

SOCIALIST PRESS



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Affiliated to the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee

As Tories halt house building

MASS ACTION

NEEDED TO

STOP CUTS!



With housing output at its lowest level since the Wilson government came into office, and over 1 million people on council waiting lists, Tory Secretary of State for the Environment Michael Heseltine last week delivered another savage blow to working class families all over the country.

In a panic move to cut local authority spending, he issued a blanket ban on all new capital projects in housing except where there is a legal obligation to spend money.

What this means is that there will be no new contracts for housebuilding or improvements, council mortgages or improvement grants, or purchases of land for future projects.

Cancelled

Councils' capital allocations, on which they were supposed to base their four year programmes have simply been cancelled.

In addition to the widespread hardship caused by the delay in urgent housing work, the decision will inevitably mean massive redundancies in building firms and council housing departments.

It is ironic that the tenants who wish to buy their council houses from the councils will not be affected by this decision, because they have a legal right to claim a mortgage from the council to make their purchase.

In other words the Tories will put up cash to destroy council housing by returning houses to the private market but are determined to cut the provision of housing, along with other hard-won rights in education, health and social services.

The scale of the Tory cuts in local government is truly enormous: and the anger welling up within the working class is so great that it has broken to the surface in the form of an emergency resolution at the Blackpool Labour Party Conference, a new left wing manifesto for

the GLC elections agreed by the London Labour Party, and growing support for the November 1 conference on the cuts sponsored by Lambeth council leader Ted Knight.

Until now, most Labour Councils have imposed cuts, while the main 'left' alternative to the Thatcher cuts has been to maintain a large proportion of the services by raising the rates.

'Hit list'

This course of action—which in any event cuts working class living standards—is becoming less and less possible as Environment Minister Heseltine has extended legal restrictions on the amount councils are allowed to raise.

The 'hit list' announced by Heseltine on 18 September of so-called "over-spending" councils from whom he is removing money shows that the Tories have taken a decision to go to war with local government services.

It is as a result of these measures that in the London Borough of Lambeth alone, a deficit of up to £6 million is now possible.

In this situation even Ted Knight—who last year raised rates by 49%—has been compelled to admit that further rate increases are becoming less and less possible, and that in any case even with rate increases they will not be able to avoid further cuts.

New situation

In an interview with *London Labour Briefing*, Knight admitted that there was now a new situation.

"I do not accept that there is no option but to make cuts, and we should be demanding that other councils and trade unions within the public sector should take a decision that the only path open to us is confrontation with the Tory government. This is the only other option open to us".

This position of course closely parallels what was spelt



Heseltine (top) and (above) London demonstration against Tory cuts

out a little more clearly in the emergency resolution from Lambeth passed at the Labour Party conference, where it was said that:

"the labour movement must be prepared to use its full strength, including industrial action, to defend the most needy in our society and the interests of every working class family.

"Campaigns must be launched to unite local communities behind actions of Labour Councils and trade unionists."

With this position winning widespread support within the labour movement it is of course inevitable that such initiatives as the Lambeth conference would attract broad layers of workers.

Already on Friday 24 October over 330 delegates had agreed to come, including delegations from numerous Labour councils—among them Leeds, Sheffield, Rochdale, Lothian Glasgow, Tyne and Wear, Greater London and Camden.

NUPE leader Alan Fisher has also decided to come and speak: and there will be numerous delegates from public sector unions.

But here is the contradic-

tion: many of those who turn out to debate the draft resolution tabled by Lambeth Labour councillors will themselves be either councillors who are at present implementing Tory cuts or trade union bureaucrats who are merrily presiding over the closure of schools, hospitals, old peoples' homes and other facilities.

There has not been a single official call to action in defence of public services from NUPE or any other public sector union!

While it is relatively easy for these people to travel to Camden Town Hall and sound off against the Tories, the real development that is needed is in terms of tangible action to defeat the cuts.

Two-faced stance

Even in Lambeth itself there is a similar two-faced stance. While Knight and the Labour council have tabled a resolution on November 1 calling for action to halt the sale of council houses, they have themselves voted that they have 'no choice' but to obey the Tories and sell off houses in their own borough!

They have been challenged by NALGO members in Lambeth Town Hall, who have voted overwhelmingly to defy Heseltine's instruction to sell: a mass meeting of 1,700 NALGO workers last week endorsed this principled stand.

Councils of action

The cuts will only be stopped in the fight for such action by the workers' movement against the Tory offensive.

This means we must also broaden such battles through the struggle to build local councils of action drawing in delegates from the whole labour movement—including private sector unions and workers' political parties).

In this way the basis can be laid for the necessary mass action to defeat the Thatcher government.

Socialist Press therefore urges delegates to this conference—now a key focus of the struggle against the Tories—to support the series of amendments put forward by supporters of *Socialist Press*, *Socialist Organiser* and the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement (see page 5).

These amendments seek a clear commitment from those attending the conference that their anti-Tory rhetoric be transformed into tangible and principled action when they return to their council chambers and union branches.

In the fight for such policies, workers who have been time and again betrayed in the few struggles that have taken place against the cuts, will be able to assess the real nature of those leaders who put themselves forward on November 1 as socialists.

Leadership

And in the struggles of the next period new militants will emerge who must form the basis of a new, revolutionary leadership; a leadership prepared to fight tooth and nail for action to bring down the Thatcher government; prepared to drive out the Labour traitors who refuse to implement socialist policies, and establish a workers' government.

French workers march against fascist violence

POLAND: dilemma for bureaucrats

It is estimated that about one million people marched in France on October 4 against the bombing of the synagogue of Rue Copernic where three died and 20 were injured.

The resurgence of right wing neo-fascist groups in France has been a marked feature of the last three months. Their targets have included not only synagogues and Jewish areas but also North African immigrants, property of the Soviet Union and well known non-French left wing leaders.

The fact that the Rue Copernic murders have brought a mass response is partly because of the highly organised and vocal Jewish lobby and partly because of the guilt of sectors of French capitalists at their collaboration with the Nazis in the deportation of French Jews to Hitler's concentration camps.

Abysmal record

But it also represents a recognition on the part of large numbers of French workers of the need to fight the growth of racism.

The demonstration centred on the abysmal record of the French police in convicting any known fascists—even those caught in the act.

But the anger of the demonstrators was directed squarely against the Giscard government. One of the main slogans was "Giscard, Bonnet, accomplices of the murderers". (Christian Bonnet is the Minister of the

Interior). The "passivity of the public authorities and the indifference of the government" as well as "the inexplicable powerlessness of the police" has been strongly condemned by Alain de Rothschild, President of the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions in France.

It has therefore been a major blow against Giscard in the run-up to next year's Presidential elections.

He has demanded that the police carry out "an exemplary action" to capture those responsible.

Statement

Prime Minister Raymond Barre made a statement in Parliament condemning the bombing and there was a unanimous vote in the National Assembly to suspend proceedings so that its Deputies could go on the demonstration.

The police unions themselves have joined the criticism, particularly against Bonnet.

A public argument has been raging since Inspector Durand was unmasked as a member of the recently outlawed FANE by Italian police investigating the Bologna bombing.

The Autonomous Federation of Police Unions and the National Autonomous Union of Civil Police maintain that up to 30 names on a list of members of fascist organisations are currently serving police officers.

They have demanded that these people be kicked out but Bonnet denies that there are any such numbers involved in his

secret list.

Other police unions such as the General Police Union have condemned the nonchalant attitude taken by Bonnet to the rise in fascist violence. "We are astonished by the attitude of the Minister of the Interior who minimises the danger of the neo-Nazi movements."

More to the point of course the police are at the same time concerned by the growth of self defence squads among immigrant communities and the labour movement: "We are equally worried because of the risk of setting up of self defence movements following this action."

The movement against this terrorism was expressed not only in a major demonstration in Paris but throughout the country: in Aix-en-Provence, 7,000 people led by Mayor Alain Joissainf marched through the town; in Avignon, 2,000 people attended a mass meeting; in Besancon, 3,000 people were mobilised by the Movement Against Racism and for Friendship Among People (MRAP) as well as unions and immigrant organisations; in Bordeaux 10,000 joined the march; in Grenoble 7,000; 4,000 turned out in Lille, 5,000 in Lyon, 10,000 in Montpellier and 5,000 in Strasbourg.

Active

The main trade union organisations the CGT and the CFDT were active in organising and participating in the demonstrations but the leaderships of the Communist and Socialist parties

have not, however, distinguished themselves from the liberal bourgeois elements in the marches; nor have they put forward any independent working class demands.

Inadmissible

"All measures must at last be taken by the government so that the criminals will be arrested and punished. An end must be put to the inadmissible activities of the groups which call themselves Nazis as our party ceaselessly calls for", declared CP General Secretary Georges Marchais.

Gaston Defferre, President of the Socialist Group in the National Assembly echoed this theme: "Those who are politically responsible, who are in charge of the forces of order, must act quickly and decisively."

'Best interests'

Meanwhile the CP fails to mount any struggle against national chauvinism; indeed they champion the call for immigration controls in France which they describe as a measure in the best interests of immigrant workers.

*No reliance on the state police!

*Build workers' self defence squads!

*Drive the fascists off the streets!

After prolonged haggling with leaders of Poland's new independent union federation Solidarity, Warsaw judge Zdzislaw Koscielniak decided last Friday to cut the Gordian knot.

He himself deleted the right to strike—a clause negotiated by the union with the government as part of the settlement of this summer's strike wave in Gdansk—from the union's draft constitution.

Then he added a clause specifying the Communist Party's leading role in Polish affairs.

And then, while Solidarity leader Lech Walesa pondered his next steps, Judge Koscielniak registered the independent union with its 'amended' constitution!

Walesa afterwards declared that:

"We shall be guided by the charter without the changes made by the court. The court has its charter and the union has its own."

But it was just such an uneasy balance of forces which the strike leaders plainly thought they had superceded with the Gdansk agreement.

The court ruling amounts to a rearguard attempt by at least sections of the Stalinist bureaucracy to reverse the gains of the summer strike wave.

It comes in the context of a call by Warsaw Communist

Party leader Henryk Szablak for CP members to join Walesa's new unions—in a clear bid to fight for political control over them.

And at the same time the debate on how best to cope with the new situation in Poland continues to rage among the Stalinist bureaucrats of Eastern Europe.

While East German leader Honecker and Romanian leader Ceausescu have viciously attacked the concessions to the Polish strikers, Hungarian TUC boss Sandor Gaspar has admitted that strikes have taken place in Hungary, too, and advocated tactical concessions to workers' demands in the form of an extension of "participation".

Meanwhile in the USSR, the ageing Kremlin bureaucracy, weakened by the resignation through illness of Premier Kosygin, must be watching with some trepidation.

Dogged by mounting working class resistance in Poland they face the daunting prospect of another disastrous harvest at home, and the added strains of maintaining their war in Afghanistan.

Fearing above all the possibility that workers within the USSR will draw lessons from the militancy of their brothers and sisters in Poland, the Kremlin leaders are forced to play a spectator's role as the Polish bureaucrats struggle to regain control.

Iranian militants put forward independent line

We reprint below a leaflet issued by an Iranian group calling for 'Unity of communist militants'. The leaflet, translated from Persian by "student supporters of Iranian communist movement", puts forward a class line in opposition to the Khomeini regime alongside an analysis of exactly why the Iraqi invasion is in the interests of world imperialism. Whilst the policy spelled out is not identical to our own, we reprint below a word for word extract from the leaflet; only spelling has been amended.

"The invasion of Iraqi Ba'ath regime in its continuation and depending upon certain circumstances, is likely to be transferred into a war of annexation (in the form of disintegration of Iran, military occupation of Iran, annexation of regions of Iran to Iraq and . . .). This invasion, in the actual fact is serving to provide the backgrounds, facilities and aids to the counter-revolutionary imperialist bourgeoisie in accomplishing its final assault against the Iranian revolution, thus, is in essence against the revolution of workers and toilers of Iran.

The Islamic Republic regime, since is a capitalist government and is an active component of bourgeois-imperialist counter-revolution which acts to serve the liquidation of the Iranian revolution, in the face of Iraqi invasion, due to its essence, acts not to defend the revolution of workers and toilers of Iran, but merely to defend its own existence.

This regime (The Islamic Republic) neither wishes nor can rely upon masses and their arming, and in the light of war with Iraq under the guise of emergency situations, the assault by an enemy, the necessity for the "defence of Islamic fatherland" and with reliance upon its disorganised military forces shall attempt:

a) To pursue more actively its policy which aims to take away political liberties and

annihilate communists and other revolutionaries.

b) To intensify its assault against workers and their political organisations and trade unions, to pressurise workers more than before in order to increase the production and to militarise the work-places;

c) To establish semi-martial law rules and regulations and to utilise more actively and directly the armed forces in the service of quelling the revolutionary opposition and distrusting democratic rights;

d) To increase its demagogic propaganda even more, and to slow down the loss of popularity of regime among working people by showing themselves as being anti-imperialist;

With respect to what was mentioned above:

Firstly, Iranian revolutionary workers have no animosity and difference in interests with Iraqi workers and toilers;

Secondly, Iranian workers and toilers see the war as one between two capitalist states which results in oppression and prevention of the spread of the revolutionary struggle in Iran; and therefore they defend their revolutionary achievements against this capitalist war.

From Iranian working class point of view, the Iraqi aggression is another effort by bourgeois-imperialist counter-revolution in providing and creating the background and circumstances for their ultimate assault against the revolutionary workers and toilers of Iran.

Such assault, whether carried out by Palizbans, Bakhtiars, Madanies or Islamic republic regime, or by armies of the region or the US imperialist army; can only be answered in a revolutionary manner by the creation of a revolutionary front, based on armed workers and toilers and under the leadership of communists.

The effort in organising this front irrespective of the potentiality of this or that specific assault is the immediate task of the communist movement of Iran.

Definite tasks facing communists in conjunction with this aggression are as below:

1) Iranian communists should struggle against the following trends which:

a) Encountering the present war, call upon the proletariat to defend Islamic republic regime or a faction within the ruling body.

b) Propagate indifference and pacifism under the pretext that this war is not related to proletariat.

c) Publicise purely the struggle against this regime and ignore the Iran-Iraq war and its political aims.

2) Communists should consistently pursue the following agitative and organisational tasks in order to build up an independent proletarian movement and united revolutionary front against this war and its aims:

a) Exposing every aspect of



Anti-American demonstration in Tehran

the bourgeois nature of this war and its counter-revolutionary objectives;

b) Disclosing the anti-democratic activities of Iranian regime, which is carried out under the pretext of war and agitating and organising in defence of democratic rights as the essential ground for a mass mobilisation against all counter-revolutionary forces;

c) Agitating and organising the workers and toilers against all the efforts and attempts of the regime for the militarisation of work-place.

d) Revealing the policies and operations of the two factions within the ruling body in face of

the war, and in their efforts to abuse the present situation to gain concession from each other;

e) Disclosing the reactionary policies of the counter-revolutionary imperialistic opposition (Ovaisi, Palizban, Bakhtiar . . .) and their activities in taking advantage from the circumstances that war has created.

f) Arguing for independent armed masses, the necessity for the permanent arming of masses and revolutionary organisation.

g) Creating and organising resistance committees, in factories, localities, schools . . . independent of the government and bourgeois political parties.

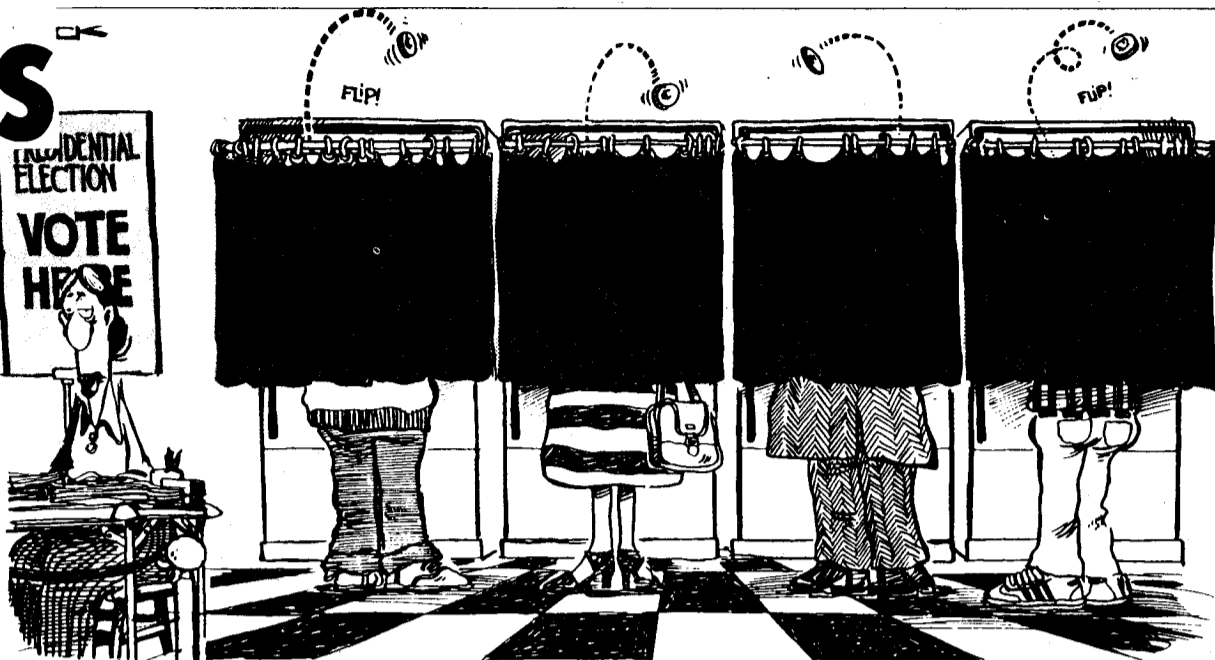
h) Explaining the just struggle of revolutionary Kurdish movement and the heroic struggle of Kurdistan toilers as an example of an independent and consistent popular resistance against the assault of different counter-revolutionary forces and currents.

i) Arousing of masses by historical examples of triumphant mass resistance under the leadership of communists (e.g. Vietnam, Korea, Albania . . .).

j) Arousing and organising the masses in probable occupied areas for the purpose of retreating the invading forces."

Fighting to break Teamsters from bosses parties

We reprint here extracts from a leaflet distributed at the Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) convention in Cleveland by the Socialist League and the Revolutionary Workers Group. The Socialist League is in sympathy with the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee but is barred from affiliating by reactionary US legislation.



The Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) is the largest rank-and-file opposition group in any union in the US or Canada.

It is also the only opposition group with a national organisation. TDU has in it a large number of militant workers who want to fight both the trucking companies and the union bureaucrats. The Teamsters are a very powerful union in a critical industry.

(...)
IBT backs Reagan.

On Wednesday 8 October 1980 the Teamster leadership endorsed Ronald Reagan for president.

Endorsing this labour-hater is an outrage to the membership! The rank-and-file, as usual, was not even consulted.

Behind the endorsement is obviously an implicit or explicit deal between Reagan and the mob to let the latter graze off the Teamster pension funds in peace and to end the government's investigations and prosecutions.

TDU cannot remain silent in the face of the Teamster leadership's action. Silence would mean acquiescence. Endorsement of Carter obviously would be no better, since Carter is as much labour's enemy as Reagan.

TDU also cannot get away with "rejecting politics", however much some TDU supporters



Reagan, (left), Carter with defeated rival Kennedy (right) There are no workers' candidates in this election

may want to. Business unionism—even "militant and democratic" business unionism—means giving the capitalist parties and their government an open field for preparing and carrying out repression of workers' struggles.

Either TDU accepts capitalist politics by default, or it begins to put forward its own working class politics.

A Plan of Action for TDU

TDU must begin to move in a new direction, if it is to

survive. This requires a new plan of action, a new programme and strategy.

1. **Union democracy.** TDU came together largely over the struggle for union democracy within the Teamsters. Union democracy requires that the local membership meet regularly.

The membership must have full information and must make all key decisions. All committees—including negotiating and strike committees—editorial boards, convention and council delegates, officers and business agents must be elected at least annually and subject to easy recall. An International convention must be held each year to elect the entire International leadership and set the policy of the union. Paid union officials must receive only workers' wages.

2. **A militant fight against the companies.** All over the country employers in trucking, warehousing, and other industries where Teamsters work are on the offensive. Lay-offs, speed-up and real wage cuts are the order of the day. Militant action is the only way to defeat the companies' offensive.

Industry-wide strikes, secondary boycotts, mass picketing, plant and other workplace occupations, roving pickets, labour solidarity—these are the tactics that can win.

Through militant action Teamsters can prevent closings and runaways, beat layoffs through a shorter work week with no loss in pay (work sharing), and stop the ravages of inflation through full and unlimited cost-of-living allowances, based on price surveys by union committees.

3. **Fight racism and sexism.** Next to the construction unions, the Teamsters have about the worst record in the labour movement of going along with the notorious racism and sexism of American society. Yet blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, other minorities and

women are in the union in substantial numbers. The division between the largely white, male drivers and the rest of the union makes it impossible for the Teamsters to use its enormous strength.

TDU must lead the union in a fight against race and sex discrimination in Teamster workplaces and in American society generally.

4. **Oust all the bureaucrats.** The policy of supporting out-bureaucrats against in-bureaucrats is a dead end, as TDU experience has shown. Very rarely do out-bureaucrats really make a programmatic break from the in-bureaucrats even in words.

In the rare cases where the rank-and-file movement an out-bureaucrat is riding forces him or her to make such a programmatic break—for example, a pledge to lead a massive "illegal" strike action or to lead

a serious attempt to build a workers' party based on the unions—union militants should be willing to give the out-bureaucrat critical support.

TDU has been much too promiscuous in its support—usually uncritical—for out-bureaucrats masquerading as TDU supporters or at least "friends". This must stop. TDU must declare war on all the bureaucratic factions.

5. **Keep the government out of the union.** Even worse than the policy of supporting out-bureaucrats to "reform" the Teamsters is the policy of asking the bosses' government to do it through court suits against the union. If the TDU leadership were to attempt to turn to the mob to "clean up the unions", every thinking worker would reject the tactic as handing the union over to its enemies.

Enemy of union

But turning to the government is even worse. The bosses' government is as much an enemy of the union as the mob—and far more dangerous both because the government is infinitely more powerful than the mob and because many workers do not recognise the government as an enemy.

6. **Break with the Democrats and Republicans! Build a Workers' Party!** The Teamster leadership's endorsement of Reagan is outrageous. But so is the UAW leadership's endorsement of Carter.

Anderson is no better. Nor is Kennedy. Workers have no candidates in this election, since the policies of both capitalist parties mean deepening depression and increasing threats of war.

Even in union struggles, there is no escaping politics, since the government will enter every important economic struggle on the side of the bosses.

The alternative to capitalist political action against the

working class is independent working class political action against the capitalists. But political action requires political organisation, which means a working class political party that would also defend the interests of black people and other minorities, women, gays and even the lower sections of the middle class.

The unions are big enough and powerful enough to build a workers' party overnight. To further the cause of independent working class political action, TDU should not only fight to dump the Teamster bureaucrats, it should also demand that the union lead in calling a union conference to found a workers' party in the US.

A first step in this direction could be gaining rank-and-file control of funds of IBT Political Action Committees, which then could be used to support independent labour candidates.

7. **The struggle for a workers' government.** Independent working class political action not only requires a workers' party, it requires a workers' programme for that party. That programme can be summarized in a single phrase: workers' power.

No, workers' power means a class-wide fight for sliding scales of wages and hours, mass labour/black mobilisations against the Nazis and Klan, political strikes against military interventions and war, workers' control of production, expropriation of the monopoly corporations without compensation to their wealthy owners, and a workers' government based on democratically elected workers' councils. This should be the plan of action for the workers' party.

Makers of

Modern

Marxism

By Terry Eagleton

STILL AVAILABLE

This Socialist Press pamphlet contains articles by Terry Eagleton on marxist theoreticians from the time of the Comintern to the present day—Lukacs, Korsch, Gramsci, Benjamin, Marcuse, Sartre and Althusser. Price 65p including P&P from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX

TROTSKYIST INTERNATIONAL LIAISON COMMITTEE



DISCUSSION BULLETIN No. 2

Articles on Nicaragua, Parity Commission and TILC Declaration

Price 40p plus 15p p&p from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX

New!

Socialist Press Pamphlet containing analysis of the military coup by the Bolivian generals.



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Conference offers lead in anti-Tory fight

MAIN RESOLUTION

Socialist Press urges readers to attend the November 15 conference of the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement where the following resolution will be discussed along with motions on Labour Party and trade union democracy.

Bring down the Tories this Winter!

2½ million unemployed, women workers driven back into the home. Massive economic crisis. Factories closing every day. Huge new cuts in the public services. Picketing now illegal, except as defined by Prior's law. 16% inflation, with the standard of living falling rapidly. This is the reality of Tory rule today.

But why is Thatcher getting away with it? She has not defeated the working class. They remain highly organised in a trade union movement which could bring the Tories down anytime if the strength of the working class was used!

The situation is clear. The mere threat of a national dock strike completely halted redundancies in the ports, yet tens of thousands of jobs

are being lost in almost every major industry. In Steel the job loss is double the total national labour force in the docks and not a finger lifted. In BL the union leaders agreed to a similar number of redundancies. In the health service scab ambulances closed St Benedicts under the very noses of the leaders of the main health service unions. Nothing done to defend the school meal service or nursery provision. They expelled Tameside Trades Council from the TUC for raising the role of British imperialism in the six counties in the trade union movement.

The fact is that the trade union leaders have protected the Tory government when it has been threatened, as in the steel strike

where they ensured the isolation of the steel workers. In reality they are politically opposed to bringing down the Tory Government by the mass action of the working class. They support the so-called 'principle' of parliamentary democracy which says that Thatcher has a further three years to run! But what will be left by then? They are as prostrate when an employer claims to be bankrupt as they are when the Tories say they have to put profitability back into the capitalist economy. The last Labour Government, which the trade union leaders backed to the hilt, had similar policies.

Despite the correct moves by the General Council to discipline Duffy and Chapple for organising the dis-

graceful mass scabbing at the Isle of Grain, the TUC Conference in September totally capitulated to the Tories. Despite rhetoric about "opposing" Prior's law "with strike action if necessary", Prior introduced his provisions on picketing three days after the Conference finished without a word from the speech makers of the previous week. At the same time the Adwest strikers, who were actually challenging Prior's laws at the factory gates were completely betrayed by the TGWU. At the TUC, the policies offered to the working class as an alternative to Toryism was wage control, the same reactionary policy which let Thatcher into power.

Callaghan was jubilant at the rightward swing at the TUC. But the Labour Party conference was different. There, the hatred of the Tories and militancy of the working class was reflected through the constituency delegates in sharp contrast to the trade union leaders wielding the block votes.

The conference decisions in favour of mandatory reselection and to scrap the existing system of electing the leader were heavy blows against Callaghan and put the right wing on the run.

The campaign which has resulted in these victories must be continued. The CDLM must fully involve itself in the Rank and File Mobilising Committee between now and the Special Conference in January, campaigning for the right of the conference to elect the leader of the Labour Party, and to kick out the right wing.

The Rank and File Mobilising Committee must also take up the refusal of Benn to support the call for the bringing down of the Tory Government and demand that the trade union leaders implement the resolution moved by Ted Knight on strike action to fight the cuts.

In the trade unions we must prepare for the battles for wages and jobs. We must fully support every wages struggle and demand that the leadership fight irrespective of the viability of the firm. When wages strikes break out we fight for councils of action to link the struggles and direct them against the government.

We must fight to defend every job where the axe falls. We must fight every cut in the public services whether in health, education or the social services. The right to picket must be defended and Prior's law defied. Those arrested and charged under the Employment Act must receive the full support of the trade union movement.



Labour Party conference constituency delegates—moving left

"BRING DOWN THE TORIES THIS WINTER"
Saturday November 15 10.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.
Digbeth Hall, Birmingham
Open to all labour movement bodies
Credential £1 (unwaged 50p) from
G. Webster 169, Barclay Road,
Smethwick, W. Midlands

CDLM POLICIES:

*No to the anti-union laws! No talks with the Tories—for a general strike to force them out of office!

*Defend living standards! Fight for cost of living clauses to give a 1% rise in take home pay for every 1% rise in the cost of living—as calculated by elected committees of trade unionists and housewives.

*Defend all jobs! For occupations, strikes and blacking action to force a policy of work sharing on full pay!

*Organise the unemployed; for their rights to full trade union membership. Fight for Trades Councils to organise

unemployed workers in sub-committees with affiliated representation.

*Stop all cuts! Occupy threatened facilities, fight for supporting strike action. Set up workers' inquiries into health, welfare and social services to expose private profiteering and the savage impact of the cuts!

*Fight for a woman's right to work! Defend and extend state nursery and childcare provision! For free abortion on demand! Defeat Prior's attacks on maternity rights!

*Demand a restoration of public spending with automatic increases to

keep pace with inflation. Demand Labour Councils repudiate debts and interest charges and refuse to implement cuts or raise rates and rents.

*Unite strikes and occupations as a step towards forming councils of action.

*Unite strikes and occupations as a step towards forming councils of action.

*Fight throughout the labour movement for a) immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland, b) self-determination for the Irish people; c) restoration of political status to Irish PoWs, preparatory to an amnesty; d) defence of Tameside Trades Council and calling of

labour movement conferences on Ireland.

*Oppose all immigration controls. Defeat racism and fascism through workers defence squads. Drive the fascists from the unions. No to the nationalistic policy of import controls!

*Remove the Labour and trade union leaders who won't fight. For a workers' government!

*Open the books of the employers who threaten redundancies or refuse wage increases, and of their suppliers and bankers! Prove the case for their nationalisation, without compensation under workers' management!



More than 1,000 trade unionists and trainee teachers marched in Hamilton, Lanarkshire, on Thursday October 16 against the closure of Hamilton Teacher Training College. Several unions were represented on the march which was joined by six MPs and STUC General Secretary Jimmy Milne.

Lambeth: putting teeth into the resolution

The conference against the cuts convened by Lambeth Labour Council marks a focal point for those militants seeking a way forward against the Tory offensive in the public sector.

But it will also form a stamping ground for numerous 'left' talking councillors seeking to register a token vote of protest before implementing the Tory cuts.

The draft resolution tabled by the organisers leaves many loopholes for such elements. But a series of amendments put forward last week by the Leicester AUEW 16 Branch, and supported by *Socialist Press*, *Socialist Organiser* and the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement, aim to lay the basis for a generalised struggle against the cuts.

Commitment

They specifically demand that the resolution's call for joint action:

"should not mean CLPs or Labour councillors using the inactivity of others to justify implementing or accepting cuts themselves".

They add the commitment that:

"We pledge ourselves to fight to commit the whole labour movement to the following policies:

1) Cancellation of debt charges. Open the books; nationalise the supply industries, e.g. drugs, food and building, and the banks and finance institutions without compensation under workers' control.

2) No charity funding of facilities! Black private sector use of facilities!

3) Funds of public services to be (as a minimum) protected from inflation in line with a cost index worked out by labour movement committees".

A weak-kneed section on Town Hall unions is deleted and replaced by a declaration that: "This conference calls on

trade union organisations at all levels [from TUC General Council to branches and shop steward committees] to pledge themselves to and campaign for all-out strikes and occupations of workplaces as soon as any Labour council faces receivers or commissioners, or is surcharged, for taking a stand against the cuts.

"The struggle may centre around the public sector unions at first, but conference calls on other workers, especially the strong sections like the miners and engineers, to join this fight to force the Tory government to back down on the cuts or get out. Conference also calls on Labour councils and Labour Parties, in cooperation with local anti-cuts committees and tenants' associations, to campaign for rent and rate strikes as soon as any Labour council is removed or surcharged for taking a stand against the cuts".

Under the heading of industrial action, the amendments call for:

"A policy of no cover for vacancies and a campaign against voluntary redundancies and natural wastage. Create and defend jobs by stopping overtime and fight for a shorter working week".

"Initiation of and support for action now against the cuts. Trade unionists and councillors should immediately publicise proposed cuts; no secret deals!

Where closures are proposed, resist rundown prior to closure, demand repairs are made, defend equipment.

Immediate strike action with official support to stop redundancies as soon as notices are issued.

Where closures are announced, prepare for occupation of the threatened facilities, and supporting strike action as soon as the occupation is threatened with eviction.

Organise full strike pay for staff in occupation if wages are cut off".

"A national fight is necessary to force the Tories to back down, but this should not mean staking everything on a pre-determined date or holding back

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CRISIS

National Labour and Trade Union Conference

Saturday November 1
Camden Town Hall
For credentials write to
Rm 103, Lambeth
Town Hall
London SW2 1RW
Starts 10.30 am.

immediate local action. Conference calls on all activists to campaign for complete non-cooperation with the Tory cuts, for Labour Party and union support for local anti-cuts fights, and for Labour MPs to assist the fight against the Tories by filibustering and obstructing the Tories' work in Parliament".

The resolution's call for non-cooperation in the sale of council houses is strengthened in the amendments by specific support for such action by Newcastle NALGO, and a call for strike action to defend any worker victimised.

An attempt to fix a definitive date of January 1 for the necessary all-out action is deleted, and there is an attempt to put the left talkers on the spot by calling for the publication of:

"... details of those councils, trade union organisations and Labour Parties willing to make the commitment called for by this conference".

Practical fight

Other trade union and Labour Party bodies are discussing the same package of amendments, which provide a firm basis for a practical fight on a national level against the cuts.

In this way the militant words of Ted Knight and company can best be put to the test in the eyes of public sector workers.

We urge *Socialist Press* readers to attend this important conference and support these amendments.

Scots Labourites: no fight on cuts

On Saturday 18 October the Scottish Council of the Labour Party held a special conference on the public spending cuts.

Representatives from local authority Labour Groups, Labour Party members of Health Boards, delegates from Constituency Labour Parties

and District Labour Parties met to discuss Labour's attitude to the cuts.

In Scotland the Labour Party have overwhelming electoral control of local authorities.

Yet the conference could only decide on a propaganda campaign against the Tory government's cuts.

Although both the holding of the conference and the decision to increase activity at local level are to be welcomed, the lack of any perspective for bringing down the Thatcher government was evident.

Much of the discussion was around the technicalities of opposing the cuts within existing legal boundaries.

Bruce Millan, the Shadow Minister of State for Scotland, went so far as to advise Health Board representatives not to refuse to implement the Tory cuts, but to stay in their positions and try to alleviate the worst effects of health service cuts!

Split

This is in a situation where Lothian Health Board is split over the question of whether to oppose the government and if so how to oppose them.

Each individual local authority was left to its own devices on how far to oppose the cuts.

It was evident that the position of Labour Coordinating Committee supporters is to refuse to implement the cuts in services and to fight for local government's right to raise revenue.

Marjorie Bain of East Edinburgh CLP pointed out that this meant going to working class Labour Party supporters and saying: "We will maintain your services and defend your living standards with 60%, 70%, 80% rates increases".

Bankrupt policy

It is self-evidently a bankrupt policy.

Although a number of delegates raised the question of opposing cuts in services and rate increases it was evident that LCC supporters would be going to their electorates on the position of justifying high rate increases.

The majority of councils will no doubt continue to make cuts in services—although not to the extent required by the Tory government.

It was interesting that there was no contribution to the debate from Strathclyde Regional Council or Glasgow District Council.

The stirrings in the Labour Party have not yet had the effect of awakening these bastions of right wing domination.

They obviously have no intention of being in the forefront of any struggle to bring down the Thatcher government this winter.

NUPE leaders blame members

Tory government cuts in health, education and social services have workers by the tens of thousand fuming.

Many, sick to the teeth of futile petitions, protests and token actions, are frustrated, longing for a firm determined call for action from their leaders—a call which has never come.

In the meantime, men and women who are ready to fight in defence of their jobs, wages, working conditions and hard-won social services are left in forced inactivity.

But for the public sector union leaders, who have time and again shown themselves more willing to chat with the Thatcher government than fight them, the problem is the other way around.

They blame the members for allowing Tories to ram home their attacks! They claim it is necessary to "educate the members" before any fight is possible!

Isolation

Meanwhile, as at the St. Benedicts Hospital occupation, as in the case of victimised Nottingham nursery teacher Eileen Crosbie, as in the CPSA struggle at Brixton, the militant struggles of the membership that do break out are left in isolation, to be picked off by the Tories one by one.

At the centre of this is the supposedly 'left' leadership of NUPE. While Alan Fisher as chairman of the TUC heads delegations to Thatcher, the union's gang of smooth-talking officials and officers are heaping the blame for the cuts firmly on their members.

Typical of this is the attitude of NUPE's West Midlands

Local Government Area Committee. The Secretary's report on September 9 declares that:

"He appreciated that there was very little help from the membership to attack the cuts made at the present time. He said that in Staffordshire it appeared that the Local Authority can do what it likes and the membership [!] were not prepared to stand up and oppose them. He said that he did not blame the membership entirely [!]..."

On defence of the school meals service, the same committee agreed that "not much could be done nationally—it must be done locally."

The problem is that members are being "done" locally by spineless NUPE officials towing the Alan Fisher line of capitulation to the reactionary Thatcher government.

Only the building of a new leadership in NUPE and a fight for all-out action can prevent further devastation.



Fisher

TAIL-ENDING KHOMEINI GULF WAR

What kind of government is there in Iran—a capitalist government or a workers' government?

The question appears so ridiculous that it seems pointless to ask. Khomeini's Islamic republic has done everything in its power to block the forward movement of the working class, attack the organisations of the left, intensify the oppression of women, gays and national minorities, and thus defend the continuity of capitalist exploitation.

While a few imperialist banks and holdings have been nationalised, the remainder of Iranian industry remains—as before the fall of the Shah—in the hands of the capitalists and the capitalist state.

The task of Trotskyists in Iran is to construct the necessary proletarian leadership and elaborate a programme of transitional and democratic demands that can create conditions for the overthrow of the Khomeini regime and the establishment of a workers' and peasants' government.

Difference

It is wrong to give any political credibility whatever to a capitalist government.

But in the eyes of the leadership of the American Socialist Workers Party, and the leadership of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (of which the SWP is the US sympathising section) the Khomeini regime is a capitalist regime with a difference: it is one which they believe it is correct to support.

Nor is their support restricted to "critical" support in the present Iran/Iraq border war.

It dates back before the conflict—and, to judge from statements by the Iranian USFI section the HKE, now approvingly published in the USFI and SWP press) goes back virtually to the time of the February 1979 revolution which overthrew the Shah.

The SWP's weekly *Militant* of October 10 reprints the whole of an HKE editorial article published before the Iraqi invasion.

In tones of ringing social patriotism, the HKE unfavourably contrasts the Iraqi "right wing regime of Saddam Hussein" with "our revolution".

It warns that:

"The experience of our revolution up to now has clearly shown that imperialism's aim is to exhaust, break down and demobilise the masses and to destroy and sabotage production and the organisation of the nation's economy through both its indigenous and external agents".

Not a word here against the attempts by Khomeini, Bani-Sadr and their gangs of Islamic fanatics to "exhaust, break down and demobilise the masses"!

On the agenda

Instead the HKE tell us that: "on the agenda of the Iranian revolution is: achieving total and genuine independence from imperialism; solving the land problem; emancipating the masses of peasants and farmers from poverty and oppression; and expropriating power and wealth from landowners, millionaire capitalists, the rich and other indigenous agents of imperialism".

The HKE significantly leave off the agenda the liberation of Iran's oppressed national minorities, women and gays. Women, they claim later, "are also taking steps toward winning equal rights": the steps of course are against Khomeini and the



Iranian civilians and soldiers surround anti-aircraft gun in mobilisation against Iraqi regime's attacks

Islamic bigots!

The HKE leave wide open the question of exactly who is to carry out the expropriations of what they admit is an extensive ruling class in Iran.

This is significant because, in the same paragraph, the article goes on to declare the HKE's commitment to enhancing the profits of the capitalists—in the populist form of the "jihad [holy war] for reconstruction".

Forgetting that the Iranian "nation" comprises both millionaires and unemployed, landlords and poor peasants, the HKE calls for a "national programme" of struggle to "defend the revolution" not against Khomeini but simply against the Iraqis!

Of course the HKE adds a ritual warning that:

"to collaborate with the imperialists and their indigenous agents—the capitalists and millionaire landowners—weakens the active participation of the masses of people".

But rather than spell out an independent class line for the working masses, they go on instead to deplore the fact that:

"the [Iranian] state, although enjoying the support of the overwhelming majority of the population in the past as well as in the present, has been incapable of fulfilling its most immediate tasks—uprooting the counter-revolution [!]—because it is based on the bureaucracy inherited from the monarchy." Here the HKE—with the

backing of the SWP/USFI emerge with a complete revision of the Marxist theory of the state.

'Uproot capitalism'

Far from providing the machinery and armed force to defend capitalist property and exploitation against the masses, the state is supposedly allotted the "task" of overthrowing such property relations!

"In the entire period since the February insurrection, the immediate task of the state has been and still is to uproot the counter-revolution, i.e., to uproot capitalism [!] and the profit-mongering order."

But after 18 months of disappointment, even the HKE is now beginning to wonder if Khomeini's Islamic republic is really going to expropriate capital:

"The experience of our own country's history during the Mossadegh era, as well as the experience of revolutions around the world, have shown that government bureaucracies are less than effective [!] in combatting the extension of counter-revolution."

Abandoned

Experience since the Paris Commune has actually taught Communists that the working class—let alone the Islamic clergy—cannot simply lay hands

JOHN LISTER examines the position of support for Iran in the Gulf War with Iraq adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and in particular by the American Socialist Workers Party—an organisation in sympathy with the USFI.

on the capitalist state machine and wield it for its own objectives: it is necessary to destroy, smash, the apparatus of capitalist rule, in order to establish the basis for the expropriation of capitalist property and the power of the working class.

The USFI has already abandoned this position in their stance of support for the Sandinista popular front regime in Nicaragua. Now in Iran they are tailing behind the self-evidently reactionary Islamic republic—awaiting the moment that it decides to "uproot the counter-revolution"!

Meanwhile, the HKE declares its unambiguous support for the government, its "battle for production", and its chauvinist hysteria against the Iraqis. Even before the first Iraqi tank moved across the border, the HKE was urging on Iranian workers to support their own capitalists and Islamic leaders in a war against the Iraqi regime.

"Now, for the defence of the revolution, it is necessary for the toiling masses of Iran to mobilise for war against imperialism [Iraq] as one united family [!] to close ranks, and to strike as one fist".

Unfortunately for the HKE the message that Iranian capitalists and workers are all one happy "family" in the war against the Iraqi masses has not yet sunk in with the Khomeini regime—who keep on persecuting Trotskyists, leftists and

militants, raiding left wing bookshops, etc.

Only the week before, the HKE's paper had published an extensive appeal for the release of one of their leading militants, Nematollah Jazayeri, arrested by Khomeini's Central Revolutionary Committee on September 8, and not heard of since.

Collaborationist

Even this HKE appeal illustrates their long-standing adaptation to the Islamic regime—Nematollah was a keen advocate of the organisation Muslim Students Following the Imam's Line—and to the class collaborationist line put forward by the regime—in June he received the dubious distinction of a letter of commendation from the management at his factory!

Indeed the HKE reports without comment the fact that after his arrest:

"one of the workers who share Jazayeri's socialist views explained how some of the outraged workers proposed a strike, sit-in, and hostage taking to force Nemat's release.

"It was patiently explained that this was not the correct way to fight on this issue and that it was possible to get Nemat released by discussing with the workers and winning their support without disrupting production".

The HKE's obvious concern for the productivity of Iranian

capitalism and opposition to strike action to free their own imprisoned comrade is underlined by the fact that they quote another worker who argues that Nemat should be released

"and be put back to work. One of the machines is not working, and his help is very much needed".

The mealy-mouthed HKE appeal concludes by pleading that:

"The All-Iran Prosecutor's Office should consider his impressive record of struggle outside the country in defence of the political prisoners jailed by the vile Pahlavi regime. It should consider the real contribution he had made to the work of rebuilding the country and to the anti-imperialist struggle.

It should release him as soon as possible [!] so that he can return to the trenches of the struggle against US imperialism ...

Method

It is not easy to tell whether the HKE's grotesque adaptations have simply been endorsed by the USFI leadership and the SWP, or whether their tail-ending of the Khomeini regime is the reflection of the opportunist method so vividly exhibited in the USFI support for the bourgeois "Government of National Reconstruction" in Nicaragua.

IN



Whichever is the case the attempts to evade the uncomfortable necessity to fight for a class line in Iran has led the FI and its Iranian section to a social-chauvinist position of straightforward support to the regime in the war with Iraq.

"Dialectician"

Indeed the SWP does not scruple to declare that in taking this stance it is defending the capitalist government against another. David Frankel in *Intercontinental Press* argues that:

"To insist in this situation on the similarities between the capitalist government in Iraq and the capitalist government in Iran is like using a clock without benefit of any reference to the real world. Nine o'clock is nine o'clock, but the difference can be between night and day".

The problem for this SWP "dialectician" is that his readiness to capitulate to, rather than to change the existing balance of forces in the "real world" leads him to effectively ignore the essential similarity between the two regimes and to leave the workers and peasants of Iran in the dark.

The fact is that in neither Iran nor Iraq do the masses have any interest in the military defence of the ruling cliques.

Though neither is a direct agent of imperialism, their anti-imperialist rhetoric cannot ignore the fact that both are reactionary governments administered by petty bourgeois demagogues within the framework of domestic and world capitalism.

Existing balance

They are locked into the world capitalist market, and seek to defend the existing balance of class forces.

Both therefore pursue the execution of national minorities, the vicious oppression of women and of gays, and seek to suppress all forms of socialist political opposition.

That both are now prepared to engage in a futile war over a halfway which both need to win in order to export their oil, rather than throw their military resources behind the struggles of the Palestinians and present a common front against imperialism and its stooges in the Middle East, is further testimony to their contempt and hostility to the oppressed masses of the Middle East.

Socialist Press stands opposed to support for either side in this war. We defend neither Khomeini nor Hussein against the other: we would however defend either or both against an imperialist attack.

In the present war, the task before both Iraqi and Iranian workers is to turn the struggle from a territorial dispute with an external "enemy" to a struggle against the Hussein and Khomeini regimes at home.

This means the fight within the armed forces on each side for rank and file committees and soviets to halt the hostilities and the formation in Iran and Iraq of factory committees and committees of poor peasants to turn the war into a civil war in which the masses confront the state forces that daily repress them, and take up the fight for a workers' and peasants' government.

Minimum step

It would be necessary to demand that such a government should, as a minimum step, move to end the national oppression of the Kurds and other minorities; extend democratic rights to the workers' movement; open the books of industry to the workers' movement; expropriate capitalist holdings and establish workers' management over state-owned enterprises; and adopt a genuinely internationalist anti-imperialist foreign policy, pledging active support to revolutionary struggles in the Middle East and elsewhere.



Bani-Sadr

The import controls quagmire

TERRY SMITH takes a look at a TGWU booklet entitled 'Control Imports Now!', available from TGWU, Transport House, Smith Square, London WC1.

In the various discussions within the labour movement on the fight against unemployment, *Socialist Press* has consistently opposed the almost universal panacea of demanding import controls.

We have argued against this not only for the obvious reasons that such measures would, if enforced, merely export unemployment to other manufacturing countries, trigger off retaliation by rival capitalists and intensify the already catastrophic world economic recession.

Nationalist

The main argument we have raised is that the import controls policy is a nationalist policy, which, by dwelling exclusively on the supposed common, "national" interests shared by employers and workers, diverts from the necessary independent action by the working class to defend jobs, halt the closures, and defeat the bosses' offensive.

Instead of fighting the capitalists who are closing down plants to maximise profits, workers are lined up behind their employers in grovelling appeals to the Tory government for "selective" protection.

Instead of taking a firm stand in defence of jobs and hard-won working conditions, workers are dragged into accepting speed-up and rationalisation designed to make "British" firms competitive in a cut-throat world market.

Instead of looking towards a socialist planned economy in which jobs can be created and defended through the expansion of production for social need rather than for private profit, the import controls policy focusses workers' attention on futile efforts to restore the 'viability' of a crisis-wracked capitalist system, and on seeking more capitalist investment.

Everyone of these arguments against the import controls demand is underlined by the new TGWU booklet *Control Imports Now!* launched just prior to the Labour Party conference.

The Introduction spells out a package of policies many of which are already being argued for strongly by sections of the

CBI: a cut in the value of sterling; selective import controls; "Buy British" campaigns; use of North Sea oil cash to bolster industrial investment; and a cut in interest rates.

The TGWU departs from CBI orthodoxy only insofar as it adds in a call for "planning agreements" with major firms, and for the public sector to "take the lead in engineering the economic revival", with an expanded role for the NEB.

But since neither policy is any more than a sick joke—particularly under the Tory government—the differences are insignificant. The TGWU is putting forward an employers' strategy under the guise of defending jobs.

Moss Evans makes this quite clear in his introduction to the union's Ten Point Charter on Import Controls, which was adopted at a special conference in April.

"We take the view that the CBI ought to end its silence and represent the interests of its members properly, as individual industries press the government for action.

If they do not respond, and if it becomes necessary for an initiative to come from the unions, for us to forge direct links with employers' associations against the government, then we will do it." (p.4)

The booklet echoes this in its Conclusion:

"In private enterprises... TGWU members have a crucial role to play in increasing the awareness of management". (p.51).

Frenzy

A parade of speakers at the conference worked themselves into a lather of nationalistic frenzy at the way unaware managers were allowing 'foreign' employers to destroy what they referred to as "our" industry.

Particular venom was reserved by chemical oil and rubber official John Miller for the American man-made fibre industry.

"Chevron tankers with our oil were now going straight to the United States and now the US was actually exporting fibres to this country using our oil to undermine our textiles industry!" (p.5).

Others boasted of the level of exploitation they had been able to impose on their members in the fight to make

"British" firms competitive. Tina Webb, convenor from Schreibers iron and toaster factory at Swinton, South Yorkshire, declared that:

"none of the stories about low productivity could wash with the workforce at Swinton, because it had an impressively high output. Management from a German company who paid visits had marvelled at their turnout, saying it was higher than in Germany".

Exploitation

Indeed while the word "profits" was scarcely mentioned at the conference, and is tactfully omitted from almost every section of the new booklet, it is clear that the import control policy could only succeed if by increasing exploitation it bolstered the profits of major employers. This is what is meant when the TGWU declares that:

"The controls would be for a short period and would be removed when our [!] industries have regained their strength and can meet overseas competition on an equal footing". (p.3).

The fact that escapes all of these management-minded bureaucrats is that the industries are not "ours": they are the property of a capitalist class which lives off the surplus value created by exploiting workers on the shop floor.

That capitalist class now finds its anarchic economic system in the throes of a major international crisis of falling profitability—a crisis which is insoluble without the wholesale destruction of existing productive capacity on a world scale—involving closures of whole industries.

In Britain the capitalist class is headed by a Tory government ruthlessly intent upon restoring the profits of the strongest sections at the expense of the rest.

Yet the TGWU, seeking a wretched alliance with sections of ruined and disgruntled British exploiters in textiles, electronics and other industries, offers workers no strategy to oppose the Tories or counter the closures: instead the booklet cringingly declares that:

"The Union is asking the [Tory!] government to do its duty to the people. Dogma has to stand aside whilst the unbridled power of companies is

checked. Both companies and Government have to recognise that people are more important than balance sheets". (p.10).

The reader is then offered a dazzling array of statistics on the extent and growth of import penetration of the British market in various sectors of production.

We are told, for instance, that:

"the two million people who travel to work each day in an imported car are riding a Trojan Horse to oblivion!" (p.25).

We are told of the foreign invasion of the shaver market, the plunge in GKN nut and bolt production; and a host of other "horror stories".

We are told in great detail of the jobs that have been "lost" by the tens of thousand.

But we are not told of even one single example of an attempt by the 2 million-strong union to defend such threatened jobs. We are given no hint that any action is possible against closures other than to beseech the Tories for a grant of North Sea oil cash and a control on imports.

There is not a hint or a glimmer of a call for the nationalisation of the affected industries, and no perspective whatever of a socialist planned economy.

Bogged down in their utopian plans to reallocate capitalist investment, protect "British" capitalist industry and regenerate profitability for "British" employers at the expense of the increased exploitation of their members, the TGWU leadership reveals itself to be fully committed to the crisis-ridden system that has already produced new record levels of unemployment.

Such is the inevitable fate of the defenders of import controls. Socialists must reject such policies out of hand.

In their place must come a fighting programme of action to defend existing jobs—linked to the fight to oust the Tories.

*Occupation of all firms threatened with redundancies to show the bosses that the factory is not going to be thrown on the scrap heap in the interests of profit. Implicit in this is the need to stop the bosses from stripping the machinery and plant.

*Demand the opening of the firm's books to elected workers committees to reveal the need to nationalise the whole combine along with other firms in the same branch of industry: the suppliers and bankers who deal with the firm must also be made to hand over their books too in order to reveal their profiteering role in the claimed bankruptcy of the employers.

The information of the workings of the firm's accounts should then be used to formulate a workers' plan based on the needs of the working class, not the need to make profits through exploitation.

*Work-sharing on full pay and a sliding scale of hours, would be a central part of such a workers' plan. The available work must be distributed between the whole of the population needing work.

*Build councils of action. Workers have no chance of defeating a united employers' attack if they try to beat them one by one.

The Thatcher government can only be defeated through the workers similarly uniting to prepare for a general strike to bring the Thatcher government down.



Furniture workers march in London against foreign imports

A David Attenborough trip into heavy leather

It's difficult to know where to begin.

"Ever had your cock sucked by a man?" The captain of police knows his officer. Young Sergeant Burns behaves with respect toward his superiors, so he doesn't start throwing punches. And he's a liberal cop, so he doesn't even spit or swear. Just acts surprised, embarrassed as he answers NO.

He's cool. But he'll need to pack plenty of ice-cubes to stay that way where he's going, down into those burning hell-holes of flagrant vice and sickening perversion (and I don't mean the cinema).

A killer is at work—stabbing, dismembering bodies among the gay heavy leather bars and clubs of New York. Sgt. Burns is to act as bait to lure and trap the murderer.

The scene is set for a film lousy way beyond your worst expectations.

As a detection thriller, *Cruising* has all the gripping tension of an empty washing line. Graced with tired, routine camera-work and dialogue that would utterly disgrace *Starsky and Hutch*, the plot has just about the strength to lurch along with monotonously predictable fits.

Setting

True, there is the shock of the first murder, projected with a violent visual effect in *The Exorcist* tradition. But that's soon over, and in the end, after three murders and one mistaken arrest, yes Al Pacino (Sgt. Burns) gets his man.

But of course it's the setting we're expected to thrill to—to be repelled by the images on the screen yet still unable to tear ourselves from our seats and demand our money back.

And surely this setting is a director's gift? Sex and violence are brought together neatly in this mysterious world, the dark lurking underside of normal urban life. What with fashionable interest in homosexuality and the inevitable guilty excitement that comes with approaching an area of taboo such as S/M (sado-masochism), Friedkin must have thought he was laughing all the way to Fort Knox.

Yet whenever *Cruising* plunges into the underworld of gay S/M, something very strange happens to the film. In the police offices, in the girlfriend's apartment, even (though only just) in the street scenes, the film is working within the conventions of the cop film.

Although the images are carelessly handled and obsessively unmemorable, still they do form an effective coherence. They are all selected from one stable code, familiar from a thousand earlier cop films and easily read by a contemporary cinema audience.

No image

But gay leather bars do not have a place in this code. Far more to the point, they do not have any image in the dominant culture of imperialism. As yet their image is to be found only on the glossy magazines and grainy films of pornography; in police reports and sociological surveys; within the restricted media of the wider gay community. For Hollywood that is no image at all.

So how does Friedkin cope with this fundamental problem? Stuck without an off-the-peg image, he is forced to fashion his own substitute. But there are limits to even Friedkin's creative imagination, and the result is not so much the creation of a fresh and living image as the carrying-through of an accomplished improvisation based in

DAVID WHITFIELD reviews the controversial film 'Cruising' now on general release.

the techniques of documentary and pornography.

Sgt. Burns is sent to immerse himself in the leather bars and their community. He has to pass as a legitimate inhabitant. But when Al Pacino bobs down the steps into a cellar club, he is no longer a cop on an undercover job.

Suddenly we are presented with a roving reporter, working on the latest assignment of investigative journalism.

Camera-angle and Al Pacino's movements are contrived in the well-established traditions of documentary: an impression of informal naturalness is produced to suggest the reporter's intimate, authoritative knowledge, but the unmistakable traces of careful rehearsal are left to establish the detachment of the reporter from the area of investigation.

Inside the club, the camera pans steadily across the room, displaying the general features and activity, pausing now and again to focus more closely on some telling detail.

Men, in leather, belts, studs, straps, caps, beards, dancing, drinking, heavy metal music,

trinity of these three components.

The documentary is the zoo of the screen, displaying the alien for entertaining observation. Whether its area of investigation is zoological, anthropological or sociological; however compassionate or committed the intentions of its makers; the documentary is saturated in—even structured by the domineering attitudes of colonialism with which its social roots are enmeshed.

Al Pacino in the leather bars is like Michaela Denis with a leopard in her lap, or David Attenborough playing gorillas: it's somehow wrong that he doesn't turn, as the camera zooms in, to offer a confidential commentary. At the very least there should be a voice-over.

Pornography

It is the absence of this commentary which reveals how *Cruising* is also located in the world of pornography. A recurrent feature of visual pornography is the painstaking naturalistic attention to superficial detail—a quasi-scientific observation which mirrors aspects of documentary.

This deadly literalness is indeed essential to pornography: without it, art may be more or less erotic in various ways, but it cannot be pornography. As with documentary, pornography produces only one subject, but here it is the viewer alone who forms that subject. It is the observation of the viewer

of the whole film, and it's largely produced around Al Pacino.

None of the film's contradictions and confusions is genuinely resolved: instead, all are displaced into the development of the Sgt. Burns character.

This development provides the only real tension in the film (and it's a fitful, flickering tension at that), substituting for the inadequacies of the detection plot.

It is Sgt. Burns who gives the entree into the leather clubs, and it is into his confused response that the film projects both the confusion of the viewer and, necessarily, the original confusion of the director.

With all this burden falling in the one place, it's scarcely surprising that *Cruising* emerges increasingly as a film centred unshakably in the developing character of the young cop.

One of Hollywood's dominant and defining characteristics is its enduring obsession with the socialisation of the innocent young man, his passage into the full virility of American manhood, with all the superiority of its compassion born of painful experience.

Like so many noble and inglorious predecessors, *Cruising* is shaped to embody this initiation rite.

Temptations

Stripped of his badge and his

which Friedkin makes of all male homosexuality with gay S/M. Of course that is a ludicrously unreal identification—even Friedkin is forced to make a strictly token admission of that.

But the argument is surely an inappropriate one, that can be based only in misplaced moralism or divisive (and ultimately counter-productive) political tactics.

(Space forbids any defence here of S/M or explanation of what can be learned about sexuality and sexual relationships from its structures).

Threat

It is the presentation of S/M itself which is a travesty, and it is only when Friedkin has established this dangerously reactionary image that he can, as he certainly does, allow it to stand as an image of all male homosexuality.

Within the film, S/M serves two purposes: as sensational setting, and as the threat to Sgt. Burns progress to manhood. In both cases any attempt to go beyond caricature would be not only unnecessary but actually destructive.

For *Cruising*, S/M is violent sex in bizarre clothes, and that's almost all there is to it. Makes you sick, doesn't it?

Well, it should do anyway—sick with excitement, if Friedkin had his way.

By the structures of documentary and pornography, S/M is locked in a recessed

these people behave in the disgusting way they do, and it's not natural and it couldn't happen to you or me.

But something is happening to Sgt. Burns as he passes his days and nights in this environment, and he doesn't know what it is. Or, at least that's what he keeps telling us and his girlfriend (perhaps I should have mentioned earlier that his girlfriend is called Nance).

Like the 'corrupted' spy, or the 'dehumanised' space-traveller after long sojourn in an alien culture of science-fiction, Sgt. Burns is being sucked into the cess-pools of corruption.

While he's making it with his girlfriend in her spacious and airy apartment, it's the heavy metal music from the leather bars that swamps his mind... Will this alien, threatening environment defeat him? Will it pervert 'our hero' to its own ends? Will we be shown Al Pacino giving head in the last reel?

Well, no, of course not—that's just part of the titillation. Sgt. Burns arrests the murderer, passes through his ordeal and emerges to receive the token of manhood from the captain of police: 'Welcome to the Detection Department'.

But Friedkin doesn't let us go even with that emphatic conclusion.

"Unstable"

Sgt. Burns has actually become friendly with one of The Gays—he's another nice guy, ineffectual, and not into leather. (They don't make it together sexually, of course, but the good sergeant does make a jealous scene with Ted's jealous lover).

But there's no getting away from it: even if not every queer is a psychopath, then they're all unstable, neurotic, emotionally incapable.

Just look at Ted. No sooner is the mass murderer locked up, than Ted gets himself murdered. It's what happens to you if you live in that vicious, violent world.

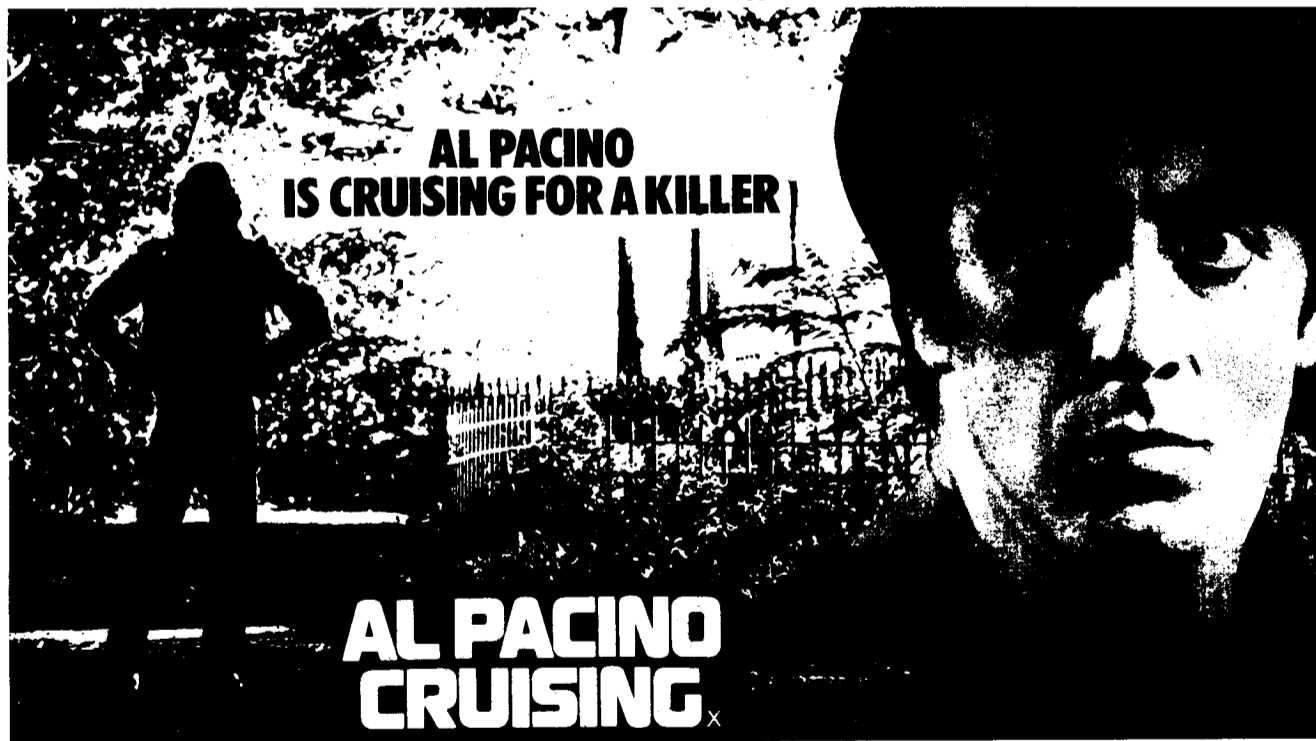
At this point, the editing plants a suspicion in our minds that Ted's killer is none other than Sgt. Burns, transformed by his repulsive experiences into the avenging sword of god. The ambiguity must have gladdened the hearts of the 'Kill a Queer for Christ' mob, but it's only Friedkin teasing us again. A moment's detective work identifies the real killer in Ted's passionately jealous lover.

But it's true that Sgt. Burns doesn't seem altogether happy with his achievement. There he is, back in the normal world, shaving in his girlfriend's apartment—but can we be sure that he has not been tainted? Perhaps homosexuality is, after all, a contagion, even a pestilence. Is that really Sgt. Burns, or has some vile thing taken possession of his mind and soul, occupied his body?

Nance comes in. She sees the strange leather gear lying on a chair, she picks it up and, *o god she's dressing up in those clothes*... The jacket, the cap, and now she's posing in that black garb before the mirror in the middle of her clean-limbed apartment.

They've taken our sons, our brothers, our friends—and now, *our women!* Is nothing precious to be held sacred, safe from the clutches of that loathsome tide which rises to overwhelm us?

O God, O Ronald Reagan, O Peeping Friedkin, make haste to save us, for the Beast is nigh and the hour of our destruction is surely even now at hand.



and those must be blow-jobs happening against the wall, and is that a guy getting fist-fucked over there?—the camera-eye moves back for verification, yes that's what it is—more leather, lights, locked bodies.

Objects

This is not fiction. In documentary there are no subjects moving with autonomous activity. To assert the literal reality of the images which it presents, documentary produces them as framed, encaged objects, which are allowed to become real only by the fact of being observed.

Reporter and camera become extensions of the viewer's rational observing self. They do not 'distort'—by creating, interpreting, selecting—but 'simply', 'directly' present their objects. In this activity, documentary merges reporter, camera, viewer to produce its sole subject: an indivisible

which gives 'life' to the images presented; these dead objects are vitalised to correspond with the fantasies of the viewer.

And of course one major type of pornography is specifically voyeuristic: images are not created to function as succubi for the viewer. Rather it is observation of the images' mutual sexual activity which creates the satisfaction of the experience. This is what we are treated to in *Cruising*.

But this form of work cannot simply be slotted into the middle of a detection thriller, and in *Cruising* the combination does not work at any level.

When Friedkin takes a gloating peep on the wild side, the result is like having to sit through the home movies of a man with boring, second-rate, voyeuristic fantasies. The viewer is barely titillated: certainly not thrilled, but, far more, confused and even embarrassed.

One way and another, titillation is a prominent characteris-

gun, deprived of his status and authority, Sgt. Burns is sent out alone into an alien environment to face and overcome whatever terrors and temptations may be sent to try him.

If he survives this ordeal, his achievement will be acknowledged by social recognition and reward. And there's the captain of police as the living guarantee of the promise—he limps badly, so we know he's been through some pretty tough, maturing experience himself.

And throughout the ceremony he remains in clandestine contact with Sgt. Burns, the adult male sponsoring the initiate.

In the manhood rites of many societies he would in fact introduce the younger man to homosexual experience, as an expression of male bonding.

Here, of course, it is precisely homosexuality which is the terror of the ordeal—and its temptation.

Some critics of the film have attacked the identification

dimension, one far less approachable than the comfortably familiar, comforting fiction world of the cop film.

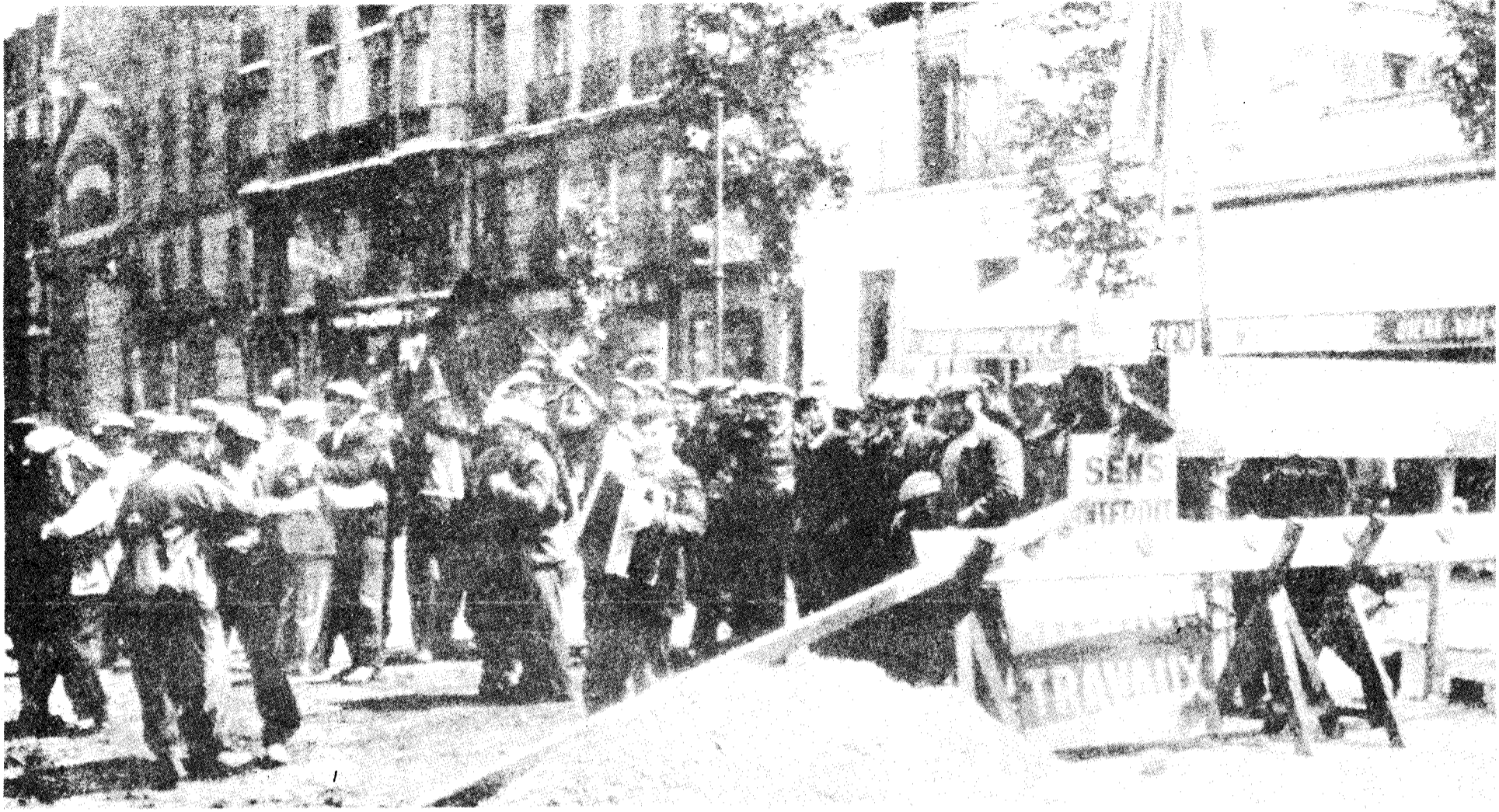
It's over there, out there, down there; and those people—they're not you, not me, the viewer. They're alien, The Other: not really human, or at least not 'healthily' human, certainly not the American Way of Life.

And lurking in the darkest corners of this foul web of darkness is the murderer, a psychopath, analysed for our instruction.

Sterile

He has been unable to adjust to the death of his father, and so haunts the leather bars to pick up guys who look like his father, and have sex with them (so we gather) before murdering them brutally. Oh, and he's sterile.

So you see, we're safe really: psychiatry can tell us why



French workers at the barricades in Paris, 1936

THE BIRTH OF FRENCH TROTSKYISM

We continue our occasional series of articles on the history of the Trotskyist movement in France with the final part of a study of the movement from the beginnings of the crisis of the Comintern to the outbreak of the Second World War. It is based very largely on 'Les Enfants du Prophete' by Pierre Rousset, who was at the time he wrote the book associated with the group 'Socialisme ou Barbarie' which had links with the British Solidarity grouping.

June 1936 was the high point achieved by the French workers' movement.

The end of the strikes, although it was claimed by the big partners and unions as a great victory for the workers, was in fact the beginning of a sombre period of successive defeats.

This was the phase leading to the war.

Every country was engaged in feverish preparations, rearmament policies accompanied the diplomatic waltz among fascist regimes, bourgeois democracies and the Soviet Union.

Hitler was not long in invading Austria and then the Sudetenland. In Spain the revolution was defeated by the combined onslaughts of the bourgeois onslaughts, the social democrats and the Stalinists, the latter being uncontestably the worst enemies of the revolution.

Falling apart

It was the period of republican 'unity'. Quite logically, Franco proceeded to introduce the most bloody repression. Spain was plunged into darkness.

In France the bourgeoisie's counter-attack began at the end of 1936, clawing back the workers' gains one by one.

The Popular Front was falling apart.

The Blum Government crashed against the 'Silver Wall' erected by the capitalists, and was forced to decree the 'Pause' and put an end to the flow of pay claims.

Abandoned

The electoral office of the 'left' collapsed over the question of intervention in Spain: the 'sister' republic was abandoned to its sorry fate.

The Popular Front came to grief definitively after Munich.

Throughout this whole period the workers kept up a desperate resistance against the counter attack of the bourgeoisie, hoping to salvage something of the gains of 1936.

This resistance was marked by numerous 'wildcat' strikes, which met with severe repres-

sion. The French bourgeoisie invoked the needs of national defence to destroy the workers' resistance, utilising rule by decree, backed up by force and propaganda.

The isolation of the Trotskyists, their splits and their desperate attempts to link themselves with the workers must all be seen in this general context.

Without doubt they had recruited members during the Popular Front, but their ship remained ridiculously fragile in the storm which was beginning to blow.

Birth of the Fourth International.

September 1938: the founding conference of the Fourth International was held somewhere in the suburbs of Paris.

Thirty delegates were present, representing ten countries. The situation of the Trotskyists in most of these countries was no brighter than it was in France.

A number of the militants strongly disputed the appropriateness of creating a Fourth International.

Artificial

They argued that it was artificial to found a new International during a period of utter shipwreck of the international workers' movement.

The previous Internationals had each been constituted around a dynamic party strongly rooted in the masses: the First International around the French workers' movement; the Second around the powerful German Social Democracy and the Third around the glorious Bolshevik Party.

By contrast the Fourth could only assemble a few tiny groups struggling against the stream.

People like Serge and Deutscher considered that the initiative was artificial and insane.

Trotsky and his followers made a revolutionary criterion of adherence to the Fourth International.

The Third International having failed and become irredeemable, it was necessary to create the Fourth.

In 1915 the participants in the Zimmerwald Congress could be carried in four cars; two years later the Russian revolution came about.

Trotsky put his faith in a new revolutionary epoch arising from inevitable overthrows during the war.

During this phase the workers would mass themselves under the banner of the Fourth International. This was the conviction he affirmed frequently.

Fresh quarrels

In the short term, in any case, the creation of the Fourth International boosted the morale of the Trotskyists.

The solidarity of militants in other countries is precious, especially when one is fighting in very difficult conditions.

However, very soon fresh quarrels were to break out.

The Trotskyists and the PSOP In June 1938 at the Congress of Royan the SFIO expelled Pivert's minority Gauche Revolutionnaire faction.

The GR had, in the preceding period, bravely defended its positions which were often close to those of the Trotskyists.

Pivert had written in June 1936 in Le Populaire an article which had caused a great stir. He stated:

"Anything can happen now, and very quickly. We stand at a point which without doubt will not appear on the stage of history again for a long time".

But Pivert turned towards Leon Blum, urging him to take the leadership of the revolutionary movement [!].

He was to go further.

Thunderbolts

Accused by Thorez of Trotskyist adventurism, he let himself be tied to the Blum government: he was appointed to lead the Secretariat to the President of the Conseil with political responsibility for control over the press, radio and cinema.

The attitude of the GR attracted some thunderbolts from Trotsky, who accused them of centrism, by which phrase he meant that they

oscillated between public revolutionary positions and a reformist opportunist practice.

The GR was to find this contradiction unsurmountable until 1938, when it was expelled.

Along with Pivert went Guerin, Collinet, Jacquier, Audry, Lefevre, Herard, Weil-Curiel and a leading nucleus from the Young Socialists-Weitz, Meier and Stibbe. A number of them were later to find their way into the present PSU.

The expelled GR set up its own party: the Parti Socialiste Ouvrier et Paysan (PSOP). The new party hoped to regroup 30,000 members. In fact it won about 6,000 but it had an undoubtedly proletarian base.

Throughout his period of exile Trotsky had followed developments in France closely. The split between Pivert's group and Blum created an entirely new situation.

Henceforth the PSOP could find the revolutionary road, with the help of the Trotskyists. The POI would no longer be forced to retreat into sectarian isolation.

Hostile majority

Entry into the SFIO had been a good thing even if its outcome was not precisely what had been hoped for. Today the construction of the revolutionary party passed through the work in the PSOP.

Trotsky authorised a fusion between the POI and the PSOP. Fusion discussions began but there was a hostile majority in both organisations.

In the PSOP many militants mistrusted the 'sectarianism' and 'spirit of infiltration' of the Trotskyists, whom they had known during their period in the SFIO.

Among the POI one tendency appeared complacent about their isolation, while another took Naville's view that the imminent approach of war made it impossible to establish a wider revolutionary vanguard.

The future was to prove the latter correct. However it was the PSOP who were to break off the discussions. Pivert did not

want fusion, but was prepared to accept the entry of individual Trotskyists.

Already, since the end of 1938 the POI had decided to dissolve itself. Its members had joined the new party, with the exceptions of Frank and Molinier, whom nobody wanted.

In the POI an important minority led by Craipeau and Rous and supported by Trotsky decided in February 1939 to try to win over the PSOP.

Guerin has written off the loyal efforts of this group, which together with him had not only organised a brave team of militants but also a certain implantation into the class, which was led by Craipeau in Nantes. The group published a review La Voie de Lenine.

In July 1939, after Cannon had been sent by Trotsky to make a final attempt to persuade the refractory majority of the POI, the Executive Committee of the Fourth International ceased to recognise the POI as its section. It invited militants to enter the PSOP as quickly as possible.

The POI dissolved. Some of its former members resigned themselves to joining the earlier entrants. Some hung around the

fringes of the PSOP.

Others such as Naville, Filiatre, Hic, Rousset and Rigal refused to join the PSOP.

Yet others of whom Boitel and Livillier were the most persistent, attempted to maintain the POI.

They brought out a few issues of 'Lutte Ouvriere' before dispersing.

Events however were hurrying onwards. 23 August 1939. The French CP was declared illegal as a result of the Hitler-Stalin Pact. (Ironically by their 'ally' in the Popular Front).

3 September. The war broke out.

Witch-hunts and persecutions were not reserved for the PCF alone.

The revolutionaries were to get their share. Although the bourgeois authorities could not accuse them, as they could the PCF, of 'complicity with the enemy', their position on the unconditional defence of the USSR and on the inter-imperialist war were sufficient motivation.

Some militants were arrested, others were called up for military service. The various groups became illegal. Links with the International were broken.



French CP mourns death of Stalin



JOBS CRUNCH IN BOOK PUBLISHING

The full effect of the present economic crisis on the book publishing industry has yet to be felt.

Employers and unions alike are agreed that if and when the industry comes out of the recession it is going to be considerably slimmer than what it is now.

The response from rank and file union members has been sporadic. A few weeks back Hamlyn's NUJ chapel accepted four redundancies, from a chapel of more than sixty, without a fight. This was against a background of 30% natural wastage in the first six months of the year. These redundancies must have saved the company absolutely nothing.

The Macmillans and British

Printing Corporation NUJ chapels on the other hand have been putting up a determined fight against redundancies in their respective companies.

Macmillans' Basingstoke chapel has stood out for two months now against redundancies and this after SOGAT and ASMTS had accepted redundancies in their areas without a fight.

The depressing aspect of the Macmillans situation is the lack of support from other unions on the premises.

At a national level the NGA have been in to meet the Book Section of the British Printing Industries Federation to discuss how the book publishing industry is to be saved.

The talks have focussed on

'productivity', 'manning levels' and 'cooperation' as well as the destructive effects of the government's policies.

If jobs in the industry are to be saved firm action is needed from chapels affected and mutual support amongst the print unions must be fought for as a priority.

Press statements such as the recent NGA/BPIF communication which speaks of the need for 'competitiveness' offer no way out for those whose jobs have yet to come under the axe.

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.

Please send me more details of the Workers Socialist League.

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Send to WSL: BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX.

Workers must act to save Times jobs

A little over 24 hours before Times Newspapers announced the sale or closure of its titles the print union SOGAT announced what "action" it was going to take over the death of the Evening News.

All Fleet Street members were to be urged to take all-out strike action—between 1.00 pm and 2.00 pm, on the day that the paper closes this Friday (October 31).

This tragicomic response to the loss of hundreds of jobs has highlighted the truth about the print unions.

Because of the hopeless way in which the unions' leaderships are wedded to the viability of the newspaper companies, the unions appear to be helpless to combat any all out attack.

Ironic

This may seem ironic, since the print unions resisted for 11 months in 1978/9 the frontal assault on their organisation at the Times and Sunday Times.

The distinctive difference however was that then the union could see an 'amicable' solution (the withdrawing of the management ultimatum) whereas now they see only the abyss.

The decision to close or sell the Times, the Sunday Times and the supplements was given to the editors only 24 hours before the unions were called in to hear sentence.

It marked a change of course by the management of the multi-national giant International Thomson Organisation.

In 1978 the intention was to batter the print unions into submitting to one employer. In 1980 their intention is to batter them into submitting to capitalism in general.

The papers will be saved so long as the print unions sacrifice their chapel power as part of the deal.

To Thomson the question of who will own a paper under such conditions is secondary so

long as a capitalist or 'consortium' of capitalists can establish their ability to control.

This can be seen from Lord Thomson's statement:

"We have been unable to secure the cooperation of important sections of the workforce on a reliable and consistent basis. I believe that a change of ownership could provide Times Newspapers with the opportunity to create a new and constructive relationship with its staff".

It was more clearly expressed by Richard Marsh, chairman of the Newspaper Publishers Association, who proclaimed the news as "the best thing that could have happened for Fleet Street".

In 1978 the managerial demands were never defined beyond rhetoric about technology.

The New Statesman earlier this year revealed documentary evidence that senior management on the paper did not know during the lockout whether direct input by journalists was or was not one of the demands.

At the end of that lockout *Socialist Press* described the outcome as "a draw", in which the unions had shown themselves strong enough to resist management attacks but unable to go on the offensive.

Losing money

Times Newspapers—owned by the holding company Thomson British Holdings Ltd—has been losing large sums of money. It expected to lose £15 million this year before tax and has borrowed £70 million from its Thomson parent since 1967.

But this is not just another example of the collapse of profitability. The Times has lost money for most of its history, while the Sunday Times is still profitable.

The large element which does not appear on the balance sheet is the ownership of a prestige instrument of the British state.

Now the Times is to be the scorpion that will whip the rest

of Fleet Street into line.

Print union reaction has been predictably supine. The TUC's Printing Industries Committee said it wanted to create the right atmosphere to attract a buyer.

Owen O'Brien, NATSOPA general secretary, said:

"Sooner or later we have got to breathe a bit more sense into the national newspaper industry. Otherwise we will not have an industry. Maybe a new management team and a new owner might be a solution.

But whoever it is our people must agree to honour their obligations and act in a responsible way. If there are difficulties they have to be resolved round the table not by turning the machine room into a battlefield".

White flag

Well the machine room is a battle field and O'Brien's members are lined up for execution. His white flag will give them no protection.

Joe Wade, capitulating for the NGA, said:

"We believe it is in the best interests of all unions that their members should, despite their undeniably angry reaction, continue to produce the newspapers without disruption because that is the only basis on which we can seek to persuade Thomson International to reverse this decision, or if that is not possible, to provide a basis on which a new buyer or buyers can be persuaded to take over the various titles".

The journalists on the Times—who had been scornful of the pro-management stance taken by editor Rees-Mogg during the lockout and their own strike this year have now fallen in behind his 'democratic dressing' in the hunt for another buyer.

Rees-Mogg made it clear that any journalists stake would depend on them putting up money to buy their own jobs, and being subservient to a more traditional capitalist.

In practice the demand is that the journalists—most of

whom are in the NUJ—declare themselves with management, against the printers.

Rees Mogg directly linked his campaign to the Times' defence of the state.

"Many of our institutions are under threat; the Times fights for them and now the Times is going to fight for herself".

The proven defensive strength of the print chapels is no longer adequate to meet this threat. They have first to counter the treachery of their own officials.

Workers' strategy

Secondly they have to devise an independent workers' strategy for the fight, which rejects messiahs in the shape of Robert Maxwell (who acted as executioner and undertaker to the Scottish Daily News) or in the shape of Rees Mogg.

Far from creating a climate for a new buyer the workers must create a climate for a workers' takeover.

Occupation of the plant is now an immediate necessity. A call to other Fleet Street workers to come out in their support would produce an immediate response.

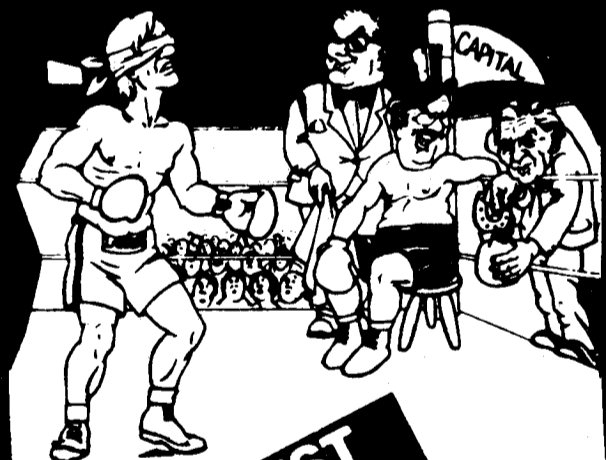
The print workers and as many journalists as possible (many but not all of whom are nakedly pro-management, pro-capitalist) must be brought together to fight for the papers to become democratically controlled papers independent of all employers.

The first task is to challenge the right of the employers to hurl the workforce onto the street. That cannot be done by turning to any other capitalists.

The employers want ideologically unchanged papers printed outside London and the breaking of the unions.

The workers must demand the strengthening of the unions and the breaking of the ideology.

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Miners must join BL CONVENORS pay fight CALL PAY STRIKE

The last few months have seen the Tory press labouring to convince workers that they should abandon their pay demands in the face of the growing recession.

But although one or two sections of workers—particularly in engineering—have settled for pay increases below 10%, there is no sign of a stampede towards such a position.

Indeed last week brought a sharp reminder that it is in fact the bureaucratic leaders of the unions rather than the rank and file who are most eager to respond to the employers' pleas of bankruptcy.

A delegate meeting of GMWU engineering workers voted to throw out a pay offer from the Engineering Employers Federation which had been accepted by not only GMWU national negotiators but also by all 17 unions in the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.

The GMWU, of course, is very much a minority union in the Confed. And the right wing leaders of the AUEW—the biggest single union involved—seem likely to succeed in steering the sell out 8% offer through their National Committee meeting this week.

Pressure

But it's clear from the GMWU vote that there is pressure from the shop floor for action to defend living standards.

A hefty pay claim has also been tabled by representatives of water workers who last year secured a settlement of nearly 20%.

But it's in the miners' union where the contradiction between the spinelessness of the right wing leaders and the demands of the rank and file has emerged most clearly.

The NCB's response to the NUM's 35% pay claim was to declare that there was no cash available to pay a wage increase in excess of 10%.

Right wing NUM President Joe Gormley, who'd gone into the talks making loud noises about not being able to sell "to the lads" any settlement less than the rise in the cost of living emerged like a pricked balloon declaring limply that the NUM "had to be realistic".

Not challenged

This position was not challenged by the Communist Party. Scottish NUM leader Mick McGahey gave tacit support to Gormley's retreat when he stressed that there is "a long way to go yet" in the talks before anyone "fires the starting

gun" for action.

But at the weekend Yorkshire NUM President Arthur Scargill in a rare public attack on Gormley echoed what must be the view of tens of thousands of miners:

"The Coal Board have told us nothing new and have merely reiterated the familiar sob story which they have been giving us for the last ten years.

I warn the Coal Board that we are not prepared to be fobbed off . . . Failure to concede the miners' claim will result in industrial action."

Gormley's job

Scargill himself has of course made militant noises in recent years—only to back down from a struggle at a crucial point. Nor is his attack on Gormley unrelated to his campaign to win Gormley's job when he retires shortly.

But Scargill is right to challenge Gormley's acceptance

of the problems of the NCB as a starting point for pay talks. It is important that this fight is pressed home and that the miners as they did against the Heath government, once more offer a lead to the working class as a whole in the struggle against a vicious Tory offensive.

Starting point

The starting point in the pay struggle must be not the inevitable financial difficulties of a crisis-ridden capitalist system, but the necessity to defend and improve the living standards of the working class.

This can best be fought for through the demand for a sliding scale of wages which links pay increases regularly to the rising levels of inflation as assessed by committees of trade unionists and housewives.

A meeting of British Leyland convenors has voted to call simultaneous mass meetings in every BL plant this Thursday with a recommendation for strike action against the company's 6.8% pay offer.

A recall meeting of convenors next Monday will assess the results and if (as expected) there is strong support, will name the day for the start of all-out strike action.

Attempts by right wing convenors from Rover and Jaguar plants to argue for a ballot on the issue were defeated after a prolonged debate.

This unaccustomed show of militancy from the convenors is a further sign of the mounting pressure from the shop floor as workers demand their union leaders act to defend their living standards.

This pressure has penetrated even to the bureaucratized layers of the JNC whose initial recommendation that the convenors reject the offer set the

scene for this Monday's decisions.

Now, with BL this year outside the Engineering Employers Federation, and the BL unions now therefore no longer nominally under the umbrella of the Confed., the JNC is the highest negotiating body in BL.

Its rejection of the "final offer" and the endorsement of this stand by the convenors means that strike action is imminent.

The reservations in the statement from TGWU Cars official Grenville Hawley, reflect trepidation among the bureaucracy that now—all of a sudden—BL unions stand on the verge of major action.

But there are no signs that the membership wants to retreat.

A mass meeting of workers at the Cowley Assembly Plant two weeks ago voted unanimously to throw out the company's original 6.1% offer.

And shop stewards from the TGWU and AUEW in the Assembly Plant have since taken up the fight for the course of action that has now been

adopted by the convenors.

BL workers have received pay increases of 5% in 1978 and 5% in 1979. The present offer of 6.8% means that their total increase in three years is less than 17%—the present rate of inflation.

Active support

Meanwhile, since last Autumn alone, the average weekly cost of living for workers on £75-£100 per week is estimated to have risen by £26.

These are the forces that have driven forward the fight for action in BL and make it difficult for the bureaucrats to sell the Edwardes offer.

Should Thursday's mass meetings in fact vote for action BL workers will at once find themselves in the front ranks of the struggle against the Thatcher government.

In their fight they will need and must demand the fullest active support from the whole labour and trade union movement.

It's Metro madness



"The Prince of Wales gave BL's mini Metro the royal seal of approval yesterday when he drove one around the company's Longbridge factory in Birmingham . . . He said: "No one abroad is going to sit around waiting for us to sort ourselves out."

The Times

Prince Charles has this embarrassing problem—one that even his best friends can't help him with.

As he goes about the world on his important business dressed as a rear admiral or a national hunt jockey, he is often called on for special favours.

Real demands

Taken aside after opening a trade fair for chemical warfare or shaking the hand of some geriatric despot, his hosts begin to press their real demands:

"Hey, Charlie, I've been waiting three months for my bullet proof XJ12 and my Range Rover ashtrays are full.

Can you put in a good word for me?"

The steady gaze of the heir to the throne begins to waver. A cold sweat breaks out on his back. His hands grow clammy and unshakable.

How is this man who ranks above God in the order or ceremonies; who has Dukes walk backwards before him; whose polo ponies have their own franchise in horse shit; . . . how is he to explain the dreadful truth about BL?

Mother

"It's those bastard unions", he mutters wishing he was home with mother.

"They won't let my sodding car out of the factories. Last week they built the first Range Rover for a year. They used it to drive home in at the end of their shift. We are still negotiating to get it back."

"Even my family have to be pulled around by corgies."

As royal tour after royal tour ends in disaster the prince is growing desperate. Will no-one rid him of these humiliating experiences?

But one brave knight rallies irish of his chief hack, who is filling in his third expense form of the evening.

"Great news" replies the hack, throwing his latest effort into the waste bin and searching for inspiration.

"Do you know what those day shift workers do at night? They go to sleep in the same beds as their wives. I can see it now on page 1. 'Sex on the BL night shift'."

But even as the editor is about to throw his arms around his faithful newshound the telephone rings. Minutes later still standing to attention the editor issues his orders. "Out of my office, ratface. Your story stinks. Send in the motoring correspondent."

Dinky toys

Working secretly at night after a hard day in the barracks, Sir Michael painstakingly assembles the new wonder—armed only with dinky toy models of French and Japanese hatchbacks.

After two weeks work his new model is unveiled. BL designers gaze at it appreciatingly. "And when the bonnet is opened", says Sir Michael "It plays Land of Hope and Glory".

The designers make a few minor suggestions. Wheels, an engine; gears. Soon the new cars are flooding off the robotised production lines . . .

. . . Meanwhile in the offices of the Daily Mail things are about to change.

The editor is in conference with his star reporter. "What news today? he asks, staring

anxiously into the gin flecked iris of his chief hack, who is filling in his third expense form of the evening.

"Great news" replies the hack, throwing his latest effort into the waste bin and searching for inspiration.

"Do you know what those day shift workers do at night? They go to sleep in the same beds as their wives. I can see it now on page 1. 'Sex on the BL night shift'."

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Pint of petrol

Fleet Street is unanimous. Britain has been saved. "Round the world on one pint of petrol" screams one headline. "Best since the Spitfire" says another. "Huns rocked by Metro perfection", a third. "Nips commit hari-kari at motor show".

The motoring correspondent

of the Daily Telegraph was hanged for treason after saying that the car showed a tendency to rattle at speed.

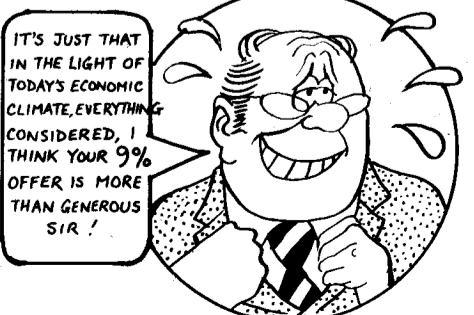
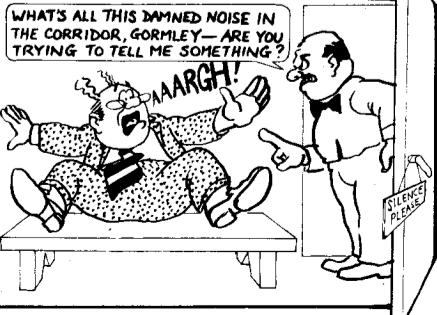
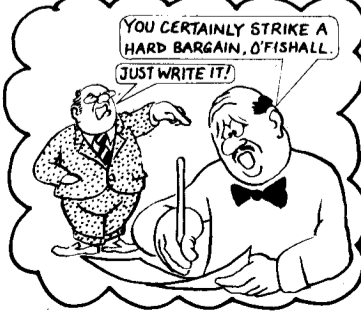
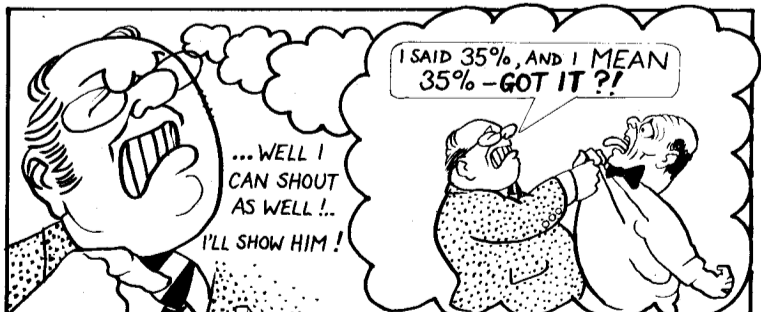
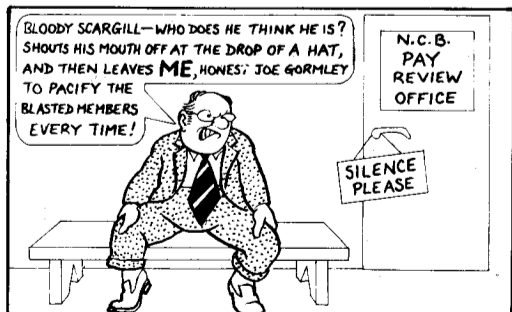
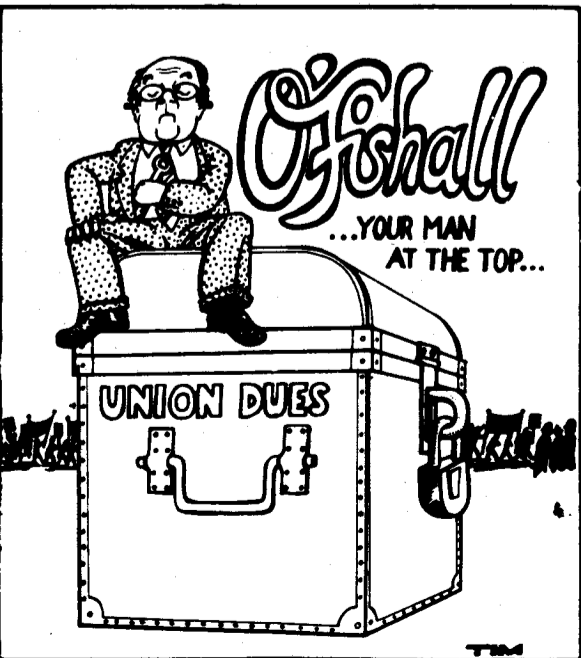
One Metro was rumoured to have run out of petrol but a D notice stopped the gossip.

Ordered to vote

Industrial relations changed overnight. At last the Tories realised the benefits of participation. All over Britain workers were dragged into management meetings and ordered to vote on the names of the next model of washing machine or machine tool. Several workers were jailed for obscenity.

. . . Meanwhile in the dictatorship of South Tyranny Prince Charles beamed affably as Sandhurst trained General Torture slipped him a fiver and asked for early delivery on a Daimler. "I've something much better than that", he said, unveiling the Metro with a flourish.

The General looked at its sleek aerodynamic lines, its Union Jack glistened in the tropical sun. His lips quivered. His eyes flashed. At last he spoke: "You swine," he said. "This means war!"



SOCIALIST PRESS



Shore

FUND LABOUR NEC REJECT PHONY ELECTION

Unfortunately we have to report that the £1500 Special Fund is still arriving too slowly.

A further £56.25 was sent in this week bringing our total to date to £340.25. Yet we are asking for the first £1,000 to be raised by November 15. This will mean an enormous effort over the next two weeks if we are to achieve that target.

We are asking readers and supporters to send us one day's pay to help us raise this fund. As the end of the month approaches we are anticipating monthly paid readers and supporters getting out their cheque books to send us their donation. Please don't let us down.

Send your donation to:
Socialist Press Fund
BM Box 5277
London WC1V 6XX

Send us a donation!

Thousands march to stop missiles

The 100,000-strong CND demonstration last Sunday represents the clearest evidence yet of a growing mass movement in Britain against the war drives of British and US imperialism.

The increasingly strident cold war tones coming from the Tory government together with Thatcher's decision to buy four Trident submarines and provide bases for US Cruise missiles brought thousands of trade unionists, Labour Party members and youth on to the streets of London in the largest

Who is John Silkin? The question is echoing throughout the organisations of the labour movement as workers struggle to understand why the press should have chosen to build up Silkin and Peter Shore as 'left' candidates for leadership of the PLP.

Even Silkin's own Party GMC appears to have been startled to discover their MP portrayed as a left winger.

But then, in the never-never land of the Parliamentary Labour Party (where socialist policies are as common as three pound notes and just as valuable!) it doesn't take much to appear as a left winger.

No credibility

The problem facing Silkin, Foot and Shore—but also facing likely winner Denis Healey—is that even if they win the farcical elections within the cloistered ranks of the PLP, they will carry no credibility whatever



Silkin

with the Party's rank and file.

Not one of the four candidates can command sufficient constituency support to get elected to the Party's National Executive.

Indeed both Tony Benn—who consistently tops the poll in the constituency nominations to the NEC—and the NEC itself have now come out openly in opposition to the PLP holding any elections for a new leader

until the constitutional changes agreed in principle in Blackpool have been implemented.

The NEC correctly voted—with only five votes against—to call on the PLP to call off its pathetic "election".

Ignored

It seems virtually certain that their request will be ignored.

But this will only further intensify the crisis that is now wracking the Labour Party, underlining the necessity to oust not only the right wing leading clique but all of those Labour MPs who refuse to make themselves answerable to the labour movement.

GMCs must demand that their MPs boycott the PLP elections, and fight for constitutional changes in January that strip Labour MPs of their privileged position in the choice of the Party leader.

Only in this way can the way be cleared for the implementation of the kind of socialist policies that can solve the problems faced by the working class.

Tory concessions fail to halt hunger strike

Seven republican prisoners in the 'H' Blocks of Long Kesh concentration camp in the six counties of Northern Ireland began a hunger strike last Monday as part of the campaign for the restoration of political status to republican

prisoners.

A decision by the Tory government to allow prisoners in Northern Ireland to wear their own clothes failed to stop the protest going ahead.

At the same time a further 142 prisoners in the 'H' Blocks have gone 'on the blanket', bringing the total involved in the campaign to 350.

nuclear one.

Only if the thousands of people now being mobilised against the threat of war join forces with workers struggling to defend jobs, services and living standards to bring down the Thatcher government can the horrors of a nuclear holocaust be avoided.

There is no solution to be found in a "broad-based" cross-class pacifist protest movement.

The trade union movement must take up the fight to black all work on the installation of Cruise missiles as part of the struggle to halt the Tories' war drive.

*Defend the Soviet Union.
*Stop Thatcher to stop Cruise.

Three demonstrations took place in Northern Ireland over the weekend in support of the prisoners, the largest of them attracting 15,000 marchers.

This is without doubt the largest demonstration of support for the republican prisoners for some time and clearly represents growing support within the Catholic community for the struggle of the republican prisoners to be granted political status.

As we have said before, the decision of the seven to start a hunger strike is a sign both of their determination and also of their desperation.

The republican movement has appealed in the past to the British labour movement for support for their demands but the union leaders who will march against repression in distant countries refuse to mobilise any support against the repression of Irish republican prisoners by a British imperialist government.

These republican prisoners deserve the support of the labour movement.

*For political status for Irish republican prisoners now, prior to an amnesty!

*British troops out of Ireland now!

*Self-determination for the Irish people!

*For an Irish workers' republic.
government

Shore's ideas on housing

It was Shore who, in response to the IMF cuts in December 1976 extended the ban to most other forms of council building orders, including roads and schools.

It was Shore who in March 1977 first set up the system of cash limits for housing expenditure which Heseltine has been able to use so viciously against council housing ever since.

Yet now the same Peter Shore is posing as a 'left' in the farcical leadership elections in the Parliamentary Labour Party!

One point that may well be overlooked in the wave of

rhetoric that will gush forth from Labour Party leaders on the latest housing cuts is that all the methods now being used by Heseltine to destroy council housing programmes were invented by Peter Shore in his term of office as Secretary of State for the Environment in the Callaghan government.

It was Shore who, in response to the Healey cuts of July 1976 first imposed a ban on new housing contracts and land purchases, as well as halting the growth of housing association schemes and council mortgages.

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