

# WORKERS' ACTION

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# SOLIDARITY

with the steelworkers

## The way to win

THE STEEL strikers are using every means of struggle that the Tories want to outlaw with their 'Employment Bill' — flying pickets, mass pickets, and solidarity from other workers.

Indeed, solidarity action with the steelworkers has been stepped up.

The T&GWU have at last made their 'advice' an instruction to members, and drivers now have no excuse to move any steel. Last Monday, 400 Confed shop stewards backed a call from the Confed district committee in Sheffield and Rotherham not to cross steel strikers' picket lines.

So 4,000 workers have stopped work in Sheffield. At GKN Shardlow the entire manual workforce, 1500 workers, refused to

go in to work and production was shut down.

At GEC Traction, 500 manual workers did not report for work. At Davy Loewy 850 workers were laid off when T&G members refused to come in.

The bosses thought they could fray the edges and finally unravel the steel strike with their ballot fraud. But the action of the Sheffield Confed stewards has set the pace for stepping up the strike again and reversing the ballot setback.

With this sort of support, the steel workers can win: solidarity from all workers using steel in any form. It must be extended throughout engineering and manufacturing industry.

All heavy industry uses

steel in some form or other. If the AUEW and T&G nationally followed the lead of the Sheffield workers, the steel strike would be won in a matter of days.

And that would be a victory not only for the steel workers, but for all workers. A victory on jobs as well as pay would throw back the Tories' plans to decimate British industry and cut thousands of jobs. It would be a decisive blow against the Employment Bill, too.

It would show the Tories that workers know how to win, and that we will not accept any curbs on our right to organise against the bosses.

By extending the Sheffield action, we can help the steelworkers win and

make the Employment Bill unenforceable before it is even law. That's the way to stop the Tories in their tracks!

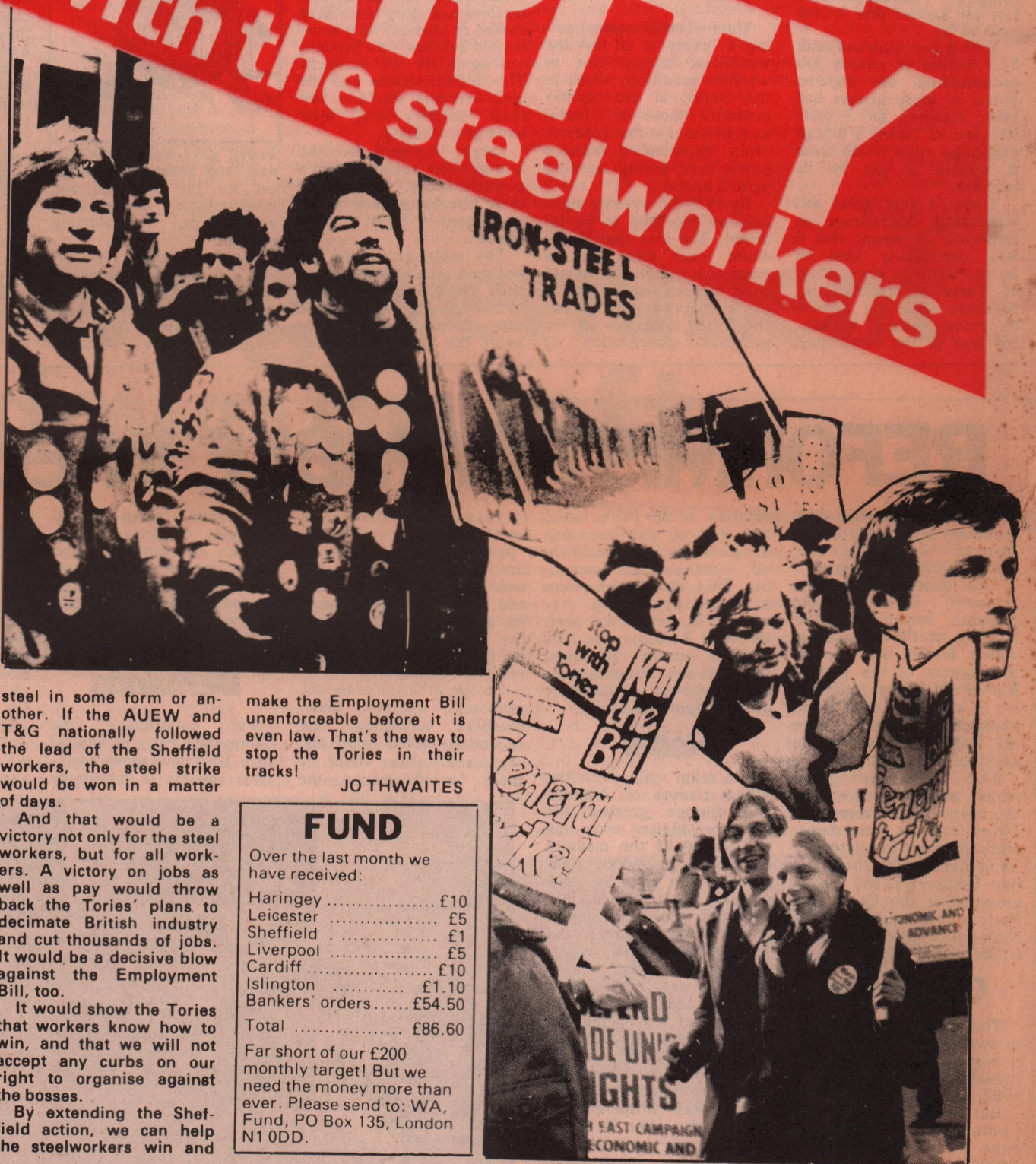
JO THWAITES

### FUND

Over the last month we have received:

Haringey	£10
Leicester	£5
Sheffield	£1
Liverpool	£5
Cardiff	£10
Islington	£1.10
Bankers' orders	£54.50
Total	£86.60

Far short of our £200 monthly target! But we need the money more than ever. Please send to: WA, Fund, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.



## COURTS GIVE ANOTHER FARCICAL RACE RULING

JUDGE Irvon Sunderland does not think the words 'sambo' and 'nig-nog' are racist. Nor could they "by any stretch of the imagination be described as discriminatory".

The verdict came at the end of a case brought by black teenager Cecil Stephens against Birmingham City Council, employers of his former English teacher, Mr Bramble.

This farcical judgment

recalls the remarks of Judge Neil McKinnon, who two years ago acquitted fascist leader Kingsley Read of charges brought under the Race Relations act. Read's speech to a crowd in London jeered at "niggers, wogs and coons" and commented on the murder of a young Sikh in Southall with the disgusting remark, "One down, one million to go". This racist fool of a judge

even concluded by saying to Read, "I wish you well".

Black organisations have realised that on paper the Race Relations Act and other Acts like the Education Acts do not permit the systematic discrimination against black children that can be seen in classroom practice, in punishments and in grading, and are insisting on their rights. But the judges are tearing up the paper rights both

in education and generally.

This new verdict confirms that state racism is as strong as ever. And — against all the idiotic claims that "They can always go to the Race Relations Board" — it shows that the courts cannot even guarantee a fair judgment on the basis of the existing laws — let alone be expected to set precedents in anti-racist rulings.

ANDREW HORNUNG

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OVER THE last year, a growing interest has been shown by international capital in Turkey's economy. Strategically poised at the cross roads of the Middle-East, bordering the Soviet Union on a 300 mile frontier, a founding member of NATO and owner of its largest land force (half a million men), Turkey is also socially and economically 'the sick man of Europe'.

With the growing acuteness of the class struggle within the country, and the repeated failure of the social and economic policies of the various governments over the last decade, Turkey seems almost ungovernable for Western interests. But for imperialism, the revolution in Iran and the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, have further increased Turkey's importance as NATO's eastern flank.

When the social-democratic government of Bulent Ecevit took office in 1977, Turkey had an estimated debt of \$13 billion. Unemployment had soared to over 20%. Inflation was rampant — estimates varied but all agreed that it was over 50%.

Within two years and extra \$1.9 billion of arrears had accumulated on imports. Some of these arrears had been standing for 3 years because of Turkey's foreign exchange crisis which made it unable to pay for its imports.

Turkey's very great and increasing dependence on imported oil meant that it was particularly hard hit by the oil price rises. Many of Turkey's manufacturing products were not allowed to enter western markets, for fear of the competition

they posed. And remittances from immigrant workers abroad, particularly in West Germany, were cut back by the expulsion of many of those workers.

The foreign exchange crisis led to the disappearance of many basic commodities such as coffee, foodstuffs and medicines, and severely cut the living standards of the Turkish masses. The country has also lost 20% or 30% of domestic production by being unable to import raw materials for industry.

The fuel crisis makes heating a luxury in all but the wealthiest homes (this in weather conditions which in the centre of the country resemble those of Siberia) and also means that industry often experiences massive power cuts, lasting anything up to 5 hours.

By 1979 the warning signs became too loud to be ignored. The idea that Ecevit could reach some kind of concordat with the urban and rural masses, capitalising on his electoral popularity and the bitter memories of the previous government of

Demirel's Justice Party and the openly fascist party of Turkes, proved false.

It was not a question of workers 'tightening their belts' or of short term sacrifices, rather it was a question of the workers' very physical survival. Living standards had been decimated, falling in many cases by over one third.

The Ecevit government quickly alienated vast layers of the population. Trade union leaders were arrested, promises to extend trade union rights were not kept, the purchasing power of the peasants fell and their lack of fuel meant that tractors and other machinery rusted in idleness as centuries-old scythes were brought out again for the harvests. The middle classes and the civil servants similarly saw their salaries and their savings dwindling.

Large sections of the bourgeoisie, seeing Ecevit's powerlessness, transferred their allegiance back to the traditional right wing parties.

The 'social-democratic' experiment had failed, and thus when Ecevit went cap in hand to the IMF and the international bankers for help, the gloves came off.

In May 1979 the OECD, the World Bank and a consortium of western banks pledged a total of \$1.45 billion. But imperialism's demands were harsh. Within weeks the Turkish Lira had been devalued by 43%.

By now Ecevit was clearly on his way out, and last year Demirel took over again. The qualms and protests of



Ecevit gave way to a wholesale and enthusiastic support for the domestic and international bourgeoisie's assault on the working people.

On January 21st, Demirel's austerity programme was announced. The currency was further devalued by 33%. Credits for state enterprises were reduced,

while Treasury subsidies for goods such as sugar were abolished. The prices of petrol, diesel and fuel oil were raised by a minimum of 20% — so as to provide more state revenues. Oil prices were increased by 44-100%, and the price of coal was doubled.

Theoretically, all this will reduce the public sector borrowing requirement by \$1 billion.

Shopkeepers and landlords, as an automatic reaction, raised their prices by 50%. Unrest was immediate. 500 passengers of the ferries connecting Istanbul with the outlying islands stormed the gates without paying when they learned that the fares had risen by 400%.

Imperialism's gratitude was expressed by handing over the second instalment of the credit agreement reached the previous May, and which had been delayed since November.

These credit and aid agreements aim to pulverise the masses, to tie Turkey disadvantageously to western financial interests and diktats, and to turn Turkey away from state-sponsored national-capitalist development towards providing an open field for foreign in-

vestment.

Previously, ever since the creation of the Republic in the 1920s under Ataturk, the state's leading role in the economy had been unchallenged. It was the State which nurtured the growth of the bourgeoisie and protected it against international rivals and the domestic leftovers of the Ottoman Period.

Foreign investment had a very limited role, covering only 98 companies with a total value of only \$137 million in 1977. But now, as the *Financial Times* states, "The day of autarchy and industrialisation inside a greenhouse of protectionism are to end". The mining industry, agriculture, food, textile, chemical, iron and steel, automobile, and electronic engineering industries are all to be open to foreign investment.

Foreign firms will be able to own between 10-49% of the companies' equity. The international petroleum firms will be allowed to prospect, extract and process oil in all parts of Turkey, but, also, foreign banks will now be able to move in and establish themselves.

Similarly, the subsidised state economic enterprises are to be left to their own devices or sold off in the name of profitability.

This month, a meeting will decide on an extra \$2.5 billion loan to cover the balance of payments deficit for 1980. But the workers of Turkey are still unwilling to be put on rations by imperialism.

ANTONIO GERMARO

## REFORMIST GAMBLE IN EL SALVADOR

ON THE 15th October 1979, a military coup overthrew the dictator of El Salvador, Carlos Humberto Romero.

The leaders of the coup, colonels Gutierrez and Majano, had the implicit backing of US imperialism, which feared that the intransigence of the butcher Romero in face of the massive working class and peasant struggles over the last year would lead to another Nicaragua.

The "reformist" junta which assumed office after the coup included representatives from the social democrats (National Revolutionary Movement MNR), the Christian Democrats, and even a member of the Communist Party, representing the National Democratic Union (UDN).

### Challenge

The junta pledged itself to sweeping reforms, which it would oversee until the presidential elections of 1982.

But even the mildest reforms would have to challenge the El Salvador Oligarchy — the 14 families in control of the overwhelming part of the country's industrial and agricultural wealth. The 1971 census showed that less than 2000 people owned over 40% of all cultivated land.

Of a population of 4.5 million, 60% live on the land. 130,000 of the poorest peasants have less than 1 hectare each, and between them less than 5% of cultivated land. Per capita income is in the region of \$600 per annum.

The thoroughly reactionary oligarchy is incapable of launching the mildest

reforms. In the 1930s, when the first of the seventeen dictatorships was established, 30,000 peasants demanding land distribution were massacred by the army.

In 1979, before the overthrow of Romero, over 1000 people, mostly peasants, workers and students were killed, victims of the army and the right wing terror.

### Relief

The relief with which the ruling classes of America and Europe greeted the Gutierrez/Majano coup was not shared by the majority of the El Salvadorian oligarchy, nor of the new middle class which has emerged under the impact of American, German and Japanese industrial investment since the 1960s. Romero was not another Somoza against whom all sections of the population rallied. The landowners and industrialists of El Salvador identified wholeheartedly with the dictator, under whom they prospered and flourished, unlike in Nicaragua.

Thus for imperialism, the political situation in El Salvador is even more worrying. The prospect of a reformist national liberation movement redefining its position vis à vis US imperialism but essentially accommodating to it, is fading fast. Instead an all out civil war is looming.

On the one side, the oligarchy, the bourgeoisie, sections of the middle class and the terrorist groups such as the "White Warriors Union" and "Orden" are attempting to carry out a wholesale massacre of the popular movement, so as

to guarantee for themselves another 45 years of social "peace". This solution is firmly supported by the vicious regimes of Honduras and Guatemala, who see it as an opportunity to stop the contagion triggered off by the revolution in neighbouring Nicaragua.

On the other side are the peasants, workers, slum-dwellers, university and secondary school students, organised in the main by three far-left groups, the

press with a series of kidnappings of foreign businessmen and diplomats and occupations of churches and embassies which were ruthlessly and bloodily crushed by the National Guard.

### Demands

Far outstripping the Communist Party in importance, they have shown themselves capable of repeatedly

the middle is the Junta, now shorn of support, especially since the resignation in January of the social democrats and the CP. Left only with the Christian Democrats who in turn have lost their mass influence gained during the anti-Romero electoral campaigns of 1972 and 1977, the Junta is incapable (even if it wanted to) of controlling the police and the rightists, who are continuing the same murderous policies

administration has announced \$50 million in economic aid and \$7 million in military assistance and proposals to send military 'advisers' to the army.

On March 6th, the Junta announced a sweeping land reform, decreeing that all estates over 1250 acres would be distributed to those working on them or renting them. About 25% of El Salvador's farm land is to be confiscated from the mere 0.25% of the population which currently owns it — in other words, the traditional landed oligarchy.

Compensation is provided for only in the form of government bonds, which are worth little in view of the political and the financial instability of the country. The following day, March 7th, the banks and savings institutions and their capital holdings were nationalised and taken under the control of the state. The state will have a controlling interest of 51% of the capital, the bank employees 20% and other private interests 29%. The Junta declared that this measure will prevent the flight of capital from the country.

With these measures, the US-backed Junta is making a bold gamble for a struggle with the oligarchs. Martial law has been declared, but a backlash from the large sections of the army that have close links with the landowners and the bourgeoisie is likely.

As for the working class and peasants, these measures will clearly be seen as concession to their struggle and militancy and thus may be too little and too late to save the reformist Junta.

ANTONIO GERMARO



Revolutionary Popular Block, the FAPU and the Popular Leagues-28th February. These three groups spearheaded the anti-Romero mobilisations and propelled the internal crisis of the country on to the front pages of the world's

obilising hundreds of thousands onto the streets, with demands for 100% wage increases, distribution of land, the smashing of the police and the army and calls for a 'prolonged popular war' against the state. Hovering uncertainly in

they pursued under Romero. This faltering government is still the nominal head of the country only because of the American Government's continued support of it, in its attempt to find a third road between reaction and revolution. The Carter



# Zimbabwe: will 3pc veto 63pc?

ALL THE PRESS is rejoicing now about the "transformation" of Robert Mugabe from a "Marxist" and a "terrorist" into a "moderate and a statesman".

But what events in Zimbabwe have shown is not a sudden change in Mugabe. They have shown how limited the democracy is that Britain supposedly gave Zimbabwe.

Before the election, ZANU had to contend with martial law, jailing of many of their militants, continual harassment, and intimidation of the people by Muzorewa's auxiliaries. Even after facing all these obstacles and getting 63% of the black vote, they face new obstacles.

ZANU built its support in the guerilla war, and in the election, on a programme of land reform, nationalisation, equal rights for black and white, and socialism in Zimbabwe. The white 3% would have every right to

live as equals in a new Zimbabwe, according to this programme, but not to continue to monopolise the wealth and power.

After winning the election, Robert Mugabe has shelved that programme. Why? Because if ZANU tried to implement the programme, then there would be a military coup of South African invasion.

## Crush

As the British press puts it, ZANU is trying to "maintain confidence". It is leaving the white-dominated state apparatus intact, and changing it only gradually; denying any threat to white property rights; and promising it will not aid armed struggle in South Africa — because otherwise the white minority and their backers will try to crush the will of the majority in blood.

A 3% minority has a substantial veto over the 63% who voted for ZANU. So much for one person, one vote.

The essence of the matter is not much different from Parliamentary democracy anywhere. In Britain too, the wealthiest and most powerful 3% or so, with their control over the permanent state apparatus, over the armed forces, and over the economy, would block any radical transformation through the ballot box by means of civil war.

Recently former Army chief Lord Carver confirmed that some officers were discussing a military coup even at the time of the February 1974 election. In Zimbabwe, the sharper political situation just means that the essential relations show much more nakedly.

But the dominance of the existing state machine and ruling class in Zimbabwe is not solidly established for

years to come. There will be important shifts and struggles, and the interests and privileges of the wealthy whites and their imperialist backers will be protected only by continuous pressure on the ZANU regime.

## Boost

However much Mugabe plays it "canny", and even if the mass movement behind ZANU in Zimbabwe is demobilised as a result, the change of regime in Zimbabwe cannot fail to give a huge boost to the black struggle in South Africa. For that reason alone, Mugabe will be under constant pressure.

Against that pressure — from imperialism, from the white-dominated state apparatus, and from South Africa — ZANU must have our full support.

COLIN FOSTER

# Nicaragua's government clamps down on left

IN THE middle of the night on January 23rd, Nicaraguan security forces took over the offices of *El Pueblo* and arrested four leaders of "Frente Obrero". The four, Carlos Cuadra, Marvin Ortega, Xiomara Centeno and Juan Alberto Henriques were shortly joined in jail by five other FO leaders, including Marvin Wallace, the editor of *El Pueblo*.

It was over a week before the detained men were charged. Their offence was distributing propaganda "that seeks to damage the popular interests and abolish the conquests achieved by the people". In the meanwhile, the printing presses owned by *El Pueblo* were turned over to the Ministry of Education.

It was an orchestrated clampdown on FO, a trade-union front for the pro-Albanian 'Maoist' People's Action Movement (MAP), by Nicaragua's Government of National Reconstruction. On January 29th, a demonstration of over 10,000 was organised by the Sandinistas in the capital Managua to support the banning of *El Pueblo*.

## Armed

The Sandinista paper *Barricada* carried a series of articles accusing FO of being "counterrevolutionaries", or "objectively kind to the counterrevolution" because they had encouraged strikes which "sabotaged production" and "divide the working class". It said that *El Pueblo* wasn't covered by guarantees on the freedom of the press because it contained "destructive criticism".

A similar campaign was launched last October when

the Sandinistas rounded up dozens of FO members and branded them as "Somozists". Later, however, the FSLN agreed to a 'dialogue' with FO. Its members were released without being charged.

This time the clampdown has been backed with accusations from the chief of state security, Hugo Torres, that FO maintains an armed wing which has carried out a series of bank robberies. On February 2nd, Torres displayed weapons to the press that were allegedly part of an FO arms cache found at a farm on the outskirts of Managua.

On February 6th, Torres announced the arrest of four men, including the brother of a former leader of the FO's armed wing in the civil war, the Anti-Somoza Peoples' Militia (MILPAS), who were charged with plotting to rob the Nicaraguan Central Bank.

But no firm evidence has been produced to confirm that FO is involved in bank robberies and the attack on the group has rested on the alleged counter-revolutionary nature of its propaganda.

The US *Militant* (a firm supporter of the FSLN regime) cites examples of the accusations levelled at FO. "Last September and October, it joined in a campaign organised by the Chamber of Commerce, to demand an immediate convocation of the Council of State — a legislative body whose original composition would have allowed the bourgeoisie's forces to block the measures being taken by the government junta and the FSLN in the interests of the workers and campesinos (farmworkers)".

*El Pueblo* is accused of interviewing politicians and union leaders associated with the right wing Social-Christian Party. Allegedly, "The PSC in return lent financial aid to the paper through the purchase of large blocs of advertising".

But the FSLN actually formed a government with bourgeois forces. Violeta Chamorro, a member of Nicaragua's leading banking family, and Alfonso Robelo, a leading industrialist, were brought into the ruling junta by the FSLN. It was the FSLN who determined the

owned, and cane cutters, who are paid piecework rates, came to suspect that they were being cheated because of inadequate supervision of the weighing of the cane they had cut. The FSLN urged the workers not to strike — claiming that the loss of tax revenues on sugar exports that would result from a strike would hit the government. FO members argued for a strike.

When FSLN leader Henry Ruiz came to address a crowd of 500 workers and explain the FSLN's arguments that 'sabotage in the

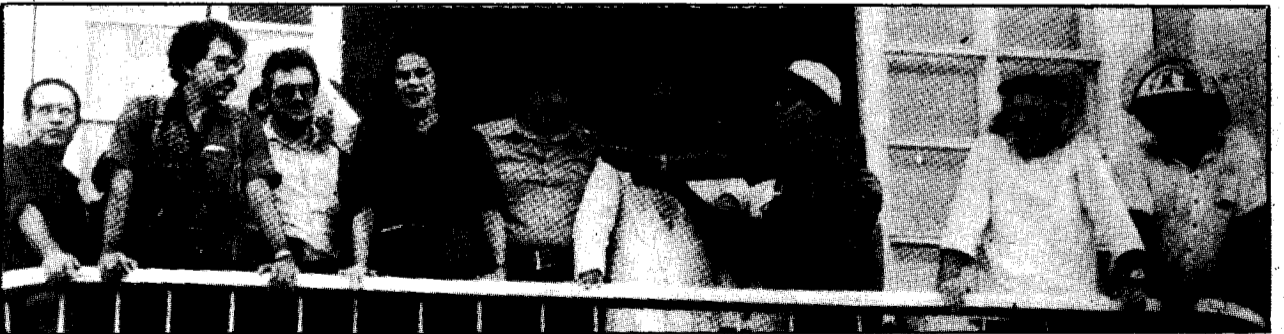
problems."

In order to carry through these policies, the Sandinistas have sought to dominate and reshape the unions. FO members as well as other leftists have been wary of concentrating power in the hands of Sandinista unions. For example, the government attempted during a recent hospital workers' strike to undermine the base of the Fet-Salud (Health Workers' Union) by trying to instal "popular health committees" through the Sandinista trade union confederal committees

unity" was a feature of FSLN propaganda throughout January, and *Barricada* carried headlines like "United in the insurrection, united in reconstruction", and "National Unity expressed the hopes of revolutionaries".

## Alliance

The closure of *El Pueblo* was an extension of the drive to cement the alliance with the bourgeoisie that the FSLN made when it formed the government of National Reconstruction.



composition of the Council of State. The FSLN allows the Chamber of Commerce and right wing parties to operate and have mouthpieces like the major daily paper *Prensa* and the radio station *Mil*.

The government's main grievance against Frente Obrero is not its involvement with the bourgeoisie, but its involvement in strikes. At the end of January — at the time of the arrests and the closure of *El Pueblo* — FO members were involved in organising a strike in Nicaragua's largest factory, the San Antonio sugar mills.

The mill is privately

workplaces' would result in unemployment, he was forced to leave the platform.

## Wary

The FSLN have a policy of "austerity" which Ruiz explained when he was appointed Planning Minister on December 30th last year. "Real wages means maintaining the market basket or improving it to the extent that the economy permits. But if the economy does not permit this, the answer is not to raise nominal wages. If the working class understands this we will have solved one of 1980s thorniest

run by hospital directors.

The opposition to these policies, if still only small, is a source of worry to the Nicaraguan government. Based on an alliance between sections of the bourgeoisie and the Sandinista movement, the government needs to maintain the appearance of national unity in order to survive in its present form.

So the other side of Ruiz's opposition to wage rises was to "ask private enterprise to be moderate, to limit itself, to make sacrifices in their manner of living as a demonstration of patriotism and commitment to the revolution".

A drive for "national

Lashing out at the left-wingers who stand on the side of the workers in wage struggles, while allowing the bourgeois ministers, parties and papers to operate freely, is not the way to defend the revolution made by the young guerilla fighters in the Sandinista army and the workers in the slum quarters of Nicaragua's cities.

It is the road to strangling it and reopening the door to American imperialism and new Somozas — who will crush the Sandinistas and their progressive reforms as well as the leftists.

NIK BARSTOW

# Labour movement Fightback for Women's Rights



invites you to

## A WORKING CONFERENCE

to pool information and experience; to discuss and coordinate the coming struggles; and to stimulate the growth of dialogue and common work between women in the labour movement and the women's movement, and those in specialised campaigns for women's rights.

The conference will focus on five main areas:

■ **Abortion rights, and what to do after Corrie to win abortion on demand & free, safe contraception.**

■ **Cuts hit women: fighting for nursery and other under-five provision; health cuts; funds for women's self-help projects.**

■ **Maternity leave and benefits, paternity leave; women and the fight to stop the Employment Bill.**

■ **Legal rights: what's happening to the equality legislation; women as claimants; women & nationality.**

■ **Strengthening the position of women and the priority of women's rights in the labour movement; organising around the TUC charter for women in the unions; bringing the fight against violence and sexism into the labour movement.**

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### PARTICIPATING:

Labour Abortion Rights Campaign; Campaign Against Depo Provera; Manchester NAC; Peter Huntingford; Fightback against Health Service Cuts; Gingerbread; London Nursery Campaign; NUS Nursery Campaign; National Campaign for Nursery Education; National Council for One Parent Families; Child Poverty Action Group; members of National Women's Aid Federation; National Maternity Grant Campaign; Action Group on Immigration & Nationality and JCWI; Rights of Women; members of Claimants Union; Equal Rights for Disabled Women; Equal Rights in Clubs Campaign for Action. Other campaigns are considering invitations to participate.

Conway Hall  
Red Lion Sq WC1  
Sat. March 22  
11am - 5pm

WHO CAN COME: groups and organisations are asked to send women delegates preferably, but men are not excluded.

Representatives are invited from women's groups, trade union bodies and women's caucuses of unions, Constituency Labour Parties and women's sections, trades council women's sub-committees; and from all campaigns and organisations with similar or overlapping aims, which are also invited to contribute papers, speakers and workshops for the conference.

There is no limit on the size of delegations, and individuals are welcome.

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A broadsheet with contributions by and about the participants is available. Send for copies, or more conference details, to: FIGHTBACK FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS, 41 Ellington Street, London N7. [01-607-5268]

by RACHEL LEVER (secretary, Labour Movement Fightback for Women's Rights)

"DITCH the Bitch", "Kill the Cow", and other such sexist slogans on the mammoth TUC march, and the readiness of women on the march to put up with them, show how remote the labour movement still is from an understanding of what sexism is, let alone going any way to combating it.

It isn't just on the placards. A sister who has recently started work in the Post Office told me: "All the women get groped. It happens every day, quite openly. When I told them to get their hands off me, they thought I was lesbian."

"The men are so convinced that women must like it, that the women are afraid to think anything else. It's only now after I've made a bit of a stand that some of the women are getting the courage to say they don't really like it either."

"The men were absolutely stunned when I spoke up at my first union meeting. Half of them giggled and goggled, and the rest were terribly patronising — 'that's very good', they said."

"There's no way I can be accepted as a normal, ord-

inary woman. Their ideas about what women should be are so stereotyped that they have to think I'm odd."

When we were selling the Fightback broadsheet in Hyde Park on the 9th, men kept shouting out "you've got too many rights", and sometimes their jeers intimidated women from buying it.

Tackling the issue of women's rights in the labour movement is a big job. But for all that we sold a few hundred broadsheets on the march, and got a good response from many of the thousands of women on the march and from some men. In the NUT, NALGO and NUPE contingents — and, more surprisingly, in the GMWU's too — women were strongly represented.

There's been a tremendous response to the call for the Fightback conference: many women are talking about it already as an event of major importance. The enthusiasm is shown by the size of some of the delegations, such as eight members of NAC from Sheffield.

Dozens of Labour Parties have sponsored the conference, sending delegates or donations.

In addition to the nearly 20 campaigns that decided early on to participate, others are contacting us almost daily, among them the Labour Students' organis-

ation, the Labour Party Women's Advisory Committee, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, and Women in Action. The North West Region TUC has distributed 500 leaflets.

Jo Richardson will be opening the conference; Maureen Colquhoun is representing Gingerbread; and Frances Morrell will be speaking for CLPD. In the lunch break Counteract will be performing 'Mother's Little Helper', a play about women's health, and there will be a room full of book-stalls.

And this week, at the Women's TUC in Brighton, we are confident of getting more support for the conference.

Please register soon for the Fightback conference. Send registration fee (£2) to 41 Ellington St, London N7; cheques payable to Fightback for Women's Rights. When registering, please also give details of names and ages of children who will/may be using the creche.

## Let's recall Labour conference — and have a real debate!

THE TGWU General Executive Council meeting last week called for a recall conference of the Labour Party to discuss opposition to the government's economic policies.

Such a conference could, if organised democratically, provide a chance for the labour movement to organise a mass campaign against the cuts and tell the Labour leaders to stop waiting for the next elections in four years time before trying to get rid of the government. It could provide a chance to hammer out a fighting policy of opposition to the cuts and unemployment.

This is not quite what Moss Evans had in mind. He spoke about a one-day conference with no resolutions and only a NEC policy statement — doubtless saying as little as possible — being put to the vote. Such



Moss Evans

a rally would be a waste of time if it was simply the latest occasion for trade union and Labour leaders to sound off with vague anti-Tory noises again.

Evans is also not too concerned about what such

a conference would decide. He called for the conference "to get us all united behind any (!) policy clearly seen to be opposed to the monetarist policies of the government".

But the steelworkers strike shows that there are two fundamentally different ways of opposing the Tories. Callaghan's way is to rely on Parliamentary votes and to try and get the Tories off the hook with his proposal of mediation in the strike. On the other hand, the steelworkers are fighting now through direct action to get the Tories out as soon as possible.

It seems unlikely that the NEC will take up the T&G Executive's proposal. Labour Party activists should push for the NEC to call a recall conference but also to make it a conference of action to bring down the Tories.

BRUCE ROBINSON



## BSC BALLOT

# IT'S A FRAUD

THE BSC BALLOT was a con and a fraud. It was a clear attempt by BSC to split the strike and had nothing to do with democracy.

As an ISTC leaflet handed out on the TUC march on March 9th pointed out, when were the steel workers ever balloted on any other aspect of BSC policy, on the closures or on the sackings? What right have the bosses to interfere in the union's conduct of the strike?

Villiers and Scholey are jubilant that they've managed to get 44% of the steelworkers to vote 'yes'. It didn't matter much to them what the 'yes' was for, but the fact that they managed to get a positive response to a question that they put to the workers is good enough for them.

Now they're talking about a return to work, as if the question in the ballot was, do you want to go back to work, rather than, do you think there should be a ballot on the BSC offer?

## Latch

To the BSC bosses it didn't matter what the question was as long as they got a 'yes' vote — one that the media could latch on to and would be hailed as a victory for the bosses as opposed to the unions.

The speed with which BSC and the government have interpreted the result of the ballot as meaning that the steelworkers want a return to work is predictable. That was what the ballot was for. It was a political tool used by BSC to try to split the strike.

There is no denying that the results of the ballot are not encouraging. Bill Sirs is blustering when he says that the results are a victory for the ISTC.

44% voted for a BSC initiative and 66% ignored the ISTC's call for a boycott of the ballot. Why did this happen?

There was confusion at first as to how workers should respond to the ballot. Many strikers thought that if they invalidated their ballot forms by writing 'Pay the steelworkers' on them that would mean they were upping the Yes votes as theirs would not be counted as a 'No'.

Many less active workers must have seen the BSC question as being fairly reasonable. After all, they were only asking the strikers if they wanted to vote on the BSC offer.

## Lies

But the fact is that what accompanied the ballot was not the BSC offer. BSC propaganda said that they'd offered 14% plus and mentioned no strings. As Bernard Connolly, South Yorks craftsmen's leader said, "If that's what the offer means, I will sign it and lead my members back to work!". The BSC have gone to any lengths, including outright lies, to get a 'Yes' vote.

BSC have not disclosed

which areas the 'yes' votes came from. Many strikers have said that they received no ballot forms and there have been reports from Scotland and S.Yorks that ballot forms have been sent to people who don't work for BSC and are not on strike.

Now the clarion cry from the bosses, the Government and the bosses' press will be 'Back to Work'. And they will use the 'ballot' and the return to work of the private sector workers as a sign that the steel strike is crumbling.

The steel strikers will show them that this is very far from the case. As Pat Shevlin of the Scottish strike committee told WA, "Pickets in Glasgow and Lanarkshire are continuing to picket steel stockholders and are just as determined to win as ever. This ballot has not made any difference to the men".

But one conclusion can be drawn from the ballot. Scholey and Co. thought that they could play on the passivity that, in the past, has been encouraged by the ISTC leaders. As Sirs keeps on emphasising, this is the first strike the ISTC has had since 1926. There is no militant tradition of the steel unions responding to the demands of the rank and file. There has never been a union ballot of the membership on previous settlements negotiated by Sirs, which were abysmally low.

And many strikers are not actively involved in the strike. As a picket at Macread's in



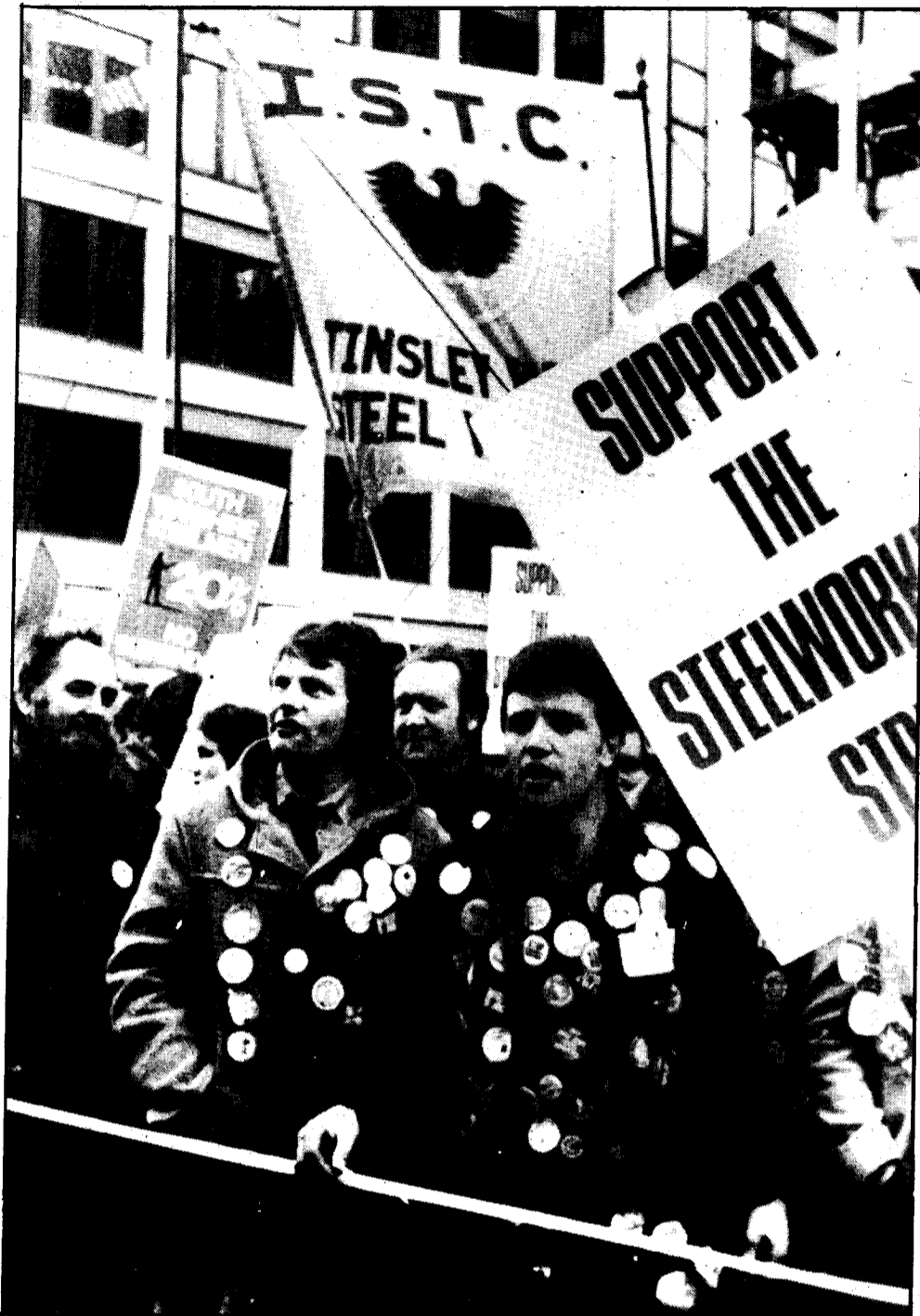
North London said "The ones that voted 'yes' are the ones who haven't been on the picket lines. They wouldn't have voted that way if they had been on the picket lines."

To overcome this, local strike headquarters must be sure that everyone does picket duty and is informed about what is going on both locally and nationally through regular strike bulletins. Regular mass meetings must be organised where the strikers can discuss and vote on the running of the strike.

With the T&GWU's national instruction to its members not to cross picket lines, the pickets must be stepped up to cover all plants and stockholders.

The steel workers have the power to win 20% and no strings. Also, through the local strike committees, they have come to see that they have the power to keep Sirs in line and not let the ISTC leadership backslide on the claim.

JO THWAITES



## So why not ballots on hospital closures?

JIM KILLEAVY, NUB delegate at BSC Stanton, talked to Pete Radcliff.

■ ■ ■ What do you think of the ballot?

□ □ To start with, we didn't want any ballot. We know that in Stanton the staff section MATSA people, who are not in the heavy steel agreement and not on strike, were given a vote. So as far as I'm concerned that means we can ignore the ballot.

Nationally I think the union won. The people that didn't vote would have counted as 'no' votes and that gives us a clear majority.

Secret ballots in general, and as they are posed in the Tories' Employment Bill, are a joke. For instance, in the ballot management organised last week in Stanton on a return to work, they numbered all the papers.

By doing that they could see exactly who it was that wanted to return to work, and then they could work out if there was any possibility of getting all the key jobs in the plant working. And that was supposed to be a secret ballot!

If there's going to be ballots, then they should work both ways. Every time Thatcher wants to close a hospital, we should have a vote on it.

■ ■ ■ What do you think about the T&GWU's national

instruction to its members not to cross picket lines?

□ □ I believe that the TGWU's instruction is that they respect our picket lines. Even if we only have two or three official pickets on the gates, they do not cross. But the national TGWU's instructions have been ignored here.

In Nottingham, T&G drivers have even been given

are in that these officials are in the management's pockets.

■ ■ ■ What should we do to counter the divisions created in the steel strike between the BSC workers and the private sector?

□ □ The unions have to do some deep thinking. The point of Thatcher's whole exercise is to divide and conquer. That applies to all unions, not just the steel unions.

This is what they've done at Stanton. They've divided workers on basic trade union principles — you've got the NUB, the G&MWU and the T&GWU falling out among themselves.

We've got to have 100% unity among the steel workers.

■ ■ ■ The call for a general strike was raised by sections of the TUC march last Sunday. What do you think?

□ □ We have to get national solidarity from all areas of the labour movement. People look to the TUC, workers look for solidarity and leadership and if it isn't there, they back off, it's as simple as that...

I'm sure this was the problem in South Wales. The trade union movement didn't unite nationally behind them.

The Welsh miners looked over the border into England and saw they weren't getting the backing from this side. They would have been left on their own.



written instructions to cross NUB picket lines by the local officials. We are having further meetings with the T&G to discuss this.

I can't understand the local TGWU and GMWU's instructions from their full-time officials to their members in Stanton not to come out. The only explan-

## DRIVERS AND THE PICKET LINES

THE TGWU has now instructed its members not to cross steel workers' picket lines. Despite the fact that several thousand T&G members employed by BSC have been out since the start, Moss Evans had only been advising T&G members to support the strike since last week.

The support that lorry drivers and dockers have been giving to the strikers has been patchy and there is no doubt that the strengthening of the T&G's official position will improve the situation.

For example, drivers at Macread's steel stockholders in North London agreed to stop crossing the ISTC picket line outside when they heard of the TGWU's instruction.

But there are still problems in several areas. TGWU officials have been advising drivers to cross picket lines. Presumably they will now have to change their public position, but they will no doubt carry on attempting to sabotage any solidarity.

While support for the strikers has been fairly good in the major cities and large ports, the big weakness has been in the rural areas where the union is weak and drivers often only hold a union card to ensure that they get loaded at unionised firms. Unfortunately, they are much more likely to be scared by management threats than impressed by instructions from the union.

It is in these areas that you find the small unregistered ports through which most of the scab steel entering the country is coming.

Then there are the out and out cowboys, most of them owner/drivers, some of them working night and day carrying steel. With new tractor units costing up to £30,000 each, diesel at £1.30 a gallon and a sharp decline in the work available over the past 6 months, many of them are desperate to find the money to stay in business. There is no doubt that the bosses are using them to weaken trade unionism in the transport industry as well as to break the steel strike.

Finally the United Road Transport Union, the other main union in road haulage, has not issued any advice to members in support of the strike.

The only way to make the TGWU instruction really effective is by a systematic campaign to black all movement of steel through the ports, on the roads, out of the stockholders and into the factories; so that if a load of steel gets unloaded at a scab wharf, or if a scab driver moves it, no unionised factory will accept it. But this will only work if it is backed up by an effective campaign to black any firm handling steel. The threat will not be enough.

The TGWU and the ISTC and the other steel unions should circulate a list of all firms breaking the strike and make sure they're blacked. A key weapon would be to stop fuel supplies. It would have a crippling effect on most transport firms and on most factories as well, and would be relatively easy to organise given that the tanker drivers are among the best organised workers in the TGWU.

SIMON TEMPLE

# Next step: all o



MARTIN THOMAS reports on the March 9th TUC demonstration.

## Workers were pouring into

Hyde Park from 10.30 onwards. As they arrived, many scanned the TUC's order of march. "Why aren't the steelworkers at the front? No.7? They should be no.1!"

The women's rights contingent which the South East Region TUC wanted to organise was not on the TUC plan at all, and the TUC refused to announce it. But placards reading "The TUC Lady puts women last" were dotted through the GMWU, NUT, NALGO and NUPE contingents which included many women.

## The march moved off at

about 12.45pm, headed by a TUC banner saying "Change Course Now".

The slogan was echoed in official stickers on the first union contingent, the miners': "NUM: for a change of government policy". But many miners, especially younger ones, had torn off the bottom of their stickers so that they just read "NUM: for a change of government".

"Maggie, Maggie, Maggie, out, out, out!" was the main slogan on the miners' contingent, as it was throughout the demonstration. There were other slogans on the same theme: "Prior out", "Tories out, socialism in!", and many chants and rhymes jeering at the Tories.

## The miners' contingent,

with its huge branch banners — several set on wheels, and one (Calverton NUM) fitted with loudspeakers! — was quieter and more orderly than many others. It was large, but not as large as it might have been: only one NUM branch from Yorkshire, Armthorpe, sent its banner.

Following close behind it, the TGWU contingent, the biggest on the march, had hundreds of official union placards, condemning the cuts, the Employment Bill, and the Tories. Other unions with official placards were ASTMS (who could come up with nothing better than "curb imports") and the print union SLADE.

There were a few printed placards with a Union Jack and the message "You need unions, Jack!" Some workers, however, refused to take them: "That looks like a National Front placard".

The AUEW contingent had groups alternating "Duffy out" with "Maggie out", mainly Ford workers.

The public service unions, near the end of the march, had slogans against the cuts as well as the anti-Tory slogans. "Two, four, six, eight, hands off the welfare state", was one. A NALGO marcher was leading a chant of: "Unemployment and inflation are not caused by immigration".

British Aerospace workers, nearer the front of the demonstration, had their own slogans against the denationalisation of their company.



## But the contingent that

stood out from the rest was the steelworkers, shouting "What do we want? 20% What have we got? Nothing."

There were more placards, and more of them with handwritten slogans as well as the official printed ones; more slogans shouted; more people going up and down the side of the demonstration collecting for strike funds; more young workers.

And more badges too... many steelworkers had their coats almost covered in badges: Rotherham Red Army, Cold Steel for the Iron Lady, Ditch the Bitch, Hadfields Massacre, the Price of Tory government: 250,000 jobs to go, We're Maggie's miners, Produce not reduce, 20% now, Don't blame me I voted Labour...

There was the Steel Women's Power badge too (and a number of women in the steelworkers' contingent)

though there were a few Thatcher jokes.

And elsewhere Women's Fight one woman in,

## As the

Piccadilly, past the rest, the other the steelworker

Halfway down collecting for the road. Imm

# Now for a programme of action

by COLIN FOSTER

IT'S CLEAR enough what the TUC's plans were for March 9th: a march through London — they didn't want it too big, so they didn't put too much effort into organising for it — a few speeches rattling on against the Tories and then everyone safely home... It would let off steam and commit them to nothing dangerous.

But over 100,000 workers had different ideas. On the march they mostly left it at general slogans and chants against the Tories, but at the end-of-march rally they expected something more definite from the union leaders than windy waffle.

So when TUC general secretary Len Murray got up, he was almost drowned out by cries of 'Support the steelworkers'. 'General Strike'.

The trade union leaders' reply to the rank and file demands for action was to appeal for 'unity'. They did not mean that the leaders should unite with what the rank and file wanted. Instead, the rank and file should unite with what the leaders wanted to do, that is, nothing!

And if the rank and file

were not satisfied, hard luck. Ken Thomas of the CPSA sneered: 'If you want a general strike, you organise it'. The crowd shouted back: 'It's your job'. And Len Murray said: 'Anyone or any organisation which in any way, whether by utterance, action or by seeking disruption, destroys our unity will have to answer to the working class of Britain.'

'Let us remember that we are speaking here today not only for millions of organised workers, but that we are the authentic voice of all the people of Britain...'

Murray, like other speakers, tried to slide over from an appeal for workers' unity (on the bureaucrats' terms) to an appeal for national unity, of all classes. Their idea was that workers should be moderate and avoid class struggle, so as to win over public opinion and finally convince the Tories, too, to opt for class harmony.

Murray declared: 'We have offered to Mr. Prior — and I repeat that offer today — our willingness to sit down with the government and put any problems on the table'. The heckling and booing reached its highest pitch — and no wonder!

The workers who had jeered at Rolls Royces coming down Park Lane understood

that a rotting British capitalism, in its current deepening crisis, has no room for class harmony. The Tories represent the most profound needs of the top 5% for smashing blows against workers' organisations, conditions, and living standards, to enable them to restore profits. They can be fought only by class struggle, not by feeble appeals to public opinion.

The workers' alternative to the Tories is not to defend the status quo — the traditions and the institutions of the British people, as Len Murray and Clive Jenkins put it — but to fight for socialism.

Clive Jenkins, Alan Fisher, and other speakers tried to give the national unity theme a militant twist. Calling for import controls, they tried to rally workers' hostility not against British bosses but against safely distant foreign targets. The import controls demand, which really is only a demand to try to export unemployment to other workers, did not get booed, but neither was it cheered. It clearly got none of the response of calls like that of Bill Sirs for support to the steelworkers, or of Albert Spanswick for 'Thatcher Out'.

Clive Jenkins talked about 'physical action to stop imports', but the workers shouting out 'we want action' had a different sort of action in mind.

'General Strike' was the major slogan against the bureaucrats. Organising for the May 14th day of action to be an all-out 24-hour general strike is an urgent task now, and agitation must continue for an indefinite general strike to stop the Tories decisively. But after the South Wales miners' vote last month, the momentum towards a general strike has been checked, at least for now, and it is vital that the labour movement actually fights every attack, on every front, now, without waiting for a general strike as the answer to everything.

To give shape and direction to the will for action shown on March 9th, the movement needs a programme of action to mobilise the rank and file and challenge the union leaders.

■ Support the steel strike. Twenty per cent now and save the jobs!

■ Link up with the steel strike with a fightback by workers facing similar threats — in British Leyland, in shipbuilding — and by the whole working class, for jobs. Cut hours, not jobs. 35 hour week now! In the industries threatened by massive cutbacks, establish work-

ers' control and share out the work available among all the workers, without loss of pay. Demand automatic inflation-protection for wages, on top of adequate straight increases.

■ Stop the cuts. Millions for hospitals, not a penny for 'defence'.

■ Troops out of Ireland now.

■ Scrap all immigration laws.

■ Defend the right to picket. Disband the SPG.

As well as fighting for these demands in direct industrial action, we must build up a left wing in the labour movement committed to these policies, which will fight to win the movement to the policies and replace leaders who will not fight for them. We must kick the Tories out — and fight for the labour movement to impose its will on a Labour Government that replaces the Tories — to insist that Tory cuts and legal restrictions are reversed and the government moves against the centres of wealth and power, nationalising the banks and big monopolies without compensation.

That means that the structure of the labour movement — the undemocratic structure which allowed the last Labour Government,

like every previous one, to flout the wishes and interests of the working class, and get away with it — must be totally changed. Last year's Labour conference decisions at Brighton were a start. Democracy and accountability must be won throughout the labour movement, and the rightwingers who will not accept accountability must be chased out of all positions of leadership.

This battle is also necessary right now to gear the labour movement for fighting the Tories. Our leaders must be told to stop talking to and collaborating with the Tories. Bureaucratism and elitism must be purged from the movement. We need all-out mobilisation of the rank and file, to give solidarity to every strike, to defend every picket line, and to throw back every attack of the Tories, the police, and (if it comes to that) the army.

After their rough ride on March 9th, the trade union leaders will be trying harder than ever to keep the anti-Tory struggle under strict control. But the truth of the matter is that a labour movement crippled by feeble leaders will be slaughtered by the Tories. We need new leaders and a renovation of the labour movement. That's the way to stop the Tories.



# ut May 14!



and electricians ran over to help. The worker was rescued but scuffles broke out, and an electricians' banner had its poles smashed.

For the rest of the way down Piccadilly, the steelworkers and electricians shouted slogans against the police: "Maggie Thatcher's boot boys", "Pigs, pigs pigs!", "Help the police, beat yourself up", and "Who killed Blair Peach?"

Then we passed the Garners Steak Houses, where last year the bosses finally managed to defeat a long-running strike for union recognition. "Scabs, scabs, scabs" was the cry. Other chants followed: "The workers, united, will never be defeated", and, from a small group, "Two, four, six, eight, when are we going to smash the state?"

## There was huge applause

as the steelworkers entered Trafalgar Square for the rally.

In the Square, Alan Fisher and Bill Sirs got a relatively good reception. But Len Murray got heckled so that sometimes he could hardly be heard.

On the march, general strike slogans had been shouted by the student contingent at the end but hardly at all in the workers' contingents. Small knots of revolutionaries tried to set chants going — a group of WSL members in the TGWU contingent, IMG members in the steelworkers' contingent, WA supporters in the NUPE contingent — but mostly with limited success.

In the Square, it was different. Right at the start, Tom Jackson of the UPW, chairing the rally, got heckled with cries of "What about Grunwick?" Eventually he handed over to someone else.

Shouts of "General Strike", started by small groups of revolutionaries, were taken up by hundreds of workers. Slogans like "Support the steelworkers" and "Don't talk to the Tories", and calls for Arthur Scargill to speak drowned out Len Murray.

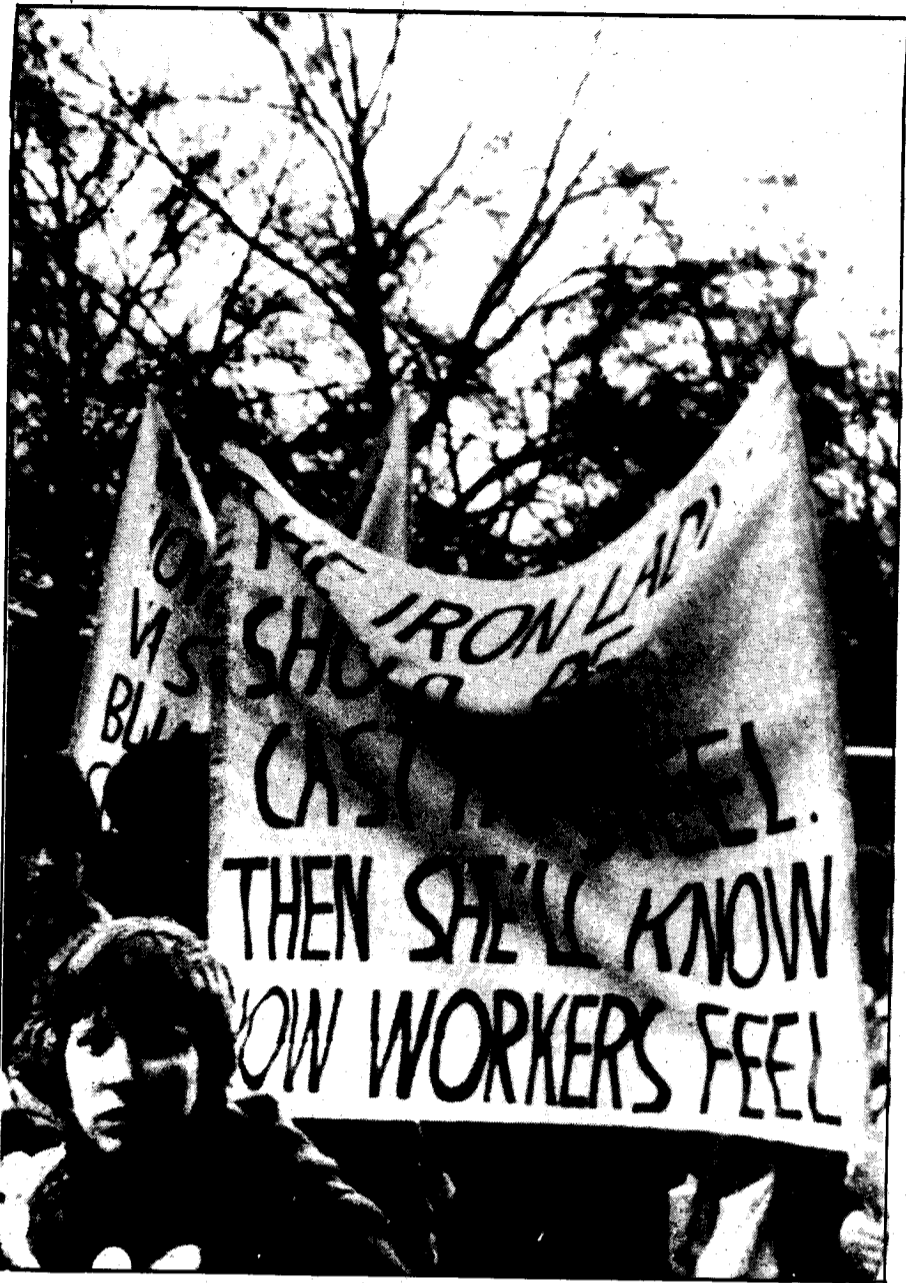
One speaker after another droned on with empty words against the Tories and nothing about any plans for action. Only Albert Spanswick of COHSE echoed the most popular slogan of the march: "Thatcher out".

The demonstrators wanted something more. The heckling continued: "Stop the lorries, Stop the steel", when Moss Evans of the TGWU came to speak; "We want action".

Some bureaucrats, like Ken Thomas of the CPSA, tried to rebuke the demonstrators. "If you want a general strike, you organise it"... "If you try to lead the workers of this country into a general strike, you will get the worst hiding you ever had". The uproar only increased: "Off, off! Rubbish, rubbish!"

## Leaving the rally, an Asian

worker asked me, "How many do you think there were?" "I've heard it's 150,000." "That's good. But the really important day is May 14th. If we can get everyone out that day..."



also the badge with a picture of Margaret Thatcher and the word "Rape"... as if rape could be

on the demonstration women selling black broadsheets got jeers of "We've got it don't want any more."

## march went down

the Ritz and Fortnum and Mason's and demonstrators jeered Rolls Royces driving side of the road. No-one jeered as loud as

Piccadilly, police grabbed a worker steel strike funds on the other side of Piccadilly, a couple of dozen steelworkers



## 10,000 on the Scottish march

LED BY the ISTC, over 10,000 trade unionists marched through Glasgow to Glasgow Green on Saturday 8th. Trades Council banners from all over Scotland, and large contingents from public service unions, miners, teachers, textile workers, tenants groups and anti-cuts committees were there.

There were quite a few Labour Party banners too.

Placards and chants were unequivocal: Tories Out! TUC General Secretary Len Murray's pleas for the Tories to change course and to let the General Council consult with them met with little enthusiasm from the rally.

STUC General Secretary Jimmy Milne spoke of the effect of the cuts and the need to fight them and to get the Tories out.

Len Murray was heckled with calls for a general strike. And the applause at the end of his speech seemed more out of politeness than anything else.

Photos  
by  
NIK  
BARSTOW

## WHO WAS THERE

There were twenty-one Joint Shop Stewards' Committee, Confederation Shop Stewards' Committee, Joint Union Committee, and strike committee banners on Sunday's demonstration:

BSC Clydebridge, Chrysler Linwood, Tilbury docks, Park Royal vehicles, Ford Basildon, Ford Langley, Easterbrook Allcard, Jaguar, Sheffield Works Dept., Lucas BW3, Acton Works (LT), Rolls Royce Patchway, British Aerospace (Manchester), British Aerospace (Kingston), ICI Huddersfield, Ambrose Shadlows, Massey Ferguson Merseyside, Shell Carrington, Merseyside docks, BSC Port Talbot, Liverpool Corporation building workers.

Hundreds of union national, district and branch banners were there, with the biggest groups from NALGO, TGWU, and the AUEW.

11 from the NUM; 16 from the NUR; 52 TGWU; 5 ACSS; 13 Boilermakers; 42 AUEW; 34 ASTMS; 10 ISTC; 15 UCATT; 9 EETPU; 6 SLADE; 12 SOGAT; 11 NATSOPA; 10 NGA; 9 USDAW; 17 NUPE; 23 NATFHE; 5 CoHSE; 30 NUT; 6 FBW; 57 NALGO; 16 CPSA; 5 SCPS; 5 ISRF; 7 UPW; 9 POEU; 6 APEX; 23 GMWU; 49 from other unions.

Sixty-one Trades Councils sent banners:

Glasgow, Dundee, Ayr, Brechin, Perth, Aberdeen, Inverness, Bradford, Southend, Cheltenham, Shrewsbury, Cardiff, Lewisham, Blackpool, Barnstaple, Cardiff, Sunderland, Wands-

worth, Harlow, St Helens, Camden, Llanelli, Hatfield, Hounslow, St Albans, Hemel, Kidderminster, Luton, Dunstable, Westminster, Thurrock, Ealing, Stockton, Reading, Brighton, Dover, Eastbourne, Warley, Lambeth, Nottingham, Colchester, Plymouth, Harrow, Mole Valley, Crawley, Slough, Tower Hamlets, Salford, Greenwich, Southwark, Guildford, Waltham Forest, Maidstone, Chelmsford, Barnsley, Wakefield, Newcastle, Derby, Stockport.

and 35 Labour Parties:

Beckenham, Aberavon, Corby, Blackpool, Norwich, Greenwich, Upminster, Stockport North, Dulwich, Streatham, Norwood, Dorchester, Walsall, Highbury, Bromsgrove, Wickham, Newham, Shoreditch, Twickenham, Manchester, Portsmouth, Swindon, Glossop, Newmarket, Lewisham, Kensington, St Pancras North, Hornsey, Mid Bedfordshire, Broodfield, Bedford, Gravesend, Battersea, Putney.

Other banners included the National League of the Blind and Disabled, Southwark Abortion Campaign, the Indian Workers' Association (GB) Wolverhampton branch, the CGTP (Portuguese trade union federation), the London Nursery Campaign, Fightback for Women's Rights, cuts campaigns, student unions, LPYs, and political parties, especially Communist Party and Socialist Workers' Party branch banners.

## Leicester Labour day-school says: Troops out now

AN overwhelming majority of nearly 100 people at a Leicester labour movement day school last Saturday, 8th, called for troops out of Ireland now.

The platform motions endorsed by the conference also called for self-determination for Ireland as a whole, repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and political status for Irish republican prisoners. They condemned the imprisonment of Giuseppe Conlon, who was framed on an explosives charge and then died in prison as a result of being denied medical treatment.

The day school was sponsored by Leicester South Labour Party and Leicester Trades Council, and a number of delegated observers attended from union branches and Labour Party wards.

After seeing a video recording on British media coverage

on Ireland, and hearing about the historical background, the day school heard a debate between Jim Marshall (Labour MP for Leicester South) and Jim Reilly of Luton Provisional Sinn Fein. Marshall argued for an end to Labour's bi-partisan approach on Ireland, for repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, for Irish unity, and for withdrawal of British troops... but not immediate withdrawal: instead, a statement of intent to withdraw within two years.

If the people who attended the day school now report back to their wards and union branches, and argue for them to back the 'troops out now' policy, then it will be an important step forward in the fight for the British labour movement to face up to its responsibilities on Ireland.

STAN CROOKE



## Is it porn - or is it sexism?

A FORTNIGHT ago the Birmingham Evening Mail gave union-bashing a break and led with an article entitled "University in porn film probe", which consisted of descriptions of "revolting and nauseating pornographic films" shown to "youngsters" at Aston University.

The cause of this outburst was a series of sex education lectures held ostensibly to dispel taboos and prejudices commonly held about sex. The lectures are run by a Dr. P. Cauthray — best known for his contributions to the gutter press on such enlightening topics as "How to keep your man" and for his involvement in a private sex clinic. This was all fuel for the Evening Mail. Their reports that the Vice Squad were investigating were unfounded and a police spokesman admitted that they used the same films for "training" their detectives!

In fact, the lectures were not particularly enlightening. They were for men — comp-

lete with sexist jokes and blue films to attract attendance.

The only justifiable opposition came from the Aston Women's Group and the rest of the left, who launched a campaign against the lectures.

A representative of the Women's Group described its aims: "We want to see this series halted because we feel that women are presented in an inaccurate manner. We do not believe that if one person controls the content and presentation, an unbiased and accurate picture of human sexuality can be presented. As we think sex education is important we are proposing a committee should be set up by the students' union to run an informative and factual programme."

This was of no interest to the Evening Mail. They were only interested in moralising, just as Dr. Cauthray was reinforcing some basic prejudices about women, however "liberated" his attitude to sex.

NICK LAWRENCE

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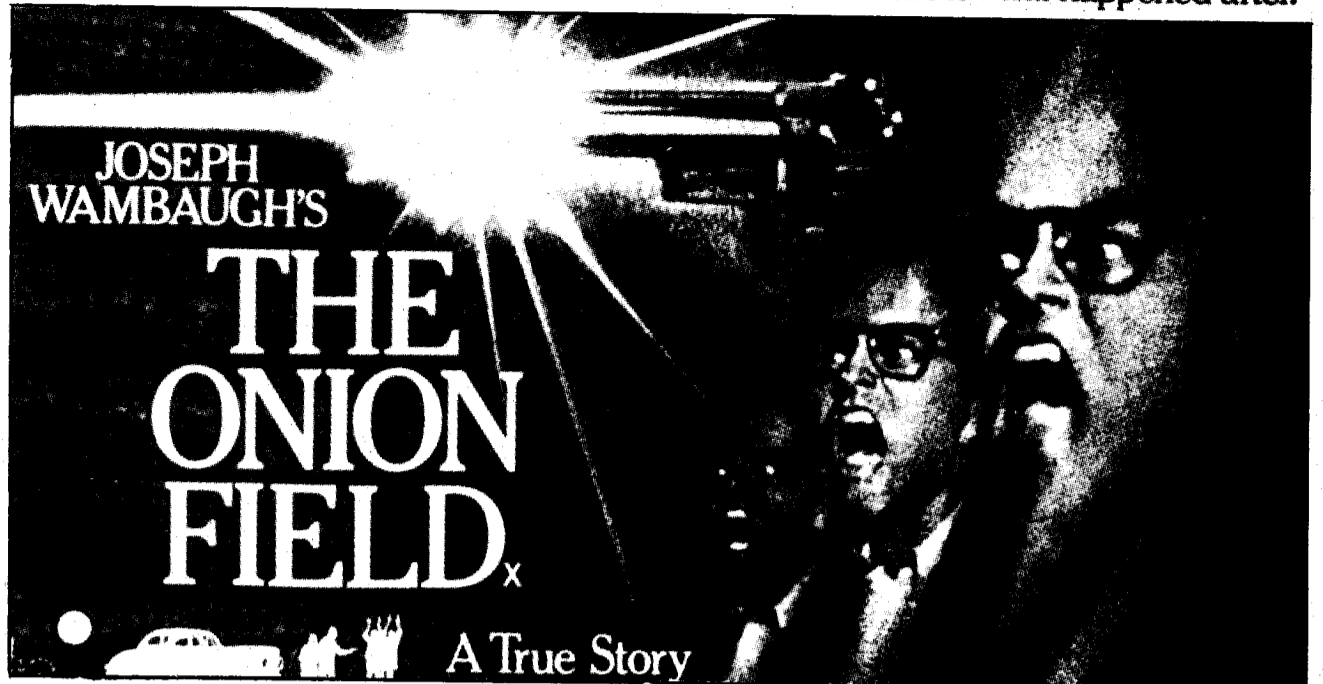
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What happened in the Onion Field is true. But the real crime is what happened after.



WHEN *The Choirboys* was panned by critics, novelist Joseph Wambaugh resolved that the next time one of his books was made into a film, he would do the scriptwriting and he would supervise the overall production. Result: *The Onion Field*. Now perhaps Wambaugh, having run out of alibis, will just give up.

Both *The Choirboys* and *The Onion Field* are cop stories. Not surprising: Wambaugh himself is an ex-cop.

The story of *The Onion Field* is simple. Greg Powell is a "crazy young thief (and incidentally a bisexual)". He befriends and soon dominates another young thief just out of jail, the mild-mannered Jimmy "Youngblood" Smith. Driving to pull yet another small job, they are stopped by two young cops, Hettinger and Campbell, who are cruising around checking out suspicious-looking characters and cars.

Instead of playing it cool, crazy Greg freaks out. He pulls a gun on Campbell who then pleads with Hettinger (who meanwhile has got the drop on Jimmy) to give up his gun. The cops are driven by Greg and Jimmy to an onion field outside town, and there Greg cold-bloodedly kills Campbell. The criminals' stupidity and confusion permits Hettinger to escape and alert the police, who soon pick up Greg and Jimmy.

the warped and wasted lives of Greg and Jimmy, the death of Campbell and Hettinger's cracking-up — Wambaugh's sympathies are clearly with the cops and their families. The message is simple: laws need to be changed in order to protect the police, and trial procedures need tightening up.

The poster for the film says it all — "What happened in the Onion Field is true. But the real crime is what happened after." If what happened after is "the real crime", then, presumably, the real crime is the absurdly long trial with its white-collar-and-black-gown surrealism, the real criminal is the too-soft system of justice, and the real victim is the long-suffering policeman on the beat. Thus, whatever the truth of what happened in the Onion Field in March 1963 or in court afterwards, or in Hettinger's life, these facts are used to make out a case that is one hundred per cent reactionary.

Nor does the film somehow become progressive because it is very critical of the law and even of certain aspects of law enforcement. On the contrary, criticism of law enforcement is a regular

element it either attacks an unspecified bureaucracy or it is turned to attack civil rights and political action as such. In the guise of attacking crime, and the inadequacy of the police to deal with it, such films attack all those ideas, institutions or laws which restrain naked police power.

*The Onion Field* departs from vehicles of this kind in its structure (it is far more ramshackle and far more boring than tightly structured features like *Bullit*, *Dirty Harry* or *The Big Heat*) and in its lack of an idealised central figure (the tough cop) but not in its basic purpose. (In fact, Hettinger's friend Oscar is a kind of foulmouthed gun-toting Dixon of Dock Green. Oscar, a subordinate figure in the film, is a portrait of the tough unpromoted neighbourhood cop who tells his superiors what they can do with their rules.)

In *The Onion Field*, the main targets are not the

in the Onion Field — after all, "the real crime is what happened after". Consequently, he fails to give any true depth to the characters of Greg and Jimmy. Instead, masquerading for depth of character we get the gaudiness of smart, colourful dialogue and idiosyncrasy.

Characters are identified according to their degree of difference, not the degree to which they typify or resemble more general types. The result is to block off any general social conclusions.

According to John Coleman in *New Statesman*, Wambaugh was encouraged to write *The Onion Field* by "Truman Capote, the Capote presumably of *In Cold Blood*".

What really happens in 'The Onion Field'

Perhaps so. Yet this film is the reverse of *In Cold Blood*. Capote was concerned to show that the crime that seemed inexplicable could be understood psychologically and, less directly, even socially. Thus the projection essentially is from the crime backwards in time to the condition that led to it. In *The Onion Field*, what happened after is the most important, and therefore the background is hardly looked at.

At the only point where much of Greg's background is revealed, the revelation is calculated to increase the audience's loathing for the screwball killer. Thus, we are not asked to understand the killing sympathetically, but we are asked to understand Hettinger's theft sympathetically, to understand that it is a product of the enormous strain placed on the policeman by the long drawn-out trial.

Apart from this, the sole indication of an explanation of Greg's character lies in the references to his delusions of sexual mastery and his homosexuality. Unfortunately, the former is treated merely as a joke while the latter is treated (you need only listen to the audience reaction) as something abnormal and disgusting.

Truly, this is a film by a cop for the benefit of other cops.

Andrew Hornung

element of pro-cop films, however strange that might seem.

Think of *Starsky and Hutch*. Such films frequently indulge in a kind of knock-the-tops populism. It is a very American game, not at all British.

The classical format is where the police commissioner (sometimes the DA or the mayor, all three being political figures) is corrupt, over-ambitious, hypocritical or unrealistic; where the cop on the beat (sometimes the private dick) is incorruptible, like the guy next door, as distinct from the well-heeled and intellectual types who make it to being DA; courageous, and above all streetwise.

Between these there is the piggy-in-the-middle captain who takes orders from above but tries to protect his men.

This raunchy democratic spirit is not used to attack privilege or profiteering. In the context of cinema pop-

Found guilty, they are both sentenced to death, but using a series of loopholes and procedural points, they are able not only to escape the chair, but to keep the trial going for the next eight years. At the end of that time, they are given life sentences.

While Greg and Jimmy fight it out in the courts, Hettinger is criticised for having broken police rules in handing his gun over to the criminals. Weighed down by a sense of guilt, he himself becomes a thief, stealing from a store he is supposed to be watching. The strain which drives him to the brink of suicide is not relieved until the trial is finally over.

In this multiple tragedy —



# Why not 'General Strike to kick the Tories out'?

ALREADY in 1980 the slogan 'General Strike to kick the Tories out' has become popular, both on workers' demonstrations and in the left press (*Socialist Press* and, more cautiously, *Socialist Challenge*). In 1970-4 that slogan was popular, too. First taken up by the Socialist Labour League (now "Workers' Revolutionary Party"), it was later brought to the fore by *Red Weekly* (forerunner of *Socialist Challenge*). But in the great struggles of 1972 and 1974, the apparently radical slogan was disorienting and confusing for the socialists who took it up. In July 1972, the Socialist Labour League argued that the general strike which promised to develop out of the mass protest at the jailing of the Pentonville Five dockers "must not be lifted until the General Election when a Labour Government pledged to socialist policies can be elected". In other words, they directly argued for the 'ballot box trap' which served the French ruling class so well in 1968, and would have served the British ruling class, too, to demobilise a general strike.

*Red Weekly* and the International Marxist Group tried to give 'General Strike to kick the Tories out' a different content, when they took it up in late 1973 and early 1974. They talked about "real workers' elections" and about organising workers to march together from the factories to the ballot boxes — tried all sorts of other ways to make "kick the Tories out" appear the same as revolution — and when after polling day the Tories hesitated a couple of days before resigning, they dived into fantasy politics with a broadsheet calling for a General Strike to Finish Off the Tories and for the Labour Party to proclaim itself the Government.

In fact, the slogan 'General Strike to kick the Tories out' could only be muddled and mystifying, or a very far from radical slogan, a call for a General Strike linked with a call for a general election as a safety-valve.

This article — reprinted in the new *Workers' Action* pamphlet, *Why We Need a General Strike*, from the socialist paper *Workers' Fight*, 12 January 1974 — is thus once again very relevant to the debates on the left.

WHY NOT link the call for a general strike with the question of government, by calling for a general strike to force the Tories out? This sounds very radical. But it is actually a snare. No government would simply resign in the middle of a general strike — it would fight and manoeuvre and scheme, in the interest of the continuation of the capitalist system, to demobilise the strike.

Therefore, either such a call is a call for armed insurrection in the course of a general strike to force the government out (or overthrow the system) — and since neither the working class nor the revolutionaries are anywhere near this possibility, that would be raving ultra left nonsense.

Or else it means a general strike to force the Tories to call an election.

In the circumstances this is all it can mean concretely. Thus, the call for a general strike to force the Tories out is really just another, mystified, way of calling for a general strike to get a general election. But in a general strike, the last thing revolutionaries would call for would be a general election, which would just be a trick to get the strike called off (as happened in France in May 1968).

Faced with the real alternatives of an unfolding general strike, this slogan would reveal its real, right wing meaning. Its advocates, if consistent, would actually help the government to get off the hook as soon as it was prepared to offer an election.

To kick out the Tories and replace them with a Labour government is of major importance now. But if a general strike, however it started, began to reach even some of its revolutionary potential, not least the mobilisation of millions of workers in direct action, then kicking out one capitalist government to be replaced by a slightly less obnoxious one would become relatively trivial, compared with the possibilities that would exist for overthrowing capitalism.

Mystifying things with a slogan which has a number of possible meanings, none of them spelled out, can only serve those who benefit from muddle and confusion on the part of the socialists and militants. In reality *Red Weekly's* slogan means neither General Election, nor insurrection — but empty phrasemongering.

The slogan can be rationalised by opting for the reformist variant: General Strike for a Labour Government.

This rests on a cold calculation with the different factors — General Strike, Government, election, insurrection — as if it were all a matter of known and fixed quantities interacting mechanically. Insurrection is not an immediate possibility; replacing the Tories by Labour would be a step forward; therefore — General Strike for a Labour government.

This misses what it is essential to understand about the General Strike: that it is not fixed, given, a stable measured action — but something which develops. Politics now is limited and defined, by the restricted level of working class involvement, within bourgeois confines. A General Strike would transform this by a giant explosion of direct action. How deep and how explosive the strike is, and how far it is allowed to develop the mobilisation of the working class — that is what will establish in action what is really possible in a General Strike. To see a General Strike as just a bargaining counter in the current business of politics is to miss its revolutionary potential.

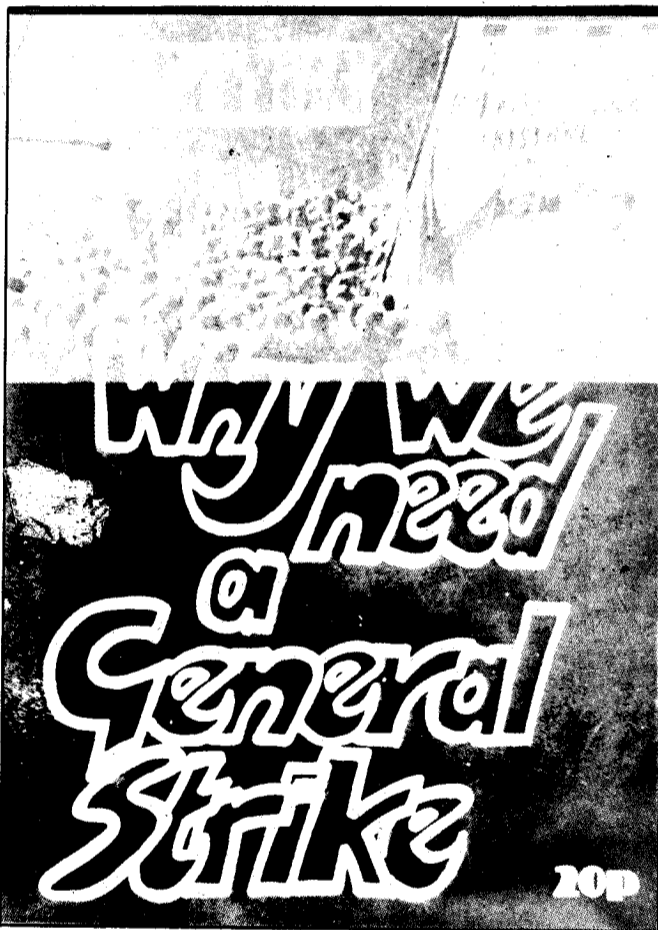
A general strike involves mobilisation of the whole working class on a gigantic scale. The strikers would begin to make decisions not normally in the province of workers. The

very fact of a great strike compels this. A vast layer of the class would be involved in meetings, discussions, decision-making, of the sort that strike committees normally have to concern themselves with, and far beyond.

What, if any, supplies should be moved? Which, if any, sections of workers should work? What transport should move? Whose transport? How to deal with scabs, including the army. And so on. In short a general strike is a vast arousing of the class's initiative, determination, and creativity (of the sort, for example, which threw up the flying picket idea).

The spread of the strikes would create a need for coordination on regional and maybe national level of the various strike committees, of linking together the regional committees of different trade unions, and so on.

The whole tendency of such committees in the course of leading the strike would be to take more and more control — often against the pressure of national trade union leaders. In 1926 strike committees in Co. Durham effectively took control of their area.



The new pamphlet from *Workers' Action*, *Why We Need a General Strike*, discusses the perspectives of a general strike in the current fightback against the Tory blitz. 16 pages, 20p plus 10p postage, from WA, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

Such committees can grow beyond just being strike committees and develop into councils in which the working class could organise and express itself politically in a way quite different from anything possible when control is fully in the hands of the bourgeois state and Parliament. The feelings, grievances, aspirations of the working class, going beyond the issues of the strike, would begin to emerge and find expression. The explosive discontent which does exist now and which in fact makes a general strike a real possibility in Britain today would burst out.

Even if the strength of reformism within such councils allowed the bourgeoisie to survive, call elections, and so on, at least a period could result when the bourgeoisie would not be in full control, and in which the working class would learn enormously.

To the degree that revolutionaries have influence — and gain influence, in the favourable conditions of mass mobilisation — revolution would become a real possibility. It may indeed turn out that the general strike brings no more than a change in government. But the revolutionary who accepts this in advance is ruling out the revolutionary potential of the general strike, as well as ignoring the experience of the general strike in history. S/he is cancelling out the activity of revolutionaries, and the slogans they raise, as a factor in how things actually develop.

To argue that a general strike for a minimalist goal of changing the government is the best slogan amounts to adventurist squandering and trifling with the energy of the working class. It is to advocate a giant mobilisation of the working class — and to chop it off in advance at a relatively limited objective. To take such a line in an actual strike would be to lose the possibility of helping to deepen the

general strike along its anti-capitalist logic. To advocate it now would be to abandon attempts to build on the present militancy; it would be a straight transformation of the revolutionaries who advocated it into Labourites — militant Labourites, but Labourites all the same.

We must break from the traditional British fear of linking politics to industrial action. We believe, however, that it is crucial to understand that direct action is at all times primary, more important for revolutionaries than parliamentary considerations. The 'General Strike for a Labour government' policy reduces the most tremendous industrial direct action possible — General Strike — to an auxiliary of parliamentary politics.

General Strike is industrial action of a necessarily political quality. It may not realise its revolutionary potential. But for revolutionaries to box it in in advance in the framework of parliamentary politics is irresponsible. A General Strike for limited goals can be victorious, or can lead to a retreat, or can develop in an open-ended way. But a General Strike which poses for itself the goal of overthrowing the government had better be either the prelude to insurrection or resign itself to a quick electoralist collapse.

To mock at an implied call for insurrection like that of *Red Weekly* is not at all to deny the revolutionary possibilities in a general strike. What is wrong with *Red Weekly* is that by raising an empty slogan it contributes to the creation of a weapon that in the hands of reformists and reactionaries would help prevent a real General Strike from developing towards a situation where an insurrection might not be ludicrous to contemplate at all. The slogan of changing the government would be taken from the hands of the ultra-lefts and used as a weapon of electoralist derailment by the ruling class. They would use electoral calls to neutralise the strike, offering the change the government in the time-honoured traditional way — elections. Which would be something actually very trivial compared with the real possibilities of a general strike.

Linking 'General Strike' with changing the government now, in advance, would lead either to revolutionaries lining up with reformists or to a panic change of slogans (something *Red Weekly* does on average every six months — never, alas, with much noticeable improvement).

*Red Weekly's* slogan is cheap ultra leftism with an as yet hidden right wing content which a general strike would very quickly reveal. 'General strike to kick the Tories out' is popular with many militants now. The responsibility of Marxists, however, is to actually think problems through — not to reflect and mimic even fundamentally healthy but muddled 'gut' reaction.

Better to link industrial action and politics rationally, taking account of the possible development of a General Strike. We pose the general strike for specific goals — against the Industrial Relations Act, against any new wage freeze — while preserving the idea that the use of a general strike, for any reason, however apparently limited, would open up a new situation in which the question of government would be posed in a different and more fundamental light. Here is the root of the paradox that the apparently more limited goals (smashing the Act) do not threaten to collide with the revolutionary logic of the general strike once begun, whereas the apparently more advanced goal (Tories out) would immediately come into head-on collision with that logic.

Today's 'advanced' slogan would be transformed into a weapon of the reformists — as in France in 1968. There is every reason to believe that a general strike in Britain in the period ahead would be an angry offensive of tremendous power, probably leading to factory seizures — and as in France in 1968, probably an unwillingness to settle even for big concessions. It is the duty of revolutionaries to orientate towards these possibilities.

Finally, not the least lesson of France 1968 is that even such a titanic explosion cannot simply be translated into votes at an election. The reformists who tried to cash in on the strike got less votes than the numbers on strike.

The strike scared the middle classes behind the Gaullist 'Party of Order', and many strikers, reacting with bitterness at the betrayal of the 'Socialist' and 'Communist' leaders, didn't vote. However desirable a general election is, one that follows a general strike is unlikely to favour the anti Government party once the strike is over. A General Strike is not a tool for exerting electoral pressure!

There are many other questions on the General Strike that need to be discussed — for example, in relation to the Labour Party, the need to make specific demands on the Labour leaders on pain of giving them an entirely free hand in the struggles ahead.

In fact the *Red Weekly* slogan, with the whole emphasis on bringing down the Government, is based on a 'scenario' mechanically modelled on 1917 in Russia. Logically they should call for a Workers' Government. Quite rightly they refuse to peddle the illusion that a Labour Government would foreseeably be a workers' government. But in true sectarian style they go from this to implicit refusal to relate to the Labour Party at all except for a vague acceptance that getting the Tories out might mean putting Labour in. Refusing to make even limited specific demands on the Labour Party, they are totally passive towards the party of the trade unions. They are left with a scenario with a great hole in the middle — the lack of any visible working class governmental alternative to the Tories — unless they have quiet hopes of forming an IMG government soon!

# COMMUNISM AGAINST STALINISM IN EASTERN EUROPE

## Class struggle will triumph over Stalinism

THIS WEEK we continue our publication of the analyses made by Marxists of the Stalinist expansion in Eastern Europe in the 1940's. These sections of the Fourth International's 1948 document *The USSR and Stalinism* conclude the discussion of revolutionary strategy in Eastern Europe and describe the development of the Stalinist parties.

The guiding idea is that "the class struggle will triumph over Stalinism"; that revolutionaries do not look to "a struggle between the 'two blocs' but a battle between worker and bourgeois". This guiding idea was not necessarily changed by the Marxists' conclusion, in the years after 1948, that the Eastern European states were no longer capitalist; but after about 1950, the class struggle perspective was partly replaced, or pushed backstage for many Trotskyists, by a notion that it was precisely the "struggle between the 'two blocs'" that was fundamental in world politics. This notion has reemerged in some socialists' reactions to the Russian invasion of Afghanistan.

Some overstatements in the 1948 document must have helped prepare the way for the later turnabout. Apparently basing itself mainly on the development of the West European Communist Parties, which fervently opposed strikes and championed capitalist reconstruction up to 1947, the document excludes even a "return to a pseudo-revolutionary orientation". In fact, CPs in Asia were conducting armed struggle even in 1948, and the West European CPs were to take a pseudo-radical tack in the years of the Cold War.

The 1948 document, however, in all its condemnations of Stalinism, does not lose sight of the fact that "the Stalinist parties remain workers' parties". In the late 1940's, many radicals, anarchists and socialists, bending under the pressure of cold war propaganda, were arguing that the Stalinist parties should be treated like fascists — that they were not workers' parties, but nuclei of new ruling classes, aiming to impose "bureaucratic communism". The Marxists maintained a clear position to this anti-communism.

**28** HOWEVER, these two combined political tasks cannot enter the field of action before the next stage. At the present time — that of retreat and disorientation of the masses in the "buffer-zone" — the tasks of the vanguard are twofold: to prepare, by propaganda and education, cadres for effective intervention in the coming tide, and to link these cadres more closely with the advanced strata of the proletariat by active intervention in all their struggles. The workers' political life is today concentrated in these countries in the Social Democratic parties. The differentiation, which has taken place there, has up till now been distorted by the absence of a revolutionary tendency. The most active anti-Stalinist working-class elements have thus been canalized by the right wing Social Democrats seeking an alliance with the bourgeois "left" and imperialism. It is the duty of the Bolshevik-Leninists in the "buffer-zone" countries to build up, inside the Social Democratic parties, a revolutionary tendency opposed to the capitulators to both the bourgeoisie and to Stalinism. Insofar as this tendency will retain its own physiognomy, as described above, it will become the pole of attraction for all advanced workers disgusted with Stalinism.

The advanced layers of the proletariat are at the present time concerned with the economic problems in the nationalised sector. The fundamental line of the Bolshevik-Leninists in these questions must consist of defending the immediate interests of the masses against the state-boss. But at the same time, it is necessary to advance, if only in a propagandist form, the historic perspectives bound up with a final solution of the problems posed by the present situation, that is, a programme of transitional demands, mobilising the masses for the proletarian revolution in these countries. The Bolshevik-Leninists will propose the following:

Abolition of the peace treaties, reparations, etc.  
Seizure of all "Soviet property" by the workers of the occupied countries.

Workers' control of production.  
Expropriation of the big and middle bourgeoisie.  
Real planning through the centralisation of the industries and bank in trusts and in a state Bank.  
Expropriation of foreign capital.  
Election of factory managers by the workers.  
Reduction of their salaries to those of skilled workers.  
Right of the workers to dismiss their managers.  
Elaboration of a plan for harmonious economic development between city and country, in the interest of the masses, with the active participation of workers' and poor peasants' committees.

**29** The question of democratisation of economic life and the national question arise in the "buffer-zone" countries in a definite social environment which is neither that of the "colonial countries" nor that of a bureaucratised Soviet society. The fact that capitalism still exists in these countries side by side with exploitation by the Stalinist bureaucracy must fundamentally determine our strategy. The capitalist nature of these countries imposes the necessity of the strictest revolutionary defeatism in war time. It also follows therefrom that we do not assign to the reactionary bourgeoisie of these countries any "progressive" mission, nor any possibility of independent action by petty-bourgeois peasant organisations. While unreservedly supporting every concrete step of the masses on the road of their struggle against the police regime, the pillaging, the suppression of workers' liberties, the increased exploitation of the workers, we do not cease for one moment our uncompromising political opposition to all bourgeois or petty-bourgeois organisations, which constitute imperialist agencies and which are far from being an — even confused — "expression of this will to struggle of the masses". They are in fact nothing but instruments to canalize and break up a fresh working-class rising.

Likewise, from the Russian occupation forces or from pro-Stalinist governments, which are completely reactionary, we do not demand the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, the setting up of a real foreign trade monopoly, an effective struggle against speculation and the black market. We call upon the Russian worker-soldiers not to permit themselves to be used as strike-breakers or anti-labour police by the bureaucracy. We count on revolutionary mass action to sweep away all that remains of the power of the capitalists, while at the same time sweeping away the forms and instruments of exploitation and oppression of the Soviet bureaucracy in these countries. This is why, while supporting every forward step by the working masses, who put forward their demands and enter the anti-capitalist road, we constantly warn them against the counter-revolutionary and anti-working-class nature of the policy of the Stalinist organisations, and we unceasingly defend the necessity of building a new revolutionary party. Special stress must be laid on the international character of the socialist revolution.

To the capitalists and petty bourgeois who count on American intervention, we oppose the independent strategy of defending the masses' interests, whose essential support must lie in the world forces of the socialist revolution. The fundamental aim of our strategy thus remains the establishment of Independent Socialist Republics of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary etc., within the framework of the Socialist United States of Europe. But the tactical application of this strategic line will depend on concrete circumstances.

**30** Stalinist policies in eastern Germany and Austria are the clearest demonstration of the reactionary role of the bureaucracy in the "buffer-zone". This reactionary role is likewise the best indication of the increasing neutralisation of the remnants of the conquests of

October by the parasitic nature of the bureaucracy. Of all the occupying powers, Stalinist Russia has been the most barbarous toward the German and Austrian populations. The pitiless deportation of industrial equipment and manpower, the pillage, rape and abductions of civilians, the cynical subordination of German and Austrian life to the interests of the bureaucracy, the arbitrary anti-democratic acts which are constantly taking place in Austria as well as the rapid establishment of a virtual dictatorship in the Eastern zone of Germany have opened the eyes of the working masses to the real character of the bureaucracy and caused a rising tide of anti-Sovietism of unequalled proportions which affects not only the Stalinist movement but the very idea of communism. The strictest delimitation of the Fourth International from Stalinism, an energetic and persistent campaign against the Stalinist crimes against the German and Austrian masses, an unequivocal statement of position for the immediate cessation of all dismantling operations, for the retention in Germany and Austria of total current production, for the abolition of all reparations agreements, for the transfer into the hands of the German and Austrian workers of all "Soviet property" — these are the preconditions for the building of a revolutionary party which alone will be able to prevent US imperialism from thoroughly exploiting the mass anti-Stalinist feeling.

**31** The character of the Stalinist parties has been completely changed by the development of the bureaucracy in these parties, following the degeneration of the Comintern, by the suppression of the freedom of different currents within the movement, by the crushing of critical spirit, and the elimination of the most educated, conscious and independent elements.

From revolutionary parties, following a more or less mistaken — "centrist" — line, reflecting the zigzags in the orientation of the Russian Bolshevik Party under Stalinist leadership, they have turned into organisations whose only function is to serve the diplomatic manoeuvres of the Soviet bureaucracy. The Stalinist leadership is, by virtue of this fact, "counter-revolutionary" in the same sense as the reformist leadership of the Social Democracy: it wishes to prevent by all means the outbreak or the victorious development of revolutionary mass movements. However, the Stalinist parties, in the same way as the Social Democratic parties, remain workers' parties — profoundly degenerated. This becomes clear the moment one applies the following criteria:

- The workers belonging to these parties consider them as workers' organisations and join them because they are aware of the necessity for a proletarian class organisation.
- The bourgeoisie considers these parties as parties of the "class enemy" representing the proletariat, although it is aware of their subordination to the Kremlin.
- The bureaucracy of the Stalinist parties itself is aware that in order to play its role efficaciously, it must rely on and keep the confidence of the working masses.

**32** The extraordinary upswing experienced by the Stalinist parties at the end of the war cannot be understood unless one considers this phenomenon within the framework of the developing labour movement. For the great majority of the proletariat and small peasants in most countries of the world, their passing from Social Democracy, petty-bourgeois organisations or political passivity toward the Stalinist parties, was the expression of their first stage of radicalisation:

- The Stalinist parties still appear in their eyes as representatives of a revolutionary tradition.
- The masses had experienced for two decades the devotion and the courage of the lower ranks of the Stalinist



# COMMUNISM AGAINST STALINISM IN EASTERN EUROPE



cadres with whom they were in constant contact during all class struggles.

c) The masses had not yet passed through their own experiences with the class treachery of the Stalinist leaders (long government experience).

d) The dominant role played by Stalinist militants in the mass resistance movements — which was above all due to the solid power and dynamism of their apparatus — as well as the victorious resistance of the USSR to imperialist aggression, had created new illusions among the masses concerning the possibilities of a social upheaval under the leadership of the Communist parties.

**33** Nevertheless, the outbreak of the German-Russian war constituted for all Stalinist parties in the world a fundamental and definitive political turning point. From that moment, these parties became the most ardent proponents of "class truce" and of the "war effort". Their propaganda lost all outward signs of a class language. The most abject chauvinism constituted the "line". In the colonies (India, etc.), the Communist parties became the most energetic agents of imperialism. In the Eastern European countries, they became completely conservative government organs, whose function consisted both in throttling the impulse to independent proletarian action and in maintaining the bourgeoisie within the framework of its "modus vivendi" with the bureaucracy. In the countries of Western Europe and several Latin-American countries, the Communist parties became the main grave-diggers of the rising proletarian revolution and repeated, on a world scale, the role of super-Noske which they had filled in the Spanish revolution.

From the government point of view of the bourgeoisie, CP participation in the government expressed the clear recognition of the fact that Stalinism had become the most powerful counter-revolutionary factor in the workers' movement. For the Stalinists, this participation reflected the fundamental needs of the Soviet bureaucracy, i.e., (a) to prevent the outbreak of the proletarian revolution; (b) to use the role of "saviour of capitalism" in order to force upon the bourgeoisie economic and especially diplomatic concessions advantageous to the Kremlin; (c) to penetrate the bourgeois state apparatus and thus prepare "strategic" positions for its neutralisation in the event of an anti-Soviet imperialist war.

This turn is the logical outcome of the political evolution of Stalinism. From that moment, the aim pursued by the Communist parties has consisted more and more exclusively in blackmailing the bourgeoisie so as to obtain its neutral or favourable orientation toward the Kremlin and so as to preserve the Stalinist positions "conquered" in the bourgeois state apparatus. The Stalinist parties have become neo-reformist parties which are distinct from the reformist parties by their connection with the Soviet bureaucracy. Just as the old reformist parties endeavoured to reconcile the existence of the labour bureaucracy with that of the national bourgeoisie, so the Stalinist parties attempt to reconcile the existence of the Soviet bureaucracy with that of the world bourgeoisie. Owing to fluctuations in the situation, temporary turns may be carried out to the right or to the left, within the framework of this fundamental orientation. A real return to a pseudo-revolutionary orientation comparable to that of 1939-41 is no longer possible, except in the case of outbreak of the US-Soviet war and the crushing of the mass movement. The Stalinists can take up arms only insofar as such action does not involve the risk of arousing a real workers' uprising. They can once more employ "revolutionary language" only insofar as this language does not actually incur the risk of starting the proletarian revolution.

**34** This fundamental transformation of the Stalinist parties, as a factor in the new foreign policy of the Soviet bureaucracy, is also explained by the change in the social composition and the new membership recruitment of the Stalinist parties and finds its expression in an entirely new ideological basis of these parties.

a) Beginning with 1944, the Stalinist parties for the first time penetrated the bourgeois state apparatus; bourgeois ideology also penetrated for the first time organically into their ranks. To the extent that the Stalinist bureaucracy starts having "private" interests to defend in each capitalist country, the reformist character of its policy must inevitably become more pronounced. While the Stalinist apparatus remained almost completely faithful to the Kremlin in 1939-40 because all its interests bound it to the Soviet bureaucracy, at present it is certainly more independent than at that time. In view of the increasingly sharp contradictions between the Stalinist bureaucracy and American imperialism, a more direct control by the Kremlin over the leadership of the various "national" Stalinist parties has become necessary. Nevertheless, one should not expect large cracks in the apparatus in the eventuality of war, because all the leading strata of the Communist parties are entirely aware that only their link with the USSR allows them to play a political role "independent" of other reformist currents inside the labour movement.

b) Starting in 1941, and up till 1945, the Communist parties recruited a great many petty-bourgeois, intellectual, peasant elements. They endeavoured — as soon as they had the majority of the working class behind them — to concentrate their recruiting efforts on these layers (course toward well-to-do peasants in the "buffer-zone", "defense of

property against the trusts" in France, and so on). Inevitably, a change in the relation of forces producing a turn of the petty bourgeoisie back to the right will weaken the Communist parties in their petty-bourgeois wing and will bring about the typically reformist tendency to "win back" these lost strata by placing stress on rightist propaganda (chauvinism, defense of national sovereignty, defense of the middle classes, etc.).

c) The sum total of these transformations in the composition and policy of the Communist parties finds expression in their new ideological basis. They now start out from the conception that the class struggle has been transferred to the field of struggle between the world powers, or essentially between the USSR and the "new democracies" on the one side, and the Anglo-American bloc, on the other. It suffices for a country to come into the Soviet sphere of influence for it to begin marching on a progressive, peaceful road to socialism. The proletarian revolution is, therefore, "outmoded" as the best way of destroying capitalism. In the countries belonging to the zone under American influence, the proletarian revolution is, furthermore, "impracticable" in view of the international relation of forces. The Communist parties there must endeavour to strengthen the independence movements of these countries against American imperialism, a movement which must embrace all classes and must, logically, end in their neutralisation and then in their inclusion in the Soviet sphere of influence. This new reformist ideology of Stalinism is the most self-evident and cynical confession of the abandonment of the revolutionary class struggle by these parties and of their complete submission to the aims of the Kremlin's foreign politics.

**35** Leon Trotsky correctly described Hitler and Stalin as "twin stars". The main power of Stalinism and the essential chance of survival of world imperialism lie precisely in their interaction, their mutual relations in the consciousness of the masses. To the extent that US imperialism shows increased hostility toward the Soviet bureaucracy and the national bourgeoisies intensify their campaign against the respective "national" Stalinist parties, the masses will inevitably tend to consider the Soviet bureaucracy and the Stalinist parties as anti-imperialist and revolutionary forces; and the masses will continue to give them more or less passive support, even in cases where they have already had their first experience with the treacherous class collaborationist policy of the Stalinist leaders.



On the other hand, to the extent that the masses — wherever Stalin is in power — will tend to consider the imperialist "democratic" camp as the only real alternative to the hated Stalinist dictatorship, they will flow back to the "democratic" and Social-Democratic organisations in the service of imperialism and will provide them with a new mass base in those areas where they had been completely deprived of popular support, by the end of the war.

But Hitler and Stalin were "twin stars" only because of the historic epoch of their appearance was an epoch of retreat and stagnation of the working-class movement. The period of upswing we are now experiencing possesses, by its own logic of development, the mechanism for the abolition of the vicious circle wherein humanity runs the risk of losing all chances for survival. In the course of their struggles, their amplification and generalisation, the masses will at the same time gain the necessary experience and revolutionary dynamism to free themselves from Stalinist influence, while clarifying their anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist orientation. Our whole perspective is based on this consideration: that the class struggle will finally triumph over Stalinism.

But already today it is clear that the subjective factor, the existence of a revolutionary party anchored in the masses and taken seriously by them, plays a decisive role in this process of emancipation of the working-class movement from putrefying Stalinism, the necessary condition for the revolutionary emancipation of the proletariat from decadent capitalism.

**36** Recent examples, in the colonial countries as well as in France, have clearly shown the possibility of a limited break-through of the Stalinist apparatus by the struggling workers at the present stage. However, this process is still necessarily limited by the following factors:

a) The Stalinist parties have not yet been sufficiently "used up" by their participation in the government.

b) They have a larger field for manoeuvres as a result of the increased hostility of the bourgeoisie toward them.

c) They have managed to "rejuvenate" reformism by combining it with a series of slogans of the post-revolutionary period in Russia.

d) There is, as yet, no revolutionary party considered by the masses as sufficiently capable in action to represent a real alternative to the Communist party.

e) The advanced layers of the proletariat have felt Stalinist betrayal only in the economic field (wage freeze, "production first", strikebreaking, etc.).

Under these conditions, a large-scale movement breaking away from the Stalinist organisations will be a long and painful process which is essentially simultaneous with that of building the revolutionary party. By constant, intelligent and patient intervention in all workers' struggles, in all mass movements of protest and revolt, the revolutionary militants must gradually gain the confidence of the most advanced workers' strata in order to constitute a real new leadership for the next revolutionary wave. They will only be able to play this role to the extent that they appear under their true colours, which the masses will in no way be able to confuse with "left Stalinism".

**37** Outside the "buffer-zone" countries, the struggle against Stalinism will thus, in the main, have to go through the following stages:

a) Against Stalinism as an ideological current poisoning the working class, we must wage an unceasing struggle, tearing down all the illusions of the masses about the "non-capitalist" nature of the "buffer-zone" countries. At the same time, patient reiteration, educational and non-doctrinaire, understandable to the masses, of the essentials of Marxism (class struggle character of the state, necessity for the proletarian revolution, principles of workers' democracy, internationalism, etc.) is one of the most essential means of combatting Stalinism.

b) Against Stalinism as the predominant organisation of the working class — the gradual penetration of the revolutionary party into all the mass organisations and, above all, into the factories and the trade unions. The struggle against Stalinism is essentially a struggle to wrest from the Stalinists their predominant influence over the working masses.

c) Against Stalinism as a political party claiming to represent the working class — constant exposure, not doctrinaire, but educational and understandable to the masses, of the anti-working class policy of the Stalinist leaders; revolutionary propaganda enabling the masses to go through their own experience with the treacherous character of the Stalinist leadership; untiring agitation for proletarian unity of action for all class objectives; propaganda for a

**EFFORT**  
de production  
maximum!

par **BENOIT FRACHON**

Le mouvement des travailleurs...  
de la France...  
pour la production...  
maximum...

The French CP after World War 2: calling for maximum production and no strikes, they recruited massively in the middle class.

united front under appropriate conditions and given a certain relationship of forces.

d) Against the GPU, the Stalinist murder machine, the Fourth International wages unceasing warfare by all the means at their disposal. The Stalinists have taken advantage of every social upheaval to kill off numerous Trotskyist and other anti-Stalinist militants in order to eliminate physically all cadres who could give revolutionary leadership to the working class (Spain, Greece, Viet Nam). The whole criminal record of the GPU must be constantly exposed. The greatest alertness must be shown to all new GPU crimes in preparation. The broadest sections of public opinion must be mobilised against them. The fullest and most careful measures of self-defence must be undertaken. Against the calculated cold-blooded murder methods of the GPU, the Fourth International must utilise every means at its command.

**38** Historically, the fate of the world proletariat depends on its capacity to throw off in time Stalinist leadership and to prevent the crushing of the working class together with the Soviet bureaucracy by imperialism. The consciousness of this inevitable historic necessity is embodied in the Fourth International. Its analysis is based on the understanding of the parallel decomposition of the capitalist world and of Soviet Russia in the absence of a victorious socialist revolution.

Its course, which is toward world revolution, cannot, at the present stage of development of the mass struggles, contain any trace of favouring either Anglo-American imperialism or the Soviet bureaucracy. On both sides of the "iron curtain", our political line, determined by the immediate and historic interests of the oppressed masses, is that of their proletarian class struggle. This is why, essentially, the struggle between the Greek partisans and the Sophoulis-Tsaldaris government does not constitute in our eyes a struggle between the "two blocs" but a battle between workers and bourgeois. This is why in the "buffer-zone" we are on the side of the working masses — against the Stalinist regimes and against possible reactionary conspiracies of the imperialists. Everywhere, we take as our starting point the predominance of the class struggle as the decisive factor in the political development.

# Meccano fight continues after eviction

BAILIFFS acting for the Meccano bosses smashed their way into the occupied factory in Liverpool at 5 in the morning last Tuesday, 11th.

Kenny Barr, one of the Meccano workers, was inside. "I was having a doze when I heard the banging. Next thing they forced the door with a sledge hammer and pickaxes.

"About 40 bailiffs and 70 police came through and ushered us out... They man-handled us out and didn't allow us any time to collect our possessions or to phone

the union officials".

The bailiffs had already tried to get into the occupation to serve the High Court writ the day before, but the workers had not opened the door to them and they were forced to retire.

The Meccano factory has been occupied for 102 days since the bosses announced that they were going to close it down. The workers, mainly women, had decided they were not going to let their jobs go down the river, and occupied to stop the bosses selling off the stocks and machinery.

Despite the invasion of the occupation, the workers are still determined that nothing will leave the factory. A picket has been mounted outside with the support of steel strikers from Warrington and workers from another occupation at Massey Ferguson in Knowsley and local trade unionists.

Convenor Frank Bloor said, "We won't allow any machinery or goods out of the factory. If they want to get anything out, they are going to have to use force".

MICK CASHMAN

# Workers seize another Merseyside factory

WORKERS AT Massey-Ferguson, Knowsley, have put out this appeal for support.

As many of you will know, the Massey Ferguson industrial machinery factory at Knowsley has been occupied by the workers. This action has been taken in defence of the 550 jobs at the site. This was brought about by the company making a statement on 11th February 1980 indicating that they intend to centralise all the north-west production of industrial construction machinery at the

Barton Dock Road factory in Manchester.

This would mean the closure of the Knowsley factory and the loss of another 550 jobs on Merseyside.

Since the first statement from the company, there has been a total embargo on all finished machines leaving the Knowsley site.

On Friday February 29 the company stated that due to the embargo they intended to start lay-offs the following week.

The trade unions, backed up by the full membership, informed the company that

if they attempted to lay off any member of the workforce then there would be an occupation of the site.

On Monday March 3rd, they announced the first lay-offs, to commence at 4.30pm that day. At 3.30pm on March 3rd the occupation took place.

We therefore call on all trade unionists to support our struggle to defend Merseyside jobs.

Financial aid is vital for us to win this battle.

All donations to: Hayden Burns, 46 Kempton Park Road, Aintree, Liverpool 10.

## EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word, £5 per column inch - payment in advance. Send copy to Events, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

**SATURDAY 15 MARCH.** Campaign against Immigration Laws conference. 10am to 6pm, Waterloo Action Centre, Baylis Rd, London SE1. All CAIL supporters welcome.

**MONDAY 17 MARCH.** Debate of the decade. The crisis and the future of the Left. Speakers: Tony Benn, Tariq Ali, Paul Foot, Stuart Holland, Hilary Wainwright, Audrey Wise. 7pm, Central Hall, Westminster.

**SATURDAY 22 MARCH.** Labour Movement Fightback for Women's Rights conference. 11am to 5pm, Conway Hall, London WC1. Registration £2 from 41 Wellington St, London N7. Cheques payable to 'Fightback for Women's Rights'.

**SATURDAY 22 MARCH.** National anti-cuts conference, called by Liverpool Trades Council and District Labour Party. 11am, St George's Hall, Liverpool. Credentials 50p from T.Harrison/A.Dods-well, 70 Victoria St, Liverpool 1

**SATURDAY 22 MARCH.** Labour Coordinating Committee conference on the Alternative Economic Strategy. 10.30am, Digbeth Hall, Birmingham. Registration £2 from C H Lomas, AUEW TASS, Holloway Circus, Queensway, Birmingham 1. Followed on the 23rd by a strategy conference for LCC members.

**FRIDAY 28 MARCH.** Picket of the Polish Embassy, 47 Portland Place, London W1, to demand the immediate release of Edmund Zadrozynski, Polish campaigner for free trade unions. At 6pm, followed at 7.30pm by a meeting at the Polytechnic of Central London, Marylebone Rd, addressed by Edmund Baluka. Organised by International Campaign against Repression.

**SATURDAY 29 MARCH.** Labour Committee on Ireland conference. 2pm to 5pm, Islington North Library, Manor Gardens, London. Credentials £1 for individuals, £2 for organisations, from LCI, c/o 5 Stamford Hill, London N16.

**SATURDAY 5 - MONDAY 7 APRIL.** Labour Party Young Socialists Annual Conference in Llandudno. Details of accommodation, fringe etc from Barricade, 16 Edinburgh.

Published by Workers' Action, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD, and printed by Anvil Press [TU]. Registered as a newspaper at the GPO.

**AFGHANISTAN: HAIL RED ARMY!** Articles from Workers Vanguard and Spartacist Britain. 30p from Spartacist Publications, Dept 2, Box 185, London WC1.

**JUST OUT:** March issue of Spartacist/Britain. Articles on Afghanistan, IMG conference, more. Send 20p to Spartacist Publishers, Dept C, Box 185, London WC1.

## Houses fit for princes to glance at?

LEASOWE ON Merseyside is not the best place to live just now. Like other council estates it faces rising rents, rising rates, rising prices, cuts in schools, health care, social services and housing repairs.

Being on Merseyside, it has the added bonus of low wages and hopeless job prospects.

Recently strange things started to happen: the estate was cleaned over and over again by an army of street cleaners; the houses have been repainted; the graffiti have been sandblasted off the walls. And, strangest of all, the playground, which had been closed through lack of money, was to reopen.

What was it all about? Not a new attitude to council tenants but an old attitude to royalty. HRH Prince Philip was to visit

the estate on Friday 7th March and what is too expensive for working class people to live in and raise families in is not good enough for HRH to cast his royal eye over on a flying visit.

The local dignitaries selected from amongst their number a party to accompany the great man, and they proceeded to the estate to be greeted by their loyal subjects. Sad to relate, not all the subjects were loyal!

Wallasey YS had circulated a leaflet on the estate calling on the local citizens to meet the Duke and express their opinions on his parasitic life-style.

As the royal party approached the playground, they were greeted by a crowd of local young people shouting "parasite" and "What did you ever do for Leasowe?"

The police moved in to keep the peace. The demonstrators were warned not to use their megaphone. They ignored the warning.

A Royalist bystander hit a YS member with a stick and the YS member was warned

that if she hit him again he would be arrested.

One local citizen, Tommy O'Riley, was arrested for breach of the peace.

After the event, Mrs. Lynda Chalker, MP for Wallasey, who as Junior Butcher of Social Services has done so much for working people, joined the local press in condemning the YS.

MIKE CASHMAN WALLASEY YS

## TUC cracks the whip

TAMESIDE Trades Council has been threatened with disaffiliation by the TUC under Rule 14 if they continue to campaign for troops out of Ireland.

Len Murray has written to the Trades Council instruct-

ing them to call off a meeting on Ireland. The meeting was to have been held on Saturday 1st, but the Labour-controlled council refused to let council rooms to the Trades Council, and the AUEW refused too, so the meeting was put off. The reason for the refusals was a daft ultra-left leaflet entitled 'Ireland: Bring the War back to Britain' written for the Trades Council by members of the Revolutionary Communist Tendency.

The meeting was called off on the Friday night by the Trades Council.

However, on the Saturday a band of about 70 fascists marched through the shopping centre under the banner of 'Smash the IRA'. They met a counter-demonstration of about 100 anti-fascists, 5 of whom were arrested.

Under Rule 14, no Trades Council is allowed to adopt a policy contrary to that of the TUC, or to affiliate to any organisation not approved of by the TUC. This effectively relegates Trades Councils

to tip-toeing meekly behind the TUC.

Rule 14 was also used as a threat against Edinburgh Trades Council on the issue of troops out of Ireland. It is an undemocratic and bureaucratic device which the TUC uses whenever a Trades Council steps out of line. Trade unions and Trades Councils must call for its withdrawal.

## Police ban all marches in Glasgow

THE SECRETARY of State for Scotland, acting on the recommendation of Strathclyde police, has banned all demonstrations in Glasgow for a month.

The ban is aimed against the National Front's planned march on Glasgow and the scheduled counter-demon-

stration. It follows efforts by sections of the left to get a ban, but cannot be considered a victory. The labour movement must stop the fascists marching; but by our own efforts, and not at the expense of seeing our own right to march taken away!

Before the ban, mobilisation was going ahead for an Anti-Nazi League march, backed by representatives of the Trades Council Executive.

The fascists, in a last-ditch attempt to build a base in Glasgow, had mobilised on the slogan 'Smash the IRA', hoping to attract Loyalist support in the city and to drive a wedge into the labour movement by using anti-Irish feeling.

A call to support this demonstration was made at the Scottish Council of the Labour Party in Perth last weekend (8th-9th), and supported by the Executive of the Scottish Council. And thousands of leaflets calling for support for the march were distributed at the Scottish TUC march on the 8th.



# BUILDERS SAY: £3 AND 35 HOURS NOW

PAY TALKS for the building industry are due to restart on March 13th, after union negotiators rejected an offer said to be worth 14% at talks on February 28th. The rank and file paper Building Worker, in its new issue, just out, is calling for a fight to win a rate of £3 an hour and a 35 hour week this year.

The claim — our claim — has gone in to the employers. Here it is:

Full consolidation of all outstanding supplements. A substantial increase in the consolidated basic rate which takes into account that on many contracts £3 an hour is already made.

This represents a compromise between UCATT, who wanted the usual woolly "substantial increase", and the T&G who wanted £3 for trades and pro rata for labourers.

Like the last eight years, there is a demand for the 35 hour week. And another week's holiday, and improved sick pay, travel, tool allowance, tool insurance, staff premiums, plus rates and doubletime for overtime and severance agreements and better health facilities on site.

## Rate

For eight years our negotiators have gone cap in hand to ask for the 35 hour week. It's union policy in UCATT, the T&G, FTAT and the G&M.

You don't get anywhere talking to our employers. They only understand industrial action which takes away their profits. That's why "the largest single increase ever negotiated in the building industry" (so

says no less an authority than Bro Les Wood) came as a result of the 1972 national strike.

What we demand is a high basic rate: a single rate, not bits and pieces. Building Worker stands for ending the differential between craft and labourers.

'Building Worker' conference for all building trade unionists.

Saturday 29 March (12 to 5) and Sunday 30 March (10 to 1) at Digbeth Hall, Birmingham.

Credentials and details, and copies of 'Building Worker', from 30 Horton House, South Lambeth Estate, Meadow Rd, SW8.

The gap has been widening: 7p in 1971, 11p in 1974, 22p in 1979. But labourers have families to feed and bills to pay just as much as tradesmen.

There has to be unity at site level for strong union organisation. The distraction suits only the employers: the less labourers get, the less we all get. So, let's see a maximum differential of 5p as part of the claim this year: £3 and £2.95.

There are 200,000 unemployed building workers. House starts are falling every year. Yet overtime is still worked as a normal supplement to the wage packet. That's how low the rate is. And that's what a

low rate leads to: men in work working long hours when more men should be employed.

It's time to say this year no more talking: the employers have heard the arguments every year for the last seven years. They won't give us the 35 hour week. We must fight.

It is our claim, so let's make our branches, sites, stewards committees, regional councils and committees, trade groups and ECs hear it: £3 and £2.95 and 35 hours.

Full claim now! No settlement till after the UCATT conference this summer. Send off resolutions asking for details of the official negotiations and demanding each body along the line takes a stand.

No secret negotiations. No anonymous negotiations.

## Key

We have to do the fighting: from the pickets of 1972 and the rank and file joint union action committees we learned the way. It's our fight: we should decide when it starts and when it finishes.

In 1972 the action started unofficially. It was coordinated nationally by the Building Workers' Charter movement. Key profitable sites like hotels were struck and then the rest of the industry stopped as the strike snowballed.

The snowball was pushed by the flying pickets. Eventually the snowball had an "official" label on it.

So let's start to raise the claim on each site NOW. Is your site prepared to take part in a national strike? And the next organised site to you?

A McSWEEN UCATT