

SOCIALIST PRESS



REAGAN

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Polish leaders retreat from confrontation

In what amounts to a further major climbdown, Poland's Stalinist regime has conceded to a major demand of the country's new independent trade union federation Solidarity.

The Supreme Court has agreed that a clause inserted by a Warsaw judge conceding the leading role of the Communist Party should be removed from the union's statutes, and—in line with a compromise deal—appended to the statute as an annex.

In exchange for this public

retreat, the Stalinist leadership has averted the threat of massive strike action on November 12 and thus bought more time to find the means to control the militant Polish working class.

While the dispute has centred on the contested clause, few of the other economic or political concessions made by the government to settle this summer's strike wave have been realised in practice.

As *Socialist Press* has consistently pointed out, there is no way that the Stalinist bureaucracy in Poland or any of the deformed workers' states can

coexist with genuinely independent trade unions.

The very existence of such bodies would be a permanent challenge to the bureaucracy's power and privileges.

The past month has seen, therefore, conflicts within the bureaucracy on the way forward and an escalation of a new stage of struggle as the working class began to demand the full implementation of the September agreements.

Mass strikes have erupted in Gdansk and Lublin on the 6 and 7 November.

In Gdansk public service

workers crippled transport and services demanding immediate wage rises for teachers and other workers, while groups of strikers occupied the city's town hall.

In Lublin striking transport workers commandeered buses and organised impromptu meetings on them to explain their demands while on the streets supporters distributed red carnations.

It is in these conditions, against a background of harvest failure and economic chaos, and with the threat of further strikes

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Polish leader Kania and Brezhnev

AFTER BL SELL-OUT

Give them an inch and they'll take a mile. That is generally true of the employers. It is even more true of the Thatcher government.

And last week they were given far more than an inch by the wretched leadership of 70,000 British Leyland workers.

A completely unrepresentative meeting of BL convenors threw aside the 2-1 vote by shop floor workers for strike action in pursuit of the unions' £17 pay claim—and called off a strike that would have at once become the focal point for an all-out fight against the Tory government.

Within hours the Tories had capitalised on this betrayal. Hoping that the scale of the sell-out would set back and demoralise the whole working class, they moved in at once and announced a savage 6% limit on pay settlements in the public sector.

Miscalculated

This new pay policy—only 10% higher than Callaghan's ill-fated 5% limit—is to be enforced through rigid cash limits on local authorities.

But there are already signs that the Tories have miscalculated the level of militancy in the working class.

The immediate reaction from the fireman—the section of workers first affected by the pay limit—was an unofficial work-to-rule that spread rapidly across virtually the whole country in advance of a meeting of the FBU Executive.

The firemen have particular reason to be angry. The agreement which ended their national strike three years ago laid down that they are entitled to an 18.8% rise this month: the Tories have now unilaterally torn up this agreement and offered them only 6%!

With the firemen clamouring for action, other public sector workers—if given a lead—can also be expected to fight back strongly.

Brunt

Inflation is now running at over 15%. Public sector workers have already born the brunt of Tory spending cuts in terms of slashed services, cuts in manning levels and cuts in overtime earnings. Bitterness is

6% LIMIT: TORIES

PUT THE BOOT IN



Howe with Thatcher: Seizing advantage of BL betrayal

running high.

But leadership in the public sector is running at an all-time low. Union leaders, who have done nothing to oppose the cuts, have tried to blame the membership for their own refusal to mount a fight.

Sized up

The same union leaders who left the steelworkers isolated in their three month struggle last winter are equally determined to prevent a showdown with the Tories this time around.

The Thatcher government has sized up the TUC leaders. They recognise that every one of them would sooner sacrifice their members' jobs and living standards than unleash the kind of struggles that could drive the Tories from office.

Thatcher has no doubt been heartened by the mealy-mouthed statements of union leaders in response to the 6% limit.

But this assessment leaves out the mood of rising anger and militancy in the working class itself.

In BL car plants, news of the

betrayal was met by fury and impromptu gatherings of shop-floor workers literally demanding to be called out on strike.

Firemen have shown their readiness to fight.

Water workers have already declared themselves prepared to take strike action to back up their 20% pay claim.

And elsewhere, too, the pressure on wages is building up. Right wing miners' President Joe Gormley found little support last week for his moves towards acceptance of the NCB's single figure pay offer in reply to the NUM's 35% claim.

In Fords, shop floor workers have suffered the double insult of a new disciplinary code unilaterally rammed home, coupled with the certainty of a single figure pay offer.

In British Airways and Rolls Royce, state-owned firms have proclaimed a total pay freeze. Rolls Royce management are offering only a possible 5% tied to increased productivity, while BA bosses have imposed a pay freeze until July, to be followed by a paltry 7.8% offer.

A readiness to fight on pay runs alongside the emergence of

struggles on jobs, with the Gardners occupation in Manchester now joined by the militant occupation of the threatened ICL factory in Winsford by workers who immediately evicted management.

And November 1 saw a broad-based 700-strong labour movement delegate conference, convened by Lambeth Labour Group, carry a fighting resolution spelling out a campaign for mass action to halt the cuts.

Even as the Tories move to put the boot in to the working class, therefore, the opportunity exists to mobilise the generalised strike action that we need to boot Thatcher out of office!

A precondition for success in such a fight is a determined struggle to prevent any moves to isolate those sections of workers that move into struggle on wages, on jobs or against the cuts.

Since TUC leaders and local officials will do everything in their power to prevent the spread of such struggles, this means it is essential to fight wherever possible for the building of councils of action to



Firemen in 1978: their pay agreement now torn up

defend and extend strikes and occupations in each area.

Such councils of action should draw in delegates from all trade union and labour movement bodies as well as working class political parties and organisations of tenants, pensioners, students and unemployed.

They should fight to mobilise class-wide action for the defeat of the Thatcher government—and as such challenge the

stranglehold of union bureaucrats.

They must link up the fight for industrial action against the Tories to the political struggle throughout the whole labour movement for a new, revolutionary leadership.

Only such a leadership is capable of challenging Foot and the old Callaghan gang, and carrying through the fight for a genuine workers' government to implement socialist policies.



INTERNATIONAL

Pinochet's guru gains new influence

On the economic front Milton Friedman must now be accounted the most influential person in the world.

Friedman's economic views are known in Britain as monetarism and in the United States as "supply-side economics".

They derive from the works of the right-wing Chicago economist Friedrich von Hayek, and now hold sway not only in Santiago (Chile), Downing Street and the Treasuries of Lisbon and Canberra; but they have now risen to dominance in Kingston, Jamaica, and are about to become orthodoxy in the Oval Office itself.

Reagan's election now brings Friedman and like-thinking economists to the centre of influence in the whole imperialist world.

The central axis of their policy is that the economic crisis must be allowed to take its "natural" course without the working class and the weakest sections of the capitalist class being protected and shielded in any way by the economic actions of the state.

The specific common features of the policy have been an emphasis on cutting the budget deficit through severe cuts in public spending, together with strict control of the money supply and—as a necessary political bribe to gain electoral popularity—cuts in taxes for the most prosperous sections of the middle class.

Reagan, for instance, in the most explicit promise of his campaign, has undertaken to reduce federal income tax by 10% in each of the next three annual Federal budgets.

Reagan has also, like Thatcher, undertaken both to increase defence spending and to reduce the government deficit to zero.

Thatcher's experience has shown that these objectives are in the present circumstances mutually exclusive.

Submerged

Or rather, they are mutually exclusive within the framework of parliamentary democracy and of the maintenance of such rights won by the working class as unemployment benefit, social security, free or subsidised education and health services.

It is the attacks on all of these which are the hidden and submerged portion of the programme on which Thatcher, Sa Carneiro, Fraser, Seaga and now Reagan have been elected.

Now elected, Reagan, like Thatcher, will find that once the submerged part of the programme becomes visible the first problem that arises is of being re-elected, or even of avoiding a possible open confrontation with the working class in which the survival of the government would be at stake.

It is more than a coincidence therefore, that there is only one country so far where Friedmanism has been applied and has



Pinochet puts Friedmanism into practice

partially "worked". That is Pinochet's savage dictatorship in Chile.

There the rate of inflation has been enormously reduced since the 1973 coup; state spending has been massively cut and the government's finances have been put in order.

So many of the stated objectives of Friedmanism have been achieved.

But all this was achieved at the cost of the unstated necessary consequences—a catastrophic level of unemployment and a huge cut in real wages.

Terrible defeat

Those consequences have been possible in Chile only because of the terrible defeat brutally inflicted on the working class in 1973.

The Chilean defeat is, there-

fore, a measure of what is required by all capitalist ruling classes.

Victory on points

They are still not prepared in most cases for the knock-out battle which took place in Chile.

For now they are looking more towards gaining a victory on points by exploiting the potentially demoralising effects of mass unemployment and falling living standards.

Italy's recently deposed Prime Minister Francesco Cossiga would be able to tell Ronald Reagan just how difficult such a victory is.

So would his successor Forlano who warned two weeks ago about the possibility of Italy becoming another Chile or another Turkey (with help, of course, from Forlano himself

More South Africa raids on SWAPO

At the end of last month, talks on Namibian independence between UN officials and the South African government ended in deadlock in Johannesburg.

On the day that the talks began, South African army generals launched yet another attack into southern Angola, aimed at SWAPO guerrilla forces and Angolan military and economic targets.

The sharp contrast between official bourgeois diplomacy and the underlying imperialist-backed drive for stable capitalist control, was further shown up soon after the talks.

Tribalist elections were held under military control to install stooge local governments in the bantustan-type labour reserves—a move designed to strengthen the system of labour control and the puppet DTA regime which administers it.

In the northern region of Ovamboland (nearly half Namibia's 1½ million people are Ovambo speaking) where SWAPO guerrillas rest on a militant base of mass resistance and effectively control many areas the army was unable to organise elections.

The UN serves as a "democratic" mask for imperialist world domination. Behind the illusions of UN "impartiality", UN resolutions and UN speeches lies the web of secret diplomacy through which imperialism and its agents organise the real decisions.

The petty bourgeois nationalist leadership of SWAPO sows criminal illusions amongst workers and militants about the ability of the UN to further their struggle against colonial oppression and capitalist exploitation.

This perspective turns the working class away from reliance on its independent mobilisation and class interests.

While workers and militants take up their determined struggle against the state, SWAPO leaders look for ways of limiting, undermining and blocking that struggle.

As a reformist bureaucracy, the SWAPO leadership fears the independent class strength of the working class—the greatest threat to its interests and ambitions.

In public speeches and statements, SWAPO leader Sam Nujoma attacks the ongoing connivance of the imperialist powers with the South African government.

Yet he himself is constantly engaged in secret negotiations and deals beyond the eyes and control of SWAPO militants.

As the struggle inside Namibia continues to sharpen, SWAPO leaders will step up their desperate attempts to assert political control over the forward movement of the working class.

At the same time, they will be forced into greater reliance on secret diplomacy in their manoeuvres with imperialism.

The growing militancy and combativity of workers, militants and guerrilla fighters must be armed with a programme of struggle and an independent leadership that shows a real way forward in the interests of the oppressed masses.

Poland Strike first-bury later: new US nuclear plan

From front page

on November 12 that some Polish CP leaders were driven to take action against the new unions—which claim a membership of 10 million in 8,000 factories throughout the country.

Josef Klasa, a CP central committee spokesman, announced that strikes which "threaten the country's well-being" will be banned, if necessary by Government decree.

"There is a limit which justifies state intervention," he said.

More ominously he added, "The party is determined, for the first time since August, to use all the options at its disposal."

But faced with this apparently open declaration of war against the rights of the new unions, the leadership of Solidarity have shown no willingness to mobilise the strength of the Polish working class in defence of their organisations.

In a recent interview with *Socialist Organiser* Lech Walesa, leader of the independent Polish trade union Solidarity, commenting on the success of the October 3 strike said "We have no plans for any more strikes. We have serious economic problems and strikes cannot help the economy."

Thus, at precisely the point when decisive action to politically confront the bureaucracy is required, the limitations of the leadership thrown up by the spontaneous struggles in August begin to be most clearly exposed.

The papacy, conscious of the importance of their influence in holding back the workers, have refused to allow Polish primate Cardinal Wyszyński to resign—he is 80!

On November 5, and for days after, countless thousands of workers all over Britain debated an extremely serious question. 'How real is the threat of nuclear war?'

They were provoked into this not only by the election of Ronald Reagan—although that might have been cause enough—but also by Jonathan Dimbleby's programme 'The Bomb' and the *Daily Mirror's* front-page on Thursday.

The sombre mood of most workers wasn't helped by Frances Pym's cheerful comment on behalf of the Tories that it is "better to be dead than red".

Few on the shop floor appeared to agree, but what we need to know is what are the realities behind the imperialist war moves?

"Arena" wars

In *The Bomb* it became rapidly clear that Pentagon strategists have gone considerably beyond such ideas as the nuclear deterrent.

They now speak of the possibility of limited nuclear engagements—just wipe out one continent! (ours?)—and of "arena" wars, i.e. a nuclear war in Europe alone.

But, as one of the many experts on the programme pointed out, such thinking has

to be based on one principle—that you strike first. And that became the central theme of Dimbleby's programme.

For the imperialist military chiefs what now counts is not the likelihood of millions of deaths, but rather the possibility of securing a strategic advantage in the Cold War by carrying out a nuclear strike in a single "theatre", leading to a shift in the global balance of power.

Blank cheques

It is in this context that Carter's decision to authorise earlier this year a new system of control of missiles, which specifically excludes any democratic or Presidential intervention, must be seen.

What Carter put his name to was in fact a blank cheque for the US military chiefs of staff to override the President and decide themselves when missiles are to be used.

That this power now rests in the hands of a Pentagon which openly contemplates the use of such weapons for even "limited" purposes—possibly to deter the USSR in the Middle East or in Europe—is indeed a chilling thought.

But what it poses most sharply is the response of imperialism to its own crisis.

Faced with a massive upsurge of struggles against imperialism on a world wide scale, in Iran, in Nicaragua, in El Salvador, in Zimbabwe, the

US ruling class has clearly decided that in the end, to preserve itself, it must be prepared to carry out total war against the workers and peasants of the world.

For that to be done, a break must be made by imperialism from all liberal notions of preserving human life.

That is the step which the Pentagon has taken.

When they talk of 'tolerable death ratios' what they mean is that for imperialism any price will be paid to preserve the

IRAN ARRESTS

The increasing crisis of political authority in Iran despite the war with Iraq was shown by the arrest on 7 November of former foreign minister Sadeq Gotbzadeh for criticising the state broadcasting service.

Gotbzadeh remains a close confidant of the Ayatollah Khomeini, so that his early release can be expected.

Less hope can be entertained for Mohamed Reza Saadati, a leader of the left wing Mujaheddin movement, who is currently held at the Evin Prison where he was formerly held by SAVAK.

bankrupt capitalist system. And just to make sure that there are no hitches in their war moves, the entire nuclear strike procedure is now computerised using codes which none of the operators understand.

With Reagan in office, the tasks facing the US working class are truly massive. But one job they must urgently carry out is the calling to account of the Pentagon, the disarming of the military warmongers and the bringing under workers' control of all nuclear installations.

IRISH HUNGER STRIKERS:

WE MUST NOT LET

THEM DIE!

Seven Irish republican prisoners at the notorious Long Kesh concentration camp in Belfast are now in their third week on hunger strike.

They are demanding restoration of their status as prisoners of war, in opposition to the attempts by Labour and Tory governments to brand them as "criminals" for fighting to liberate their country from British rule—imposed by military force. In fighting such imperialist repression, the five specific demands raised by the prisoners are for:

*The right to wear their own, not prison, clothing.

*The right to refrain from prison work.

*The right to free association amongst other political prisoners.

*The right to organise their own educational and recreational facilities, and to receive one visit, one letter and one parcel a week.

*The right to full remission of sentences.

These demands have been consistently raised by republican prisoners in Long Kesh since their special category status was stripped from them by the Wilson government in 1976, in a bid to portray as common criminals those who fight the efforts of the British army to preserve the imperialist oppression of the Irish people.

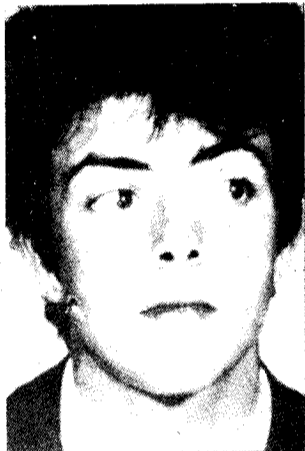
Blanket protest

For four years, up to 300 republican prisoners at any one time have been engaged in the "blanket" protest at Long Kesh in which they have refused to wear prison clothing or to slop out their cells.

In retaliation they have been subjected to savage intimidation: clothed only in a single blanket, they have been left in filthy, unheated cells and subjected to brutal body searches, beatings and endless abuse.

This maltreatment at the hands of British imperialism which has been internationally condemned, has run alongside a complete *silence* on the blanket struggle from the leadership of the British labour movement.

Trade union and Labour leaders—who so easily condemn barbaric behaviour by right wing regimes in far away Latin America, Asia and Africa—have raised not a whisper against similar activities being carried out by the *British* military authorities in their efforts to repress the liberation struggle in the six counties of Northern Ireland.



Sean McKenna



John Nixon



Brendan Hughes



Leo Green



Tommy McKearney



Tom McFeeley



Ray McCartney

In some cases this shameful silence has been the result of indifference to the struggles of the Irish people for national liberation: in others it is the outcome of tacit or open support for their "own" British ruling class in maintaining its rule over the six counties of Northern Ireland.

The capitalist press and mass media are ever ready to witch-hunt anyone who takes up the struggle against British imperialism.

As a result, few labour movement leaders have seen any political advantage to be gained from declaring themselves in support of the Blanket men of Long Kesh.

After four years of bitter struggle have failed to make any impact on the British government's position and failed to win the support they need from the British workers' movement, the 'H' Block prisoners have resorted to desperate tactics.

Desperate is certainly the word: the decision to launch a hunger strike in their present weakened state could quickly bring death to the seven men involved.

But there is no doubt that they have been so goaded by ill-treatment and oppression that they are willing to press through their struggle. The only way they can be saved is to ensure that they win their demands.

There have already been too many martyrs to the Irish revolution: the British labour move-

ment has the responsibility to act in solidarity with the hunger strikers and ensure that no man dies.

Already it is clear that the hunger strikers' stand has formed a focal point for a growth of the struggle against British imperialism.

A huge 25,000-strong demonstration through Belfast bore witness to the solid support for the liberation struggle in the six counties—now at a greater level than any time in the last ten years.

And the fears of a rise in the struggle and of the possible deaths of hunger strikers have helped to stampede a group of union leaders, Labour MPs and individual liberals into adding their signatures to the Charter 80 petition endorsing the prisoners' five demands.

With one or two notable exceptions, these signatories have until now taken no significant stand on the prisoners' issue or the Irish liberation struggle.

Their involvement now must be made the starting point of the broadest possible campaign throughout the labour movement for *action* in solidarity with the hunger strikers.

This means demanding that these union leaders and Labourites conduct an active *campaign* at every level in their own organisations for resolutions in support of the prisoners' demands, and for preparations to mobilise maximum support on the national demonstrations on November 15 and December

7 in London.

The fight on these issues must be linked to a full scale mobilisation in the British labour movement against the Thatcher government and against the defenders of British imperialism in the Labour leadership.

In this context, socialists must explicitly raise the demand for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland as the basis for the ending of imperialist rule and the self-determination of the Irish people as a whole.

"We, the undersigned Republican POWs presently incarcerated in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh firmly declare that from today October 27 1980, we shall embark upon a hunger strike in demand that we not only be recognised and treated as political prisoners, but as human beings.

Our grave decision to hunger-strike is entirely our own, and owes influence only to the perpetuation of four long years of British institutionalised torture and unprecedented barbarity here within H-Block and Armagh jail. Having exhausted every other means and alternatives available to us, we see no other way of ending this inhumanity.

Whilst the Irish nation remains unfree, partitioned and at war with an alien government, torture in the prisons and oppression in the streets will always exist. And no different is today than from the same Black and Tans of sixty years ago, when the same alien government murdered Terence MacSwiney and young Kevin Barry.

So, in the spirit of MacSwiney, and with the determination of eight centuries of uncompromising resistance, we the undersigned, of yet another risen Irish generation, declare our firm resolve to uphold those fundamental principles of right and justice, for there is no right in torture, and no justice in British justice.

We call upon the Irish nation to bear witness not only to our trials of inhumanity, but to the perennial wrong inflicted upon our nation by an alien government. We face death in the mind of those who are right. We leave our lives in the hands of the Irish nation and our souls to the most high God.

Signed
Leo Green
Brendan Hughes
Ray McCartney
Tom McFeeley
Tommy McKearney
Sean McKenna
John Nixon



Charter signatories Benn and TGWU Organiser Ron Todd



The huge Belfast support demonstration



Some of the 19 King Henry's strikers with supporters on the picket line

King Henry's: the savage face of capitalism

The management of strike-bound King Henry's Meat Products, Levenshulme have been found guilty and fined £500 on two charges at Manchester City Magistrates Court.

1) Not securing guards to the crimping machine.

2) Providing insufficient training and supervision.

The charges arose from an accident last spring when 17-year old Heather Valentine lost 1½ fingers in a machine which crimps the lids on pies.

In evidence she said she had tried to remove a lid after she had put it on crookedly.

Management admitted that the guards were wrongly adjusted but denied that the training was inadequate.

Striker and witness Debbie Fitzpatrick claimed the accident happened before she drew her first week's wage packet and that she had only been given half an hour's instruction on how to run the machine.

This is the second conviction of the company in its four year history.

In 1978, a man's arm was badly injured when it was pulled into a machine with a faulty limit switch which would ordinarily have automatically switched the machine off in an accident.

Since Heather's accident there have been another three.

In June Duncan lost 75% of

his hand including his thumb and first three fingers in a muffin machine without a guard.

The management is being prosecuted over this. But he is still crossing the picket line!

In September Margaret, a union member for over 15 years had three fingers crushed in the steak pudding crimping machine.

Crushed

On 22 October another worker had two fingers crushed in a third crimping machine.

Despite them crossing an official picket line to risk life and limb in the factory, and falling behind in their dues, these workers are still being defended by the Bakers Union.

Such generosity is not shared by manager Hollins whose offers have now reached the level of telling the strikers they should draw straws to see which eight return!

Picketing continues. On the evening of 19 September a picket was arrested for criminal damage to a car, half an hour

after it had gone through the line.

Police also arrested her friend for complaining about her treatment.

Their case will be tried on 10 December. The other eleven pickets arrested on 29 August will be tried by special court on 11 and 12 December—all to be heard before the notorious Stipendiary Magistrate, Judge Coffey.

There will probably be a demonstration in support of the pickets and against the Tories' Employment Act on 12 December.

The beginning of the nearby Gardners occupation resulted in a fall in money and attendance at mass pickets but support for this dispute remains essential.

Donations and messages of support should be sent to: BF&AWU, 30 Dudley Rd., Manchester 16.

Teachers demand union stand on gays

About 30 NATFHE members lobbied the National Council of the union last weekend demanding support for gay teachers in further and higher education.

The lobby was asking for support for resolutions from Regional Councils in East Anglia and Outer London insisting that NATFHE produce a gay rights policy without delay.

We reprint below sections of the leaflet put out by the THFE Gay Group at the lobby.

The National Council's response to this important lobby was not to reach the item on the agenda and to vote down a proposal to give the item priority.

"It has never been easy for gays working with young people to be honest about their sexuality and recent events make it clear that it is becoming no easier.

In September of this year Clwyd County Council decided to discriminate against known homosexuals, particularly those

working with the young or the mentally handicapped.

The document outlining this policy has not been made public but already one gay man has been transferred from the area of work for which he was qualified to a job in an old peoples' home.

A handyman in a Scottish youth camp, John Saunders, was sacked by his employers as soon as they found out that he was gay. He had always been totally discrete about his gayness, but an Employment Appeals Tribunal upheld the dismissal although they agreed that there was no scientific evidence for such anti-gay prejudice.

A Salford drama lecturer, Gordon Wiseman, is currently fighting against his dismissal after being found guilty of gross indecency. Had any heterosexual lecturers been convicted of similar charges it is highly unlikely that they would have suffered this double punishment.

Gays are particularly prone to such discrimination because they are denied the protection

of the Employment Protection Act.

A movement, however, is only as strong as its weakest link, and if the attacks on gays are successful today, there will be attacks on other workers tomorrow.

Already the Saunders case is being used as a precedent against other workers appealing against unfair dismissal in industrial tribunals. No trade unionist can afford to ignore such sackings, particularly in a period of rising unemployment.

The 1977 NATFHE Annual Conference was told that research was being undertaken into discrimination against gay lecturers. Where are the results of that research?

We think that after three and a half years it is time for NATFHE to make a public stand on the gay issue. Then its gay members would know that they could rely on the support of their union and certain employers might at least think twice before discriminating against us."

PRESS GANG



Hypocritical tone of the week was set by the Daily Mirror which set out to woo the mass anti-bomb movement.

One of its special editions was given over to chilling stories about the effects of a nuclear blast and the build up of atomic weapons.

The issue included a super-imposed photograph showing a nuclear bomb exploding in the centre of London.

But for all that the Mirror needs the pennies of the 70,000 people who demonstrated in London on October 26, it also needs the politics of nuclear weapons apologists Rogers, Owen and Healey.

A stern editorial—looking out of place amidst the simulated carnage—declared that the only way to prevent nuclear war was to build more nuclear bombs!

The same hypocrisy has swept through the press over the Tories' economic policies.

It is no longer good business to sound too enthusiastic over Thatcher's economic policies.

Her public status dwindles by the day and the number of critics among supposed supporters increases just as fast.

(The Brighton Argus gave prominent coverage to a Guy Fawkes party where Thatcher was burned on the bonfire. The organisers said they tried to focus their display on a theme of public interest!)

The national press generally makes a pretence at trying to make up its mind at election time before plumping either for the Tories or the Labour right wing.

Now it has become obligatory for all the press to begin editorials on the economy by listing the pitfalls and problems that face the Tories and listing some of the opposition to their policies. But there is never any doubt where the leaders are going.

"Suicide"

BL workers, we were first told, deserved some sympathy. But on the morning of the senior stewards' crucial vote there was a sudden blast of the old venom with references to 'suicide' spread across most of the front pages.

The collapse of the senior



Thatcher

stewards left however, little time for celebration since the next attack—the 6% limit—was announced simultaneously.

A rash of anxious hand wringing broke out. The government was nervously accused of a 'U turn' (which it isn't).

Liberal newspapers—like the Guardian, complained that not all workers would be equally attacked: "It will not be their own jobs which go when they beat the limits, but other people's."

Conservative papers like the Sunday Telegraph showed its concerns were the same: the problem is not the attack on the workers; the problem is that the workers may fight back.

All papers agreed that the collapse of the BL convenors in the face of Edwardes' threat of closure was a major factor in the government announcement.

There have already been predictable bleatings in Britain when the government of Zimbabwe announced it is nationalising most of the daily papers. There have been far fewer criticisms of the reactionary Thatcherite Fraser government in Australia which has censored two newspapers which were about to expose a defence contract scandal.

In Britain, after all, the Law Lords this week tightened the gag on British journalists with their judgement on the BSC "mole" case—setting a precedent aimed at preventing any further such embarrassing leaks.

The press in Britain, for all its breast-beating about independence and freedom, is as servile and constrained as any in the world.

NOW AVAILABLE

BRING DOWN THE TORIES THIS WINTER!

a Socialist Press pamphlet

A brand new pamphlet, spelling out programme and perspective for struggle to oust the Tories.

Available, price 45p including postage from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX.

Our first lucky winner

Dear Comrades,
I am writing to enter your "Spot the Month of Action" competition. As you may know, West London is the place where Jack Dromey has his base in Southall. It may come as a surprise to you to know that activities have actually been organised in this area.

I enclose a leaflet which details events which started with a meeting of 200 people in Brunel University on 2 November and will culminate in a big anti-Tory rally in Acton Town Hall on 25 November.

This rally will be addressed by Dennis Skinner, Joan Lester and—that indescribable champion of cuts struggles—Alan Fisher!

Other events include public meetings, conferences, leafletting and demonstrations in several towns such as Southall, Acton, Hounslow, Chiswick, etc.

I hope this information is sufficient to win me at least one copy of the pamphlet "Bring Down the Tories This Winter".

I also hope that your members and supporters will not, as you seem to have done, assume that no activities have been organised but will seek them out and argue as strongly as possible the need to kick out Thatcher's government and replace it with a workers' government.

The main point about SERTUC and similar bodies is not that they do not organise activities but that when they do mobilise people, they push their bankrupt alternative economic capitalist strategy down their throats rather than offering a fighting socialist programme.

Yours fraternally,

WSL

Leicester bosses back 'import controls' demonstration

By Colin Morrow

On Wednesday 12 November Greville Janner MP, Labour MP for Leicester West will head a large demonstration through the streets of Leicester.

He will be accompanied by two other local Labour MPs, Jim Marshall and Tom Bradley, together with Alex Kilsby, the Hosiery Workers Organiser.

Is this to be a demonstration calling for the bringing down of the Tories? Not on your life! The bureaucrats will be on the streets asking Thatcher to impose import controls.

They will be joined, not surprisingly, by a clutch of

Tory MPs and a handful of local employers—some of whom have given their workforce an hour off to take part in the march, so eager are they to see their workers adopting the nationalist policies of "Buy British, Stop Imports".

At the same time, of course, these employers will no doubt be equally eager to use the implicit class collaborationist stance of union bureaucrats against their workforce at the next turn of the screw on wages—demanding that in the interests of company viability the workers should forgo their rises as they did in the "I'm Backing Britain Campaign".

This line up, employers, Tories, union bureaucrats and

Labourites spells out in the most vivid way the reality of the import controls demand.

It is the politics of class collaboration. For workers seeking to fight unemployment it can offer no solution. Supporters of 'Woman Worker', women's paper of the Workers Socialist League will be intervening in the demonstration arguing for an alternative programme—a programme to defend the independent interests of the working class.

They will argue for the opening of the books of the hosiery employers and their suppliers, opposition to all redundancies work-sharing on full pay to defend jobs and a policy of occupation to halt closures.

It is this type of policy for fighting unemployment that the union leaders wish to avoid.

That is why there has been no action to defend the 5,000 jobs already lost in hosiery this year.

That is why the TUC remains passive in the face of 2½ million unemployed.

The demonstration in Liverpool on November 29 must become the start of a mass campaign to demand action on jobs.

But the action must start not from the problems of the employers and their hatchmen in parliament but from the independent interests of the working class.



Textile workers

Steel houses: unions to launch enquiry

CONFUSION AS LABOUR LEFTS SEEK UNION SUPPORT

Leicester and District Trades Council has launched an enquiry into the cause of the house fires in steel houses on the City's New Parks Estate.

The decision to hold a labour movement enquiry came after Trades Council delegates heard, at the request of the AUEW 16 Branch, the accounts of conditions on the estate from two tenants.

Graphic account

John Barry and Val Hill gave a graphic account of the fear which haunts the estate following seven fires in as many months and vigorously criticised the local council for its attempts to cover up the real problem: the fact that the houses were "temporary houses"—designed for no more than 15 years use.

Val Hill said the result was that many tenants were now convinced that the council had no intention of making the major structural changes in materials used in order to make the houses safe, and were intent only on hushing things up and making a few cosmetic alterations to keep people quiet.

She said the main point was that the houses needed knocking down and replacing.

The council has responded by producing a plan for a £1.2 million repair scheme (£500,000 in the present year) to remove the worst excesses (such as pressed cardboard ceilings), but leave the houses generally as they are.

Inadequate

The inadequacy of this is clearly indicated by the fact that in Hull it was calculated that over £6,000 per house would be needed for such work, whilst Leicester have come out with a figure of £2,500.

Perhaps more disturbing, however, is the reluctance of the council to spell out in any detail what it intends to do or say what the detailed reports on the fires prepared by the fire officer concluded.

If the Trades Council Enquiry is to succeed it will

have to begin by accepting that if it is to carry out an effective enquiry then it cannot worry about upsetting councillors.

In fact, more than likely, it will run head-on into the hostility of councillors keen to maintain the cover-up.

A genuine independent labour movement inquiry begins not from keeping a cosy relationship with the local Labour bureaucrats but from a struggle to establish before the workers' movement the real nature of problems which face workers under capitalism.

That may well mean pointing directly to the complicity of Labour leaders in cover-ups and betrayals at both local and national level.

The recent Leeds conference organised by the Labour Coordinating Committee proved to be a confused and inadequate affair.

The attendance was little over 100; Arthur Scargill was not there and no resolutions were taken or decisions reached.

Nevertheless its significance lies in the fact that the LCC saw fit to call it at all, an expression of the changing situation within the Labour Party.

Those Labour 'lefts' linked to the LCC, who have been pushing hardest for the internal democratisation measures, now turn to the trade unions not in the traditional manner typical of the right wing—that is in back door deals with the top echelons of the trade union bureaucracy—but seeking links with the rank and file.

Quite what the 'lefts' intend to achieve is not clear, and certainly the conference failed to give much of an answer.

But the day was notable as a forum for discussion on the stage reached in the Labour Party since the Blackpool conference and (to a much lesser extent), the fight to remove the Tory government.

Peter Hain, LCC spokesman, summed up their hesitancy by saying they realised that turning towards the unions was a 'minefield' and it was necessary to 'get everything worked out first'.

This no doubt explained the organisers' inability to make even a single concrete proposal for action—postponed until a further conference at some future date.

A clue to the LCC's motives was revealed by Hain's references to the failings of the

SWP's rank and file movements and the CP-dominated LCDTU.

He correctly referred to the latter's demise as being partly attributable to the Stalinists' keenness to strike deals with the right wing. But then he added mournfully, that 'we are all suffering from its collapse'!

Ex-MP Audrey Wise made a typically demagogic contribution—calling for a fight in the labour movement to get rid of the Tories and its replacement with a workers' government.

Welcoming the 'straight talking' that was now taking place within the Labour Party, her policies were confined to an appeal for the alternative economic strategy—but with real participation by the workers in companies like Lucas and BL.



Peter Hain

Bob Cryer, a local 'left' MP who kept his seat, spent 15 minutes blaming the working class for accepting mass unemployment, closures, etc.

Speakers from Gardners factory occupation and a thoughtful and interesting report from steelworkers in the Llanwern Action Committee in South Wales were examples of the kind of struggles and forces which a Labour Party/trade union membership alliance could attract. But that means providing effective answers and policies—which the LCC has yet to do.

Bradford solidarity with Palestinians

The Bradford Labour Movement Campaign for Palestinian Solidarity held its first public meeting the Monday before last.

The meeting, entitled "Why workers should support the Palestinians", attracted around 50 trade unionists, Labour Party members, students and Palestinian exiles.

Opening the meeting on behalf of the Campaign, Barry Turner stressed the dangers represented by crisis-ridden imperialist governments who now find themselves faced by a militant working class and peasantry throughout the world.

US war chiefs had lost the ability to openly intervene in events as they wished—as witnessed by Nicaragua and Iran.

As a result they were using the excuse of Afghanistan to re-establish military outposts and rearm their allies.

The swing from 'detente' towards renewed cold war reflected a recognition that

Stalinism could not be relied upon, despite its obvious willingness to prevent the overthrow of dictatorships friendly to the US.

In these conditions the continued repression of the Palestinians was guaranteed and it was stressed that ever since the formation of the Campaign workers had witnessed the fruits of imperialist tactics in the Turkey coup.

British responsible

Roger Hardy, an NUJ member and journalist specialising on the Middle East, gave a detailed account of the dispossession of the Palestinians in 1948 and showed how the British government had been responsible for aiding the Zionists.

He explained how the British government protected the Zionists as they created a 'state within a state' prior to 1948.

A major factor in aiding the final military defeat of the

Palestinians had been the breaking of the massive resistance strikes in the 1930s by British forces.

The continuing western support for Zionism was explained by the need for imperialism to maintain a reliable police agency in the heart of the Middle East.

The campaign's characterisation of Israel as a racist, colonialist settler state was challenged by a group of Zionist students who attended a part of the meeting.

In referring to the 'rights' of different religious followers to conduct their religion in certain towns the meeting was encouraged by these apologists to accept the idea that Zionist Israel was indeed a form of socialist state!

Brother Hardy correctly pointed to the denial of trade union rights to Palestinian workers, the bulldozing of homes, the torture and arrest of activists and the nonsense of the idea of socialism based upon the dispossession of a whole people



Zionist brutality on West Bank

from their homeland.

To conclude the meeting a motion against repression in the West Bank and another on the coup in Turkey were presented to the meeting to be taken into the labour movement.

The campaign received solidarity greetings from ten organisations including the Labour

Middle East Council, Trade Union Friends of Palestine, Turkey Solidarity Campaign and the PLO.

A petition was also circulated in support of the Irish republican hunger strikers and the campaign steering committee announced its support for their struggle.

John Lister looks at the politics of the new President

IT'S REAGAN — BY A MUSHROOM CLOUD

In his first statements after the election results were declared, President-elect Ronald Reagan has said his initial moves will be to cut taxes and government spending, and impose a freeze on the recruitment of public service workers.

He has campaigned on a pledge to implement three consecutive annual cuts of 10% in Federal income tax, and to give huge tax concessions to industry — while pledging at the same time to further increase military spending over and above Carter's colossal \$175 billion war budget.

Such policies under the conditions of the US economy are problematic: in any case they can only be carried through by draconian cuts in social service spending.

But the attacks on public services will also be accompanied by the wholesale lifting of environmental, health, safety and other regulations on big business—again at the expense of the working class.

Reagan also plans to lower the minimum wage in order to increase the scope for employers to exploit the vast army of unemployed youth—particularly blacks—cast aside by crisis-ridden capitalism. Such a "solution" to unemployment is one which intensifies the misery of the most oppressed sections of US workers.

Thatcher's strategy

It is no coincidence if all this sounds exactly like Thatcher's economic strategy. Reagan and Thatcher share an admiration for the monetarist theories of Milton Friedman, and a similar dedication to the restoration of capitalist profitability through slashing state spending and allowing the weakest sections to go to the wall.

"What's wrong with bankruptcy?" was Reagan's first reaction to the Carter administration's laboriously constructed plan to save the USA's third largest motor firm from collapse earlier this year.

The closure of Chrysler would have brought some 500,000 redundancies—but would of course have given a profits boost to Ford and General Motors.

Small wonder that the Thatcher government has been one of the few enthusiastically to welcome the arrival of Reagan as President-elect.

Stronger hand

The sweeping Republican victory has given Reagan control of the Senate—and thus a far stronger hand for implementing his policies than Jimmy Carter ever had for his more conventional attempts to manage US capitalism.

Thatcher and Reagan's other co-thinkers hope that he will as a result quickly be able to implement his reactionary policies on an international as well as a national level.

In the last five years Reagan's aggressive Cold War politics have led him on no less than ten occasions to propose the use of military force to



secure US imperialist interests.

In 1975 Reagan was among the few "hawks" sufficiently recovered from the trauma of the Vietnam defeat to call for a US military intervention into the Angolan war of liberation.

But the Republican President of the day, Gerald Ford, felt unable to intervene. The USA could do not more than supply money and CIA mercenaries to work alongside South African soldiers and the pro-imperialist FLNA/UNITA guerrillas in their unsuccessful war against the Cuban-backed nationalist MPLA.

More recently, Reagan advocated only last winter that the USA should reply to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan by blockading Cuba!

Alongside such warmongering statements has gone a continued defence of the US intervention in Vietnam, with Reagan declaring during his election campaign that:

"It is time we recognised that ours was, in truth, a noble cause."

To back up such a warmongering world view, Reagan's defence advisors are looking towards a colossal increase in

the military budget—perhaps \$40 billion or more in his first year.

Reagan refers lovingly to the balance of forces that prevailed at the time of the Cuban missiles crisis, when President Kennedy brought the world to the brink of a nuclear war.

"We outnumbered them 8 to 1 in missiles. It isn't very hard to see why, when Kennedy and Krushchev eyeballed each other, Krushchev blinked. He knew he didn't have the muscle to stare us down. And now we haven't got the muscle to stare them down."

Arms race

It is towards a renewal of the arms race to restore such a balance of military forces that Reagan is looking when he declares himself opposed to ratifying the SALT 2 arms limitation agreement negotiated by Carter with the Soviet bureaucracy.

Reagan is in favour of the \$100 million MX missile system initiated by Carter, and also in favour of building the neutron bomb—as well as other undis-

closed plans for increased weaponry and military technology.

In the final few weeks of the election Reagan carefully soft peddled his Cold War image.

But it is plain that he, and the military hardliners who have supported him, would initiate a new period of growing international tensions, dropping even the pretence of concern for "human rights" and throw the weight of US imperialism openly behind reactionary regimes, in Central and Latin America—such as the dictatorships in El Salvador and Bolivia.

There are even more frightening possibilities. Reagan's seven foreign policy advisors are reportedly divided into "hawks" and "superhawks".

For the hawks, the planned increase in the US military budget is a move designed to force the Soviet Union to agree to a more acceptable deal on arms limitation.

But for the superhawks—headed by Reagan's foreign policy coordinator Richard V. Allen—there is no question of a deal with the Kremlin leaders.

They believe that a major

conventional or—more likely—nuclear war is inevitable within the next few years—and are urging Reagan to raise military spending by an immediate 20% to prepare for such a war.

These men are in the majority among Reagan's defence advisors!

Under their influence he has made it clear that he favours:

*Stationing US troops in the Sinai desert to help prop up both the Zionist state of Israel and the puppet Sadat regime in Egypt.

*Pressing the Japanese imperialists to increase military spending.

*Possible moves towards recognising the reactionary nationalist regime in Taiwan—if this could be done without alienating the Chinese Stalinist leadership in Peking.

*A "get tough" policy against revolutionary movements in the Caribbean.

Such aggressive moves will win instant applause from Thatcher's Tory government, which will continue as ever to follow in the wake of US imperialism.

Meanwhile within the USA itself Reagan plans an offensive

to strengthen the grip of the racist, sexist ideology of US imperialism.

His election programme was eagerly endorsed by the neo-fascists of the Ku Klux Klan, who pointed out that:

"It reads as if it were written by a Klansman."

Similar enthusiasm was to be found among religious fundamentalists. They launched a "Christians for Reagan" campaign—based on "the Republican's stance of opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment (which would concede equal rights to women), opposition to abortion, and opposition to gay rights."

Let-down

The reactionary Christian vote has not always gone to the Republicans. In 1976 many of them looked to "born again" Jimmy Carter to intensify the oppression of women and gays.

Colonel Donner, leader of Christian Voice, pointed out that Carter's term of office had disappointed the extreme right wing:

"It was a tremendous let-

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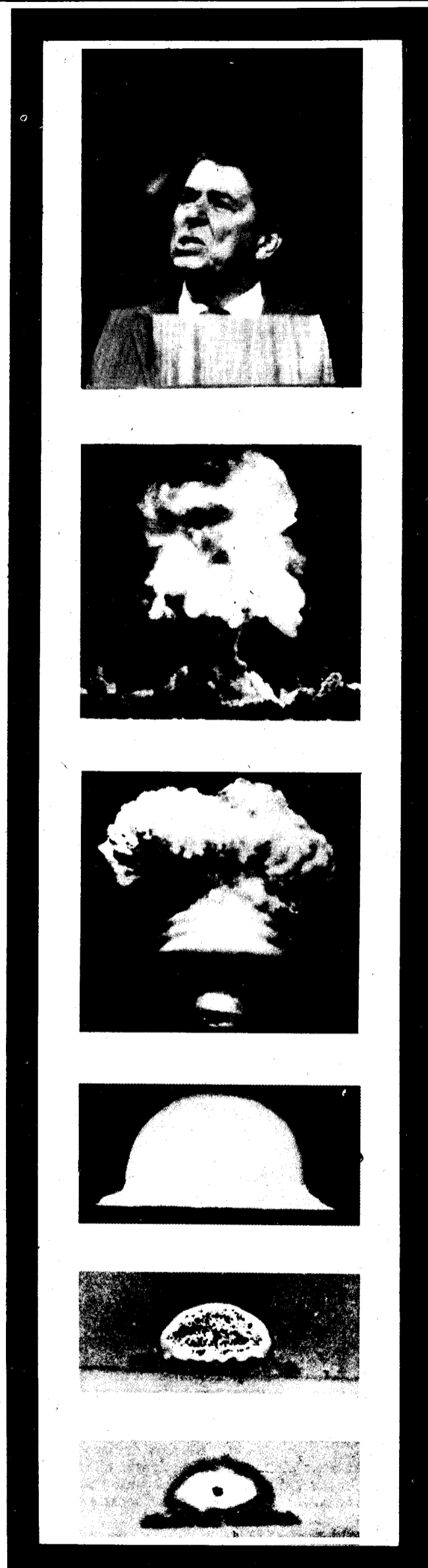


elderly stand there and out and rough them up

own, if not a betrayal, to have Carter stumping for the ERA, or not stopping federally-paid abortions, for advocating homosexual rights."

Darwin challenged

Reagan, on the contrary, mainly intends to hold on to such supporters. His election speech to a rally of 15,000 evangelical Christians in Dallas even went so far as to question the theory of evolution, in a bid to prove his mediaeval credentials. As bigots and reactionaries threw their weight behind Reagan, he drew into his campaign seasoned reactionaries such as Lyn Nofziger, a former member of the extreme right wing John Birch Society, who became campaign press secretary. Yet Nofziger and his colleagues were prudent enough not to allow Reagan to parade his most reactionary statements unrehearsed before the press. Instead the Republicans' vicious strategy was gift-wrapped in a manner again reminiscent of the Saatchi and



Saatchi campaign which brought Thatcher to office in Britain. And Reagan's tendency to blurt out ludicrous and unsupported statements was squashed by virtually screening him from the direct access of reporters for the duration of the campaign. But Reagan's trump card was the disillusion and anger amongst many sections of American society at the appalling record of the Carter regime, which in its own ham-fisted way had spent four years at least initiating—if not completely accomplishing—many of Reagan's economic and military policies. Reagan is therefore now set to take office in a period of continuing profound economic crisis. The whoops of enthusiasm for his election amongst Wall Street speculators and industrialists will be echoed by

the oil monopolies and others who will look for quick cash returns on their investment in his campaign. At 69, Reagan is the oldest man ever to take office as President. The next oldest was William Henry Harrison. He took office aged 68 in 1841, caught pneumonia the same day, and died a month later. Tens of millions of Americans would no doubt now welcome a recurrence of such events. But it seems more than likely that Reagan will be around busily terrorising, starving and repressing men, women and children the world over for the next four years. Only the independent struggles of the US labour movement in defence of jobs, wages, social services and hard-won democratic rights can halt the Reagan offensive.

As US workers abstain from election

MAJOR UNION CALLS FOR LABOUR PARTY

While the British press echoes the American ballyhoo about the "landslide" election of Ronald Reagan as the new American President, the fact remains that his Republican candidacy attracted the support of only 26.5% of the adult population.

While 43 million men and women went out to register their support for Reagan's blend of Thatcherite economic policies and Cold War propaganda, they were heavily outnumbered by some 77 million who had been so alienated by the choice between Jimmy Tweedledum Carter and Ronald Tweedledee Reagan that they did not vote at all.

Participation in this election—with a miserable 52% turnout—was lower than in the 1976 election and lower than the previous post-war rock bottom, 53% in 1952.

Thus in the world's most celebrated "democracy", the biggest single political tendency is one of opposition to both of the multi-million dollar capitalist electoral machines and the anti-working class policies on which both mass parties and the so-called "independent" John Anderson fought the election.

Not registered

Included in this 77 million tendency will be tens of millions of workers who have become so hostile to the politics of the bourgeois parties that they do not even bother to register to vote.

But this does not mean that their trade union leaders have adopted a similarly neutral stance—or drawn the obvious political conclusion: that it is necessary to break from both Democrats and Republicans and to construct a Labour Party in the USA to carry the fight for the independent interests of the working class and oppressed minorities.

Instead the bulk of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy threw their weight behind either Carter or Reagan.

The bureaucratic leaders of the 2-million strong Teamsters (transport) union, together with the National Maritime Union, threw in their lot with Reagan—while most others, having failed to secure the nomination of Teddy Kennedy as candidate, rallied around Carter as a supposed "lesser evil" to Reagan.

Withhold support

But significantly, one of the USA's biggest unions, the one-million-strong International Association of Machinists, voted overwhelmingly at the September convention to withhold support from any presidential candidate.

Instead the IAM leadership was mandated to: "Join with other progressive and liberal groups in our society to determine the extent to

which grass roots support might be developed for an independent pro-labor party."

Yet the IAM in a schizophrenic move also voted to maintain its support for Democratic candidates for Congress and the Democratic Party platform.

This contradictory stance reflects the position of IAM President William Winpisinger, who was one of the foremost union supporters of Kennedy, and one of the few who then refused to swing obediently behind Carter after the Democratic Convention.

Winpisinger declared himself in favour of a "pro-labor" party, though opposed to one tied simply to the trade union movement.

In the debate on the issue, one of the delegates, Bro. Smith from IAM Lodge 1005, vigorously underlined the necessity for an independent party of the working class.

"In the past our approach to politics has been to support the Democratic Party. What good has this done us? Are they really our friends?"

Let us not forget that every time a piece of anti-labour legislation was passed, the Democrats were in control. They were in control when our constitutional right to protest and peaceably picket were taken away from us by the Taft Hartley Law. How can they limit our pickets to three or four at a plant gate. When a scab crosses our picket lines we want them to know we don't like it; we want them to know we are not going to stand for it. It doesn't take too much courage to cross a picket line where there is only one picket there, but a picket line of hundreds or even thousands is a different story and I think you will all agree that scabs are not noted for their courage or idealism.

Let us not forget that the Democratic-controlled Congress now is in power and they control the interest rates as they escalate. We need to build the picket lines like they did in the thirties; we must demand our constitutional rights; we must return to the solidarity of the thirties; we must have the right to strike in our contracts; we must have the picket lines where we control who crosses these lines, not management. We have to stop the scabs. Show the unions our militancy and determination and people will flock to the IAM as they did to the CIO in the thirties. Show this militancy and the people will flock to the IAM as the Polish workers rallied to the leadership of the shipyard workers.

We are not going to dump the Taft Hartley Law and other laws by supporting the Democrats. The Democrats and Republicans both are parties of big business. We have to form our own party, a party of working people, like those here in this room today. We have to get all of organised labour together to hammer out our own political programme. We have to create a platform that all of the working people can support. We have to have politicians that will stick to what they say and

stick to a platform and if they don't we will throw them out just as the British workers threw out the party of Prime Minister Heath in England.

Learn from our Polish brothers and sisters; occupy the plants when you see they are going to close down. What would happen to the labour laws in this country if all of the Machinists on this continent were to lay down their tools at the same time? All we have to do is put our hands in our pockets and stand firm like the Polish workers did. Our Polish counterparts now have more legal rights than we do and they live in a communist country. Our coal miners, just a couple of years ago, stood firm. They fought for the right to strike during a contract, fought for a pension for retired workers and fought against every injunction.

When Carter invoked Taft Hartley, they ignored it. While they were striking the railroads, the barges carried in scab coal. The miners built the CIO. Eighty percent of the finances for the CIO came from the miners.

Let us stand together as the Polish workers did and we will gain victory. We must have a labour party and must start building it today."

Class consciousness

Another delegate again showed the emergence of a new level of class consciousness among IAM members, spurred on by the evident bankruptcy of both Presidential candidates:

"Delegate Kelly (Lodge 79): The working men and women of this country have been consistently given less and less choice of political candidates, as exemplified this year by big business controlling Reagan and the so-called lesser evil, Carter, and the United States is the only major country in the world where the working men and women do not have their own political parties that function on a day to day basis, leading and fighting for their interests, in the community and the political arena.

The IAM should take the initiative to build an independent labour party. We should empower President Winpisinger and Secretary Glover to call a conference for the purpose of building a working people's party and that this Convention should call upon all of organised labour in the United States to join in building an independent American labour party. If we do not start now, we will not have a labour party."

Such a development in one of the USA's largest unions must be driven forward in the next period—exploiting to the full the sharpened situation created by the election of Reagan and the crisis within the Democratic Party.

The fight must be to break the US labour movement from the grip of the bourgeois parties and carry through the fight for an independent party of the working class.

A new series

Why build a

revolutionary

party?

By John Lister

2. Reformism



From our first thinking moments in childhood, our immediate response to problems we confront is to seek to overcome them by reforming the conditions in which we live.

Whether it be the crying baby seeking to pressurise adults into providing more food, warmth or affection; or shop-floor workers organising in trade unions to pressurise employers into paying more wages or improving working conditions, we tend spontaneously to think simply in terms of seeking change *within* the existing order of things.

Developed as a political ideology, this approach is that of *reformism*—seeking to win improvements in working class living standards through the existing forms of organisation and the Parliamentary system *within* the framework of capitalism.

Reformism remains the dominant political tendency within the British workers' movement.

This is not because reformists are able to offer workers a way to defend their independent class interests.

It is because reformist politics are a reflection of the ideology of the ruling class in capitalist society—and are therefore reinforced at every turn by the education system, the mass media, and every institution in the capitalist state.

In the eyes of the reformist leaders of the Labour Party and the trade unions, the development towards "socialism" in the indefinite future can arise only from a cumulative process of reforms legislated through Parliament.

In the meantime—and thus in practice at every critical moment—the reformist sees it as essential to *preserve* the capitalist system, and to make it profitable and efficient in its exploitation of the working

class, in the hopes that further reforms can be conceded in the future.

Of course many workers unwittingly embrace such ideas—having encountered no serious alternative position.

But the politics of reformism also provide an ideal cover for Labour leaders and trade union officials who seek only to preserve their own cosy, privileged positions.

Uneasy balance

The union bureaucracy emerged from the strengthening of the trade union movement in the last century. As a layer of officials and administrators they have balanced—at first uneasily—between the growing power of the members they supposedly represent and the employers.

Increasingly cut off and unaccountable to the union membership, this bureaucracy has in the course of decades increasingly become hardened

into an elite, feeding off the strength of the labour movement while committed to *containing* that strength in order to preserve a truce between labour and capital.

They recognise that if the balance of forces were to be disrupted by the overthrow of the capitalist class, then their fat salaries, expense accounts and cushy jobs would come to an end.

Feeble protest

Their response to even frontal attacks on the unions and hard-won rights has therefore invariably been confined to the most feeble forms of protest and pressure politics.

Even the employers' direct legal onslaught on the power of the unions at the turn of the century was fought not by mobilising mass strike action in the working class but by the formation of a parliamentary party—the Labour Party—to pass laws to defend the unions.

The Labour politicians and Labour governments that have emerged since that point have carried forward the restricted reformist politics of the union bureaucracy—and thus struggled simply to "manage" capitalism and achieve piecemeal reforms through Parliament.

Yet the politics of reformism run time and again up against material barriers. The fact is that, for all the charade of Parliamentary democracy, real power in capitalist society resides not in the talk-shop of Westminster, but in the undemocratic board-rooms of

the banks and industrial monopolies, in the military and police headquarters, in the High Court and the top echelons of the Civil Service.

While verbal battles in Parliament over this or that reform are tolerated by the ruling class, the capitalists will allow such play-acting only so long as their private property, profits and system of exploitation remain intact—as vicious military crack-downs in Chile, Turkey and Bolivia have helped to confirm.

Reformism offers workers no way whatsoever of confronting this obstacle and destroying the power of the state, resting as it does upon bodies of armed men used by the capitalist class to preserve its rule.

Socialism—which requires the nationalisation of banks and basic industry without compensation under workers' management cannot be achieved "peacefully" through legislation, but only by mobilising the full strength of the working class in mass action to break up the capitalist state machinery and instal a new, workers' state machine in its place.

Unattainable

But if socialism is unattainable by the politics of reformism, so, in this period of economic crisis, are reforms!

The Thatcher government, hell-bent on restoring the profitability of capitalist industry, is driven by the economic crisis to destroy jobs, social services, living standards and trade union rights.

And the most conscious

Labour leaders are making it clear that they are not prepared to promise to restore the cuts even if re-elected.

The profitability of British capitalism can only be restored by intensifying the exploitation of the working class.

Far from leaving leeway for new reforms, this means stripping away the limited reforms won in past, more profitable, years.

Overthrow

For workers to defend these gains, or seek to improve their living standards, they must begin to look not to reforms within the capitalist system but towards the steps necessary to *overthrow* the system and establish a socialist planned economy.

Such a revolutionary perspective is gaining in popularity amongst sections of workers driven to desperation by the all-sided Tory offensive. But it will not win majority support spontaneously.

Revolutionary politics must be fought for and argued out *in opposition* to Labour and trade union leaders 'left' and right alike and this requires an organised struggle.

Only a revolutionary party committed to such a perspective can carry through this fight and thus lay the basis for the necessary struggle to defend the interests of the working class.

We urge readers to join with the Workers Socialist League in this fight.

Defend Bolivian masses!

Statement of the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee, Monday October 27, 1980

The seizure of power by a new military dictatorship in Bolivia is an attempt to crush the workers movement in the same way as Pinochet's coup did in 1973 in Chile.

Every gain, every democratic right, won by the long struggle of the Bolivian working class and oppressed masses—including the very existence of their own organisations—is now suppressed.

Already workers and their leaders have been massacred and imprisoned in the barbaric onslaught of the military.

The world economic crisis means that more than ever the imperialists and their Bolivian allies need to increase the rate of exploitation of the working class.

The bourgeoisie has no leeway to grant reforms to the oppressed in these conditions. The imperialists and their allies know that the initiation of any genuine democratic freedoms will allow the working class with its long revolutionary traditions to build its own organs of power as it began to do in 1952 and again in 1971, and to move rapidly towards the creation of an authentic workers' and peasants' government.

It is always the quest for profit and the need therefore to oppress the masses which is paramount in the considerations of the imperialists and their local allies, and not their words about "human rights".

It is now therefore the urgent task of the working class movement throughout the world to help Bolivian workers

put a rapid end to this new dictatorship and establish their own power.

In Bolivia, we support all struggles for the widest possible democratic rights—for freedom of organisation especially for the trade unions, for freedom of the press and assembly, for the release of all political prisoners.

We see the fulfilment of these demands as forming part of the task of the overthrow of the military dictatorship by the working masses of Bolivia, with the help of their allies internationally.

As part of the struggle for the complete destruction of the dictatorship, we support the call for a constituent assembly based on universal franchise.

Revolutionary

This is a revolutionary democratic demand. It must not be restricted to the setting up of a bourgeois parliament such as has been overthrown so often in Bolivia. It must be combined with the struggle to form independent organs of workers' power, soviets, in which all the organisations of Bolivia's oppressed masses will be represented: these organs will group together the representatives of the working class, the peasantry and the rank and file soldiers and organise the armed defence of the workers' struggles.

They can form the basis for a continuous advance from the overthrow of the military dictatorship to the taking of power by the working class and the building of a workers' state in Bolivia based on soviet democracy.

Through these demands revolutionaries in Bolivia and throughout the world will fight for a strategy of permanent revolution.

In the rest of the world, especially in the advanced imperialist countries upon which the dictatorship depends, we have a duty as revolutionary socialists to fight for the maximum possible political and material solidarity with the struggle of Bolivia's oppressed masses against the dictatorship.

First, we support the demand made by the resistance movement in Bolivia that there should be no recognition of the Bolivian military regime by the imperialist governments; and that all forms of economic and other assistance should be ended.

We call upon the leaders of the main workers' parties (Socialist and Communist parties) to do everything in their power to stop such recognition and aid taking place.

Second, we support and aim to give concrete effect to the demand made by Bolivian workers for a blacking of trade with Bolivia.

We call on leaders of the trade union movement in the imperialist countries to implement immediate blacking of all arms and other supplies to the junta; and to impose blacking of imports—especially tin—from Bolivia.

Third, we call upon the leaders of the labour movement to initiate a massive campaign of propaganda and active, concrete solidarity in the imperialist countries in order to increase the spread of information about the new, reactionary, anti-work-

ing class regime and to help to speed its end.

Fourth, we demand that no restrictions be placed upon the immigration of political refugees from Bolivia and that they should be entitled to Social Security and other related benefits.

The bureaucratic leaders of the degenerated and deformed workers' states have long shown themselves unwilling to fight against dictatorship in Latin America.

The Chinese bureaucracy

aids Pinochet in Chile and the Soviet bureaucracy has a close alliance with "progressive" Videla in Argentina, the friend of the new Bolivian junta.

We call upon the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries to join us in denouncing all assistance by the workers' states to such dictatorships, and to demand that they institute the blacking of trade with the Bolivian junta and other

measures of support to the struggle of the working class and oppressed masses.

*Long live the Bolivian workers' and peasants' struggle against the dictatorship!

*For the establishment of democratic rights! For a Constituent Assembly!

*For a workers' and peasants' government in Bolivia!

*For the united socialist states of South America!



Bolivian prisoners—at least 2,000 political prisoners thought to be held in jail

School meals campaign gathers strength

By Eric Jones

School meals staff in Lancashire are fighting back against the Tory government attacks on their jobs and living standards.

Some school meals staff have supported the Lancashire School Meals Campaign almost from its inception, but now they are getting full support from their union.

North-East Lancs area organiser for NUPE, Neville Davis, is asking all branches of school meals staff in the area to send delegates and give full support to the school meals campaign.

Whilst sectional interest is obviously one motive for this move by the official trade union movement, it is by no means the sole one.

Following the successful lobby of County Hall, Preston, last month, the campaign organised a further meeting earlier this week. The active representation on the campaign committee reflects its growth in the two months since its formation.

Trades Council delegates, full and part-time union officials, school meals staff, teachers, parents, local councillors and a nutritional expert are all represented on the committee.

The latest meeting reflected the non-sectional attitude of all members of the campaign. Although a fight against the erosion of the school meals service remains the central issue, solidarity was expressed for all workers involved in struggles against attacks on jobs and living standards through expenditure cuts in the public sector.

School meals staff were particularly concerned about the adverse effects which the cuts in hours and staffing levels, as well as changes in menus, are having on the welfare of children.

Less staff and hours means less time to spend on cleaning and, therefore, lower standards of hygiene. Menu changes have resulted in a lowering of nutritional value of meals.

The meeting recognised that the erosion in the service represented a direct attack on low-income families, with the partial withdrawal of free school meals and price increases.

Discrimination

Discrimination against children on free school meals, particularly in senior and upper schools, was reflected in the use of the 'white disc' system, segregation and restricted items on the menu.

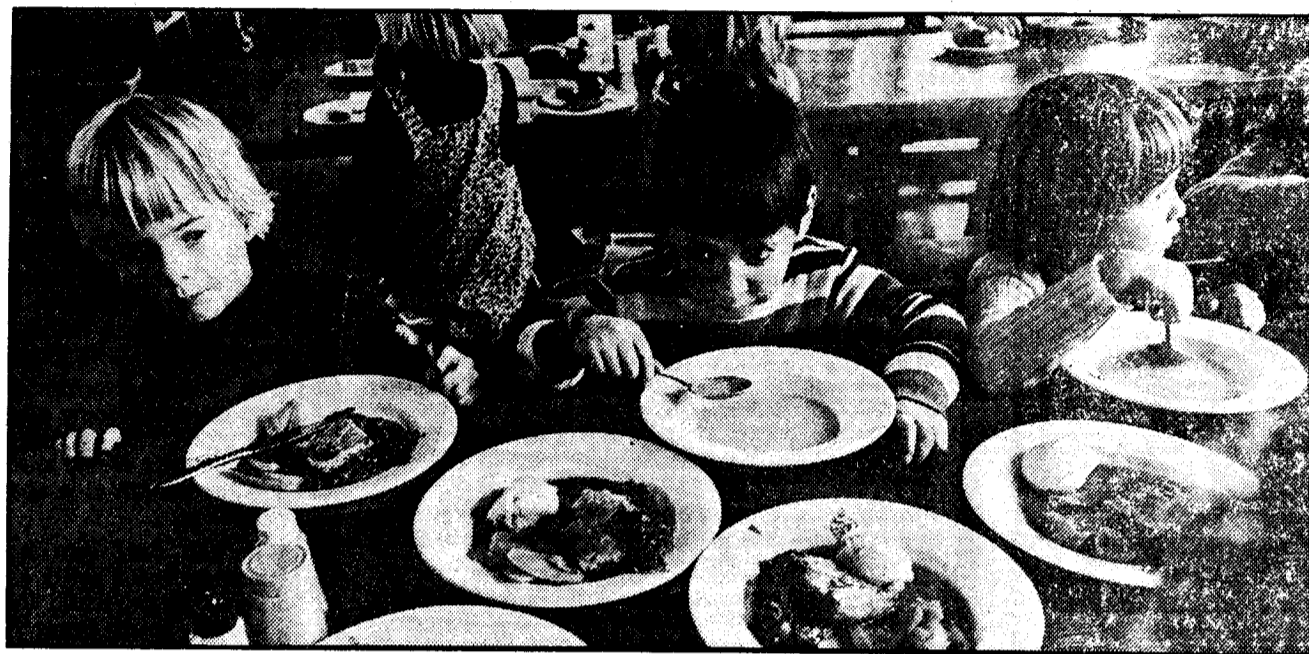
This particularly obscene effect of council and government policy not only mirrors capitalist values but strikes at the basic rights and equality of youth and school children.

The attacks on the school meals service are an attack on the rights of women and a conscious policy of the transference of funds from the public to private sector of the economy.

By making the school meal less attractive, more expensive, less accessible to low-income groups and by discouraging a transition to 'packed' lunches (through reduced supervision and the refusal to allow a glass of water with a packed meal), the Tory government is able to deal a double blow on the working class.

Hamburger vans

Children are either asking to go home for lunch, which often means that women who work outside the home have to give up their job or make arrangements for someone else to provide a meal for their



children. Or, children are encouraged to use the growing number of 'chip' and 'hamburger' vans which park outside school gates at lunch time.

With county and local authorities about to embark on the budget compilation for the next financial year, further attacks on the school meals service can be expected. There is a real danger that next year may see a widespread axing of the school meals system throughout Britain, something that has already occurred in some areas.

The campaign meeting discussed future action of the group. An open letter to the Lancashire County Council is to appear in *Preston Worker*, the organ of the Preston Trades

Council, demanding amongst other things, the release of a suppressed nutritional report on the Lancashire school meal.

Cement links

Letters are being sent to all parent-teacher groups in the area in order to build further the existing support for the group and to cement links between struggles of school meals workers, teachers and parents.

Experience in struggle has shown the outcome of fighting attacks in isolation. The campaign has successfully defended the school meals service from one round of 'cuts', only to see the burden transferred to other areas of county expenditure by

the council.

The campaign offers support to all groups fighting expenditure cuts and encourages the setting-up of campaigns throughout Lancashire. The Lancashire campaign now has a link with a group fighting cut-backs in the school meals service in Cheshire, The Cheshire Trade Union Action Committee.

The possibility of industrial action by NUPE was discussed at the campaign's last meeting. This again underlined the importance of building councils of action to broaden the struggles against cuts, with delegations from the whole labour movement providing a base for supporting strike action in both the public and private sector.

In this way the basis can be

laid for the necessary mass action to defeat the Thatcher government and defeat attacks on the working-class.

Solidarity with Turkish workers

Speakers from the Turkish Solidarity Campaign and the Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey recently addressed a meeting called by Coventry South-West CLP on the theme of 'What's happening in Turkey?'

The meeting, which was held on October 29, was sponsored by the Coventry South-East CLP and the local Trades Council.

It heard reports and analysis of the latest situation in Turkey. In the discussion which followed, the main points raised were the nature of the regime after the September 12 coup and the need for solidarity which was active and which sought to involve rank and file Labour Party and trade union members.

Despite the limited attendance of around 20 the meeting was considered a success by those involved as a starting point in the drive for active solidarity with the Turkish masses and Kurdish people.

In particular the obvious readiness of both solidarity movements to work together was a good omen for the future.

Bring Anwar Ditta's children home!

Demonstration
Saturday 15 November 1980
Assemble Church Stile, off
Drake Street, 12 noon

For 4½ years Anwar Ditta, a Birmingham born Asian woman has been struggling against the racist immigration laws to be reunited with her three children—Saima 7, Imran 8, and Kamran 10.

For 4½ years Anwar and her husband have been denied the basic human right to have a normal family life.

Anwar first applied for her three children in October 1976 under the Labour government and was refused. Anwar's appeal was heard in July 1980 under the Tory government and it was rejected!

The judgement was not based on any discrepancies in Anwar's evidence, but simply on a racist character assassination by the Home Office.

On 16 September the leave to appeal against this decision was refused! On 30 September the Home Office declared the case of Anwar Ditta completely closed.

Anwar is a home worker in the textile industry on paltry piecemeal rates.

Her husband Shuja is on short time.

They send a considerable proportion of their income back to Pakistan for the maintenance of their three children.



Anwar Ditta and 4½ year old Samera lead the demonstration of 300 at Rochdale last September

Despite the fact that these children have been accepted as dependents by the Inland Revenue since 1975, the state is now trying to cut their tax allowance completely in light of

the Home Office's decision.

Anwar Ditta is an outspoken and courageous woman who will fight for her rights.

For every case of immigration law harrassment publicised,

there are dozens of cases that are not.

There are no less than five such in the Longsight area of Manchester alone.

Socialist Press calls for

support for the demonstration being organised on 15 November in Rochdale in support of Anwar Ditta.

For more details of the Turkey Solidarity Campaign please write to BM Box 5965, London WC1N 3XX.



Liverpool docks stewards pave way to dole

The developments in Liverpool docks since the threatened strike were revealed recently in an article in the *Liverpool Echo*.

Chairman of the docks shop stewards committee Jim Nolan said they have recently called a series of meetings to discuss the recent company profitability study conducted by the National Ports Council.

If implemented, this report will mean the loss of 1,500 jobs, more speed up and closure of berths.

In response to this attack the leaders of the shop stewards have put forward the following pathetic reply: they are calling for the government to intervene in affairs between the company and unions (i.e. for tripartite talks); for the setting up of some kind of National Ports Council (the exact structure of which is unclear) to run the docks; and for a delay in any decision about land acquisition and sale by Merseyside Urban Development Corporation until the 'financial and social repercussions have been examined in depth'.

The stewards declare their opposition to compulsory redundancies; say that early retirement should be on a voluntary basis; and call for a shorter working week and longer holidays.

The latter demand is the only one worth retaining.

The rest is the usual reformist clap-trap which is tantamount to a lash up with the employers to implement voluntary redundancies and to create unemployment by the back door.

It offers a green light for any short sighted and confused worker on the docks to take the money and run.

Abdication

As such it is an abdication by the docks' leaders of their responsibility to defend all jobs.

There must be no concessions on jobs either compulsory or voluntary.

Early retirement is just another form of voluntary redundancy that does away with jobs forever in an area of colossal unemployment and poverty.

The complete acceptance of this scandalous loss of jobs by the docks' leadership highlights sharply the need for a new leadership committed to a policy of work sharing on full pay.

The fight for this must be backed up by the demand for access by an elected workers' committee and its advisors to the whole of the accounts of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, the shipping firms and all the other capitalist firms dealing with the docks, so that workers can formulate their own study of the crisis-ridden docks industry, prior to its complete expropriation and nationalisation under workers' management.

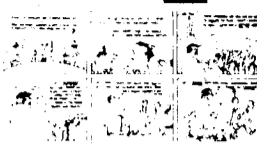
Occupation and national strike action in the docks is the key to the realisation of this demand, linked to supporting action by overseas dockers and seamen.

But with the current, bankrupt leadership of the Mersey docks stewards committee asking for tripartite talks, it is clear that they themselves must be the first to be got rid of if workers jobs are not to be 'volunteered' onto the scrap heap.

MERSEYSIDE FACTORY CLOSURES

Fisher Berwick Leyland Dunlop Meccano

Why campaigns were lost & how they can be won



A WSL Pamphlet

JUST OUT
A new pamphlet produced by the North West Area of the Workers Socialist

League exposing the betrayals of the trade union leadership in the fight against factory closures and the policies needed to defend jobs.

Price 27p including postage from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX

Fight textile closures

At a recent meeting of the North West Division of the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers the main discussion was led by full time official Ralph Don.

He first apologised for bringing politics into his discussion - then went on to talk about the problem of closures.

He expressed his sympathy for those hard-up employers who couldn't afford to eat at the luxury hotel where the employers and union EC were meeting to discuss the wage increase for 1981 - and had to eat with the union officials at a local pub!

In the heated discussion that followed, a Winsford delegate raised the question of a lack of union policy to fight the massive closures in the clothing industry and to organise against the Tory government.

The crisis that is hitting the clothing workers is a result of the crisis of capitalism, she said, and not the problem of imports from low cost countries.

Diversion

The union leaders are simply using the question of imports to divert from the fight against the Tory government.

A call for the nationalisation of the clothing industry was received favourably by the delegates, but diverted by the officials.

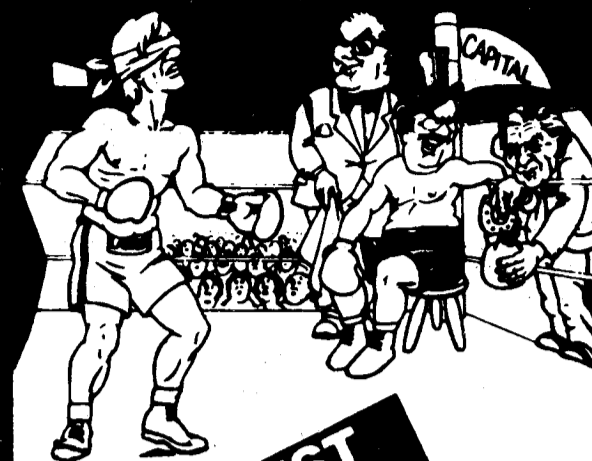
Three delegates, however, declared their willingness to fight for this policy before the conference next April, to make it a real issue in the union.

The pessimism admitted by one union official in no way reflects the workers in the clothing industry, who are more than willing to take on the Tory government and discuss the question of occupations and strikes to bring down Thatcher.

The mobilisation of workers for 29 November must not be left there.

Clothing workers must carry on the fight with other workers to build councils of action to fight closures, cuts, and unemployment.

DON'T GO INTO THE FIGHT BLINDFOLD!



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Hospital work-in vote

Oxfordshire AHA, with the support of local consultants and the Community Health Council have renewed their attempts to close the vitally necessary long-stay Longworth Hospital for 50 highly dependant elderly women.

There is a critical shortage of well over 300 beds for the elderly in Oxfordshire, admitted by the AHA.

They have just closed the geriatric hospital in Cowley Road, which they argue was not a cut but a straight transfer of beds.

In fact, 13 beds have been lost as well as the specialist geriatric care received there.

The closure of Cowley Road Hospital met with great public hostility, but crucial though this community support for the hospital was, it was only the hospital staff who were in a position to defend it.

It soon became clear, however, that the official line of NUPE - the major union at the hospital - was not to fight to save the hospital, but instead to organise for 'the best transfer terms for staff' when closure took place.

Fortunately the story at Longworth is very different.

It was in May 1978 that the staff were all gathered together for a mass meeting to be told by an AHA officer that their hospital

would close. "Use your union to get jobs at the new Witney hospital" he said.

Fortunately the union steward had other ideas about what a union was for.

She called a meeting for all union members in the hospital and asked them to oppose the closure when the time came by continuing to work with the patients and keeping all the hospital's facilities open.

To succeed, she said, they would have to seek the support of all the NHS trade unions locally, especially from their own union branch, COHSE.

The site meeting voted unanimously to continue working with their patients in the wards, to go into occupation to prevent bed removal and to ask for supporting strike action when the AHA moves in to physically close it.

It is clear that the AHA and the consultants see geriatric facilities in general and Longworth in particular as a soft option for closure.

Their cynical and systematic destruction of facilities has been exposed.

They arrogantly dismiss the determination of Longworth workers to defend the hospital.

Woman Worker supporters are fighting to ensure that the COHSE workers' action from supporting strike action from other health service unions will prove them wrong and keep this much needed hospital open.



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

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

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

In a period where the contradictions of the anarchic capitalist system force the wholesale closure and destruction of the productive forces of society, only a socialist planned

economy on a world scale offers a way forward.

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

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

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

degenerated workers' states.

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

Please send me more details of the Workers Socialist League.

Name

Address

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

BL CONVENORS

FROM BACK PAGE

conference of all BL convenors is even worse.

Only 35 of the 200 BL convenors come from the TGWU. Yet the TGWU represents 80% of the BL workforce!

The rest are made up of craft union convenors often representing ridiculously tiny numbers of workers in particular plants, whose conditions are entirely different to those of production workers.

It was to this completely farcical assembly that the JNC then turned to rubber stamp its betrayal of the strike.

The vote for the sell-out was overwhelming. The wishes of 43,000 workers—including virtually the whole of the

manual workforce at the giant Longbridge complex and the Cowley Assembly and Body plants—were contemptuously brushed aside.

In the aftermath of this betrayal, a meeting of the Joint Shop Stewards at the Cowley Assembly Plant voted with only one against to endorse the following demand for the implementation of democratic procedures in future pay negotiations:

"This meeting has no confidence in the JNC or the convenors conference. They have sold out our claim. They had no authority whatever to override the 42,000 mass vote of the members. If they wanted

to capitulate to Edwardes they had an obligation to recall the mass meetings and seek the support of the members for their position.

We call for an end to the existing unrepresentative negotiating structure within BL. We call for a new structure based on a representative delegate conference reflecting the size of the individual plants. This conference should elect the JNC and the JNC should be responsible to it.

This would bring a degree of democracy into our negotiating procedures."

A full analysis of the situation in BL following the sell-out will appear in next week's Socialist Press.

ICL's 2-day sit-in: make it indefinite!

1,500 workers at the ICL computer factory at Winsford in Cheshire did not wait long before giving their response to the company's plan to close it down.

The closure was announced last Friday. The following Monday, after a discussion on the plant's Joint Union Committee, shop stewards voted to occupy the plant for two days to show their determination to defend jobs.

They marched to the management offices and asked them to leave the plant—which they did.

Stewards then broadcast over the Tannoy system—to a no-doubt surprised workforce—that the factory was occupied.

The decision for a two-day occupation had not arisen without debate: some stewards had strongly argued the case for an immediate all-out occupation to defend jobs.

Others had favoured more traditional forms of protest—the kind of gestures that have seen factories closed down by the dozen throughout the North West and industrial Britain.

The advocates of an indefinite occupation had also

pressed for this proposal to be put by the Joint Negotiating Committee to a mass meeting of the plant workforce the next day, in order fully to involve the membership in the fight.

In the event an amended resolution, calling for a limited occupation, to be announced from above by the JUC, was carried by a 4-1 majority.

But the action, though limited, marks a significant break from the defeatist politics of union leaders when faced with proposed closures.

If they now go beyond the 2-day occupation to an indefinite sit-in at the plant, and fight from that basis to build supporting action locally and throughout the ICL combine, the Winsford workers can take the only steps open to them to defend their jobs.

Occupation as a key to the defence of jobs is effective only insofar as it goes beyond the stage of being simply a protest action, and its leadership spells out clearly to all concerned that workers are intent upon seizing and holding the property of the capitalist class, and mobilising full scale support for their action.

ICL is not a loss-making company. In the first half of

1980 its pre-tax profits rose 10% to £20.5 million. In the last full year profits rose 22% to a record £45.7 million.

In addition it has just received confirmation of an order for the computerisation of the Inland Revenue PAYE system.

Redundancies

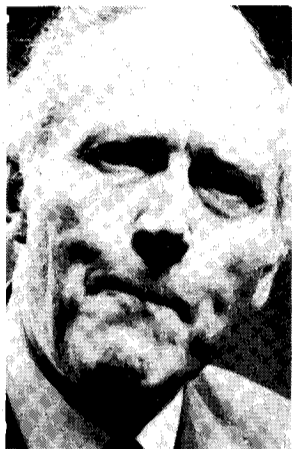
The sackings are simply a new move to further boost profits by increasing the exploitation of the labour force.

They follow on a programme of redundancies that have already axed 1,600 jobs in the last 12 months.

In Winsford this means that the 500 workers who were willing to "volunteer" for redundancy have already gone.

With factories throughout the area closed or closing, the rest have nothing to lose and everything to gain by mounting a fight to save their jobs.

In their fight for supporting action they should start by calling on the workforce of the threatened Metal Box factory across the road to join them in a coordinated fight, demanding full-scale official backing from the unions concerned.



Basnett

Hunterston JSSC
Conference on basic trade union rights
Partick Burgh Hall
GLASGOW
Monday November 17
10 a.m.

March against unemployment Nov 29

The national demonstration against unemployment called in Liverpool for 29 November forms the next major focus of working class hostility to the Thatcher government.

With special trains and coaches laid on from all areas it is certain that many of the most militant sections of the workers' movement will participate in a demonstration called in the heart of one of the areas most devastated by Tory policies.

But nor will there be any lack of hypocritical Labour and trade union leaders willing to turn out on a Saturday protest against unemployment without being prepared to lift a finger in practice to fight cuts and closures or mount any struggle to bring down the Tory government.

Breast-beating speeches can be expected from a whole range of bureaucrats: yet the stark fact is that there has not been a single officially-led fight to stop even one factory closure or public service cut since the

Tories took office.

The few struggles that have taken place—the St. Benedicts Hospital work-in; the Meccano occupation; the St. Columba's Hospital work-in; the Gardners occupation in Manchester; the fight to defend Nottingham teacher Eileen Crosbie—have resulted not from initiatives from union officials, but from militant resistance among the rank and file.

And they have all been deliberately isolated by national union leaders in the hope that they will be quietly defeated and thus help to deter other workers from taking similar action.

The mood in the ranks of the workers movement however is very different from the wretched capitulations of the leadership.

This was borne out at the 700-strong delegate conference 'Local Government in Crisis' convened by Lambeth Labour Group on November 1.

Attempts by top NUPE bureaucrat Ron Keating to blame cuts on union members were vocally attacked by rank

and file NUPE delegates and other floor speakers. Miserable NUPE amendments designed to eliminate any call to action from the draft resolution were overwhelmingly thrown out.

Trade unionists and Labour activists instead voted in favour of a series of amendments supported jointly by Socialist Press, the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement and Socialist Organiser—which spelled out a commitment to fight for mass strike action against the cuts in order to defeat the Tory offensive.

This fight must be pressed home in the campaign for the November 29 demonstration.

The demand must be placed firmly on those that claim to lead the workers' movement that they stop their excuses for inaction and start the long overdue fight to mobilise mass strike action to throw out the Thatcher government.

A new leadership must be built in the labour movement to challenge, oust and replace those that stand opposed to such a fight.

Out now!

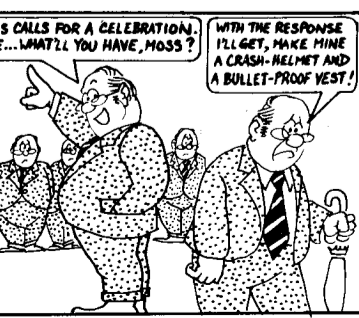
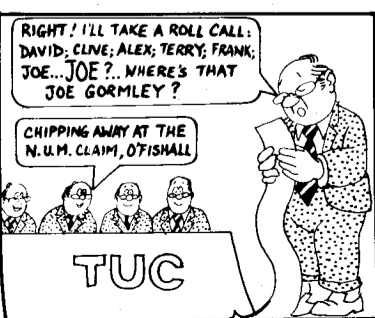
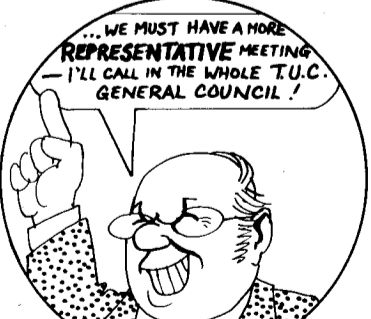
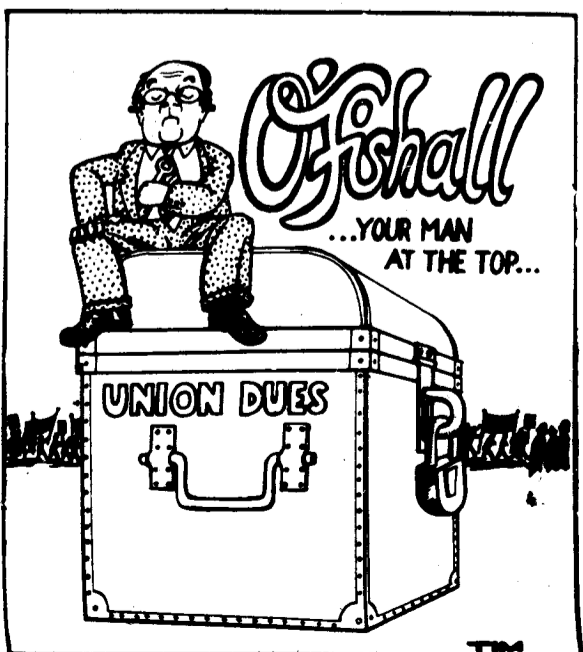


Bringing together recent material published in Socialist Press, this new pamphlet details the crisis in BL, the collaboration of the union leadership with Edwardes on the future of BL

Price 42p including p&p from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX.

Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement CONFERENCE

Saturday November 15 at Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham
10.30 am. to 5.00 pm. Credentials £1 (50p unwaged)
from G. Webster, 169 Barclay Road, Smethwick, West Midlands



SOCIALIST PRESS

IT'S FOOT! FIGHT ON!

BL: CONVENORS THE WEAK LINK

For the second year running BL workers have voted 2-1 for strike action to pursue their wage claim.

And for the second year running they have been miserably betrayed by their leaders.

Last year in a secret ballot the workforce threw out a 5% offer. Union officials and convenors stepped in to create maximum confusion. And eventually Edwardes succeeded in imposing the deal on angry shop floor workers.

Came as shock

This year, mass meetings throughout the BL factories produced a convincing 43,000-21,000 vote for strike action to press the union's £17 claim and reject Edwardes' 6.8% ultimatum.

The vote came as a shock to union leaders, employers and

Tory press—all of whom had formed the view that BL workers, after years of betrayals, would never fight again.

Under pressure from their members—bitter at three years of savage wage cuts—convenors on Monday November 3 voted—with heavy abstentions—for all out strike action the following Tuesday.

But this decision proved to be the starting signal *not* for preparations to win the strike but for frantic manoeuvres by top officials to force home a sell-out.

Union General Secretaries—many of them (like David Bassett and Clive Jenkins) with little or nothing to do with the claim—were immediately closeted with Edwardes, who wheeled out his usual threat to shut down the company.

The General Secretaries immediately collapsed before Edwardes' threats.

They grasped at once onto the ludicrous proposal by the company to pay £1.25 bonus per week for 12 weeks—a mere £15 per worker over 3 months!—as a supposed "concession" that would excuse calling off the strike.

Steamrollered

Next to fall before Edwardes was the Joint Negotiating Committee. Having initially been divided on whether or not to even fight the 6.8% offer, the Committee was soon steamrollered into voting overwhelmingly to call off the strike few of them had wanted.

But while the JNC is itself notoriously unrepresentative—the numbers being packed by the attendance of full time union officials and convenors representing only tiny handfuls of BL's 70,000 workforce—a

Cont'd page 11



Workers at BL Cowley Body Plant

Michael Foot has been selected by the Parliamentary Labour Party as the 'man most likely'.

They see him as best equipped to stem a forward movement of workers that threatens to oust the Thatcher government and return a Labour government under stormy conditions.

Despite his ageing and tattered 'left' image—laboriously refurbished by the Tory press in recent weeks—Foot has for years been a loyal servant of the Callaghan gang.

Wage controls

During the lifetime of the last Labour government Foot as a Cabinet minister lent his support to four phases of wage controls, to huge public spending cuts, mass unemployment, cash handouts to private industry, and intensified repression of the Irish people.

Since the election of the Tory government Foot has devoted his main energies to forestalling moves towards Labour Party democracy and bolstering the discredited Callaghan leadership.

Like Callaghan, Foot stands resolutely *opposed* to mass action to bring down the Tories. But his methods of argument for a perspective of seeking to pressurise Thatcher into a change of policy are more subtle and flexible than those of his main rival for the Party leadership, Dennis Healey.

While Healey bluntly and arrogantly argues the need for capitalist policies—wage cuts, public spending cuts and unemployment—to resolve the capitalist crisis, Foot seeks more tactfully to dress up the same policies as a variety of socialism.

It is on this basis that Foot has clearly won substantial support from the right wing dominated PLP, who recognise that they now face a battle to retain control of the Labour Party in the face of rising rank and file militancy.

Bamboozle

Sooner than further antagonise the new left wing within the Party, the PLP have chosen Foot—whose flights of windy rhetoric will, they hope bamboozle them and defuse their struggle.

The fight for a principled socialist leadership in the labour movement must now proceed against Foot as it did against Callaghan. With the extreme right wing's chosen leader defeated, the battle will now be further out in the open in the run-up to the Special Conference in January.

tion of the previous political status for these prisoners, and draw attention to Annual Conference Report 1980, page 66, policy resolutions of the NEC.

Also we note the cynical attempt of the Tory government to head off the growing disquiet in Britain and elsewhere about what is happening in the 'H' Blocks and in Ireland generally, by granting all prisoners in Northern Ireland the right to wear official prison issue civilian-type clothing.

"We congratulate the councillors prepped to declare their positions on the question of Ireland, and pledge that they will not stand alone under attack by the [Birmingham] Mail and its supporters."

The issues—page 3

SUPPORT HUNGER STRIKERS!

Friday November 14, 5.30 pm. Mass picket of Downing Street in support of Armagh prisoner Pauline McLaughlin.

Saturday November 15, 7.30pm Benefit Disco, Central London Polytechnic, Bolsover St., called by T.O.M.

Monday November 17, 7.30 pm Public Meeting on Hunger Strike Dalston Labour Rooms, Hackney, Speaker Ernie Roberts MP. Called by Socialist Organiser.

Saturday November 22, 12 noon. Picket of Brixton police station called by South London Hunger Strike Action Group.

Sunday November 23, 2.30pm Manchester Martyrs demonstration. Assemble Piccadilly Gardens.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Monday November 24 at 7.30 p.m.

Lower Town Hall, Brixton Called by South London Hunger Strike Action Committee

Wednesday November 26 at 7.30 p.m. Battersea Town Hall, Lavender Hill

Saturday November 29, 2.30pm March from Clapham Common called by South London Hunger Strike Action Committee.

Saturday November 29, 1.30pm March from The Crown, Cricklewood. Called by IRSP.

For more details contact Charter 80, PO Box 353, London NW5. 01-267-2004.



As the hunger strike by seven Irish republican prisoners enters its third week, the campaign in their support is beginning to grow.

But with the danger that in their weakened state the prisoners could face death before Christmas, it is vital that the British labour movement moves rapidly to take up their demand for the restoration of prisoner of war status.

At its meeting on the weekend the National Committee of the Workers Socialist League called on all WSL branches and

Socialist Press supporters to take up a fight in every town for joint initiatives with other socialists and troops out campaigners towards publicity and meetings in support of the hunger strikers.

Meanwhile in the wake of the press witch-hunt against six Birmingham Labour councillors who declared their support for the hunger strikers, the West Midlands section of the Labour Committee on Ireland—including Labour Party members from 13 constituencies—has rallied in their support.

A statement declares that: "We call for the reintroduc-

FUND

A good post of £206 this week has taken us much nearer to our target of raising the first £1,000 of our £1,500 Special Fund by next Saturday. But we still have to raise £310.75 in the next few days if we are to reach the first stage of our target on time, so there's no time to lose.

We want to complete the fund by the Workers Socialist League Sixth Anniversary Rally on December 6. And in order to do so we are asking all our readers and supporters to consider sending us one day's pay.

We know that everyone is feeling the pinch at the moment, but, with huge struggles looming against the 6% wage limit imposed by the Tories, we need every penny of this fund if we are to be able to intervene in these struggles with the programme of Trotskyism.

Send us a donation today. Our (new) address is:

Socialist Press Special Fund, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX

WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE

Christmas Bazaar

Cowley Community

Centre, Oxford

SATURDAY 29

NOVEMBER

12 noon to 4 p.m.

Cakes — Gifts — Books

Raffle — Bottles —

Games — Jumble —

Plants — Refreshments

You name it, we've got

it!

Donations and assist-

ance welcome.

ANNIVERSARY RALLY

Six years of the Workers Socialist League

Speakers from Socialist Press Woman Worker Red Youth

and the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee

plus film

SATURDAY 6 DECEMBER 3 p.m.

New Ambassadors Hotel Upper Woburn Place London WC!

Tickets £1.50 (£1.00 outside London in advance), unwaged 50p