

# SOCIALIST PRESS



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## Passive revolution

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# WIN THE STEEL STRIKE!



BRS lorry load of components passes through pickets into BL's Cowley Plant

As the steel strike enters its twelfth solid week, the press is speculating as to the next management manoeuvre aimed at splitting and demoralising the strikers.

The British Steel Corporation are moving to smash the strike. They are prepared to go over the heads of the trade unions and ballot steel workers through the post.

They hope that they have chosen the moment to get a majority for a return to work.

The employers want to create the conditions to open the gates to the scabs and generate a back to work movement.

But while such management moves are to be expected at this stage, they are by no means the most decisive element in the strike.

The key factor in determining the morale and tenacity of the strikers at this point in the struggle and strengthening the management is the wholesale scabbing on the strike that has been carried out by TUC leaders.

Not only have the steel workers been left to fight the Tory government alone—with moves to bring out miners, BL workers and others being ruth-

# STOP THE LORRIES!



Evans

crushed by the Tories than to unleash the power of the labour movement in General Strike action to bring down the Thatcher government.

They see all too clearly that such a struggle would develop the strength of the working class and create conditions for the removal of the Labour and trade union bureaucracy that has acted consistently to hold back struggles for workers' independent interests.

Such treachery must be combated. Moss Evans' speech to the Trafalgar Square rally on March 9 was greeted with angry roars of "stop the lorries!" Yet nothing has been done.

An all-out campaign of lobbying and other action at District, Regional and National offices must now be waged by steel strikers and trade unionists throughout the country to force the TGWU to take the action to win this strike.

And at the same time other sections of workers must take up the growing call from steelworkers for the TUC to call an all-out General Strike to bring down this Tory government.

- \*Stop the lorries!
- \*Dockers must black all steel supplies!
- \*TUC must call a General Strike!
- \*Bring down the Tories!
- \*For a workers' government!

lessly knifed by union-bureaucrats—but strikebreaking supplies of steel have for twelve weeks been freely moved into

and around the country by trade union labour with the connivance of union officials.

As the *Financial Times* arrogantly boasts:

"British industry has arranged sufficient alternative sourcing [i.e. scab supplies!] roughly to balance the absence of the British Steel Corporation from the market.

"Theoretically the strike could continue indefinitely without tangible damage being caused to Britain's industrial production." (March 17).

### Docks

How are these supplies being moved? Through the docks and by road. The *Financial Times*, quoting from government reports, points out:

"... there has been no deterioration in the past month in the quality of the steel delivery services by road transport operators."

"Imports are being hampered at a few ports [!] by restrictions on handling steel, but most orders placed with European Community mills and third world countries are being delivered."

Thanks to this wholesale strikebreaking, manufacturing output has fallen by only 3% since the start of the steel strike: industry is virtually unaffected.

TGWU lorry drivers and dockers, following instructions from their officials, have been carrying supplies of steel that are aimed at breaking an official strike by TGWU steel workers!

It is in the hands of this one union alone to win the steel strike by issuing a clear instruction to all its members that no lorries should cross steel picket lines.

Yet instead, amidst 'left' talk of "stepping up the strike",

TGWU leaders Evans and Todd have given the green light for everything except raw steel, gas and oil to drive through pickets.

In this they have lined up completely with Len Murray and the rest of the TUC General Council in their efforts to ensure the isolation of the steel strike.

It is vital that this isolation is broken—both through the fight to mobilise other sections of workers in strike action, and through a conscious turn by steel pickets to action designed to halt production at major engineering factories.

This means confronting head-on the sabotage and treachery of TGWU and other union officials whose every effort has been directed towards ensuring that industrial production is not hit by the strike.

These bureaucrats would prefer to see the steelworkers

## Black bosses' ballot!

Even before management finalise their plans to ballot the BSC workers on the 14%-with-strings offer there are forces in and around the strike arguing that the unions should participate in it, and fight for a 'no' vote.

But the postal ballot—which the individual worker at home is "consulted" while subjected to a barrage of media propaganda and family

pressures—is rigged in the bosses' favour from the outset.

And the higher the participation in the ballot, the more credibility it can claim.

This is why the unions must organise a boycott of the ballot, and refuse in advance to accept its outcome, while stepping up the offensive to seal off steel supplies to industry.

# General Strike! Tories Out!



-INTERNATIONAL

# FRANCO'S HEIRS SET BACK IN EUSKADI ELECTIONS

The first elections to the new and almost powerless Basque parliament took place on March 9. They produced a result which was both predictable and unpredictable.

The expected part was that the various Basque nationalist parties would together get the majority of the 60 seats (20 for each of the three Basque provinces Viscaya, Guipuzcoa and Alava).

What was less expected was the dramatic extent of their victory and the resulting blow suffered by both the "democratic" Francoists of the Democratic Centre Union (UCD) and also by the main national workers' parties the Socialists (PSOE) and the Communist Party.

Much to its embarrassment the party of the central government in Madrid (the UCD) will have only six seats in the new parliament.

And four of those it obtained in the smallest province Alava as a result of the

electoral system which is heavily weighted against the most populous and urbanised region.

That, of course, does not mean that capitalism will be under-represented in the Parliament which will assemble in the traditional Basque capital of Guernica, cruelly bombed by Hitler's and Franco's planes in 1937.

The election victors were the party of Basque capitalism, the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV).

## Demagogic

After a demagogic nationalist campaign the PNV got 25 out of 60 seats—even more than expected.

The radical nationalists of Herri Batasuna (Popular Unity), who are allied to the guerrilla organisation ETA (militar), say that their 11 deputies will boycott the parliament.

This means that the PNV will be able to form a monocolour right wing nationalist "government" to exercise the derisory administrative functions which have been allocated to the "autonomous"

Basque government.

Despite its parliamentary strength, the PNV is bound to find its political hegemony in Euskadi increasingly threatened by the more radical sections of the nationalist movement.

The heavy popular support for Herri Batasuna, and for the more compromising Euskadiko Ezkerra (linked to ETA political military), came from sections of the petty bourgeoisie, the youth and of the working class.

They are bitterly hostile to the Francoists of Madrid and their omnipresent repressive apparatus; and at the same time they are contemptuous of the PNV's bourgeois respectability and reaction.

## Support

It is very likely that this support for Herri Batasuna will strengthen as the PNV implements policies which, for all their nationalist rhetoric, will be hard to distinguish from those of the central government in Madrid.



Jubilant Basque nationalists ically low vote they received in the elections.

The PSOE got 14% of the votes and 9 seats, the CP a mere 4% and only one seat.

It is certainly these attitudes of workers in Euskadi, especially those not of Basque origin, which produced the very high level of abstentions in last week's election—participation was only 59%.

After the elections, there is little that either the PNV or the UCD in Madrid can now do to disguise any longer the pathetic fraud which the present Statute of Autonomy represents.

Capitalist authority will be thrown into a growing crisis in Euskadi.

For revolutionaries, therefore, the present situation is creating a massive challenge.

But it also contains the opportunity to fight in the mass movement to link the demands of the working class and those of the radicalised nationalists against the policies of the reactionary Suarez government and its occasionally insolent, but ultimately faithful puppets of the PNV in Guernica.

remain in Euskadi).

And Basque flags flying from all the public buildings, and the Basque language in the schools will hardly distract attention from the acute and growing problems of unemployment and inflation faced every day by the working class of Euskadi.

It is those material problems, alongside the continuation of many aspects of Francoist repression, which will set a limit to the growth of support for the radical nationalists.

## Incapable

Because of their petty bourgeois class position they are incapable of offering any coherent answer to the material problems of the working class.

And many workers already clearly view the arguments between EIS and the PNV as largely a diversion.

They did not in the elections however, look to the major national workers' parties, the PSOE and the CP, to offer an alternative solution.

The disillusion of workers with the reformist and Stalinist leaders is reflected in the path-

## French cops wade in



A 6-week public inquiry into the building of a nuclear power station at Plogoff in Northern France has led to bitter daily clashes between anti-nuclear demonstrators and riot police.

Last weekend the violence spread to Paris, where a protest march of 2,000 was viciously attacked by police using tear-gas.

Such confrontations between large numbers of French workers and the police have multiplied in the last eight months, with major incidents in Nantes, Cherbourg, Belfort, the naval yard at Brest and the full-scale riots in the steel towns of Longwy and Denain.

## Giscard's motives

The reasons for the French government's refusal to align itself with the US-led condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan or to boycott the Moscow Olympics have now become crystal clear.

Figures released this week reveal that Franco-Soviet trade reached FFfr 16 bn (£1.7bn) last year. The trade turnover rose by 33% from the 1978 level of FFfr. 12.18 bn, and France is likely to emerge as the Soviet Union's second largest Western trading partner in the 1980s.

To the French government's delight, exports to the USSR increased by 30% and included such things as oil recovery equipment, agricultural products, mostly meat and butter, and whole factory equipment.

The imports were mainly of oil and oil products, natural gas and raw materials such as cotton, wood, precious metals, nickel and copper.

These figures may also throw light on French Communist Party Secretary Marchais' apparently maverick stand in support of the Soviet bureaucracy on the question of Afghanistan.



Still friends: Suarez and PSOE leader Gonzalez

## TILC International Summer School

Eight days of classes and discussion on basic questions of Marxism and the fight to reconstruct the Fourth International.

Sunday July 20—Sunday July 27

The Summer School will be attended by delegations from the organisations affiliated to the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee, and is open to WSL members and supporters.

More details available from:

WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX

## THE RESULTS

	% of votes	Seats	% of votes in 1979 general election
Basque Nationalist Party	38	25	28
Herri Batasuna	16	11	15
Euskadiko Ezkerra	10	6	8
Socialist Party	14	9	20
Democratic Centre Union	8	6	17
Communist Party	4	1	5
Popular Alliance (Francoist)	5	2	4



INTERNATIONAL

# Turkish workers fight

## police

The following report from Istanbul was unfortunately delayed in reaching us. But though the events it describes have since been reported in the media, it gives a clear picture of the elements involved in the unfolding class struggle in Turkey, where the Demirel government has now ordered troops to shoot left wing "terrorists" on sight.

A small-scale civil war took place in Izmir, third largest city in Turkey, when state forces moved in to break up the occupation of the state owned agricultural factory TARIS.

The occupation—which, along with a similar struggle in the ANTBIRLIK plant in the city of Antalya, was the strongest in the history of the Turkish working class—began when the right wing Demirel government attempted mass victimisations, and to replace left wing militant workers with fascists.

### Barricades

As the police moved in, workers set up barricades on the roads and in the factories, and open armed battles erupted between workers and left wing militants and the state forces.

The fighting went on for over a week, though eventually the police regained control of most parts of the firm.

The city of Izmir itself has been occupied by 5,000 troops in response to student protests in solidarity with the TARIS workers.

Thousands of students were arrested and herded into football grounds in a scene ominously reminiscent of the 1973 Pinochet coup in Chile.

Women and children armed with sticks and stones sallied into the fight as police moved into the working class districts.

As the whole Aegean coast area remained in turmoil, Prime Minister Demirel declared that his government was formed precisely to "finish off such problems".

But while the vicious action of the state forces leaves no doubts as to Demirel's intentions, the mass spontaneous struggles of workers against the fascists and state forces have shown that they will not surren-



Confiscating left wing literature

der without a fight. Despite an almost total absence of leadership Turkish workers are prepared to fight arms in hand to defend their jobs and rights.

The TARIS occupation coincided with another long-term struggle by 20,000 workers in the state-owned TEKEL combine in Istanbul, where management at Demirel's instructions had also taken on numbers of known fascists, and trade union leaders had been killed.

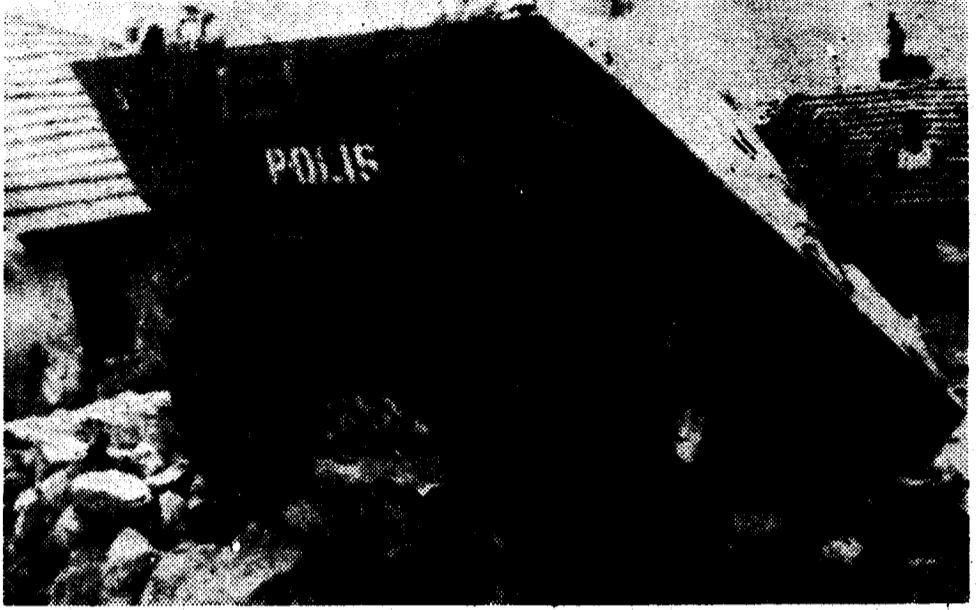
And it also coincided with the call for a General Strike against Demirel's new economic measures and repression from

the left wing trade union confederation DISK.

In the event the DISK leadership has done nothing more than organise two demonstrations in defence of "democracy"—one in Izmir and one in Antalya, which was attended by a crowd of 20-30,000 workers incensed at the government's actions.

### Held back

But instead of mobilising the key sections of workers in strike action (almost all DISK members are currently in the midst of pay negotiations) the



Police armoured car breaks through barricade

DISK leaders have actually tried to hold back the struggles that have developed.

### Assaulted

DISK officials were assaulted by angry TARIS militants when they moved in with an appeal to "go back to work". But such an approach stems from the political links between the DISK bureaucrats and bourgeois opposition party, Bulent Ecevit's RPP.

Ecevit keeps declaring that Demirel's new economic measures are modelled on Latin American dictatorships, and that they imply the destruction of "democracy".

But he insists that the way to fight back is through "democratic", in other words *Parliamentary* means.

The TARIS workers however showed an—albeit inade-

quate—understanding that what is necessary to confront the offensive of the employers and the state against the working class and its basic organisations is *revolutionary* struggle.

Without such a struggle the most basic democratic gains in the form of trade union rights, jobs and living standards, are at risk from a government hell-bent on restoring the fortunes of Turkish and international capitalist firms at the expense of the working class.

### Coordinate

Other sections of Turkish workers must follow the TARIS example. Occupation committees and soviet-type councils of action must be set up to coordinate and extend these struggles.

Armed detachments of workers militia must be formed to combat fascist and state

violence.

Trade union and labour movement leaders must be forced to break from Ecevit and the RPP's fraudulent talk of democracy, and to mobilise the independent strength of the working class to defeat the Demirel regime and create the basis for a workers and peasants government in Turkey.

It is in this fight that the struggle to construct a Trotskyist party in Turkey as part of a reconstructed Fourth International takes on an even greater urgency.



Demirel

# DENG REHABILITATES KEY 'CAPITALIST ROADER'

"It was the biggest frame up our party has ever known, and it must be completely overturned." With these words the Plenum of China's Communist Party Central Committee announced the total posthumous rehabilitation of Liu Shaoqi.

It has now even raised him to No. 2 in the league table of dead Chinese revolutionary heroes, ahead even of the former Prime Minister, Chou En-lai.

The other decisions of this 5th Plenary session reinforced the position of Deng Xiaoping in the party leadership.

### Hangover

The last four remaining members of the politbureau who represented a "leftist" line and were a hangover from the "Gang of Four" days had their resignations accepted.

They were all closely associated with Mao himself and the present Deng majority felt that to delay in their removal would only encourage a dangerous opposition tendency.

Commentators have pointed out that their "factional" activity endangered the stability and unity of the regime.



The four are Wang Dongxing—Mao's bodyguard and a vice-president of the Central Committee; Wu De—the old Mayor of Peking; Chen Xilian—the old Commander of the Peking military region and Ji Qengkiu—former first political commissar of the Peking military region.

Although they had been stripped previously of all army, party and civil administration positions, this nevertheless marked a break with that less pragmatic, pro-imperialist era

pre-Deng. It is difficult to gauge if the dominant reason for this purge was the present arrogant confidence of the Deng leadership or its mortal fear of any opposition.

He has brought into leading positions his strong supporters—a decade younger than the old guard, thereby ensuring his succession.

Hu Yaobang has been formally ensconced in the recreated post of General Secre-

tary of the Central Committee, having been cited as such over a year ago.

Altogether 12 others have been brought into leading party positions, including the First Secretary of Sichuan, Zhao Ziyang who is tipped for high office.

### Solid background

They have similar characteristics of being slightly younger than the top rank leadership, are firm Deng supporters, and have come from a solid technical, economic or administrative background.

Clearly the most spectacular announcement from the plenum was the rehabilitation of Liu. There is to be a solemn ceremony in his memory where epithets such as "traitor, renegade and scab" are to be expunged.

This gesture is symbolic in its implied criticism of Mao for being party to the attack on this "great Marxist".

This bureaucratic reshuffle is of more significance than the simple syndrome of "the King is dead, long live the King."

### Greater Attacks

It goes alongside greater attacks on the political rights of

the Chinese workers and peasants and frantic moves towards imperialism, particularly to assist them in whipping up Cold War hysteria against the old workers states.

Stricter discipline inside and outside the Party is to be emphasised.

Parts of the constitution enshrined in article 45 are to be deleted.

Especially odious to the bureaucracy has been the wall poster campaign at the "democracy wall" in Peking. This right is to be revoked.

A new tightening up on discipline and correct behaviour is to be initiated with more stringent application of the new criminal code.

The Chinese bureaucracy was one of the first to leap in and condemn the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan—but not of course from the standpoint of the Afghan masses.

No—it appealed to US imperialism to step in and deal a blow against the Red Army.

The bureaucracy can expect its reward in greater military and economic assistance from the US butchers.

But it is going to need more than this to hold back the struggles of the oppressed masses which will continue to have its reflection among the billion Chinese.

Reconstruct the Fourth International!

No. 1 Nov. 1979

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## Ealing teachers strike

Over 2,000 teachers, school students and parents joined a protest demonstration through Ealing last Tuesday, as the NUT staged a half-day strike against the cuts.

180 teaching jobs face the axe, and education of children between 3-5 is to cease in Ealing council's £2.8 million cuts package.

Several hundred marchers supported the contingent of the

Ealing 3-5 Action Group, and a rally at the end of the march overflowed the Town Hall with hundreds left outside.

But for all this evident willingness to fight the Tories no direction whatever was offered by platform speakers. NUT President Jim Murphy drew a line between "good" and "bad" Tories, and called Education Secretary Carlisle a "hypocrite".

Carlisle is unlikely to be shaken from his course of

destruction by such rhetoric—or by half day token strikes. Nor will he be intimidated by bluster from Labour leaders who refuse even to commit themselves to reverse the cuts if reelected.

NUSS speaker Neil James argued from the floor of the rally that the only way to halt the cuts is through a political fight based on occupations together with local and national strike action as part of the fight to throw the Tories out of office.



Leafletting in an earlier NUSS campaign against fascists in schools, this time the YNF

PHOTO: John Sturrock (Report)

## Flowers lays wreath on medical schools

Several protests and demonstrations have taken place in London over the past two weeks against two reports containing proposals on London hospitals.

These reports—on medical schools and acute beds—present the most serious threat so far to the already decimated health service in London.

The report by the Flowers Committee proposes to reduce the number of medical schools from 34 to 6. This would include closing down Westminster Hospital Medical School, merging the Middlesex and Royal Free Medical School and the closure of the British Post-graduate Medical Research School.

These proposals alone present a serious threat to the national standards of medical training and research.

The second report, by the London Health Planning Consortium, plans to reduce the number of acute hospital beds by 20-25%. If implemented this would include the complete closure of the Westminster Hospital.

This report is justified by "demographic factors". Because of the supposed population decline in London the report claims that the demand for acute beds has fallen.

This same fall in demand is the reason for the closure of medical schools, as the students do not have sufficient acute patients for their practical studies.

Already students and academics at the Westminster and Royal Free Medical Schools have staged token protests in an attempt to prevent the reports being implemented from June-July 1980.

These proposals must be seen as part of the general attack on the health service in London.

Joint defence committees should be formed in threatened schools with doctors and students fighting through their respective unions for the policy of occupation of threatened facilities with supporting strike action to prevent closures.

In this fight the professional layers of the health service must link up with the manual unions—both COHSE and NUPE are in theory pledged to a policy of occupations against closures.

The demand must be for no cuts, no closures, and for full funding of the NHS to be restored to pre-1976 levels, and protected against inflation through a sliding scale of spending.

## Women bear brunt of mass unemployment

Successive attacks on jobs by Labour and Tory governments have fallen most heavily on the least organised and most oppressed sections of the working class—with women the prime sufferers.

A report published for the Women's TUC reveals the stark fact that while the total number of men unemployed actually went down by 16,000 in the four years 1976-80, the number of women unemployed rose by 158,000 in the same period—an increase of 62%!

A major cause of this is obviously the direct impact of government spending cuts in the public services in which women form a majority of the work force.

In addition falling living standards are among the factors pressing more married women into seeking jobs. Employers are seizing upon this fact and

increase their use of part-time labour to cover peak periods of sales or production, and to provide a loosely-organised, easily disposed of and thus "flexible" workforce.

In 1976 one fifth of all employers were part-time, 85% of them (4.3 million) being women.

And a 1977 survey showed that 78% of all part time workers were married women.

Now it is precisely such women that are facing the most savage attacks in the form of public spending cuts and redundancies.

### Cut in hours

In many local authorities for instance the thorny question of sacking full time staff in education or social services is being evaded or minimised by cutting the hours worked by part-time staff—thus cutting their wages while nominally retaining the same numbers on the payroll.

And as the Tory offensive

gathers pace, women will remain the chief victims—both of the jobs lost and of the services slashed.

In Leicestershire, for instance, of the 1,800 jobs threatened by the council's £6 million education cuts, 1,790—all but 10!—are women.

But while the Women's TUC is able to parade an impressive array of statistics to show the attacks now underway against women, it is of course unable to point the finger at those that have it in their power to hit back and defend hard won jobs conditions and basic rights—the TUC and Labour leaders.

Only the building of a revolutionary leadership committed to the principled struggle for the interests of the working class—including its most oppressed and exploited sections—can offer working women and men a way forward from unemployment and growing poverty to the overthrow of capitalism and a planned socialist economy.



## NUT must oust racist teachers

School students in West London have met a blank wall of obstruction in their fight to drive out a racist teacher.

Stephen Brady, who teaches at Elthorne High School, Hanwell, was exposed in the *Sunday People* as a member of the extreme right wing League of St. George, and one of those who organised meetings for the leader of the Ku Klux Klan during his visit to Britain.

Photocopies of the article were handed out to school students by NUSS members and it was clear that there was a mass feeling for Brady to be removed.

But an attempt to convene a lunchtime meeting in the playground was blocked by teachers, despite the presence of several

hundred youth and the press.

A meeting called for 4pm was sabotaged by teachers sending students home one lesson early.

As rumours circulated that Brady had been sacked, or resigned from his post, he told the local *Ealing Gazette* that he wanted to go back to the school to teach.

But Education Committee chairman Lady Henniker-Heaton insisted that there was no indication that Brady aired his racist views at school.

Meanwhile the silence of NUT leaders on the issue is deafening. Where do they stand on the issue of racist and fascist teachers in school? It is high time the NUT joined forces with the NUSS to hound out Brady and his ilk wherever they appear.

## Fighting the cuts in Tunbridge

In 1976 when the Labour government's public spending cuts prompted the Tory dominated Kent County Council to close down Court Royal, an old people's home in the Tunbridge Wells area, the local Tory Council, in the face of mass protest action, was forced to defy the decision and oppose the closure.

The situation has now changed and if protest action alone could prevent closure of old people's homes they would have been saved a long time ago.

In a particularly cowardly attack by the Tories, Pembury Grange, a home for 'mentally confused' old people is closing down and the residents kicked out and rehoused, some in expensive private homes which are unsuitable for the constant specialised supervision required.

A confidential document has shown that Pembury Grange is to close by September 1980 not 1981 as previously reported.

In reality preparation for closure is already underway, a waiting list for all the homes in the Tunbridge Wells area containing 60 names has been conveniently 'misplaced' by the Kent County Council and consequently vacancies arising at Pembury Grange are not being filled.

This coupled with adverts in the local Tory paper for staff at another home—due to be axed next year—could attract workers

away from Pembury Grange resulting in gradual run down and an excuse for closure.

Workers see this as a deliberate tactic by the Kent County Council to undermine action taken in defence of the home.

One explanation for the County Council's refusal to save Pembury Grange is that being situated on the outskirts of Tunbridge Wells in acres of extremely desirable land it would prove financially rewarding if sold for redevelopment.

It is now obvious that only direct action by NUPE and NALGO workers will save the home.

The Tunbridge Wells Cuts Committee and Constituency Labour Party see the only way to prevent closure of Pembury Grange is occupation by NUPE and NALGO members with supporting strike action from their fellow workers in other unions.

### Trades council

In response to this resolution, the POEU and CPSA (P&T Section) have demanded that the Trades Council campaign for the same policies which are at present being discussed in union branches throughout the area.

To stop the gradual run down in numbers of old people and staff, NALGO must demand that the waiting list be handed over to them and arrange for vacancies to be filled immediately.

## NALGO PEOPLE NOT PROFITS

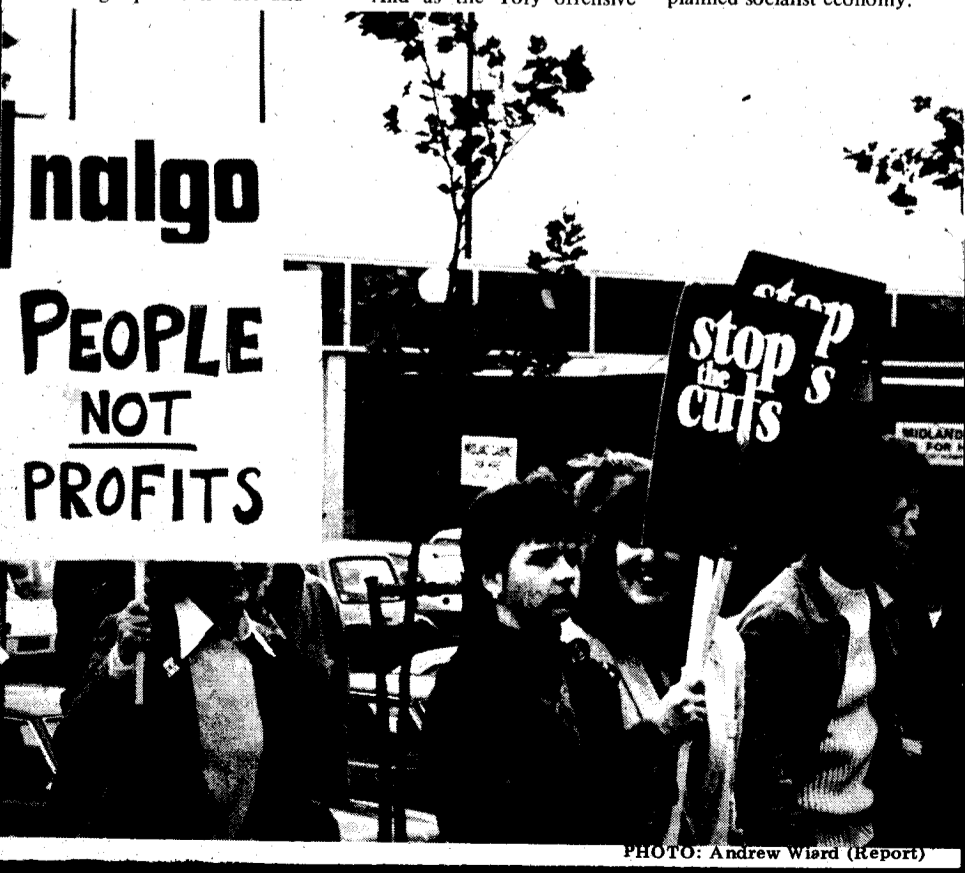


PHOTO: Andrew Ward (Report)

# PRESS GANG



Once again the *Sun* is in a rage with the BBC. A TV interview with a member of Mudiad Amdiffyn Cymru (the organisation which sets fire to Welsh holiday homes) brought renewed calls from the paper for a purge of BBC journalists and producers.

The *Telegraph* meanwhile has been full of irate letters from viewers of Philip Donnellan's BBC 2 programme, *Gone for a Soldier*, which is said to have depicted the army as louts and thugs.

In both cases the papers react against any 'image' being built in the public mind harmful to the structure of the state.

This is nowhere more apparent than in the image of the police. In a bourgeois democracy the press does not ignore stories of police corruption, but chooses to portray a 'bad apple' theory in which no-one is more pleased than the police themselves to have the few 'Bad 'Uns' weeded out.

This theory has taken a bit of a pasting in recent years with police corruption stories becoming as common a feature of the news pages in the serious press, as are sex scandal vicars in the gutter press.

Sir David McNee, commissioner of the Metropolitan Police wrote a lengthy article in the *Sunday Telegraph* bluntly headed *The Case for the Police*.

He covered familiar ground (Grunwick, Notting Hill Carnival, anti-fascist mobilisations, etc) and used his usual stock of police regulation platitudes. He reserved his sharpest criticism for "those with a particular responsibility for reducing harmony in the com-

munity (who) have failed to use their position to counter outrageous and damaging smears—many of which, although aimed at the police, have a profoundly damaging effect, particularly on some of the young."

"I cannot guarantee that no officer of mine will succumb to temptation and commit a corrupt act. I can guarantee that such malpractice will receive swift and full retribution."

McNee writes that cant in full knowledge that Operation Countryman is grinding to a halt in its corruption inquiries because of police obstruction.

But it was an accident of timing that McNee's article coincided with *Sunday Times* publication of the internal Scotland Yard inquiry into Blair Peach's murder last year.

That report, (which McNee has of course suppressed), shows that one of five named SPG constables killed Peach and that they had obstructed the inquiry aided and abetted by senior officers.

The story is a good example of the fact that capitalist papers do not always suppress the truth when it is harmful to the state. But a debate has been going on among the editors about how far they ought to go.

In an effort to set the record straight (and to calm any feelings of self doubt) the *Sunday Times* commissioned a poll on what the public thought of the police.

According to the MORI poll the police were held in high esteem by 51% of the survey—lower than doctors but higher than solicitors in the public mind and a good deal higher than businessmen, MPs, councillors and union leaders (who came bottom).

The *Sunday Times*, in folksy mood, said: "Our policemen are still wonderful. Despite the battering that the police have taken over the past few years from allegations of corruption, of violence, of lack of accountability and the like, the overwhelming majority of people remain unswerving in their admiration of them."

But who are 'the people'? A close reading of the text shows that some cracks begin to appear in this assessment. Experience of the police is said to be widespread, based on statistics of those who have reported something to the police or asked them for information.

The paper admits that "the middle classes are significantly more likely than working class people to have reported something to the police, to have gone into a police station or to have asked for information or assistance." It then adds (without evidence) "Just as the middle classes more readily use other services—the health service for instance—so they appear to avail themselves more of those police functions."

Of those working class men, women and youth who "avail themselves" of some of the more basic police functions (being arrested, questioned or stopped in the street) only one in three think police honesty 'high'.

Approval for the police (despite corruption) by those whose interests they defend is scarcely surprising or reassuring to the *Sunday Times*. Amongst the working class—and particularly its militant sections—no amount of 'image building' by the press can cover the stench of the police, which arises not from corruption, but from its anti-working class nature.

# Students oppose Turkish repression

Students at Leicester Polytechnic voted on March 13 to back the Turkey Solidarity Campaign's fight to arouse the labour movement's awareness of the danger of a fascist military coup in Turkey.

The motion, which was seconded by a leading Communist Party member in the college, denounced the attacks on trade unionists and students by the fascists and military under Demirel's reactionary

regime; and declared its unequivocal support for the right of trade unionists and the labour movement to organise independently of the state.

At the same time, in a second part of the motion, the students endorsed the condemnation of the reactionary Ba'athist regime in Iraq for its attacks on trade union rights and its open oppression of political opponents.

The motion also deplored the consistent support given to the bloody Ba'athist dictatorship by *Newline*, the paper of

the "Trotskyist" Workers Revolutionary Party.

The motion was overwhelmingly carried despite organised opposition from carefully drilled Iraqi students and it won particular support from Iranian and other overseas students.

## TURKEY SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

Public meeting  
"The crisis in Turkey"  
Wednesday 26 March, 8.00pm  
Central Library, Fieldway Cresc.  
off Holloway Road, London

# Defend the WARWICK 14!

Fourteen students of Warwick University face disciplinary action by the University as a result of their involvement in a recent wave of direct action over the proposed fee increases for overseas students.

True to the democratic tradition of the University, the hearings will be heard in secret, and, in order to make things really difficult, will take place

during the Easter vacation.

This will mean that several vital defence witnesses will be unable to attend. It also tends to isolate the fourteen from the mass of the students who will not be on campus at this time.

Students at Warwick recently convened a national meeting of University and Polytechnic students to discuss the whole issue of student fees and education cuts.

The high level of action at Warwick has got the authorities worried—therefore the

possible expulsions of these fourteen students in intended as a warning to the rest.

Despite the lack of time students are rallying round the victimised 14.

The disciplinary hearings are due to be held on March 26, 27 and 28.

It is vital that support for the picket of these hearings is mobilised as widely as possible.

Further details from Warwick University Students Union.

# No cuts in Queen's Loo!

The visit of the Queen to Leicester gave the local forces of the state yet another chance to play martial law games.

At London Road station police dragooned the carefully selected throng of schoolkids and ageing royalists while elsewhere in the town plain clothes men ferreted through spectators in search of disruptive elements.

And just to make the whole thing clear, numbers of armed police were openly stationed amongst the waiting crowds and on available rooftops.

Unfortunately for the royal party the rain-drenched crowds

were less than overwhelming in their enthusiasm as she passed en route in a bullet-proof Rolls Royce 'greenhouse'.

Amongst the cheers there were shouts of 'scroungers'.

## Skip out

Clearly not everyone was there for the spectacle: Labour MP Greville Janner used the opportunity to skip out of voting against the Corrie Bill, while the Tory County Council busied themselves spending the money saved from sacking lollipop ladies and nursery nurses on a new royal blue carpet specially imported from

Norway to grace the chosen Royal loo.

Even the toilet-roll holder was specially moved so that her "Highness" wouldn't have to stoop so low as to stretch a muscle.

Unfortunately for the Tory County Council the decision to spend over £20,000 on the royal visit has not gone unnoticed by those who turned out on February 27 to oppose the council cuts.

Nor has the fact that while school students who struck then in support of teachers have since been hounded and victimised by headmasters and welfare officers for their absence, no such action will be taken against those students conned into filling out the ranks of the royalist parade.

Tory backbenchers and their supporters are the main hope for those fighting the Thatcher government's cuts—according to 'left' talking NUPE leader Alan Fisher at a public meeting in Camden last week.

He held out the prospect of a U-turn by the Thatcher government under pressure from the Tory Party, culminating in a wage freeze before the end of the year.

In line with this perspective, Fisher emphasized the role of propaganda activity—to bring home the terrible reality of the cuts to rank and file Tories!

## Tory voters

The TUC and trade union leaderships' primary role according to Fisher is to coordinate campaigns of marches and meetings to bring home the truth about the cuts, first to ordinary workers, and then to their new-found saviours—Tory voters.

Although Fisher acknowledged that the "true strength of the working class is industrial" in the first sentence of his



Fisher

speech, he emphasised the difficulties of getting workers to use that strength in the next.

That this was the last that was to be heard of industrial action can be gauged from the fact that throughout his oration—lasting over forty minutes—Fisher did not mention the steel strike once!

But the glaring gap between what Fisher advocates and what is needed did not escape his audience.

A Camden dustmen's shop steward pointed to the lack of any lead from the NUPE bureaucracy, contrasting their low profile today with their treacherous role in the low pay strikes of last winter, when they consciously promoted the divisive policy of selective action.

His criticisms of the NUPE leadership, characterised as "the easy way out" by Fisher, were echoed by a worker from University College Hospital, who emphasised that at her workplace action against the cuts needed the organisation and coordination that can only come from a determined leadership.

Last week's performance confirmed once again that the only way such leadership will be forthcoming is through the building of a new principled revolutionary leadership in NUPE.

# Glasgow cuts fight

A meeting of 60 parents and teachers at All Saints Secondary School, Springburn, Glasgow, last Thursday heard regional councillor Pat Trainer tell them that "there will be no closures of schools or redundancies among teachers; but, if there have to be redundancies they will be negotiated with the unions."

He also admitted there

would be a policy of non-replacement of teachers.

Warnings of such attacks were made by other speakers at the meeting—John Cairney, EIS representative at All Saints and Ian McCalman, EIS representative at Albert Secondary School—both speaking in a personal capacity.

## Send back

The latter called upon the Labour councillors to refuse to implement the cuts, and to send the bill back to the Tory govern-



# HOW STALIN OVERTUR CAPITALISM - FROM A

Jon Bloomfield is not a Marxist, but *Passive Revolution* is a superb book, containing a tremendous amount of valuable research and a wealth of factual material on the post-war overturn of capitalism in Czechoslovakia.

Though the book is the best to emerge from the "Eurocommunist" stable, the developments in Czechoslovakia are in no way compatible with the Euro CPs' insistence on a peaceful parliamentary evolution towards socialism in alliance with "democratic" capitalist parties.

Bloomfield shows this contradiction at the end of the book, where he admits that:

"For example, the balance between retaining maximum unity and encouraging the most advanced forces to press ahead always needs fine judgement. In 1945 the KSC's (Czechoslovak Communist Party's) caution undoubtedly led it to emphasise the former."

He explains this away by arguing that the Czechoslovak CP was not working towards socialism!

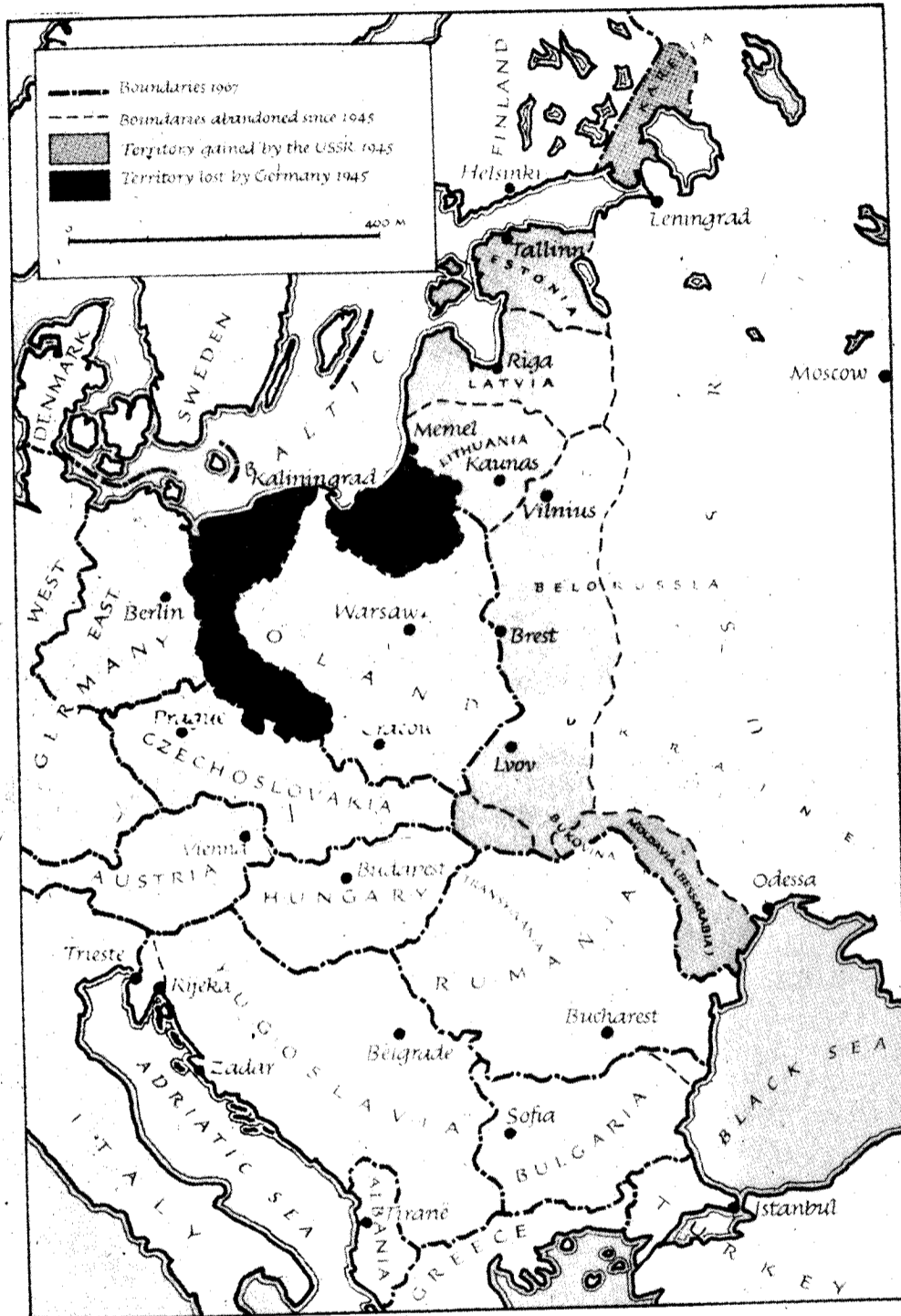
Indeed *Passive Revolution* is not a Marxist work precisely because Bloomfield approaches history simply to discover facts that fit his own "Eurocommunist" perspective. He has no intention of probing historical development to show the primary forces at work—in which the most decisive is that of the leadership of the working class.

In this way he approaches Czechoslovakia as an isolated phenomenon—isolated not in its period, but in history.

Why was the Czech CP not working towards socialism? Why did "Communists" oppose the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism in 1945?

The starting point in grasping these questions is an understanding of the bureaucratic degeneration that took place within the Soviet Union under conditions of isolation and crushing economic difficulties in the 1920s. A privileged bureaucratic caste, headed and epitomised by Joseph Stalin, began increasingly to recognise its need if it were to preserve its position—to balance between the strength of the nationalised property relations achieved in the October 1917 revolution and the strength of imperialism internationally.

This position, summed up in Stalin's "theory" of building socialism in one country, could only lead to



the most reactionary conclusion: the effort to preserve the balance of class forces by holding back working class struggles internationally.

Through the bureaucratisation of Lenin's Communist International, this counter-revolutionary perspective of the Kremlin leaders became the watchword of the Communist Parties of every country.

Thus the apparatus of the "Communist" movement became transformed into a major obstacle to the revolutionary struggle for communism.

Czechoslovakia in the year from 1945 was only one example of Stalinist resistance to revolutionary mobilisation. But it was also an example of the other side of the contradictory role of Stalinism; for as a bureaucracy resting parasitically on

nationalised property relations within the Soviet Union, the Kremlin leadership is capable, and at times has felt obliged, to defend itself against imperialist offensive by a variety of means—up to and even including the overturn of capitalism itself in the post-war "buffer" states of Eastern Europe.

Trotsky and the Left Opposition, and subsequently the Fourth International, fought the bureaucratic degeneration inside the Soviet Union. It is from the basis of their work, analysis and practical struggles that the real nature of Stalinism can be grasped today, and the contradictory transformations in Eastern Europe can be understood.

Yet the Trotskyist movement in the post-war period found its very principles challenged by the emer-

gence of a political current within its leading ranks that set out to revise basic tenets of the Transitional Programme.

Where Trotsky had fought for a conception of the need to mobilise the working class independently and in conflict with the Stalinist and reformist labour bureaucracies, this current, headed by FI Secretary Michel Pablo, saw in the social overturn of capitalism in Eastern Europe—and particularly Yugoslavia—"proof" that Stalinism was not a completely counter-revolutionary force.

Under certain "special" conditions, concluded Pablo, Stalinist bureaucrats can be pressured into centrist and even revolutionary positions by the movement of the masses.

Such an analysis of course called into question the very need for the building of revolutionary



Monument to Red Army liberation of Prague in May 1945

Trotskyist parties to combat Stalinism and lead the working class to power.

This confusion as to the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism, and the way in which it operates, continuously arises amongst forces calling themselves Trotskyist.

It can be seen today in forces as diverse as the opportunist Socialist Workers Party—with its fulsome support for the Cuban Stalinist bureaucracy—and the sectarian Spartacist cult with their position of "Hail the Red Army" in Afghanistan.

Such people cannot comprehend the way in which on a world scale Stalinism acts as a material and political force for counter-revolution through the demobilisation and repression of the independent struggles of the working class.

If, for its own bureaucratic reasons, the Kremlin bureaucracy should transform property relations in Afghanistan, this minor and limited progressive step must still be seen in the context of its reactionary strategy on a world scale. And it will be carried through by the same Red Army that crushed workers' uprisings in East Germany and Hungary in the 1950s.

Trotsky, in some of the last writings of his career, examined the change that took place in the international role of the Soviet Union after the takeover by the Stalinist bureaucracy.

He replied sharply to critics like Max Schachtman who argued that, since he supported the Red Army invading Georgia in 1920, he should hold a similar position on the actions of the Red Army in 1939:

"You (Max Schachtman) quote the march of the Red Army into Poland and into



# NED BOVE

In this, and a further article next week, TONY RICHARDSON reviews the book *Passive Revolution* by Jon Bloomfield (Alison and Busby, £3.95), and examines some of the issues it raises in relation to the post-war overturns of capitalism in the Eastern European 'Buffer' countries.



Czech crowds greet Red Army liberation forces

Georgia and you continue: "Now if there is nothing new in the situation, why does not the majority propose to hail the advance of the Red Army into Poland, into the Baltic countries, into Finland..." (Page 20). In this decisive part of your speech you establish that something is "new in the situation" between 1920 and 1939. Of course! This newness in the situation is the bankruptcy of the Third International, the degeneracy of the Soviet State, the development of the Left Opposition, and the creation of the Fourth International. This "concreteness of events" occurred precisely between 1920 and 1939. And these events explain sufficiently why we have radically changed our position toward the politics of the Kremlin, including its military politics.

It seems that you forget somewhat that in 1920 we supported not only the deeds of the Red Army but also the deeds of the GPU. From the point of view of our appreciation of the state there is no principled difference between the Red Army and the GPU.

In their activities they are not only closely connected but intermeshed. We can say that in 1918 and the following years we hailed the Cheka in their fight against the Russian counter-revolutionaries and imperialist spies but in 1927 when the GPU began to arrest, to exile and to shoot the genuine Bolsheviks we changed our appreciation of this institution...

"We began to change this position in 1923. We proceeded by stages more or less in accordance with the objective developments. The decisive point of development was for us 1933-4." (In *Defence of Marxism*, pp:38-9).

In the quoted passage, Trotsky is coming to grips with the fact that Russia is no longer, as it once was, a revolutionary workers' state.

The emergence of the Stalinist bureaucracy had brought the defeat of the German working class in 1933—yet there had been no reaction whatever inside the Stalinised Comintern. And the line of the Kremlin leaders continued to reflect their opportunist relations with imperialism, regardless of the consequences for the working class.

On a world scale, therefore, the workers' state that had emerged from the 1917 revolution had been transformed from a revolutionary workers state struggling to advance workers' struggles, to a counter-revolutionary workers' state, in which a bureaucratic dictatorship cynically exploited and repressed the strength of the masses to preserve its own power and privileges.

But Trotsky goes on to deal with those people who drew from this the conclusion that it is no longer necessary to defend the USSR against imperialism.

He argues for defence of the Soviet Union on the basis of defending the gains of the 1917 revolution—in the material form of the nationalised property relations.

It is the understanding of the specific phenomenon of a counter-revolutionary bureaucracy based on a degenerated workers state that leads to Trotsky's understanding of the social transformation in eastern Poland in a way that offers a key to analysing post-war overturns.

How could the bureaucracy be counter-revolu-

tionary yet at the same time carry out a progressive transformation?

"The statification of the means of production is, as we said, a progressive measure. But its progressiveness is relative; its specific weight depends on the sum total of all the other factors. Thus we must first and foremost establish that the extensions of the territory dominated by bureaucratic autocracy and parasitism, cloaked by "socialist" measures, can augment the prestige of the Kremlin, engender illusions concerning the possibility of replacing the proletarian revolution by bureaucratic manoeuvres and so on. This evil by far outweighs the progressive content of Stalinist reforms in Poland." (In *Defence of Marxism*, p.19)

Of course this does not mean that Trotsky provides us with an analysis of the post-war overturns: rather he offers us the Marxist method of approach that provides the tool with which to open up the complexities of the overturns.

Bloomfield on the other hand is able to offer us only descriptions, not a political explanation of the actions of the Soviet bureaucracy. The actions of the Czech CP are described—but no alternative courses of action are examined.

As a result he offers us only a series of dilemmas. For if the Czech CP was not aiming for revolution or for socialism, then what kind of party and programme were needed: what is needed today? And what kind of state is Czechoslovakia today?

Yet his research offers the reader a chance to formulate answers to these ques-

tions that reinforce the Trotskyist analysis of the post-war overturns.

Tim Wohlforth says in *'Communists' Against Revolution* (p.20) "It was international considerations which determined the final social evolution of the countries in this [E. Europe buffer] region."

This is essential to understand because the form of the process of transformation was different in a lot of ways in each buffer country. In the case of Czechoslovakia, the masses were very much involved: but in the case of Hungary there was the direct use of the Russian Army.

Despite these apparent divergences, the transformations themselves were politically the same. They took place in the same period because of the same international factors.

At the end of the war the Soviet bureaucracy came together to horse-trade with the capitalist world which countries would come under which "sphere of influence".

Czechoslovakia was ceded to the Russian sphere of influence, even though American troops were in a position to invade (helped by the Germans, who had held out against the Russians but once they realised they were being defeated made things easy for the 'allies').

From the imperialists' point of view this territory was ceded to Russian influence only because they needed the help of the Soviet bureaucracy to stop revolutions in the industrialised West.

Trotsky's expectations of the possibilities that would arise from the war were shown to be correct.

All over Europe there was the basis of proletarian revolution. The workers were armed in the resistance forces mainly supporting the CPs.

The bourgeoisie's were in the main exposed for their co-existence with and often outright support for the fascists.

There were mutinies in the US Army—as troops demanded to be sent home. And a huge wave of strikes erupted in the USA itself.

So there was a genuine basis for socialist revolutions. And it was here that the most important counter-revolutionary role of the Russian bureaucracy was revealed.

Stalin directed the most powerful CPs to give in their arms and to take ministerial positions in bourgeois coalition governments.

This they did from 1945-47. These years of collaboration were used by the bourgeoisie to provide an essential breathing space for capitalism which ensured its survival. In Indochina and in Greece the Stalinists actually welcomed the arrival of imperialist occupying armies! Anything subsequently done in Eastern Europe is far outweighed by these counter-revolutionary actions.

In the Eastern European "buffer" states encircling its borders the Soviet Union set up coalition regimes which included bourgeois parties.

Stalin did not go for transformation of the economies. He aimed only to provide the Stalinist bureaucracy with a buffer and breathing space to rebuild.

So what exactly were the buffer states of Eastern Europe in those two years 1945-7? They remained capitalist states: but capitalist states in which the state machinery rested on the strength of the Soviet Red Army or (in Yugoslavia) on Communist-led partisan forces. As such they remained unstable formations, in which a process of change was already underway.

There is little evidence to suggest that in these initial moves the Stalinist bureaucracy did anything but move forward empirically step-by-step: there seems no sign of any overall long-term strategy of assimilating these states, as claimed for instance by the SWP's Chris Harman. Harman of course believes that the Russian state is a capitalist state: but he also feels that there was a grand plan at work from 1945:

"At the same time they (the CPs) were preparing the ground in co-operation with the Russian occupying forces, to destroy these allies (bourgeois ministers) as well—'from above'."

(*Bureaucracy and Revolution in Eastern Europe*, p.35).



Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin carving up the post-war world

Rather each counter-revolutionary move took a form forced upon the bureaucracy by its own contradictory role as a privileged conservative caste balanced precariously on a workers' state.

From the outset the nervous Kremlin bureaucracy insisted that the E. European Communist Parties should have the ministries of the Interior and Defence—knowing that these would be crucial to stop attacks on the Soviet Union from taking place from those countries.

So even while the states were still capitalist (despite extensive nationalisations, often following the expropriations of fascists' property), the Kremlin-controlled Communist Parties had key positions from which they controlled the repressive state apparatus.

So the capitalists couldn't act without them, especially with the Red Army looming. Here for a period was bureaucratic control over the capitalists.

The factor that transformed this was the imperialists, who, after their breathing space, took the initiative in launching the Cold War.

CP ministers were chucked out of coalition governments in the West in 1947. The Marshall Aid Plan was started to regenerate capitalism in the West—and moves were made to bring the Eastern European countries into this plan.

This led the Russian bureaucracy to act, where possible through the national Communist Parties, elsewhere through the Army.

The bourgeois ministers were thrown out, the social transformations were carried through, and enlarged, purged and monolithic Stalinist parties imposed their bureaucratic grip on new, deformed, workers states born not through revolutionary overthrow but bureaucratic/military overturn.

So when we look at the developments in a particular country we have to assess such external factors first.

But this does not mean we dismiss the internal factors.

As Tim Wohlforth points out:

"The process of structural assimilation was carried through in every country in Eastern Europe by the combined efforts of internal forces and the external role of the USSR. The relative weight of external and internal forces varied from country to country depending on the indigenous strength of the Stalinist movement in the particular country and its relative reliability in the eyes of the Kremlin."

(Wohlforth, p.29)

Continued next week

# The fine art of alienation

A GUEST REVIEWER discusses the exhibition **ABSTRACTION: TOWARDS A NEW ART** showing at the Tate Gallery until April 13 (Admission £1).

The first two decades of this century saw something of a revolution in Western painting—only a very partial revolution, more apparent than real, in that it occurred on canvas and not in society.

Artists continued pretty much in the same essential relationship to other people as they had for the previous 400 years or so of painting for the commercial market.

That is, they were understood and appreciated (sometimes) by a small elite from the ruling and educated class; from the broad masses they were quite divorced.

This despite the fact that it was those masses who produced the surplus value on which painting, like all cultural activities not essential to maintaining life, fed.

The superficial revolution consisted largely in this: the abandonment of the objective reality of the sensual world, in favour of their own decorative or anxious souls.

Of course this had always been true to a certain extent in post-Renaissance painting: the artist saw through their own eyes and those of the class to which they belonged or were attached.

This inevitably led to some 'abstraction', some deviation, from what lay 'objectively' in their field of vision when they set up their canvases.

It grew increasingly so in the Post-Impressionism of artists like van Gogh, Gauguin and Cezanne.

Yet the ten years or so up to the First World War saw the development of a new vocabulary of painting—though it by

no means monopolised the greatest artists of that period or since.

It was a vocabulary of shapes and colours and textures which no longer claimed to refer to 'external nature', but only to itself and its internal relationships—and sometimes, as with the Dutchman Mondrian and the Russian Kandinsky, to mystical concepts and systems.

The most important painters in the origin and growth of abstract painting were Picasso and Braque who developed in the years around 1910 in Paris the type of painting we call 'Cubist'.

## Cezanne

These paintings were, however revolutionary, clearly related to earlier developments, particularly to Cezanne. And they still referred, however complexly and unapparently, to the world around them.

What marked them as revolutionary was their total abandonment of traditional perspective—whereby an object or scene is depicted as being viewed from a single fixed point in space, with all parallel lines pointing to a single 'vanishing point'.

This art of 'perspective' was invented at the beginning of the Renaissance. Prior to then, paintings had been made generally with more than one vanishing point, with an appearance of flatness and unreality, without giving an illusion of 'likeness' as became possible with the invention of perspective.

Medieval paintings had been painted, then, as being seen by the all-seeing eye of the God whom they served. From the late fifteenth century onwards

things were seen in paintings as from the eye of an individual person—corresponding to the bourgeois humanism and the individualism of the capitalist society that was being born.

The great achievement of the Cubists was that they broke through this way of seeing reality in painting.

## Challenge

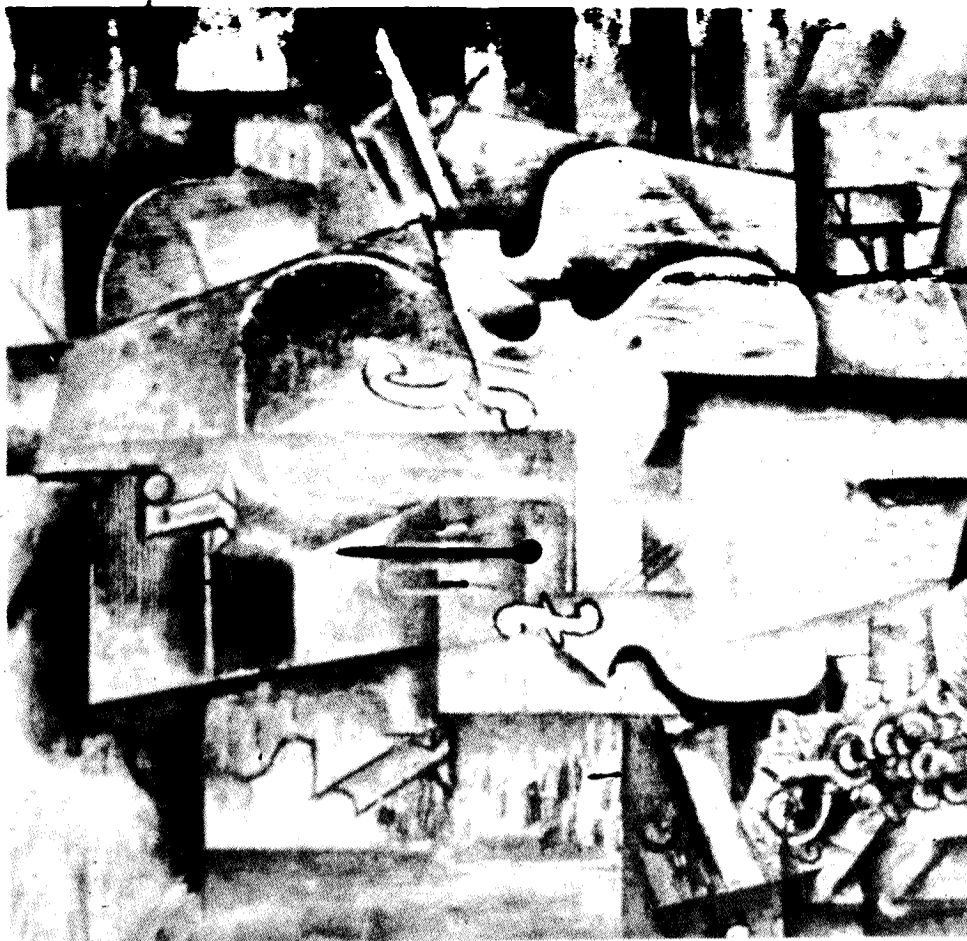
They painted, for example, a violin as seen from many points of view simultaneously, thus challenging many aspects of the bourgeois tradition in painting.

Doing this, they inevitably made the painted canvas look very different: it no longer 'obviously' reproduced reality, for their realism was not traditional realism—though it remains as all genuine art must: realism.

The painted surface emphasised that it was just that; it took on a more decorative, patterned, geometric appearance. It was, unfortunately, this more superficial aspect that was taken up most avidly by avant-garde painters around the world.

The social basis of the rapid development of 'abstract' or 'non-representational' art is fairly clear. It was initially a rebellion against a reality that was, in fact, dehumanised and debased—the reality of capitalist society, no longer progressive, but still brutal and ugly and fundamentally hostile in many ways to the production of art.

Because petty-bourgeois artists did not see the social revolution that was necessary to end this regime, they tried to have a revolution in the world of art to which they retreated, as they reacted against both capitalist reality and the bour-



Picasso: Still Life (1912)

geois artistic tradition.

Symbolically and geographically at the centre of this large exhibition of the pioneering works of abstract painting are Cubist works by Picasso and Braque.

In the rooms around this revolutionary centre, are paintings grouped according to the nationality that was, by 1910, becoming much less important to art, as a 'world school' replaced the national schools of an earlier stage of capitalist society.

## Abstraction

There are the Dutch paintings, grouped around Mondrian, with their vertical/horizontal grids and squares of colour. Mondrian's own development towards abstraction is carefully shown in a well-chosen selection of paintings.

There are the Russian painters like Rodchenko and Malevich, perhaps historically the most important pioneers of purely abstract painting; there are the French, who probably descended best into purely decorative and meaningless abstraction; the German, the British, the American.

In these paintings of ten years of phenomenally amazing growth are some very exciting and interesting works.

And in them are virtually all the elements which abstract painters since then have used, re-arranged and made money with as they pick up and discarded the various fashions which the capitalist market system ensures are the basis of much 'art'.

(This is true, equally, of much 'representational' painting, equally unadventurous, stale and at the mercy of the market place).

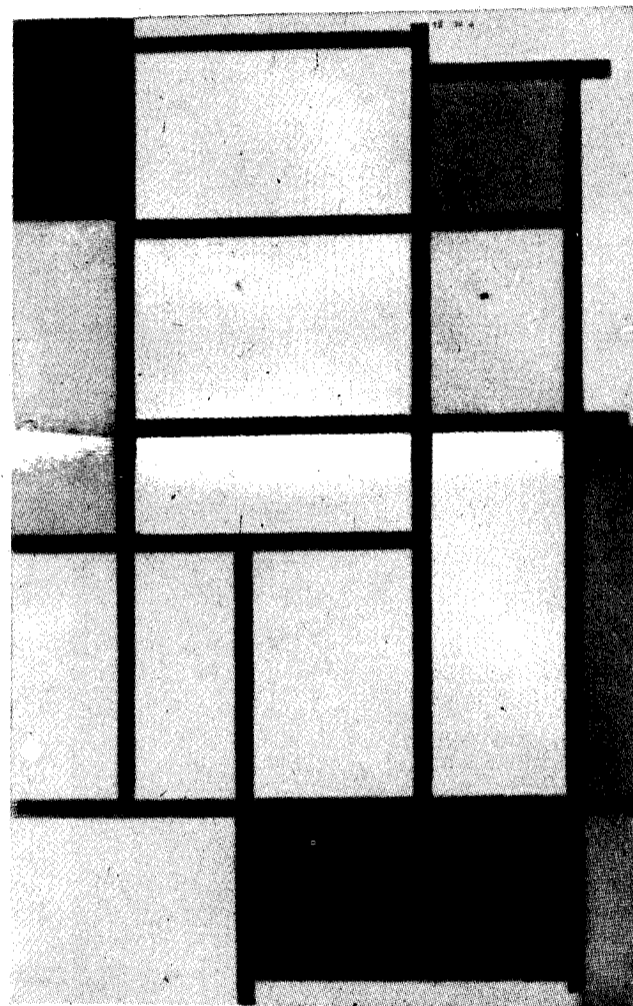
## Pioneers

These pioneers certainly saw their artistic revolution as being socially relevant; many even saw it as a blow against an individualistic capitalist society essentially opposed to the production of art.

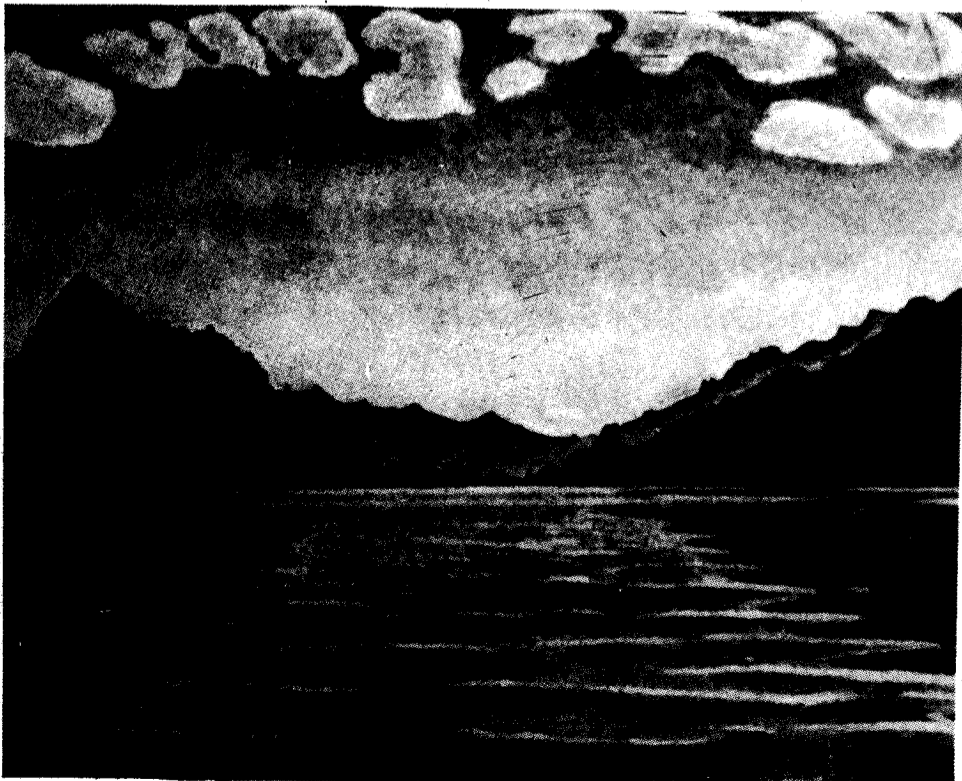
But in the pure abstract works of even this exhibition, we must wonder whether the total rejection of the sensuous world, this 'liberation' as the painters saw it, is not ultimately sterile. They are mostly paintings of paint, or of an individualistic 'self-expression'.

These are socially anonymous paintings; monuments to capitalist society's alienation: the alienation of the masses from art, of man from man, and of man from the world around him, the social reality which he has wrested from nature.

A real revolution in painting can occur and grow only in harmony with the development of the socialist revolution, as the proletariat seizes the culture of the past and builds on it the art—not of artists or a ruling class—but the genuinely mass-based art of a classless society.



Mondrian: Composition in Red, Yellow and Blue (1921)



Kandinski: Composition (1916)

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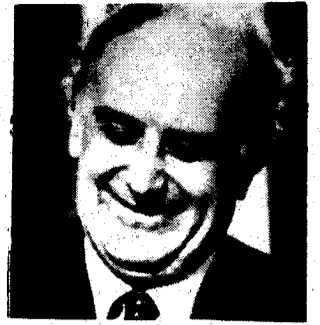
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# Mass resistance forced Corrie Bill's defeat



Forced to oppose Corrie proposals: Health Secretary Vaughan.

By Mary Wilson

It now looks almost certain that John Corrie's anti-abortion bill will not receive its Third Reading this session.

The only chance of its gaining further time is if it comes up on July 4: but this will only be possible if other Private Members Bills are dropped.

However, Corrie's Bill is the fourth attempt to restrict the limited provision for abortion offered by the 1967 Act. And it is certain that it will not be the last.

Yet it is immediately obvious that the MPs who decide the fate of abortion legislation do not represent the wishes of the electorate.

## Against restriction

A series of opinion polls have shown overwhelmingly that the majority of women and men in this country are *opposed* to any restriction of the existing Abortion Act, despite the fact that MPs voted 238-98 in favour of Corrie's Bill at its Second Reading.

Clearly the proportionately large numbers of Roman Catholic MPs who believe that women should be denied control of their own fertility, have vociferously supported Corrie.

However it is not only *male* MPs who have supported the Bill.

Thatcher—whom some liberal feminists supported during the election campaign as the representative of women's interests—led the anti-abortionists to the 'aye' lobby, supported by all but one of the Tory women.

## Morality

The support for Corrie's Bill has to be seen primarily as an attempt to shore up the family unit and bourgeois morality.

It encourages the myth that a woman's true place is in the home, with her children, since the denial of abortion rights forces unwanted child-bearing on women.

At the same time there has been much rhetoric against the 'permissiveness' of unmarried women and arguments that women who have unwanted pregnancies should be deprived abortion, as punishment for not taking precautions—despite the fact that no contraception is really safe and efficient.

This movement to rehabilitate the institution of the family strengthens an important ideological support of capitalist social relations.

## Individual unit

The family isolates workers into individual, self-contained units, reducing women to dependence on their husbands, and burdening working men with the obligation of supporting wife and children.

Moreover, the fact that the denial of abortion rights will tie more women to the home, at a time when unemployment is rising cannot have escaped the notice of the Tories.

Most of their other social legislation has the effect of squeezing women out of paid employment: the slashing of nursery education, threats to maternity grants and employment protection for pregnant



PHOTO: Mark Risher (IPL)

Against action: Callaghan  
Against abortion: Thatcher  
Against Corrie: Jo Richardson.



TUC Anti-Corrie demonstration

Act said they would seek a backstreet abortion if denied legal access to it.

The Corrie Act, if passed, would clearly be continuously broken on a massive scale. Also it would be totally unenforceable. (Before 1967, prosecutions of backstreet abortionists depended almost entirely on the acts of police provocateurs: working women would not, in general, inform on abortionists who performed a vital, if unsafe, service).

Meanwhile, backstreet operators would be profiteering on women's suffering, and private clinics would gain a lucrative trade.

Significantly, the body which did *not* defeat Corrie was the Parliamentary Labour Party.

At the Second Reading, only 53 Labour MPs voted for Corrie, while Callaghan refused to allow a three-line whip on the PLP despite the fact that opposition to Corrie and free abortion on request is Labour Party policy.

Even trade union sponsored Labour MPs failed to vote against Corrie—flouting TUC policy.

The Tories, rather than Labour, recognised from the outset that abortion is a class issue.

Given that the PLP has refused to make a stand to defend women's rights, it has been touch and go, since last June whether Corrie's Bill would become law.

As it has turned out, the petitions, lobbies and propaganda campaign have this time been successful.

However, if Corrie had won, such limited tactics would be insufficient to defend the

present NHS abortion service against the reactionary legislation and avoid a return to the backstreets.

Only strike action by the MPU/ASTMS and other public sector unions in defence of victimised doctors and health workers who continued to provide abortion facilities, and supporting action from the rest of the labour movement would be able to safeguard women's right to safe, free abortion.

However, such a campaign of direct action would not be mobilised easily.

It would mean putting demands on union leaders, and forcing them to act in defence of working class women.

Yet a start has already been made.

The fact that the TUC was pressurised into calling a demonstration against anti-abortion legislation was itself a historic step and the campaign which has been carried into the labour movement has strengthened this limited stand.

Next time an anti-abortion bill is tabled, the labour movement must put up a better fight.

But before that happens, we must mobilise the strength of the labour movement in the fight to *extend* abortion facilities.

We must demand that a future Labour government repeal all anti-abortion legislation, making abortions no more restricted than other surgical operations.

More immediately, the Labour Party and trade unions must fight to *expand* existing services in the NHS and to defend them against cuts and cash limits.

## Reagan on abortion

In an interview published in last Thursday's *Guardian* Republican Party right winger Ronald Reagan spelled out with brutal frankness the reactionary case against abortion and against contraception for "under age" young women.

Accusing the government of "sticking its nose into the family", Reagan brushed aside the view that efficient contraception would avoid the need

for abortion.

"Whatever happened to just saying "no"? he demanded.

And showing the link between repression of sexuality and the right wing call for "law and order", Reagan went on:

"It's morally wrong, and our Judeo-Christian tradition tells us, it's morally wrong but wouldn't it also be far better for girls to do what girls from time immemorial have done, have a baby and put it up for adoption? I have an adopted child—and how long we waited.

"So—no talk about a breakdown of morals, what we're really saying is, there's a kind of philosophy that if it feels good, do it. And it may feel good for someone to bob someone else over the head with a club . . . What ever happened to try and teach morality to the young?"

Reagan's "morality" is of course that of imperialism and capitalist exploitation. And like the Tories, he sees the "family" as the means to prop up that system.

women, and redundancies in the welfare services which are an area of high female employment.

The Corrie Bill provided one further method of 'easing' unemployment.

What is more, abortion restrictions would not severely affect the average Tory voter.

Abortion is a class issue. Women with money could always get an abortion, if restrictive legislation was passed, at Harley St. clinics, just as they did before 1967.

It is *working women* who

would again suffer—at the hands of backstreet abortionists.

We would return to the grim pre-'67 years, with their high maternal mortality and morbidity rates—the very reason why the Abortion Act was eventually passed.

Why then, did Corrie fail? The immediate reason was the filibustering of Tribunate MPs, and the tabling of a huge number of amendments, which used up the limited time allocated.

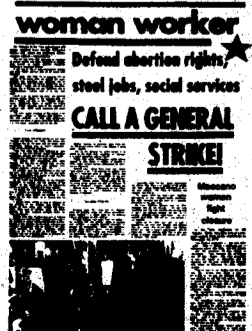
The widespread anti-Corrie feeling, evidenced by opinion

polls, and more concretely by the huge TUC demonstration last October, and lobbies of Parliament in advance of its Third Reading, made it impossible for the government to give the Bill extra time—and risk identifying themselves openly with the anti-abortionists.

What must have weighed even more heavily with MPs was the fact that, according to the polls one in every three women of childbearing age, having become accustomed to the rights conceded by the 1967

## WOMAN WORKER

Bi-monthly women's paper of the Workers Socialist League. Available price 18p (including postage) from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX.





# NGA sticks to claim

The first real initiative to follow from the engineers' breakthrough on the 40 hour week is the present print workers' dispute.

Management have offered 20.6% on top rates with proportionate increases for other grades plus a 39 hour week from January 1981 and 37½ hours from July 1982.

The original claim was for an £80 minimum plus 37½ hours from April 23, 1980.

The offer would mean a top rate basic of only £75. But SOGAT and NATSOPA have caved in and are recommending acceptance of the offer in a ballot of members.

The NGA, obviously under pressure following the massive pay-out at the Times, have now turned it down.

This reflects militancy among the membership. But the NGA is only calling selective token strikes to back up its fight for the claim.

Clearly the full claim can only be won through national strike action in which the fight must be taken up for support from SOGAT and NATSOPA.

\*No retreat on the full claim!

\*37½ hours now!

\*All out strike action!

# Fight on to save Perivale hospital

The thought of ambulances trying to whisk women about to have babies along the A4 Western Avenue in the rush hour to Hammer-smith seems a sick joke.

But this is what the local AHA is seriously proposing.

The Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow Area Health Authority is proposing the closure of the Perivale Maternity Hospital which has all the maternity beds in the Ealing District.

The usual pseudonym for cuts—"rationalisation"—is used to try to justify this latest attack on the NHS locally.

The AHA document even has the nerve to link these cuts in with the need to devote resources to such services as provision for the elderly and mentally handicapped when their Tory friends in Ealing Council have just closed a day centre!

A vain attempt is made by the AHA to try to mask the fact that all they are concerned about is the saving of about £746,000 per annum and the possible 'disposal' of the site.

They point out that the South and North Hammersmith Districts in the same AHA have more than the recommended number of beds per head of population.

But even they are forced to admit that if the proposed

YOU CAN'T  
RUN HOSPITALS  
ON SKELETON  
STAFF

PHOTO: Ian McIntosh (FL)



amalgamation of the West London Hospital and Queen Charlotte's takes place there will be no spare capacity to take referrals from Perivale.

They also say that many patients can go to Hillingdon Hospital anyway.

This argument is answered in a thorough Community Health Council report (which

calls for Perivale Hospital to be left alone). Hillingdon Hospital closed a labour ward in December and so more local mothers are being given prefer-

ence. The reason the hospitals in the North and South Hammersmith Districts have more than the "recommended" number of beds is because of their national importance as teaching hospitals especially with the demand for the Leboyer Method offered at the West London.

The CHC reply shows how the Perivale Hospital covers the area in the AHA with a very high concentration of women of child bearing age which is also one of social stress, covering the Southall, Greenford and Northolt areas.

As one of the mums told us, many of the hospital's doctors are Asian and can talk to the young Asian women

and make them feel more contented.

This sort of thing is of no interest to the moguls of the AHA.

Neither apparently is the fact that without practical experience of obstetrics it could mean the withdrawal of recognition by the General Nursing Council and the Royal Colleges of recognition for training nurses and doctors.

A vigorous local campaign to save the hospital has already begun. Bill Dunn of COHSE with some of the staff at the hospital have been interviewed on LBC and a petition has been circulating around all the union branches, trades councils and political parties in the area. A public meeting is planned for 3 April. The final date for objections to be notified to the AHA is 31 March.

Bill Dunn did say to the radio interviewer that if necessary the workers would consider occupying to save the hospital.

However, this must first be discussed with the workforce themselves and preparations made to gain support of the local GPs to keep referring patients and to the ambulance drivers to keep bringing the women in.

The Area Joint Shop Stewards Committee has pledged to give all support to any action taken in defence of the hospital.

This must be taken up and a pledge of supporting strike action given. Work must be done among other local COHSE branches who apparently in the past would not pledge themselves to take action in the fight to keep Perivale open.

The tendency now of some people to say that cuts should be made in other districts of the AHA must be roundly attacked.

It is clear that Perivale is a very popular hospital and local workers, residents and tenants will fight to keep it open.

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 contradictions 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.

Internationally, we are affiliated to the newly-formed Trotskyist International Liaison Committee, which fights for the reconstruction of the Fourth International and the building of revolutionary parties in every country to lead the struggle against imperialism and against the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies in the deformed and degenerated workers' states.

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.

## RED YOUTH 19

Monthly paper of the Socialist Youth League

Articles include feature on Further Education, Ramones, unionisation of shop workers, NUSS, Punks on the march, steel strike and more.

Available, price 15p including postage, from SYL, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX.

# Bailiffs break in on Meccano

The 100-day occupation of the Meccano factory on Merseyside came to an abrupt end when last Tuesday (March 11) a squad of 100 police and bailiffs burst into the plant wielding sledge hammers, pick-axes and hatchets.

The handful of workers still sitting in the doomed plant were roughly ejected from the factory and plans put in motion to ship out equipment, materials and stocks of finished toys and Meccano sets.

Though a token picket—including supporters from other unions on Merseyside—is being maintained on the gates of the plant in a bid to prevent such materials being moved, management succeeded at the weekend in removing the first two lorry loads.

The depressing prospect of an indefinite vigil at the gates of a dead factory seems unlikely to galvanise the enthusiasm of workers on Merseyside: the fight could much more productively be taken up within the unions whose members at Meccano were sacked at 40

minutes notice late last year. The largest union, the GMWU, has lifted not a finger to mount blacking action against Meccano's owners—the giant Airfix combine—or even to offer strike pay to those in dispute!

Effective blacking of the stocks and machinery, and other forms of solidarity action directed at Airfix nationally offer the only means of pursuing the struggle for the jobs axed at Meccano.

It is precisely such policies that GMWU official Mike Egan and other union leaders in the area have shied away from since the beginning of the work-in.

## New buyer

With empty factories virtually two a penny now on Merseyside the hopes they once held out of finding a new buyer for Meccano are exposed as a reactionary, utopian diversion from the fight for action.

It is to be hoped that this lesson will not be missed by the 400 workers currently occupying the latest Merseyside factory to face the axe—the nearby Massey Ferguson tractor plant at Knowsley.

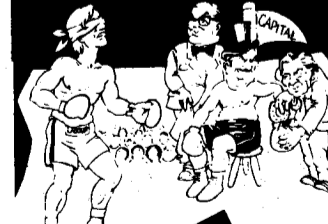
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# THE STEEL 'WAR' COMES TO COWLEY

## NALGO calls pay action

The right wing leadership of NALGO has launched a programme of blacking action in support of a 10-22% comparability pay claim.

The action is in response to a management offer of 6-12%. Computer staff and other NALGO members have been instructed not to work on the issue of rate demands—a move that could quickly prove very expensive for the employers, who will need to borrow cash to tide them over.

This action is also being supported by white collar members of NUPE who share the same demands.

And air traffic control officers at municipal airports are to be balloted on action over Easter.

This stand by NALGO—albeit over an obviously inadequate pay claim—is a further reflection of the growing militancy on wages throughout the working class.

"We're in a war." This is how most of the South Yorkshire steel pickets described their decision to picket the Leyland Body Plant at Cowley.

After the refusal of the Leyland senior stewards to call a strike on their own pay demand, despite the steelworkers' lobby of their meeting, the steel strikers decided to put pickets into Oxford.

The South Yorkshire TGWU members, after ten weeks of TGWU lorries crossing their picket lines, finally got Moss Evans to issue a clear "directive" as opposed to his earlier request. This reads:

"The General Executive Council of the Transport and General Workers Union meeting Monday 3 March 1980 discussed in detail the current dispute in the steel industry and reinforced the request put out by the General Secretary that all Transport and General Workers Union members should observe the

pickets of the unions in dispute with the British Steel Corporation. We are instructing all members to recognise that this instruction must be positively observed."

When pickets started on the Body Plant on Monday March 10 the lorries started to queue up outside.

Drivers went away to phone their shop stewards. Their stewards contacted the District Secretary of the TGWU, David Buckle.

Suddenly the lorries, mainly BRS, started to cross.

When David Buckle was challenged by the pickets he replied that Evans' instruction only applied to 'new steel'.

### Pressure

More pressure was then put onto the TGWU at national level by the strikers and National Organiser Ron Todd then interpreted the directive as meaning "fresh steel, oil and gas".

The Cowley Body Plant needs very little steel over the next two weeks, because the press shop workers are nearly all laid off.

Oil and gas supplies can take time to affect production—especially if the company is able to concentrate simply on finding ways to get in supplies of these two items.

Yet it is in the power of the TGWU to stop the plant virtually immediately, by stopping supplies of made-up steel products—such as petrol tanks. Yet these have been specifically exempted from observing the pickets!



Steel pickets at BL's Cowley Body Plant

This is a 'war' in which the 'Generals' will not use the very weapons that will defeat the enemy!

The Oxford Student Trade Union Liaison Committee has formed an active support committee and they organised a lobby by TGWU members of the TGWU District Committee last Thursday.

The right wing-led District Committee did allow a steel striker to speak, but the out-

come was that the TGWU directive was still limited to the three types of supplies.

The support committee has backed up the pickets well, with finance, food and pickets.

The Yorkshire strikers will soon be getting back-up from Corby. But the real question, if the battle of Cowley is to be won, is getting the directive interpreted in a way that will enable production to be stopped.

This fight is seen by the strikers as the test case of the directive: it will prove whether Evans and Co. want to win the strike or not.

A victory at Cowley could then be used to turn to other key Leyland plants such as Radiators at Llanelli and Swindon Body Plant and also to Fords and other major steel consumers.

## Needed: a general strike!

"What we need is a General Strike, and bloody quick, too!"

These words from Mick Skelton, strike coordinator of the Corby strike committee, summed up the growing conviction of numbers of steel workers that their struggle is a vital test of strength with the Tory government.

Skelton was speaking at a public meeting in Leicester called by the Trades Council and Leicester South CLP to support the strike.

"This strike is about politics," he stressed, pointing out that the steelworkers are being used as a "dress rehearsal" for the imposition of the Tories' anti-union laws.

And he firmly opposed any notion of protest politics and picketing alone being sufficient to win the struggle.

"In two weeks this will be the longest strike in history except for the miners in 1926. And that's in a moderate trade union, so-called!"

Now I'm making it quite clear that pickets on the Gruvick size are not going to win the war. Pickets and finance won't win this war at all.

The only way we can fight back with the solidarity of the whole labour movement in action.

Skelton went on to relate how, as a member of the negotiating committee, he met with TUC leaders and moved a call for a General Strike—only to be told 'out of order'!

### At stake

Yet the stake is far more than the steel strike itself.

"If we are defeated, everyone is defeated," argued Skelton.

To the Tories, the management and the most advanced militants, this is self-evident: to the bureaucracy—reluctant at a time to mobilise their membership in all-out struggle—the prospect of a defeat of steelworkers is less frightening than the fear of being swept out of their privileged positions by a conflict and forward-moving work class.

That is why the steelworkers have been left far to fight the Tories alone.

# BL 'LOSSES': OPEN THE BOOKS

As we go to press talks are still continuing between British Leyland management and the Joint Negotiating Committee on the November 1979 pay review.

The company's 5%-with-strings offer was rejected in a recent postal ballot by a 3-2 majority—yet convenors and union officials have consistently refused to call strike action that would bring out BL workers alongside the steel strikers.

After months of hedging and delays had handed the initiative back to management, a convenors' meeting ten days ago meekly caved in to Edwardes' carefully timed tactic of laying

off a few thousand BL workers in selected plants and voted against calling a strike.

Pressing home his advantage, and well aware that BL's carefully doctored balance sheets were shortly to be given full publicity, Edwardes moved in for the kill. He summoned obedient union General Secretaries to talks on the firm's "recovery plan".

### Hammered home

There the call for further sacrifices by union members to restore the "viability" of BL was hammered home to union leaders who have already lent their support to the loss of jobs by the thousand.

And they were called upon to press gang the negotiating committee into accepting the offer—strings and all.

Duffy and his fellow bureaucrats emerged declaring their commitment to the viability of BL.

A few days later Edwardes produced the latest balance sheet—showing a thumping £144.5 million loss for the last year—and spelled out in no uncertain terms what viability required.

He said that the task was to reduce "overmanning", reduce "excess capacity", "slim down" the company to a sustainable level and eliminate the cash flow deficit.

Further talks then took place with the union leaders—after which BL Cars Managing

Director Ray Horrocks declared "we are pleased with the outcome."

On Monday March 17 the talks reconvened, with General Secretaries present to bludgeon the convenors of the JNC into line.

Yet it scarcely seemed likely that convenors who a week earlier had accepted without question the absurd claim that there were 40,000 workers laid off in BL (when in reality no more than 8,000 were temporarily laid off) would even stop to consider the validity of BL's balance sheet.

Of course what the BL figures conceal is precisely the question of who profits from this supposed "loss-making" corporation.

The profits of BL's myriad of private suppliers, dealers and contractors are hidden from view.

The claim that BL holds huge unsold stocks of cars remains unproven.

### Interest payments

And the huge sums creamed off in interest payments by the bankers are obscured: last year such interest payments amounted to over £60 million.

Yet in the period since the Ryder Report and the introduction of 'workers participation' there has been no move by BL convenors or union officials to question at any point the need to make "sacrifices" to restore

the firm to viability. At each point they have bent the knee to management ultimatums, and sacrificed their members on the altar of profit.

Acceptance under these conditions of Edwardes' insulting pay offer seems not unlikely. But such a move seems certain to provoke fierce resistance on the shop floor, where the 92-page book of strings threatens to strip away every worthwhile union agreement won in 30 years of struggle.

Either way BL workers face the need to fight both management attacks and the treachery of their own present leaders through the fight for a new leadership that will defend their interests.

## NUR call

As we go to press the NUR has called on the TUC to organise a 24-hour General Strike against the policies of the Tory government, declaring that marches alone will not change its course.

It is important that the right wing NUR leaders now concede the need for such generalised action.

But it is wrong to restrict it to one day. Militants in every union must press for an all-out general strike to bring down the Tories.

To prepare for such action, and strengthen and spread the steel strike councils of action must be built in each area drawing delegates from all local labour movement bodies.

## London nursery sit-in

On Friday 6 March parents occupied Nightingale Lane Day Nursery in the London Borough of Wandsworth.

Knowing that a demonstration was planned for 4 p.m. the Matron tried to forestall any struggle by removing the children from the Nursery at lunchtime.

But in her rush and panic a window was left open and parents were able to gain entrance legally and start their occupation.

The decision of Wandsworth Social Services Committee to close the Day Nursery was made in November 1979.

Parents were advised by letter of the decision, which was rubber-stamped two weeks later. The reason for closing, they were told, was that the building—which is leased by the Council—was "no longer suitable" for a Day Nursery.

### Private nursery

Parents were therefore amazed and perplexed to find that two applications for the lease (which the Council has renewed for three years) were from individuals planning to run—would you believe—a private day nursery!

The parents occupied Nightingale Lane Nursery the night before the social services meeting as a token gesture but that didn't deter them in their closure plan.

Since November the nursery which has full facilities for 56 children and had an attendance of 44 children prior to the closure decision, has been deliberately run down, to leave only four children on the day of closure.

The parents plan to continue the occupation as long as possible and have leafleted the local area and asked parents and childminders to bring children along to the Nursery to use the facilities.

### Supporting strikes

The trade unions, Labour Party and Trades Council in Wandsworth have given support to the occupation but active support is needed, particularly from public sector unions in the form of supporting strike action.

If not there is a real danger that this occupation, like other previous struggles against the Tory attack on women, children one parent families and the necessary and vital service of day provision for the under fives could end in isolation and defeat.

Send financial support to: Sarah Rackham, c/o Nightingale Lane Day Nursery, 56, Nightingale Lane, London SW12.



PHOTO: Laurence Sparham, IFL

Duffy





Another good week on the Special Fund has brought us in sight of our first £1000, with £947.05 in hand. But it is still going to be an uphill battle if we are to raise the first half of the £3,000 fund by the Easter weekend.

Meanwhile, it is important that readers do not forget our Monthly Fund which we have to maintain at £750 a month in order to sustain our paper.

The total, half way through the month is £358.30 so we are not too far off target. But we must not rest on our laurels.

Donations to either fund should be rushed to:  
Socialist Press Fund, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX

# STRIKES NOT VOTES NEEDED TO KICK OUT THATCHER

As Tory right winger Teddy Taylor scraped home by the skin of his teeth in the formerly "safe" seat of Southend last week, it was clear that Thatcher's government is whipping up more hostility and faster than her ill-fated predecessor Edward Heath.

Taylor suffered the humiliation of seeing a 10,774 majority transformed into one of only 430 in a by-election which he won with only barely over a third of the votes cast.

With Sir Keith Joseph still sponging assorted foodstuffs off his suit after his uncomfortable visit to South Wales, Thatcher herself took care to offer only a distant and fast-moving target for egg-throwers during her flying visit to Yorkshire and Humberside.

Sneaking around by side roads and back entrances, and protected by a wall of 500 police at Selby coalfield, Thatcher remained unharmed.

But a group of steelworkers' wives narrowly missed her speeding car in Howden, and in Hull, too, there was an impromptu attempt by a crowd

of over 200 to make an omlette on her windscreen or on Thatcher herself.

Meanwhile the seething anger at Tory policies found a reflection even in the House of Lords, where government proposals to introduce sweeping charges for school transport were thrown out in a surprising 2-1 vote.

### Bitterness

While the revolt on this question was led by Tory peers—and will no doubt lead simply to further cuts on other aspects of education spending—it is in part an outcome of the bitterness among workers and middle class families in rural districts, who would face crippling transport charges for sending their children to school.

But this small setback inflicted on the Tory's strategy of cuts—costing only £20-£30 million nationally—will do little if anything to stem the growing tide of opposition to government policies.

Indeed the latest official figures on retail price inflation—showing a 19.1% annual rise in prices, with more to come—grossly understate the impact of Tory policies and the capitalist

crisis on the working class.

Not only is inflation still accelerating upwards—with higher prices for milk, petrol, beer, coal, rates, council rents, gas, electricity, and prescriptions still to come in the next two months—but the average figure contains some much steeper increases.

Housing costs for instance have risen by 26.8% over the last 12 months mainly as a result of the soaring mortgage rate. Transport and vehicle costs have gone up by 23.7%. The overall figure is lower than 20% largely because food prices have gone up by only 12.8%—a result of the mild winter.

Another factor concealed by the figures for retail price increases is that raw material prices are now going up twice as fast as those of finished commodities—at an annual rate of around 40%.

### Fall in profits

This rapid increase brings with it a fall in profits for manufacturers—who will continue to respond by "rationalising" production, bringing closures, sackings and speed-up on the shop floor.

Unemployment—already on



Speeding away in an egg-proof car: Thatcher

course for 2 million next winter will receive a further boost, at a time when there is speculation that Howe's budget will attempt to cut dole payments and other benefits for the first time since the 1930s.

These policies are not arbitrary spite on the Tories' behalf: they flow from the world-wide crisis of capitalism—an anarchic system that rests not on production for social need but on the accumulation of profit.

This is why even as millions of workers face a future of unemployment, exploitation and poverty the major banks are reporting record profits and BP can announce quadrupled profits on last year's figures.

It is no use looking to Southend or other by-elections as an answer to Thatcher: and if she is allowed to continue on course for four more years the latest Cambridge Policy Review forecasts 3½ million unemployed!

The answer must be to fight throughout the labour movement for general strike action to defeat this government and create conditions to drive out Labour's right wing leadership.

Only a genuine workers' government, carrying out a socialist programme based on nationalisation of banks and industry without compensation under workers' management, can offer a real alternative to Tory destruction.

# TORIES SHRINK FROM KREMLIN'S 'HUMAN RIGHTS' CHALLENGE



British soldier in Ireland

The human rights crusade under which the British government pursues its hysterical anti-Soviet Union campaign almost blew up in its face last week. Predictably the fuse was Ireland.

A cynical deal was reached between the British government and the Soviet bureaucracy in the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

The British agreed to drop a resolution calling for a Soviet statement on the treatment of Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov—in return for the dropping of another by the Soviet Union which condemned Britain for violating human rights in Ireland.

The deal—played down in Britain—is a measure of the deep hypocrisy under which the anti-Soviet crusade is being run.

For home consumption the British government—both this Tory government and the

Labour government which preceded it—have dismissed the H Block prisoners as "terrorists" and masochists who deliberately deprive themselves of the most up to date prison facilities in Europe.

Abroad, the government comes under constant pressure—not because other imperialist oppressors support the struggle of Irish nationalists—but because the torture, repression and treatment of Irish republicans by the British tarnishes the image of the "free world" advocates of dissident rights in deformed and degenerated workers states.

The Stalinist regimes themselves have never raised the imperialist oppression of the Irish people or the treatment handed out to the H Block prisoners as anything other than a bargaining counter, a means to defend the repressive regimes over which they preside.

The cornerstone of British foreign policy is not anti-Sovietism. The real target of its

attack are the socialised property relations in the Soviet Union and the deformed workers' states which have barred the free exploitation of those massive markets by imperialist finance.

The crusade on human rights is trotted out only against those countries which do not provide America, Britain, West Germany and Japan with unrestricted markets.

Where markets exist—in Chile, the Shah's Iran and a host of other repressive nations, Britain and America condemn "outside interference".

Where such markets might be created (in China, where the imperialists hope to see an eventual overturn of nationalised property relations) the trade is switched off like a tap.

Ireland remains Britain's Achilles heel in its international manoeuvres.

The British had a majority in the Human Rights Commission for their attack on the Soviet Union and therefore

sacrificed a major propaganda success.

An undeformed workers state would of course initially have some political prisoners. It is necessary for a workers state to defend itself against now to re-establish capitalism.

But the Soviet Union since the rise of Stalinism has since dropped any pretence that this is its aim. The police state is used against workers, Trotskyists and dissidents like Sakharov who are not agents of imperialism.

The Soviet Union is therefore unable to demonstrate to the working class of the world the difference between the repression of the exploited in imperialist countries and the necessary repression of the exploiters.

It is for that reason that the Soviet Union cannot campaign on the treatment of H Block prisoners and Irish republicans by the British.

But that fight must be taken up by British socialists.

\*PoW status for republican prisoners!

\*Smash the H Blocks!

\*Troops out of Ireland now!