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Clash in Poland

POLAND'S ruling party last week ousted leader Stanislaw Kania and moved to a more hard-line attitude towards the workers' movement.

On Tuesday there was the first of what could be a new series of confrontations. Solidarnosc members were, apparently, selling their local newsheet as usual in the town centre at Katowice when police arrested some of the sellers.

5,000 protesters gathered, and were reportedly dispersed by police using tear gas. Meanwhile hard-line Stalinist students occupied the offices of a local steel mill and demanded the local Party leadership resign because they considered its attitude too soft.
MORE ON POLAND: PAGE FIVE.

Solidarity with BL strike

TRADE UNIONISM AT STAKE!



by Bill Peters

THE strike of BL Cars' 58,000 manual workers, due to commence on November 1st, is no longer simply a wages struggle, but a fight for the very existence of the trade unions in the corporation.

Edwardes' ultimatum that he will sack the whole workforce and wind up BL if the strike goes ahead makes it an issue for the whole of the working class.

The ultimatum received its answer in the mass strike vote from the BL plants last Friday, 16th. It was a vote which reflects not only the history of sell-outs in BL and the frustration felt by BL workers, but also the hostility of the working class as a whole towards the Thatcher government.

Size

The exact size of the vote will not be known until the convenors have met on Thursday of this week (22nd) and taken reports from each plant. But it is obvious that the management and press figures of a two-to-one majority are a gross underestimate, and the trade unions' figure of eight to one closer to the mark.

The two major areas, Longbridge and Cowley, comprise almost half the membership. Of the 11,000 workers in the six Cowley plants, less than 1,000 voted against the strike. In Longbridge, where the Cowley vote was announced to the meeting before the result, only a tiny handful of the 15,000 workers voted to accept Edwardes' 3.8 per cent offer.

The main Rover plant voted four to one for the strike, and Jaguar five to one.

Such a vote, taken the

day after Edwardes' ultimatum, is unprecedented. It means that BL workers are going into the fight with their eyes open, knowing that it is not just an industrial struggle but an all-out confrontation with the Tory government.

Impending

The total support of the Thatcher government for Edwardes, with statements from minister after minister, means that Thatcher also sees it as a make or break confrontation. It is becoming increasingly obvious that a victory for BL workers could well bring the government down.

It is therefore crucial that the Labour and trade union movement now begins to see the impending struggle in those terms as well. Just consider the consequences of a Thatcher - Edwardes victory.

If Edwardes is able to successfully carry out mass sackings, it will constitute the abolition of the right to strike, not only in BL, but to a great extent throughout

industry. It would open the way to Tebbit's draconian anti-union laws, which if implemented would take the trade unions back to the Taff Vale judgment.

If Edwardes closed down all 36 plants it would put another one million workers on the dole (if the suppliers and component industries are included). An Edwardes victory would also be a massive green light for Thatcher to force through the four per cent limit in the rest of the public sector.

If these are the implications, and there can be no doubt about it, it means that the fight cannot be fought by BL workers alone. It is a crucial confrontation at the highest level, with the whole of the trade union movement.

Basis

The strike must begin on the basis of such an analysis. Already both the TGWU and the AUEW have made this strike official in advance. The T&G executive have also taken a very important initiative against the four per cent limit. The October issue of the Record, the T&G paper, carries a headline, 'Four per cent no way'. It draws attention to the union's policy of free collective bargaining and urges all negotiators to "draw up pay claims on the basis of free collective bargaining and pursue them vigorously".

At its last meeting, the Executive Council passed the following resolution: "The General Executive Council therefore states quite unequivocally that it will support its members both in the public and private sector in the fight to defend and improve their real living standards against a government hell-bent on dramatic cuts in real wages".

Such a resolution would put the TUC on a collision course with the four per cent and the Thatcher government if it was carried out to the full.

But even resolutions of that sort are not enough. In BL there must be an answer not only to the four per cent but to the sackings and victimisations as well.

Bluff

To say that Edwardes is bluffing is not an effective answer to victimisation. It must be answered by the full strength of the trade union movement. The T&G and the AUEW must make it clear now that they will call out the whole of their membership in every industry if the victimisations go ahead.

If Edwardes calls in the receiver, they must support the occupation of the plants.

Constitutional objections must be cast aside. On May 14th last year the T&G 'called on' all its members to come out, despite the requirement in rule to hold a ballot before they could be instructed. When the AUEW funds were sequestered under the Industrial Relations Act, Hugh Scanlon called an immediate strike of the whole of the membership. When the Pentonville 5 were jailed under the Industrial Relations Act in 1972, the T&G called the whole of its docks trade group out on strike.

Pentonville

This time the Executive could call out its automotive group, covering the whole of the car industry, in the event of its 40,000 members in BL being sacked.

Although in 1972 a national dock strike was enough to get the Official Solicitor in to get the dock-



ers out of jail, the TUC was already moving to call a one-day general strike in their support. Sackings in BL today would be a much bigger issue than the Pentonville Five. The TUC must be forced to use the full weight of the whole trade union movement to stop Thatcher and Tebbit and their hatchmen in management.

The determination of BL workers is not in doubt. But the trade union movement could pay a heavy price if BL workers are left to stand alone, as the steelworkers were last year.

Then, BL workers voted to strike, but the leadership would not implement their decision. The TUC stifled a general strike decision by the Wales TUC, and Bill Sirs called off the steel strike on the

same day that a national dock strike was called in their support.

The same political obstacles will be present in this strike. When it comes to bringing down the government, the leadership will pull back. When it comes to spreading the strike into an all-out confrontation with the government, they will retreat.

Already the NUM negotiations with the Coal Board have been adjourned a week as the BL strike gets nearer.

But these limitations must be overcome.

The strike must be spread to all those affected by the four per cent limit. One million local authority workers are faced with a four per cent offer in a few weeks' time. If they stand back and see BL workers defeated, they will be faced with a

near-impossible task.

The mobilisation in support of the BL strike must therefore start now, and not wait until November 1st.

* T&G branches, Regional Committees, District Committees, and shop stewards' committees, to send resolutions to the Executive calling for all-out action in the event of mass victimisation.

* AUEW branches, shop stewards' committees and District Committees should do the same.

* A campaign must be waged throughout the trade union movement, calling on the TUC to call for a general strike if the sackings are carried out.

* Trades Councils and trade union and Labour Party branches should take the initiative now in setting up BL strike support committees.

* Inside BL, there must be no retreat and no compromise on the strike resolution. Plans must go ahead to ensure a total stoppage on November 1st, with flying pickets organised to stop the movement of all cars to the showrooms.



Edwardes



Inside
PAGES 2-3. Answering
Edwardes' closure threat

Leyland ACTION

BL: OPEN THE BOOKS!

What you can do:



our Parties, and unemployed workers' groups. Unemployed workers can be organised to help with picketing and collecting money.

* If there's no BL plant in the area, pickets of BL showrooms can help show support for the strike.

* TGWU and AUEW members should put resolutions calling for a national strike of those unions in the event of Edwardes carrying out the sackings.

* Collect money for the Leyland Action Committee 194 Dawlish Road, Birmingham 29.

* In Labour Parties and Trades Councils: start organising now for public meetings, so as soon as the strike starts the issues can be explained by BL workers right from the start.

* Labour Parties and Trades Councils should approach other public sector workers with a view to making these meetings labour movement conferences on smashing the four per cent limit.

* From such meetings and conferences, BL strike support committees can be set up, with representatives from local trade unions, Lab-



by John Lister

BL is depicted in the Tory press as if were some gigantic benevolent institute caring for an all-but-idle workforce of 58,000 shop floor workers.

But the fact is that it remains Britain's largest manufacturing exporter. In that capacity BL is literally the vehicle by which thousands of small engineering firms reach markets in Britain and abroad. Its finished cars are a composite of materials and components from a huge range of sources.

BL spends £2,000 million every year on goods and services in Britain from no less than 7,000 small firms.

Analysis

The company itself directly employs a total of some 120,000 workers - while component suppliers, contractors, hauliers and distributors employ at least a further 300,000.

This much is admitted in the press. But there is no analysis offered of the other side to these figures. For if 7,000 privately-owned firms have

contracts with BL, then 7,000 firms are plainly drawing profits from the supposedly 'loss-making' car giant.

In other words one state-run loss-maker is a source of wealth to large numbers of businessmen in enterprises ranging from a couple of dozen employees to the giant Joseph Lucas combine.

Money

But it is not only in car components that money is being made out of BL. Since 1978 the firm has spent £800 million on new plant and equipment - in a desperate attempt to catch up on years of profit-taking in which no effort had been made to modernise the firm.

The contracts for such plant have gone to private firms in the engineering and construction industries - all of whom have profited from BL's 'losses'.

Nor have the profits been confined to the engineering industry. Bankers and speculators too have made their pile out of the growing investment programme in BL. Every pound of 'tax-payers' money' invested has been subject to hefty interest payments - now totall-

ing well over £70 million every year - which go straight into the coffers of the banks.

Far from simply being a liability around the necks of British capitalists, therefore, BL has proved a capable provider of rich pickings for whole sections of the ruling class.

Not so of course for BL workers themselves, who have faced annual cutbacks in their living standards - with derisory pay increases - accompanied by an unending war of attrition on hard-won working conditions and trade union rights.

Wipe out

The Tories talk about cutting public spending: yet they know that to close BL would place anything up to one million additional workers on the dole, and wipe out further whole areas of British industry. The estimated cost of such measures must be calculated at £340 million for every 100,000 added to the dole queues - a possible £3,400 million per annum!

It is not for us to calculate the Tories' sums for

them: it is conceivable that the desperate Thatcher gang would reckon the political benefits of possibly crushing a major section of workers as preferable to the continued existence of BL and its dependent firms.

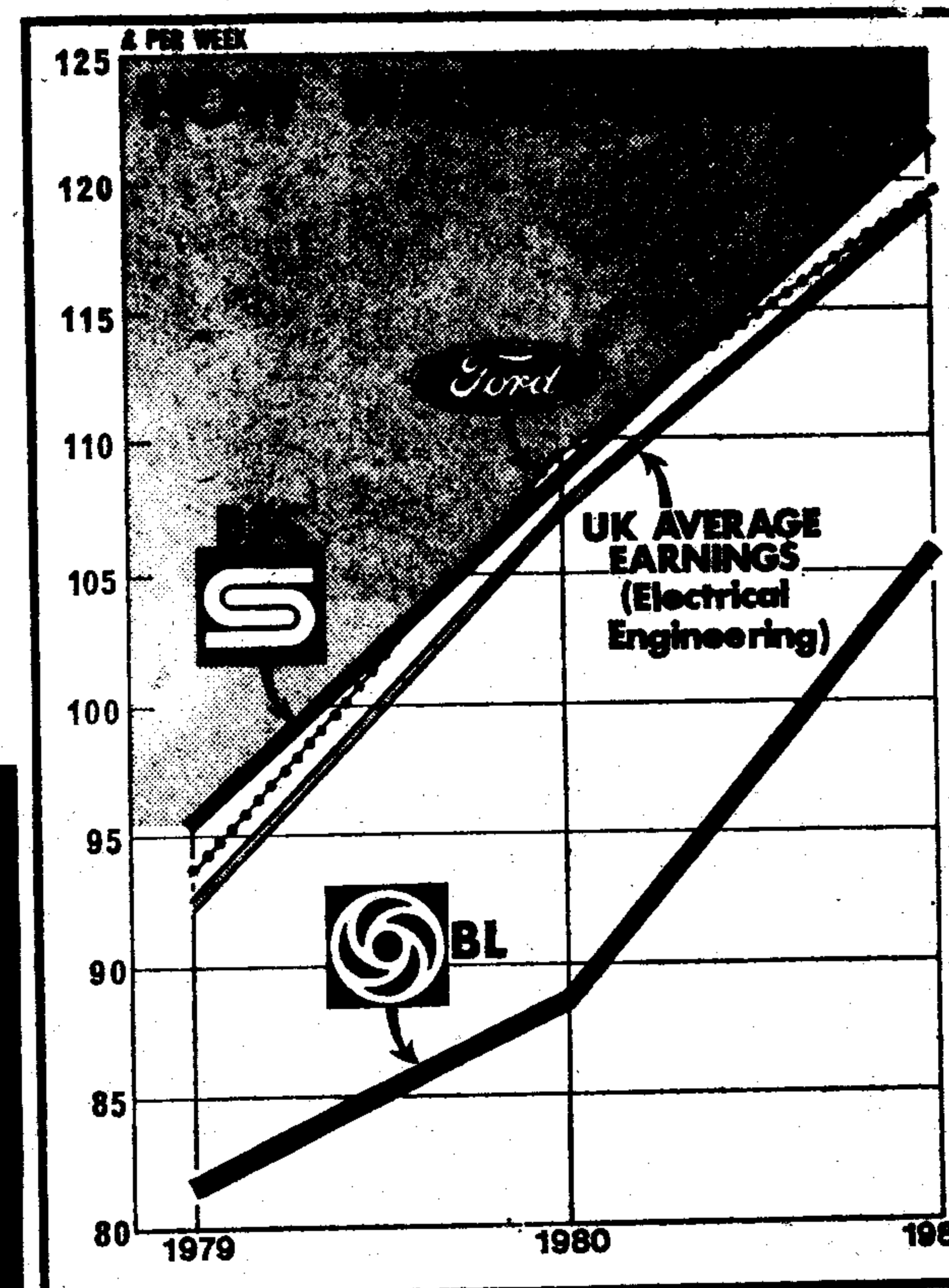
Fraud

But to develop an awareness among BL workers themselves and the remainder of the labour movement of the centrality of BL to British capitalism, and expose the fraud of the 'losses' recorded for BL, elected

committees should be established to open the books of the firm, together with those of its bankers, suppliers, contractors and distributors.

Let's dispel the fog of mystery that hangs over BL's finances: let's also prove to any that doubt it the necessity for an integrated motor industry as part of a planned socialist economy.

Let's prove to the workers in related firms and industries that the BL fight is also their fight for survival - and that the way to win is to combine forces in all-out action to defeat the Thatcher government



£20 NOW!

How the KGB swung BL mass meetings...

THE scene is the newsroom of a BBC radio studio. Across the table from each other sit the twin presenters of the current affairs programme 'The World at Bay'.

Bill Sarcastic, a paunchy, balding man in his 50s, is a former editor of the Daily Rattle and of the weekly current affairs magazine Managerial Competence. He now needs a medicinal slug of whisky before, during and after his 6am show.

Alison Cutlass has not been chosen as his co-presenter out of body fascism, although she is elegantly dressed and carefully made up. Her qualific-

ation is a whiplash voice of steely sarcasm which she varies to patronising syrup when interviewing the owners of parrots that play the stock market and other curiosities.

Geared

Today the studio has been geared up to the crucial vote of British Leyland workers. The desk is strewn with the morning papers. Sir Michael Edwardes waits at the end of a telephone and a lesser BL executive is carried bleary eyed to the studio in an official BBC car.

Sarcastic opens the show - 'Today. The future of the British motor industry. Sir Michael Edwardes, the man who built the Metro and who single handed brought some hope to the future of BL faces his biggest test. The shop stewards - who see their own power threatened - have called on the workforce to strike even though this will mean the end of their jobs'.

Cutlass: 'First, this morning's paper. The Daily Telegraph says the vote is being taken by the wrong people. It should be taken by the tax payers who keep the BL workers in luxury.'

The Daily Mail has revealed a KGB plot to pack the mass meetings with their agents. For an assess-

ment of this plot we call in Bernard Knife, industrial correspondent of the Daily Mail.

'Bernard, are you really saying all the people at the mass meetings will be Russians?'

Knife: 'Yes, indeed. It is well known for example that the Upper Clyde shipyard work-in was entirely Russian staffed. Only yesterday thousands of KGB car workers were being landed at Heathrow.'

Sarcastic: 'Sorry to interrupt you Bernard but we just have the first results in - workers at the nipple bleeder plant in Surrey have voted three to one to reject the strike call and save their jobs. We call in Angus McGhee, industrial relations consultant to BL Cars. Mr. McGhee, your reaction to this result?'

McGhee: 'This is what we expected Bill. The BL workforce have shown their responsibility in choosing low wage rises for the past three years. We always knew that the BL stewards do not really represent the ordinary men in our workforce.'

Biggest

Sarcastic: 'Of course this isn't the biggest plant in BL.'

McGhee: 'No indeed. This vote of three to one represents Bob, Nigel and

Alec in favour of the offer and Spike against. But it's the proportion that counts. The hub cap assembly plant in the Falkland Islands has voted to accept by 17 to one. Even if Cowley and Longbridge vote against, that is two plants each.'

Sarcastic: 'Well, first blood to Sir Michael. It looks as if BL workers recognise that he is not bluffing. Over now to Footslog O'Slimey in the radio car at Cowley. How are things looking, O'Slimey?'

O'Slimey: 'Well, the workers are arriving at the factory, Bill. They are going round the roundabout in their cars. They look grim but determined. Some are on bicycles.'

Things could be close here Bill. The workforce understands, I think, that a vote for a strike is a vote for suicide.

Yelled

Some are turning to the left and some to the right. One yelled 'Up Sir Michael' as he went by so the Chairman clearly has some support.'

Cutlass: 'Well, we now have Sir Michael on the phone. Good morning, Sir Michael. Can I ask first of all. You do really mean you will sack all the workers and close the company, don't you?'

Edwardes: 'Yes'.

Cutlass: 'And anyone

PRESS GANG

by Patrick Spilling



who votes for a strike is helping to put tens of thousands on the dole?'

Edwardes: 'Exactly'.

Cutlass: 'Some people say you have been a bit tough only offering 3.8%, Sir Michael. I suppose in reply you would point out that you could not afford to pay any more without the collapse of the British motor industry?'

Edwardes: 'Precisely'.

Cutlass: 'Well, there you have it. We have all heard Sir Michael say bluntly to BL workers that they face ruining the lives of innocent wives and children, of thousands of families, if they vote for greed. Now back to Footslog O'Slimey for the vote.'

O'Slimey: 'There is chaos here Alison. BL workers clearly didn't understand what was being put to the vote. They have voted about twenty to one for strike action. A great cheer has just gone up. The workers are streaming towards me. I'll just stop one. Excuse me. What about this vote. Do you realise what

you've done?'

Voice off: 'We've fucked that slimy little South African bastard, that's what. (Sound of cheering.)'

Sarcastic: 'Well Mr. McGhee, what about that vote?'

McGhee: 'Well of course this was quite predictable. The BL workforce does not really represent the real feeling in the Company. What matters is what happens on November 2nd, not some charade of a vote'

Canary

Sarcastic: 'I've just heard that the vote at Longbridge has gone the same way by an even bigger majority. Can we call in Sir Michael. Sir Michael?...' The line seems to have gone dead.

'Well, Alison, I think it's over to you. I understand you have been speaking to a canary which is campaigning to bring back hanging?'

Cutlass: 'Yes, indeed, Bill. This canary has conducted a poll...' Fade out.



Daily Mail
DAILY EXPRESS
FINANCIAL TIMES
The Daily Telegraph
THE Sun

Socialist
Organiser
EDITORIAL

Behind Edwardes stands Thatcher

EDWARDES must have been shaken rigid.

For four years he has been shielded from the anger of workers on the shop floor in BL by obliging union officials and by cringing convenors.

But all of a sudden the old magic formula failed to work. First the BL convenors, and then even the national union officials, were forced to recognise the seething militancy among the workforce.

Such was the feeling that Edwardes did not dare try his specialty — a ballot conducted over the heads of the workforce in a blaze of media witch-hunt: he knew he would lose.

Cornered, he hit back with the only means he knew — an ultimatum, threatening to close the corporation and sack all 58,000 manual workers.

All of a sudden the struggle escalated from a (crucial) pay dispute to a major political confrontation — in which the issue at stake is now the right to strike, and the very survival of shop floor trade union organisation.

For if Edwardes were to succeed, and it became a sacking offence to take official strike action — even after the workers' annual contract has expired and procedure has been exhausted — then this setback for union organisation would effectively smash shop floor strength in BL. And it would herald a wave of similar attacks throughout British industry.

Close collaboration

Edwardes is plainly not able to make such a sweeping decision — with colossal economic implications for the whole of British capitalism — simply off his own bat. He is acting in close collaboration with the Thatcher government. The lines are drawn for a major class confrontation which will decide the future of trade unionism and the labour movement for

years to come.

The stakes for which Thatcher and the capitalist class are playing in this confrontation are therefore extremely high; and while some may quail at the prospect of a closure of BL, the employers will (at least at first) rally around Edwardes.

But can the same be said for the leaders of the labour movement?

True, Terry Duffy has taken time out from his efforts to knife the Laurence Scott strike to lend vocal support to the stand taken by his members in BL. This position is in startling contrast to the AUEW's record of squalid subservience to Edwardes over the last four years.

TGWU negotiator Grenville Hawley, too, has played an uncharacteristically militant role — urging BL convenors to fight for all-out action, and slamming attempts by the EETPU to force a postal ballot on the strike call.

Strike against sackings

But where will those leaders stand when the struggle is not ten days away but an immediate physical reality?

If (or when) Edwardes goes ahead with his sacking threat, the union leaders must be ready with a militant response — not wringing their hands and saying they never thought it would come to that. Plans need to be made by the TGWU and AUEW leaders now for all-out strike action by their memberships if this huge mass sacking goes ahead.

And it doesn't just concern the TGWU and the AUEW. Every worker who needs the right to strike and a decent wage rise (breaking the four per cent limit) is vitally concerned in this struggle.



But miners' leader Joe Gormley had deliberately postponed further talks on the miners' pay claim until two weeks after the NUM contract expires on November 1st, in the hope of avoiding a struggle side by side with BL. Public sector union leaders are ominously silent about the pay review affecting one million local authority manual workers who — like BL — are up against the four per cent limit.

Some union leaders in BL itself have begun to argue that it would be wrong to see the struggle as one to remove the Thatcher government — since that would simply put the SDP in office! But whether they like it or not, the Thatcher government sees the struggle as one to beat down the whole labour movement. BL union leaders should be making an open appeal to all other workers facing the four per cent limit to bring their struggles forward and strike alongside BL.

And the TUC should make plans to bring all the unions together against the four per cent and the sackings blackmail, in a general strike.

The silence, the treachery, and the red herrings come precisely because union leaders recognise the potential of this BL strike to topple Thatcher: that is a prospect which frightens them beyond belief.

While the working class stands only to gain by the defeat and removal of the Thatcher government, the bureaucracy sees the strengthening of the confidence and militancy of the working class as a threat to its own position.

And the Labour leaders too fear the prospect of being forced back into office on a tide of working class militancy that would place demands on them to solve the problem of mass unemployment through measures like a reduced workweek, public works projects, and nationalisation under workers' control,

when all they have to offer is a bundle of policies for preserving British capitalism.

That is why the struggle in BL must not be left in the hands of the union bureaucrats and the Labour co-thinkers. Strike committees must be elected from shopfloor members in each plant to take control of the action, and seek every possible means to extend it into the engineering industry, the public sector and the whole trade union movement.

Within Labour Parties, demands must be placed on MPs and councillors to lend their weight to the struggle and actively mobilise material and political support. Those that refuse to back the struggle must be exposed to the labour movement as protectors of Thatcher and enemies of the working class.

Labour Parties and Trades Councils should try to draw other groups of workers facing the four per cent limit into BL strike support committees, which can develop into councils of action to the extent the strike spreads.

And in the political debate that will take place around this confrontation, we must argue consistently for the perspective of defeating and removing the Thatcher government, and for the need therefore to step up the fight within the labour movement to ensure that a new Labour government is not allowed to act in the same way as those of Wilson and Callaghan.

Workers' rights and living standards will be defended not by a Labour government of the old type but only by a workers' government, responsive and accountable to the needs and demands of the labour movement. To create such a government requires the development of a new, revolutionary leadership by the working class: we urge readers to organise with us to carry through that fight.

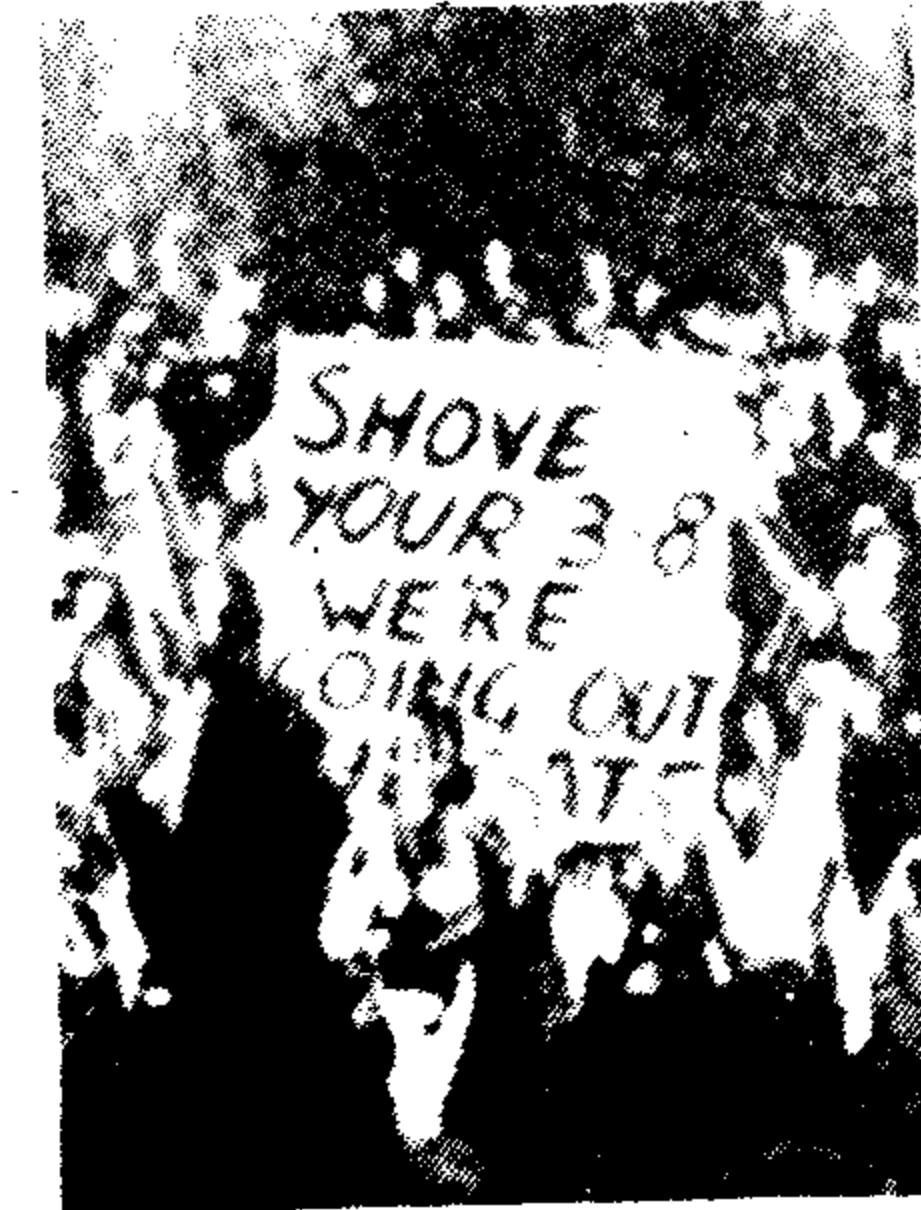


Behind Edwardes stands the Tory government

Meet closure moves with Occupation!

AT THE Longbridge mass meeting, many workers could be heard saying that they would rather be on the dole than have to accept the 3.8 per cent rise and further attacks on shopfloor rights.

Longbridge convenor Jack Adams' assessment of the mood of most BL workers is certainly accurate: "They don't know whether Edwardes' closure threat is a bluff or not. And frankly they don't seem too bothered one way or the other either".



This is a healthy response to Edwardes' blackmailing tactics, and will provide a strong basis for the strike. But what will happen if (or more likely when) Edwardes does sack the strikers and declare the plants closed?

Bluffing

Even then, Edwardes will probably be bluffing. A full closure or carving-up of BL could only go through after the unions had been crushingly defeated: as long as the strike remains in the balance, all threats are still just threats.

But the only way to make sure the threats remain empty is to prepare to counter Edwardes' attacks with escalation from the workers' side.

Since Edwardes took over at BL, 68,000 jobs have been slashed. This month another 2,850 redundancies have been announced (due to the planned closure of Coventry Engines, Speke, and a plant in Hemel Hempstead). On top of that, an-

other 1,500 jobs are due to go from Longbridge when Allegro production comes to an end next year.

BL workers have no illusions that low wage settlements save jobs! But up to now the union leaders' craven capitulation on wages, working practices, and victimisations, has sapped the rank and file's confidence when it comes to resisting closures and redundancies.

The recent acceptance of closure at the Rover SD1 Solihull plant is instructive. When the closure was first announced in May, there was a strong reaction on the shop floor, and stewards had no difficulty winning a resolution to 'resist' the closure at a mass meeting.

Occupation

But although most SD1 stewards realised that an occupation of the plant would be necessary if the closure was to be defeated, they decided against that putting that to the work-

force immediately, and concentrated instead on building up a 'Save the SD1' campaign through letters to the local press, shopfloor propaganda, and a big march and rally.

Accepted

These tactics did not work. The delay in fighting for a firm commitment to occupy gave management time to spread their propaganda, allowed the closure to grow into an accepted fact, and finally resulted in a two-to-one vote to accept the closure in July.

That's why in the present much sharper confrontation over pay, BL militants must immediately fight for a policy of occupying the plants as soon as the first plant closure is announced.

Remember, Edwardes has said he will close down not only any plant that goes on strike, but also any plant 'unable to work as a result of the strike'. Logically, that means the whole of the Cars Division, since Longbridge



and Cowley between them can paralyse all BL Cars production.

So we need to fight for occupation of all BL plants as soon as any one factory is fingered.

The aim, of course, must

not be to set about any utopian 'workers' cooperative' schemes, but to hold machinery and stocks to ransom, and to use the factories as organising centres for flying pickets, delegations to other groups of

workers, production of publicity material, and so forth.

Occupying the plants would also help to encourage rank and file involvement, maintain solidarity, and make scabbing impossible. It would make us much stronger to negotiate on terms and conditions for eventual return to work (raising the possibility even reversing closures like SD1) — regardless of any changes of management personnel or even government that may have taken place in the meantime.

Victory

Occupying the plants itself will not be enough to guarantee victory. It must be combined with organised picketing of depots, docks, plus vigorous efforts to draw other groups of workers into the action alongside BL.

JIM DENHAM

World news

SADAT: HELPED USA SUCK EGYPT DRY

A history of repression

SOME PEOPLE'S reputations are saved by their deaths. That was true for Anwar el-Sadat. And it was just as true for his predecessor, Gamal Abdel Nasser.

Had they lived a little longer, they would have had to face the failure of their most ambitious projects.

Nasser is remembered by the Egyptian masses as the man who broke the grip of imperialism and its local agents on Egypt, and who developed the nation's economy through state control of industry. He is also remembered as an intransigent opponent of Zionism.

But the truth is very different. By 1970, the year of his death, Nasser had already begun — albeit slowly — dismantling the system he had built up.

By the time of his death, there had been concessions to the private sector whose role Nasser had considerably curtailed a decade before.

Restrictions on private imports had been relaxed, contracts had been given to privately-owned oil companies, and some land had been returned to the big landlords who had owned it before.

Discussion about the liberalisation of the economy was already well under way.

At the same time, the Egyptian regime had accepted the US-sponsored Rogers 'Peace' Plan — a diplomatic cover for the murder of the Palestinian masses in Jordan.

When Sadat took over, the process of compromising with imperialism was accelerated. And the price demanded for this sell-out was slashed: Egypt's independence was mortgaged not for the huge inflow of investment that had been envisaged, but for a relatively small but poisonous trickle: enough to enrich foreign capitalists, too little to lift Egypt out of bottomless debt and the mass of its people out of permanent poverty.

The first move in this process came with Sadat's dismissal of Ali Sabry from the government in May 1971. Sabry was the leader of the pro-Soviet tendency among the Nasserites and his removal came on the day before the arrival in Cairo of US Secretary of State William Rogers. The signal was unmistakable.

A year later, Sadat expelled Soviet military experts. This move was dressed up as a nationalist reaction to Soviet pressure, in truth it was the opposite. It was the Egyptian ruling class's reaction to imperialist pressures and an other signal of their readiness to embrace US imperialism.

Despite these obvious signals US imperialism remained aloof. A more vigorous courtship and an easier virtue were needed. In the summer of 1973 Sadat invited the national media to consider a so-called democratic dialogue document whose outlines were supposed to prepare the transformation of Egypt.

Sadat's dedication to democracy was clearly demonstrated a month later when the regime passed a law which provided for



by Andrew Hornung

sentences up to life imprisonment for membership of political organisations outside the Arab Socialist Union.

Still US imperialism remained aloof. But when in October 1973 Sadat waged war on Israel, the US was forced to intervene and take responsibility for arranging a 'peace' formula.

The price for Egypt's signature on any 'peace' treaty would be US investments and US arms.

That did it. The US could no longer remain aloof, it could only play hard to get a bit in the hope that Sadat would make further concessions. And that worked, too.

By February 1974, Sadat was ready to promulgate three decrees, shifting control over the economy from the state bureaucracy to bodies which included representatives of foreign capital and improving conditions for foreign investment.

The decrees exempted enterprises investing in the Canal Free Zones from taxes and duties, exempted new enterprises in the rest of Egypt from paying tax on profits for a period of five to eight years, and freed business and investment banks from currency controls.

Three months later, the Highest Council of Appeals declared all nationalisation and sequestration of property to be illegal, and their consequences void.

Collusion

This was the prelude to the 'Infitah' or 'Open Door' policy.

With such allurements, wasn't US capital bound to flood in? Not at all: US investors did not fully trust Sadat, and they did not trust the stability of his regime, despite the popularity it enjoyed from the limited success of the October War.

More had to be done. Sadat fired Hassanein Heykal, editor-in-chief of the semi-official El Ahram, and a pioneer of compromise with imperialism during Nasser's lifetime. Heykal was replaced by Ali Amin, a journalist driven out of Egypt by Nasser for alleged collusion with the CIA.

Yet despite this, a new interim economic plan and a new investment law favouring foreign capital,

Sadat's efforts were rewarded by only a meagre trickle of investments and contracts.

Still more drastic measures had to be taken. With the appointment of the Salem government, Sadat accelerated the destruction of those institutions of Nasserism which gave some protection to the poor and middle peasants, gave some control over industrial activity to the state, and gave some protection to native capital.

Desperate

The champion of new laws which meant higher rents for the peasantry, payment partly in kind (protecting the landowner from inflation), easier eviction of tenants by landowners, and the end of peasant courts, was one Abu Wafia.

Abu Wafia was a big landowner, president of the People's Assembly commission in charge of the 'Open Door' policy... and Sadat's brother-in-law.

The Salem government was much more openly than ever before a government of big capitalists. The Housing Minister of this nation with such a desperate housing need was Osman Ahmad Osman, millionaire owner of the Arab Contractors Company and Sadat's son-in-law.

The Salem government abolished the public institutions which served as the apparatus of coordination and control in the context of Egypt's economic plan, transforming at the same time the administrative councils of public sector companies by including 'experts' from the private sector.

Hindrances

Finance Minister Ahmed Abu Ismael, the Norman Tebbit of the Salem government, spelled it out:

"The government is set on the open-door policy. One of the first priorities has been to dissolve public institutions and give individual economic units complete freedom to reform their administration and remove all obstacles and hindrances to the realisation of this objective. Any unit failing to achieve these ends will be regarded as a burden and liquidated".

The IMF demanded further reductions in subsidies and a complete float of the Egyptian pound — together these would force huge price rises, the main burden falling on the poor.

Sadat did not budge on these — but he agreed to compensate US investors for claims resulting from expropriations under Nasser. A month later, in mid 1976, a new Investment Law was passed exempting imports from customs and easing restrictions on repatriation of profits.

Still Egypt got little except a new Hilton Hotel. The pressure mounted on Sadat to capitulate completely and allow the international agencies to plunder at will.

Luxury

The break came with the appointment of a new deputy prime minister for financial and economic affairs, who was tied to the IMF and the Kuwaiti ruling family, and was himself a banker. That did it.

The international agencies were now confident that their man, Abdul Moneim al-Qaisouni, would cut the tape for a field-day of profiteering. They were not disappointed. And sure enough, the new budget he drew up included the slashing of food subsidies they had been demanding.

When the working-class revolt of January 1977 forced a retreat, so frightened were the imperialists that they decided to rush loans to Sadat to save his regime from possible overthrow.

The much-heralded Open Door policy has indeed opened the door to

EGYPT, with a population of nearly 40 million, is one of the largest states in the Middle East. Despite the fact that the mass of the population are miserably poor peasants, it is also one of the more significant from the point of view of the development of industry and the working class.

From 1882 to 1922 Egypt was a British colony or 'protectorate'. Under King Fuad and King Farouk (1922-52) it continued to be dominated by Britain.

In 1952 a rebellion of middle-ranking officers overthrew the King and his corrupt clique. In 1954 Nasser gained power. Land reform and removal of British troops followed.

After the abortive British/French/Israeli attempt to stop nationalisation of the Suez Canal by military intervention (in 1956), there were further nationalisations and nationalist policies. By 1964 almost all big firms had been nationalised. Many big capitalists had their property confiscated.

'Nasserism' became identified with 'Arab socialism': but it meant state capitalism, with repression against the Left, rather than workers' power.

In 1970 Nasser died. Sadat took over and began steering, bit by bit, towards denationalisation, an economic 'open door', and alliance with the US rather than the USSR.

luxury consumption for a few. In a country with an average income of 98 Egyptian pounds yearly, some 35 million Egyptian pounds was spent on imported private cars between 1972 and 1975.

Hock

The longer Sadat followed US imperialism, the deeper Egypt ran into debt. Today Egypt is wholly in hock.

But imperialism has not sucked it dry. It will continue to prop up any pro-imperialist regime, as against the alternative of a pro-Kremlin orientation or — of course — a revolutionary socialist transformation.

The Muslim right

THE LACK of any big working class upsurge since Sadat's assassination seems to confirm that his killers were from the Muslim Right and they — not the Left — are the rising force in Egypt.

Sadat himself was largely responsible for fostering the Muslim Right.

The Muslim Brotherhood has a long history. Sadat was the link-man between the Brotherhood and the Free Officers who made the revolution of 1952.

In 1971, Sadat and Gaddafi (then in alliance) created the al-Jama'a al-Shar'iyya association. This was a Muslim youth movement specifically organised to combat leftists on the campuses and in the factories.

The move was quite successful, but after the Sadat-Gaddafi split the association was ditched by Sadat. Out of it came several underground organisations that grew more hostile to Sadat the more he went grovelling for the favours of US imperialism.

The Muslim rightist movements combine fundamentalism with populist anti-imperialist rhetoric and agitation against corruption and immorality.

The dominant trend in the Muslim Right is the Muslim Brotherhood. It is divided into several trends, some generally supporting Sadat on the grounds that his regime, they think, was moving to establish rule by Islamic law, and others openly hostile to him.

Sadat for his part always tried to enlist their support against the working class movement, student radicalism, the political left and the peasantry.

He was prepared to fuel anti-Coptic pogroms in order to divert the class struggle.



Nasser personified 'Arab socialism' in truth, nationalist state capitalism

World news

KANIA SACKED AS POLISH BUREAUCRATS LOSE PATIENCE

by Alexis Carras

ONE OF the most black-comic traits of the Stalinists, above all those in power, is their ability to twist the meaning of words — to elevate the art of cant to new heights undreamed of even by our own ruling class.

The Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party at its latest plenum, the fourth since the Extraordinary Congress held in July, set itself the goal — believe it or not — of pushing back 'totalitarianism', which according to these gentlemen is threatening Poland.

Appeasement

This alleged totalitarianism is the responsibility of Solidarnosc, with its demand for the formation of a national economic council of the PUWP and the union to discuss Poland's impasse.

To facilitate its crusade against totalitarianism, the CC has ousted Stanislaw Kania as General Secretary of the PUWP.

Kania took over the reins of power after Edward Gierek's well-timed heart attack in the wake of the August occupations last year. For years the head of Poland's secret police, with an undoubted ability to further his career, it seems he could not survive this final crisis over his handling of the independent and militant workers' movement. His appeasement of Solidarnosc was found distasteful by a large part of the Central Committee.



Gwiazda and Bogdan Lis

Demands at the Plenum included the total banning of all strikes for a period of three years, as suggested by Kociolek — First Secretary of the Warsaw PUWP apparatus.

It is very difficult to imagine such a ban being enforced without a major test of strength and perhaps a bloody showdown. The Plenum backed down from the more extreme proposals, yet it made a decisive shift to a more

hardline attitude against the workers.

For the first time in a Stalinist-ruled state, the Party and government are headed by the same person — who is also a high-ranking military figure.

General Jaruzelski, minister of Defence since 1968, was elected head of the Party by 180 out of 184 votes. Although his acceptance by the Party's top functionaries was fairly

overwhelming, (he also got the highest number of votes for the CC at the PUWP July Congress) splits continue in the bureaucracy.

Nationalist

Kania's resignation, which followed the CC's condemnation of the chaotic state of the economy and the Party's dealing with it, was accepted by only 54% of the Committee's members. The split between those desiring co-operation and incorporation of Solidarnosc into the running of the country (on the bureaucracy's terms) and those who fear the entire process has already gone too far has only been tentatively resolved by the election of the General.

Jaruzelski will play a balancing role within the Central Committee and the Party's other leading bodies, and the Stalinists also hope that they will now be more able to play the nationalist card.

Jaruzelski, head of the armed forces, the supposed guarantor of Polish sovereignty, can perhaps now be elevated to the heights of a national saviour.

With the winter months, approaching, with Poland's GNP estimated to be a catastrophic 25% down on last year, with only about two weeks coal reserves, the bureaucrats hope the General will be able to appeal to the Polish nation to desist from strikes, to resume Saturday working, and to agree to price increases, all in the name of national salvation.

His oft-vaunted refusal to use the Polish army against strikers in 1970 and 1976 will be severely tested in the coming weeks.

The Stalinists are also pushing to put their own house in order for the confrontations ahead.

Kania, before his resignation, boldly admitted that "the lack of confidence has paralysed the party from inside and nobody can believe in a Party that does not believe in itself."

Purge

To overcome the paralysis of will, the Stalinists have embarked on a wholesale purge from their ranks of those they consider fifth columnists.

Already Bogdan Lis, a Gdansk worker, and for the past year no.2 to Walesa in Solidarnosc, and a member of the PUWP since 1976, has been expelled from the party.

The same has occurred to Bratkowski, President of the Polish Journalists' Association, for his leading role in the struggle for the democratisation of the country's media.

The tentative relaxation within the PUWP is now over.

Last July it was trumpeted throughout the world that a Solidarnosc member, and a woman — Zofia Grzyb — had been elected

Mass arrests in Sierra Leone

IMPERIALISM'S agents in West Africa watch nervously the developments in Sierra Leone as they prepare to go to the aid of the murderous and corrupt Stevens regime.

The massive popular support for the general strike called by the 22 unions and 250,000 members of the Labour Congress forced the traditional capitalist response to the voice of the people — bloody repression.

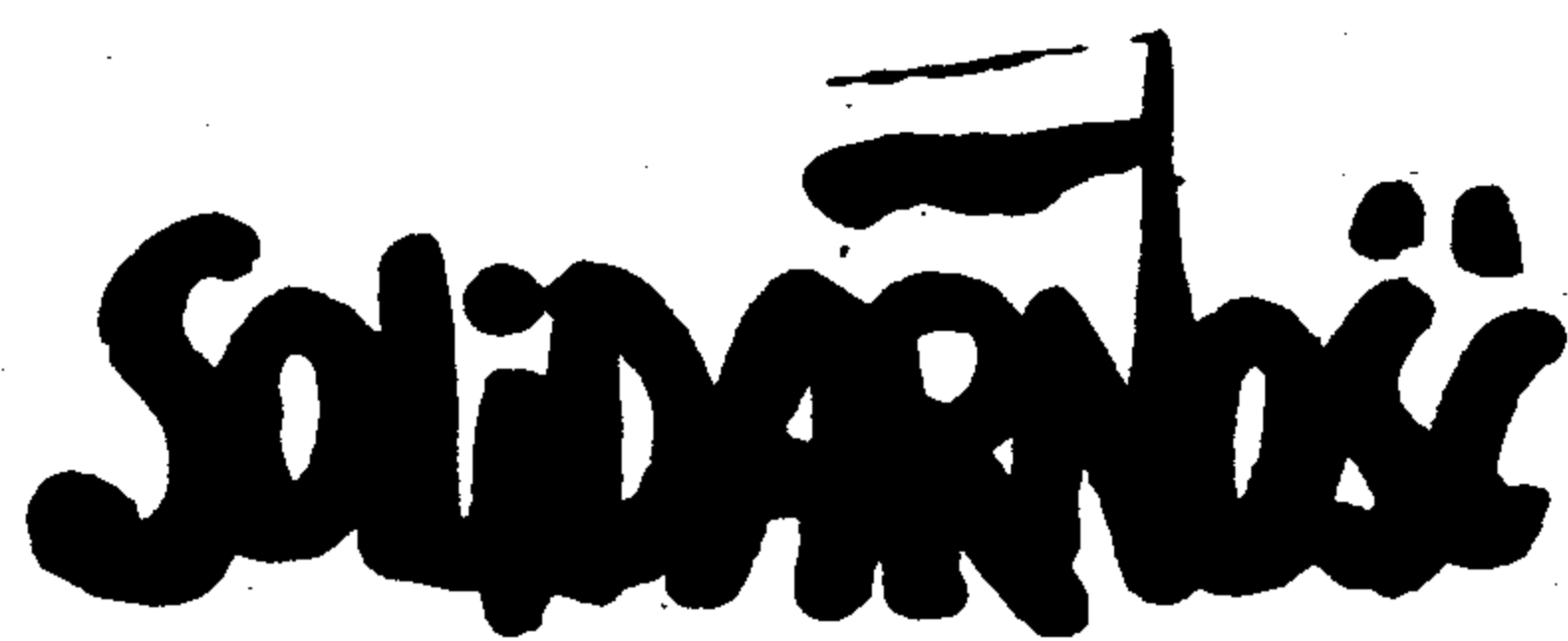
The entire labour leadership, union militants and many journalists and students were arrested.

The unions were banned, and armed gangs of the regime's thugs physically smashed the opposition press and broke up workers' organisations.

These gangs along with the army and police have also been responsible for over 60 deaths as they smashed up anti-government demonstrations that occurred throughout the country.

In an attempt to consolidate their repression, the regime has been forced to concede many of the workers' demands.

However the 50% increase in pensions, and the payment of all back pay and wages with no deductions for the strike, will go nowhere towards satisfying the workers who face annual inflation of 215%, and whose initial demands, besides calling for the "total overhaul of the economic system", were such that no neo-colonial regime could grant without the overthrow of the capitalist system itself. Their struggle continues bloodied but by no means crushed.



Right wing trounced in Greek polls

by Alexis Carras

ONLY TWO hours into the tallying-up of the votes, and the head of the outgoing Greek government — George Rallis — conceded defeat for his party, the conservative New Democracy.

Despite the rallying to the New Democracy of all sorts of neo-fascist and recalcitrant monarchist votes, this major party of the ruling class suffered a humiliating defeat.

Its vote sank to about 37%, while the Socialists PASOK, headed by Andreas Papandreu, skyrocketed to 48%, almost doubling the 25% of the vote that this relatively new party obtained in the 1977 Parliamentary elections. The other small political formations of bourgeois liberalism have been decisively (and let's hope definitively) obliterated. The only other party that managed to maintain its vote was the pro-Moscow Communist Party (Exterior).

This election result is of enormous significance. In a

massive realignment of political forces, the virtual monopoly of political power, which the right wing has, almost as a reflex reaction considered to be its own for the last 50 years, has been overturned.

Yet what different sections of the electorate want from PASOK, and what they will get, will largely determine the future of this incoming government.

For workers who voted for the left, the inflation-protection of wages promised by the Socialists to enable living standards to keep up with a 25% inflation rate, the unshackling of state controls on the trade union movement and the creation of a comprehensive health and social security system are some of the most crucial issues.

For the many small businessmen who voted for the Socialists, the major concern will be greater subsidies and grants to small enterprises, to avoid the wholesale strangulation that now threatens them from large domestic and

overseas monopolies.

In the wake of the international capitalist recession, it is difficult to imagine where the necessary funds for such projects will come from, especially in an economy like Greece's which, despite undoubted changes and advances over the last few decades, remains feeble.

Paymaster

Despite the immediate reforms — the separation of Church and State, civil marriage, divorce, voting rights, the repeal of all sorts of repressive legislation — and the euphoria and relief of the mass of Greek workers at having thrust off their backs the corrupt right-wingers who have ruled for so long, it will in due course become clear that the leadership of PASOK in the end follows only one paymaster — the bourgeoisie itself.

The reaction to these inevitable betrayals by the PASOK leadership in the country, in the working

class as a whole, and in the left wing of the party itself, will present enormous possibilities for revolutionaries.



Victor Papandreu

PREPARING TO ATTACK LIBYA?

"THE MOST direct way of dealing with Gaddafi is to kill him". So says Sunday Times correspondent David Bundy.

Thinking out aloud? Or just summing up the hot air in high places?

According to his article, US officials are openly talking about getting rid of Gaddafi. Henry Kissinger, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, is quoted as saying, "We should have taken him out a long time ago".

But it's not all talk. Nor is it simply a matter of the daily press accusations that Gaddafi was Sadat's murderer, that he is a 'madman' and a 'Muslim fanatic', and (to quote the US Vice-President) 'the world's principal terrorist'. Reagan's rushing AWACS radar reconnaissance planes to Egypt is physical evidence of war preparations against Libya.

The US has also announced 'a very extensive joint enterprise' with Egyptian forces, Operation Bright Star. This will involve landing amphibious assault ships at Oman and Somalia, mak-

ing practice runs with B52 bombers, and dropping 1400 airborne troops.

At the same time, Sudan's dictator, President Numeiri, claims that he fears either an assassination attempt or a full-scale Libyan invasion. He also accuses Libya of bombing Sudanese villages along Sudan's border with Libya and Chad.

Clearly imperialism is preparing public opinion for the possibility of an armed intervention in Libya. (It is not hopeful of an internal coup: 'We tried all the different angles, but there was no momentum going for a coup', an ex-CIA operative wrote recently).

That intervention will most likely come through Egypt and Sudan, operating with American support. We give not the slightest support to Gaddafi's regime. But socialists must support Libya's right to independence, and must oppose any attempt by imperialism to impose its will on Libya.

ANDREW HORNUNG

Labour Party



Tenants resist first evictions under Criminal Trespass Act

Retreat means a swindle!

by Martin Thomas

LABOUR'S Brighton conference convinced many activists that it was time for a new initiative to organise the Left.

Tony Benn's deputy leadership attracted tens of thousands to meetings across the country, newly aroused and newly hopeful about the struggle of the Left in the Labour Party. For once they saw the Left fighting as if it meant business.

Do we let them sink back into disillusion, or do we organise them to start to put their new hopes into practice?

Politics

The deputy leadership campaign brought politics into the unions on a big scale. The Left needs to organise to follow that up.

But as the pressure of the defeats on the NEC elections and the Manifesto makes itself felt, a lot of the Labour Left is pulling back.

The majority of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy executive has come out against a new Left initiative and for 'low-profile' tactics. (See Vladimir Derer's columns last week and this week: Socialist Organiser has also invited comrades representing the CLPD minority viewpoint to contribute next week).

The CLPD is in favour of continuing the Rank and File Mobilising Committee, the nearest the Labour Left has come so far to an activist alliance. But the Labour Coordinating Committee, another important Labour Left campaign, has already announced that it is pulling out of the RFMC.

The Guardian this week reports that a new LCC executive statement "rules out an 'action replay' of this year's contest for the deputy leadership and suggests that no decision should be taken on whether to challenge Mr Denis Healey again until the spring..."

"The underlying assumption is clearly that if Mr Benn is elected to the Shadow Cabinet and offered a post which the Left would regard as commensurate with his established power in the party he might decide not to fight Mr Healey again..."

And instead of a fight against Healey the LCC executive reportedly proposes to turn to activity "outside in the workplace and in the community" and to 'reformulating' the Alternative Economic Strategy.

The LCC office was not available to give comment or information this week, but the Guardian's correspondent, Julia Langdon, is usually well informed.

'Reformulating' the AES is (in my view) a fruitless

task - what the LCC should be doing is junking the whole baggage of Keynesian tinkering. But the idyllic perspective of reconciliation and unity has problems besides that.

Labour is solidly committed to unilateral nuclear disarmament. Denis Healey says he will not serve in any Labour government committed to scrapping the Bomb. So if we want to get rid of the Bomb, we have to get rid of Healey too.

What basis for reconciliation can there be? Clearly Michael Foot and others are trying to water down Labour's commitment to mere 'unilateral initiatives'.

Many of the most controversial reselection battles will

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LCC faces danger

THERE is a danger that the Labour Coordinating Committee annual conference in Scotland on November 8th may develop the incipient anti-Trotskyist alliance burgeoning between Stalinist trade union bureaucrats and their opposite numbers in CLPs.

The LCC was established in 1978 'to link up left Labour activists in the Party and the Unions'.

"If we are to be successful in transforming the Labour Party into an instrument of fundamental social change", its blurb says, "then the left needs to organise throughout the movement".

This is an admirable and

correct objective but is already degenerating in the hands of the bureaucrats and Stalinists into a calculated exclusion of the revolutionary left.

And it is in fact only the revolutionary left inside the Labour Party that can begin to transform this objective into a living reality, away from the dead formalism that is already beginning to pervade the LCC.

SO supporters should therefore make a priority of joining and becoming active in the LCC.

Further information from the LCC, 9 Poland Stree, London W1.

Jonathan Hammond

be fought over coming months. 'Unity' and 'reconciliation' will be the catch-cries used by sitting MPs to try to force through shortlists of one and keep their seats.

On many another issue, too, the scene is set for efforts to water down or gut the radical policies and democratic reforms decided by recent Labour conferences - all in the name of unity, no doubt, and all in the name of winning the next election. But such unity just means that the rank and file gets swindled.

Organiser

If the Labour Left really has woken up and started fighting for real, as the deputy leadership election seemed to show, then we must organise to stop this

The one thing gained from the 1974-9 Labour government was some bitter lessons, which have inspired some momentous rank and file assaults on Labour conservatism. Are we willing to let all that fade away now, in a sad but graceful return to 'business as usual'?

In the constituencies, there is still a strong body of activists who want to take forward the fight. But they want and expect leadership - and what they are getting from the mainstream Labour Left groups is the opposite.

The last Socialist Organiser secretariat meeting decided to propose to our next Delegate Meeting, on November 1st, a project for a broad Labour Left conference in the new year, to be organised jointly with as many local Labour Lefts and national groupings as possible.

Stop GLC from selling houses!

by Fran Newell
(Squat Against Sales)

AT Elgin Avenue, West London, there are 18 new flats occupied by 70 people, including 12 children.

These people are taking part in a Squat Against Sales, and were given a commitment by the Labour GLC in July that they would not be required to leave until the flats were let to council tenants, and that the homeless would be rehoused.

Now the GLC, as freeholders of the property, are taking these people to court to regain possession of the flats so they can sell them.

On October 13th the GLC ratified the decision of its Housing Committee, taken on October 6th after the Labour Group meeting the day before, to give up fighting for the right to retain council homes earmarked for sale by the Conservatives.

Erosion

There are two causes for this defeat: the threat of surcharge and disqualification from office by the District Auditor, coupled with the financial and legal restraints imposed by the previous Tory GLC and central government.

Voters who oppose the erosion of public housing stock by sales will be disappointed and more cynical in future about the determination of Labour councillors. But 23 councillors voted

to continue with the sale of 354 homes.

Dissent

Their decision is specially disturbing because it is so near to the stirring resolutions passed at Labour Party conference on support for local government in its fight against cuts and enforced sales and because the voice of dissent against the forced policy change was so small.

Only three councillors - Deirdre Woods, Andy Hastings, and Lesley Hammond - voted against sales.

The Labour councillors on the Housing Committee are: Davies, Dimson, Garside, Gant, Hardy, Hart, Herbert, Hinds, Hughes, Langton, Livingstone, McFrear, Nicholson, Rolfe, Ross, Sieve, Stead, Hammond, Harris, and Wood.

There are six Tory councillors.

The Tory GLC formed a number of Estmanco (Estate Management Companies) to dispose of property under the 1980 Housing Act by selling to the private sector. Two of these companies were closed down by the Tories themselves before they lost control of the GLC.

Rocketing

On Labour's victory in the GLC elections and its subsequent July decision to relet housing stock in six Estmanco estates, it found itself having injunctions served against it by three Estmanco to prevent it from reletting the properties. The GLC is the majority

shareholder in each of the six Estmancos!

Legal opinion now instructs the GLC that they cannot wind up the six Estmancos - even though the Tories could do so. Stranger still is the legal opinion that the GLC is unable legally to form a company to administer the planned local Enterprise Board. The Tory group are trying to prevent the creation of what would in law be a company structure identical to an Estmanco.

Harass

'Squat Against Sales' are publicising the GLC decision and will be picketing High Court hearings on 20th October. In a petition presented to Gladys Dimson (chair of the Housing Committee), they have asked the GLC to take action on three fronts: firstly, to continue to 'contest the Tory court challenge to its election mandate', secondly 'to withdraw the eviction notices against the Elgin Avenue Squat Against Sales', and thirdly 'to halt the squandering of £6,000 a week on anti-squatting forces and equipment at the three estates where flats are currently being kept empty awaiting sales'.

They state that they will continue 'indefinitely to fight against sales and harass as long as necessary all efforts to sell off the flats on the three sites'.

* Further information and petitions from: Elgin Avenue Squat Against Sales, Flat 47, Marble House, Elgin Avenue, London W9. (701 5691).

Campaign for Labour Party Democracy

VLADIMIR DERER writes the column from the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy this week.

AT ITS recent meeting the CLPD Executive rejected the proposal that CLPD should participate in the proposed formation of a 'new Left Wing' organisation based on the just concluded Deputy Leadership campaign. The majority of the Executive held that at this time such a step would be tactically inept.

Instead the CLPD Executive recommended that CLPD should continue to cooperate with the Labour Coordinating Committee, the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory, NOLS, Clause 4, Militant and the LPYS in the framework of the reconstituted or, if need be, 're-vamped', Rank and File Mobilising Committee.

While a joint platform of this body would necessarily involve further negotiations with the above organisations, and hopefully also others, it was anticipated that such negotiations would not give rise to any major difficulties.

What was seen as the main problem was agreement on the 'style' that the reformed body should adopt. It was thought that the 'style' should be in line with the prevailing mood in the party. This, it was felt, was characterised:

1. by the increasing feel-

ing that there is a need to restore to the Labour Party the credibility crucial if the unprecedentedly reactionary policies of Thatcher are to be successfully challenged in the next general election.

2. by the realisation that Labour will not acquire this credibility so long as it appears to be a hopelessly divided party. This realisation is reinforced by the awareness that the new SDP factor means that Labour is no longer the only alternative to the Tories.

In these circumstances, if the advocates of democratic reform were to take any steps that would tend to increase the existing tensions within the Party, it would merely strengthen the position of those intent on putting the clock back.

Successful

The setting up of an entirely new organisation which would adopt a 'high profile' approach - with circuses and jamborees so beloved to be far 'Left', the CP, and those members of the Labour Party who try to compensate for their inability to make any headway within the Party (i.e. their failure to make full use of the existing party channels) by fantasies about the effectiveness of 'extra-parliamentary' action - would make a successful defence of such gains as have been made, let alone any



Next steps after Brighton

new achievements, quite impossible.

A 'low profile' approach, on which the Executive decided, does not imply purely defensive tactics. It does, however, involve acknowledging that our opponents have achieved a major victory at Brighton, and not just because they were 'better organised', but also, and more importantly, because support for greater accountability and the measures that would ensure that conference policies are actually acted on, has ebbed, because of the Thatcher threat and increasing disunity.

Under these conditions a vigorous defence and new advances can only succeed by occupying such positions as would enable the majority of the Labour Party and trade union rank and file members to see that it is the attitudes and course of action adopted by the anti-reformers as well as the obduracy of the PLP, which are the main obstacle to Party unity.

Divisions

In this context a 'high profile' approach by us would prevent this realisation as it would be seen as conducive to continuing divisions.

The CLPD Executive therefore decided to recommend that CLPD aims be

pursued in the usual way and broadened to include trade union grass roots organisations.

So far as the impending regional conferences of the Labour Party are concerned, the Executive agreed on the following priority subjects:

Accountable

1. Democracy within the Parliamentary Labour Party.

2. Positive discrimination for Labour women. (In both the above cases the CLPD campaign is to be based on resolutions remitted by conference to the NEC).

3. The inclusion in the next Labour Party election manifesto of the demand to take into public ownership at least 25 of the largest manufacturing companies, as proposed in the 1973 Labour Party programme.

4. The strengthening of the mandatory reselection procedures by doing away with the 'shortlist' of one except where there is only one nominee.

5. Making Labour groups accountable to their CLPs and their Local Government Committees.

Join CLPD: individuals £3, couples £3.50, to Victor Schonfield, 21 Wallingford Ave, London W10 6QA.

Women in struggle

Press home struggle for 'Right to work' demonstration

by Rachel Lever

The Action Committee for a Woman's Right to Work, which has been organising support since May, would like a full scale demonstration — though not necessarily a very long march — because this will make a big difference to the way people mobilise for it (a serious protest, not just a nice day out), and will be a way to show who is there with banners and placards.

The final rally could then incorporate bands, shows, stalls and festivities.

The other question that will only be resolved by the work that's put into it is the political complexion of the event. The official line is likely to stress the Alternative Economic Strategy and what a future Labour government may do for women.

The Action Committee will be stressing women's self-organisation and independence, challenging the dominant male bias of society and the labour movement, and mobilising for defence of jobs, services and rights against the Tories.

Conference

On February 20th, the Action Committee is calling a national conference to boost the mobilisation for the demo. And already, several local groups have been set up.

This reflects a determination that the long run-up to the demonstration will be used to create a movement all over the country to support women fighting for jobs and services and to begin to challenge the predominant view of unemployment as a man's problem.

Broadsheet

Other plans are for a mass circulation broadsheet, a specially commissioned play, speakers' notes and use of Open Door TV.

Meanwhile, a basic leaflet is available from the Action Committee (c/o 181 Richmond Road, London E8), and an excellent pamphlet produced by the Labour Party and TUC (Women's Right to Work, 35p).

Raise the matter now in your local organisation. Get them to sponsor the demo, to order leaflets, to send a donation to the Action

THE campaign for a demonstration for a woman's right to work has made definite progress.

The Labour Party is committed to an 'event', and June 5th has been suggested as a possible date.

The idea is now being put to the TUC. The final format of the day will be determined by how much pressure can be built up for a march, as the TUC are reluctant at this stage to call one and are likely to press for a 'festival'.

Sponsors

New sponsors are coming in all the time for the demonstration. Latest support from prominent individuals comes from Marie Patterson and Alex Kitson of the TGWU; TUC President Alan Sapper; Ray Buckton of Aslef, Bill Sirs of ISTC, and Bernard Dix of NUPE.



Demonstrating at the TUC

Committee, and to press for the Regional or National body to commit itself to the demonstration.

If you're in a Labour Party women's section, local women's group, anti-

cuts campaign, unemployed centre or Trades Council call a meeting to plan how to mobilise around the demo, inviting all the usual and the less usual organisations to send representat-

tives.

CONTACT: Action Committee for a Woman's Right to Work, c/o Fran Bass, 181 Richmond Rd, London E8.

INSIGHT INTO THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

IN October 1979 an historic demonstration made its way from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square. About 60,000 people marched to protest at John Corrie's anti-abortion bill.

There had been militant, successful campaigns against previous attempts to restrict the 1967 Abortion Act — but the 1979 demonstration mobilised about twice as many people because it was officially called by the TUC.

For the first time the official backing of the labour movement was given to what, not so long before, was seen as at best peripheral or purely 'personal', or at worst a crime: free abortion on demand.

That campaign was perhaps the highpoint, so far, of the process by which the labour movement is slowly being shaken up by women and women's politics. Embryonic women's caucuses and campaigns have sprung up in unions such as CPSA and Nalgo.

At the same time, women's sections in the Labour Party are being revitalised by militant women, prepared to organise to challenge the rampant sexism

and bureaucratic lethargy of the Labour Party structure and leaderships.

This process would never have begun (and it has only begun) without the profound impact of the women's movement of the last two decades. All our lives have been affected by the ideas, campaigns and practice of the women's liberation movement (WLM).

'Women's issues', such as abortion and nursery

provision, are now taken up by the left and pushed in the labour movement. The very style of politics has also been subtly altered by the involvement of more and more women influenced by the experiences of the women's movement.

A book that tries to draw together the achievements and experiences of the WLM is therefore important — not just to the women who've been directly involved in the debates and campaigns, but also to the left.

'No Turning Back' is a collection of essays, poems, articles and interviews from five years of the WLM, 1975-80. It covers theoretical discussion, campaigns, personal experiences.

As the introduction points out, the 'late 1970s saw the flourishing of women's music, theatre, writing groups, printing presses and publishing houses, and the development of internal women's movement newsletters and information services'. The collection is a very rich reflection of these developments.

Patriarchy

There is a growing division in the WLM between the socialist feminist current and the radical or revolutionary feminists. In a section headed 'Sex and Class' a number of articles discuss the question of patriarchy, and the relationship (if any) between the struggle for women's liberation and for socialism.

The dominant argument is that Marxism, while it has some useful methods, has failed to take into account the depth of women's oppression and

failed to place it centrally in its analysis of capitalism and class society.

An interesting sideline is a discussion of the concept of patriarchy between Sheila Rowbotham, who argues that it is an unhelpful concept, and Sally Alexander and Barbara Taylor who argue 'In Defence of Patriarchy'.

My view is that it is useful to have a word to express the fact that men do dominate all aspects of capitalist society. 'Patriarchy' may not be very scientific, but I have yet to come across a more precise one.

Rape

The growing preoccupation of the women's movement with campaigns against male violence is strongly reflected. Reports from Rape Crisis centres, and descriptions of rape and pornography as methods of male control of women, take up a substantial section of the volume.

What is clear is that there is still confusion about what can actually be done about male violence, apart from responding in a defensive way with Rape Crisis Centres and refuges.

The question of whether pornography should be banned or censored is avoided. Since Sainsbury's 'Indecent Displays' Bill comes into force this week, this is not an issue that can be skirted around.

The overall theme of the volume is expressed in the title: the achievements of the WLM and its momentum cannot be easily reversed. Where that momentum is taking the movement is an open question, especially in a period when

NO TURNING BACK writings from the women's liberation movement 1975-80

Published by The Women's Press, 1981

Review by Ann Evans

the Thatcher government is doing its best to reverse the gains made.

It is striking that the articles are almost all timeless: they deal with issues that have always been there, without relating them to recent developments.

One notable exception is a piece by Sue Fawcus on Abortion and the Cuts.

The recent women's

movement was born in a period of boom, optimism and forward movement. It remains to be seen how the movement will cope with the present period of reaction and backlash, and with the present government's overt attacks — ideological and material — on women.

I would not agree with all or even most of the arguments in this book: but they deal with questions that concern us all.

**T.U.C. says
ABORTION
KEEP IT LEGAL
KEEP IT SAFE**



TUC demonstration against Corrie's Bill



Women's liberation and class struggle? Women on the steel strike picket lines, 1980

FIGHT THE WARMONGERS

TERRY SMITH argues that the danger of nuclear annihilation stems from a disregard for human life and an aggressive dynamic in the very basis of the capitalist system - to which the Kremlin bureaucrats respond in their own cynical, reactionary, militarist fashion.



MARGARET Thatcher and Ronald Reagan can be regarded as a major galvanising force in the growth of anti-war and disarmament movements in Britain, Europe and the USA.

Their bloodcurdling anti-communist rhetoric and sabre-rattling have now turned into a weapons build-up that has brought home to millions of people that fact that the imperialist leaders are seriously considering nuclear war.

US strategy has changed fundamentally from the old notion of "mutually ensured destruction" (MAD), in which both the US and the USSR were certain that a nuclear war would obliterate both sides.

New, sophisticated guidance systems and high-performance missiles now mean that it is theoretically conceivable for either side to wage a 'limited' nuclear strike aimed only at military targets.

The USA has already adopted such a plan. Under President Carter, Presidential Directive 59 gave the order to prioritise military targets in order to prepare for a possible 'first strike' against the Soviet Union.

NATO plans for conventional war in Europe include the use of 'tactical' nuclear weapons after only five days of confrontation.



Now Reagan has pressed ahead with the programme of basing Cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe, and commissioning a further 3,000 Cruise missiles to be carried in airborne US bombers: these, together with submarine missiles and 250 newly commissioned 10-warhead MX ground based missiles equip the USA to carry out a lethal 'first strike' against the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

In response to this the Kremlin bureaucrats could scarcely sit on their hands. We can assume that they in turn have drawn up their own list of targets for possible retaliation or for a 'preemptive' action should they fear an American attack.

Beneath the looming shadows of intercontinental missiles and multi-megaton warheads the international workers' movement must urgently consider its response. Under these conditions the 'peace' movement, having fallen to a certain extent by the wayside in the late 70s has been able to win a new lease of life and a new body of supporters.

The movement is politically disparate - stretching from the well-heeled uni-

lateralists of the Liberal Party through various strands of pacifism and confusion to the small number of Revolutionary Marxists who fight for a socialist perspective. And it is generating some lively and thought-provoking literature.

E.P. Thompson's 'Protest and Survive' anthology (Penguin, 1980) brought together a diverse and rambling series of articles containing a welter of useful information in not particularly digestible form.

But the build-up towards this year's October 24th demonstration has brought the publication of further material worthy of attent-

the responsibility of the USA and imperialist countries for the blocking of disarmament proposals in 1955:

"On 10 May 1955 the Soviet Union laid proposals before the UN Disarmament Sub-Committee which, amongst other measures, provided for armed manpower ceilings of 1,500,000, major reductions in conventional armaments and an arrangement for the abolition of 75% of the stocks of nuclear and other mass destruction weapons. They agreed to an international control organ with staffs of inspectors having unimpeded access at all times to all objects of control. The com-

months, have been accepted in large measure by the Soviet Union.'

"After months of procrastination, on 6 September the American delegate dashed all hopes of agreement with: 'The United States does now place a reservation upon all of its pre-Geneva substantive positions taken in this Sub-Committee or in the Disarmament Commission or in the UN on these questions in relation to levels of armaments.' In other words all the proposals urged with vigour and persistence only three months before were withdrawn."

Indeed a great strength of Overkill is its focus on the arms programme in the

new group of apparently less responsible nations obtain the bomb and use it in a way which escalates on a world scale.

Such a view dramatically overstates the level of control which the imperialist leaders are at present able to exercise over the pressures towards war.

And it equally exaggerates the effect of additional states possessing nuclear weapons in destabilising an already unstable situation.

But Calder does have some useful insights to offer. Like Cox he is more objective than many pacifists in his assessment of the Soviet bureaucracy and its intentions.

He repeatedly underlines

advance base for a war which they hope will leave the USA intact.

He quotes the cynical US joke about:

"A tactical nuclear weapon is one that explodes in Germany."

He quotes NATO soldiers on exercise preparing for nuclear war complaining that in densely populated Europe

"German towns are only two kilotons apart."

He quotes the estimates drawn up from a 1955 NATO exercise called Carte Blanche, which envisaged over 300 nuclear explosions and civilian deaths of over 1.6 million.

Strives

And he refers at some length to the newly-released plans for a possible nuclear war against the USSR in 1949:

"The code name was Trojan and the attacks required about 150 atomic weapons, using up most of the stocks then in existence. Within two weeks of the outbreak of war, medium bombers flying mainly from England and long-range bombers operating from American bases via Alaska were to strike at industrial targets in 30 cities in the Soviet Union. The targets were chosen with care so as to do the greatest possible damage to the Soviet capacity for waging war; they were also widely dispersed so as to confuse Soviet air defences. That initial nuclear attack was to be accompanied by aerial reconnaissance over another 40 cities, listed for a second nuclear attack to follow within another 16 days. There were no targets outside the Soviet Union. The document remarks: 'The purpose is to hit hard and to attack a large number of Soviet urban areas in the shortest possible time. It is hoped thus to exploit the effects of surprise and shock, to provoke the spread and compounding of disaster rumours, and by widespread damage to interdependent industries to complicate and retard processes of recuperation'

"Still spattered with its 'top secret' stamps, the typewritten Trojan document is a further reminder that plans for nuclear war are not vague conjectures. This was the war that would have occurred in 1949 had Western leaders been tempted or provoked into punishing the Russians

with an atomic attack for their assimilation of Czechoslovakia and their blockade of Berlin."

Both books very ably paint the picture of a belligerent imperialist alliance making undisguised plans to attack the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries.

Both point in contrast to the generally defensive attitude of the Soviet bureaucracy, responding after each new imperialist move by building up its own forces and arsenals.

But neither book explains why this is the case. The Kremlin bureaucracy rests on an economic base which does not have the relentless, expansionist, world-plundering drive of capitalism.

Despite its lust for revenue and power, it is fundamentally concerned to defend its existing privileges and strength. It fears - and strives to contain, restrain or suppress - working class mobilisation, which could spread to challenge its own usurping rule; it therefore also fears all political upheavals which could arouse working class struggle.

Myth

The Kremlin leaders have sought since the mid 30s to establish a stable balance of forces on which to base a long-term co-existence with imperialism.

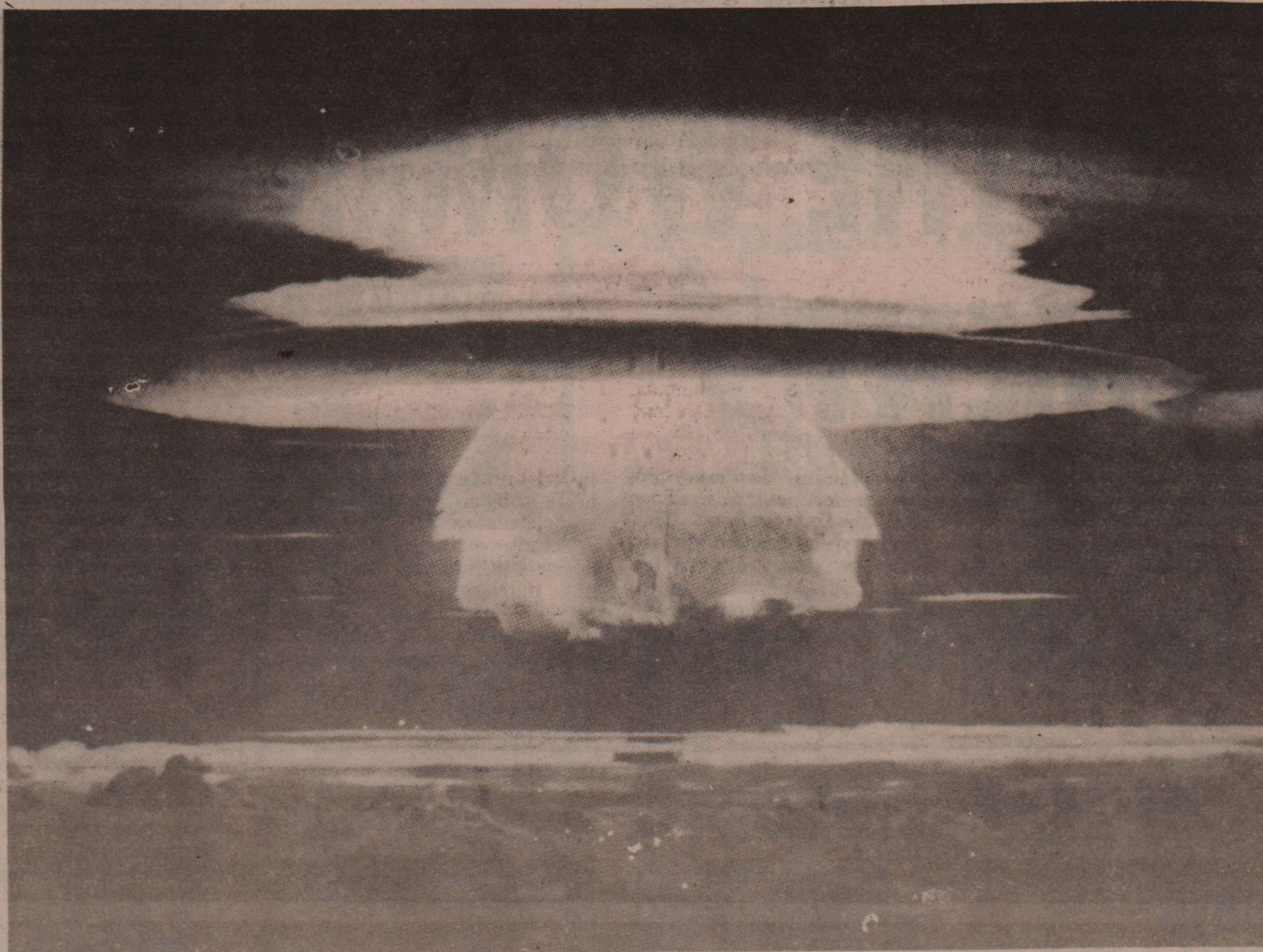
Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev have acted time and again to prevent the overthrow of capitalism in Europe and to crush workers fighting to oust Stalinist bureaucracies in East Germany, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

Talk of the 'Communist threat against the West' is therefore a myth conjured up by imperialist warmongers seeking bigger budgets for the means of destruction.

But for the thousands of workers and youth drawn towards the anti-war movement it is necessary to point out that they should not simply fear the military build-up: they should see the threat to the USSR and to anti-imperialist struggles world-wide as a threat to themselves.

The hostility of the US to the Kremlin leaders is qualitatively different from their hostility to rival capitalists around the world.

The revolutionary overturn of capitalist property relations in the Russian



ion.

A new edition of Overkill by John Cox (First edition, 1977) offers a coherent account of exactly what nuclear energy and nuclear weapons are, how they work, their effects and the 'delivery systems' devised to transport them to their targets.

Cox is far less mealy-mouthed than many 'Protest and Survive' contributors in pinning the blame for the arms race firmly on the USA.

"Whatever views are held about the politics and intentions of the Soviet Union, and the supposed level of their conventional armed forces, it must be admitted that the United States has led the nuclear arms race. Whether you consider the first nuclear bombs, ICBMs, MIRVs, nuclear submarines, SRAMs or ASW, the United States has been the pacemaker, usually with a lead of several years."

Cox goes on to point out

pletion of all these measures was to be followed by further reductions in armaments.

"The French delegate's immediate response was that 'the whole thing looks too good to be true'. The British delegates, after consultation with the government, said he was glad that the Western 'policy of patience' had now achieved this welcome dividend, and that the Western proposals have now been largely, and in some cases, entirely, adopted by the Soviet Union and made into its own proposals.' After listing the points of agreement, he said 'we have made an advance that I never dreamed possible'.

"The US delegate, after two days' discussion with the American government, said 'we have been gratified to find that the concepts we have put forward over a considerable length of time, and which we have repeated many times during this past two

advanced capitalist countries and its reluctance to get sidetracked into discussions of the dangers of 'proliferation'. The thrust is - therefore consistently towards a campaign aimed primarily at disarming our 'own' ruling class and the US capitalists.

No such single-mindedness is apparent in another new Penguin - Nuclear Nightmares by Nigel Calder.

Prominent among the four scenarios which Calder contemplates as the possible prelude to a nuclear holocaust is the 'Nuclear Epidemic' - in which a



the fact that:

"The Soviet Union has reason to be fearful of NATO, especially of the Americans, the self-avowed foes of communism and of the Germans, their unforgotten enemies of recent history."

Cynical

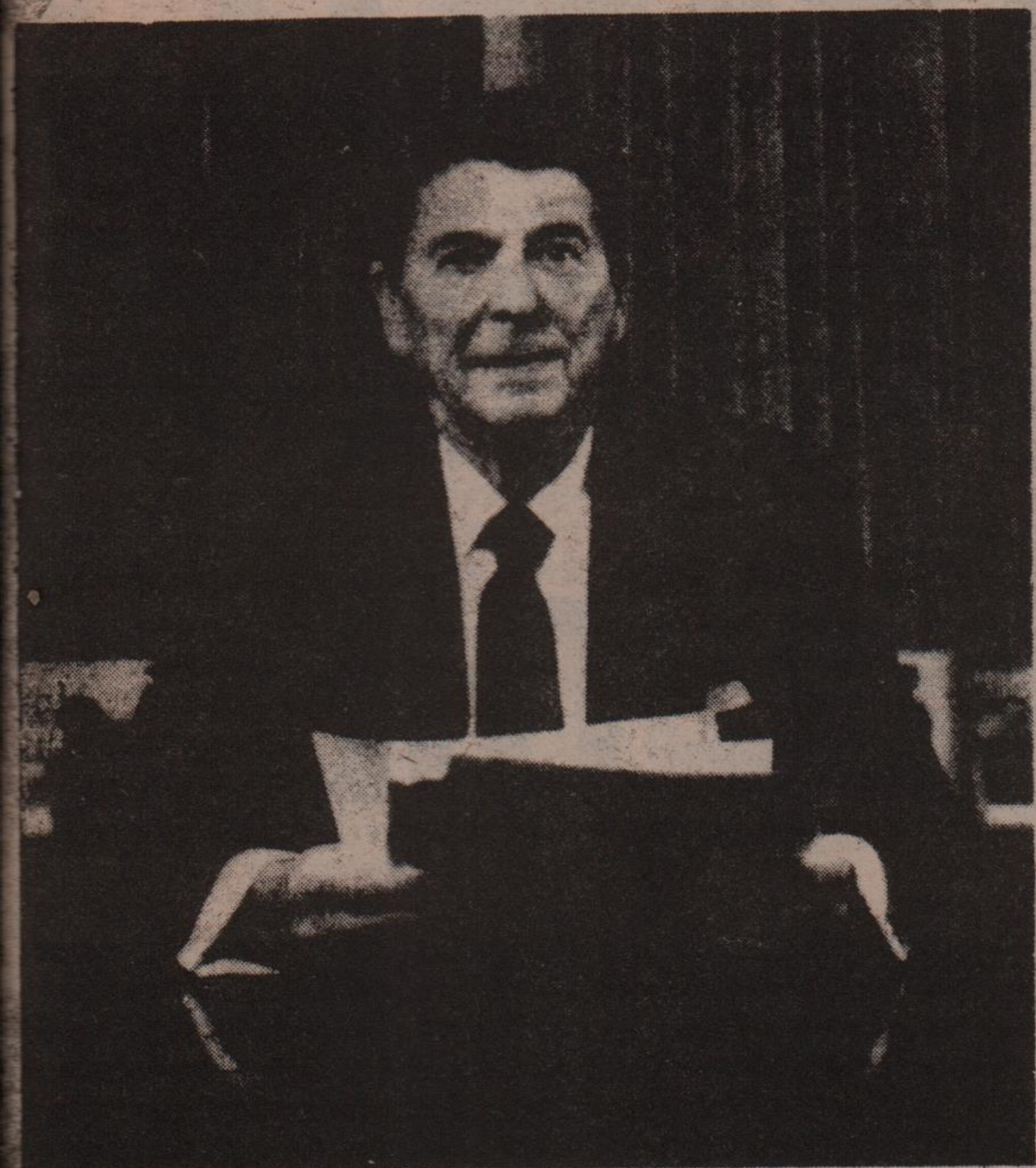
And without drawing any conclusions on the politics of the Kremlin leaders, he points out that:

"The nub of the military crisis in Europe is that a Soviet defensive posture is indistinguishable from an aggressive posture."

While not ignoring the extensive military preparations by the USSR, Calder insists that the "primary purpose of their policy" is to "deter any military adventure by NATO in Eastern Europe."

At the same time he draws out the real meaning of the US nuclear strategy - to use Europe as an

... FIGHT THEIR SYSTEM!



Revolution of October 1917 marked a major step forward for the working class.

Efforts

Efforts by imperialism to overthrow that revolution

proved unsuccessful, and even decades of bureaucratic conservative rule by Stalin and his successors have failed to destroy completely the benefits of a planned, nationalised economy.

Since World War 2

The capitalist system centres on the ability of the employing class to exploit the labour of the working class — paying the workforce wages which are less than the value of the goods they produce.

Capitalism's thirst for profit is never satisfied. Capitalism produces not for human need, but to get more wealth for the sake of wealth.

So capitalism always strives to conquer new areas. As capitalism in Western Europe and the USA became highly monopolised in the late 19th century, the big capitalist powers set about dividing up the whole world's markets, raw material sources, and areas for investment.

Through the military conquest and subjugation of colonies in Africa, Asia and Latin America, the rival capitalist powers secured access to vital supplies of raw materials and at the same time a potential workforce whose standard of living was far lower than in the advanced countries. Wages paid

out could therefore be kept lower — and profits higher.

Attempts by different capitalist powers to improve their share in this division of the world lay behind the two great inter-imperialist wars of 1914-18 and 1939-45.

Since 1945, the forms of domination of imperialism have evolved. After huge struggles, most colonial countries have gained political independence.

But the economic exploitation of the masses in the underdeveloped countries continues at the hands of multinational banks and corporations based in the imperialist countries, while they continue to be politically repressed by bourgeois — often dictatorial — regimes backed by imperialist weaponry and military aid.

The basic drive for ceaseless expansion and economic domination by a handful of huge capitalist enterprises and capitalist states continues. And so does the war danger flowing from that drive.

further huge areas of the potential world market — Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam and Cuba — have been transformed into deformed workers' states.

It is to these states and their Stalinist rulers that workers in struggle against imperialist oppression in the Third World look — generally in vain — for material and political support.

And for this reason imperialist rulers — fearful of losing control over areas such as the Persian Gulf, Southern Africa and Central America — have embarked on an arms build-up to frighten off any possible Stalinist support for liberation struggles.

Meanwhile particularly extreme sections of the US capitalist class and military plainly cherish dreams of reconquering the lost

markets, lost sources of exploitable labour and lost territories that are now contained in the Stalinist states.

Any advance of the working class in its struggle for socialism demands the defence of past conquests — democratic rights, trade unions, social services, living standards: among these gains the highest are those flowing from the only successful proletarian revolution in history — the Russian revolution.

Cripples

As socialists we are not neutral therefore on the question of imperialist threats to the USSR: we stand for the defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism. At the same time we support those who fight for the political overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy whose dictatorial rule stifles the power of the working class, cripples the nationalised economy and stands opposed to world revolution, and for the establishment of a revolutionary government based on workers' councils.

We defend the Soviet Union by fighting to weaken and defeat imperialism.

We fight to break up the anti-Soviet NATO alliance; we fight to disarm and overthrow the capitalist class in Britain, Europe and the USA.

For this reason it is nec-

essary to go much further than the political conclusions advocated by Cox (join CND) or Calder (speculative thoughts about quotas limiting missile tests).

The professionally non-aligned, cross-class politics of CND also fall far short of the necessary firm direction into the unions and Labour Party.

Nightmare

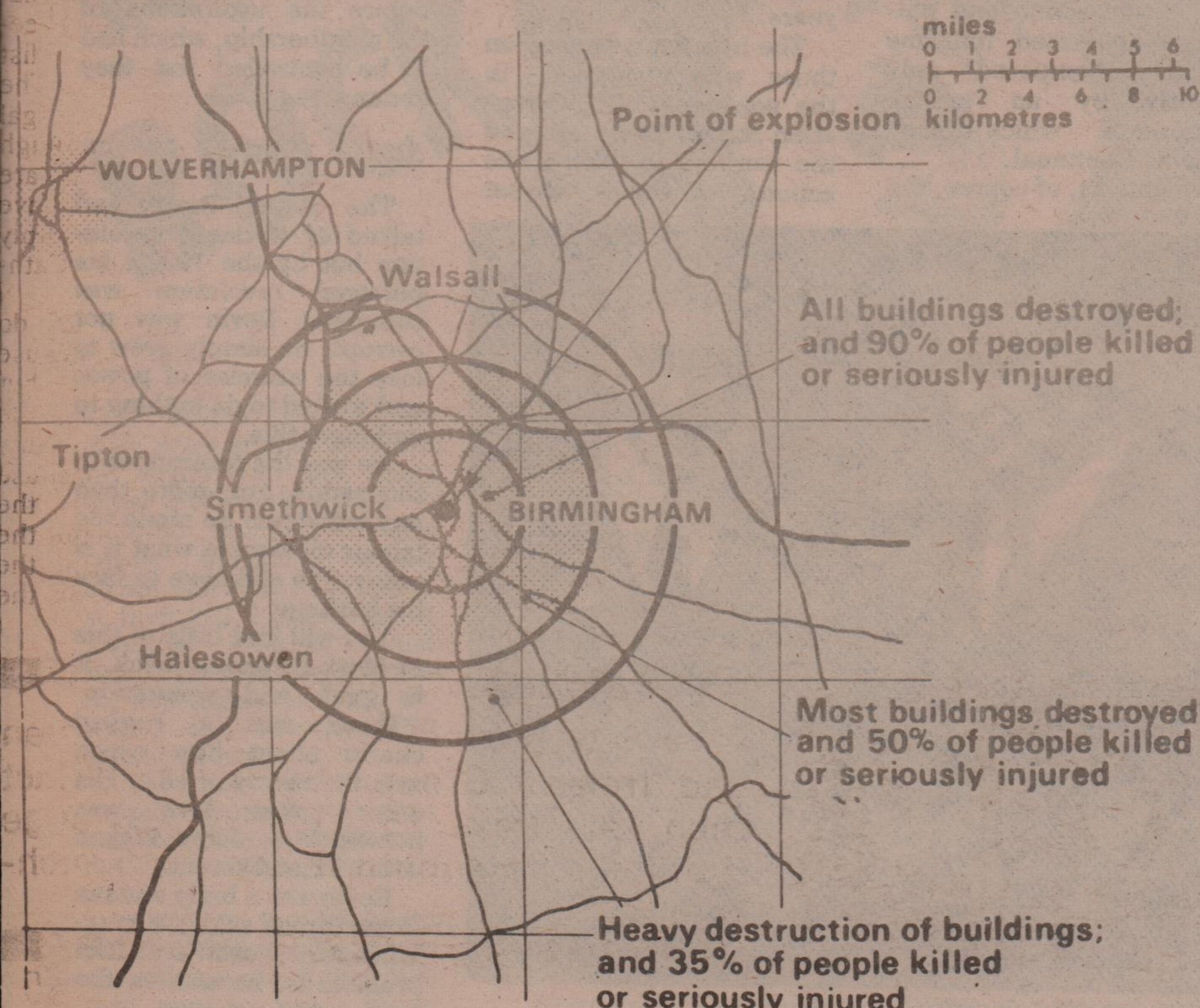
Only in the labour movement does it make sense to argue for action to bring down the warmongering Thatcher government; only the organised labour movement can force a workers' government to pull out of NATO and take a stand in support of revolutionary struggles around the world.

Readers should read and absorb the disturbing facts in *Overkill* and *Nuclear Nightmares*.

But having done so, we urge them to fight with *Socialist Organiser* for policies that can bring about the nightmare that haunts the capitalist class; the overthrow of their system of oppression and exploitation and the establishment of peace through socialist revolution and internationalism.



Hiroshima: a pinprick compared with the horrors of the latest weapons



Effect of a single one-megaton bomb on Birmingham (from 'Overkill')

Expose civil defence fraud

by Dave Spencer, West Midlands county councillor

THE WEST Midlands County Council's policy on civil defence is quite clear in the Manifesto for last May's elections — dismantle it, and spend the money on educating the public about nuclear war.

A special sub-committee on Emergency Planning was set up, and soon established that provision to protect the civilian population in the event of nuclear war is non-existent.

Apparently the Home Office has the grand total of eight people nationally involved in this area of civil defence.

There are no doubt special emergency plans known to the Ministry of Defence and the military and a select few administrators —

but not to democratically elected representatives. One officer commented that the military probably assume that military targets would be the first hit, and that civilian areas could be coped with by regular emergency procedures.

A cynical councillor replied that the military were no doubt planning on exactly the opposite.

In the West Midlands, there has been no distinction between planning for peacetime emergencies and for war. Thus procedures and equipment are available for rabies outbreaks, evacuation in the event of floods, major industrial explosions, etc. Stocks of blankets and stretchers are available, and church and school halls have

been earmarked as reception centres.

But we discovered that civil defence is totally inadequate for peacetime emergencies, too.

The major hazards in the West Midlands area have not even been identified and located, let alone controlled. Where major hazards are known, officials are reluctant to publicise the fact for fear that nearby residents might object, house prices might fall, and industry be driven from the area.

These hazards are often quite near city centres or densely populated areas. Even worse, they are often near other major hazards, so that there could well be a knock-on effect.

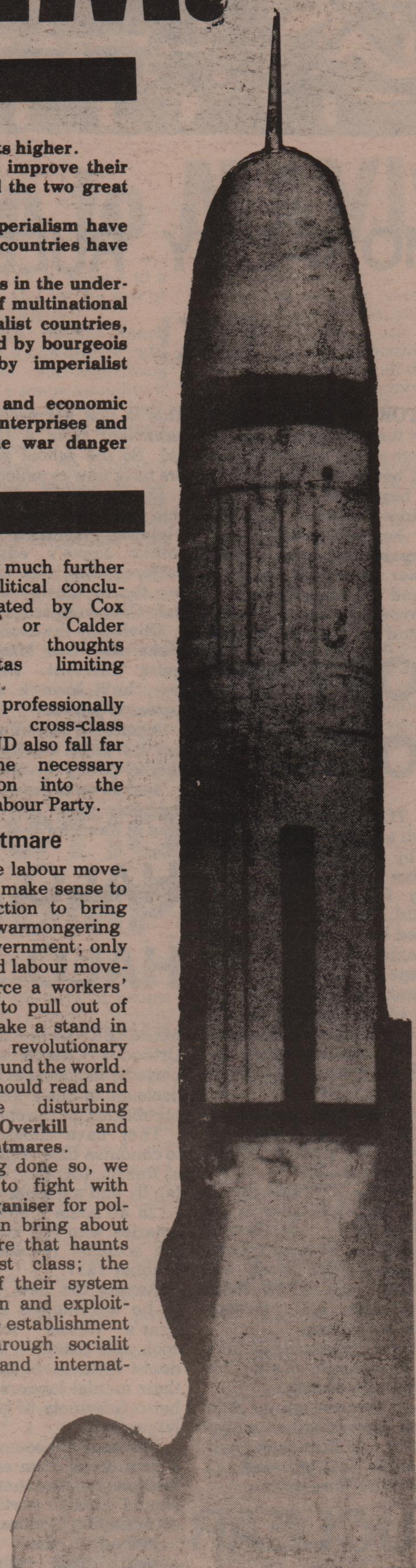
With motorways and rail

criss-crossing the West Midlands, transporting chemicals, nuclear waste, and the like, the potential is there for some highly dangerous explosions.

We also discovered that there is a real possibility of a whole town centre in the West Midlands collapsing into old mineral workings.

The Health and Safety Executive has identified 500 industrial sites in Britain which are major hazards. They will not, however, reveal where these hazards are, for fear of creating gloom and despondency.

There could be no better example of the profit motive at work — the total cynicism of capitalism and its disregard for human life and limb. It is time for the labour movement to expose and make public the dangers in our midst before some major catastrophe occurs.





MORALITY RULES OK!

VICTORIAN morality still rules the roost at school.

Jayne Clee was expelled from her school for kissing her boyfriend in a school corridor between classes. The boyfriend wasn't, as he apologised to the headmaster, who was hanging around watching them.

Jayne got their incensed and refused to recant.

This is just not acceptable behaviour from a 15 year old. So the school governors have now expelled her.

She was due to sit exams this year, but these wooden Victorian moralists would rather Jayne's education suffered than risk tarnishing the reputation of Tivdale Comprehensive.

Obviously the case of the bloke she was kissing is quite different. Being a boy, he'll have a serious career to pursue.

A puzzled parent pointed out that there was no actual 'hanky-panky' involved.

Just as well: Jayne would probably have had to be shot at dawn for that.

TORY NO TO CODE

UP TO a million infant death a year could be caused by multinational companies promoting their baby foods in the Third World, it has been estimated by the World Health Organisation and other groups.

Studies point out that the cost of feeding a child on these products in Ethiopia for six months could be equivalent to 140% of the per capita GNP.

The health of another ten million babies could be affected by pushing these expensive foods.

Now the EEC has decided to increase controls on companies' marketing practices, with stiff fines for those who break the existing code which bans advertising and promotional incentives.

While these controls may not be enough, it's a step in the right direction.

And the one group who voted against these measures in the European Parliament? You guessed it, the British Tory party.

NUCLEAR FAMILY

A LETTER in last week's Socialist Organiser pointed to the role of the monarchy as a pillar of class oppression. Well, now you've got another reason to abolish them as soon as possible.

Prince Andrew is being trained to drop nuclear bombs from helicopters. It seems like a case of get rid of them before they get rid of us!

HALO, HALO...

MEMBERS of the Russian Orthodox Church are reportedly incensed at a novel decision of their generally lugubrious patriarchs.

They have chosen 1981 to canonise Czar Nicholas II of Russia, together with his family and personal retinue — in all some 8,000 reactionaries who fell victim to the socialist revolution of October 1917.

Among the new 'saints' to be worshipped are the Czar's former footman, cook and maid — who no doubt little suspected that their menial labours would be so fulsomely (if belatedly) praised.

The decision seems to be a firm break from any old-fashioned notion that saints should lead particularly self-denying or moral lives.

Indeed, there now appears little reason to confine the list to Christians at all: why should Czar Nicholas' equally blood-thirsty fellow-despots be excluded?

A provisional list of worthy additions should include at least the Emperor Bokassa, Mussolini, Hitler and a Chinese saint, Chiang Kai Shek; and let's not forget Joseph Stalin, whose brutal persecutions did more than almost anything to promote the survival of the Church in Russia.



ONE Sunday morning in November 1908, a ragged procession of 400 unemployed workers marched into morning service at Bristol Cathedral playing True to Death.

The clergy and respectable citizens were in some consternation as the tattered troops sat down amongst them, but, much impressed, the Dean and Chapter took up the plight of the unemployed with the City Council.

This incident was typical of the imaginative tactics used in the 'Right to Work' agitation by a young member of the Marxist Social Democratic Federation, Ernest Bevin.

Harsh

He was a firm socialist. As he said of unemployment at the AGM of the Bristol Right to Work Committee that year, "nothing but a complete social and economic revolution is going to solve the problem. We must feed the people in order that men (sic) may be strong enough physically and mentally to carry out that revolution which will come at no distant date."

Such admirable views were the product of a tough upbringing in the harsh conditions of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. As Bevin himself said, "I had to work at ten years of age while my employer's son went to the University until he was twenty. I was taught to bow to the squire and touch my hat to the parson; my employer's son was not."

"All these things produced within me an intense hatred, a hatred which has caused me to organise for my fellows and direct my mind to a policy to give my class power to control their own destiny and labour."

Anathema

1981 is the centenary of the birth of this young socialist agitator. It has already been celebrated by a television documentary, this book specifically commissioned by Britain's biggest union and the unveiling of a plaque by James Prior and William Whitehead at the Department of Employment. They crossed the civil service union picket lines to honour Bevin.

Such glorification of a socialist trade unionist might seem strange.

As T&G activists look towards reforming their union, JOHN McILROY takes a look at its founder

However, as this book which details "the amazing story of the unskilled labourer who became a great trade union leader and world statesman", points out, the young Bevin changed a little bit in the process. As they say, he worked his passage.

By the 1930's his earlier sentiments were anathema to him. The man who had wanted to give his class the power to control society was determined to ensure that they would not even control their own unions. The man who had believed in revolution insisted that within the TGWU communists should be treated in the same way as Fascists.

To a journalist who pointed to the discomfort of the public in a bus strike, Bevin barked, "They've got to walk but I'm fighting for my life and the life of my union and I'm not going to stop until I've crushed them once and for all flat finished."

"Them" referred to the strikers, the workers who paid Bevin's salary, the people on whose backs he had clambered to power.

Retreat

It had been a relatively short but brutal and action-packed ride. In 1911, at the age of 30, Bevin became a full-time official. He clambered up the ranks in the Dockers' Union, becoming no. 2 to Ben Tillet.

In 1914 Bevin was still enough of a socialist to oppose the war, but by 1919, as he nudged the Triple Alliance away from confrontation with Lloyd George, the Daily Telegraph could comment, "Hitherto he has been regarded as an extremist but he has played a great part in bringing about a settlement of one of the most threatening industrial disputes the country has seen."

Bevin was a brilliant organiser who used deficiencies in organisation as an excuse for retreat. In 1921 he played an important part in the desertion of the miners on the infamous

Black Friday. During the General Strike he flogged himself to death in providing whatever effective organisation came from the top.

More far-sighted than most, he saw clearly that the sell-out meant unconditional surrender but made no attempt to draw back and continue the struggle together with the miners.

"The best way to describe today is that we have committed suicide. Thousands of members will be victimised as a result of this day's work."

Of course, like all trade union leaders, Bevin had his moments. He was a superb negotiator. His famous appearance as the Dockers' Attorney before the Shaw Inquiry captured the public imagination.

Patronise

He played a determined and important role in the Council of Action, which in 1920 stopped the government going to war with Russia. His most durable achievement was the creation of the TGWU in the early 1920's, brought about largely by his vision, determination and perseverance.

However, its constitution showed the new face of trade unions. The General Secretary was given tremendous power, elected for life and able to strongly influence a lay executive which controlled finance and strike action and patronise appointed full-time officials hampered only slightly by an annual conference which soon became bi-annual.

Bevin was, of course, the

BEVIN: A BEAST FIGHTING FOR THE BOSSES

General Secretary, bullying Tillet to step down in his favour.

His only failure was an attempt to manoeuvre out the President, Harry Gosling, but Ernie was undoubtedly the king of the castle. As Vic Allen said, "Whenever there was a conflict of opinion between Bevin and any official the latter had to give way".

Distribution of executive minutes was not on, declared Bevin. The executive must have a free hand. Employers' organisations do not distribute minutes.

"The lay members", he stated, "must be conscious that there are certain things they cannot do and they must leave the officers to carry out the tasks in which they are employed to specialise."

After the defeat of the General Strike, Bevin, with Citrine, was the architect of collaboration. "We, on our side began to apply reason for the solution of our problems and immediately we found a willingness on the part of the rest of the community to adopt reason."

Reason was wage-cutting and victimisation. "I hate strikes", he declared, "Is the strike the only way to fight?" he asked Arthur Cook, arguing for the Mond-Turner talks. No, of course not, but the use of alternative methods led to mass unemployment for 15 years.

The iron fist was used on those who disagreed. In the notorious 1937 Coronation Strike, Bevin allowed the workers to take strike action, let them exhaust

themselves and then ruthlessly smashed them. Eight strike leaders were expelled or suspended from holding office.

Bevin began to play an important role in the Labour Party through the block vote and his domination of the General Council. He opposed intervention in Spain and united front work against fascism and was responsible for removing the pacifist, George Lansbury from the leadership of the Labour Party in 1935.

Trap

When war broke out the establishment knew its man. As Minister of Labour he agreed dilution with the major unions within 24 hours. "I have to ask you virtually to place yourselves at the disposal of the state."

He introduced laws against strikes that would make Norman Tebbit look soft and sent workers to prison.

"I was much in harmony with Bevin", Churchill said. Foreign Minister in the Attlee government, Bevin played a crucial role in constructing NATO and the Cold War.

Bevin was caught in the classic trap of the bureaucrat. Insidiously, silently, unknown even to himself, he took on board the ideas of the ruling class as he became increasingly separated from his own class.

Organisation came before the aspirations of the membership, which had to be controlled lest they endangered it.

Gush

The young Bevin had talked of workers' revolution but by the 1920's his personal revolution was complete. Bevin was not corrupt, he simply grew to love the exercise of power and wished to do nothing to endanger this.

He was the forerunner of thousands, but, more than any individual he made the labour movement what it is today. We still have to face his heritage.

You will find little of this in Mark Stephens' book. It is gush and veneration. "There was a rugged charm about him which won the hearts of all... His other great love was horses." — John Wayne with a Bristol accent.

Bevin was a bully and, as Beaverbrook said, "a magnificent beast". The problem is, he was on the bosses side, not ours.



Bevin with TUC chief Citrine

a socialist organiser broadsheet 20p

the fight for trade union democracy

McIlroy
Director
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25 Middle
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GLUM FACES FOR THATCHER'S SPEECH

While Tory grandees urge Thatcher to adopt a more slow and subtle policy against the working class, the Tory rank and file is high on Thatcherite rhetoric and wants an even harder line. JOHN LISTER reports.

THE BARELY disguised exasperation of the Tory press, and the evident unease and embarrassment on the faces of Thatcher's ministers during her wind-up speech in Blackpool, tell their own story.

The Tory party is in deep crisis. For the first time there is a real and increasingly vocal and tenacious challenge to Thatcher's policies and even her leadership. The attack is spearheaded by Heath, St John Stevas and Gilmour; but it comprises growing sections of the Tory party in Parliament.

Embarrass

Such an opposition has a disproportionate ability to embarrass Thatcher by its access to the press and its power to interfere with the legislation of government policies in Parliament.

But the conference showed that it is a peculiar opposition - largely isolated from the rank and file reactionaries that form the backbone of the active Tory party.

It is an opposition created on the one hand by the economic repercussions of Thatcher's policies on whole sections of the employers, and on the other by a growing fear among Tory MPs that if the policies are not changed then they (and their Party) will be annihilated at the next election.

This aspect of the problem has grown with the emergence of the SDP as a new rival capitalist party, plainly taking much of its electoral support from disgruntled Tories.

Prophets

Under such pressure those who regard themselves as 'traditional' Tories have begun to wheel out references to Disraeli and Iain Macleod as the great past prophets of the politics of 'one



Rank and file floggers

nation', and to counterpose them to the outright class war strategy pursued by Thatcher.

They have spelled out alternative policies for the restoration of profitability.

In doing so they have begun to enlist some apparently unlikely fellow travellers within Thatcher's own cabinet: Leader of the House Francis Pym and Environment Secretary Heseltine made carefully veiled calls for a shift of policy; Home Secretary Whitelaw and Foreign Secretary Carrington are, also reportedly more and more worried at the inflexible course and the devastating electoral results it will bring.

But while the Parliamentary Tories continue their wrangles, they can scarcely be unaware that a very different kind of pressure is arising from the Party's rank and file - reflected in the howling down of a conference speaker who dared to speak out against racialism,

the brandishing of handcuffs by one councillor in the debate on 'law and order', and the defeat of Whitelaw's resolution on the basis that it was not tough enough.

The ultra-right wing Monday Club has produced a National Front style call for compulsory 'repatriation' of blacks, while delegates were plainly eager to hear Norman Tebbit unveil his plans to attack the unions with laws that would strip away 75 years of legal protection.

Frenzied

Desperate and frenzied sections of the Tory middle class have been driven by the crisis to demand measures even more right wing than Thatcher's proposals, while their leaders are beginning to chicken out. This polarisation could do more than anything up to now to provide forces and cash backing to outright fascist movements such as the NF and

the British Movement.

Meanwhile a divided and clearly demoralised Tory leadership faces the task of imposing further brutal cuts in public spending, and confronting working-class anger spearheaded by the BL strikers.

Already the opposition of the unions and threat of industrial action has forced an important government

Other policies floated or decided at the Tory Conference included the possible introduction of a 'voucher system' to encourage middle-class parents to send their children to private schools.

Sir Keith Joseph - bringing the same ruthless commitment to education that he brought to British industry - proposed the scheme to loud cheers from well-heeled delegates.

The Tory Party has always been the party of landlords and landlords - so it was appropriately at its Blackpool conference that Housing Minister John Stanley announced new proposals to strip private tenants of security of tenure.

Blood-sucking property owners have long been howling that they were not prepared to let property unless they received far more than what is currently defined as a 'fair' rent.

Now the Tories are to amend their own 1980 Housing Act to remove landlords' obligation to get a fair rent agreed by a rent officer before letting property on shorthold terms.

retreat from the sale of gas showrooms. The political conditions are maturing for a major showdown with the Thatcher government under conditions where it could be driven from office.

Maybe that is why Thatcher's ministers looked so sick during her speech last Friday.

But it was later attacked by Ted Heath as a divisive plan that would 'split the Party from top to bottom'.

Delegates loudly demanded the imposition of a 3-line whip and that MPs be mandated to vote in favour of a return of hanging; but the Conference organisers had excluded all 80 pro-hanging motions from the agenda.



by Les Hearn

No to MAVIS

DISABILITY is defined to a serious extent by the sort of society we live in.

Dyslexia doesn't much matter in a non-literate culture, while short-sightedness could be a severe disability if spectacles had not been invented (or if you couldn't afford them!)

Nowadays, the explosion in computer technology has opened up immense possibilities for improving the quality of life for people with disabilities.

The government has recently been trying to decide which type of computer would be most useful to people with severe physical handicaps - their own computer, MAVIS, developed by the National Physical Laboratory, or a cheaper commercial microcomputer, adapted for use by people

with disabilities.

MAVIS can be carried around in a briefcase, could run off batteries, can be dropped without smashing, and can have purpose-designed computer programmes written for it.

Cheaper

The Government is likely to decide that the cheaper alternative is better, but whatever it decides, this technology is unlikely to affect the lives of many of those it could help.

Little government money is to go into further research and development of these aids and even less will go towards helping people pay for them. They've even turned down money from industry because it would need government money to go with it.

ACTION ON DUMPS

WITH more and more examples recently of chemicals blighting the lives of people in Britain (pesticide contamination of schools, housing estates built on toxic tips, chemical factory fires and secret dioxin dumps) nothing could be more timely than to publicise the activities of the Sandyford and Goldenhill Action Group (SGAG) against their local toxic tip (see previous Socialist Organiser).

Arthur Bough of Stoke Socialist Organiser and SGAG has sent me a most impressive file of letters, leaflets, maps and press cuttings.

Since it started last May, SGAG has organised two public meetings, each attracting over 300 people, collected a 3000-signature petition, just from the immediate area involved, and organised a mass application for reduction of rates.

They have produced a newsletter, Action News, made a film, written to the local press, and got onto the local radio. Labour Party members took the fight into the local branch, and secured the support of the councillors, after some initial hostility.

SGAG has organised an excellent Monitoring Group, whose job is to check for breaches of regulations on the dump itself. They have collected evidence of gates regularly left open, children frequently playing on the site, fires on the site, and waste material falling off lorries on their way to the site.

When a number of birds were found dead from no

apparent cause, near the site, these were sent for analysis. Their observation of unlicensed deliveries of drums of oil which preceded the recent explosion I have already mentioned (Socialist Organiser no.55).

That explosion seems to have been caused by the dumping of a drum of magnesium turnings in a pool of battery acid.

Magnesium is a very reactive metal. Left in water, it slowly reacts, producing highly inflammable hydrogen gas (used as a rocket fuel fuel). In acid the same reaction goes much faster and releases lots of heat.

This must have caused an explosion of hydrogen. I don't know if the oil then caught fire, but you can imagine the danger of the situation.

The Action Group is going to monitor, protest, demonstrate, etc. until the toxic tip is closed for ever. People threatened by similar chemical catastrophes could do worse than follow their example.

THREE Mile Island reactor operators took an exam last April to see if they still knew how to run a nuclear reactor (if they ever did!). This was to prepare for restarting one of the undamaged reactors.

Now they are going to have to take the exam again, since at least two of them were caught cheating!

Information from New Scientist and Arthur Bough.

RED ROCK



...searing analysis...
Hi-Fi Today

by Everton Williams

YOU KNOW it's autumn again when another Madness LP comes out. But that's where predictability ends.

After the long overdue recent statement against racism and Nazi recruitment at their gigs, I hoped that it indicated Madness would stop being just sharply satirical and highly amusing observers and become social commentators.

The new LP left me happily disappointed. That may sound a contradiction, but isn't that what it's about.

Although the LP marks progress from earlier material, and they don't take political sides on major issues, like the Specials and the

Beat, they remain the most versatile of bands.

Madness, as the cover and video show, are essentially about having fun and enjoying yourself, and they do it excellently.

The opening track, 'Cardiac Arrest', from initial to final heartbeats, is a brilliant composition, very reflective and cuttlingly accurate on the pressures of everyday 'office' life.

The conclusion, the suicide, could be seen as dauntingly depressive or perhaps unfortunately realistic. It's great to dance to, and probably the high point of the LP.

'Shut up' is a wonderful follow-up track about the

problems of petty criminals, a choice increasingly taken by youth faced with the prospect of the dole. 'Pass the blame and don't blame' is a stinging line, as it says as much about Maggie as the band.

'Sign of the Times' livens up the side, and reminds you that Madness are essentially a great band to dance to. It's fabulously punchy and well-timed.

'Missing you' is sixties-style ska romanticism, about a situation we all go through at one point or another.

Witty

'Mrs Hutchinson' is about the old theme of loneliness,

but wonderfully done. The final track on side one, 'Tomorrow's dream', is highly interesting lyrically.

Side two starts with 'Grey day', which I really like, as it's the best in their parcel of songs about the pettiness and depressive routinism of life. It's typical Madness, with all the trappings.

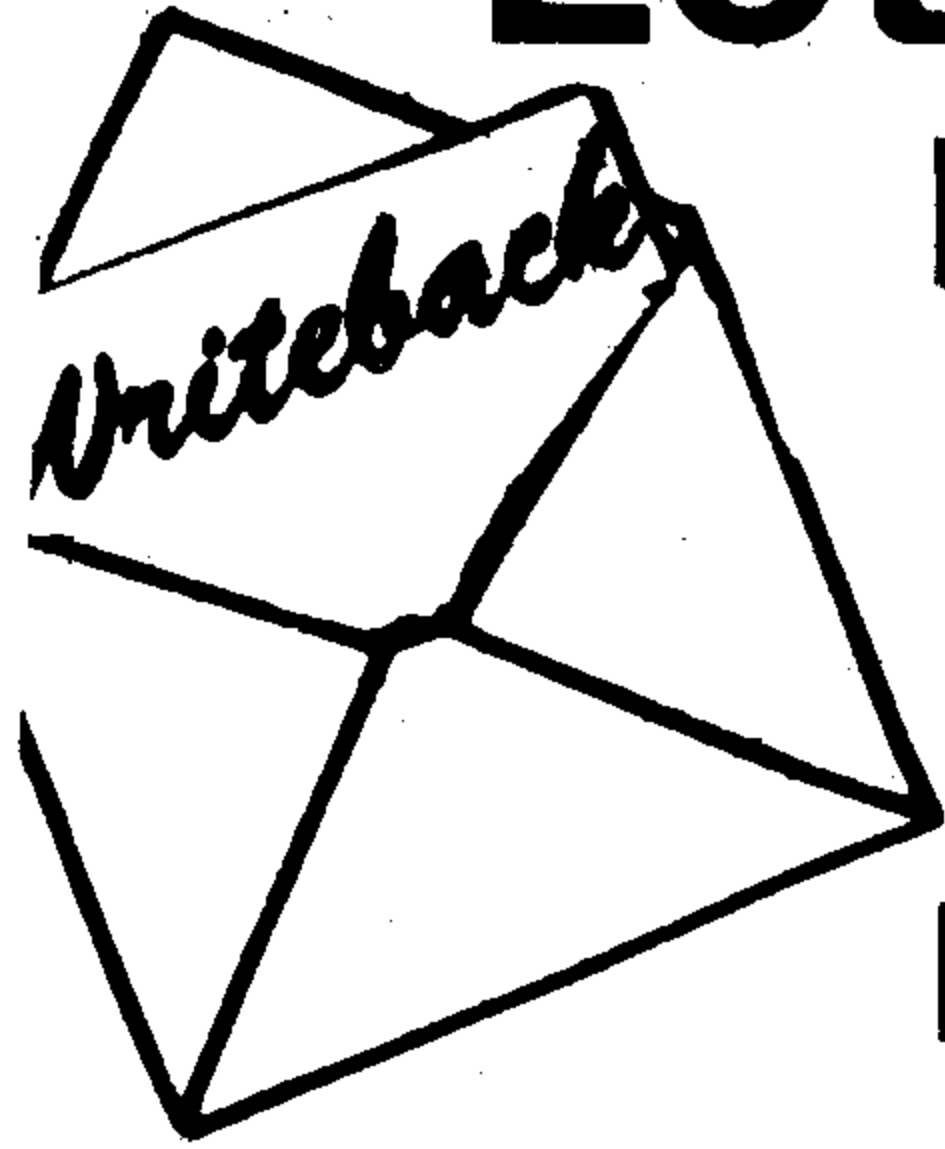
'Pac-a-mac', 'Benny bullfrog', and to a lesser extent 'Promises, promises', are better ignored and forgotten. They are well below the other tracks, but not too offensive to the ear to provoke dislike.

However, 'When dawn arrives' is a lifting little number.

THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM FOR SOCIALIST REVOLUTION
LEON TROTSKY

30p from Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8

Letters



Writeback to
Socialist Organiser
28 Middle Lane,
London N8

YES, WE NEED A GENERAL STRIKE!

FIGHT POLICE ABUSES

THE REPORT printed in Socialist Organiser no.57 about the arrest of Nigel Lee was unfortunately out of date by the time it appeared. To brief you on events over the past two weeks:

Nigel was released on October 9 after his appeal against sentence was accepted.

But his case, along with material compiled by local National Council for Civil Liberties activists about other police abuses and frame-ups, has laid open the possibility of a serious campaign in defence of others arrested.

Nottingham NCCL has accumulated considerable evidence on people arrested being denied legal representation and intimidated to make false pleas of guilty. Flats have been broken into by police, residents have been arrested and then released, and on returning they have found their flats smashed up.

Hard-line magistrates

have volunteered to do the dirty work in helping the police to send down innocent youth.

The NCCL report provides useful material for those in Nottingham fighting both on behalf of those unjustly imprisoned and to alert the labour movement on what the 'independence of the police' really means.

PETE RADCLIFF,
Nottingham.



AT EVERY demonstration we go on now, we hear the chants of 'Maggie Out'. The obvious question to this is, how?

I would argue that the way it is done is by uniting workers involved in a political struggle against the Tories, i.e. against the four per cent limit, for a general strike, and for the generalisation of a partial strike or strikes.

Comrade V. O'Brien presented us with an opportunity to open the necessary

debate with his letter in last week's Socialist Organiser, "We're not ready for a general strike".

Ready

It seems to me the question that the comrade is really asking is not whether the working class is ready for a general strike, but whether we need one.

He says correctly that 'we must firstly understand what the general strike is', and then wrong-

ly says that the general strike means dual power or nothing, backing that up apparently with our editorial comment that it poses the question of power.

But Trotsky argued, for instance, that it was possible in France in the '30s to have a general strike against the repressive decree-laws introduced in 1934 under fascist pressure and conscription. The ruling class might back down, to prepare for defeating the working class

later — but in any case the working class would gain immensely in self-confidence and consciousness from the general strike, whether it led directly to the struggle for power or was only the stage before it.

The working class will never become 'ripe' for the revolutionary struggle

Women against prison

EAST London Women Against Prison (ELWAP) is a group which aims to support and give advice to women who are facing prison sentences, are already in prison, or may need help on their release.

We also wish to stress that we need more help. If any one is interested and has time to spare, please contact Cathi on 555 0289.

There are also regular ELWAP meetings every Friday, 7pm, at 56 Danes Road, Forest Gate, London E7.

DEBBIE PRENDIVILLE

by waiting for the perfect moment, but only by militant struggle.

The preconditions that the comrade puts on the general strike call — 'pre-revolutionary situation', 'working class everywhere challenging the authority of capitalism' — lead us to wonder just when he would raise the demand at all. He has the same explanation of the present situation as many trade union bureaucrats have, that the working class 'is in retreat'.

This argument was devastated by the BL decision. At last week's demonstration in Blackpool, a buzz went through the nearly 10,000 workers and youth; and, talking to the Robb Caledon workers about the BL decision, it didn't need us to tell them the need for a general strike. They said it themselves.

It is not lack of confidence in the masses, or lack of a 'pre-revolutionary situation' (which must first be created) that will stop a general strike. The obstacle to general strike action is shown at the moment by Joe Gormley putting off the miners' discussions with management until November 11th, hoping that BL will be back by then. It was shown last year through the steel strike, and the top union leaders' sabotage of the possibility of BL strike action together with the steelworkers. And it was shown between 1934 and 1938 in France, where the bureaucrats tried to stop a general strike and then called it off as quickly as possible when it exploded despite them.

The prerequisites for a general strike do exist now. Capitalism has outlived its usefulness and is hanging on in deep crisis, the working class has been politically educated through the developments in the Labour Party, and there are widespread struggles beginning on the four per cent.

We take the demand from our dialogue with the masses — that is what we mean by agitation — while the bureaucrats start from the point of avoiding confrontation and encouraging collaboration.

Yes, the general strike is a sharp struggle, one of the sharpest before insurrection. We are prepared to take up that fight. By arguing against it, you're running into the hands of the bureaucrats.

MICK LIGGINS

Poland: the birth of a

stalinist state

TEN million workers in Poland are engaged in the struggle to wrest political power and control of the country's nationalised economy from their parasitic Stalinist rulers.

To understand the task they face we must first examine the nature and origins of the Polish state.

The most obvious comparison to explain the present set-up in Poland is with the Soviet Union.

In both countries the major factories, industrial concerns and banks are owned not as in Britain by capitalists, but by the state: there is a state monopoly of foreign trade; and on this basis there is an attempt, often grotesque, at a planned economy.

Power has been, in each case, in the hands of a 'Communist' Party, for decades upheld by dictatorial repression of all political opposition, rigid press censorship, and (until the emergence of Solidarnosc) the total state control of the official 'unions'.

Conceal

But these similarities conceal a difference. For the Soviet Union emerged as a workers' state from a victorious revolution in October 1917, in which independent organisations of the working class and the poor peasantry were mobilised under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party to overthrow capitalist rule and establish the power of the 'soviets' (workers' councils).

Only after this triumphant revolution — which sent shock waves of struggle throughout the international workers' movement — did conditions arise which led to the emergence of a firmly entrenched Soviet state bureaucracy.

Long and agonising years of civil war against reactionary forces (which were fuelled and militarily assisted by the imperialist countries), combined with the initial economic backwardness of the Russian economy and the failure of proletarian revolutions in Europe, to create chronic shortages, dislocation and demoralisation.

Richer

In these conditions the richer layers of Russian peasants, together with technocrats and senior administrators, increasingly formed a reactionary base for a conservative, bureaucratic layer in the leadership of the Bolshevik party.

In the wake of Lenin's death in 1924, this layer, headed by Joseph Stalin, increasingly consolidated its grip on the state machinery, began to repress its opponents, and to solidify as a privileged caste, feeding off the nationalised economy, and drawing strength from its disarray and from the weakening of revolutionary forces.

The Soviet Union increasingly degenerated into a bureaucratized workers' state. And the conservative, nationalist preoccupations of the Stalinist clique and their base within the Soviet Union increasingly took shape in

the politics of seeking to build 'socialism in one country'.

This rejection of internationalism accompanied the establishment of opportunist alliances with reformist trade union leaders (like the British TUC) and capitalist (and even, later, fascist) leaders — all of whom in practice bitterly opposed revolutionary struggles.

But Poland has not degenerated in this way. It has never been a healthy workers' state. An attempt by the Red Army in 1920 to lend military assistance to a wave of revolutionary struggles by the Polish working class proved unsuccessful.

Exploited

The 1920s and 1930s saw the country ruled by reactionary regimes and heavily exploited by international capital.

Stalin's infamous 'pact' with Hitler in 1939 was in many ways a 'pact' on how to carve up Poland between Germany and the USSR — until Hitler judged the time was right to mount an invasion of the USSR itself.

It wasn't until five long and traumatic years later that the Red Army was able to drive back the Nazi occupation forces from Poland and other East European

Marxism and the Polish revolution

John Lister begins a series of articles on Poland

countries.

This could have been the start of a genuine revolution. As the Red Army advanced, the Polish workers, despite years of brutal repression, seized factories, set up workers' councils, and took steps towards workers' control.

Yet the very last thing that Stalin wanted to see was 1917-style revolutionary struggles on his borders in Eastern Europe.

In some instances, therefore, the Red Army held back to allow the vindictive Nazis to wreak mass slaughter on the Polish workers: in other cases the Red Army itself moved in to defuse or repress workers' struggles.

After the withdrawal of German imperialism, under the dominance of the Red Army the power was given not to the militant working class but to a capitalist coalition government, which in fact rebuilt much of the old state apparatus that had been destroyed during the Nazi occupation.

Because of the disappearance of many of the old owners, extensive nationalisations were carried out by this coalition government — but carried out in such a way as to exclude the control of the working class by explicitly confirming the 'authority of the director'.

Within a year of the driv-

ing out of the Nazis, 90 per cent of Polish industry had been nationalised — yet, as CP leader Beirut admitted, the system was far from socialist.

"In the state of People's Democracy there still exist classes which live by exploiting the work of others; these are the capitalists, various entrepreneurs, well-to-do merchants, factory owners employing a certain number of workers, rich peasants, speculators and other non-workers".

The first steps towards eliminating the capitalist parties from the coalition government in Poland — as in most of the other East European countries — arose not from the revolutionary action of the working class but from the calculated actions of the bureaucratic leaders of the Communist Party, following instructions from the Kremlin.

Buffer

Stalin had hoped to mobilise the East European countries as a military 'buffer' against a further imperialist attack on the USSR.

The imperialists were too weak to hope militarily to reconquer Eastern Europe — but they still cherished hopes of economic penta-

tion and control.

The onset of the Cold War was coupled with the launching of the US Marshall Plan, offering huge loans for reconstruction of Europe. This carrot was dangled in front of the East European regimes.

At first the Czech government accepted — only to be whipped into line by the Kremlin: it was plain that the aspirations of capitalist elements within the coalitions were incompatible with the economic system in the Soviet Union. Stable Soviet control over Eastern Europe required that the conflict be eliminated.

Stalin therefore gave the go-ahead for moves to purge the pro-capitalist parties and leaders from the coalitions; to broaden the base of the Stalinist parties; to consolidate their grip on the police, military and State apparatus; and, in short, to stamp out the remnants of capitalist control and structurally transform the Eastern European countries after the bureaucratic model of the USSR.

Merger

By 1952, Poland had adopted a constitution modelled on Stalin's in the USSR: the Polish CP had purged any potential dissidents from its ranks, conducted a forced merger with the social democratic party, consolidated a monolithic party and state apparatus, and adopted its first five year plan. While never having been a healthy workers' state, it had become a bureaucratic workers' state.

It had not degenerated, like the USSR: it had been deformed from its very birth.



1926: were they ready then? Or should they have waited?

KICK OUT THE TORIES!

Labour democracy
and the
fight for a
WORKERS GOVERNMENT

A Socialist Organiser Pamphlet

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Conference initiative to organise the unemployed

MICK LIGGINS previews the national unemployed conference on October 31/November 1, at Goldsmiths College Students Union, New Cross, London. Delegates are welcome from all unemployed groups: for details phone Leicester UWU, 0533 898324.

COURT SLAMS PICKETS

by Chris Erswell

SUPPORTERS and members of the Liverpool 8 Defence Committee picketed the Crown Court last Thursday 15th, as the first riot case came up.

Hundreds of youth have been shut up in Risley Remand Centre for the last three months, and are now being processed through the Crown Court. Many of them have been the victims of trumped-up charges or have been beaten up by the police while in custody.

The picketers handed out a leaflet exposing the fraudulent nature of the system of justice which allows a reactionary press to keep up a barrage of abuse and slander against the rioters while ignoring the attempts of the Defence Committee to set the record straight.

Contempt

15 minutes after the picketers had assembled, a police 'meat wagon' arrived, and the picketers were bundled into it — on charges of 'contempt of court'. After several hours in the cells below the Crown Court, they were dragged before the judge and confronted with the choice of a prison term or an apology.

The picketers were angry, but reluctantly agreed to have a QC deliver an apology on their behalf.

It would seem that three months of press coverage is not supposed to bias the jury, but a single leaflet interferes with the due process of justice!

On the picket were a number of white members of the TGWU 6/612 branch. Some black Defence Committee members said they felt strengthened to know that trade unionists had been with them.

Earlier in the week a packed meeting called by the Charles Wootton Centre had heard black youths call on the trade unions to use their strength so that in future riots will be unnecessary.

Joint

The meeting brought together many community groups to set up a joint committee to coordinate future responses to the attacks of the police. Representatives of the shopkeepers' organisation set up in the aftermath of the riots to jointly seek compensation for the damage, were present at the meeting, though there was some jeering from the youth.

A split can be avoided by the Defence Committee supporting the small shopkeepers' demands for compensation, and pointing out to them that they have the same interest as the unemployed youth in fighting to bring down the Tory government. Otherwise there is a danger of the extreme right wing gaining support among the shopkeepers.

THE POTENTIAL size for an organisation of the unemployed to fight for the rights of the unemployed and for jobs is now over 3 million.

Launch

If you want to build such a movement, then you should come to the conference organised in London next Saturday 31st and Sunday 1st to launch a national unemployed workers' movement.

At the moment the official trade union movement has a hostile or passive attitude towards organising the unemployed. The largest union in the country, the TGWU, offers unemployed workers looking for a fight-back a place in a holding branch which never meets for 38p a week. This is of course under review — at the next T&G Rules Revision conference, in four years'

time. We obviously need to build a mass organisation of unemployed workers which the TUC cannot ignore. That's what this conference is about.

On the first day there'll be discussions through workshops on the main questions facing the unemployed and

AFTER throwing well over three million people onto the dole, the Thatcher government has already begun the process of cutting the benefits to which they are entitled.

In his last budget, Chancellor Geoffrey Howe announced that benefits would no longer rise with inflation, but rise at five per cent less than the rise in the cost of living.

This vicious attack on the

YOP workers. After the riots the unemployed workers' movement has to turn that anger into organised action.

The position of ethnic minorities will be discussed. The myth of the 'immigrants having all the jobs' is smashed by the figures for unemployment among black youths in Brixton — 60 per cent. We

must organise against the discrimination that takes place among the few jobs that exist, and fight for black workers and youth to organise.

Women's unemployment will be on the agenda. Not only do the Tories deny women the right to work, they also deny women's un-

employment, keeping over half a million unemployed women off the official lists.

Relate

Lee Jeans gave the whole labour movement a lesson in occupying their factory, and showed that women will fight back.

The conference will also debate how to relate the unemployed workers' movement to the official trade union movement, and the health service and unemployment.

There will be speakers from BL, who go on strike

the next day, and from Staffa Engineering, as well as other workers in struggle.

From the conference a national steering committee will be elected to coordinate the work in the coming months.

We've got two real choices concerning unemployment. We can sit back just like the TUC do, while the unemployed are becoming more demoralised and the fascists are growing; or we can fight to build a movement that can have a voice among the unemployed and force action alongside the employed against the Tories.

Marching against unemployment

100 people joined the Trans-Pennine March from Sheffield to Blackpool on October 7 to 16. One marcher reports how he saw it:

AS WE started from Sheffield, Shardlows engineering, who were consistent in their financial and physical support for the People's March, walked out in solidarity, despite being told by management that they would be suspended for three days.

In Barnsley the march was addressed by Jack Taylor, vice-president of the Yorkshire NUM, who were the biggest financial backers of the march. But probably the best reception was in Keighley, where Trades Council officials met us as well as Keighley MP Bob Cryer. A social was organised by the Labour Party Young Socialists.

In Blackburn we were met by the Right to Work marchers coming from Liverpool. Despite the feeling on both marches that the two should walk together, the predominantly Communist Party leadership of the Trans Pennine march refused, say-

ing that 'ideological differences' separated the marches.

The 'broad' orientation of the People's Campaign for Jobs, which organised the Trans-Pennine march, was not broad enough to bring in militant working class youth organised by anyone with opinions to the left of the TUC.

Unity

Under pressure from Preston Trades Council, the Pennine march leadership agreed to a joint rally in Preston. John Deason, chief organiser of the Right to Work march, called for unity, to loud applause and

cheering from both sections of the audience.

When we finally got to Blackpool, about 7,000 people, including 1,000 from the Right to Work march, joined us to lobby the Tory party conference.

Unfortunately, when the Right to Work march stopped outside the conference, we marched away to the Trades Club. It was a big anti-climax.

We should not ignore official TUC campaigns such as the Trans-Pennine march, but fight to make them a springboard for militant activity against capitalism, rather than passive liberal protest.



On the march in Blackpool

Where we stand

- * Organise the left to beat back the Tories' attacks! No to attacks on union rights; defend the picket-line; no state interference in our unions! No to any wage curbs. Labour must support all struggles for better living standards and conditions.
- * Wage rises should at the very least keep up with price increases. For a price index calculated by working class organisations, as the basis for clauses in all wage agreements to provide automatic monthly rises in line with the true cost of living for the working class. The same inflation-proofing should apply to state benefits, grants and pensions.
- * Fight for improvements in the social services, and against cuts. Protection for those services against inflation by automatic inflation-proofing of expenditure. For occupations and supporting strike action to defend jobs and services.
- * End unemployment. Cut hours, not jobs. Fight for a 35 hour week and an end to overtime. Demand work-sharing without loss of pay. Organise the unemployed — campaign for a programme of useful public works to create new jobs for the unemployed.

- * Defend all jobs! Open the books of those firms that threaten closure or redundancies, along with those of their suppliers and bankers, to elected trade union committees. For occupation and blacking action to halt the closures. For nationalisation without compensation under workers' management.
- * Make the bosses pay, not the working class. Millions for hospitals, not a penny for 'defence'! Nationalise the banks and financial institutions, without compensation. End the interest burden on council housing and other public services.
- * Freeze rents and rates.
- * Scrap all immigration controls. Race is not a problem; racism is. The labour movement must mobilise to drive the fascists off the streets. Purge racists from positions in the

labour movement. Organise full support for black self-defence. Build workers' defence squads.

- * The capitalist police are an enemy for the working class. Support all demands to weaken them as a bosses' striking force: dissolution of special squads (SPG, Special Branch, MI5, etc.), public accountability, etc.
- * Free abortion on demand. Women's equal right to work and full equality for women. Defend and extend free state nursery and childcare provision.
- * Against attacks on gays by the state: abolish all laws which discriminate against lesbians and gay men; for the right of the gay community to organise and affirm their stand publicly.
- * The Irish people — as a whole — should have the right to determine their own future. Get the British troops out now! Repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Political status for Irish Republican prisoners as a matter of urgency.
- * The black working people of South Africa should get full support from the British labour movement for their strikes, struggles and armed combat against the white supremacist regime. South African goods and services should be blacked.
- * It is essential to achieve the fullest democracy in the labour movement. Automatic reselection of MPs during each parliament and the election by annual conference of party leaders. Annual election of all trade union officials, who should be paid the average for the trade.
- * The chaos, waste, human suffering and misery of capitalism now — in Britain and throughout the world — show the urgent need to establish rational, democratic, human control over the economy, to make the decisive sectors of industry social property, under workers' control. The strength of the labour movement lies in the rank and file. Our perspective must be working class action to raze the capitalist system down to its foundations, and to put a working class socialist alternative in its place — rather than having our representatives run the system and waiting for crumbs from the tables of the bankers and the bosses.

GET ORGANISED!

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Industrial News

Leaders retreat from action to save shipyards

October
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WHAT'S ON

Rochdale Labour Party Dayschool: Democracy in trade unions.
Speakers: Winnie Murphy (NUTGW), Alan Thornett (TGWU).
From 10.30am, Sunday 1st November, at Wardleworth Community Centre, South St, Rochdale.

Liverpool Socialist Organiser meetings:
Thursday at 7.30 at the Swan Hotel, London Rd.
Oct.22: Organising the unemployed
Oct.29: (joint with Women's Fightback) Women in struggle
Nov.5: The Russian revolution, the rise of Stalinism, and Trotskyism.
Nov.12: What is fascism?
Nov.19: Bennism and the need to organise the Left.

Leicester Socialist Organiser Alliance - weekly Marxist forum. Sundays at 7.30, at the Leicester Socialist Centre, High St (above Blackthorn Books).
Nov.1: Labour and Ireland
Nov.8: BL and the 4% limit
Nov.15: 1956-81, 25th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution
Nov.22: Workers' control
Nov.29: Chile/Bolivia - the role of the military in Latin America.

Oxford Socialist Organiser Marxist classes.
Nov.1: Day school on fascism. 10am to 4pm at West Oxford Community Centre
Wednesdays, 8pm at 44b Princes St.
Nov.18: The Russian Revolution
Dec.2: The crisis of the 4th International
Dec.16: The nuclear threat.

South-East and London conference of unwaged women. Friday October 30, 10am to 5pm at North London Poly Students' Union, Holloway Rd, N7. Creche provided. Open to all women: but voting only by unemployed and unwaged women.

Lambeth Socialist Organiser educational programme. Sundays at 7pm: for venue, phone 609 3071.
Oct.25: Labour theory of value.
Nov.29: State and revolution
Dec.20: The Russian revolution.
Jan.31: Stalinism
Feb.28: The origins of the Labour Party.

Anti-Apartheid movement conference Sunday November 1st, 10 to 5.30, at Westminster Cathedral Conference Centre, Morpeth Terrace, SW1. Open to all AAM members: details, AAM, 89 Charlotte St, London W1.

The Campaign for Democratic Rights in Turkey is organising a conference for Saturday December 12, from 10.30 to 5pm at NUFTO Hall, Jockeys Fields, London WC1.
Labour movement organisations are invited to write to the CDDRT, 29 Parkfield St, London N1, for credentials. Fee is £3.
The conference will provide an important opportunity to discuss the current situation in Turkey and the role of the labour movement.



THE Liverpool City Council typists' strike, over a regrading dispute, is still solid. Money and messages of support are needed: send to NALGO, Duchy Chambers, 24 Sir Thomas Street, Liverpool 1.

by Stan Crooke

ON FRIDAY October 16th, the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU) announced that they were calling off the ban on overtime and the weekly one-day strikes which had been in operation since mid-September in support of the sit-in at the Robb Caledon shipyard in Dundee.

In one sense, the announcement was only to be expected - given the record of some of the trade union bureaucrats at the head of the CSEU.

Radio

In another sense, it was totally unexpected. The men in the sit-in first heard about it from the radio.

Instead of going for an all out strike - the only way to put enough pressure on British Shipbuilders to back down - the union leaders are relying on the arbitration and conciliation service ACAS to cobble together a deal.

All the signs are that the deal will mean hiving off the shipyard to Kestrel Marine. Harry McLevy, one of the local union officials, has told the press that, while wanting to keep all the jobs at the yard, the unions are now 'flexible to the extent of considering privatisation of the yard'.

And British Shipbuilders have already applied to the Dundee Port Authority to transfer their lease on the yard to the Scottish Development Agency (SDA). This would leave the way open for the SDA to sub-let the yard to Kestrel Marine.

The CSEU leaders would regard such an outcome as a good enough excuse to ditch the sit-in completely.

Kestrel

For the workers in the sit-in, the hiving-off is no solution at all. They want the shipyard to remain part of a nationalised industry. And Kestrel Marine is not inter-

ested in taking over the whole yard, but only the prefab shop and the jetty.

The kind of work done by Kestrel Marine demands a different type of workforce from the yard's present workers - who therefore would not be guaranteed jobs at all.

Stab

Despite the stab in the back from the CSEU, the sit-in remains as solid as ever. A mass meeting held after the news of withdrawal of national action by the CSEU was unanimously in favour of continuing the sit-in until guarantees were obtained for all jobs and the maintenance of the yard as a shipbuilding unit.

After the mass meeting, the workers went on to lobby a meeting of the Dundee Port Authority, where one of the items on the agenda was the transfer of the lease of the yard.

The Port Authority postponed its decision.

The backdown by the CSEU stands in stark contrast to the massive support won by the sit-in, especially in Dundee itself, where there is hardly a family that has not had some connection with the shipyard.

Factories have organised levies, social clubs have collecting tins on the bar and socials to raise funds, the Magicians' Union is holding a special cabaret evening, and on Monday 19th Charles Bowman (leader of the Labour administration on the council) will move a motion for the council to set up a public fund to help the sit-in.

Even some of the Tories on Dundee council have come out in (verbal) support of the sit-in.

Green

The workers in the sit-in know that they are fighting for more than just their own jobs. If they are defeated, then it will be a green light for more job losses and more closures of shipyards throughout the country.

If British Shipbuilders get away with these enforced redundancies, one of the shop stewards told Socialist Organiser, 'what yard is safe? Years ago there would be lay offs whenever a ship was launched, but in the last ten years we've had a more stable situation. There's no way we're going back to the old situation'.

The CSEU must be forced to restore national solidarity action. But this time, not ineffective one-day strikes, but an all-out strike, linking up with the fight against job losses and closures elsewhere.

Labour must pay the council workers

by Martin Thomas

ONE MILLION council manual workers - by far the biggest single group confronting the four per cent limit - put in their wage claim on Tuesday 13th. It calls for wage increases in line with inflation, shorter hours, and longer holidays.

This is the most important chance yet for Labour Parties and Labour councils to give practical meaning to the militant resolution against cuts passed at the Labour Party's Brighton conference.

The resolution called on Labour councils, 'to refuse to make the cuts needed to balance the books', and mandated the NEC to campaign for industrial action in support.

The Tories' four per cent cash limit is an order to Labour councils to cut the real wages of some of the country's lowest-paid workers: a cut as cruel as any of the cuts in services.

Labour now has a majority on the councils' pay

negotiating body. A single-sentence announcement from the Labour councils that they will defy the Tories and pay the full claim would demolish the four per cent limit as surely as a long strike in BL.

And if the BL workers are willing to face the threat of sacking for the sake of the struggle, then the Labour councils, strengthened by the Brighton resolution and this year's T&G conference resolution pledging industrial action in support of any council fighting cuts, should be prepared to face Tory threats of surcharge - threats which will in any case be totally unenforceable if there is a strong stand by the labour movement.

The councils, at present, are not due to reply to the unions' claim until mid-November. But left-wing Labour councils and Labour Parties should not hidembehind this formality.

A declaration now by councils like Greater London, the West Midlands, Camden and Lambeth, that they

will pay the full claim come what may, and will fight for the full negotiating body to do likewise, would give a huge boost to the BL workers and all other workers fighting the four per cent limit - as well as being an elementary act of justice for low-paid workers.

Conversely, any hint by Labour councils that they will enforce the four per cent limit will be a stab in the back for BL.

The councils can and should call for industrial action to wring the money from the Tories.

Emergency resolutions, motivated on the BL sacking threat, should be going through Labour Parties this month, calling on local Labour councils to make this declaration. And Labour

declaration. And Labour Left leaders and groupings like the LCC should be making a public appeal for such resolutions and declarations.

Encouraging

NUPE, T&G and G&M delegates in local Labour Parties can play a leading role in fighting this issue - though their leaders, like NUPE assistant general secretary Ron Keating, are just saying that the Labour majority on the councils' negotiating body is 'encouraging' ('encouraging' him to wait and do nothing?)

Camden General NUPE branch (with the support of the local T&G and G&M) has called a conference for Wednesday October 28 (7.30 at Camden Town Hall) for

council workers to plan action on the pay claim. A conference organiser stated:

'We are considering industrial action in the London region, regardless of what is happening nationally. By doing so, we hope to set an example to the negotiators and to the rest of the country'

This important call will give a boost to every other worker fighting the four per cent, too - and doubly so if it is linked to a political fight to force Labour councils to 'set an example', too.

Finance

And the flow of financial support to the sit-in must be increased. 'You can't win any battle without finance', said the shop steward. 'We're all right as long as finance keeps coming in, and that's what's needed now: financial support from all areas and not just shipbuilding'.

Messages/money to: Robert Jones, c/o Finance Committee, Robb Caledon Shipbuilding, Caledon Shipyards, Dundee. Make cheques payable to Finance Committee.

HOOVER READY

By Ian McLeish

THERE IS no doubt that if the Hoover company tries to close down any of the British factories, there will be a massive fightback.

Eddie McAvoy, shop stewards' convenor at the Cambuslang plant, outlined the workers' plans at a recent meeting organised by Rutherglen LPYS: 'The company say they'll let us know their plans by Friday 23rd. If they say they'll close Cambuslang, then we'll strike on Friday.'

'I would expect the same thing to happen at Perivale. Neither of us can win in isolation. The closure of one factory still doesn't guarantee jobs at the other.'

'In Cambuslang we are very fortunate that the factory has a 50-50 workforce of men and women. I was told when I took the convenor's job that the women would sell us out because they only worked for pin money. That's just not true.'

'It's the men who have usually accepted lower pay increases, etc. The biggest support has always come from the women.'

Critical

'Over the past few weeks the fightback has been started. The next few days will be critical. But if we continue to fight the way we have so far, we'll win.'

Blacking blocked

DINNINGTON Branch of the Yorkshire NUM at a branch meeting on 27th September passed a resolution calling on the Yorkshire NUM Executive to mobilise full support for the workers at Laurence Scott. The resolution, which called for continuing financial support, for blacking of Mining Supplies and for support for any picketing, was presented as an emergency resolution to the last Area Council meeting.

The resolution was ruled out of order on the grounds that the AUEW had informed the Yorkshire Area NUM that it was satisfied with what the Area had done and that as all the other factories in the group were working the NUM could do nothing until they started to move.

This feeble response has been fully in line with Arthur Scargill's attitude all along the line.

6 MONTHS FIGHTING FOR JOBS LAURENCE SCOTT NATIONAL SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE

Speakers invited: TONY BENN
CHARLES MORRIS (MP for Openshaw)
RON HALVERSON (National Committee, AUEW)
ERIC CLARKE (Gen Sec Scottish NUM)
LEE JEANS

SATURDAY 14 NOVEMBER

Main Hall, University of Manchester
Institute of Science & Technology
(5 minutes from Piccadilly Station, central Manchester)

Starts 10am. Credentials (four delegates per Joint Shop Stewards Committee, two per other labour movement body) £2 per delegate from W.J.Partlan, 15 Lines Road, Droylsden, Manchester.

SUCCESSFUL MASS PICKET AT ST MARY'S

Duffy rapped

THE FINAL Appeal Court of the AUEW — highest body in the union — has found that President Terry Duffy was in breach of rule during his election campaign.

Duffy's candidacy was backed by material in the union's official journal and by 250,000 leaflets issued in the name of the union.

His challenger, 'Broad Left' careerist Bob Wright, enjoyed no such privileges. He has now called for the ballot to be re-run with the

same candidates.

The union's rules — if headed by the ruling right wing cabal of Duffy/Boyd — oblige the executive to observe the rulings of the appeal court.

But they are unlikely to implement either of their two options: to declare Wright elected, or hold a new ballot.

AUEW branches should take up this issue with urgency and demand that the rules of union democracy are enforced.

Black Glencroft

by Ian McLeish

HEAVY rain and bitter cold have not been enough to break the morale of the 15 women picketing Glencroft Knitwear in Glasgow.

Determination is what they've got plenty of — "We'll stand here all year if we have to". Sadly, new initiatives to step up the struggle are thin on the ground.

Blacking imports, mass mobilisations on the picket line, and 'secondary picketing' have yet to be

Financial support from trade union and Labour Party branches continues to grow steadily, with local branches of NALGO and SOGAT each giving £40 last week. The only deliveries last week were made by the boss's nephew, although the women are sure the lories are dumping their loads elsewhere and he is ferrying them in.

He has also become more aggressive towards the pickets. He'd thought he had found a perfect way through — instead of walking, drive a van through.

The smirk was soon wiped off his face when one of the women charged him on the spot for assault. The police didn't want to charge him, and it was only after the women threatened to report them to their superiors that they changed their minds.

The police were only too happy to cooperate when Newman (the boss) accused three of the women after someone had poured sugar in his petrol tank. But there is no evidence against any of them — in fact one of them wasn't even on the picket line that day — so they are not being charged.

One certainty from all this is that Newman will now go hell for leather to get his own back in whatever way he can.

ACAS won't stop him using the police against the pickets, nor will it stop the scabs from crossing the picket line. What is needed is action now that the women aren't standing there this time next year.

Join the picket line: black all Glencroft goods.

THE ALL-day picket of St Mary's hospital (London W9) on October 19th was a great success.

All day ambulance drivers brought patients into the hospital as instructed by their union, in defiance of management instructions. The picket peaked at about 50 around 8.30am, and continued with about 20 people all day.

Many hospital workers, especially domestics, came out in their tea-breaks and lunch break.

Inside the hospital, the struggle is hotting up as management aim to close wards 2, 3 and 5 in line with their reorganisation plans.

On the day of the picket, management published their third circular assuring us that jobs and services would not be affected by the cuts. Staff at the hospital are unconvinced of this.

Porters have declared their intention not to move patients from the threatened wards without the agreement of the sister and staff nurses in charge. Nursing staff are showing remarkable determination to maintain services and staffing levels.



Possibly the weak point is the doctors, who despite their commitment to the hospital are under heavy pressure from administrators and consultants not to admit patients into the threatened wards.

The policy of transfer, if adopted, will not only

endanger the fight to save the hospital, but will also involve discomfort and danger to those patients moved.

Obviously the medical staff need to be encouraged to take a stand by the mass support of the labour movement and the community.

The first step towards this is a conference which is being organised by the Defence Committee for Saturday November 21st at 11am in Porchester Hall.

* Messages/money/details of conference: Defence Committee, c/o TGWU office, St Mary's Hospital, Harrow Rd, London W9.

* Regular commitments to picket are urgently required from all labour movement organisations. Any organisation or individual wishing to commit themselves should ring the Defence Committee at 01-286 4884 ex. 544/372.

STOP PRESS: In an ominous step towards victimisation, TGWU shop steward Rita Maxim — 17 years at St Mary's and a leading figure in the fight against cuts in services and staffing levels — has been summoned to an inquiry hearing on her final disciplinary warning.

This movement by management is another reason why trade unionists should support the picket on the gates of the hospital.

Staffa sit-in busted

by Mike Foley

AT 5am on Saturday October 16, several hundred police, a few bailiffs, and management, in a multi-pronged movement, smashed their way into the Staffa factory in Leytonstone, in a military type operation.

The factory had been occupied for several weeks by workers in an attempt to save 390 jobs.

The police were acting on a repossession order granted to the management by the courts on Friday morning. Earlier in the week, a police helicopter swooped low over the factory, clearly taking photographs to help on their early morning raid.

At the time of the police raid, there was only a handful of workers on the premises, and in tactical terms they had little option but to leave.

They are not, however, disheartened. The official picket lines of the AUEW and ASTMS have been set up outside the factory and are being manned on a rota basis. 300 people turned up for a mass picket outside the factory on Monday 19th.

Stockpile

It is hoped to get official TGWU backing of all Staffa products, as a first step to try and stop management moving the stockpile of machinery inside the plant.

The management strategy will probably be to try and break the workers' determination by getting some of the workforce back in the factory. The convenor, Dave Green, expects management to issue letters to the workforce inviting them

the workforce inviting them back to work.

Staffa workers, like those at Laurence Scotts, need as much support as they can get from the labour movement. They are in the forefront of the fight to save jobs.

Messages/money: Chris Mewson, AUEW Strike Committee, 39 Somers Rd, Walthamstow, E17. Socialist Organiser readers in the AUEW, NUM and TGWU should be raising the question of blacking Staffa products.

Help us make our circulation JUMP!

Take a bundle of 50 to sell!

Many readers tell us they think Socialist Organiser has improved greatly since we went weekly. And our circulation has improved, too.

But it could improve a lot more if some of the many readers who like the paper, but only take one copy for themselves began taking bundles.

We're offering bundles of 5 each week for 80p post free, and bundles of 10 for £1.50

post free. That's £9.60 for three months for bundles of 5, and £18 for bundles of 10.

Regular subscription rates are £4 for three months, £7 for six months, and £12 for a year.

From: Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle

Lane, London N8. Please make cheques payable to Socialist Organiser.

Name.....

Address.....

SUBSCRIBE!

Socialist Worker wrong on BL

Socialist Worker's sniping and ill-informed comment (October 17) on the recent lay-off strike at the Cowley Assembly plant needs a reply.

The article, by Ceri Jones, calls the strike "nothing but a shambles". It accuses the strike leaders of failing to spread the strike to the whole plant, badly organising the picketing, and therefore causing a split vote when the AUEW officials "said there was no chance the AUEW would make the strike official".

It was a very militant strike, and very important, since it took up the principle of lay-off pay. Its weakness was that it was a sectional strike, involving about one third of the total workforce on the plant, and confined to two tracks plus trim.

They were the people who had lost a day's pay.

Advisability

From the start there was a division of opinion among activists on the plant and the strikers themselves as to the advisability of a mass meeting designed to extend the strike to the whole plant. The problem was that a majority of the strike committee formed by the strikers themselves was against extending it.

They were reluctant to submit their strike to a vote when the majority had not lost money.

At first picketing was very strong, but it is true that it broke up towards the

end following the decision of a mass meeting to picket on a 24 hour basis. There was poor organisation immediately following the meeting, but basically the meeting did not appreciate the problem of a 24 hour picket on a plant with ten gates to cover and as many again which could be opened whenever the management wanted.

Cruised

Management cruised around in a car and opened up any gate not in sight of the pickets.

More importantly, what split the strike was not what Ceri Jones says, the reluctance of the AUEW to make it official, but an instruction from the AUEW Executive ordering their members back to work.

Such an instruction was a very serious matter, given an employer like Edwardes. Within hours he issued the sacking notices.

Ceri Jones would have done better to have identified the real problems, instead of criticising the strike committee. That Socialist Worker lacked focus is shown by the way it related the local strike to the upcoming national BL wages struggle.

One of the strikers is quoted approvingly as saying that the lay-off strike was far more important than the wages struggle.

The job of the strike leaders was to lead a successful local strike, but to insist that it remained subordinate to the national action.

Renault halted

SINCE October 2 no cars have been produced in a major part of the Renault factory at Billancourt, near Paris. A wave of strikes has rolled through the factory, the most important being a strike of 700 assembly workers for regrading and against attempts to impose speed-up.

As a result of this strike, the management has locked out a total of 4,000 workers at Billancourt. Management has made token concessions such as offering a 50 franc rise (the strikers' demands would mean a rise of between 170 and 300 francs a week).



Join the Labour Party

Write to 150
Walworth Rd.
London SE17.

Socialist Organiser

Troops out of Ireland!

IN THE aftermath of the H-Block hunger strike, many republican prisoners in the Long Kesh camp are now apparently wearing their

own clothes. They are also beginning to claim rights to association, recreation and meals in the canteen served by their own nominated 'orderlies'. But as yet it is unclear how many concessions will be made to prisoners on these issues, or on the question of interpreting what is 'prison work'. It seems certain that the Thatcher government will offer no more than a 50% restoration of remission to the prisoners who took part in the four-year 'blanket' protest.

Courage

The sacrifice and courage of the ten dead and the surviving hunger strikers has however drawn the world's attention to the plight of the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland.

It is high time that was translated into a fight for solidarity in the British labour movement.

Troops out now!

REAGAN BLOWS THE GAFF!

JOIN THE DEMONSTRATION
Saturday October 24,
11.30 from Victoria
Embankment,
London

by Alexis Carras

SATURDAY'S CND march comes in the wake of the mammoth 250,000 strong demonstration held in Bonn two weeks ago.

It is not only the hundreds of thousands of young Germans whom we can thank for the growing impact of the anti-nuclear campaign throughout Europe. CND can thank one man in particular - Ronald Reagan.

Reagan, with one throw-away sentence, has done more these last few days to build CND than years of hard slog and propaganda.

For what Reagan has stupidly admitted is that CND is absolutely right. Nuclear 'deterrence' is a myth.

"I could see where you could have the exchange of tactical nuclear weapons against troops in the field without bringing either one of the major powers to pushing the button".

So the American government has admitted that it truly believes a limited, tactical, nuclear war is possible and winnable.

If you hadn't quite caught on where this little war is to be fought, the answer is right here in Europe, where US imperialism is busy installing Pershing, Trident and Cruise missiles, and deploying the neutron bomb.

Thatcher's defence spokesperson, John Nott, sees 'nothing controversial' in Reagan's statements.

But Reagan is stating that the US is willing to start a nuclear war from quite limited conflicts. He reckons it would remain 'limited' (just a few tens of millions dead?) but in reality the holocaust would certainly spread.



For thirty years, the politicians, the militarists, and the owners of the powerful and enormously rich war industries have repeatedly told us that nuclear weapons are the best guarantee of

peace. The deterrent of nuclear annihilation would ensure that the blocs had to coexist, however uneasily.

Now, on top of the obscenity of billions and billions being squandered while the vast mass of the world's population exists in misery, we are being told that this deterrence argument is a load of old nonsense!

Nuclear war is no longer unthinkable for American imperialism in its drive to regain the initiative against the ruling bureaucracies of the Stalinist states and to reverse the many defeats it has suffered in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and elsewhere.

Major General Robert Schweitzer, Reagan's military adviser, said in an unvetted speech to the Association of the United States Army that there was "a

drift to war" with the USSR, and that the US would use the neutron bomb. The man has been sacked for his comments. Having already made a gaffe with Reagan's comments, the US government wants to "knock this one hard on the head" to shore up the tattered confidence of its European allies.

But like Helmut Schmidt, whose government may fall in the wake of the new revelations and the fight in Germany against Cruise missile sitings, our own right wingers in the unions and Labour Party must be feeling very sick indeed.

The unilateralism of the Party's ranks will be stiffened even further, and these remarks can only further discredit the warmonger NATO alliance and swing even bigger sections of the labour movement behind the drive to pull out of it.

While the feeling in the Party and the trade unions, and the working class as a whole, is towards a more militant anti-war direction, the leadership of the labour movement - Foot, Healey, and the trade union barons like Basnett - are pushing precisely in the opposite direction. Given Healey's outspoken statements that he will not serve in a unilateralist government, the drive is now on to emasculate the Party's democratically decided position.

Trojan

It is up to Labour Party and trade union activists, and all those concerned with avoiding nuclear war, to campaign not only against Reagan, Thatcher and Nott, but also against the Trojan Horse of the right wingers

in the leadership of the labour movement.

The defeat of the unilateralists in 1961 by the right wing and Gaitskell must not be repeated.

SEVEN youths are still being held in Leeds, awaiting trial for offences relating to the riots in Chapeltown in July. And some of them could face life sentences.

Five are white, one is West Indian, and one Pakistani. All live in Chapeltown.

The charges relate to preparation of petrol bombs and their use.

One youth, charged with organising a riot, has been refused bail despite offering one of the highest ever bails in a Leeds court - £60,000.

Meanwhile, last week Muhammad Hussain was released on bail after nine weeks in jail. Muhammad was charged with stealing an acid bottle from his school last April and then giving the acid to another youth just before the riots.

Release

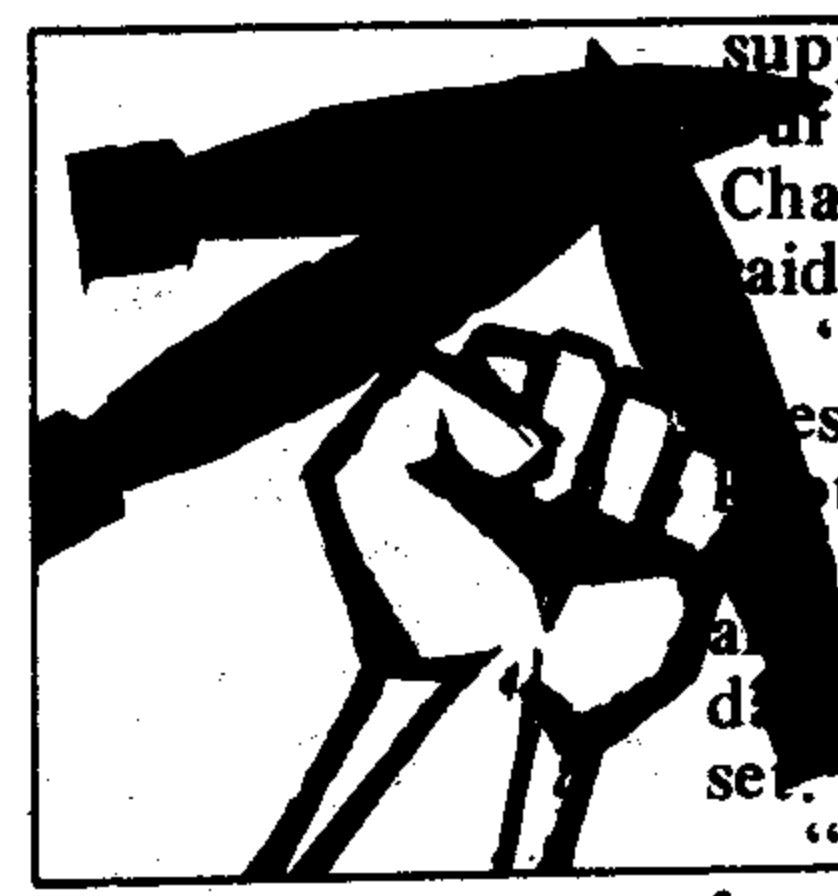
A new committee has been set up to campaign for the defence of the youth.

Garth Frankland, a Socialist Organiser supporter and the Labour councillor for the Chapeltown district, said:

"It's a disgrace that these youths have been in jail so long without bail. Most of them are still waiting for the date of their trial to be set."

"And most of them face charges connected with events on a night on which there was no riot!"

"The labour movement must campaign for the release of these youth".



CENTRE PAGES:
Why an effective fight against the nuclear menace means a fight against capitalism

LAST week was a snail's-pace week on our regular £2,000 monthly fund -- only £93 came in, leaving us £1095 to get before the end of October.

And this isn't a month where we can afford to let things slip a bit. On the contrary: we need a special drive for money for work round the upcoming BL strike.

The Leyland Action Committee is appealing to the whole labour movement for cash, but it will need a float to start its work, and Socialist Organiser is providing that. On top of that we need money for Socialist Organiser's own efforts: meetings, travel, leaflets, extra runs of the paper.

Send to: Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.