employers have loyally welcomed this latest Tory move—



Chancellor Howe

intending to step up their propaganda campaign threatening workers with redundancies if they press "excessive" pay claims.

Nor have there been any complaints from the bankers, who stand to profit from the increase in interest rates (and possibly also from the new opportunity to borrow funds at lower rates abroad to lend out at 20% or more in Britain).

The main employers to suffer from the new measure will ironically be in those small firms which Thatcher has promised to assist!

But the full brunt of the attack will fall of course upon the working class, which on every side now faces the ravages of an economic system which in Britain and on a world scale is quite obviously wildly out of control.

Indeed while British capitalists complain about their "inadequate" profits and demand workers sacrifice jobs by the thousand in order to restore "viability", giant US corporations such as Chrysler and Ford are running colossal losses, and waging exactly similar attacks on their workforce!

The crisis is not a "British" or an "American" crisis. It is the outcome of the anarchic world capitalist system—a system which produces commodities not to satisfy social need, but to accumulate private profit.

Destruction

When that profit is not available in sufficient quantities, the capitalist system turns to the wanton destruction of whole sections of the productive forces, and human progress is thrown into reverse in the quest

for an adequate return on capital investment.

In place of a rising store of wealth in commodities, capitalism offers the international working class instead a rising tide of mass poverty, unemployment, ill-health and misery.

In Britain this process is clearly under way under the Tories. Each week brings its toll of closures and redundancies, its flurry of price increases, its new list of social service cuts and closures, and new revelations of further attacks to come.

Each week brings more open admissions from the Tories that there are no new jobs emerging to replace those axed, and that any attempt by workers even to defend existing living standards

would bring further sackings.

Anarchy

Within this system there is no possibility of stable employment, guaranteed living standards or social progress.

It is a system of anarchy, destruction and decay, functioning for the benefit of a tiny handful of bankers, industrialists and speculators, at the expense of the vast majority.

In resisting the impact of the Tory attacks at every turn—occupying plants to prevent sackings or closures; fighting to protect wages against inflation through cost-of-living clauses; striking in support of fellow workers in struggle; building local councils of action to

strengthen and extend struggles against the cuts; and mobilising in defence of democratic and trade union rights—it is vital for workers to recognise that, in order to solve their problems, generalised, class action is needed, to defeat the Tory government, nationalise the banks and major industries without compensation under workers' management and put an end to their decrepit economic system.

Only under a socialist planned economy can the forces of production be expanded and developed with the goal of fulfilling the social needs of the international working class.



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Robinson

British Leyland management has gone for broke in a deliberate confrontation with the trade union movement.

As we go to press, they have sacked the chairman of the BL Combine Committee and convener of the massive Longbridge complex, Derek Robinson.

The "offence" Robinson is accused of is opposing the closure of 13 BL plants under the Edwardes plan, and expressing his views in the recently-published Combine Committee

Sacked for expressing his views!

booklet campaigning against it.

The sacking decision, approved by Edwardes personally, is a conscious move to smash the Combine Committee and shop floor power in BL, prior to putting in its place a new, non-elected committee of national union officials for which management already have the agreement of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.

It is a further indication that the Tory government are only prepared to keep BL open on their terms. Indeed it comes in the midst of company moves to

ram through an insulting 5% pay offer coupled to the abolition of virtually every protective agreement established by the unions in BL.

85-page document

The 85-page document spelling out the "strings" to the deal was issued to bitterly hostile BL workers this week.

If BL management succeed in forcing home this attack, it will become the model copied by every other reactionary

Cont'd, page 11

STOP THE CUTS! ALL OUT NOVEMBER 28



Hassan's new setback

Increasingly isolated in the spheres of international diplomacy, King Hassan II of Morocco has suffered another setback to his colonial adventure in the western Sahara.

Two weeks ago a force of the Polisario Front attacked the conveyor belt which transports phosphates across the desert from the excavations of Bou-Craa to facilities on the Atlantic coast.

Two of the guard and maintenance stations along the belt were completely destroyed, with 60 troops of the Moroccan army of occupation killed.

A swift counter-attack by Moroccan forces, with Mirage bombers, caused very heavy losses for the Polisario, both of men (Hassan claims a total of 150 dead) and equipment.

But even the reinforcements being drafted in to bolster the occupation of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic will not be adequate to turn the balance of a war which is constantly draining Hassan's limited resources and bringing new gains to the fighters of the Polisario Front.



Deposed President Guevara speaking to journalists



Tank moves in on demonstrators in La Paz

Workers' struggles topple Bolivian dictator

Victory to the EPLF!

The Eritrean Popular Liberation Front is now consolidating its positions and once again gathering its forces after the offensive launched earlier this year by the Derg, with the help of its counter-revolutionary allies in the Soviet and Cuban bureaucracies.

In this period of relative calm, as the reactionary military dictatorship in Ethiopia struggles to regain its foundering military initiative, the Association of Eritrean Workers and the Association of Eritrean Women have called their first congresses in the areas liberated by the army of the EPLF.

The WSL was unable to accept the invitation to attend the congresses, but has sent its fraternal greetings which we reprint below:

Comrades,
The Workers Socialist League of Britain sends its revolutionary socialist greetings to the First Congresses of the Association of Eritrean Workers and the Association of Eritrean Women.

We call on all working class and socialist organisations to give the greatest possible moral and material support to the struggle for Eritrean national self-determination against its imperialist and Stalinist enemies.

Only a socialist leadership committed to the struggle for permanent revolution and the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International can secure and extend the gains made by the heroic Eritrean workers and peasants as part of the struggle for international socialism.

We hope to be able to discuss these important political questions with your organisation.

*Victory to the EPLF against the reactionary Derg and its allies!

*For a workers and peasants government in Eritrea and Ethiopia!

*For world unity of workers in the struggles against imperialism and Stalinism! Victory to the socialist revolution!

The eventual resignation of Bolivian dictator Col. Alberto Natusch last Saturday after 16 days of street battles, strikes, attempted counter-coups and thorough political crisis for the Bolivian capitalist class is a major gain for the working class.

The final removal of Natusch and the defeat of his incipient dictatorship was not obtained through the negotiations between the military and the Congressional opposition but through the mobilisation of the masses headed by the proletariat.

The resolve of the 'democratic' wing of the bourgeoisie and the COB (TUC) bureaucracy was only maintained by the enormous pressure exerted from below through the almost daily demonstrations in the

cities—which cost over 200 lives—and the massive support for the week-long national general strike.

When the leaders of the COB headed by Juan Lechin, called off the general strike after eight days (just as it was on the point of developing into a revolutionary mobilisation), the miners vehemently attacked them, called for continued resistance and maintained their action, paralysing the mines and effectively bringing the economy to a standstill.

This concerted action meant that, despite his manoeuvres, Lechin was unable to pull the COB into a totally unprincipled coalition junta with representatives of Congress and the military.

However, if the removal of Natusch was forced through by the working class the outcome has remained firmly in the hands of the bourgeoisie which has stage-managed a 'compro-

mise' with the army.

This has elevated to the Presidency the former president of Congress, Lydia Gueiler, who will preside over an interim government until new elections next May.

Stalemate

This is exactly the position in which deposed president Walter Guevara found himself—and in no way alters the fundamental stalemate and lack of direction within the leading circles of the bourgeoisie.

Gueiler, unlike Guevara, has a degree of popular support derived from her prominent role in the 1952 revolution and her record of 'forthright repudiation' of military regimes.

This record appears to have been established, at least partially, on the basis of her almost total absence from Bolivia between 1964 and 1978!

Gueiler was a leading

member of the bourgeois nationalist party, the MNR, in its early days of radicalism.

Shortly after the revolution she married Edwin Moller, leader of that faction of the POR (Workers Revolutionary Party) which followed the classical Pabloite path to fuse with the petty bourgeois nationalists and renounce all aspirations to being Trotskyists.

The definitive turn of the MNR towards imperialism after the implementation of the US 'Stabilisation Plan' in 1956 eventually led both Gueiler and Moller to split from the MNR and form with Lechin the left-posturing PRIN (Revolutionary Party of Left Nationalism).

Since the early '60s Gueiler has languished there or thereabouts and been conspicuously absent from any real struggle of the working class.

Once she donned the presidential sash (which by now must be slightly threadbare),

Gueiler announced with remarkable aplomb that "coups have ended for ever in Bolivia".

This assinine statement must have been received with total disbelief by the masses, since Gueiler's ascent has been contrived in liaison with precisely those sectors of the military that backed Natusch's coup and defended his dictatorial regime by strafing demonstrations from the air and machine-gunning them from the ground.

The extended delay in the removal of Natusch lay in the inability of the Army to reach an internal decision on how it could retreat and still retain "honour".

Far from defeated

They have undoubtedly suffered a setback. But they are still far from defeated and it remains to be seen how they will adjust to the "revival of the democratic process".

This 'process' is itself in a complete shambles and can offer no feasible resolution to the virtual bankruptcy of the Bolivian economy without turning once more against the working class that actually fought and sacrificed hundreds of lives in its defence.

Although Congress and the whole apparatus of bourgeois democracy is riding high on its resistance to the military, this facade will drop away very quickly.

The miners have already given notice of their position.

The powerful council of the Central-Southern Region voted overwhelmingly to remove from their union posts any of their leaders that took up seats in Congress on the grounds that parliament was an openly 'anti-worker' body.

The crisis is not over—it has only just begun.

As it deepens, and its real class content becomes clear, the working class will not be aligned with elderly parliamentarians against ambitious officers but will be thrown into battle on its own behalf against all forms of capitalist class rule.

Khomeini calls Carter's bluff

From back page

dollars who have reason to suspect that they may come into sharp conflict with US imperialism.

They have been given a clear warning to transfer their funds, or face a situation where they are held to ransom by the dictate of the US government.

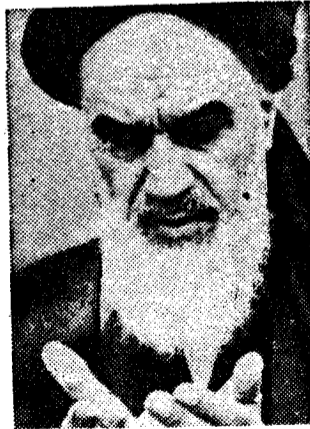
These fears lead to the prospect of a massive withdrawal of investment in the US by, particularly, the Arab states, and a further blow to cripple the US economy.

At the same time, immediate pressures on the oil market are almost certain to be reflected in further price rises at the OPEC conference in December, while an increasing proportion of world supplies is traded through the 'spot' market, where prices are already rising once more.

Every move that the imperialists have made to attack the Khomeini regime has brought painful consequences for themselves.

Beni Sadr—rapidly emerging as the most important figure in Khomeini's government—expressed this aspect of the situation quite clearly: "If the Americans want economic war, then they can have it!"

But this new situation does not only reveal even more vividly than before how far the US imperialists have been weakened by the struggles of the working class and the oppressed masses internationally



since the defeat of US imperialism in Vietnam.

What has also been exposed is how near Khomeini has come to the utter bankruptcy of his counter-revolutionary policies.

Reports from Iran suggest that Khomeini's central authority is now effectively confined to Tehran, Qom and two other cities, with other areas variously under the control of the Kurdish nationalists, the Fedayeen and local religious leaders.

The new government appointed by the revolutionary council has already been divided in public arguments over the tactics to employ around the occupation and the strategy to adopt towards US imperialism.

The inevitable failure of the 'Islamic Republic' to meet the material needs of the exploited masses is producing a reaction against Khomeini's rule by the Koran.

Last week, the Ministry of Labour was the target for a demonstration by hundreds of unemployed workers, who raised the slogan 'America and reaction are the source of our unemployment'.

Dire Straits

On Saturday, the 'Revolutionary Council' proclaimed that henceforth all occupations and 'unjustified' strikes would be treated as 'counter-revolutionary' acts.

Khomeini's reactionary regime is clearly in dire straits, and frantically clutching at desperate remedies.

But the disintegration of this jerry-built dictatorship will not simply in itself be a gain for the workers and peasants of Iran.

Such a collapse may open the way for US imperialism to intervene again, as it did in 1953 and restore the cancerous Shah to his throne.

Khomeini's radical bigotry can provide no serious answer to this danger. It is only the Iranian proletariat which can secure and develop the gains made with the overthrow of the Shah, and threatened ever since by both imperialism without,

and Islamic reaction and bourgeois nationalism within.

But that revolutionary potential will never be realised without the building of a Trotskyist party committed to the Marxist programme of permanent revolution and fighting to win the other oppressed classes behind the banner of socialism in the struggle to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.

*Defend the Iranian revolution against imperialism and reaction!

*Seize all the banks and major capitalist holdings. No compensation—for workers' management and a planned socialist economy.

*Build workers militias and factory committees. For soviets to replace the committee and tribunals of Islamic reaction.

*Against unemployment—for a massive programme of public works.

*Against national oppression—for the rights of self-determination of the Kurds and all other oppressed nations.

*Against sexual oppression—full democratic rights for all women and homosexual men.

*For proletarian internationalism—every possible assistance to the international struggles against imperialism.

*Down with Khomeini and the 'Revolutionary Council'—for a workers and peasants government in Iran.



Natusch



A late night protest against the police killing



Mourners gather for the funeral of Francisco Caballero

Euskadi: a tale of two murders

Ortuella is a small town in the mining district close to the Basque industrial centre of Bilbao.

It is a town with strong traditions of working class organisation.

It is one of the minority of towns of the region to have elected a municipal council last April, with a majority of workers' parties rather than Basque nationalist councillors.

It has a Socialist Party mayor.

On November 7 at 3 a.m. Ortuella became, to the anger of its people and the embarrassment of its political leaders, another name to add to a long list of Francoist crimes against the working class.

At that time Francisco Caballero, a 25 year old worker from Ortuella, was shot dead in nearby Bilbao by the armed Francoist police.

Bloody reminder

He was returning home with a friend after visiting friends when two armed policemen fired machine gun bullets into his car, which careered out of control.

Francisco Caballero was a sympathiser of the Spanish CP, of which his father was a well-known local member in Ortuella.

Caballero's death, coming only two weeks after the referendum which "approved" the Basque autonomy statute worked out between the bourgeois nationalists in Euskadi and Franco's successors in Madrid, was a bloody reminder that the approval of the statute does not mark the end of repression.

But this latest murder was an acute embarrassment to the leaders of the main workers and Basque nationalist parties and trade unions.

Ten days earlier they had organised a massive one-day general strike and numerous demonstrations throughout Euskadi after the killing of a member of the Socialist Party (PSOE), German Gonzalez.

It is still not clear who was responsible for that killing. It was claimed by "autonomous commandoes" of ETA which alleged that Gonzalez was a police spy.

ETA (militar) has denied any responsibility for the killing.

It may have been done by a group which has split from ETA (militar) but many in Euskadi believe that it could have been the work of police provocateurs.

Certainly the killing was cynically used by the reformist, Stalinist and nationalist parties.

They organised a wave of activity against ETA and in favour of the Statute of Autonomy—a statute which will, as many Basque workers realise, not remove the Francoist forces of repression from Euskadi but will add another locally based police force to them.

Contrast

"With the statute—more repression!" is a slogan on many walls in the Basque provinces today.

There could hardly have been a sharper contrast between the reformist, Stalinist and bourgeois nationalist leaders' response to the killing of Gonzalez—which they could!

blame on ETA and "ultraleftism"—and that of Caballero, who was murdered by the police.

Faced with enormous pressure from the rank and file to organise a response, these leaders could not afford just to do nothing.

One hour only

They called strikes, demonstrations and mass meetings—but in such a way as to contribute to confusion and demobilisation of the working class.

The strike they proposed was for one hour only—and it was scarcely publicised.

In the mining area around Ortuella, however, workers spontaneously went on strike for the whole day of Caballero's funeral.

And in many other factories they called mass meetings which indulged not in the harmless ritual denunciation of "right and left terrorism" in which PSOE and CP and Basque Nationalist Party leaders specialise, but in severe attacks against the inaction of their leadership.

The next day the Basque daily paper *Eguro* reported them in this way:

"The factory mass meetings—where they took place—turned out to be very polemical, since many workers criticised the position of the Workers Commissions—CP and of the UGT-PSOE in calling an hour's stoppage yesterday when last week they called a general strike.

"In many meetings it was said that "there appear to be first and second division workers".

"There were open conflicts between supporters of the token hour and the whole day strike throughout the day in the factories of Babcock Wilcox, General Electric, Lemoniz (nuclear power station) and others.

The content of the resolutions reaching this office reflects the conflict.

"We have received many communiques from mass meetings in various workplaces.

"Those from Lemoniz, from the Cadagua shipyards, the Buildings and Works department, and many others, join in condemning the posture of the Workers Commission—CP and the UGT-PSOE.

"For the workers of Lemoniz this showed "the policy of collaboration which they carry on with the UCD (the government); for the workers of the Cadagua shipyards "it brings into the open the political intentions which were hidden behind the calling of the last general strike; that time they tried to make us see that the real enemy was ETA terrorism but the reality has shown something else."

Dispersed

The same conflicts showed up later in the demonstration which the CP, the PSOE and the main unions called in Ortuella to coincide with Caballero's funeral.

They had summoned "the whole population of Viscaya province" to attend. But they had been careful not to publicise the call—nor to arrange transport!

So, in the event, it was a small demonstration of 3,000.

It began under the direction of the local CP, marching silently from the funeral to the Town Square for a ritual singing of the Basque national anthem and the Internationale.

Thereupon the CP leaders rapidly dispersed and the march continued noisily with many slogans and increasingly under the leadership of ETA (militar).

The slogan of "Dissolution of the repressive forces" was widely taken up—but so was the slogan which epitomises the political bankruptcy of the ETA leadership: ETA, ETA, ETA; mas metralletas! (ETA—more machine guns!).

The events around these killings show up the reality of the present political situation in Euskadi.

The working class remains, more clearly than in any part of the Spanish state, ready to resist repression and the mounting economic attacks which are coming in the wake of the crisis.

But the reformist and Stalinist leaders play their treacherous demobilising role in more and more open alliance with the government of Francoists in Madrid and their armed agents in Euskadi.

In the absence of any convincing alternative leadership in the workers' movement, many workers have turned to the radical nationalist forces represented by the Herri Batasuna (Popular Unity) coalition which is in effect the political arm of ETA (militar).

But radical words don't constitute a political programme—and that ETA is incapable of providing.

ETA is unable even to take political advantage of the aftermath of the referendum—in which the government, the Basque Nationalist Party and the reformists and Stalinists got barely 50% of the votes even

after massive publicity and a good deal of electoral fraud.

The forces of the pro-ETA coalition are now publicly divided over whether to participate in the Basque parliament which will be elected early next year.

Two out of the four parties of the Herri Batasuna coalition have now said they will participate, and the others appear undecided.

Such indecision seems likely to herald the rapid demise of ETA's political influence.

In Euskadi, almost more than any other part of Europe, the way is open for the building of a revolutionary Trotskyist party to replace the existing reformist, Stalinist and nationalist leaders.

This possibility, however, is hampered as it is everywhere else, by the consequences of the prolonged crisis of Trotskyism in the course of which the Fourth International as an authoritative revolutionary centre has been destroyed.

Euskadi points to the urgency of reconstructing it.

The Liga Comunista in Euskadi reacted to the two deaths by putting up two wall posters, (the second of which is printed below) in the centre of Erandio, a working class town near to Bilbao.

And now what?

The police have killed a worker; a militant of the PCE. The trail of blood which the Forces of Public Order (FOP) leave in their trail is again extended.

Enough! This constant aggression against the people must be stopped!

On 29 October the leaders of the PSOE, PCE, Workers Commissions, UGT, Spanish Labour Party (PTE, Maoist) and Euskadiko Eskerra (Basque left, politico-military wing of ETA) called for a general strike and other actions as a result of the death of German Gonzalez, against terrorism and in favour of the statute of autonomy.

What are they waiting for before replying with the necessary boldness now we are confronted with another provocation by the repressive forces which they have sanctified in their statute?

Will they content themselves with parliamentary questions and commissions "of investigation" to bury the matter?

In fact their intentions are not to defend the interests of Basque workers—neither on 29 October, nor today. They wanted to divide us more in order to back up the autonomy statute which had failed to secure majority support.

The statute of the FOP is incompatible with the freedom of Euskadi!

The workers' organisations must organise resistance against this police terror which is unleashed against the working class and people of Euskadi on the pretext of an "anti-terrorist" struggle.

Is this not the moment to call a general strike against the enemies of the Basque working class?

Workers: discuss this in mass meetings and give the answer.

*Dissolution of the repressive apparatuses!

*Down with the government and the monarchy!

*Let those responsible for the crimes pay!

6.11.79



Gunned down by police—Francisco Caballero



Sup

Army takes over Belfast factories

The requisition and military takeover of two small factories on Belfast's Whiterock industrial estate marks a further step in the increasingly desperate struggle to secure imperialist control over the occupied six counties of Ireland.

The new military outpost will be developed as an additional fort—the fourth within one square mile—with an overview of two nationalist estates, Turf Lodge and Dermot Hill.

More than 20 jobs have been lost as a result of the factory closure, in an area of truly massive unemployment—claimed to be as high as one in every two adult males.



The army move in at Whiterock

the occupying imperialist army have, in other words, led to a renewed military crackdown in the North, in which former spymaster Maurice Oldfield is giving a leading role to the army in contrast to earlier moves to "Ulsterise" the defence of imperialist interests.

This continued escalation of the conflict by British imperialism, and the contempt with which the military rulers regard the jobs, homes and democratic rights of the Irish population, show yet again that there can be no peace in Ireland without the

immediate withdrawal of British troops and acknowledgement of the right of the Irish people to self determination.

The provision of jobs for the long term unemployed of the six and the 26 counties of Ireland requires in addition, not the piecemeal gestures of the British imperialists or the Lynch government, but the construction of a Trotskyist revolutionary leadership committed to the struggle for a socialist planned economy in a united Irish workers' republic.

Betrayals bring decline in CP



PHOTO: Laurence Spatham, IFL

Sparse turnout on CP unemployment day of action

Another decline in membership of the Communist Party of Great Britain was reported by General Secretary Gordon McLennan at its annual Congress last week.

The CP has dwindled in strength by another 4,694 to a new low of 20,599.

As for the party's daily paper, the good news was that circulation of the *Morning Star* has fallen by only 363 as against a decline last year of 1,863. But the bad news was that last year's Congress had voted to 'increase sales by 3,000!'

McLennan, speaking for the dominant "Eurocommunist" wing of the party, explained the decline by referring to:

"the differences in the international Communist movement, armed conflict between socialist states, and limitations of democracy in socialist countries."

Yet the split down the middle of the CP on these issues was exposed by the vote on an East Midlands amendment.

It proposed to remove the part of the main resolution referring to the "socialist countries", and to insert as the reason for the loss of membership:

"the fact that we have not done enough to publicise the achievements of the socialist countries—the most convincing argument for socialism and for the Communist Party."

This amendment was only defeated by 165 votes to 114.

The emergence of these two counterposed positions reflect the dual pull on the Communist Party.

Slavish defence

The one is represented by the East Midlands amendment, and flows from the slavish defence of the actions of the Kremlin bureaucracy as it manoeuvres on a world scale in defence of its power and privileges.

The other pull, reflected in the policies of the CPGB leadership, is from the British capitalist class in crisis, and the necessity to draw closer in collaborationist alliances with the capitalists if the existing balance of forces—"peaceful coexistence"—is to be preserved.

Of course neither position offers an independent road forward for the working class in Britain or internationally.

Significantly neither the CPGB leadership, nor the "left" critics referred to the betrayals

of working class struggles under CP leadership as a factor in the party's decline.

Nor did any delegate speak out against the party's reactionary, nationalist policy of "protecting" British capitalist industry through import controls.

And in the debate on party democracy there was nobody with the nerve to seek the right of oppositional minorities to organise as factions within the party.

Instead there was a resolution which sought the right to conduct discussions in the pre-congress period "across the boundaries of the party organisation".

This was defeated by 212 votes to 71, having been vigorously attacked by Executive spokesman Reuben Falber.

In the same debate newly-elected Executive member Ian MacKay attacked what he called "An almost religious obsession about ridding the party of its Stalinist heritage; when the party celebrates in the main 60 glorious years of struggle".

MacKay will not be disappointed. The party's squalid Stalinist heritage will, of course, remain intact.

Later on, speakers complained that the media was influencing the elections for the Party's Executive. This was shown by the fact that media "regulars" Vishnu Sharma, Mick McGahey and Tess Gill knocked General Secretary McLennan into fourth place in the poll!

But, once again, no-one was elected on the strength of having led any struggles over the last year, which—at Garners, in the shipyards, at British Leyland and elsewhere—has brought another crop of CP sell-outs in the tradition established since the Communist movement was taken over by Stalin in the 1920s.

For Trotskyists, dedicated to the revolutionary struggle for socialism, the decline, splits and crisis of the Communist Party is a welcome development.

We can with confidence hope and predict that as the class struggle advances, the CP's decline will accelerate and the *Morning Star* will be driven out of business.

TV cameras

The takeover at Whiterock runs alongside the establishment of an advanced army observation post on the top of a multi-storey nurses home attached to the Royal Victoria Hospital.

And in the nationalist stronghold of Andersonstown television cameras have been installed which can survey the entire surrounding area.

The miserable collapse of Humphrey Atkins' half-hearted and half-baked political "initiative" and the continued offensive of republican forces against

Pay-off no substitute for safety

The £67,000 damages payment to the widow of a Windscale nuclear plant worker last week has given renewed prominence to the question of safety in nuclear power stations.

Mr Malcolm Pattinson died of leukaemia at 36 years of age after working in the radiation areas at Windscale for eight years.

But he was only one of a number of casualties of inadequate safety procedures at the plant.

In two out of court settlements in 1977 British Nuclear Fuels paid over smaller amounts of money after the death of former employees: and the GMWU is currently contesting two further cases.

As reports on the Three Mile Island nuclear crisis at Harrisburg Pennsylvania show that the reactor came within minutes of a lethal "melt-down" and it is revealed that 25 out of 26 French nuclear plants have developed leaks, there is an obvious need for the workers' movement to do more than finance court cases for compensation after the deaths of their members.

Trade unions in the plants and in surrounding areas must organise to elect joint committees which will demand full access to all available information on safety precautions, and open the financial books of the nuclear industry and its suppliers.

The strictest workers' control over safety in these plants must be enforced—and where the slightest doubt exists, the plant in question must be forced to close

forced to close—with the workforce retained on full pay—until outstanding problems are resolved.



Thatcher splashes out on torpedoes

The current furore over the exposure of the "Fourth Man" and speculation as to the identity of the fifth has provided a useful smoke-screen for Tory government decisions to step up "defence" commitments and its cooperation with the anti-Soviet NATO alliance.

Not only has the Thatcher government readily agreed to accept the stationing of 160 lethal American Cruise Missiles in Britain—but Defence Minister Pym has been at the forefront of efforts to pressurise other NATO governments to accept them as well.

Reluctance

Altogether the US imperialists plan to deploy 572 of the missiles—targeted on Russian sites—in Europe: but so far the Dutch government is refusing to agree to the stationing of 48 Cruise missiles on its territory.

No doubt the Dutch reluctance to turn Holland into a prime target for Soviet retaliation in the event of the missiles being used was intensified by last weekend's "10 minute war" in which US planes were scrambled, bomber fleets lumbered on to runways and missiles were made ready

following a computer error.

The prospect of US missiles being loosed off by US personnel from emplacements in Holland at a moment's notice—probably without even the knowledge of the Dutch government—is indeed an alarming one, which the unstable Dutch coalition government does not feel keen to sell to the Dutch people.

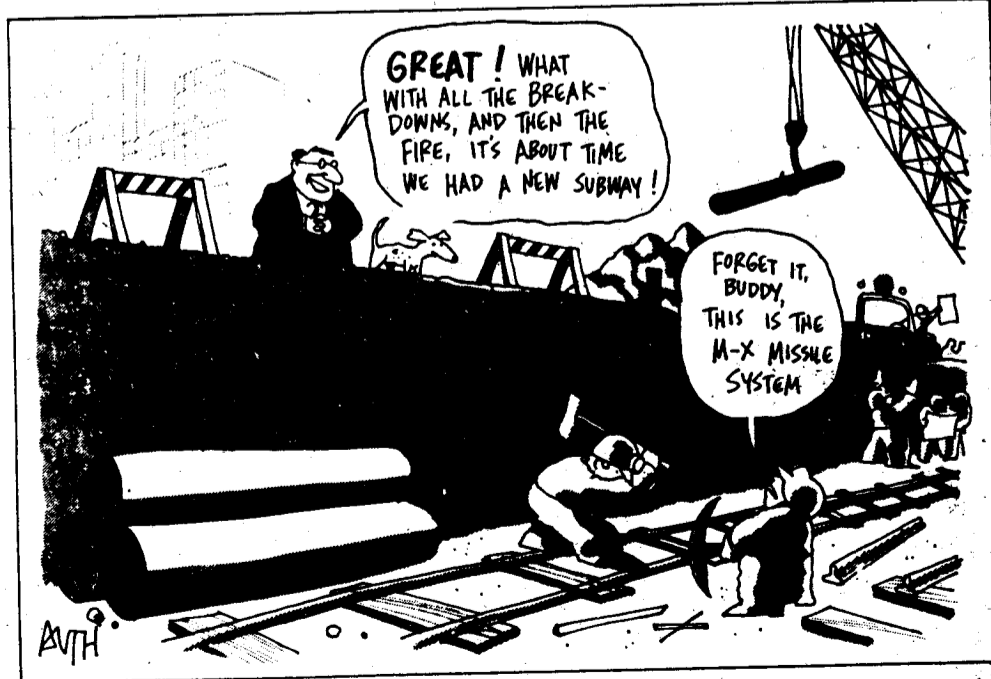
But Thatcher's aggressive anti-Soviet stance means that an exactly similar sequence of events could take place here.

The deployment of these new missiles amounts to an outright rejection by the NATO imperialist bloc of the offer by Soviet leader Brezhnev to reduce the numbers of Soviet SS20 missiles and forward-stationed Soviet troops in Europe in exchange for the scrapping of the plan.

And it goes hand in hand with further aggressive moves by the imperialists.

In the USA itself President Carter's extravagant plan to construct the new MX mobile missile system is pressing ahead, with Senate agreement to vote an initial \$670 million for development work.

But even the Senate is shrinking from the colossal predicted cost of the entire scheme, which would incorporate a series of "race tracks" sunk into the desert areas of



Utah, Nevada and Arizona.

The plan is for each of the 200 MX missiles to be mounted on a giant truck, and rotated between 23 different shelters on a system of circular roadways, in order to confuse Soviet target planners.

The estimated cost of the scheme is at least \$37 billion.

Meanwhile in Britain, the Thatcher government, even while slashing spending on hospitals, social services and education, has announced a £200 million contract with Marconi to construct the new Stingray "super torpedo"—which has already cost £90 million to develop.

Perhaps this points to the way the Tories will eventually resolve the growing problem of sick people without hospitals, old people without homes and young people without jobs. They could be floated out to sea and used by Marconi for target practice.

Hiding from history

Labour's left talking Party Treasurer Norman Atkinson showed once again last Saturday the hypocrisy of Labour leaders when it comes to fighting the cuts.

Speaking at a Regional Labour Party Rally against the cuts in Aylesbury Atkinson bored most of the audience with his pet economic theories about the conflict between the 'city' and 'manufacturing' interests.

He failed to put forward a single fighting policy for action to stop the cuts.

Alongside this waffle came the usual left talk about the

need for a "socialist movement with socialist policies to transform the system".

But even this was coupled with the guarded statement that "The Labour Party must strive at all times to achieve unity".

After Atkinson had spoken one local GMC member challenged his record fighting the cuts and called on Atkinson to reply to one simple question: "How are we going to fight the cuts?"

Atkinson replied by declaring we need a "mass protest"—of writing letters to the press, petitions and publicity.

He definitely ruled out any industrial action by admitting "I'm not an advocate of open industrial warfare."

When asked to defend his previous record under the Labour government which had carried out a succession of Tory policies Atkinson was stuck for an answer—and, in the words of every embarrassed opportunist replied to the young apprentice who had asked the question by saying: "My young friend, we don't go back over history, the important thing is what to do today!"

So devoid are Labour's 'lefts' of any perspective for actually fighting the cuts that Atkinson, in his speech, even failed to mention the mass lobby of Parliament on November 28 which the Labour Party is supposed to be supporting.

Fight Whitelaw's racist plans

As leading Tory racials moaned that the new government White Paper on immigration would "reduce the huge [!] numbers coming in by only 3,000", Home secretary Whitelaw last week spelt out a series of vicious new restrictions aimed at excluding Asian men and women from Britain.

He assured leading reactionaries from his own Party that the Tory manifesto pledges to

introduce an immigration register and a quota had not been scrapped, but simply delayed pending new legislation.

And, as widely predicted, he made clear that the main thrust of the Tories' attacks is to prevent the fiances of Asian girls joining them in Britain.

In addition, the regulations restricting foreign students in Britain are to be tightened up—this coming on top of the discriminatory fees increase which will in any event drastically cut back the number of overseas students coming to Britain.

Elderly relatives of Asian families already settled here are also to be subjected to more stringent entry conditions.

Au pairs will be allowed in only from Western Europe—one of the most openly racist provisions.

Campaign Against Racist Laws on Sunday November 25 will again show the hostility of thousands of workers to the reactionary Tory government.

Leadership

But in mobilising the maximum working class solidarity against these proposals it is necessary also to expose those Labour leaders who have themselves supported or introduced racist laws, and who stand completely opposed to mass work-

ing class action to bring down the Tory government.

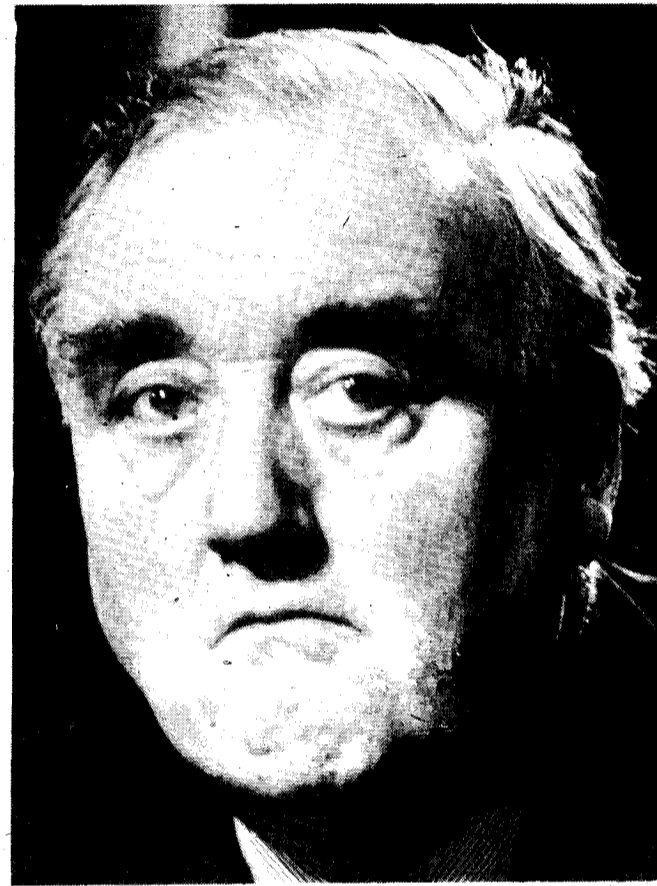
The fight to repeal existing racist legislation and defeat attempts to impose Whitelaw's new measures requires the construction of a principled socialist leadership in the workers' movement committed to the struggle against all forms of nationalism, chauvinism and collaboration with crisis-ridden British capitalism.



Atkinson



Timothy Raison



Whitelaw

Vicious

But, as always, the stinking rich will have little trouble in passing through the Tory net. Those with £100,000 in the bank or an income of not less than £10,000 a year will be subjected to a minimum of restrictions.

Even while Whitelaw was spelling out these new proposals—amid largely hypocritical squeals of protest from Labour MPs who in general lifted not a finger to fight the Labour government's own racist immigration restrictions—the vicious nature of existing legislation was revealed in moves to deport a 7-year old Bangla Deshi girl from Oxford, an 80 year old blind Pakistani woman from Rochdale, and an Asian woman in Manchester, deserted by her husband.

Under these conditions all the signs are that the national demonstration organised by the

PRESS GANG



Like an unrepentant criminal released from jail the *Times* came blinking back into daylight—as bad tempered as ever and more convinced than before of its need for crime.

It came too late for many of its fans. They were irrevocably dead, some of them very publicly dead.

But if death did not suspend its ravages amongst the ruling classes simply because the *Times* was away, many of its victims could clearly not rest in their graves—until their obituaries had been published.

The *Times* has begun the work of placating their ghosts, with the first of three *Times* Obituaries Supplements!

The cast of the dead is laid out in order of disappearance—beginning with Earl Mountbatten. 'Inspiring war commander and statesmanlike leader in peace' and Airey Neave—both blown to bits—and moving on to Golda Meir, Bhutto, Nelson Rockefeller, and other prime candidates for the Chamber of Horrors.

If the dead are now assured of peace, the same cannot be said for the living.

The *Times* returned with an editorial ponderously and pompously anti-worker as anything in its history.

Analysing—broadly correctly—the scale of the crisis of British capital (but omitting all mention of the crisis of international capital) the *Times* finds praise for only Michael Edwards and the Thatcher/ Joseph government.

It looks gloomily into the future and at technology.

"If we take British productivity as 100, and American, German or Japanese as 200, and then multiply our competitors' productivity by, say five, to allow for the general adoption of electronic methods, we are left with productivity ratios of

10:1."

The trouble is, grumbles the *Times*, that the 'unions' (meaning union members) seem to regard jobs as something to be preserved.

"A manager who wastes labour is letting down not just his shareholders, but the people who work for him, and more broadly the nation; he is unpatriotic."

("Wasting labour", incidentally, is *not* leaving it idle, but employing it!)

This argument applies also to the public sector, where the massive cuts are described in terms which Tory Central Office PR department could not better as "trying to stabilise public expenditure".

If the NHS does collapse—says the Thunderer—it will be because of poor productivity.

"A child with a heart murmur will be examined on average more than six times by different doctors". [!]

Despite this apparent multiplicity of doctors:

"We are in danger of moving from a hospital service primarily staffed by doctors and nurses to one primarily staffed by porters,

cleaners and cooks".

After this flurry of high-flown stuff, it's back to naked self interest.

"If on the *Times* we had been able to rely on an informed public opinion, our agreements would not have required fifty weeks, not fifty days, not fifty minutes.

"People would have been pressing for higher productivity as the only conceivable way to raise pay and secure jobs.

"It is the employer who does not instal new technologies against whom reasonable men would strike."

Not that this perspective of the destruction of the trade unions has taught the *Times* chapels leadership the rules by which the employers are playing.

In a token and plaintive piece by Barry Fitzpatrick, chairman of the all union liaison committee, we can find further references to what the 'nation needs' and appeals to use "the energy and expertise solutions, that exists on both sides to develop and expand our [!] business."

Gag law protest

The Campaign for Press Freedom, which boasts a number of 'left' and not-so-left MPs and leaders of the NUJ and print unions among its sponsors, has launched a campaign against the Tories' Protection of Information Bill.

A statement issued to sponsors, affiliated organisations and all NUJ branches describes the Bill as "the most serious long-term threat to freedom of expression in the United

Kingdom this century."

While this is undoubtedly true, the exclusive focus on this particular restriction of press freedom at a time when almost every month reveals the massive level of press censorship of news on the war in Ireland certainly exaggerates the existing "freedom of the press".

Take action

The Campaign circular points out that the new Bill (introduced through the "back door" of the House of Lords), would enable Ministers unilater-

ally to decide what information was likely to cause "damage to the nation", and would effectively outlaw all public discussion and reportage of security, defence, and intelligence matters.

And it would become an offence for anyone to complain publicly that his/her telephone was being tapped!

The fight against this Bill must be urgently taken forward in the labour movement, which must declare its willingness to take action in defence of anyone victimised under the proposed new laws.

Kelly, Peach, picket: CLASS JUSTICE!

In three brazen declarations of class justice last week the Tory government, courts and police revealed the extent to which British capitalism is prepared to go to protect its armed agents and strikebreakers.

On Friday November 9, a scab lorry driver knocked down and hospitalised a picket at a Manchester direct works department.

But police refused to prosecute the scab—arguing that the incident took place on a

"private road", and that it was therefore an "industrial accident".

4,500 building workers have been so angered by this clear bias against pickets that they called protest strikes last Friday and this coming Tuesday.

As convenor Walter Wainwright pointed out if the pickets had dragged the driver from his cab and assaulted him the police would immediately have moved in to arrest him.

On Wednesday Home Secretary Whitelaw brushed aside growing demands for a public inquiry into the murder of Jimmy Kelly, a 53-year old worker, arrested by Merseyside police on his way home from a pub and beaten to death in police custody.

The case has been sufficiently outrageous and well publicised to raise even the careerist corpse of Sir Harold Wilson to demand a public inquiry.

But Whitelaw has pointed to a seemingly interminable and undoubtedly worthless internal police inquiry being carried out by West Midlands Assistant Chief Constable Gerty, which has allegedly been going on for 2½ months.

60 statements

And on Thursday Lord Widgery, the Lord Chief Justice refused to allow a jury in the inquest on the murder of Blair

Peach by police Special Patrol Group thugs at Southall.

He also refused to allow the counsel for Peach's family to see any of the 60 statements collected by the police "inquiry" into the killing.

The Director of Public Prosecutions has declared that there is "insufficient evidence" for the prosecution of any of the Special Patrol Group officers who carried out the baton charge in which Peach was clubbed to death with a blow from a weighted truncheon or cosh.

Widgery stated that the Peach murder did not qualify for a jury inquest because it did not fit the category of:

"circumstances, the continuance or possible recurrence of which would affect the health and safety of the public".

Of course for those members of the public that seek to exercise their democratic right to demonstrate life will be neither safe nor healthy as long as the police and SPG remain in existence.

Widgery's ruling merely confirms that, while such legal battles can expose the limits to democratic rights under capitalism, only decisive action by the working class to bring down the Tory government and establish a genuine workers' government can create conditions where rights can be guaranteed—through the *disbanding* of the police and the SPG.

TEMPORARY TENANTS

LABOUR/TORY ALLIA

On December 8th the Coventry Labour Council is hosting a conference of Labour councils to discuss a campaign against the Tory cuts.

Below we print an inter-

view with Tricia Doyle, Secretary of the Coventry Temporary Council Tenants which exposes the depths to which the hypocrisy of these supposed defenders of working class interests has

sunk.

Further information about the Temporary Tenants can be obtained by writing to:-

Coventry Temporary Council Tenants Association

c/o Coventry Resources & Information Centre, Cox St. Coventry.

Funds, help and encouragement for their important struggle are always needed.

What is the Coventry Temporary Council Tenants Association?

For years Coventry Council has had a policy of placing people in Part III or temporary accommodation which is supposed to be on a temporary basis.

People in this type of accommodation are usually there because of rent or council mortgage arrears. They have been evicted and placed in temporary housing.

We have argued all along that there are good reasons for these arrears, and that the Council's allegations of 'wilful refusal to pay arrears' are wrong.

Many people get into arrears because of unemployment, redundancies, sickness or, in some cases, family bereavements.

There are a lot of one parent families—for instance wives who have had to leave their husbands for safety.

It's the husbands that are in arrears. The Council is biased against women.

After our campaigning, the Council is now interviewing all tenants to find out the reasons for their difficulties.

The Vice-Chairman of the Housing Committee, Mrs. Laken has told us that out of all the tenants she has so far interviewed only one or two didn't have good reasons.

This substantiates what we have said all along.

The Temporary Tenants (TT) was formed to represent our interests collectively.

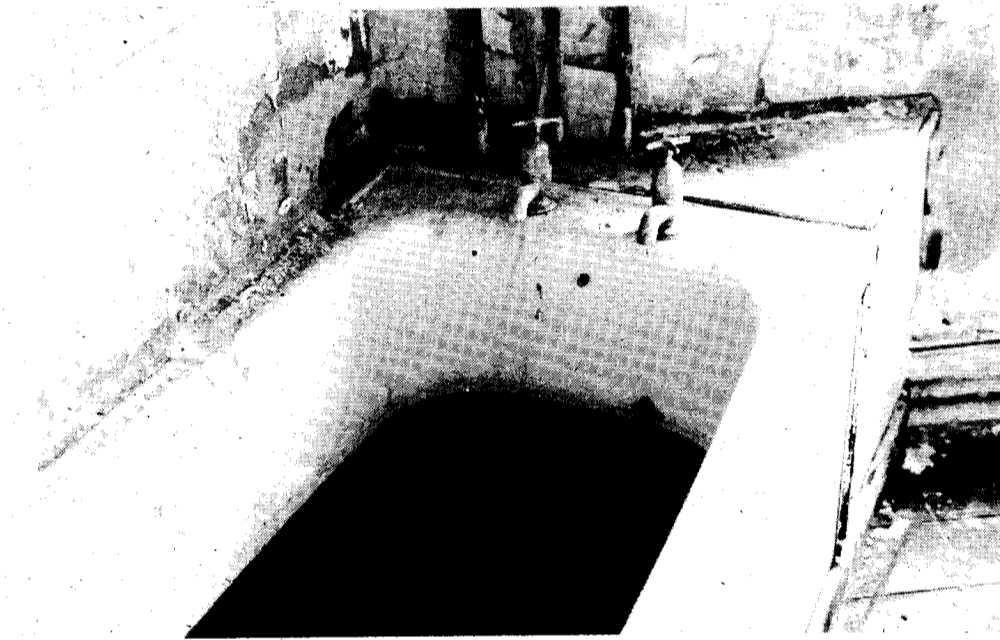
How did the TT get started? Tenants in Smith St. got in touch 18 months ago with the Coventry Workshop.

The Trades Council agreed to survey the temporary accommodation last September 100 out of 150 known properties were surveyed.

In these 100 houses there were a total of 300 children. A majority of the houses were without basic amenities—bath, hot water, inside toilet.

90% were in a state of substantial disrepair, eg. missing doors, dampness, crumbling plaster.

Where repairs are done they are very shoddy—and this is a conscious policy on the part of the Council



(although I should stress that the Council workmen are not at fault).

Most of the kids had suffered serious illness such as bronchitis and asthma.

There had been a number of suicide attempts by women, and marriages had broken up.

A meeting was held by the Trades Council last November. This led to the Temporary Tenants being formed.

How did you campaign?

We organised a petition to the Council asking for an end to different categories; full modernisation of all basically sound Council houses; a crash programme of new Council house building; and abolition of Part III houses or any other policy which treats people as third-class citizens.

The Association has now added a further three demands—an end to council house selling; expansion of the council's direct works department and an end to evictions.

We were not recognised by the Tory Council. Councillor Sawdon, the Chairman of the Housing Committee labelled us as "anti-social" and undesirable.

The Bishop of Coventry suggested that a committee be formed to look into temporary accommodation. This led to the formation of an Ad Hoc Housing Committee.

We weren't represented but we got hold of the Minutes—part of which was a confidential document admitting that 101 out of 103 temporary houses were in a state of disrepair, six were unfit for human habitation and four were irreparable.

Where did you go from there?

In February we were forced into some direct action. 15 families went to the office of Mr Lomas, the Director of Homes and Property.

We went in at 10 a.m. and decided to stay there until all 15 families got keys to decent houses.

The Housing Officers were scared stiff—they moved typewriters and even potted plants.

We knew we wouldn't get keys and demanded a meeting with Housing Chairman Tim Sawdon.

We met him at 6.00 p.m. He was very sarcastic to the tenants.

Although we were there as an association he simply went into individual cases, bringing up things like rent arrears. So we left.

We decided to picket the opticians' shop where Sawdon is the manager.

When we arrived we were met with a temporary injunction which named specifically our chairman Dave Leggat. He wasn't even there because he was in bed with a back injury.

We argued with the police that if we couldn't

stand outside the shop we would walk up and down.

That was on Saturday. On Monday Dave received a summons to appear in Court in London the next day!

He was still ill so he didn't go. Sawdon was awarded costs against us of £400. We have not paid it and our solicitor is still fighting the case.

You have brought cases against the Council. When did these start?

In late February three tenants issued summonses against the council under



Representatives of the temporary tenants handing petition to

Section 99 of the 1936 Public Health Act. We were faced with continual adjournments.

What difference did the local elections make?

None. On May 3rd the Labour Party won control of the Council. We thought that they would abolish temporary accommodation. We were so pleased we went out and got drunk to celebrate.

We went to the Labour

group to ask them to plead guilty. We were given five minutes to speak and were then shouted down. They said we were 'sub judice'.

We went there because Arthur Waugh Senior (leader of the Labour group) had actually been photographed in one of the houses back in February or thereabouts and made statements attacking Tory policy and supporting us.

So what did the Labour group decide about the cases?

They didn't agree to concede, and the first case was heard in June. It was mine, and the council fought it on a legal technicality.

I had been moved out of 12, Mason Road in April because they were modernising the whole street. The Council's solicitor said that because of this there was no case to answer.

Our solicitor said it was a criminal case and therefore the council still had a case to answer. The magistrate found the Council guilty.

A month later 40 temporary tenants went to the Housing Committee. At the end of the meeting Councillor Cairns, the present chairman, said they would discuss the cases in private. We wouldn't leave—so they did!

We took over their seats and convened a meeting of the TT. We sent a note to the chairman of the Committee (which had recon-



PHOTO: Laurence Sparham, IFL

FIGHT NUISANCE



Councillor Cairns



The housing officers are trying to put the Ombudsman off by saying that our association doesn't represent all Temporary Tenants.

We've also tried to get publicity through the local press, but the Coventry *Evening Telegraph* has consistently attacked us.

They won't mention the fact that some tenants are in mortgage rather than rent arrears—because it upsets Tory ideology.

They won't print our letters or press releases—although now Labour are in office they are more keen.

In the second case Mrs Clark asked the *Evening Telegraph* not to print her address because of her ex-husband.

They printed it—and her husband came round and smashed up her and the house.

They also refused to print the fact that the TT were responsible for bringing the court case against the council—they made out it was an individual.

The Editor has written at least four editorials attacking us.

What about the labour movement?

As I said the TT was set up with the help of the Coventry Workshop and the Trades Council.

In the second case two of the Council's witnesses were a member of NALGO and one from UCATT—the Trades Council has taken this up.

Tory Councillor Sawden is a delegate to the Trades Council from ASTMS! The Trades Council asked his branch to reconsider his delegate status!

Also we have a lot of support from Labour Party members.

Many wards have passed resolutions in support of us.

We're affiliated to the National Tenants Organisation and have strong links with the North East Tenants Association.

What is the present situation?

The third case is due to be heard on 19 November in Coventry magistrates court. We are confident of another victory.

The Council's appeal of the second case is in late December. The first one has to go to the High Court because it's on a point of law—that could take months. Every time someone

issues a summons they try to get round it by trying to repair the house or re-house.

When the cases are being heard the Council's solicitor brings out details of personal cases which are irrelevant.

It shows the law is a load of rubbish.

The councillors won't speak about the appeals because they say it's "sub judice".

We've asked for a meeting with them—with legal advisors from both sides present.

Are all the Temporary Tenants part of the Association?

The TT has well over 100 members but we don't know how many others there are.

We've asked for a full, up-to-date list—they've refused.

The officers put a block on it by saying it's a breach of confidence. At least they could sent each temporary tenant our address and phone number.

We have an elected committee and hold meetings and publish a newsletter every three weeks.

Housing

from WSL
Manifesto

1978 saw less starts on new houses than any time since the fall of the Heath government. Only 130,000 houses were completed — the lowest total for five years.

This slump is expected to get worse, while the shortage of both private and public sector housing has sent prices rocketing, with a 33% increase last year and a 20% increase expected in 1979.

The average price of a house is now over £20,000, making nonsense of Labour's fine talk of easy mortgages and help for first-time buyers.

But Tory policies — laying waste council housing with half-price sales, and slashing the housing budget — would rapidly drive these prices even higher.

Profits

In either case, while workers struggle to afford a roof over their heads, the privately-owned developers, construction firms, contractors, banks and suppliers (many of them major sponsors of the Tory Party) continue to rake in huge profits. Building societies continue to funnel billions of pounds of money from small savers into preserving the

existing anarchic system.

The socialist answer demands the struggle to lift the lid on the wheeling and dealing, the profiteering and corruption at every level of the house-building programme by opening the books to show beyond any doubt the necessity for action to force the nationalisation of the large holdings of land, the development firms, the construction industry, the banks and the building societies.

Such nationalisation must be without any compensation to capitalist owners, but with complete protection for small savers. The resources liberated must be placed under the management of elected trade union committees, with the task of implementing a crash house-building programme, providing new jobs for the 300,000 unemployed building workers.

Unused buildings and office blocks must be requisitioned and converted for housing and other socially useful purposes.

Local authority direct works departments must be expanded to carry out necessary maintenance and renovation of existing council and other housing.

Only under a socialist planned economy can the anarchy of the capitalist market and the plunder of profiteering be eliminated, and housing be provided on the basis of social need.

Our main problems are transport and baby-sitters but even so we get good attendances.

This is especially important for people thinking of taking voluntary redundancy. It's just not worth it.

Finally, how do you see your fight in relation to the wider fight against the attacks of the Tory government?

That's very important. I was told the other day that many Talbot workers got into difficulties with rent and mortgage payments during their strike.

As I said earlier many of the temporary tenants are in that position because of unemployment or redundancy.

There are going to be more temporary tenants as unemployment rises.

The Trades Council Housing Sub-Committee is arranging for us to speak at union branches to warn people of what is likely to happen to them.

Since this interview it has emerged that the Labour group have voted to pay Tory councillor Tim Sawdon £100 towards the £400 he won from the court action but has not received because of the appeal.

This decision so outraged members of the Labour Party in Coventry—particularly Coventry South East CLP—that the decision has now been rescinded.

vened in another committee room) to come and explain why they were appealing.

They said that they had not decided yet. Their legal advisors were asking the magistrates why they had found 12, Mason Road a statutory nuisance. They would then consult with barristers about an appeal to the High Court.

We suggested that the money they were wasting on the preparation of an appeal could be put to better use by starting to clear the two-year backlog of council house repairs which exists at the present time.

Six weeks ago they decided definitely to appeal to the High Court.

On September 11 the second case was heard and won. The council was ordered to repair the house within six weeks and pay £400 costs, to be divided between the solicitor, the Environmental Health Office and a photographer who helped prepare the evidence.

Did this decision make them change their minds?

No. Three weeks after this second case the Council decided to appeal to the Crown Court.

In this case they are appealing over the decision, not over a point of law as in my case.

After the decision to appeal we sent letters to all Labour councillors condemning their action.

What's your attitude to the Labour group?

We have been used as political pawns. The Labour group previously supported us and urged us on.

Now they are opposing us. We've been stabbed in the back. We're disillusioned with the Labour Council.

The Labour group said they wouldn't use Part III as a punishment but it's still used.

In one case a woman who'd been a "temporary tenant" for 15 years was told by the council that her home (see photo) was wanted for modernisation.

The Council told her if she didn't move to a home which was little better they would move her compulsorily.

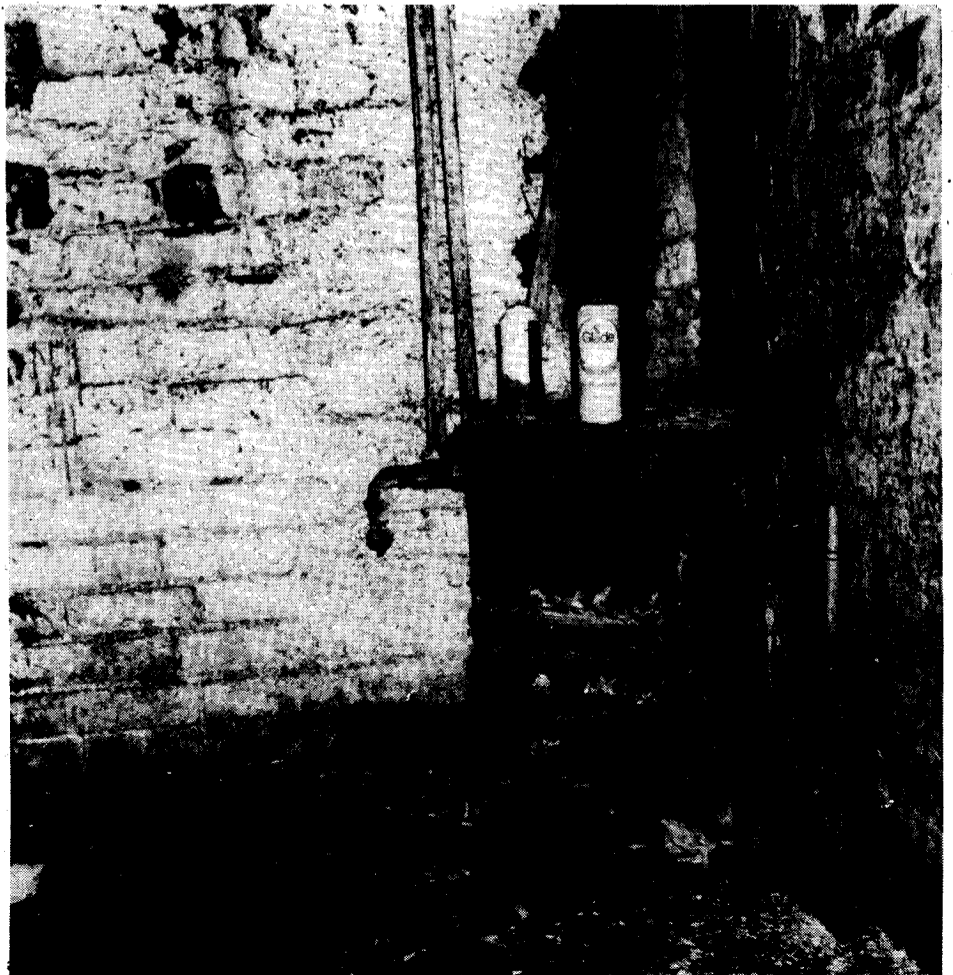
In our opinion the Labour Council is as bad, if not worse than, the Tories.

Most of our tenants have voted Labour all their lives and they're supposed to represent working people.

What other channels have you tried?

Back in February we complained to the local government Ombudsman that Coventry Council weren't keeping temporary homes up to standard and were not complying with the 1977 Housing (Homeless Persons) Act.

The Ombudsman has made preliminary investigations and decided to hold a full enquiry—which is still going on—it will take months.



COMIC OPERA POLICIES FROM SPARTACIST DREAM-MACHINE

Allegations levelled at the International Spartacist Tendency that it has no perspective to offer the working class appear to have done it less than justice.

The British section of the IST has clearly been doing some highly original work on the development of Marxist theory—and as a result of their exertions, are now able to offer BL workers a truly unique way forward against the Edwardes plan.

The November issue of *Spartacist Britain* turned over its main story to that perspective, under the headline 'Don't pay for the bosses' mess!'

Unfortunately it is a perspective that has more to do with French farce and comic opera than socialism.

Upbraided

The Workers Socialist League is upbraided for calling for occupation of threatened plants and blacking to stop the moving of work.

The IST in return calls for the occupation of every Leyland plant; accuses the WSL of 'parochialism'; and solemnly "reveals" the unsurprising fact that the Edwardes plan is an attack on all Leyland workers.

The WSL would, of course, be in favour of an occupation of all Leyland plants.

We would be in favour of a strike throughout the engineering industry.

Our strategy is even more ambitious—it consists in politically preparing and building towards a general strike in which the full strength of the working class is mobilised to bring down the Tories and press through the struggle for the socialist overthrow of capitalism.

We are no defenders of the divisions between crafts and workplaces which impede the united action of the working class.

But, unlike the IST, we are capable of observing that *without a fight in the plants singled out for closure*, the chances of supporting occupations throughout Leyland are nil.

Spark

We are also capable of seeing that the 'narrow parochialism' which 'has encouraged the workers of St. Benedict's Hospital to take it over because it was threatened with closure, could be a spark for a generalised struggle throughout the health service.

Does the IST scorn such calls for occupying threatened hospitals linked to calls for strikes in their defence?

Will they now call *instead* for the occupation of all hospitals—to avoid "parochialism"?

No doubt further speculative debates will take place within the IST on this point.

Meanwhile, in the real world, the WSL and militants throughout BL are forced to fight in practice for supporting action to impede Edwardes' closure plan and create conditions for a generalised struggle.



The blacking of work transferred from the threatened plants—an action scorned by the Sparts—means in practice fighting to mobilise BL workers, who have been told their jobs are "guaranteed" if they accept scab work, into refusing to accept it.

It is no easy fight. And, so far it has been spearheaded at the Cowley Assembly Plant, where the WSL has its strongest forces.

Never-never land

But, determined at all costs to find a policy that is different from everyone else, the Spartacists' article lifts off abruptly from the real world to their own, unique, never-never land.

Although much of the article is given over to pointing out that BL cannot be "saved" by alternative strategies put forward by the Stalinists and TGWU leaders, the same article is capable of telling us, straight-faced that it can be saved by Ford workers!

"Leyland workers' brothers at Ford, for example, are right now pursuing their own claim."

"They must combine their fight to win much higher wages and better working conditions throughout the industry."

So the fantastic vision becomes even more far-fetched. Now the (male!) workers at Fords are allotted the daunting task of unilaterally saving the jobs at threatened plants in BL, Chrysler/Talbot, and "throughout the industry"!

Flight of fancy

It would be amusing to see a Spartacist advocate such a position at a Dagenham mass meeting!

Meanwhile the IST has become so swept away by its

flight of fancy that it pauses briefly to describe the WSL policy as "leftist... social democratic cretinism".

And what is this social-democratic cretinism? The IST tells us:

"The centrist WSL advances the demand for opening BL's books to confirm the necessity for the nationalisation, without compensation of the entire automotive industry and the banks if jobs are to be protected."

(*Socialist Press*, 17 October) Then (ignoring the WSL's specific mention of the banks) the Sparts go on to argue against this demand saying it amounts only to "chauvinism" and the call for import controls (a call which the WSL has consistently lambasted).

Having attacked the WSL for its "reformist, inherently chauvinist formula" the Sparts go on to reveal the full horrors of their own policies.

Intellectual curiosity

They are, they admit, in favour of opening the books of BL. But they see this *not*, like the WSL, as a means to spur on working class action against the capitalist exploiters and create conditions for the seizure of the banks. This, say the Sparts, is "reformism".

No, these "communists" call for the opening of the books simply to satisfy their own intellectual curiosity—"to see how much Leyland really has been driven into the ground by the irrationalities of capitalist mismanagement" and how many "perks and baubles" it is hiding!

Poor Trotsky! What a piece of reformist nonsense he produced in the Transitional Programme. All that talk of "The right to employment is the only serious right left to a

worker in a society based upon exploitation."

Didn't he know capitalism cannot guarantee any such thing? Why call for the expropriation of the banks when—with the aid of the Sparts—he could have come up with a *real, revolutionary demand?*

"If BL can be set on its feet, let the bosses try it—at their own expense. If not, the plants and assets which the workers have seized [!] should be disposed of by the workers—not the capitalist state, not the bondholders—and all the money from the sale of assets be divided equitably on the basis of seniority among BL workers."

(*Spartacist Britain* No. 16, November 1979, (original emphasis).

It is this uniquely Spartacist demand which shows the true genius of the IST dream-machine, in which reformist illusions, sectarian frenzy and petty bourgeois anarchistic tendencies are given equal rein.

First, BL workers should occupy all the plants.

Next, for form's sake, they should have a quick look at the books.

Then they should demand that the BL management try to set it on its feet at their own expense—while knowing, of course, that this is impossible.

Then, the workers must sell the plants and assets to some gullible buyer and divide up the money 'equitably'—according to the old syndicalist principle of "seniority".

In this way 160,000 jobs in BL and 500,000 outside can be disposed of; and every worker gets a pay-off to take to the dole queue.

At one time there used to be a popular line amongst Paris con-artists. They "sold"—sorry "disposed of"—the Eiffel Tower to tourists.



BL workers marching against the Edwardes plan

Those that were caught generally went to jail.

Nor were the unfortunate buyers in any position to enjoy the fruits of ownership—since the old owners were not convinced of their "title deeds".

Yet buyers will doubtless line up to buy the bankrupt BL plants from the Spartacists ("One conveyor line, old and worn out—going cheap. Also 300 half built Marinas. Quick sale needed").

Overcapacity

Quite what this imaginary new buyer would do with his bargain-priced BL factories in a period of overcapacity throughout the car industry has not yet been worked out by the IST.

Indeed the policy is carefully stated to avoid embarrassing parallels with the moves by the Stalinist leaders of the UCS work-in and reformist leaders in endless plant closures ever since to find a "new buyer" for their doomed plant.

Of course one problem would be that capitalism as a whole would remain intact.

Anyone bold enough to buy a "seized" factory secondhand from the IST would need a permanent and massive workers' defence guard to protect it from the shareholders and the state (possibly providing jobs for the old workforce?)

And the workforce, dividing up the spoils of this con-trick of all time might find the forces of the state—the police fraud squad

would have something to say about it all.

But these are details—no doubt to be sorted out in the next issue of *Spartacist Britain*.

Hot dog stand

What matter whether the question of property relations has been settled? Take the money and run!

Armed with this new wealth BL workers can take their places at the back of the dole queue—or use their assets to open a little shop or a hot-dog stand somewhere.

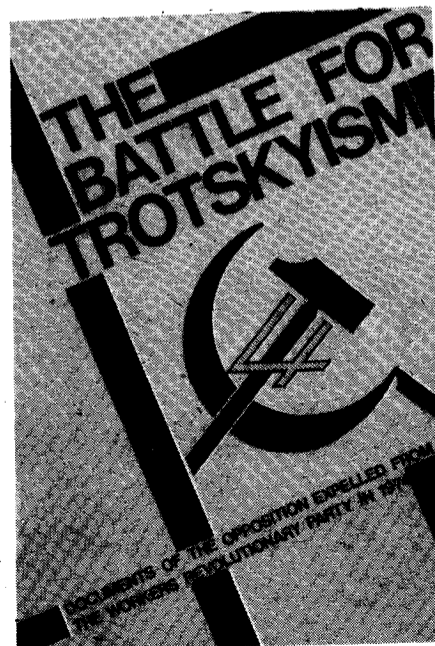
Indeed IST policy—concocted by petty bourgeois for petty bourgeois—has all the ingredients to turn Britain into a nation of shopkeepers!

In essence the whole flight of fancy is no more than a leftist and laughable form of BL's own voluntary redundancy scheme.

Beneath the "revolutionary" phraseology is a deeply reactionary, anti-working class content that offers Leyland workers only total confusion, demoralisation and defeat.

But it gives the Sparts the position they have always sought—*uniquely rotten, and uniquely wrong!*

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ERNIE STUBBINS reviews "Beneath the City Streets" by Peter Laurie, published by Panther at £1.95.

Beneath your city streets

Recently making a welcome reappearance in the bookshops is Peter Laurie's *Beneath the City Streets*.

This is one of the essential books for socialists seeking to build up a picture of state preparations against the working class.

The publication of this revised edition is one result of the ABC trial.

If they had been convicted for the systematic use of public information, it is doubtful, to say the least, that Laurie's book would ever have been reprinted.

The book is a classic of 'counter-government research'.

Laurie, a former writer for *New Scientist* and the *Sunday Times* among other jobs, has devoted a great deal of time and energy to seeking out and collating as much information as possible on the government's preparations for war and/or revolution.

In this task he has achieved an impressive body of work, even if *Socialist Press* readers will be less interested in his political conclusions.

The best known, or best remembered, sections of Laurie's first edition are the attempts to identify and locate the components of the British government's system of citadels and the hardened channels of communication between them.

Many of his starting points were provided by official publications released in the short lived phase of euphoria at the end of the Second World War.

These made it possible to recognise the importance of the systems of deep tunnels under London.

From this point on, Laurie's investigations rival the best detective stories.

Official reports and public records are sifted for the smallest clues.

Rumours are checked and traced.

Where nothing seems to provide a clue, he tried even wild guesses, which sometimes throw up new links in the chain.

He puts together an impressive picture of a system designed and built to protect tens of thousands of members of the ruling class and the state bureaucracy against nuclear attack.

Although it is possible to quarrel with details of these sections, overall Laurie is at his most convincing here.

Such a system has been established, and apparently without democratic approval.

The very existence of such a system leads us to question the commonly held notion of nuclear war as destructive of all human life on the planet.



Thatcher

Laurie sets out to investigate the probable effects of nuclear attack by the USSR on Britain, using as much information as is available on the effects of blast, radiation and post attack disruption, combined with public estimates of the weapon stocks of the nuclear powers.

His conclusion is that life in Britain would be far from extinct after nuclear attack.

Indeed, casualties might not exceed 20 million.

In such conditions a well prepared ruling class could expect, with military support, to re-establish its control in a fairly short time span.

Although in the early sections Laurie clearly recognises that these state preparations are made as much with internal as external enemies in mind (as witness the protracted death agony of even the tinpot Somoza regime in Nicaragua), as the book proceeds he seems more and more concerned with war, and less and less with revolution.

In fact, most of the components of the home defence systems other than the exotic hardware, are much more likely to be used in civil than military emergencies.

One of the most important, but least well known of these systems is the network of regional and local controls which can be brought into play by various emergency powers of government.

Striking feature

The most striking feature of this network is its use of exist-

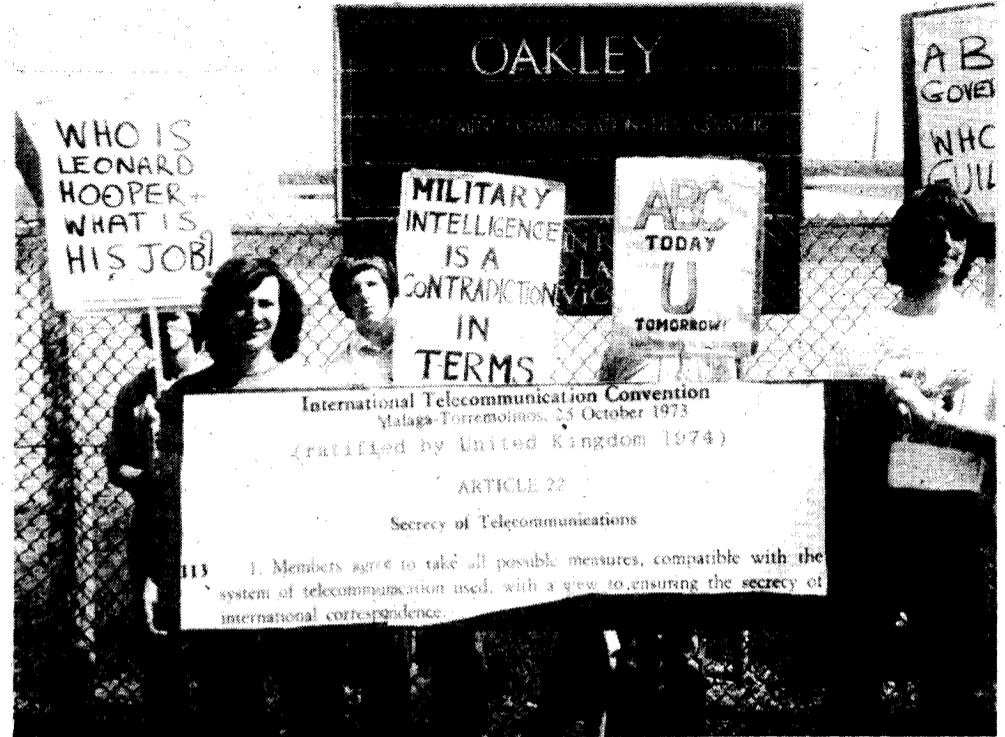


PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report.

ABC campaigners rally outside top secret communications headquarters in Cheltenham

ing facilities, particularly local authority staff and assets, for emergency purposes.

Emergency powers in fact fall to the chief officers of local authorities, and democratically elected councillors could find themselves imprisoned, or even executed, by their erstwhile employees!

Clearly this system is aimed much more at the maintenance of civil power than resistance to invasion or attack.

Laurie's political conclusion is that 'democracy' falls before the conspiratorial preparations of the military and bureaucratic elites which proliferate in the context of threatened nuclear war.

implies, might enable 'democracy' to be defended.

Our view would be different. We do not regard military and technical secret preparations by the state as an unfortunate but curable ailment of a democratic society.

We recognise these symptoms as essential parts of the society in which we live, and its world context.

Democratic freedoms

The democratic freedoms which Laurie seeks to defend have all been wrung from the ruling classes in the past.

The economic crisis is ending the scope for that kind of liberalism, and key elements in the ruling class clearly understand this.

Their only hope for survival rests on the defeat of the working class, in the capitalist states as much as in the deformed workers' states.

Laurie's position eventually lines the workers' interests up with those of the ruling class in seeking war with the Soviet Union—while of course the real enemy is the capitalists at home.

Revolutionaries however can make use of Laurie's researches in propaganda for an independent proletarian policy—fighting to abolish the power of the ruling class in the capitalist countries, while defending the nationalised property relations in the deformed workers' states, and struggling for the political overthrow of the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy.

Letter

Trotskyism and the Labour Party

Dear Editor,

In the *Socialist Press* of February 14 Jeff Harris wrote about what he described as the anti-working class nature of the Labour Party. If this is indeed an accurate description of that party clearly there would be little point in being inside it. But is this accurate?

In fact trade unions cast the overwhelming majority of votes at the Annual Conference. The majority of the Executive's 29 members are elected by trade union votes: 12 members by the unions alone, five women and the treasurer by the whole conference, in which union votes predominate.

Moreover, the constituency parties, which have 7 members, are themselves composed of delegates from branches of trade unions, co-op organisations, etc., as well as individual members. A large part of the party's income comes from the unions.

More accountable

At this year's annual conference the votes of unions, including the transport and engineering workers', ensured that steps were taken towards changing the constitution to make Labour Members of Parliament more accountable to the party. The votes of the unions decide the policy of the party and whether it is transformed into a more effective instrument to achieve socialism.

Trotsky saw clearly the working class nature of the Labour Party and its relationship with the trade unions:

In 1925 in *Where is Britain Going?* he wrote about the "numerically powerful Labour Party based on the trade unions", and how "the Labour Party grew out of the parliamentary representation of the trade unions, in other words, out of the purely class organisations of employed labour." And: "If one reflects on the history of the origins of the Labour Party, it becomes clear that from the trade union aspect the party is as it were its political section." The Labour Party had grown up "as the direct extension of the trade unions."

Controlling position

What then is the correct attitude of socialists, of a revolutionary socialist party, to the Labour Party?

Also in *Where is Britain Going?* Trotsky wrote that: "The Communist Party will take that place in relation to the Labour Party which at present is occupied by the Independent Labour Party."

What was that position? "As the absolute majority on the Executive Committee and in the other more important institutions of the British Labour Party belongs to the Independent Labour Party, the latter forms a governing faction in the Labour Party." The ILP occupied the "directing role" in the Labour Party. The ILP, "numbering 30,000 members, obtains a controlling position in an organisation based through the trade unions on millions of members."



COHSE delegates at the Labour Party conference

However, unlike the ILP, the Communist Party "can only come to the head of the working class in the measure that the latter comes into irreconcilable antagonism with the conservative bureaucracy in the trade unions and in the Labour Party."

The revolutionary socialist party comes into irreconcilable antagonism with the present leaders of the industrial and political wings of the trade unions by being active *inside* both wings of the movement.

Trotsky wrote that: "A revolutionary Labour Party, based on the trade unions, will together with them become a mighty instrument for their restoration to health and their uplift." He foresaw that "only under the pressure" of the trade unions "will the Labour Party, after radically renewing its leadership, be transformed into a revolutionary force."

Peter McIntyre should therefore have spoken in the *Socialist Press* of June 6 about the

betrayals, not of the TUC and the Labour Party, but of *their present leaders*. The difference is vital. Marxists are not at all opposed to either the industrial or political wings of the trade unions. On the contrary they are their best defenders.

The revolutionary socialist party does not stand in opposition to either wing of the trade unions but comes to the head of both wings.

In various writings in the 1930s Trotsky argued in favour of membership of the Labour Party.

For instance in 1935 he wrote (*Writings, 1935-36*, p.142): "The policy of the opposition in the Labour Party is unspeakably bad. But this only means that it is necessary to counterpose to it inside the Labour Party another, a correct Marxist policy." Yes, *inside* the Labour Party.

A number of other quotations, not directly related to the Labour Party or Britain, illustrate the essential point.

In 1936 Trotsky wrote (*ibid.*, p.289): "You need the independent party not to compete in a small way with the mass organisations, but to *win them from inside*. That is the only way." And (*ibid.*, p.290):

"The great lesson of Bolshevism is the intransigence of the party toward reformism and centrism and the greatest flexibility towards the mass organisations. Without the first quality, the party inevitably becomes the instrument of capital; without the second, the party remains a sterile sect for-

ever. It is the synthesis of iron hardness and extreme flexibility that assures success."

Further (*ibid.*, p.321): "We need the greatest ideological steadfastness and the sharpest and clearest revolutionary thinking not in order to isolate ourselves from the existing mass organisations in a sectarian manner, but rather in order to work effectively in their midst without losing our perspective."

Of course all those who are opposed to Britain being transformed into a socialist democracy do not want socialists to act effectively.

They would like socialists to stay out of the mass organisations.

However a tendency which aspires to become the revolutionary socialist party capable of leading the working class to victory cannot allow itself to be diverted away from working in the mass movement, including the political wing of the trade unions.

David Harris, 30 October, 1979 Sussex

Many of the points made by comrade Harris are evidently correct. But we would stress that, while *Socialist Press* argues for socialists to fight for a principled programme within both the unions and the Labour Party we do *not* envisage the Labour Party being transformed into an effective instrument to achieve socialism or a "revolutionary force". Rather we fight to build a Marxist party to serve the purpose—which will of course eventually include elements that break from the Labour Party.

INDUSTRIAL NEWS

Craft unions sell Shotton jobs



Corby workers

Having been pressurised into a verbal call for national action to defend thousands of jobs at the threatened Corby and Shotton steelworks, the industry's major union, the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, has been left in the lurch by craft union bureaucrats and the GMWU.

ISTC leader Bill Sirs, embarrassed by mass opposition to BSC's closure plans, had called for a national overtime ban and a programme of selective and one-day strikes to oppose the closures.

While such action left out the necessary fight for occupation of the Corby and Shotton plants, and all-out strike action, it would undoubtedly have a

dramatic impact on steel production and amount to the first national official action against a closure.

But it proved too much for Sirs' fellow bureaucrats—particularly blastfurnacemen's leader Hector Smith.

Refusing to make any pretence of defending the independent interests of the working class, Smith has been the most outspoken advocate of speed-up, demanning and voluntary redundancies in BSC.

Bluff

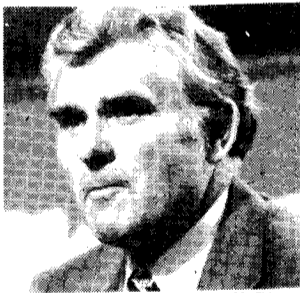
Under his leadership blastfurnacemen at Shotton have declared their support for BSC's closure plans, and the NUB Executive seems certain to refuse to participate in Sirs' proposed national action.

GMWU members at Corby have also been led to vote against any resistance to the closure.

So it looks more and more as if Sirs' increasingly hollow-sounding bluff about the ISTC going it alone if necessary is likely to be called.

And if this is the case no worker should be surprised to see him engage in a miserable climbdown.

The only tangible way in which such a betrayal can be combatted is if the Corby and Shotton workforce take a categorical decision to occupy their plants and demand national supporting action.



Bill Sirs

"Union" shuns TUC

The vote by the Royal College of Nursing not to affiliate to the TUC was, on the surface, a narrow one.

The recent RCN conference defeated the proposal by 3,742 to 2,849, well short of the two thirds majority which was needed.

The RCN has stood as a bastion of anti-unionism, tying nurses in chains of 'professionalism'—a euphemism for servility.

Both NUPE and COHSE were rightly committed to oppose the RCN's application if it came, but elements of the TUC must have been hoping for a different result, to strengthen their grip.

What the RCN in the TUC would mean can be seen from the way the motion was

proposed at the AGM.

Howard Hoare, President of the RCN Birmingham Centre, (according to the RCN paper *Nursing Standard*):

"Said that the RCN was the voice for nurses and must not stand in isolation. The TUC was a moderating force which also mediates between unions and calls off strikes."

Even this shrewd estimate of the role of the TUC was not sufficient to have a majority into voting for affiliation.

Management tool

The RCN's rapid growth has been pointed to as proof of nurses' distaste for unions. But the allegiance of nurses to the body can be seen to be less than enthusiastic.

The total vote on this major question by postal ballot (for and against) was 6,591—or about 4% of the total claimed membership of 150,000.

The elections for the ruling council received a poll of about a third of that!

Needless to say there are no press witch-hunts against a leadership which claims to speak for 150,000 yet is elected by fewer than 2% of the membership.

Of 50,000 student nurses offered an 'advisory' vote only 377 took it up!

The RCN is a management tool with no real grip over the mass of nurses.

Where strong union campaigns have been launched they have shown the RCN can be wiped out.

No fight at

Firestone

Further steps to turn the former industrial area of North London into a wasteland were announced last week with the projected closure of the 51-year old Firestone tyre plant at Brentford—close by the defunct AEC plant.

All 1,500 workers face redundancy in the closure, which the company blame on financial losses on their UK operation and on the disappearance of the market for cross-ply tyres.

Right wing union leaders at the plant—whose industrial relations history is described as "impeccable" seem decided not even to go through the motions of opposing the closure as did Dunlop stewards in the closure of the Speke tyre plant.

They accept without question that Firestone should solve its crisis at their expense, and are to concentrate simply on negotiating redundancy payments.

With leaders so willing to see the bosses' point of view it hardly needs a manager to issue the final notice of closure.

YOU SHOULD JOIN US!

With workers by the thousand taking to the streets to oppose Tory policies there is plainly no lack of militancy in the organised working class.

Yet the existing trade union bureaucrats and Labour leaders—whether right or 'left'—have no perspective to offer those workers prepared to fight in defence of jobs, living standards, social services and democratic rights.

These can only be defended through policies which start from the independent interests of the working class, which, as an international class, has nothing to gain and everything to lose from attempts to restore the profitability of their "own" employing class.

In a period where the contra-

dictions of the anarchic capitalist system force the wholesale closure and destruction of the productive forces of society, only a socialist planned economy on a world scale offers a way forward.

To achieve such a perspective a leadership is needed which, in today's struggles fights to advance workers beyond trade union militancy, protest politics and illusions that capitalism can be abolished through parliament.

The Workers Socialist League is a Trotskyist movement fighting day in and day out to build such a principled leadership in the working class in Britain and internationally.

We invite all readers of Socialist Press to seek more details of the WSL and its work and to join us in the struggle for socialism.

Please send me more details of the Workers Socialist League.

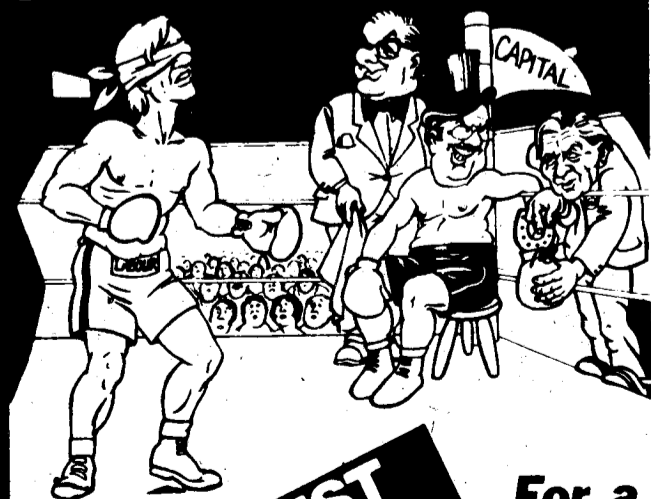
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Charing X strike solid

The strike by AUEW and TGWU members at London's Charing Cross Hospital has entered its fifth week. It remains solid despite a stepping up of the press and TV witch-hunt.

The strike is over the dismissal of two mechanical engineers who refused to carry out work normally done by unskilled labourers as part of a work to rule in protest at dangerously low manning levels and general cuts in service.

Support for the strike both inside and out of the hospital continues to grow.

CIVIL SERVANTS TAKE UP CUTS FIGHT

Last Tuesday two civil servants, one CPSA and one SCPS member in Kennington DHSS office, London were suspended for blacking the work of casual staff, part of the CPSA action against the civil service cuts.

Thousands of civil servants throughout the country immediately walked out in protest at

the suspensions. 5,000 walked out in London, and 20,000 in the rest of the country.

Strikes and walkouts continued throughout the week as nine more CPSA members were suspended on Wednesday and Thursday of last week.

Many government offices in Scotland were closed by massive walkouts in response to the suspension of 200 civil servants

at the National Savings Bank headquarters at Glasgow.

They were suspended for blacking work done on overtime.

This week further suspensions are threatened at Kennington DHSS and at Glasgow National Savings Bank headquarters.

The Tory government want a major confrontation with the CPSA and SCPS now in order to

break their strength and so ensure that there is no resistance to the next round of civil service cuts—to be announced at the end of the month.

Instead of putting up a fight, the CPSA Broad Left leadership are sticking to their limited work to rule consisting of an overtime ban, a ban on temporary promotion and substitution, a policy of one person, one job,

and a ban on casual staff. They are also restricting action against suspensions to protest walkouts and one-day strikes.

CPSA and SCPS members must demand that their leadership immediately organise all out indefinite strike action to stop the cuts and defend the unions' victimised members.

Coventry calls conference for councillors

On December 8 Coventry council will be hosting a conference of Labour Councils called to "organise a national campaign against the Tory cuts".

As we have seen with the Temporary Tenants in Coventry (see centre pages) the same people who called this conference have reached such depths of degeneration that

when faced with a court decision against them under Section 99 of the Public Health Act their gut response is to appeal to the courts against that decision.

If this is not enough to put their supposed anti-Toryism in absolutely clear terms then the decisions they took in September to implement cuts ordered by the last Labour government should make their real position clear.

Among other cuts they voted £2 million off this year's education budget.

The purpose of the conference on December 8 is to organise a strong campaign of complaints to the Tories.

Coventry councillors have called this conference to avoid a real struggle on the cuts.

The Labour councillors have made it clear that they are not prepared to go it alone against the Tories.

The task of those who want to fight the cuts is to mobilise those who the cuts will affect—the trade unions, community groups, tenants associations—to fight the cuts being made by the council now.

This means demanding that the Labour council refuses to implement the Tory cuts, refuses to raise rates or rents and thus challenges the Tories head on.

Coventry Trades Council is calling a mass demonstration and lobby of the December 8 conference.

LEYLAND

From front page

employer.

Edwardes' move relies heavily on the stage-managed 7-7-1 majority for his plan achieved in the recent management ballot: and BL will now cash in on the anti-communist hysteria whipped up by the "Fourth Man" spy case. As we go to press it is clear

rights is involved.

The whole Longbridge workforce showed they understood this—and immediately walked out as soon as the sacking was announced.

BL workers elsewhere, smarting at the pay "offer" are ready to take action, if given a lead.

Demands must be made for full support from the AUEW Executive. Their recommendation for a 'yes' vote in the ballot is being quoted by BL as justification for sacking Robinson, whom management accuse of seeking to disrupt Edwardes so-called "survival plan".

And TGWU members throughout BL—whose official union policy remains in opposition to the 13 closures and essentially identical to the line of the Combine Committee booklet—must also be given an official call to take action.

Only an all-out strike in defence of Robinson throughout BL can repel this fundamental challenge to trade union rights and lay the basis for the defence of jobs and working conditions in the coming period.



that preparations are in hand for a major witch-hunt in which Robinson, a leading CP member, will be pilloried in the press as a "Marxist".

In reality Socialist Press has frequently been forced to combat his politics of collaboration with the imposition of "workers' participation" and corporate bargaining in BL. But in Robinson's victimisation a basic issue of trade union

Save B'ham hospital!

A Birmingham Area Health Authority working party report has recommended the closure of the John Conolly Psychiatric Hospital at Rubery near Longbridge.

The working party are trying to mask the closure by calling their proposals "a change of use".

However, this "change" would involve the transfer of the John Conolly patients and administration to the Rubery Hill Hospital, which is on the same site.

This would lead to the loss of at least half of the John Conolly beds, and an added burden on other hospitals such as Highcroft and Hollymoor as well as on Rubery Hill.

The John Conolly Joint Trades Union Committee has leafleted most of the Health Service union branches in the area together with a number of industrial branches, notably the BL plant at Longbridge, asking for support for a "model resolution" which asks the AHA to reconsider its proposals.

But the 427 Branch of COHSE, whilst supporting these proposals, points out quite

correctly that they are not likely to be adequate in saving the hospital.

Moral argument has not yet saved a single hospital.

Instead the 427 Branch of COHSE calls on the staff at John Conolly to follow the example of workers at St. Benedicts in London and pledge themselves to occupy the hospital and take over its administration from the management.

Only this can prevent the gradual run-down of services and the gradual transfer of administration to Rubery Hill.

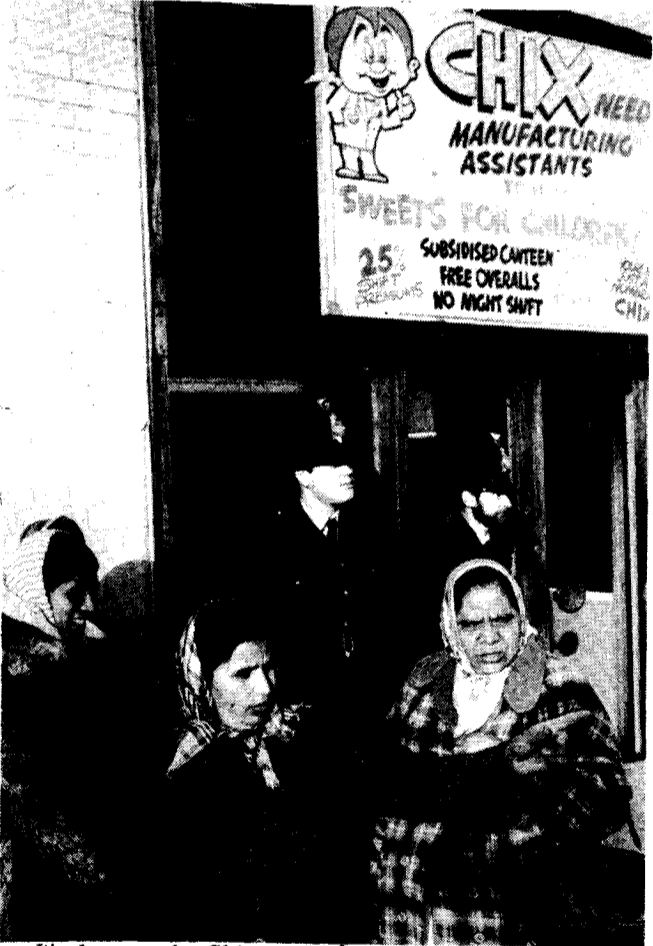
At the same time workers at Rubery Hill and at other hospitals, ambulancemen and porters must take the necessary steps to prevent a transfer of patients from the John Conolly.

It is also essential to gather pledges of supporting strike action from other sections of industry and the public sector.

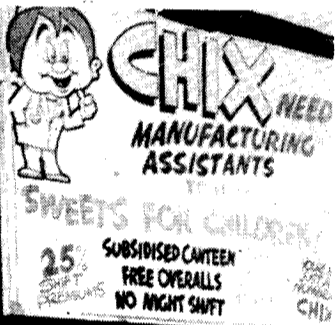
The attacks upon Leyland and the John Conolly are part and parcel of the same thing.

Leyland workers and hospital workers share a common battle.

The answer must be occupy all threatened plants and hospitals and organise supporting strike action.



Workers at the Chix sweet factory continue their strike for union recognition. Information from and messages of support and donations to: M. Anwar, 271 Goodman Park, Slough.



Students spur teachers' fight

The Tory County Council in Leicestershire have now spelt out their plans for further cuts.

Having already pioneered the attack on school meals with their "experimental" snack system which set out to force students to pay up to 60p for meals, they have now moved on to a more general attack on the public services as a whole.

Thrown out

Immediately this means the closure of one day nursery, the cutting of the teaching force by over 200 by April, a major reduction in money for resources in schools, the scrapping of all special clothing allowances and the threatened closure of one ward in a local hospital.

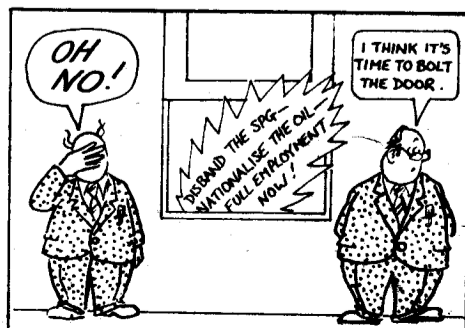
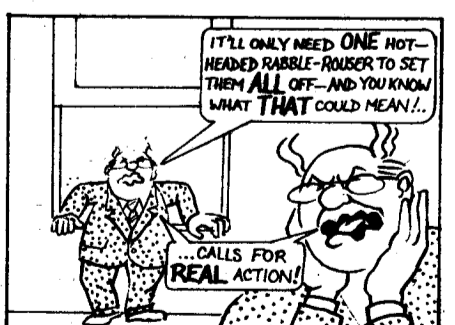
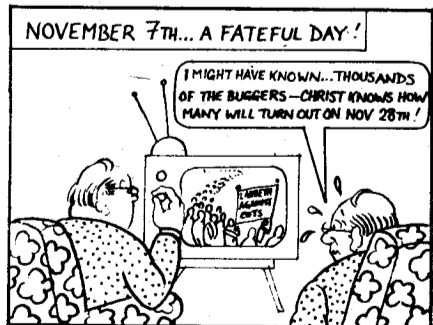
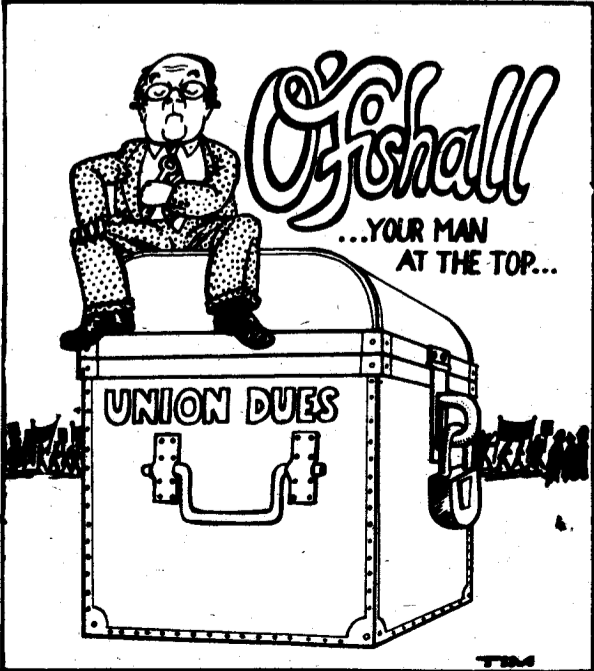
Despite all this, and the announcement of even bigger

cuts to come, the local trade union leadership have shown themselves primarily concerned to hold back any action against the cuts.

Moves for strike action in the teachers' union were thrown out at Divisional level, and even the milk-and-water policy of no-cover for absent or non-replaced staff has been limited to only 40 schools and stifled in a straightjacket of bureaucratic procedures.

The ability of these bureaucrats to hold back the movement has, however, been rapidly eroded by events.

The occupation of the Polytechnic by local students in opposition to the cuts, and their decision to strike on November 28 has prompted a decision by the city NUT to urge strike action, and demand a national levy of members in preparation for this.



SOCIALIST PRESS



Khomeini calls Carter's bluff

Full scale economic war is now raging between the US imperialists and the reactionary forces of Khomeini's 'Revolutionary Council'.

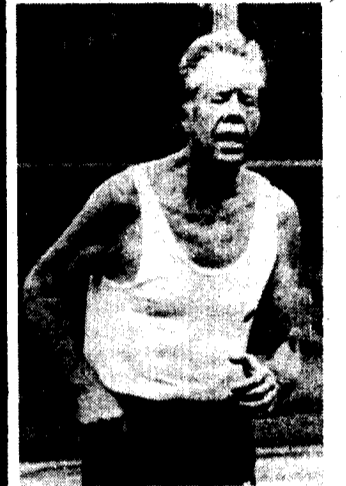
In this conflict, each side has already resorted to aggressive measures which at the same time dangerously undermine its own position.

Since the occupation of the US embassy in Tehran, one outflanking manoeuvre has been set in motion after another as Carter has gambled desperately to call the bluff of the counter-revolutionary regime in Iran.

Iranian threats of a halt to oil supplies were checked by Carter's embargo on direct imports of Iranian oil.

Iranian threats to withdraw all funds from the US were checked by Carter's freezing of virtually all Iranian assets in the US, and in subsidiaries of US companies.

The escalation has continued with the ban on all sales of oil to US companies that have been imposed by Khomeini's government.



Carter

Carter's initial embargo was largely a publicity gesture; the US imperialists expected to shunt the supplies they needed from one port to another at their convenience, while they exploited the opportunity to drive on with the 'energy conservation' programme. In this scenario, the crisis was to be brief with negligible long-term effects on US oil supplies.

But Carter's bluff has been called in turn. The move to freeze Iranian assets was a desperate step that will have profound and enduring effects on the economic crisis of imperialism.

It may in the short-term produce a situation where oil companies are forced to stop making payments to Iran in dollars, and switch to other currencies—thus weakening the dollar still further.

More generally, this asset-freezing has alarmed other states with substantial holdings in

Cont'd page 2

St Benedicts leads the way ACTION NOT WORDS TO STOP THE CUTS

Shortly before the giant 80,000-strong demonstration against the Labour government's cuts in November 1976, when hospital closures were still a comparative rarity, the workers at the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital staged a work-in to save it from closure.

Despite the fact that the only attention given to the work-in by union officials consisted in restoring the control of the hospital administrators

and ensuring that the struggle remained as isolated as possible, the action struck a chord of sympathy in the London labour movement.

Time and again workers in the public sector and in local private industry showed their readiness to take supporting strike action if the hospital were closed down.

And for over two years such action succeeded in defending the EGA, until eventually isolation and demoralisation at the lack of any clear perspective for upgrading the hospital created the conditions for the Tories to close it down.

Now, on the eve of another massive demonstration on November 28, 1979, the staff at St Benedicts geriatric hospital in Tooting have staged an occupation, set up a picket rota, and declared their intention to fight for the preservation of vital facilities.

The St Benedicts action takes place under very different conditions. Hospital cuts and closures are being announced virtually every day throughout the country as simply a part of the Tory offensive on jobs, social services, living standards and democratic rights.

Formal support

The health service unions COHSE and NUPE have

declared formal support for a policy of work-in action to prevent closure.

Tens of thousands of workers have already mobilised in mass action against Thatcher's policies—creating extremely favourable conditions for struggles to halt the cuts. The St Benedicts struggle points the way for those that want to fight and could provide the spark to ignite them.

Rhetoric

But, as in 1976, union leaders—for all their rhetoric—remain opposed to mobilising the all-out action that is needed to support occupations and work-ins such as the St Benedicts fight.

The fact is that while local action is crucial, the cuts, like Tory attacks on abortion rights, trade union rights and jobs, can be genuinely defeated only by tenacious, national-level action designed to bring down the Thatcher government and bring to power a government prepared—unlike Callaghan's last administration—to act on socialist policies in the interests of the working class.

But the union leaders remain tied to the apron-strings of the Labour leadership, to a commitment to "gradual" change, accomplished through parliament and protest campaigns.

In other words they are tied—like Callaghan—to accepting that the Tories can do what they want with the working class for the next five years, while Thatcher goes onto a hammer and tongs offensive!

Genuine

Certain elements of the trade union and Labour bureaucracy, of course, have, like Scargill, Benn, and Lambeth leader Ted Knight, attempted to portray themselves as different, as genuine representatives of the working class.

Now is the time to put such 'left' words to the test.

The working class does not need talkers. It desperately needs a leadership that will fight for action to halt the cuts, and for a perspective of bringing down the Thatcher government.

This means:
*Occupations and supporting strike action to stop closure!
*Open the books of the public services! Reveal the profiteering by private suppliers, bankers and contractors.

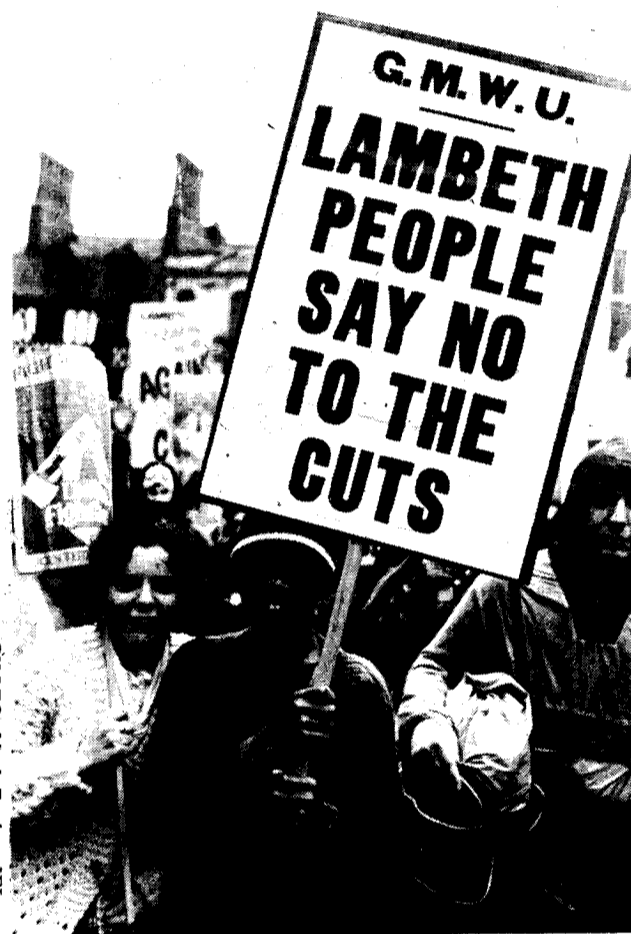


PHOTO: Mark Risher, IFL

Demonstrators on November 7

*Fight for the nationalisation of these firms, without compensation, under workers' management.

*No to rate and rent increases! Councils must withhold interest payments maintain full services and confront the Tory government head on!

*Restore all cuts! For a sliding scale of public service spending to protect against rising costs, as assessed by elected trade union committees!

*Full support for any section in action against the cuts. For national, indefinite strike action to defeat the Tory government and its offensive.

*Defend all civil service jobs! All out action to defeat victimisation moves!

*Kick out the Callaghan-Healey leadership and any Labour or trade union leader that refuses to fight to bring down the Tories! For a programme of socialist policies—no to import controls!

*Link up in action with unions in the private sector! Build local councils of action drawing delegates from all workers' organisations! Prepare to bring down the Tories!

Insofar as Benn, Scargill or any other leader of the labour movement takes up a fight for such policies, they must clearly be supported in their struggle against the right wing.

But the bitter experience of past struggles has shown that time and again these leaders shrink at the crucial moment from the practical struggle.

This is why faith in such 'left' talkers is no substitute for the building of a principled, Marxist leadership that will fight consistently and consciously for

the independent interests of the working class.

This is the perspective of the Workers Socialist League.

Workers Socialist League

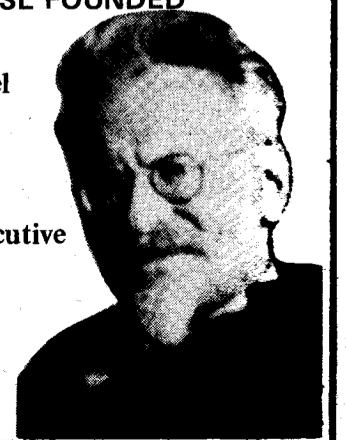
Anniversary Rally

SATURDAY
DECEMBER 8
2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

100 YEARS SINCE BIRTH OF TROTSKY
FIVE YEARS SINCE WSL FOUNDED

New Ambassadors Hotel
Upper Woburn Place
London WC1

Speakers from WSL Executive
Committee, plus film.
Tickets £1.00 or £1.50
at door.



Scargill

PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

FUND

"For the monthly fund and for Press Gang issue no. 173" (the one about the imaginary IRA plot against Princess Margaret) was the note with an anonymous donation of £20 received this week.

This note and contribution is just one example of the growing response that our paper is winning in its fight to give leadership to the working class in its struggles against the Tory government.

With other contributions this helped to bring our total so far to £486.50, leaving us with just over £250 to raise before the end of the month.

Send your donation to:

Socialist Press Monthly Fund
31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR

Oxford Tote winners: 11 November, numbers 9-3, ticket 97
18 November, numbers 13-11, tickets 141, 196.